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# **Values in Islamic Culture and the Experience of History**

**Russian Philosophical Studies, I**

Edited by  
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The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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## Preface

George F. Mclean

As we enter upon the global age our life with others intensifies exponentially. This is not merely a matter of economics, although there was notable truth to the observation of Hegel and Marx—not to mention Aristotle and his whole tradition—that physical exchange is basic for interchange between humans. Today, however, because the social sphere is so intense, political relations have come to supercede, organize and direct economic interchange. The World Bank and the World Trade Organization, while certainly economic entities, were created and are run today as integral dimensions of the political world order.

But when we ask how the economic and political orders operate we find that not only is this not at random, neither is it according to the formal economic and political principles and goals of profit and power. Beneath (or above) these are the cultural patterns that identify the parts and interrelate them in a truly global whole. The challenges of the economy may be shared, but each people responds in its own term. How peoples understand themselves and manage their homes, communities and nations is specific to each major civilization and defines the many ways of life. Thus, the issues of human cooperation have become civilizational, both in breadth and in depth.

The ability to understand other cultures and to integrate their concerns in determining one's actions is now crucial. And as truly human relations are mutual, understanding the other entails a corresponding process of self-discovery, while hermeneutics tells us that only in an awareness of self can we interpret the other.

Today the time of orientalism understood as curiosity about the strange and exotic has passed. We now live together through immigration notably from the East into the West and through globalization extensively from the West into the East. Issues of difference are no longer at arm length, but matters of proximate daily interchange. Issues of war and peace are no longer articulated by symmetrical rows of canons along the Marginot line, but by the asymmetry between the massive Pentagon in Washington and the one room madrasa in the mountains through which the Silk Road long since wound its way.

This involution reflects a profound shift in the terms of engagement. Since Plato in the Western tradition all has been basically objective in character. The body of knowledge was given in Greek and Roman literature; its was modelled in alienated adib behavior, and interpreted through the external economic dialectic of formation theory.

As pointed out by Y. Pochta in Chapter I this is now in the process of being substituted through a general shift from objectivity to subjectivity. In these new terms it is possible to take account of the inner consciousness of the person or people with their awareness, evaluation and creative response to their concrete circumstances. As this forms a culture and a civilization; it will be referred to as the civilizational interpretation of Islam in the West. In these terms it now becomes possible to engage Islam not as a theoretical world view or a pawn in economic interaction, but as a people with their concerns and fears, hopes and responses.

This work on Western interpretations of Islam is situated astride the major divide between these two approaches: between the past objectivist, even materialist ideology, on the one hand, and the emergence of new attention to human interiority and its meaning for the evolution of cultures and peoples, on the other. To adapt a classical phrase: this is to stand formation theory on its head. Moreover, if interpretation is the basis of action then this augurs to be a most important book for the relations between peoples in a global age.

The Soviet Union has one of the largest Muslim populations, and hence a unique engagement with Islam and its culture. From this inestimable store of experience in its studies of Islam rich results can be expected. Yet, as heirs to a materialist ideology, the public context has long been in tension with the pervasively religious character of Islam. Thus, this work on Islam faces a unique challenge and constitutes a true hermeneutic laboratory. This is true regarding not only the object to be known, but the subject who seeks to know and understand; it exemplifies a major effort from a secular culture to understand another that is religious. This then is a matter not simply of reporting a set of objective facts or behaviours, but of being able to enter into the mind and heart of another culture in order to empathize with its concerns and live together in true cooperation.

Moreover, though there has been much discussion about the ability of Islam to develop Western patterns of social life in order to live with the West, amazingly little has been written about the ability of a secularized West to live with Islam. As exemplifying an effort at cross cultural understanding this work itself gives witness to the challenges to be faced and the developing avenues along which success can be hoped.

All of this has taken on the greatest urgency in view of the Russian experience in Afghanistan and Chechnia, and the escalation of asymmetrical violence as we enter into the new millennium. As the issue of mutual understanding with Islam has been catapulted into the front rank of human concerns this book has taken on major importance.

Part I, "Islamic Culture in the Contemporary World: Problems of Research," begins this effort by presenting a hermeneutic for the study of Islamic culture.

Chapter I by Yuriy Pochta, "The Image of Islamic Culture in European Consciousness," is particularly instructive. He analyzes how the lens of interpretation is in a continual process of change and its special dynamics with regard to Islamic studies in the West. One is the difficulty of the West in escaping its Eurocentrism resulting in what can be called a missionary approach. This is not to suggest a crusade intentionally to impose one religion over the other, but rather the inability to envisage an alternate to the Western liberal vision of life or civilization. As a result Islam has been continually misinterpreted as a religion, culture and society. Wishing it well has consisted largely in wishing that it would change to become like the West. Only recently have some begun to consider it in its own terms, rather than in those of the Christian West.

A second major difference is between the "civilizational model" in which the role of culture, religion and spirit is seen to predominate and the "formational model" based on material conditions, class and ideology. Soon after the Revolution the limitations of the formational model became manifest in the massive destruction of mosques, while the West has been trapped in a theological fundamentalism of its own since the peace of Augsburg in 1555. This chapter brings all of this to reflective consciousness, thereby pointing to the need to view Islam in terms of its own cultural identity. Hopefully, this could augur the dawn of an authentic pluralism in which Islam can find its respected place. Hence we will keep this distinction of method in mind in reviewing each of the subsequent chapters as it points to the ability of the West to encounter Islam.

Chapter II by Nur Kirabaev, "Islamic Civilization and the West: Problems of Dialogue," continues this theme. By recognizing the complex character of Islam as a civilization he points beyond ideologies to a recognition of the need to see Islam and its place in the world not as a choice between alternatives, but as an integration of values. This has been experienced as a challenge since al-Ghazali pointed out the inability of the great Islamic philosophers wedded to Greek philosophy adequately to account for the Koranic doctrines of human responsibility and

resurrection. For lack of a philosophical resolution of this question, the relation between faith and reason remains today an increasingly explosive challenge.

Chapter III by Maitham Al-Janabi, "Islamic Civilization: An Empire of Culture," carries this still further by going deeply to the religious root of Muslim culture in the one God to find there the hermeneutic key to interpreting Islam both from within and in relation to its global partners. On this basis he shows how unity marks all aspects of Islam and the civilization it has generated. Hence, while all aspects of life are included and it can be analyzed from every aspect, what is characteristic is its ability to embrace a diversity of peoples, and the variety of their values and virtues. This has enabled it to recognize that the diversity of cultures is a blessing and to envisage a place for the most diverse cultures within a general human community.

Moreover, in recognizing diversity within itself, Muslim culture supposed diversity outside. It presupposes the possibility of a universal civilization with different cultures. A true culture is capable of viewing others according to criteria of reason and morals. All are integrated, as al-Andalusi wrote many centuries ago, by virtues of theoretical and practical reason, rather than by the force of anger in the animal soul. Though, ants can build their own "political cities and systems," they are not the "civilizations of moral reason which constitute the essence of humankind."

Part II, "Islamic Culture: Its Nature, Major Concepts and Problems," turns to the nature of Islam itself. Here the hermeneutic division noted by Y. Pochta in Chapter I becomes especially determinative. Only Chapter VI proceeds from a "civilizational" rather than a "formationist" perspective, and hence is able to take account of the fundamental character of Islam as a culture and religion.

Chapter IV by Artur Sagadeyev, "Social and Historical Premises of the Origin and Development of Classical Arab-Islamic Culture," in search of non-theistic thinking searches out socio-cultural parallels to Western intellectuals, and *falsafa* is seen as opposition to Sunni Islam, rather than as an attempt to develop it. In a paradoxical sense this implements the "missionary" approach to Islam by attempting to understand it as a body without a soul.

Chapter V by Taufik Ibrahim K., "Ancient Heritage in Kalam Philosophy," makes an important contribution in showing the extent to which philosophical competencies grew. However, as he supposes religion and mysticism to be contradictory to science he interprets this as supplementing religion by secular concerns, rather than enabling the deeply religious understanding of the nature and work of God which marks Islamic culture.

Chapter VI by Nur Kirabaev, "The Political and Legal Culture of Medieval Islam," achieves greater success though following the civilizational model, i.e., looking at the role of religion in politics, rather than reducing religious patterns of thought to political concerns. He expertly weaves together Shari'a and Caliphate and analyzes the classical theories on the state of al-Mawardi, al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya. All of them were guided by the Qur'anic and Sunnah traditions, the practices of the Islamic community in its golden period, the Umma and Ijma'.

In Chapter VII "Humanistic Ideals of the Islamic Middle Ages," Artur Sagadeyev returns to the formational approach raising the question of whether an Islamic culture can be understood in reductively human terms. The chapter assembles the positive case, educating the role of Greek thought, and the paideia or adib ideal of education. In these terms one can compare Islamic with other cultures incrementally as more or less of the same, e.g., as leading in astrology and mathematics. To see what makes Islamic culture special, however, it is necessary to see how it is

inspired and integrated. This calls again for elements found only in a civilizational approach open, e.g., to the mystical terms of an Ibn Arabi beyond those of Ibn Rushd or even Ibn Sina.

In his *Munqid* al-Ghazali describes how conscious and tense could be this decision to transcend the confines of Greek thought and "take to the road"—which in the circumstances was not only the road to Damascus, but the way of the Sufis. It would be more than a century, however—and then in Paris rather than in Baghdad—that a Aristotelian Christian synthesis, built on the religious sense of existence, would resolve these tensions for the West. For Islam this tension has not dissipated, as would have been the case if the humanism described in this chapter were to have become predominant.

Part III, "Islamic Culture: Classical Paradigm and Modernity," surveys some of the amazing range of forms in which the principles of Islam discussed above are lived in the present day.

In Chapter VIII, "Classical Arab-Islamic Culture in the Context of Dialogue of Civilizations," Taufik Ibrahim K., in a veritable tour de force, provides a major overview of the many dimensions of Islamic civilization in a manner that is clear, comprehensive and balanced.

Chapter IX, "Islamic Culture in Search of a Golden Mean," by Maitham Al-Janabi takes this to the next deeper level by a structuralist analysis of Islamic culture as a consistent effort at moderation. This integrates the great variety of the factors which make up a civilization. It can be also Islamic in reflecting the characteristic unity described in chapters III and VIII. To find its soul and zest for life, however, it would be necessary to ground this in the unity of the One Divine life which brings all to life and guides life along its perilous path—without this inspiration its moderation would have become a bland humanism.

Chapter X by Alexander Rodrigues, "Wahhabism and 'Peoples' Islam' in the Arabian Peninsula," illustrates this exuberance as a recurring theme. It is part of the continuing criticism of the successive states that they are all too human and fail to realize the Islamic ideal. Wahhabism is the latest attempt to renew the initial élan of Islam in Saudi Arabia and illustrates the constant dilemma of Islam: how to be faithful in the human pilgrimage through time. It shows the need of Islam for a more adequate hermeneutic that is broadly and ever more urgently sensed in our times.

Chapter XI by Abdillahi Hassan, "The Ethnoconfessional Situation in the Horn of Africa," describes the complex recent history of this attempt in the geographic region of North East Africa. It illustrates how difficult it is for different peoples to live together.

In conclusion, Chapter XII by Nur Kirabaev, "Islam in the Context of Modern Civilization," reviews three forms of this effort to evolve a modern civilization: modernist, fundamentalist and political militant. In tribute to the rich unity of Islam Prof. Kirabaev concludes that "problems concerning the specific features of Islamic civilization should be considered not in a context of the opposition of East or West, old or new, past and present, origin or modernity, traditionalism or rationalism, faith or reason, heritage or renewal, religious or national, but on the basis of their interconnections." In this he rejoins the conclusion of the analysis of the evolution of Western studies of Islam in Chapter I by Yuriy Pochta. Together they underline that real progress in response to the urgent need to understand and engage Islam in our times requires recognizing it as a culture in its own right—a civilizational approach—which is to be understood in terms of its basic values and religious commitments or not at all.



# Introduction

Nur Kirabaev

A major task faces philosophical sciences in modern conditions. It is the task of studying the unity of world history not only through the similar and concordant traits of different civilizations (diversity in unity), but also through their distinct forms of developing human characteristics as specific cultural-historical entities (unity in diversity). In this approach, an important challenge is to uncover the paradigm of Islamic civilization and to understand its world wide historical role. This not only reveals, but also determines its socio-cultural affinity to other civilizations in their universal human dimension.

This spiritual paradigm is revealed by analyzing a large variety of diverse cultural and ideological phenomena, and first of all, the historical period during which the paradigm acquired its relatively complete and consistent form. Thus, the philosophical reconstruction and description of Islamic culture presupposes knowledge of *what* (in the Heideggerian sense) determined its vision of the world and of the human being. Understanding this "being what" presupposes a historical-philosophical consideration of the cultural phenomena and ideological images of the epoch. Consequently, the philosophy of history and culture and the history of philosophy and culture should be considered as two sides of a single cognitive process.

In general in speaking about the values of Islamic culture it is important to treat the general perception of concrete-historical types in relation to the aims and norms of their behavior. These are embodied in the historical experience and meaning of Islamic civilization, as well of humanity in general. This is the spiritual orientations according to which representatives of Islamic civilization, both as individuals and as social groups, correlate their actions and way of life. The values of Islamic culture, as with cultures of any other civilization, are to a large extent determined by the so-called substantial values, which constitute the basis of an overall value consciousness. To a large extent, these were determined by the specifics of the formation and development of the Arabic Caliphate.

Thus the specific features of classical Islamic culture were formed as an essential part of the single Mediterranean culture and civilization. This conceived and enriched the cultural, scientific and philosophical traditions of Antiquity, and evolved the humanistic characteristics of Mediterranean culture (albeit, in different historical conditions).

By classical Islamic culture we mean then the culture connected with the birth and strengthening of the Arabic caliphate which, under the aegis of the new monotheistic religion (Islam) proclaimed by Muhammad in the VIIth century, spread its authority and influence to a vast territory from Gibraltar to the banks of the Indus, and became the new center of interaction and mutual enrichment of diverse cultural traditions. The "Golden Age" developed on the basis of Islamic culture is in the IX - XII centuries, as Islamic culture began to determine the world's material and spiritual cultures.

One of the major characteristics of classical Islamic culture is the fact that it is not so much science (as in Western European thought), but values and ideological trends which play the role of structural elements in defining the character of cognition, interpretation and epistemology for understanding the world. These trends have a common paradigm, on which was erected the complex of evaluations and perceptions relating to the ultimate basis of human existence in the world and one's own nature and relation to the Cosmos. Based on the ideals of knowledge in Islam Medieval Islamic thinkers solved every problem—be it questions of culture or politics, ethics or

aesthetics, philosophy or law. While not limited to the specific issues of cognition, this determined in an integrated fashion all the major philosophical and socio-political trends of medieval Islamic society, whether of political theory, philosophy, law or ethics.

The specifics of the ideal of knowledge in Islamic culture is defined by the Shari'a. As faith and reason not only do not contradict each other, but are complementary, medieval Islamic culture was oriented upon a united and integral, if somewhat complex, ideal of knowledge. For example, the work of the famous thinker al-Ghazali (1058 -1111), *The Revival of the Religious Sciences*, can be regarded equally as a philosophical, legal, religious, linguistic and a cultural work—in the modern sense of the term it would be called an interdisciplinary study. Averroes wrote of al-Ghazali that with philosophers he is a philosopher, with sufists he is a Sufi, with the Mutakallims he is a Mutakallim. Many representatives of Kalam wrote their works on issues not only of religion, but also of philosophy and natural science. This reflects not so much a weak differentiation of the sciences, but the specific spiritual atmosphere of the Islamic culture, based on the famous dictum of the Prophet Muhammad: "Go for knowledge, even to China".

In the medieval Arab-Islamic civilization "knowledge" both secular and religious gained an all-embracing importance and status, without equal in other civilizations. Its high status in the system of values of medieval Islamic society, which of itself is a significant indicator, tells us at least that there were many educated people in that society. Even specialists cannot now imagine the actual scale of Arab book publications: the few manuscripts of that immense literature which have reached us more or less safely number above than the hundreds of thousands.

As for the value orientations of the educated part of medieval Islamic society, one can suppose that the behavior of the effect adiba group was imitated to some degree by the majority of those educated. This group embodied traits of both the secular and religious knowledge of educated persons of every culture: philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and model of behavior.

Important factors in understanding the Islamic cultural paradigm are the non-existence of church as an institution, and accordingly the lack of orthodoxy and heresy in the sense understood in Christianity. There was an especially wide-spread religious and legal pluralism within the framework of the uniform Islamic world outlook. In describing this it is important to separate two dominant components: Islam and Hellenism. In its history, this culture has exhibited and exhibits both "Western features", since it contains elements of Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism, and "Eastern features" which departs from these components to reflect a more humanistic character attempting to facilitate the realization of one's search for fulfillment. This reflects three aspects of humanism in medieval Islamic culture:

- religious humanism, which proclaimed the human being as the highest of all God's creatures;
- adab humanism, whose ideal formed in the IXth century corresponds to European XVIth century humanitas, i.e. the ideal of developing the physical, moral and mental capacities of everyone in the name of the common good;
- philosophical humanism, more conceptualized, whose essence Abu Haiyan at-Tawhidi briefly and actually expressed in his dictum: "Man has become a problem for man".

Recognizing the universal character of the traits and principles of humanism, it is possible, at the same time, to say that every culture and civilization, at the peak of its vigor works out its own model of humanism. Within the framework of Islamic culture humanism revealed itself in different forms. This phenomenon first appeared in the East during the rule of Khosrov Anushirvan, and was represented by Barzue, Pavel Pers and Salman Pak. This was followed by a humanism which

developed under the influence of Hellenistic gnosticism, hermetism and Neoplatonism. This humanistic quest, concentrated on the theme of the "perfect human being," was represented by Ibn Arabi, Abd al-Karim al-Jili, al-Khalliaja and Sukhrawardi. Lastly, there is humanism which emphasized the greatness of human reason (as in the Hadiths, where the Prophet Muhammad is reported to have said: "Anybody who cognizes God will cognize me", and "The first thing created by God is reason"). A major representative of this humanism is Muhammad ibn Zakaria ar-Razi, who rejected the Revelation and affirmed the autonomy of human reason in the spirit of the European Enlightenment.

The ambivalence of Islamic culture, based on the principles of Shari'a and the historical Arabic caliphate, assumes as its point of view the correlation of the temporal and sacral, as well as of the exoteric and esoteric character of its "being what". Taking into account the great role of the Shari'a in temporal affairs and the prevalence of earthly purposes in human behavior and thinking, Islamic culture retains a link between the Cosmos and ethics. In its time, this made it possible to consider the science of philosophy, oriented on the Ancient tradition as an inalienable part of Islamic culture; it today allows the door to be kept open for modern European science and culture.

As for the correlation of the exoteric and esoteric in the context of problems of faith and reason, it is necessary to note their complementarity. A theological analysis of this problem shows that most thinkers belonged to the exoteric tradition which gives priority to reason instead of to faith. This prepared the ground for sufiestic esoteric knowledge and its intellectual attempts to harmonize Shari'a and Tariqah. Sufism has not considered the correlation of reason and faith as a separate problem, but has included it in the general system of the prescriptions of faith, Ways and Truth (Shari'a—Tariqah—Hakikat). This system organized the "logical form" of the subject's quest for an absolute, which promoted the emergence of many variations, one of which is the doctrine of al-Ghazali. As an integral historical phenomenon, the study of Sufism is very important with regard to the archetypes of Islamic culture.

A philosophical analysis of this culture must point out what is stable and what changing in the course of its historical development. This is very important in all efforts towards reforming or modernizing Islam. As a rule, all previous efforts to create Western models of Islamic development have failed due to the fact that the traditional fundamental principles which constitute the spirit of the Islamic culture were taken as historically surmountable and transient. In contrast, the socio-historical and political factors inevitably show that the comprehension of the essence of the traditional and the modern are very closely interconnected with the fundamental principles of political-legal culture of Islam and the dominant ideological-cultural movements within the framework of its development. An analysis of classical theories of the state in Islamic political thought, represented by such famous authors as al-Mawardi, al-Juweyni and al-Ghazali, shows that the Shari'a principles never disturbed the need to take into consideration the historical realities of the Arabic Caliphate, and to a large extent were based on historical precedents. The doctrine that the state is but a conduit of the principles of Shari'a is a permanent constituent of these conceptions, but the question comes down to who holds real political power, in which way that power and authority are understood, and what is the consolidating element and moral-spiritual basis of civil Islamic society. The idea of the unity of religion and state is based not only on the religious feelings of solidarity, but also on the understanding that Islam is expected to establish equality and justice in socio-political and economic relations. The recognition of the fact that Islam is a way of life and a definite type of modern world outlook allows us to understand the essence of the Islamic state. A good example of this, is the analysis undertaken in this study of the state ideology of Saudi Arabia—Wahhabism. This shows how the traditionalistic doctrine of Abd al-

Wahhab, based on Islamic traditionalism from Ibn Hanbal to Ibn Taymiyyah, in the spirit of Islamic culture tries to answer the challenges of the XXth century.

It is usually thought that modernity is the completeness of being, but as history shows this is not entirely so. As the state of research of Islamic culture and philosophy shows, our knowledge is not only surface but frequently very distorted. Recently, in research as well as in the consciousness of the masses, mistaken cultural-philosophical and political-ideological stereotypes dominate as regards Islamic civilization, for example, in the wide-spread usage in the mass media of such terms as Islamic fundamentalism, interpreted broadly and arbitrarily as religious extremism, whereas it is necessary to distinguish Islamic fundamentalism and Islamic extremism. In general, stereotypes usually result either from insufficient knowledge and methodology, or from the ideological and socio-cultural purposes of the observer. In this work, European stereotypes of Islamic culture are subjected to critical examination and special attention is paid to the critique of the methodology of European civilizational, Russian historiosophical and the Marxist formation approaches towards Islamic society and its culture. The categories and methodologies of studying Islamic culture are surveyed and new alternative approaches which correct the commonly held stereotypes are proposed.

In examining the general cultural stereotypes, one can note, for example, the attempts to portray Islam and Islamic culture in the concepts and categories of the Christian tradition. As a rule, Islam is studied with a view to finding something analogous to Christian orthodoxy, theology, church ideology, etc. Though these phenomena simply do not exist in Islamic culture, on the basis of such stereotypes in the research tradition a stable Eurocentric vision has been formed regarding Kalam as the dominant orthodox theology in Islamic philosophy and culture. It is inappropriate to discuss and speak abstractly of Islam and Islamic culture without considering the fact that in each historical epochs and country these have their own specific features. Moreover, attempts are undertaken to negate the humanistic character of Islamic culture and, for example, to regard the sufism of Ibn Arabi as the single existing variant of Sufism. In reality, sufism is no less differentiated in its manifestations than is Islam itself. The European civilizational, Russian historiosophical, and Marxist formational approaches to Islamic society and its culture share the so-called missionary approach and attempt to see the Western or Russian mission in relation to the Islamic world as both progressive and emancipatory.

Instead, the specific features of Islamic culture and civilization should be examined not within the context of contrasting the so-called East and the so-called West, the old and new, past and present, heritage and renewal, religious and national, but on the basis of their mutual connections and cooperation.

This study is devoted to an analysis of different points of views about how to compare in the philosophical-value dimension the classical Arab-Islamic culture, which was open to mutual cooperation with other cultures, and the modern Islamic culture, which, if not in confrontation, apparently is not ready or receptive for the modern inter-civilizational dialogue. In the world of Islamic culture, at present, the most single important problem is to define what should be retained regards in the correlation of the permanent Islamic civilizational phenomenon with nationalism within the context of the industrial and post-industrial development of Eastern Islamic society.

**Part I**  
**Islamic Culture in the contemporary world: problems of research**

## Chapter I

# The Image of Islamic Culture in European Consciousness

Yuriy Pochta

Humankind has already entered the 21st century, although many fundamental problems are yet to be solved. One of them is the problem of communication between different cultures. Without achieving consensus on values, which cannot be limited to only Western culture, humankind may face in the forthcoming century even more serious conflicts.

One of the examples of the current division of humankind into conflicting sides and the remaining tensions between them is the interrelation between Western and Islamic societies. The post-communist era and the widely acclaimed victory of the Western liberal-democratic model as the single universal civilized form of social development does not guarantee that this victorious model may not meet major future challenges in the areas of the defeated Communist ideology. More than that, one of its possible opponents is not new to the European religious and scientific thought, namely, the Islamic world, which represents another, Eastern, form of civilization. In Europe, Islam had been regarded as an opponent even before the emergence of Marxism. Among the defenders of the Western value of an "open society," many also regard the Islamic world as an embodiment of a "closed society" because they (wrongly) equate the Islamic world with Islamic fundamentalism.

As history shows, for more than a millennium the problems of Islam have lost their relevance to European thought. The pessimistic evaluations of development trends in Islamic society, for the last 300 years, by various European thinkers were unjustified. Islamic society continues to develop and is open to the future. In contrast to numerous forecasts, it retains its vitality and importance for humankind.

Theoretical interest about the role of Islamic society on the world scene is constantly growing and can be traced throughout many humanitarian disciplines. For European thought, which is not at all self-sufficient, close attention to the image of Islamic society is an important condition of its self-understanding (and self-recognition). The "Indomania" of the romantics of 18th and 19th centuries is better known than the constant reference, in the last three centuries, of many great European thinkers to Islamic problems. The attitude toward Islam became an element of the European philosophical development, a part of the creative biography of some of its greatest philosophers. In characterizing the cultural-historical context of the interaction of Christian and Islamic societies, the dogmas of Christianity as a world religion have, to a large extent, taken shape in rivalry with, and opposition to, Islam. The emergence of the image of a "Christian world" in the minds of Europeans was an outcome of centuries of contacts with Islamic society. From the Middle Ages until the present, many important concepts of religious and philosophical thought (monotheism, mysticism, prophecy, fatalism, fanaticism, rationalism, natural religion, despotism, democracy, humanism, private property, and religious fundamentalism) were considered while taking into account the socio-cultural development of European as well as Islamic societies.

It is necessary to clarify the notion "European" used since its connection with a concrete geographical place. We mean by this term a centuries-old scientific tradition established on Ancient, Christian, Renaissance, and Enlightenment cultural and historical bases. In this broad scientific tradition, we place of West European, Russian, and North American thinkers. But this does not mean that we reduce Russian historiography to a West European philosophy of history.

They have much in common, but, at the same time, the Russian philosophy of history has its specific features. Specifically, these include the Eastern-Christian cultural and religious basis of Russian civilization and the geopolitical features of Russian history because of the centuries-old contact with Islamic peoples in both internal and external state relations unknown to Europe. Thus, we shall use the term "European Philosophy of History" as a generic term for the scientific sources originating in the Christian world, except for those cases, where we specify certain features of the Russian Philosophy of History.

From the European point of view, the existence of the Islamic East as a nonclassical variant of social being constitutes a problem for philosophical and historical concepts. It is also a serious test for theoretical and methodological instruments of social knowledge from the viewpoint of its humanistic content and universalism. From the early Middle Ages now, Islamic society presents a riddle for its interpreters. Hence, the question arises about the ability of European philosophy to interpret the unity of history in a diverse world, to combine the idea of a unified world history with that of the diversity of concrete-historical social organisms. The answer lies in a critical analysis of ideas about Islamic society in the European philosophy of history, that is, a study of the evolution of ideas about the diversity of humankind based on the concrete understanding by European thinkers of the place of Islamic society.

The study of European thinkers' ideas about Islamic society and its culture is complicated by the fact that European history of philosophy is not conceptually homogeneous, but dependent on the political situation and religious outlook, on prejudices and stereotypes. The scientific terminology used is heavily value laden and reflects the spiritual maturation of European society. For this reason, a philosophical analysis of this problem should take into account the complicated and constantly changing correlation of the cognitive and value-laden content of the concepts employed. The value component of the European philosophy of history is, in many ways, connected to the religious ideas of Christian Providentialism. In many ages, Providentialism had been explicit; from the middle of the 18th century it became implicit in the form of an Eurocentrist socio-cultural orientation. Providentialism greatly influenced the perception of Islamic society in European philosophy.

The task of this paper is to analyze the theoretical means that one part of humankind (European society) perceives the other (Islamic society) within the framework world history. In our case, it is insufficient to obtain a general image of the philosophical and historical concept of any European thinker, as this is not utilized for an immediate understanding of Muslim society's place in the history of humankind. When a researcher turns his explanations from his own society (European) to another (in this case—Muslim) qualitatively different culture with own its religious basis, his views undergo certain modification. Touching upon the conflict of world outlooks in the analysis of the common issues of culture, Max Weber wrote that superior ideals which move us most of all, always express themselves only through struggle with other ideals which are as sacred for others as ours are for us. In this process, a two-faced European culture emerges: one position looks at one's own society, the other for Islamic society. As these positions do not coincide, the main complexity of the analysis consists in the definition, comparison and clarification of the reasons for the given phenomena as characteristic of the contradictory process of formation of European humanism and universalism. In this respect, inconsistent thinking appears almost as a methodological principle in the works of such philosophers as Leibniz, Hegel, Karl Marx or Arnold Toynbee. In the same work, concerning the same object (Islamic society), philosophical and historical conclusions stand against the philosophical and religious, naturalistic-rationalistic against deterministic against voluntaristic. This give gives the impression that every such work is

written by two different authors. As a rule, in historical-philosophical studies, the strategy utilized is to separate the contradictory tendencies into main and ascendant, on the one hand, and minor and regressive, on the other hand. The whole of the ideas of a concrete thinker would be reduced to one of their components. However, in this way, the contradiction of ideas is not explained, but arbitrarily eliminated. One cannot subjectively select one part and ignore other parts of the philosophical and historical concepts of concrete thinkers. An objective analysis of the ideas of Friedrich Engels about Islamic society shows that, in no small measure, he adheres to the civilized, rather than the formational paradigm. Therefore, the reconstruction of the philosophical and historical opinions of European thinkers about Islamic society appears as a process of recovering the conceptual unity of these views, of what unites their world outlook.

The context of this study is formed by the conception of complex, multistage processes of European social formation and its attaining self-consciousness as a subject of human history. This is not unique and significant, but participates in the multidimensional development of humankind. In this a particular object is not a link in a deterministic overall claim, but has its own logic of evolution and, accordingly, of destiny. For European society, the comparison of its image with the image of Islamic society was one of the means to obtain such self-consciousness within the integral picture of the world, both religious and secularized. But the Islamic part acted mostly as a "mirror," in which European thought aspired to see either its own merits or defects, depending on concrete conditions of its history. In other words, Islamic society quite often turned out to be for European society not so much the goal of social and historical understanding, but a means of self-perception and self-consolidation, an experimental polygon for proving new religious and scientific concepts and paradigms, and an object for theological, philosophical, and historical speculation. European culture reflected an opposite tendency, which became particularly apparent in the second half of the 19th and 20th centuries, based on a rupture with the Enlightenment concepts of linear progress, and realization of its drama of its history as a destiny common to all cultures. This is the context of this study provides an analysis and evaluation of methodological paradigms at concrete stages of the development of a European philosophy of history about Islamic society, taking into consideration the contradictions and struggle between different tendencies in explaining the diversity of humankind.

Our initial position is that in the European philosophy of history the conceptual understanding of world history, and the place of Islamic society in it developed in two main directions: civilizational (from the mid 18th century) and the formational (from the mid 19th century). Apart from this, the concept of Christian Providentialism that preceded them and has a centuries-old history in European culture, also had an influence on them.

From the civilizational standpoint, the interpretation of Islamic society has several stages, among which it is possible to note the Enlightenment period (Leibniz, Voltaire, Diderot, Holbach, Condorcet, J.-J. Rousseau, E. Gibbon, J. Herder); Romanticism (F. Schlegel, Chateaubriand, T. Carlyle); Positivism (E. Renan, G. Le Bon); and the methodological synthesis of the 20th century, where the ideas of the philosophy of life, phenomenology, philosophy of anthropology, existentialism, structuralism, and philosophical hermeneutics enrich each other (O. Spengler, A. Toynbee, M. Hodgson). In pre-Revolutionary Russia, this task was accomplished mainly by the historiosophical school of social thought (P. Chaadaev, A. Khomyakov, N. Danilevsky, V. Solovyov).

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the 1850-1880s were the first to realize the formational explanation of Islamic society. Later, in the 1920-1930s, this question attracted the attention of the first Soviet researchers into Islam (E. Belyaev, V. Detyakin, L. Klimovich, Kh. Naumov, M.A.



Reisner, N.A. Smirnov, S.P. Tolstoy, S. Tomara). In the 1960-1970s, there appeared some interesting researches (E.A. Belyaev, L.I. Nadiradze, I.P. Petrushevsky, M.A. Usmanov), and also in the 1980-1990s (O.Kh. Guliev, B. Lapshov, M.F. Mekhtiev, I. Khalevinsky). The neo-Marxist interpretation of this question appeared also in Western Marxism during the 1950-1970s (M.Rodinson, B.Turner).

For many centuries, one of the means for the self-identification of European society has been the comparison of its own way of life with that of Islamic society, but within the framework of both a religious and secularized world outlook. Islamic society has not often been the subject of socio-historical cognition, but has served as a means for the self-reflection and self-assertion of European society, a subject of theological and philosophical-historical speculation. Only in the second half of the 19th century, did European culture began to shun the Enlightenment concept of linear progressivism, and realized the dramatic character of its history as a common fate with all cultures.

### **The Traditional Explanation of Islamic Questions in European Culture**

Being the basis of European civilization and European philosophy of history, Christianity had a decisive influence in shaping an image of Islamic society. In medieval Europe, the essence of Islamic society was explained mainly from the position of a religious understanding of history on the basis that there exists only one true religion. From the standpoint of its doctrines about the human being and society Islamic society, which appeared some centuries after Christianity, seemed to be an error of providence. In the epoch of the Enlightenment, with its rationalistic attitudes towards history in the form of a philosophy of history, the influence of religious Providentialism on the perceptions of secular thinkers about Islamic society loosened. Within the framework of the philosophy of history, the civilizational approach became the basis of new theoretical studies and obtained new importance as a world outlook. This concept began a new paradigm of socio-historical thought and the formation of a conceptual dualism of immanentism and transcendentalism which defined the philosophical-historical views of European thinkers who, while thinking about Islamic society, belong to the civilizational paradigm. A new process of creating a scientific methodology of Islamic studies commenced.

In contrast to 17th century metaphysics, representatives of the 18th century Enlightenment (Voltaire, Diderot, Condorcet) overcame their separation from the practical problems of life by directly connecting their social philosophy with the tasks of the antifeudal and anticlerical struggle. Aside from understandable cognitive interest, Islamic society attracted the attention of Enlightenment thinkers, specifically the French, as a convenient object for sharp criticism of feudalism and for exposing the Church as the source of superstitions, fanaticism, and intolerance. The opposite tendency heralded by Pierre Bayle was expressed less clearly, namely, to approach the Islamic world in search of those specific features of social life that Europe lacked, for example, religious tolerance and rationality, and a reasonable balance between the spiritual and material aspects of life. Idealizing Islam, representatives of this tendency showed Islam's correspondence to the deistic views characteristic of most enlightenment philosophers.

The Enlightenment approach, doubtless, prompted sharp expansion of the spatial-temporal boundaries of historical research and the creation of a conceptual and methodological apparatus for the philosophy of history. Even the negative traits of Islamic society, especially marked by European thought as cruelty, barbarity and despotism, could be subjected to scientific analysis and explained by geographic or social reasons. Beginning with Montesquieu, such phenomena could

be considered as naturally intrinsic to any, including European, society. On the basis of rationalistic universalism, a new synthetic picture of the world appeared, whereby the East acquired its place alongside the West, and Islamic society is interpreted within the context of the military-political and cultural-historical history of humankind. But this rationalistic universalism, and the universality of historical analysis gained by it and within the framework of civilizational paradigm, stands on a shaky basis. The Enlightenment thinkers proceeded on the basis of an immutability and universality of human nature, according to them its essence is based on the ability to reason. They regarded the existing differences among peoples as purely quantitative. To them, human nature as an embodiment of maximizing the intellect is represented by the European society of the 18th century. On the basis of this methodology, Islamic society is viewed as not yet having developed to the level of European society, owing to the prevalent influence of Islam. The next generation of thinkers (Rousseau, Herder) began to overcome this framework by trying to explain the place of Islamic society in world history from the viewpoint of a romantic world outlook. Rousseau and J. Herder can be regarded as transitional figures who embodied the end of the Enlightenment and the beginning of a romantic philosophy of history.

In his famous book, *Outlines of a Philosophy of the History of Man* (1800), Herder contributed positively to rethinking the history of Islamic society within the context of a universal picture of the world by using the principles of humanism and historicism. His standpoint emanated from recognizing the uniqueness of every culture; at the same time, it quite often used the method of analogy comparing Arab and ancient civilizations. Later, such comparison was widely used by O. Spengler and A. Toynbee. Herder managed to produce the most consistent and methodologically well thought out expression of the philosophy of history of Islamic society. He based his studies on the early romantic monotheistic universalism, not deformed (as happened to F. Schlegel, Hegel, V. Solovyov) by national, racial, or confessional influences. He went further than the Enlightenment thinkers with their idea of the immutability of human nature, showing the plurality of unchanging human natures in his doctrine of racial differences. This made it possible for them to accept a pluralism of civilizations and pinpoint the idea of cultural relativism. However, the idea of inferring the specifics of any culture from internal and constant mental features of a concrete race is ahistorical. From this standpoint, it is impossible to understand the difference, for example, between the Islamic and European Christian civilizations as historically conditioned.

On the verge of the 18th to 19th centuries, Romanticism widely influenced the perceptions of European thinkers about Islamic society. This cultural current, although born in the bosom of Enlightenment, began to negate it. The philosophical-historical perceptions of European Romanticism are widely and, more or less, fully represented in the studies of the theoretician of German Romanticism Friedrich Schlegel; the French publicist and writer Francois-Rene de Chateaubriand; and the English philosopher, writer, and historian Thomas Carlyle.

The deeply experienced crisis situation of society, frequently explained by the unfavorable results of the Renaissance which sought its inspiration from the Ancient world, led the romantics to study civilizations other than the European. However, European thinkers mainly found the romantic East in India, instead of in the Islamic East.

F. Schlegel and Chateaubriand proceed from the fact of a certain Islamic culture permeated with an Eastern spirit. They identify it with barbarity, and therefore as hostile to Western civilization, which they think should triumph in the Islamic East and all over the world. In contrast, T. Carlyle is tolerant of Islam in his work, *On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History* (1841), but this tolerance is based on the fact that he identifies the history of human society with the history of the Christianization of humankind. He obviously excludes the very existence

of other civilizations. He assumes that as Muslims are representatives of Abrahamic monotheism, their religion is either a simplified version of Christian civilization, or barbarism; there is no third way. The cultural-historical relativism initiated by Herder is excluded not only by Carlyle, but also by F. Schlegel and Chateaubriand.

Romantic thought inevitably reproduced the Eurocentric approach of Enlightenment historicism in relation to Islamic society: The latter necessarily serves as an instructive example of a "wrong" model of religious belief and of socio-cultural development. The cyclical idea of world history boils down to a linear interpretation of historical development common to all romantics, which supposed the evolution of humankind from barbarism to the triumph of social Christianity in its European variant. In this approach, Islamic society appears to have long ago completed its cycle of development, while European society is continuing its progressive development.

In comparison with the Enlightenment, Romanticism took an important step forward in the development of the universalism of European socio-historical thought. While inevitably taking an Eurocentric form, romantic historicism, nevertheless ensures the integration of the Islamic east into universal history. Together with the philosophical-historical heritage of the Enlightenment, it thereby contributes to the creation of real theoretical prerequisites for systematizing the perceptions about Islamic society attained in the synthetic philosophical-historical conception of Hegel.

Hegel's concept is an original summing up of the scientific research of the 18th and 19th centuries related to the formation of European bourgeois society after the social upheavals heralded by the French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars. The history of Islamic society is interpreted by Hegel by contrasting Islam to Christianity as an antithesis to Western development and as its simplified version obviously doomed to stagnation. In Hegel's understanding Muslims, having fulfilled their historical task in the early Middle Ages, ceased further development: they have ceased to exist for universal history, because, being abandoned by the world spirit, they became an ahistorical people. That is the past. As for the future, not only Muslims, but humankind as such has no chance of further social evolution because, according to Hegel the world spirit attained in the Germany of his days (Europe) at its highest stage. Muslims, being foreign to Western civilization, remain on the sidelines of history; their only hope is to repeat the Western road of social development. Proceeding from the logic of Hegel's philosophy of history, an Islamic civilization was not created because the world spirit did not pay attention to that society. Their history has never been a concrete stage of universal historical development whose principle is the expression of the spirit. The insurmountable difficulties faced by Hegel's philosophy of history in explaining the history of Islamic society have their origin in his Eurocentrism, apology for bourgeois society, nationalism, and the absolutization of the state-legal forms of Christian society. These propositions, which are immanent in Hegel's philosophy of history, explain the ahistorical and basically ideological character of his evaluation of Islamic society and its religion. However, one can merit the German thinker for his serious attempt to analyze the history of Islamic society within the history of humankind, and Islam within the context of the history of religious doctrines as a single law-governing process. The civilizational aspect of explaining the history of society within the framework of the relations of West and East, deeply worked out by Hegel, had had colossal influence on the later perceptions of Islamic society in European science and culture.

In the second half of the 19th century, Positivism achieved a major influence in European Oriental studies. Proceeding from its dictum of the common character of natural and historical laws. Representatives of this trend proclaimed the end of speculative philosophical-historical thought, and instead proposed sociology as a positive science of the universal natural laws of social

evolution. Positivists supposed that through sociology they achieve authentic and trustworthy knowledge about society and are capable of playing the role of its reformers. In this connection the Islamic East, as part of a single humankind, attracted their attention; they saw there an extensive field for their transforming activities. The rational-universal approach of Enlightenment to non-European societies is replaced by another extreme approach—an irreducible cultural-historical or racial-anthropological pluralism, in which the only viable society is believed to be the European model of social development.

An analysis of the studies of Ernest Renan and Gustave Le Bon, two leading European positivist thinkers who paid great attention to Islamic society, show that their concepts maintained certain ideas expounded by the Enlightenment thinkers and romantics, but already integrated into a naturalistic world outlook and coupled with a racial theory oriented towards the idea of a progressive inequality of races. Positivist sociology pretends to discover a racial principle as the true substance of social life, of which all the elements of civilization are but outward expressions.

For Renan, who is convinced that exact and precise knowledge allows not only the explanation, but the reformation of human society, universality means not only a socio-philosophical principle for explaining the world, but also a principle for transforming Western society into a global society. European civilization, so he thinks, is potentially a universal civilization: however, its mission is endangered by external and internal barbarism, which have to be actively liquidated, without relying on the activity of natural laws of social development. Thus, universality turned into an important aspect of the current policies of European states and served as a substantiation of the ideology of colonialism. This approach leads to Islamic society being regarded as a typical embodiment of barbarism from which the world has to redeem itself through cultural and political means.

G. Le Bon's pessimistic variant of interpreting universality, with an accent on the irrationalism and diversity of socio-historical forms, touches upon the problems of Islamic society in his book *La civilisation des Arabes* (1884). But since the very principle of a scientifically substantiated transformation of society is under doubt, his attitude to Islamic society is not that of an object liable to European intervention and transformation. Islamic society is for him an embodied example of the inevitable action of the natural law of racial and individual inequality, a law that has led to an end for the history of Islamic society, and which endangers modern European society that ignores the dangers emanating from socialist movements. Positivism, apparently, continues Hegel's line of historicism based on an a priori antithesis of European and Eastern principles of development. The only difference here lies in the racial-anthropological and socio-psychological explanations they used, which gave additional arguments to the Eurocentric conclusion (formed in the 17th century): European civilization must both theoretically and practically negate Islamic society for the sake of its own globalization.

From the mid 19th century, an alternative theory to the civilizational paradigm formed within European social thought: the socio-economic formation theory. Proceeding from the available historical perceptions and deeply rooted in European scientific ideas about the Eastern (Asian) type of social development as differing radically from the European experience, K. Marx and F. Engels tried to explain the specifics of Islamic countries from the standpoint of historical materialism. This problem was posed by them, but not solved, owing to serious problems of an epistemological character connected to a contradiction intrinsic to their methodology.

The interpretation of Islamic society by Marx and Engels is composed of two different approaches—the then dominant civilizational and the formational they created. In political activity, they proceeded from the perception that the civilizational stage of human history with its

private property and class exploitation is exhausted. However, in their scientific and publicist activities, they were unable easily to bypass the theory of civilization, which remained the major explanatory paradigm of history in European science. By gradually overcoming it, they were able to create their formation theory. In this endeavor, they succeeded least of all in explaining the history of Eastern society.

Some researchers indicate the incompatibility of the "structural" and the "subjective" components of Marxist theory (P. Anderson), or the "historicism" and "pragmatism" (K. Popper) of Marx. The idea is that Marx was unable to give a clear answer to the question of the major driving forces of history—whether to consider these as a contradiction between the productive forces and relations of production, or class struggle. From here comes, for Marxist historicism, the insolvable antinomy of materialism and idealism, economism and voluntarism, evolutionism and revolutionism evolves. One of the expressions of the ambivalence of Marxist historicism is the contradictory correlation between civilizational and formational concepts, which became obvious in analyzing Marx's and Engels' attitudes to the problems of Islamic society.

To include Islamic society in their historical materialist scheme, they began by characterizing it in terms of an Asian Mode of Production (AMP). Within it they proposed the idea of the influence of a dry climate, the absence of private property, the dominant position of state property, and the need to carry out social works by artificial irrigation masterminded by the central power. However, one can say that the AMP concept first proposed by Marx in 1857-1858 was created under the influence of his studies of Islamic society. Later, Marx and Engels obviously shunned this concept in explaining Islamic society and repeatedly spoke about feudal property and "Oriental feudalism" in evaluating the socio-economic structure of Islamic society. These ideas never received systematic development from which one concludes that in the transitional methodology which the founders of Marxism applied in explaining Islamic society, elements of Hegel's civilizational concept dominate over those of formation theory. Thence follows the ambivalence of Marx and Engels on the question of whether a civilization was created in the Islamic East, because, in many aspects, Islamic society did not answer the European criteria for civilization shared and upheld by Marx and Engels.

### **The Russian Historiosophy about Islamic Society**

The most important peculiarity of 19th century Russian culture, which had a major influence on the philosophical-historical perceptions of Russian thinkers, was its questioning of the applicability of West European experience to Russia and to other parts of the world. Many elements of civilization (state, church, private property, urbanization, science) were either put under question or rejected as worthless for Russia. The West as dynamic but traveling on a "wrong road," is opposed to the stagnant East which has lost touch with world history. Russia is trying to find its bearings between them. The elaboration of the philosophy of history of Islamic society in Russia took place within the context of this cultural-historical structure: West, Russia, East.

A study of the research of Russian thinkers shows that the process of Russian cultural-historical self-cognition, having its original images in the form of religious-philosophical reflection, organically includes the problems of Islamic society while retaining the socio-Christian sense of Providence. The relation of Russian thinkers in evaluating Islam and the place of Islamic society in the history of humankind depended on their orientation towards either Catholicism or Orthodoxy as an active social principle. The Orthodox world outlook of the majority of Russian philosophers of history has not allowed them to accept, in contrast to such supporters of

Catholicism as Chaadayev and Solovyov, to accept that Islam is a close relative of Christianity, and thus conditioned their negative attitude to Islam and Islamic society. This is their common position of whether they perceive human history from the Christian position of God and humankind (in unity with Europe—I.V. Kireyevsky; or in contrast to it—A.S. Khomyakov), or on the basis of the cyclical naturalistic concept of cultural-historical types (N.Y. Danilevsky).

Orthodox thinkers supposed Islamic society not to have its own justification, but in the plan of Providence to fulfill the limited role as an intermediary between the ancient and European societies, between the Catholic and Orthodox worlds.

Among Russian philosophers of this trend, the most antinomial religious-philosophical perception of the Islamic problem was expressed by V.S. Solovyov. In his synthetic conception he analyzed and critically evaluated different philosophical-religious and philosophical-historical explanations of Islamic society. Proceeding from belief in the coincidence of modernized Christianity and the historical explanation of social life, Solovyov tried to interpret the civilizational process from the point of view of Christian Providentialism, and to synthesize the philosophy of history with the philosophy of religion. This synthesis, which called for giving more weight to the philosophical-historical utopia of the Russian philosopher, appears unsuccessful.

Solovyov's research into the history of Islam and Islamic society retained throughout the clear-cut religious-ideological character of his Christian monotheism. The mobility of concepts used by him is due to their axiological, rather than their substantive content. Solovyov constantly changes his attitude and position towards the key concepts of his philosophy, mainly West-East, and the related opposite terms: Christianity-Anti-Christianity, Civilization-Barbarism. In the first stage of his studies, Solovyov evaluated Islam and Islamic society as anti-Christian and barbaric. Later, he concluded that Islam, both as a doctrine and as a society, is genetically close to Christianity (this mainly concerns early Islam and Islamic society), and therefore, embodies certain elements of civilization. Furthermore, Solovyov gradually detected and revealed anti-Christianity (paganism) and barbarism in European and Russian societies, which he formerly considered as both Christian and civilized. At first, Solovyov assumed that Russian Orthodoxy had a capacity to renew Christianity, but later he recognized it as anti-Christian, and even identified Russian Orthodox society with Islamic society.

Needless to say, Solovyov is one-sided in his pan-Christianity and in absolutizing the Christian principle in human history. In his analysis of civilization this tendency becomes obvious when he tries to overcome the limitations of the theory of cultural-historical types developed by N.Y. Danilevsky through a new concept whereby he identifies the history of human civilization with the history of the peoples of Europe professing Christianity. More than that, he understands progress as Christian progress, that is, the internal unity of Christian theory and social-state practice. This position is obviously biased since it excludes the existence of other civilizations and their significance for the present and future of humankind. The need to synthesize different religious, philosophical, and social forms comes into direct contradiction with the priority of Christian principles in his worldview. Thus, Solovyov was incapable of transcending the framework of the Christian worldview and of Christian humanism.

For the Russian 19th-century religious philosophers, the idea of civilization is a major methodological concept of the philosophical-historical research concerning Islamic society. They apply both cyclical and linear models of the development of civilization. At the same time, most thinkers exhibit a tendency to consider the civilizational stage of social development as, in the last analysis, a deadlock that should be replaced by establishing "God's Kingdom" on earth. Alongside the combination of philosophy of history with philosophy of religion and ideas of Christian

Providentialism with positivist sociological naturalism, the interpretation of the history of Islamic society by Russian philosophers collided with the prevalence of national and Christian nonnational principles. Nevertheless, the Russian religious philosophers (with the exception of Khomyakov) inclined to the idea that Islamic society was incapable of creating its own civilization.

Neither variant of understanding the civilizational paradigm by Russian thinkers (the conception of social Christianity, the theory of cultural-historical types) could solve the problem of the unity and diversity of human history. The Pan-Christianity of Russian thinkers determined their philosophical-historical perception of the place of Islamic society in world history; they perceived the past, present, and future of humankind exclusively through the categories of Christian thought.

### **Islamic Society in the Philosophical-Historical Concepts of the 20th Century: The Crisis of Monism and the Search for a Methodological Synthesis**

The philosophical-historical concepts of O. Spengler and A. Toynbee became very popular in 1920-1930s. Both negated the ideas of social progress and the unity of human history; instead they proposed a diversity of independently exs. Both thinkers, in the last analysis, removed European civilization from the framework of cyclical fatalism, asserting that in contrast to all other civilizations, it has kept its creative potentiality and hence has the capacity to avoid death. In the 1950-1960s an optimistic tendency in the philosophy of history of humankind in general, and that of Islamic society in particular, is expressed in the works of the American historian and Islamologist, Marshall Hodgson. He totally rejected the fatalistic cyclical approach predominant in the early decades of the 20th century and proceeds from the idea of the unity of human history, including the history of Arab-Islamic society. His philosophy of history as a religious-moral development of humankind is based on recognition of the idea of the progress of humankind as an integral whole.

The anti-Christian beliefs of Oswald Spengler were the formative factor in his eclectic methodology. He was bound to recognize that religion is the essence of every culture or "national soul." At the same time, he contends that nonreligiousness is the essence of every civilization and tries to prove the nonreligious character of modern Western society. *The Decline of Europe (1918-1922)*, according to Spengler, is a study of the crisis of the West as a Christian society, and also the crisis of the whole Christian world as a spiritual entity. Spengler challenges the European tradition whose philosophy of history is based directly or indirectly on a Christian view of world history. He goes further than his predecessors of the French Enlightenment and Marxism in elaborating an anti-Christian view of world history. Spengler accuses modern Christianity of being guilty to a large extent of the decline of the West. But this is not enough for him since he has to prove the bankruptcy of Christianity throughout its long history. For this he uses the Islamic problem as a means to confute the Christian view of human history. A fantastic interpretation of the history of Islam serves him as a means of "eroding" Christianity, rejecting its essential internal unity, depreciating it, and even factually negating its significance as the spiritual bedrock of European culture. One can argue that Spengler overturns Hegel's conclusion that European society is a product of the development of Christianity, and the history of Islam is a minor episode in the formation of Christendom. To Spengler, Islam (or broadly all magic culture) takes on gigantic forms which overshadow Christianity and turn it into an insignificant phenomenon. Spengler's consistent refutation of Eurocentrism, and his criticism of the historical scheme—the ancient

world, the Middle Ages, the Modern Age—in essence represents one of the arguments for rejecting the Christian philosophy of history.

If Spengler, by rejecting Christianity, expresses deep doubts about the future of the Western world, Toynbee in *A Study of History (1934-1961)* by arbitrarily using historical materials, expresses his hope that the Western world will survive thanks to the role of its true religion, namely, a reformed Christianity understood in a pantheistic spirit. His theocentric understanding of human history, coupled with his criticism of racism and geographical determinism, leads Toynbee to conclude to the unity of human nature. He delimits the progressive character of world history to the religious sphere, the process of the development of religions. Of all the major religions. Of all the major religions (he refers to Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), only Christianity successfully developed. It alone is capable of assisting Western society—which is in crisis situation owing to the destructive character of the productive industrial forces, class struggle and wars—to avoid death and rescue all humankind. The other civilizations inevitably should perish after exhausting their natural life potentialities. Toynbee's philosophy of history is closely connected with the philosophy of religion and his rationalism with irrationalism, mythology and mysticism. A philosophical-historical analysis of Islamic society and recognition of Islam as one of the highest religions with a single common God for all, its opposition to modern post-Christian neo-paganism (nationalism, communism, fascism) is coupled by him with traditional Eurocentric value of the superiority of Christianity to Islam.

Among a large body of studies carried out in the 1950-1980s by Western philosophers, sociologists, economists, political scientists, historians, and students of religion about the place of Islamic society in world history, the studies of Marshall Hodgson deserve to be singled out. In his work, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization* (1974), Hodgson substantially criticized Eurocentrism, and proposed his own interpretation of the history of Islamic society based on a precise methodology worked out within the civilizational paradigm. According to some Western scholars, this conception represents the culmination of the Western tradition of Islamic studies.

Hodgson's methodology synthesizes the speculative approach to world history worked out by Hegel, with a basically neo-Kantian sociological analysis of culture on the basis of M. Weber's ideal-types model. His acceptance of Weber's thesis that culture is the final fragment of a world which from the point of view of humankind has sense and significance, enabled the American historian to achieve more consistency (in comparison with Spengler and Toynbee) in overcoming Eurocentric evaluations of the history of Islamic society. Such an approach assumes comprehension by the scientist that cognition of a cultural reality is carried out always from a completely specific point of view, and that its major task consists in correlating historical facts with the universal values of human culture.

In comparison to his great predecessors, Spengler and Toynbee, Hodgson takes one step forward in explaining the spatial-temporal aspects of civilizational development by considering the processes unfolding in the Afro-Euroasian oikoumene from the beginning of history until now. Such an approach allows him to boldly outline the history of Islamic society in the context of the history of humankind as an entity.

The philosophy of history of Islamic society based on the civilizational paradigm reached its highest heuristic limits in the creative works of Hodgson. Some Western representatives of Islamic studies, in the 1970-1980s, recognized his work and called for a search for new methodological approaches with no universalistic claims and significance. Among the new concepts, one can point to the methodological approach in studying the economic life of society proposed by the French



historical "Annals" school, and also the neo-Marxist methodology in modern Western sociology. This rightly criticizes the mechanistic forms of Marxian and Weberian sociology, which are unable to give a satisfactory explanation of the relations between the material and spiritual factors in the history of Islamic society.

The evolution of a formational paradigm in Soviet Islamic studies is also of great interest. The peculiarity of this process is connected closely with the transformation of a Marxist philosophy of history and the eventful political life of the country. The intensive evolution of philosophical-historical perceptions of Marxism about Islamic society in the first quarter of the 20th century cannot be explained outside the context of the political upheavals which engulfed Russia: the Russian Revolutions, the civil war, the building of socialism in one country, and the expectations for a worldwide proletarian revolution.

Marxism pursued the radical transformation of Western bourgeois society as the most developed society in human history. Therefore, it is quite clear, that being prepared for a world socialist revolution, the Russian Marxists devoted themselves to studying the Western capitalist economy and the development of capitalism in Russia, and hence were apparently less interested in the East in general and in the Islamic East in particular. On a world scale, their main attention was focused on the West, and within the Russian Empire on its European rather than its Asian part. Lenin, following Marx, defined the place of the East in world history in the Hegelian Eurocentric manner. However, the actual development of events in the first third of the 20th century caused an evolution in the attitude of Russian Marxists to their Islamic society: (1) from ignoring and underestimating it, (2) through declaring an anti-imperialist union on the basis of the principles of national self-determination and freedom of conscience, and (3) to violent social transformation of Islamic society and the declaration of war on Islam.

A different policy was conducted in the international arena, where Soviet Russia continued to search for any allies in its anti-Western and anti-imperialist struggle by encouraging and supporting both nationalist-religious and communist movements in the countries of the Islamic East. This foreign policy simultaneously determined two tasks: maintenance of the USSR state interests (policy of peaceful coexistence) and realization of the doctrine of world revolution.

The thrust of this study is also to clarify a fashionable perception of Leninism (mainly in the West) as a peculiarly Russian version of Marxism. That is, that being a principled supporter of the Western path of transformation of the Russian revolution into a world, Lenin nevertheless was periodically inclined to the Eastern variant, which included anti-European elements, talking about a "backward Europe and advanced Asia." However, these oscillations were also characteristic of the founders of Marxism in the 1870s. It is obvious, that Lenin only continued, in new conditions, the process of orienting Marxism, begun by its founders. This is reflected in the recognition by Lenin in the 1920s of the decisive significance of the East in the salvation of Soviet Russia, and the continuation of struggle with the capitalist world on its colonial periphery—proposed the idea that Russia, India and China as representing the largest part of world population will decide the outcome of the anti-imperialist struggle. All these ideas meant one more retreat from the positions of Eurocentric Marxist orthodoxy, and a move in the direction of transforming the Russian variant of Marxism into an anti-Western, theory and practice oriented to the East. This turn had beforehand been predicted by G.V. Plekhanov and K. Kautsky.

Having taken from the heritage of the European philosophy of history the principle of Eurocentrism to explain world history, Marxists have tried to reject the main element in this heritage, namely, the concept of civilization, replacing it with a formation theory. The formation scheme of the history of society, created on the basis of European historical material was accepted

by Bolsheviks as a universal theory, that is quite applicable to the history of both Russia and Islamic society. The further evolution of this basis was stipulated by two major tendencies in the development of Soviet social science in the 1920-1930s: economic materialism and the ideologization of science. The works of Western positivist Islamic researchers left an indelible impression on the early Soviet Islamic researchers who took those works as truly materialistic. In this case, the trend of economic materialism in Soviet research on Islam was manifest in the identification of economic factors with material and in particular with the natural environmental conditions of the life of society: for example, the ethno-immigration origin of Islam and Islamic society of the Italian Islamologist L. Caetani (Islam has arisen as a result of the last big immigration movement of Semites from Arabia, caused by the progressive "drying" of Arabia); the German orientalist, A. Sprenger's idea that Islam is the religion of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples; the trade-capitalist hypothesis of Islam's origin by M. Hartmann; the German orientalist H. Grimme's hypothesis of the origin of Islam as a socialist movement. To all these could be added the influence of the geopolitical ideas of the German geographer and ethnographer F. Ratzel. The trade-capitalist hypothesis of the origin of Islam by M. Hartmann received in Soviet Islamic studies the status of a truly Marxist concept thanks to the influence of the historical school of M. Pokrovsky, in which the idea of trade-capitalism was studied as a special socio-economic formation.

By the end of the 1920s, the ideologization of science began to have noticeable influence in the methodology of Islamic studies. The essence of this influence lies in the fact that the idea of class struggle and the dictatorship of the proletariat spread over all spheres of scientific life. In Islamic studies, this resulted in the elimination of any doubts about the universal character of the theory of socio-economic formations and the truthfulness of that methodology, left by Marx and Engels for understanding Islamic society. The former perceptions about the progressive and democratic character of early Islam as an ideology which defended the interests of the poor of Mecca and of the peasantry or nomads, were rejected at the beginning of the 1930s as a result of the emergence of a new ideological prescription about the reactionary character of this religion from the moment of its origin. It was necessary only to determine those exploiter classes of which Islam was only the "ideological veil". Among those named were: tribal aristocracy, slave-owners, feudal lords and trade capitalists.

Beginning from the 1940s, Soviet Islamic studies began to acquire a more academic character. In historical and religious studies, Islamic society was unequivocally characterized as feudal in the course of its history. However, one question remained unsolved: the formational specifics of Arabian society in the epoch of Islam's origin, that is, the social essence of early Islam. For some decades, the study of this problem served Soviet orientalists as one of the ways of discussing questions concerning the Marxist formation schematism: the number of exploiter formations, their sequence, and the universalism of the theory of socio-economic formation.

In the history of Soviet Islamic studies there were various answers to the question of to which formation the early Islamic society belonged. In the 1920-1930s, early Islam was understood either as the ideology (1) of the Meccan merchants ("merchant-capitalist" theory of M.A. Reisner), (2) of the poor masses (the "nomadic" theory of S.D. Asfendiarov), or (3) of poor peasants of Arabia (the "agricultural" theory of M.L. Tamara). At that time there appeared two hypotheses which competed with each other in the 1960-1980s, which conditionally may be named "slave-owning" and "feudal." According to the first, at the end of 6th and the beginning of 7th centuries the process of decomposition of tribal relations and the emergence of a slave-owning mode of production were happening in Arabia. However, the latter did not turn into the dominant mode of production because the expansions which followed soon after its emergence turned Islamic society into a

feudal system (S.P. Tolstoy, B.N. Zakhoder, I.P. Petrushevsky, E.A. Belyaev). The second concept assumed that in this period the Arabs passed directly from a dying tribal to an early feudal society, and the conquests only speeded up this process ( N.A. Smirnov, L.I. Nadiradze, L.V. Negria).

At the same time, it was rather characteristic of most research in Soviet Islamic studies, that it was still too early to look for a final answer to the problem of the formation of class society for the Arabs. This was the commonly held conclusion, whose main reason was the insufficient conceptual elaboration of the question of the specificity of the development of Arab society on the basis of a Marxist methodology. Researchers on Islam did not see any outlet for the contradictions of formational schematism, while philosophers either did not notice the philosophical-historical problems of Islamic studies or tried not to get involved in a controversy on problems that went beyond the established perceptions of Marxist orthodoxy. As a result, there was a situation where owing to the absence of a real civilizational alternative to the formation theory, the latter lost any stimulus for development. The continuing rupture between empirical Oriental studies and historical materialism, between concrete-historical and socio-philosophical aspects of the theory of precapitalist formations deepened. In the continuation of the debate about the AMP was in every possible way limited by the authorities, as before the Islamic East found no place in the philosophical-historical Marxist scheme.

At the beginning of the 1980s, Y.M. Pochta proposed new methods for softening the rigid schematism of the Marxist philosophy of history, overcoming the rupture between the general provisions of formation theory and the concrete-historical research on Arabian society at the time of Islam's origin. While remaining in the mainstream of Marxist historicism, he aspired to reveal the heuristic potential available by creating the methodological concept of middle level, which represents a medium link between the abstract and concrete levels of socio-historical analysis. The categorical apparatus generated for this purpose promoted the achievement of a systematic understanding of formational development, coordinating the spatial-temporal finiteness of a separate society with universal movement and world history. Such a conceptually expressed methodological approach allowed for research of the essential specificity of Arabian society at the time of Islam's origin from the point of view of such important problems of social development as that of a uniform essence of formation development and the diversity of its revelation in the process of formation transitions, the role of geographical and social environment in the formation of a class society and state, and the dialectics of the internal and external objective and subjective factors of social development.

In explaining the correlation of barbaric conquests and the formation of feudalism the author used the concept of feudal synthesis. Thus, it made possible the consideration of Islam not so much as an Arabic religion, which has achieved the status of a world religion, but as a world religion which in the long process of its formation was connected to the history of Arabic society. As a world religion, Islam was a product of the development of Middle Eastern society in the early Middle Ages. During the conquests, it was not exported from Arabia in a completed form. The process of feudal synthesis taking place in the Middle East and the Mediterranean caused such conditions of social life that the impulse obtained from the military-religious expansion of Muslims led to the formation of a new world religion.

This research helped to reveal not only a certain heuristic potential of the formation theory, but also its defects. In the course of deepening the analysis, serious contradictions between the universalistic claims of the formational paradigm and its limitation to the European cultural-historical experience and perceptions became obvious. Moreover, revealing the tendency of the socio-economic history of the Arabic society does not by itself enable an explanation of its spiritual

history. Explanation of the history of Islam entails the need to use elements of civilizational analysis in the consideration of such problems as the place of pre-Islamic Arab culture in the context of the civilizations of the Middle East and the Mediterranean societies, the genesis of Islam in correlation to the history of Judaism and Christianity, and the connection of Islam with the Arabic language, with Arab ethnic self-identity, and with the state-legal traditions of the Arab Caliphate. Thus, there arose the need to join heuristically significant elements of formational and civilizational paradigms into a philosophical-historical scheme of the evolution of Islamic society considered in the context of world history. For the creation of such methodology, it was necessary, beforehand, to reject the idea of a full correspondence of theory and its objective content, and to apply to the understanding of the formational paradigm Weber's idea about the ideal-type character of any methodological design. The formation theory to say nothing of the "five-formations" schema interpreted in this way does not claim full to the universal-historical tendencies of social development. Yet, it can become a convenient means of philosophical-historical explanation and can be connected to elements of civilizational analysis. This approach was realized by Y.M. Pochta in his subsequent works, which led him to attempt to make a historical-philosophical analysis of the evolution of civilizational and formational paradigms for explaining Islamic society in the European philosophy of history.

As has been shown above, in the Russian and foreign Oriental and Islamic literature, broad experience has been accumulated in the analysis of philosophical-historical interpretations of Islamic society as part of the world. At the same time, the fact that many questions are still unsolved, witnesses to the existence of a problem in this sphere of humanitarian knowledge. This can be indirectly inferred from the purely negative reaction of European society, distant from any philosophical or cultural understanding and analysis at the end of the 20th century, to the phenomenon of "Islamic fundamentalism".

Recently, it has been characteristic of most works about the place of Islamic society in the history of humankind to work out the history of this society as peripheral to the history of European society, which was considered as the single dominant perspective. This linear approach, the basis of which was laid down by Hegel, helped explain some questions about the history of humankind as a uniform social organism, unfolding through evolution in historical time and space. But this approach, based on the comparative analysis of the "periphery" from the point of view of the "center," could not disclose what was essential and specific to the historical development of Islamic society. The concept of the philosophy of history of Islamic society is under formation in the contemporary period, not on a monistic, but on a pluralistic image of the world, based on the idea of the nonreducibility of the diverse socio-cultural formations. There is no doubt about the actuality of the question of the main stages of development of these Western European perceptions, the character of their succession, and their links to the ideas and principles of various philosophical systems. Major controversies are still raging about the concept of Eurocentrism whose existence is either rejected totally or recognized along with obvious exaggeration of its negative features and ignoring of its objective character.

The major conclusions of this study can be stated in the following theses:

- The philosophical-historical analysis of Islamic society in the European science of the 18th to 20th centuries moved along the general course of attempting to explain the problem of the unity and diversity of world history. The analysis of this phenomenon, which has its own logic of development and continuity, assumes concrete-historical stages of its evolution, with a qualitative originality as regards world outlook and methodological approaches: the Enlightenment, romantic,

positivist, Marxist, and contemporary. In the process of replacing these stages, the picture of the world and the place of Islamic society also underwent changes.

- In contrast to European science, where the understanding of Islamic society went through the comparison of West and East, in Russian historiography of the 19th and 20th centuries, this process mainly represented an attempt at the cultural self-identification of Russian society through the comparison of the West, Russia, and the East.

- The main conceptual means for explaining the diversity of the world for European thinkers as regards Islamic society were the theories of civilization and formation which arose in the bosom of European culture. European thinkers were inclined to apply the theory of civilization in its religio-philosophical or philosophico-rationalistic variants in explaining Islamic society within the framework of an antithesis: civilization and barbarism. As a result, Islamic society in comparison to European society was characterized as only partially civilized, but on the whole as barbarous.

- Russian historiography exhibited a tendency to consider the civilizational stages of the development of humankind, in the last analysis, as a deadlocked path which should be replaced with the establishment of the "Divine Kingdom" on earth. Recognizing, mainly, the providential, albeit secondary role of Islam in the formation of a Christian humankind, Russian thinkers were inclined to the idea that Islamic society was unable to create its own civilization.

- Marxism formulated its own perception of world history, proceeding from the idea of the inevitable "death" of bourgeois civilization. In light of such understanding of world history, Islamic society was relegated to being part of the pre-capitalist Eastern society and the semi-colonial rear of world capitalism. The formational philosophical-historical scheme of Marxism, created on the basis of European historical material, could not explain the essential specificity of Islamic society.

- In the civilizational and formational approaches to the philosophy of the history of Islamic society, interpretation of the direction of historical development is not reduced to the conventional dichotomy of the linear-cyclical, but includes also circular movement as one of the variants of development. In the last analysis, however, the linear interpretation of social development is determined in which light Islamic society is represented as a social anachronism in the European picture of the world.

- Eurocentrism is characteristic of the civilizational and formational paradigms as well. Eurocentrism implicitly contains in itself perceptions of Christian Providentialism about the existence of a uniquely true religion, and an individual and social appropriate to its ideals. Eurocentrism reflects an actual, objectively "centrist" orientation of one culture in attempts to explain other cultures. However, even during the domination of Enlightenment "linearity," European thinkers could not avoid posing the problem of the diversity of the world. The understanding of this problem was reached by means of a Eurocentric cultural orientation, thereby promoting, albeit in a deformed manner, the augmentation of knowledge about the diversity of world history.

But these critical conclusions are not sufficient. We need more positive results from this study and some ideas of postmodern philosophy, especially a narrative methodology, can be useful for this purpose. All the scientific interpretations of the Muslim society, analyzed above, are part of the project of modernity, which has already ended. Postmodern thinking renewed respect for the uniqueness and the diversity of peoples and cultures with their religious roots. As Bryan S. Turner underlines in his book *Orientalism, Postmodernism and Globalism* (1994), we now need a new form of secular ecumenism for every civilization has its religious foundation. As shown, this basis

is evident in the stories that European science tells about Muslim society, implicitly in the form of the religious Providentialism or explicitly in rational-philosophical form. This circumstance allows us to state that there are certain limits to the universal, objective and scientific character of the narrative of Islamic society created by the European philosophical imagination. In other words, the truth and meaning of this narrative are context-bound.

At present, there are two extremes in the Western historical narrative that one should avoid. The first implies that after the end of the Cold War, the West will see its values expand all over the world. Francis Fukuyama has described this story about "the end of the history." The second supposes that the end of the Cold War will inevitably lead to a "clash of civilizations," according to Samuel Huntington's vision. These stories are modernist in origin, the first is optimistic about the final worldwide victory of Western civilization, and the second is pessimistic about the gradual decline of the West. Neither of these points of view can be accepted if we are trying to restore world history and avoid fatalistic comprehension. Modernist language cannot help in this situation because the world is becoming more and more postmodern, but this does not devastate all previous languages. Instead, it understands none of them as fixed or final. None of today's theoretical constructions, one's only means of portraying reality, are perfect and none of them are final. According to postmodernism, whatever exists can be reconstructed.

There are several possible conditions for restoring the Western comprehension of Muslim society's history using the narrative methodology of postmodern philosophy. It is possible to externalize the dominant negative narratives and to look for alternative positive ones. One can retrieve such stories and follow the example of some Western scholars who have already started this process (A. Toynbee, M. Hodgson, E. Said, B.S. Turner, A. Hourani, R. Khuri). In the contemporary world, the importance of this task cannot be overestimated because if it is not fulfilled one will have to accept the main thesis of S. Huntington's book *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (1996). He will be correct unless one can change dominant and pessimistic narratives about the history of Islamic civilization.

Hence, it is necessary to:

- Overcome Eurocentrism and the linear, one-dimensional understanding of civilizational development, that is, to recognize that there are several centers in the world, each with its own narrative about its role in the history of humankind. Such features of modern Western society as democracy, free-market capitalism and individualism are manifestations of its unique civilizational identity and are based on the Western lived experience, but they are not universal and appropriate for all peoples. The Great Narrative of Western modernity that dominated the stories of civilization for the last three centuries no longer appears adequate. It is necessary to rebuild humanity, to make it more just and free, based on worldwide civic values as well as the civic values of each civilization while preserving the identity of them all;

- Recognize the ontological uniqueness of the Islamic civilization as one of several different civilizations existing in the world;

- Recognize the equal right of Islam as well as of Christianity to have their place in human society (according to Kant's ideas about the history of religions); and

- Avoid any kind of missionary or civilizing attitude towards Muslim society, that is, to exclude attempts to impose the Western upon the Islamic narrative.

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## **Chapter II**

### **Islamic Civilization and the West: Problems of Dialogue**

Nur Kirabaev

This chapter concerns the problem of openness of civilizations to dialogue in the history of Muslim-Arab World. Its thrust is to analyze the preconditions of openness to cultural interaction, tolerance and pluralism.

In the course of almost six centuries, from VII to XIII AD, Muslim civilization displayed its openness in a constant dialogue with other cultures and civilizations. In the last instance, this openness was promoted by the spirit of religious and cultural tolerance prevailing in the oikumene of the Arab-Muslim Caliphate, which stretched from the Indus to Gibraltar. The Persian wisdom and Greek reason became component parts of the Muslim spiritual culture. In conditions of political-legal and religious pluralism within the framework of Islam, the creators of the classical culture of the Arab-Muslim middle ages were not only Arabs, but also representatives of many other peoples. Despite various collisions and wars between the Arab-Muslim world and Medieval Europe, as well as the various collisions within the Caliphate itself, Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba became the major cultural centres which defined the course of interaction with other civilizations. This openness to dialogue has, precisely, allowed medieval Europe to consider as a component of its own culture not only the heritage of antiquity received from the Arabs, but also the many achievements of classical Arab-Muslim in the fields of philosophy, science and culture. It is interesting to note, that on the basis of interaction between civilizations independent cultures were generated and developed which simultaneously belonged to Islamic and European civilizations.

It is obviously important to note, that the openness to dialogue and the fruitfulness of interaction of Muslim and European cultures was determined by the circumstance that they were generated and developed in the area of a uniform Mediterranean civilization. The stability of interaction of cultures within the framework of the Mediterranean civilization was connected to basic principles of a uniform outlook based on the ancient culture and Abrahamic religious tradition. The consolidating basis of the medieval Muslim world, consisting of three Caliphates (Baghdad, Fatimids and Cordovan) and various other Emirates, were tolerance and pluralism. Arab-Muslim culture has produced the great Ibn Rushd (Averroes), whose basic ideas determined the course of development of late medieval Europe in the doctrine of the Latin Averroists about the "duality of truth", but of itself Muslim culture did not know Averroism.

The 15th century became a turning point in the history of the Muslim world, which faced a civilizational choice. With the conquest of Byzantium in 1453 and the development of the Ottoman empire, the basis of the consolidation of the Muslim world was no longer the principles of tolerance, pluralism, and openness to dialogue with other civilizations, but a rigidly conservative religious vision. Historical civilizational choice which was based not on dialogue, but on the opposition of the Ottoman Caliphate and European civilization; the Muslim world saw and heard of Europe only what it wanted to see and hear. Many achievements of the European civilization from the 15th to 19th centuries were considered by the Muslims of those times as to menace destruction the spiritual culture of its world. The principle approach was closure to any dialogue, which triggered the formation and development of radical socio-political movements in the Empire. Classic Arab-Islamic culture maintained its own development, but only on the periphery of the Ottoman Empire. Istanbul, not Cairo, Damascus and Baghdad, became the new embodiment and personification of the Islamic world. The history of the Ottoman Caliphate has been the history

of the decline of the classical Islamic culture, and of the struggle of the Islamic periphery for its own independence from the Ottoman Caliphate. The culture of the Ottomans could not play a consolidating role for Islamic world civilization. The Turkish Caliphate had not seen, and consequently had not accepted either the European achievements in science, culture and philosophy, or the transition of Europe to an industrial stage of development.

By the end of 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries on the peripheries of the Ottoman Empire, and especially in Egypt, there were new ideas which heralded a new period of civilizational choice. The doctrines of Al-Afghani, M. Abduh and R. Rida on nationalism and modernism to a large extent contributed to, and facilitated, the crisis and disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. The cunning of history once again played its irony in human history when, through the lips of Kemal Ataturk who proclaimed in 1921 a civil Turkish state at the very heart of that empire, the ideas of nationalism formed and developed in its peripheries won the day. At this juncture of history the Ottoman Empire was neither capable, nor ready to become a consolidating basis for the Islamic world. Moreover it became its destroyer declaring itself an inalienable part of Europe and taking itself to the West with her "roses and thorns". This civilizational choice at the beginning of the 20th century led to the formation of 22 independent Arab States, and also to Palestine which has been waging a long drawn-out struggle for independence throughout the whole of the 20th and into the 21st century.

Nowadays, the civilizational alternative, in many respects, is defined and determined by three interconnected problems whose decision must allow the onetime united Muslim world to attain open dialogue with other civilizations. The issue is the attempts and trials in harmonizing and coordinating Islam, Nationalism and Modernity. Islam, as a rule, is seen as a civilizational basis, nationalism as a state-cultural component, and modernism as the general context which should allow the Muslim world to give an answer to the challenge presented by the Post-industrial era. In the present time we can say, that the process of formation of a nation-state identity of Muslim countries is not yet completed. It is shaken by radical religious and socio-political transformations, which do not permit on the whole speaking about the readiness of the Muslim world for dialogue with other cultures and civilizations. Though for the sake of justice, it is necessary to note, that some Muslim countries made major break-throughs in this direction, this is not so much a cultural as a technological dialogue.

In the modern dialogue of civilizations a major role is allocated to the countries of the Muslim East. This is understandable. Historically Muslim civilization was a component part of Mediterranean civilization. But the strengthening of the political role of Islam from the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the growth of Islamic "revivalist" movements after the Iranian revolution of 1979, and the strengthening of the tendency of international Islamic solidarity has caused in minds of Western nations a sensation of danger and fear. Accordingly, there has arisen aversion and hostility to what in western literature is called "militant Islam or fundamentalism". For Muslims this has generated in response a rebirth of a feeling of the dignity of religious traditions and piety. In this connection, many questions arise: What are the specific features of Muslim civilization? What place could Muslim civilization occupy in the movement of humankind toward its true purpose—human freedom?

Today there are more than one billion Muslims in the world, and they comprise the majority of the population of almost 50 countries. In Europe and America the number of Muslim minorities is rapidly growing. For example, in Germany there are up to 3 million Muslims, in France more than 3 million, in Italy about 400 thousand, in the USA more Muslims than Jews. In Rome in 1992 the first mosque was opened; which incidentally is the largest in Europe. In western countries

tension is growing between the authorities and Muslim communities. In the USA, the idea of clash of civilizations, specially the clash of Western and Muslim civilizations is taking root.

The basic difference between the West and the Muslim East in questions of religion is not the distinction between dogmatic and religious principles; the essence of the problem is connected with secularization. A Muslim, even if personally not a believer, always recognizes the Islamic nature of his/her culture. The faithless in Europe prefer to consider the state something secular, and even at times are surprised to find "vestiges" of official religion in their own culture. In Europe as a whole it is impossible to think of any specific Christian government. Therefore, the aspiration of radical Islam, for example in Iran and Algeria, to take power has sent out shock waves in the West. Any steps connected to religion and its so-called revolutionary character which assumes support of religious authority is considered in the West as strengthening conservatism and religious fundamentalism - in sum as an historical deviation and a retreat from the "road" to democracy. There is an open question: Is Islam as a socio-cultural system and as a religion compatible with secularization?

Secularism, as a matter of fact, is not the abolition of religion. European societies are secular and religious at the same time. This means that religion is reduced to a part of society, but is not abolished. In the history of Islamic civilization we can see very clear examples, especially in the history of classic Muslim philosophy and science, that Islamic civilization was both religious and civil at the same time.

In the Muslim East religion is not simply a subject of personal belief, but the affair of a religious community, the common affair of believers. Thus, Islam as a religion and culture bears a communal character. At the same time, it is important to emphasize that Islam, as the religion of a community, is rather tolerant of coexistence with other internal communities, Christian and Jewish. It is impossible to assert that Muslim society is constant and unchangeable, but with certain exceptions, in the course of the dialogue of West and the Islamic East it is necessary to take into account the communal nature of Islam, which is present now and, probably, always will be.

The brilliant past of Islam, in particular for the Arabs, has not only a religious sense. The culture of Islam is closely connected to religion, but is not exhausted by it. The rise and development of Islamic modernism evidently shows the rethinking and reappraisal of traditional theology in search of an "openness" of Islam and Muslim civilization to economic, technical and scientific progress. The historical practice of the development of Islam—the history of the development of Islamic jurisprudence, and the flourishing of philosophy, science and medicine in the 9th –14th centuries—shows evidently that in the classical period Islam and its practice was really open for a dialogue with other civilizations in the course of solving constantly arising problems. The question now is connected to the so-called Averroes' paradox: whether the doctrine of Ibn Rushd in the history of the Muslim East may play the same role that Averroism played in the Christian West?

The problem of a dialogue between Europe and the Muslim East is connected with differences between industrial and industrializing societies more than with differences between religious beliefs. Since modern science and technology came to the Muslim world, Muslim thinkers have felt challenged and adopted different attitudes towards their methods and results. Some of the Muslim reformers, Al-Afghani, M. Abduh, R. Rida and others, thought that Islam was an open-minded religion and therefore its dogmatic positions could not be eroded by scientific and historical knowledge.

Some modern Muslim researchers from Europe and USA, such as S. Nasr, Z. Sardar, I. R. Al-Faruqi, F. Rahman and others in the on-going discourse about the future opportunities of Islamic

traditions emphasize not only the problems of modernizing Islam, but also the need to consider the question of islamizing modernity. They try to find adequate definitions for the relations between the Islamic tradition and the modern development of Muslim states. As to the question of modernization we can say that the main question is: can a culture carry an industry or does industry necessarily create a culture? Obviously it is important to develop an adequate evaluation and estimation of the reformist potentiality of Muslim civilization and culture, and its ability for self-innovation. When we speak about modernist or so-called fundamentalist Islam, we have in view not simply a system of beliefs or ideology. "Re-Islamization", underlying both Islamic integrist, Islamism, and "fundamentalism" represents the most effective variant of a culturally protective reaction of the non-European peoples to the globalization of European culture.

The pragmatic interests and ideology of modernization can draw together Europe and the Muslim countries, which in the course of the 20th century could not find points of meaningful contact. Not only should the principles of religion respond to the challenge of time, but also the principles of the modernization of a society should take into account the cultural - historical context. For example, Iran is seen as a member of the countries where the so-called Islamic fundamentalism took root, while Turkey is considered as a state with elements of Islamic liberalism. For relations between these countries there are principles of pragmatic mutual interest conducive to dialogue, though not on a stable basis. In the relations between the countries of Europe and the Muslim East a necessary condition of their interaction is the rejection of messianism and the civilizing role of any single and "true" religion. Pragmatic interest can represent itself as an integrator which forces all sides to develop certain acceptable norms of relations for all. As the conflicts with Muslim communities in the countries of Europe show, these conflicts and collisions are rather of social and national (ethnic), than religious, character. The pragmatic interest underlying a dialogue of civilizations allowed in its time the Jews in the Cordovan Caliphate to occupy important posts and places in the state; religious differences with Muslims did not hamper that interaction. Another example is the strategic partnership of two completely different countries is USA and Saudi Arabia. Pragmatic interest puts in the centre of public discussions such problems as national sovereignty and security, economic and ecological problems; to a lesser degree it considers questions of cultural and religious authenticity. Pragmatic interests do not allow ideology to cultivate an image of the "Other" as an enemy; rather there is a rapprochement of cultures on the basis of their openness and ability to dialogue. This is the basis of integration and the culture of modernization, whose components are openness, tolerance, and pluralism. One of spheres of pragmatic interest is economy and business, which are a part of the social order both of concrete countries and of interstate relations.

In defining the features of Muslim civilization it is very important to take into account the process of interaction of Islam and nationalism as a socio-historical and cultural phenomenon. Doubtless, in the development of Muslim civilization a large contribution came not only from the Arabs and Muslims, but also from Christians and Jews; their cultures can and probably should be considered as components of the Muslim civilization. But another fact of the recent history of Muslim countries is obvious also, namely, that a consolidating basis in defining the paths of social development in these countries frequently is not religion, but nationalism.

A dialogue of civilizations as significant socio-cultural systems having as their spiritual basis those or other values, including the religious, are reduced neither to state, ethnic, nor social connections. The interaction occurs in terms of preservation of their identity and its ability for tolerance. Like any other religion, Islam is not a certain national-religious monolith; it is dominant in different forms in regions whose peoples differ strongly in their historical destinies and

traditions. Questions concerning the specific and future of Islamic civilization should be examined not in the context of opposition of East and West, old and new, past and present, authenticity and modernity, reason and belief, heritage and innovation, religious and national, but on the basis of their interrelation. East and West, old and new, past and present, authenticity and modernity, reason and belief, heritage and innovation, religious and national, but on the basis of their interrelation.

**Chapter III**  
**Islamic Civilization: An Empire of Culture**  
M. Al-Janabi

**Islam: A Caliphate Of Culture**

The greatness of any civilization is centered in its historical destiny, just as the historical importance of an individual is reflected in his/her personal destiny. The historical individuality of a human being and civilization is its synthesis capable of giving new impulses to various levels and areas of intellectual interpretation. In this sense, historical individuality comprises one of the basic sources of a deepening cultural (national and universal) self-consciousness.

Historical individuality comprises not only the originality of a civilization, but also the continuity of its existence. Continuity is the constant interpretation of the theoretical and practical achievements of a culture—interpretation being the continuity of a history of effective vision in each generation. From a historical point of view, civilization is a "fossilized" heritage, while its individuality is its way of transformation or self-reproduction. The individuality of a civilization depends on its "cultural spirit."

A civilization which remains in ruins and memory, can intertwine by dissolution into the updated elements of knowledge and action. The following civilizations or global civilizations provide examples: the Shumerian, Babylonian and Egyptian civilizations. They dissolved into elements that formed the Persian, Greek, and Roman civilizations. Their models and images permeated state structures and the organization of public life, natural sciences, art, and law. Equally these civilizations absorbed the earlier achievements in cosmology, metaphysics, ethical norms, and "holy commandments," and the songs and legends of the Old Testament. The historical destiny of this type of civilization shows that their greatness lies in what they wanted to achieve, instead of what they wanted to say.

Subsequent civilizations were a reincarnation of Greek and Roman civilizations by creatively mastering their material and spiritual ideals and, hence, becoming a source of inspiration for the rise of the Renaissance, Enlightenment, and industrial epochs of European civilization in science, art and politics, as well as in their way of life and the form of statehood. However, with time the ontological types of these civilizations disappeared and their shape, language, and history remain embodied in films, theatrical productions and the magnificent decorations in elite salons. The historical destiny of this type of civilization shows that their greatness lies in what they wanted to say, instead of what they wanted to achieve. This conditions its predisposition to freedom, instead of justice. From this comes the Europeanization of Greek culture, despite its close relationship with Minor Asia, and also its Islamization, despite its pagan roots.

The example of a civilization capable of reproducing itself is found in Islamic civilization and its unity of knowledge and action as construed in its outlook as a monotheistic credo of universal order and justice. From this derives the complexity of its "modernization" according to the criteria of modern pragmatism. It is difficult to imagine the commercialization of the Hajj (pilgrimage), despite the "opportunity" of huge profits comparable to that of the Olympic Games. It is no less difficult to transform Muslim prayer into profitable decoration, despite the formal opportunity of the synchronous movement and strict organization of the huge masses of people. Any efforts or intentions to that end are doomed to failure.

Muslim culture, remaining within the framework of its own cultural spirit as a source of interpretation and inspiration, has left a deep trace in world history. Its civilized nature is an impulse of its constant creativity. From this comes the value that Muslim culture called *al-Qayb* (Secret Sacrament) in being and metaphysics. "Secret Sacrament" for culture does not derive from history, but is the source of its own permanent interpretation. At the same time, Muslim culture found the sense of beginnings and disappearances, giving thus metaphysical, ontological, and moral character to everything it speaks about and does.

The basic theoretical sciences of Islam such as jurisprudence (Fiqh), theology (Kalam) and mysticism (Sufism) examined being in its quality as a "written book." Hence, Muslim civilization has reached a level where it considers itself and all available within it as words written on the "testimonies of being," being as a historical embodiment of the "Divine Testimonies." That is, Islam perceives its own development as a chapter in the book of world history. This perception follows from the cultural spirit dominant in Muslim civilization, the sole civilization whose name is not connected to space, time, nationality, or person. The worship (Islam) of the Absolute, the single transcendental God, became its historical name. It identified its vision with the Absolute, that is, Islam has transformed its feelings, reason, and intuition as part of the whole, and through it undertook diligence in all areas of life. Muslim culture saw in all that speaks and acts an active search for truth. Transformation of its opinion into rational diligence has not led it to sophistry, just as doubting its evaluations has not run it into an abyss, for its monotheistic credo expresses a just order.

The essential importance of order and justice in Muslim culture represents a unity of the logical and the historical in the monotheistic outlook of Islam. Consequently, the unity of justice and order is nothing other than the concrete form of a real correlation of the physical and metaphysical, a balance of the material and spiritual in the existence of an individual, nation and civilization.

From its inception, Muslim culture proceeded from the fact that the source of all being is a one, and just God. Accordingly, the whole variety of being is a blessing, be it alive or lifeless, nature or man. From this follows the idea about the need for the existence of different peoples and languages, while at the same time, Truth is One, and the True is One. Islam perceived this idea on the practical plane and has been absorbed as a true representation of the monotheistic outlook. The conclusions of Islam about the equality of all prophets of Monotheism are based on this, for it saw in them the representatives of the Truth and the True (God).

The representation of Truth and the True in Muslim culture is constituted of a unity of history and authenticity. This is conditioned by the formation of Muslim culture and the further transformation of Muslim civilization into an Empire of culture in which the leading place was occupied by the history of Truth, instead of religious, ethnic, or national components. Being a history of Truth and the True, the history is infinite and has neither beginning nor end. Muslim culture did not see Christ a Christian, just as it did not see Moses a Jew, but portrayed them as true representatives of God, the One. All Muslims are "faithful to the Truth" and only withdrawal from Truth results in their dissociation. The prophets call not for different religions, but to God, the One. God is One and God is just; history is not a theater, but a book, whose reading is also its writing.

This conclusion has determined the civilizational openness and cultural authenticity of Islam, and has defined its general position in the assiduous pursuit of all things (irrespective of direct results). If the quest is successful, the researcher is remunerated twice, if not—only once, for "above everyone who knows there is the All-Knowing." In other words, the achievements of people or culture have relative value because they reflect the experience of concrete knowledge

and actions. From this follows the idea of the culture of the "first and last sciences." "First or ancient sciences" have included everything that preceded Islam, manifesting diligence in the pursuit of truth, for they were the forerunners of all the sciences. In this sense, these sciences are diligence, containing the true and false, the correct and the erroneous.

Taking into account the experience of other peoples and cultures, Muslim culture processed this into its own criteria of evaluation and action. This is reflected in the Hadith: "Wisdom is the desired purpose of the faithful." Wisdom is true creativity and the truth in any creativity. From this follows the wisdom of China, India, Persia, Greece, Rome, and other cultures into the art, literature, theology, philosophy, and politics of the Muslim world, not as fragments or as worldly wisdom, but as reasonable and acceptable elements of consciousness. Therefore, the book *Kalila and Dimna* is not only a graceful sample of literature, but also a practical manual of ethics and aesthetics. The same can be said of the Greek philosophers, whose ideas deeply enriched Muslim creativity. Aristotle becomes not simply a philosopher, but the First Teacher, al-Farabi—the second is Ibn-Rushd (Averroes) - the first Commentator.

In other words, Muslim culture proceeding from its criteria of the cultural spirit transformed the experience of previous cultures into its own and included their wise men into the pantheon of its own wise men and teachers. We find a similar approach concerning the natural sciences. When Ibn Abi Usaibia (d. 668 AH) wrote his book *Source of Knowledge*, he recognized that "everything to which we aspire is divided either into kindness or pleasure, both of which are possible only in the presence of health." This led him to the conclusion that "in spite of the fact that the time of many wise-healers has long passed, all the knowledge of medicine assembled by them and which has been written down in books does not lose its utility, as the work of a teacher before his students does not lose virtue." This position is characteristic of Muslim culture in relation to all kinds of ancient experience. Accordingly, the inclusion of the cumulative achievement of previous civilizations into Muslim culture was not a mechanical act, or one of layers—however "thick"—but a cultural absorption into the basic paradigm of the Islamic monotheistic world outlook.

## **Muslim Monolith**

Muslim monotheism formed a state, society, and civilization similar to itself. The Caliphate was not only a power, but also a being in which the Islamic vision of the unity of the physical and the metaphysical is realized. From the historical point of view, understanding the imperial Shah's and royal types of political systems (statehood) was not alien to the first Muslims. Therefore, the Caliphate in its initial and ideal type represented a new understanding of the political continuation (*Khilafa*) of an historic mission. In this sense, the Caliphate comprises a unity of material and spiritual history. All its functions were incorporated in the prophetic mission as an expression of Truth (God). Its paradigm is the fundamental paradigm of the community in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, which are a source of the legislation and legal status of the Caliph. The politics and legal status of unity in the Caliphate shows this to be based in the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* as the beginning of its lofty history. It is continued in diligent comprehension of the integrated paradigm of reason and *Ijma'* (coordinated decision of recognized lawyers). All this has left a seal on the life and activity of state, society and people from the Islamic point of view assumes their unification on the basis of the fundamental principles of Islam. The synthesis of reason and *Ijma'*, alongside the *Qur'an* and *Sunna*, forms the basis of Muslim culture as a cultural form of both the physical and the metaphysical. This fact has determined the formation of a system both of the material and spiritual life of Muslim culture. Actually the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* are a unity of the



"Divine" (super-historical) and the historical. This is realized by the community during its perception of rising needs and interests which, as any cultural process, could not avoid ideological and political collisions. From this come the diverse schools and trends in *Fiqh* with the dominance of the so-called basic Sunnite doctrines (Shafism, Malikism, Hanafism and Hanbalism), Shiite (Jafarism), and Zahirite (Exoterism). None of the Muslim luminaries of *Fiqh* aspired to transform his elaborate projects into a state system of regulations and rules for public life; on the contrary, all were against serving authorities and rulers. They served the state by legal substantiation (*Ijma'*) of necessary rules that regulated public and private interests of society and the individuals.

Proceeding from the general Islamic world outlook, Muslim law (*Fiqh*) could not abstract itself from state and public affairs for the *Qur'an* and *Sunna* were the sources of legal proceedings. Intellectual diligence in the areas of public and spiritual life not subject to the state becomes an impulse promoting the rational resolution of different vital problems. A consequence of this is bifurcation and diversity in the delicate aspects of public life while preserving the unity of the material and moral approach. Al-Tabari (d. 310 AH), for example, enumerates 27 various legal approaches to problems of guarantees in which real and probable versions of bargains and decisions are touched upon. Something similar can be found in relation to hundreds and thousands of problems and aspects of public life. This is natural to any jurisprudence, however, the specific features of Islam are determined by the paradigm of order and justice with their inherent ontological and metaphysical parameters. This defines *Fiqh's* status as the science of changing needs and necessities in the system of justice. *Fiqh*, thus, is science which not only simply realizes and proves the values of justice according to changing needs and necessities, but also asserts right and order. Freedom as diligence in the pursuit of real needs is submission to order and justice. This implies the dominance of such concepts as best, most useful, permissible, desirable, ought, and obligatory.

The unity of order and freedom, of truth and diligence, has resulted through the struggle of different trends of *Fiqh* and *Kalam* and political schools and trends in the formation of the institution of *Ijma'* and its further transformation into a mode of regulating public and state relations. However, what is essential in *Fiqh* is that it expresses at a legal level the monotheistic outlook of Islam. Historical *Ijma'* is a collectivity of decision-making evolved in legally overcoming barriers arising on the struggle of different approaches to these and other problems. It comprises a way of transforming primary paradoxes into general axioms so that any step towards freedom is a step to order. When Muslim civilization during its development included in its structure the rights of man, it spoke about "the rights of a Muslim" not of man in general. Its focus is not on an abstract, standardized "average" man, but on man existing and working in his own framework.<sup>1</sup> Hence, the formation of the basic rights of man is above all affirmation of three rights: honor and personal dignity, the inviolability of life; and the inviolability of personal property. A whole system of rights and rules of moral behavior is joined to these.

Muslim culture developed, in the main, as collective instead of state's rights, covering relations of man to man and individual to community. Al-Ghazali (d. 505 AH) in collecting all that he called "the rights of a Muslim" included an obligatory greeting at meeting [somebody], an indispensable response to a request, visiting the sick family member or and neighbor, and participation in funerals. These rights, in essence, are moral and practical forms of the internal relations of a community from cradle to grave. In their permanence the Islamic moral vision is reflected. This is stated laconically in the *Hadiths*: "The faithful in their mutual love and mutual mercy are a single body. If one organ suffers, the whole body answers by sweating and sleeplessness" and "the devout answers for the devout as the stones of one building each supporting

the another." A truly devout person should cause damage to another devout person either by words or by deeds. This determines such moral requirements as "modesty, forgiveness, obligation of kind deeds, interdiction of long deliberate separations, censure of punishment and revenge, observance of tact and delicacy, respect for grown-ups, mercy to the younger, a dignified attitude to people, interdiction on profiting from the needs of the faithful, interdiction on spying and squealing, protection of the honor, dignity, life, and property of a Muslim from encroachment by others, support, help, etc." Al-Ghazali supplemented the "rights of a neighborhood" irrespective of his creed; not only not to damage him (even by insults), but also to suffer from him inconvenience, to show mercy to him, to share with him pleasures and grieving, and to forgive him his mistakes. Further there follows the "rights of relatives" and, first of all, those of parents which stipulates a kind attitude toward them throughout their whole life, a request for pardon after their passing, fulfillment of their promises and precepts, respect for their friends, as well as a soft and intimate attitude toward children whose careful upbringing is the right and duty of their parents. Thus, the rights of a person are not determining their interests according to the criteria of religious and secular life, but also their realization in the context of the whole surrounding world—from the general (the devout Muslims), to the particular (neighbors), and to oneself and one's relatives. This is the moral chain that supplements the legal rules and laws developed by different schools of *Fiqh* that regulate social, economic and political relations.

We can observe this tendency also in relation to society. The basic criterion of this relation in Muslim culture is the priority of community and the spirit of collectivity inherent in it. Society represents a dynamic unity of the community or the collective (*Umma—Jama'a*; nation and collective). The correlation of community and collective corresponds to the correlation of form and content. The condition of community depends on the spirit of collectivity, which, in turn, is a reasonable and moderate proportion of the basic material and spiritual problems of its existence worked out in the process of decision-making by the community. The correlation of community—collective and their proportion define the dimensions of freedom determined by justice. This is the basis for the effectiveness of "rules" in all areas and on all levels of life from a world outlook to the intimate behavior of human beings.

In terms of world outlook the "basics of dogmatics" were developed in the many schools speculative theology (Kalam). Mutazilites, for example, proved their doctrine by five principles: justice, monotheism, recompense after Resurrection, intermediate condition, necessity of kind deeds, and resistance to evil deeds. On the basis of these principles, they developed different variants of the ideal bases of dogma called to unite the community, and to fix in it the spirit of collectivity. "The people of the *Hadiths* and *Sunna*" worked out different variants "of the fundamentals of dogma" in which they collected in detail their coordinated views on various problems—from religious metaphysics to the concrete burning problems of the socio-political history of the Caliphate. Asharites more than anybody else systematized the variants "of the fundamentals of dogma". In such a way, al-Juweyni (d. 478 AH) wrote his book *Gleams of the Fundamentals of Dogma*, where in a popular form he elaborated the basic principles of his theological philosophy: The world is everything existing besides God; it is divided into created substances and accidents; God is the Creator, Eternal, One, Knowing, Powerful, Alive, with eternal will; all occurring, whether useful or harmful, is desirable for God; all things are created by God; man is not forced in his deeds for he possess will-power, which is given to him; it is impossible to speak of God as if He is obliged or owes; He sends to the world prophets as preachers and messengers; miracles are not appropriate to the natural state of affairs; the proof of Muhammad's prophecy is the *Qur'an*; there were only four rightly guided Caliphs; the Caliphate existed only

30years, and after it a kingdom came into being; the Imam (master of the community) should have certain qualities, that is, he should be from the Kureish clan, free in his pursuit of capable of passing a binding legal rule, courageous, full-fledged, free (not a slave) and pious in faith.

Al-Ghazali has widely contributed to the development of the fundamentals of dogma. He singled out four basic principles, each of which contains ten basic rules. The first principle relates to various aspects of the divine substance, the second to the attributes of God, the third to God's deeds, and the fourth to various problems of the *Sunna* (tradition). As to other trends of Islam (such as Shi'ites, Kharijites) and various socio-political groups (such as the "Brethren of Purity"), despite their disagreements and contradictions, they support the development of the general tendency of free search. They promoted the formation of general concerns and strengthened the unity of the community and its collective spirit.

This spirit was revealed in the creation of a whole genre called edification, which is not the arrogance of a mentor or scornfulness, but a rational-emotional cultural experience. It comprises a set of reason and emotions and, their use in the upbringing of individuals and society, with the help of general sublime values. This explains the existence of theological, philosophical, mystical, literary and behavioral types, each of which has its own vision, formulations, concrete tasks, and purposes of the given edification.

In the *Qur'anic* verse: "call to your Lord with the help of wisdom and kind council" Muslim culture has found the ideal prototype of edification, which is reflected in the idea: "Advice is a warrior from the warriors of God. He is similar to clay on a wall—if hardened, it will strengthen the wall, if not—it will leave but a trace." Muslim culture developed different criteria and rules for edification, such as: "Edification of people is preferably by deeds rather than by words;" "one who has in his soul an instructor has God as his keeper;" "edification is difficult as an old man's path up a mountain." Edification becomes an attractive occupation to all layers of society: Caliphs, scientists, politicians, men and women, old and young. This fascinating occupation has its source in the way culture has presented the value of word, its meaning and its consequence for the social and moral spirit of communities. Thus, the practical wisdom: "One who consults will not be disappointed;" "advice is a key to good fortune;" "self-conceit is a way of error." A similar place and role for advice and edification is reflected in the eulogy of one writer to a Vizier: "His face has one thousand eyes, in his mouth one thousand tongues, in his breast one thousand hearts." In other words, these thousands provide a variety of vision, sensations, and intuitions, and in their unity is wisdom and kindness.

Muslim culture lifted the importance of advice and edification up to a level of prophetic *Sunna*. As a consequence a *Hadith* says: "Belief is an edification in the name of God, in the name of Scripture, in the name of the Prophet, for the governors of community and for the public." (a) Edification in the name of God is a description of His inherent qualities, and submission to Him internally and externally. (b) Edification in the name of Scripture is reading and understanding it, protecting it from the attacks of opponents, and training all to grasp its true meaning. (c) Edification in the name of the Prophet is the fulfillment of his *Sunna* by practical deeds and moral acts. (d) Edification for governors is to help them in performing their duties, and warn them about those who damage the interests of a community. (e) Edification for the public are the favorable attitudes of respect for grown-ups, mercy for the young, and help for the needy.

Concretization of this general approach to edification has found its reflection in specialized versions of culture. Specialization reflects, on the one hand, the characteristics of different disciplines and directions, and on the other hand, the general tendency of cultures to ennoble the meaning and value of the ultimate goals of edification, as an emotional fabric for the reason of a

culture. From this derives its value for rules of moral and emotional education, and of good manners. It comprises education about belonging to a culture and what it considers reasonable acts. It pervades different kinds of knowledge and action since it personifies the unity of reason and emotions which is one of the major paradigms of Muslim culture. Therefore, it is based in the *Qur'an* and *Hadiths*, and frequently was used by the Caliphs, mutakallims, faqihs, philosophers, judges, politicians, writers, poets, and historians.

Muslim edification expresses the culture's soul and body in their attempts to define the value of its lofty principles. It includes a unity of physics and metaphysics in the "eternal formula" of history and nature, as well as the eternal in the intuition, spirit and metaphysics of the culture itself. Hence, edification is personified in the Imam (Shi'ism) and Sheikh (Sufism). They are called upon to assert and reproduce a conscious and emotional adherence of the followers and adepts to their spiritual support. Shi'ism, for example, has taken from edification the principle of the continuity of Imams as an embodiment "of eternal wisdom," while edification itself is an embodied choice of wisdom: the true Imam as well as Sheikh is the embodiment of a choice of eternal wisdom or divine light. The extremist Shi'ite sect, Khattabists, for example, saw in the Imam an edification of God. As an embodiment of the Muslim Absolute in which some Shi'ite extremists saw the measure of truth, kindness and beauty, whereas in opponents they saw an embodiment of error, evil and ugliness (such as Kharisites). When the Kisanites (a Shi'ite extremist sect) say that they have no Imam, and are waiting only the dead, they mean by it the expectation of "rescuers." Actually, their future rescuers are those who do not die in time and do not live in space. This paradox has given Shi'ism an opportunity to unite the obvious and hidden, the speaking and silent (in the case of Karmats), absence and returning (in the case of Numeirits). The Imam personifies a live embodiment of the eternal edification of order and justice in their diversity as "the proof of time" and "the sovereign of time." This conditions the limitation of the number of Imams in all Shi'ite sects, and the opportunities of their "return." Shi'ism embodies in itself an invisible wisdom that all begins with one and "comes back" to infinity. Ismai'ilism and Imamism, as the largest Shi'ite trends, are the examples of that.

Of the seventh Imam it is said: "I am the Saturday of Saturdays, sun of times and light of months". This means that he embodies an infinite cycle of permanence and change. The cycle of Imamites "comes to an end" in the 12th Imam. Being the last, he is the expected one, the last, he is constantly existing as he embodies an infinite opportunity of divine edification through personification of edification itself a sublime authority (transcendental paradigm). This is reflected in the names of Imams that imitate the Muslim 99 perfect names of God.

Sufism has come to the same result by an embodiment of edification into a Path, as a unity of the constant and variable, Stage and Condition (*makam - hal*), Truth and Path (*haqiqat-tarikat*), *Sheikh* and *Murid* (teacher and disciple). Sufis can be divided, accordingly, in the way the teachers develop and specify the universal Sufi systems of edification for their disciples. Every Sheikh has his own edification for disciples in terms of knowledge and action. It is possible to say that Sufism *per se* is edification. Ibn-Arabi (d. 638 AH), for example, saw in edification "an eternal Divine Judgement." Without edification, people would live as if blind, thanks to it people, states, and civilizations thrive. Such comprehension of the value of edification has found its reflection in the 109 edifications of "Mecca revelations," which cover all aspects of life and the aspirations to the perfection of human beings.

A similar form of rules of behavior was developed by Muslim civilization for performing religious rites and etiquette. It worked out in detail the most delicate movements of body and soul, not only in relation to such duties as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and *Zakat*, but also in relation to

diet, sleep, body-cleansing, conversation, etc. Various trends and disciplines skillfully perfected these rules, giving them new directions and meanings. All this in aggregate has resulted in the formation of a certain system—conservative, but susceptible to change and capable of self-reproduction. This ability is a consequence of Muslim culture with its typical unity of principles material and spiritual, sensual and rational, beneficial and moral.

On the basis of these rules for behavior in both religious and secular life, Islamic culture has developed variants of social ethics. It covers all external and internal aspects of the behavior of man, for the sake of ordering the components of human life according to Islamic understanding. This Islamic culture has not bypassed any part of the human body, or any movement of the human soul, but has replaced the flesh and blood of the Muslim with its own (cultural) flesh and blood. It presents man with variants of the real and the obligatory, the obvious and the hidden, the popular (mass) and the elite on all planes of existence. Culture has defined the parameters of a person's belonging to Islam as a Muslim and as a "believer (devout)." Each of these categories has external and internal, general and specific characteristics. A Muslim, in general and externally, represents the necessary minimum of belonging to the community (*Umma*). Something similar can be encountered in all that concerns body and soul, in all branches of dogmatics, ethics, politics, etc., owing to the need for real of order in terms of culture.

Muslim culture is a culture of proper order. Everything that enters it should be dissolved and renewed in terms of Muslim criteria and evaluation. Its order is based on a proportional unity of the reasonable (rational) and the transmitted (faith), which have accumulated in the experience of the Muslim community. From this there follows the impossibility of its division. During its development, Muslim culture has worked out a balance of the basic necessary components of its existence. The result of this balance was an overcoming of the "spirit of discrepancy" between religious and secular life, science and faith, individual and community, man and God, state and society. It has transformed the ideal prototype of these binaries into both the source and the criteria of its own pursuit. The culmination of the ordering of the spirit became the end result of the formation of its cultural unity.

## **Cultural Unity**

The Muslim cultural unity does not mean a standardization of culture, but rather the reasonable proportion of its basic components, because the spirit of order is what is most essential in Muslim culture. Order is moderation determined by a priority of justice. This makes justice the prism in which the socio-political and ethical values of community are refracted. The social, political, and military collisions of the first century of *Hijra*—a century of turbulent formation of the Caliphate—were related basically to the struggle around the ideas of justice. The early Kharijites and Shi'ites were the first people tested through the prism of the Islamic understanding of justice. These trends were formed originally in response to the perception of the deviation of authorities from the initial principles of Islamic justice, especially during the reign of the third Caliph Osman Ibn-Afan (d. 35 AH), in constant protest against the excesses and luxurious lives of the rulers. One of the famous disciples of the prophet Abu-Thar al-Gifari (d. 22 AH) proclaimed as his slogan the verse in the *Qur'an* that says: "One who accumulates gold and silver and does not spend them in the name of God, is awaited by a terrible punishment." Osman Ibn-Afan was assassinated by a rebellious community, which realized in practice the Islamic principle that declares: "There is no obedience to God." Obedience in this case is synonymous to justice. It is well known that all those who support and criticize the actions of the masses at the early stages of state formation, as a rule take

the form of sharp disagreement, condemnation, and disobedience, reflecting the feeling of withdrawal from truth and justice. Therefore, the wide discussion of socio-political and ethical problems such as faithfulness and blasphemy, good and evil, sin and repentance, freedom of will and predetermination, etc., is not accidental. Accusations of blasphemy were closely connected to the question of "mortal sins" whose criterion was withdrawal from truth and justice. The Kharijites, for example, in the beginning of their activity considered it possible to name any person blasphemous when they commit the slightest evil. Later, they considered blasphemous any person who committed one of the mortal sins. Ibadites-Kharijites considered such a person an apostate (from blessings). The Kharijites were against the deliberate and cowardly separation of word and deed, belief and action. Azrakites condemned those who do not fight against the tyrants who were the real teachers of blasphemy. They deeply felt the value of the state and the function of supreme authority within it, which led the Baikhasites-Kharijites to the conclusion: "If the supreme ruler is blasphemous, then all the members of the community both present and absent are part of this act." Ibadites considered those Muslims who disagree with such rulers to be believers, whereas the governors were criminals. Nadjites, in general, supposed possibility a community without an Imam (governor), if its members observe practically the *Qur'anic* instructions. All this shows that the basic motive of the socio-political and ethical thought and actions of the Kharijites was justice.

We find a similar motive in Shi'ism, as an embodiment of the emotional aspect of justice and truth in the personification of the Imam, who appears as a sublime image of the Muslim self or identity. This conditions the transformation of the problem of the Imamate and Imam into a problem of fundamental beliefs (based on a creed), instead of a particular political issue. Shi'ism underscores that the Imam is an embodiment of Truth and the True, that is, the substantial value that glues together the order of our life.

Alongside Kharajites and Shi'ites, there appeared trends, such as Jahmites, Murji'ites, and others, each of which tried in its own way to substantiate ideas of justice as moderation and moderation as justice. The highest form of comprehension and realization of this idea among schools of Kalam was developed by the Mutazilites. For the first time in the Caliphate history, they created a comprehensive ideological system about justice, having transformed it theoretically and practically into a universal principle of their metaphysics, ontology, and ethics.

In building their doctrine, the Mutazilites proceeded from the principle of justice and ended with the principle of monotheism. From this followed their name: the "people of justice and monotheism." This name reflects their deep and all-round understanding of the essence of Islam. Mutazilites aspired to unite the physical and historical sense of Islam by identifying monotheism with justice and vice versa. In this light it is some kind of rational-ethical synthesis, which, in the general development of Islamic civilization, has promoted a deepening affirmation of the cultural spirit of Islam.

The monotheism of the Mutazilites aspired to prove the transcendental character of God, to detach the divine from the vulgar and the passing desires of opposing sides. According to the doctrine of the Mutazilites, the divine substance is a being with absolute essence, absolute reason, universal kindness, and perfect beauty. Such an ideal substantiation gives man an opportunity to improve his/her reason and will. A strong-willed reason, educated around the value of goodness and beauty, is capable of establishing a similar order and organizing it as a realization of justice. They recognized man's free will as the creator of his goodness and evil; hence, God cannot be accused of evil, nor can injustice be the common denominator of the Mutazilites.

If God created injustice, He would be unfair; if He created justice then He is fair. According to all Mutazilite schools, God performs only what is good and perfect, because, according to

wisdom, it is necessary to encourage and to protect all that is good and beneficial to people. All this is accessible to reason, for it is reasonable, and what is reasonable should be real: supreme reason is justice. The Mutazilite al-Nazzam (d. 231 AH) said in this regard that God is not capable of doing to people anything that contradicts what is virtuous for them. Al-Iskafi (d. 240 AH) asserted that God cannot do injustice to reasonable beings (people); hence, our world is the best of worlds and is accessible to rational comprehension. Man is capable of realizing justice in this world, for the existence of the world assumes the presence of justice, both from the point of view of its divine origin as a principle, and from the point of view of its reasonable continuation in human activity.

This conclusion, as a whole, was shared by the major representatives of Caliphate intellectual schools, including the Hanbalite. Ibn-Taymiyya (d. 728 AH), for example, focused attention on problems of justice, considering it as basic to his approach to state and society. His general conclusion states: Justice is the source of the material and moral immunity of the state and person from evil.

As to philosophers, they shared the view about the value of universal justice for all beings. Islamic philosophy, in general, put justice as the basis of its rational and moral understanding of the world, and on this developed its understanding of such problems as God and man, state and society, life and death, goodness and evil, perfect and ugly. Proceeding from this, al-Kindi (d. 252 AH) elaborated his notion of reason and justice; al-Farabi (d. 339 AH) the notion of the ideal city and happiness; Ibn-Sina (d. 428 AH) the system of being and knowledge; Ibn-Rushd (d. 595 AH) the synthesis of traditions and truth in their various forms and aspects. The cumulative achievement of Islamic philosophy facilitated the assertion of a vision of justice as the core of what is reasonable and proper for human existence as a whole.

The Sufis asserted a proportion between justice as an actuality and as something that is due or ought to be. According to the Sufis, God is absolute harmony, unity of contrasts, and live proportion that indefatigably pervades the universe. This is reflected in their name: "the people of Truth." Truth here means perfect proportion in all. This is defined as a living immanent proportion of ontology, metaphysics, and morals, expressed in the unity of the Way (Tariqat), Law (shari'a) and Truth (Haqiqah). This means that truth has its law and Way. Sufis embodied truth through the laws (Shari'a) of its culture (Muslim) and its Way, showing that the great truths are those of culture. The originality of these truths is inherent in them, for they represent the spirit and pursuit of justice and order. One finds ideal methods for this pursuit in the great systems of al-Ghazali and Ibn-Arabi.

The priority of the ideas of justice and order in all the theoretical and practical sciences of Muslim civilization reflects, first of all, a comprehension of the cultural value of proportion. The point is that justice and order are, first of all, proportions. But proportion is not simply a necessary and existing quantity of things, but also a way for interaction and mutual influences. In this sense it arises and develops in proportion to how the correlation of the physical and metaphysical in culture is resolved.

From its very inception Muslim tried to assimilate the Qur'anic ideal of "just ways". This is the middle of moderation, justice and truth as the ideal order. In other words, comprehension of moderation as the necessary and reasonable proportion of the existence of the community and commonwealth penetrates its attitude to itself (physical level) and to God (metaphysical level). It lays out for itself a way with its rites (soul) and customs (body).

By uniting soul and body, Muslim culture developed for itself ideal methods and proportionate forms of exterior and interior prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, and *Zakat*. Prayer is the movement of

the body, tongue, and heart (three-multiple or five-multiple) in the direction of God (or in spatial terms to the *Ka'aba*). Fasting is the movement of the body (stomach) in time (Ramadan) for the sake of God. Pilgrimage is movement of the whole body in time (once in a lifetime, or once yearly as far as possible) for the sake of God. Zakat is the movement of the whole body (material, money) in time (once a year) for the purification of the soul. This means that Islam attaches the individual and public body to an harmonious fraternal movement of tongue, heart, stomach, and soul (for taxes in Islam are, first of all, to purify souls, and then only to solve economic problems of the community). Islam unites in movement of body and soul, space and time by tying them into a single whole on behalf of a uniformity of God, community, body and soul, i.e., all that creates unity in community and diversity in individuals. The same mechanism works in customs. For example, *Fiqh* represents the typical embodiment of the unity of reason and morals concerning the social, economic, and legal life of the community. It has incorporated a reasonable proportion of interests (benefit, advantage) and preferences (morals). *Fiqh* unites the basis (*Qur'an* and *Sunna*) with the intellectual diligence of the various trends of Shafi'ism, Malikism, Hanafism, Hanbalism, Jafarism, Zahirism, Batinism, etc.

The great diversity in the forms of Islamic culture within its overall unity expresses, first of all, the pursuit of reasonable proportion in and of an ideal order. The result of this pursuit was the creation of its universal paradigms and the predominance of the spirit of proportion and order, due to which the basic binaries have a footing which facilitates the building "mechanisms" of moderation (justice) and organization (order). In the methodology of knowledge, Muslim culture has created binary relations of the reasonable and transmittable; in the image of life—a binaries of the religious and the secular; in relation to the *Qur'an*—binaries of explanation and interpretation, esoterism and exoterism, in *Fiqh*—binaries of the fundamental source and free pursuit of Faqihs, free diligence and common consent by recognized *Faqihs*. These and many other binaries promoted the creation of a unique system of knowledge and action as the Muslim cultural spirit.

### **The Muslim Cultural Spirit**

The transformation of the basic binaries of Muslim culture into substantial elements of creativity of the cultural spirit represents a specific resolution by Islam of the correlation between the physical and the metaphysical in the socio-historical life of the individual, society and state. Not every binary and paradigm, or system of binaries and paradigms, is capable of creating a pure cultural spirit capable of constantly overcoming the ethnic "principle" by binding them into a system of the lofty principles of a consistent world outlook.

The basic binaries of the Muslim spirit were historically formed as components of a monotheistic system, which in turn has resulted in the creation of an Islamic cultural monolith. Working through the system of basic binaries the Muslim cultural monolith constantly corrected the spirit of moderation in dogmatic knowledge and action. This has resulted in a dynamics of unity and diversity. By virtue of its inherent synchronous binary action diversity (including disagreement and antagonism) has promoted the substantiation of an ideal proportion of the best possible order.

Comprehension of the cultural reality of proportion in an ideal order can lead to a unity of means and purpose in knowledge and action both within and without. This unity is reflected in the diversity of the creative efforts of Islamic civilization according to the criteria of its own culture. The formation of the unity and diversity of the creative spirit of Muslim culture underwent the direct and indirect influence of the basic binaries of culture. Consequently, there were diverse



trends of *Kalam*. There were diverse schools of every trend, and the creative diversity within each school and scholars, while retaining a unity in protecting the basic principles of the Muslim world outlook. Al-Jahiz (d. 225 AH), al-Bakillani (d. 403 AH), Ibn-Khazm (d. 456 AH) and Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597 AH) are typical examples of this trend. Al-Jahiz is a classical representative of Mutazilism and, at the same time, the founder of an independent school. This is also characteristic of Ibn-Khazm within the framework of Zahirism (an exoteric trend), of al-Bakillani—within Asharism, and of Ibn al-Jawzi—within Hanbalism.

This type of diversity, which conventionally can be called horizontal or quantitative, has its continuation in the so-called vertical or qualitative dimension, and in the creative unity of both. Al-Jahiz, for example, is not only a representative of Mutazilism, but also of its encyclopedic type. He is not only the founder of Arab rhetoric and eloquence, but also a consistent defender of the Islamic cultural spirit. On the one hand, he glorified the role of the Arabic language in Islamic civilization, trying to identify as characteristic of Arabs, their eloquence. On the other hand, he helped prevent the attacks on those peoples who joined the Islamic world. Thus, he wrote a series of books about the dignity of Turks, the superiority of blacks in comparison to whites, and much more in order to prove the presence of certain merits in other peoples. Every people is reputable; it is necessary to avoid hubris and arrogance in relation to others. Al-Jahiz expressed this conclusion in a series of short stories about invalids, the blind, cross-eyed persons and the otherwise handicapped to prove that body defects are nothing in comparison with the aspiration to free will; for, in the last analysis, man is will, and the rest is only its clothing. He transformed this conclusion into one of his basic philosophical principles proclaiming that all free actions of man are deeds of his will; indeed in childhood one has nothing else. He exposed this idea in tens of books and treatises, thereby creating an anthropological encyclopedia of his epoch. Simultaneously he wrote a well-known study, *Book About Animals*, an encyclopedia of extensive knowledge about everything.

Another example is al-Bakillani who personifies the Asharite model of the theological substantiation of belief. For this purpose, he develops "rules of discussion," clearly stating them in his treatises *at-Tamhid*, *al-Ibana*, etc. Al-Bakillani consistently carried out the Asharite line using the rational method of "reasons of belief" in disputes with opponents. He has written on such diverse subjects as the history of religion, metaphysics, politics, history, jurisprudence, and philology. He engaged also in politics, yet without falling under its spell.

Ibn-Khazm represented an ideal sample of the esoteric school of Muslim culture. This is manifest in his encyclopedia on the history of religion, theology, and philosophy *Kitab al-Fasl*, where he passes judgement on the correctness or inconsistency of the viewpoints of different religious, theological and philosophical schools. In this as in his other studies including his grandiose study on *Fiqh; Al-Muhalla*, he defines, in a strict and categorical manner his position on the questions under discussion. His personal life was an embodiment of his moral rigor and ideological severity; and at the same time he authored delicate love poems assembled in his famous book, *Dayq al-Hamama (Necklace of a Dove)*.

Something similar can be seen in the person and studies of Ibn al-Jawzi, though Hanbalites are usually quite strict and sober. Among the brightest figures of the Hanbalites, alongside Ibn-Taymiyya, is Ibn al-Jawzi authored traditional treatises on theology and religious dogmatics and a large historiographic volume, *Al-Muntazi*, where he expounds the history of the Caliphate and the outstanding figures of Muslim culture. But in his famous treatise, *Narration about Silly and the Stupid* he relates ridiculous histories and jokes about the most improbable aspects of secular and religious life. At the same time, he shows the need for an exposition of the value of reason and

vigilance, as well as for protection for the heart from illnesses with the help of ridiculous jokes and irony, for irony and mockery are characteristic of reasonable (wise) persons.

This unity that lies behind the diversity of creativity in the various trends and disciplines follows from the established system of moderate proportions in Muslim culture itself. In other words, in its movement culture processes elements of rebellion and organization, freedom and constraint, revolution and conservatism as natural and necessary proportions of creativity—in poetry, music, fine arts, and architecture. In poetry, we find typical samples of secular life with all its elements in Abu Nuwas, piety and asceticism in Abu al-Atahiyy; chivalry and heroism in al-Mutanabi; wisdom and skepticism in al-Mua'ri; and combinations of all these element in Omar Khayam.

In fairy tales, such as *One Thousand and One Nights*, we find a unity of opposite manifestations of life in its Islamic-cultural dimension. Here one thousand is not simply a quantity of nights, but also the first letter of the Arabic alphabet. As the last night is the first night after the thousand it symbolizes an infinite echo in hearing and in time, a beauty that al-Mu'ari has described in his famous treatise *Risalat al-Gufran (Treatise on Pardon)*. Here pardon is identical with cultural indulgence in which light he reconsidered the real and ideal history of the creative spirit. Al-Mu'ari analyzes the cultural creativity of the spiritual history of the "I" freed from the chains of the conventionalities of social and religious interests. The hero of the treatise, walking in paradise, evaluates aggregates of cultural achievements, and its individual representatives, as if infinite echo of Islamic time. In this he represents in his conclusions and argumentation the achievements of culture's theoretical and practical reason in which context an echo is similar to music, which is not similar to anything else except itself. In culture the proportions are dissolved, for it is the finest and absolute embodiment of proportion.

This embodiment in traditions of "life and awakenings" has found its interpretation in the fairy tales *Haya Ibn Yakzan (Alive, the Son Woken Up)* of Ibn-Sina, Ibn-Tufail (d. 580 AH), and as-Suhrawardi, *The Killed* (d. 587 AH). The natural form of the correlation of awakening and life assumes that life is nothing more than the sublime form of the substantial situation of awakening. Hearing in time is similar to the sounds in a string; the string being is a matter (physical), and the sound being its sublime continuation (metaphysical). From this follows the wisdom formulated by Sufism in a paradoxical aphorism that "people dream and wake up only, when they die," meaning that comprehension of life's value is possible only by constant awakening. Death shows that life (material, usual, and conditional) is a passing thing, a sublime illusiveness. This illusiveness, however, acquires sense when it turns into insight. The correlation between thing-nonthing disappears in the end, for it is an awakening of proportion. It is not by chance that *Kalam*, philosophy, and Sufism attempted to connect revelation (Divine Insight) with awakening and insight (philosophical, artistic, Sufi, etc.), with dream. They wanted to say that the imperfect sense reality and fantasy disappear, being dissolved in sincere belief, in pure reason, or in perfect participation (enjoyment) as an expression of religiosity (prophetic), rationality (philosophy and *Kalam*), and intuition (Sufism). This theory has found its ideal embodiment in the philosophical-fantastic novel of Ibn-Tufail (*Haya, the Son of Yakzan*) where the author explores the harmonious proportions of the physical and metaphysical in man.

The fine arts reflect the same model of a quest for an ideal identity of the physical and the metaphysical. It is especially and clearly visible in the roles played by a point, line or letter. A point and line both represent a beginning and an end, final and infinite, from which follows the domination of abstraction in Muslim painting. The Muslim God (Allah) is obvious in the hidden, and hidden in the obvious: external in the internal, and internal in the external. He is a perfect

manifestations of proportion and a perfect unity of antipodes. The line is a constant movement of infinity. Each point in the Muslim ornament is both a beginning and an end of movement and form. The line represents this lofty correlation of the material and the spiritual. With the help of a line, it is possible to represent the Word of God (Allah) or any *Qur'anic* verse as a tree, bird, or in the form of stiffened movement; what is indefinable, imperceptible to the eyes can be represented in a form causing pleasure and confusion, for it is not finally definite except for its obvious-hidden self-identity. Muslim architecture in buildings, mosques, streets and squares also embodies the unity of the obvious and hidden, external and internal in displays of proportion that are both material and spiritual, finite and infinite.

From this it follows that interpretation of basic Muslim paradigms has resulted in the formation of a cultural whole characterized by a freedom of diversity in creative pursuits. Regulation of its external and internal being shows the presence of certain proportions corresponding to the basic cultural paradigms inherent in this being. This has led to the formation of creative cultural spirit, which has created a similar community. Muslim community is "a community of the middle," manifested in its aspiration to moderation. Externally, "the middle community" is represented in the attempt at overcoming extremes in the struggle of Judaism and Christianity. In essence, it overcomes all types of extremes in relation to itself and to God, that is, to the physical and metaphysical, in an individual and community.

The Muslim vision of community was called upon to unite all in the name of a sublime principle. The contrast of Judaism and Christianity was considered a withdrawal from Truth and the True. From the point of view of Islam, God is God. His envoys are His envoys instead of being Jews and Christians, no matter to which faith they belong. Hence, no one is superior to the other, just as there is no superiority between men and women. There can be no superiority of one to the other on account of belonging to a religion or a community, but only according to the degree of one's piety. This is the principle that Islam has placed into its practical monotheism—religious and social. The point is that Islam considers experiences of prophets as manifestations of the Divine will to ennoble man, to lead him to the way of Truth (Straight Path). All prophets follow one and the same monotheistic path of goodness and justice.

Islam is not a proper name, but an act of belonging to the one God. The prophets and wise men of the past are His prophets and wise men, and the goodness and justice of all times and peoples are His goodness and justice. Islam is capable of perceiving the virtues of any people and time and intertwining them into its own system. This is the opportunity for partnership of everyone who works in its framework and under its consolidating spirit; its achievement becomes the gain to all its followers. Hence, the absence among its followers of the spirit of national despotic superiority (*Istikbar*). The partnership of the peoples of Islam in constructing a united spirit among cultures was voluntary, that is, not under the dictatorship of anyone outside of—or above—the community, state, or religious structures and organizations. This explains the transformation of outstanding figures of Muslim culture into universally recognized figures for the nations and peoples of Islam. By its principles and system of basic paradigms Islam has destroyed the despotic spirit of superiority in itself and its relations to others, and in others in relation to itself. There are neither national, ethnic, nor regional nuclei in Islam. Rather, diversity in Islam means free diligence in pursuit of justice and order. Islam neither belittles nor denies the national existence of peoples. It accepts them, but subordinates them to its monotheistic outlook. By virtue of this, it is impossible for any nationalist, chauvinist, fascist or racial tendencies or ideologies to emerge from its core.

All this led to an openness of Muslim culture both internally and externally, which explains its deep religious tolerance and cultural openness according to its system of paradigms. The Muslim community interpreted its "middle position" among other communities (religious and nonreligious) according to its religious and secular monotheistic criteria. Hence, in relation to religious communities (in particular, Judaism and Christianity) it proceeds from three basic principles formulated in the *Qur'an*: first, recognition that true monotheistic history, namely, Islam, is the culmination of monotheism; second, that one can claim to represent Truth in the last instance; and third, that Islam is an embodiment of true monotheism. Islam is, first of all, monotheism, that is, sincere fidelity to God, the One.

These three principles fixed in the *Qur'an* formed the basis of initial Islam. As a whole, this can be reduced to five basic positions: first, the demand that among the believers a Muslim must distinguish the believer from the faithless; second that disputes with them should be carried out not by words, but by deeds; third, opposition fanaticism and extremism; fourth, the error of withdrawal of "men of belief" from the true admonition of the prophets (Straight Path, One God); and fifth the obligation on Muslims to struggle with such apostates, including the military, so that they behave in accordance with truth and justice.

The formation of these positions has taken place in the course of the realization of the three basic principles proclaimed by Islam in relation to religious communities. These positions have a concrete historical, rather than an absolute character and are essential to Islam. The realization of these principles means an embodiment of their meaning in the Muslim community, rather than in merely private positions. The point is that the would-be Muslim community represents a realization of the true and just (golden) mean. This explains why later Judaic and Christian communities became part of extensive religious and nonreligious communities. Differences with them became a part of religious, theological, and philosophical disputes within the Muslim community itself, thereby becoming objects of research by the various sciences. Muslim culture developed in this area four basic directions: first, objective, in which the essence of other religions are stated without comment or criticism (this line is personified by al-Naybakhti (d. approx. in 320 AH) in his study, *Ideas and Religions*); second, critical-analytical as in Ibn-Khassm in his treatise *al-Fasl*; third, analytical-debatable as in al-Bakillani in *at-Tamhid*; fourth, comparative-analytical as in al-Shahrastani (d. 548 AH) in his study, *Book About Religious Sects and Philosophical Schools*. Alongside these basic trends there are many other tendencies in terms of methodology and personal evaluations, but as a whole they promoted a deepening of the cultural vision of religious communities, and also the development of ideas about religious unity (in particular by Sufi scholars).

Muslim culture by and through its religious world-outlook approach towards community leads to a comprehension and substantiation in the spiritual unity of religious communities. The most complete embodiment of this approach can be found in Ibn-Arabi and Abd-al-Karim al-Jili (d. 832 AH). The comprehension of the cultural value of the spiritual unity of a community reflects, first of all, its internal openness reflecting the monotheistic system of Islam. Since the non-religious community became an object of research, Muslim culture pursued in it what is reasonable from the point of view of its own criteria of reason and morals. When al-Biruni (d. 440 AH) summarized his observations about the life and knowledge of Indian culture in all its fields. He searched for what is acceptable or unacceptable for reason. This study is reflected in the title of his study, *The Certification of Indian Ideas both Acceptable, and Unacceptable for Reason*. He presented the achievements of Indian civilization in philosophy, religion, and natural sciences as being the greatest achievement of humankind. Yet, he criticized what is unacceptable to reason as the highest

criterion of evaluation, and which for Biruni is undoubtedly Muslim cultural reason. The point is that cultural reason is not purely logical reason, but an aggregate of the theoretical and practical experience of the culture itself. Hence, any openness to the experience of other cultures presupposes a cultural evaluation of their achievements. Certainly, this deliberate approach was developed over many centuries of the development of Muslim self-consciousness.

Muslim culture developed, in this context, five basic approaches in evaluating nations and peoples: (1) geographical; (2) characterizes features of creativity; (3) defines the type of mentality; (4) world-outlook; and (5) scientific-philosophical.

1. Two types are included in the first: one is based on the division of the world into seven regions, in which the geographical factor influences the formation of various national characters, national souls, and their reflection on skin color and language; the other is based on the division of the world into four parts: East, West, North, and South according to which nations are divided in terms of their character and way of life.

2. The creativity to the approach proceeds from the contribution a given nation has brought to the civilization of humankind. For example, Ibn al-Mukaffa (d. 142 AH) distinguished four basic nations: Arabs as a people of oratory and eloquence; Persians as a people of etiquette and politics; Romans as a people of architecture and geometry; and Indians as a people of reason and witchcraft. Al-Jahis divided this classification and added to the four nations a fifth, namely, the Chinese as a people of manual crafts and arts, and divided the Romans into Latins (a people of high craft) and Greeks (a people of science). Al-Tawhidi proposed another classification composed of six nations: Persians as a people of politics and etiquette; Romans as a people of science and wisdom; Indians as a people of speculative thinking and witchcraft; Turks as a people of bravery and bellicosity; Africans as a people of patience, labor and entertainment; Arabs as a people of fidelity, eloquence and oratory.

3. The basic approach, based on differences of mentality, recognizes two types. One is characterized by definition of the properties of things, judgement by criteria of truth, and the use of spiritual values. To this type belong the Arabs and Indians. The second type is characterized by definition of the nature of things, judgement by criteria of quality and quantity and the use of material values; these are the Persians and Romans.

4. The approach according to world-outlook, as in Shahrastani, is based on the fact that each community solves in its own way metaphysical, social and moral life questions. Hence, there are religious and nonreligious communities.

5. The scientific-philosophical approach has its classical reflection in Ibn-Said al-Andalusi's (d. in 462 AH) study, *Categories of Peoples*. He recognized that although nations on the human plane are uniform, all of them differ among themselves in three ways, namely, morals, shape and language. According to al-Andalusi, the most important peoples in history were the Persians and Chaldeans (among whom were Syrians, Babylonians, Jews and Arabs); Greeks (Romans, Franks, Russians, Bulgarians and others); Copts (ancient Egyptians, Sudanese, Ethiopians and Nubians); Turks (Kimaki and Khazars); Indians and Chinese. All these peoples differed from each other by their degree of mastery of the sciences and, in particular, of philosophy. According to al-Andalusi, eight of them were nations of science: Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Jews, Greeks, Romans, Egyptians, and Arabs. Other nations are not scientifically oriented, for they did not take great interest in philosophy. The Chinese, for example, are skilled in crafts God are masters of perfect art and industrial crafts. Turks also, representing a huge people distributed over all Asia, are characterized by their physical shape and military art. They and their like cannot be ranked as

peoples of science, because, in the opinion of al-Andalusi, they do not use their intellectual ability for the sake of wisdom and do not burden themselves with the study of philosophy. Al-Andalusi developed his general conclusion as to whether a given people is scientifically oriented (cultural) or not, according to three requirements: first, comprehension of a level of discourse (theoretical reason); second, asceticism and control of the temper of the soul; and third, the essential place of philosophy and natural sciences in self-education and training.

The above shows that the general course of development of an historical representation of a people (community) progressively approaches and in the end is identified with cultural elements of world understanding that adequately answer the basic principles of Islamic monotheism. The point is that Islamic monotheism, in an historical and social sense, means, as well, the unity of humankind as an example of the One (God). As the truth, He is uniform in essence but diverse in embodiment. Hence, variety is a blessing provided it be subordinated to goodness and general blessing. This idea follows from the general principle expressed in the *Qur'an*, which says: "O mankind! We created you from a single pair, male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes that you may know each other. Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is he who is the most righteous of you." In other words, diversity has both a natural and an historical logic both as a given fact and its lofty supernatural and ideal logic as what is due. The interlacing of these two types of logic in Muslim monotheistic outlook (that is, in the system of cultural paradigm of Islam) has led to developing an adequate approach to understanding the religious and secular communities.

Muslim culture by virtue of its cultural paradigm has allowed for an harmonious coexistence of two approaches and evaluations both for itself and others, in which there is no place for arrogance and dictatorship. This approach is clearly visible in the example of the above-stated classification of the civilized nations of those times, for there are no irrational elements in these general classifications and evaluations. On the contrary, it is emphasized, especially by al-Andalusi, that the "nonscientific-orientation" of certain peoples is rooted in the weakness and backwardness of their theoretical reason and their subjection to the passion for anger. All peoples can overcome the given "natural" barriers, for which they have to rise to the "supernatural" level.

This humanitarian spirit of Muslim culture has defined its openness and recognition of diversity as a blessing. When Muslim culture identifies one nation with any quality, as for example, Greeks with wisdom; Persians with politics; Chinese with crafts; Turks with bravery; Indians with reason and witchcraft; and Arabs with eloquence, it tried to evaluate them on their true merits. In other words, it tried to show the diversity of their true dignity, thereby, substantiating the value of diversity for human history. Al-Tawhidi's conclusion that each nation has virtues and vices, beauties and ugliness, perfection and defects is natural. This conclusion reflects also the ability of Muslim culture to admit a diversity of peoples within it, and the diversity of their qualities and dignity. In other words, the openness of Muslim culture is equivalent to the comprehension of the value of the dignity and virtues of peoples. Thus, the culture has developed a recognition of diversity of cultures as a blessing and the equality of cultures in a general dignity.

In recognizing diversity within itself, Muslim culture supposed diversity outside of itself. Hence, Islam presupposes the possibility of a universal civilization with different cultures. A true culture is one that is capable of viewing others according to criteria of reason and morals, dominated, as al-Andalusi wrote many centuries ago, by virtues of theoretical and practical reason, instead of by forces of anger in the animal soul. Though, like ants, the latter can build their own

"political cities and systems," these are not the civilizations of moral reason, which constitutes the essence of humankind as such.

### **Note**

1. The practical value of this approach is that it exempts rights being used in political games and transient narrow interests. It destroys the very possibility of using lofty values in favor of egoistically-oriented authorities and statesmen. The universality of this Muslim approach to the problem of the rights of man is that it does not impose its vision and decisions on others; yet neither does it encourage arbitrariness of authorities, since the general right for all Muslims (citizens of the Muslim state) is dominant.

**Part II**  
**Islamic Culture: Its Nature, Major Concepts and Problems**



## Chapter IV

# Some Social and Historical Influences in the Origin in Classical Medieval Arab-Islamic Culture

Artur Sagadeev

### **Socio-Cultural Factors of the Development of Nontheistic in the Medieval Islamic World**

The history of classical Arab-Islamic philosophy is a part of the cultural history of the Arab Caliphate, which, under the aegis of Islam—the new monotheistic religion proclaimed by the Prophet Muhammad—had extended its power over a broad area from the banks of the Indus and the Amu-Darya to the Atlantic coasts of North Africa and the Iberian Peninsula. Within this vast empire, integrating Arabs, Persians, Turks, Berbers, and other peoples of three continents, extensive economic development took place. While in the Christian West a natural economy (individual peasant holdings) dominated in the Islamic world practically everywhere highly diversified professions promoted production on the basis of which commerce could be widely developed. The rise of handicrafts and trade stimulated the development of cities, as many as 400 to 500 in the Arab world. The population in urban settings was high. For example, in the three largest cities of Sabada (South Mesopotamia) and in two towns in Egypt, there lived about 20 percent of the population. In the 8th to 9th centuries, cities with more than 100,000 residents in Mesopotamia and Egypt exceeded populations in the highly urbanized, 19th century, West European countries, such as the Netherlands, England, Wales, and France. At that time, Baghdad contained about 400,000 inhabitants, and cities such as Fustat (Cairo), Cordoba, Alexandria, Kufa, and Basra had from 100,000 to 250,000 people. (1, p. 184).

Like later medieval cities, the Arab cities had crowded streets, squares, and markets and overcrowded rooming houses of six or seven floors—in Fusta there were houses with 14 floors. The atmosphere was polluted with what Ibn Sina defined as "a mixture of smoke fumes," closely corresponding to today's "smog." However, the surrounding countryside had no such medieval attributes as castles for feudal lords because the elite lived with their servants in the cities.

The economic development of the cities did not depend solely on income from selling handicrafts. As administrative and political centers, these cities often gathered considerable wealth from extortionary taxes. The riches that flowed to the Abbasids' capital, Baghdad, were especially extravagant. Any feudal lord could hardly have had such gigantic sums as the Abbasids had at the period of their might: More than 400 million dirkhems (about 1,160 tons of silver) entered Baghdad each year. By comparison, the total income of the Russian empire in 1763 equated to 140 million dirkhems" (1, p. 185-186). Local dynasties separated from Baghdad also had considerable wealth. For example, the annual income of the Samanids, whose capital was Bukhara, might run about 45 million dirkhems. The concentration of wealth from commerce and taxation in cities led to the further population growth. The surplus product was further redistributed among different strata of townsmen, forming, like the medieval intelligentsia, professional classes for the intensification of spiritual life and for the development of sciences, literature, and the arts.

Such extensive development was possible because for the first time after the epoch of Alexander the Great, Arabs could unite under their rule both East and West, the Hellenic Mediterranean and the Indo-Persian worlds, thus creating preconditions for the mutual enrichment and cooperation of cultures. The representatives of the Arab-Islamic civilization adapted those elements of the assimilated culture necessary for their practical needs, particularly medicine,

astronomy, and mathematics. These sciences satisfied the needs of the state and the conditions for public health needed in their overcrowded cities. The synthetic character of the Ancient Greek and Hellenic populations as well as the growing spiritual needs of the Islamic writers also led to increasing interest in ancient philosophy, including the science of the ultimate causes of being, metaphysics. (In several decades after the rise of Islam, its philosophical doctrines, in the 7th century, became too narrow for their worldview.) They grasped ancient science in a relatively integrated form that answered their interest in theology, as was characteristic of Christian scholars of the early Middle Ages.

F. Rozental, devoted to the role of knowledge in the medieval Islamic civilization, came to the conclusion that knowledge acquired an importance that had "no equal in other civilizations" (2, p. 324). The knowledge analyzed here is both secular and religious, but its high position in the value system of Medieval Islamic society is significant because it means that in this society there were many educated people. "In spite of the fact that books were copied by hand," as A.B. Khalidov writes regarding the book culture of the Islamic Middle Ages, "books were produced in a great number that was absolutely improbable for medieval Europe. Even professionals do not always realize the genuine scale of Arab book production: the small part of old manuscript treasures that came to us through all the reversals of history is estimated at the hundreds of thousands." (3, p. 215).

One could judge the values of the educated in medieval Islamic society by a group considered the embodiment of the features required of a cultured person. The Adibs were well educated and well brought up, with knowledge of philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, and proper behavior. At the same time, they maintained a relative independence of an adib intellect from religion and theology.

In the given context, it is important to underline that *adab* and philosophy (*falsafa*, wisdom) aimed at the ancient standards of philosophical thought) were closely connected. Philosophers (*falasifa*) considered their science to be the highest goal of a humanitarian education and a means of "salvation" (*nadjat*), that is, of the highest human perfection and achievement of happiness. According to Miskawayh, one of at-Tawhidi's contemporaries (died about 1010), an ideal upbringing, leading to the title "true adab" (*al-adab al-hakiki*), included educating a child in religion before studying ethics, arithmetic, and geometry. Finally, the child must be taught truthfulness and rhetoric.

A model of a philosophical program of education that does justice to grammar, poetry and rhetoric, can be found in the adab version of Aristotle's biography, where it is said:

When [Aristotle] reached the age of eight, his father brought him to Athens, the city that was the gathering place for the philosophers and sages. His father turned him over to the tutelage of poets, grammarians (schoolmasters) and rhetoricians. He learned [what they taught] thoroughly in nine years. It happened that at this place there was then a group of philosophers, who disparaged the learning of these people (poets, etc.) and chided those who studied with them and prided themselves in their arts. Among them were Epicurus and Pythagoras. They claimed that their (e.g., the grammarians) branch of learning required nothing of philosophy, and that those who studied this were not philosophers. For the grammarians were merely teachers of youth; the poets masters of prattle, lying and obscenity; and the rhetoricians masters of obsequiousness, contentiousness, viciousness and deceit, although they were the ones who were the judges and the arbiters at that time. Learning of this, Aristotle was seized with indignation on their behalf. He defended them,

corroborating their contentions, saying: 'Philosophy cannot dispense with these branches of learning, for logic (*mantiq*) is an instrument (*organon*) for their knowledge. And poetry, rhetoric, grammar and brevity embellish logic. And [Aristotle] said that man's superiority over beasts is in speech (*mantiq/logos*), and the most worthy of humanity (*insaniyya*) is the most accomplished in his speech and the most skilled in self-expression. After this he is able to arrange everything properly so that he attains the supreme [level] of philosophy at the ultimate [stage] of humanity. For philosophy is the noblest of the arts and the chief of the sciences. And it must be expressed by means of the most valid reasoning and noblest expression, furthest from defect, vulgarity and solecism. For such would undermine demonstrative proof and the light of wisdom and may fall short of what is required, confuse the listener, corrupt meaning, and inculcate doubt. When [Aristotle] reached this point, having commanded all we have mentioned and having thoroughly mastered the arts of grammar, poetry and rhetoric, he applied himself avidly to the study of [ethics, politics, physics, mathematics and metaphysics]. He then attached himself to Plato.' (4, p. 153-154).

The importance of the philosophical theory of education (elucidated in the classification of sciences of the Eastern *Peripatetics*) will become particularly evident if we take into account the Greek-Arabic Gnostic literature. This vast depository of popular wisdom was destined for a wide circle of readers that considerably outnumbered philosophers, the intellectual elite, and even the court. Adab literature widely cited aphorisms and anecdotes of ancient sages, reflecting their lives and doctrines. In this connection, it is proper to quote the ruler of Sijistan, Abu Jaafar ibn Banuvaih (ruled in 906-963) on Gnostic literature, whose words had been reserved by the philosopher al-Sijistani:

[Abu Jaafar] used to preserve (or memorize) the sayings, anecdotes, biographies, and affairs of the Greeks in a way I have seen in no one else. He used to say, 'These are gold nuggets and like uncast raw metal.' The anecdotes of the Greeks caused him such wonder that he would say; 'What will be thought of a people whose jesting, conviviality, and relaxation are such, when they become serious and resolutely realize their natural powers?' Then he said: 'I am fond of something ascribed to Democratus: The one, who swims in our sea, has no shore but himself.' (4, p. 155)

This example is typical of Islamic medieval culture. The value system of Adibs whose best representatives possessed philosophical wisdom, set the tone in the "elite" circles. Their ideals also characterized the feudal circles that formed, as has been said above, were part of the city populations of the medieval Islamic world. The same could be said about the Caliphs, among whom were pious people who devoted themselves to religion, especially in their old age, as well as persons who were not devote Muslims.

Many of the companions of the Prophet were alive when the rule of the Umayyads began (661-750) in Damascus, the new capital city of the Caliphate. Because of the new political and cultural conditions and the vast expansion of the empire, the Umayyads paid greater attention to institution building, rather than to religious matters. In a sense, this was inevitable at the stage owing to the fast expansion of the Empire, although many of the "old guard" Muslims viewed themselves as less religious, especially during the reign of Al-Walid Ibn Al-Yazid (ruled in 743-744). Among other things, the grave weakening of spirituality during and after his reign, contributed to the downfall of that dynasty.

With the advent the Abbasids and the transfer of the capital from Damascus to Baghdad, immigrants from Iran began replacing the patrimonial Arab aristocracy. The culture of the Caliphate received powerful impulse for further development under the influence of this ancient Persian civilization. When "the Translators Movement" began to bear its first fruits, the Caliphs and the elite found great pleasure in the intellectual sphere. Al-Mamun, in particular, belonged to such a group. He encouraged free discussions at his court on theological and philosophical themes, with the participation of representatives of different religious and nonreligious views. He also supported the Mutazilites against the orthodox traditionalists by establishing the institution of *Mihnaa*—a sort of inquisition.

The Caliph's common subjects followed a more practical approach to religion. This practice was favored because, from the beginning, Islam was "politicized" and viewed as a state religion. Religion satisfied not only their spiritual needs, but also the practical requirements of society as a basis for social, political, moral, legal, and family relations among the people. As a rule, theological trends, sects, and movements in Islam also had a clearly expressed political cause. However, a purely utilitarian approach to the problems of belief was typical of numerous neophytes among the earlier Pagans, Christians, and Jews who adopted Islam exclusively for such practical considerations as evading payment of taxes, protection from the Muslims, and to be upward mobility in the social hierarchy.

Of great importance, was the fact that the Middle East and Central Asia became the arena of collisions of a multitude of beliefs, including the three revealed religions: Islam, Christianity and Judaism. This situation created a favorable basis for the development of non-theistic thinkers in three ways: first, it neutralized the conviction in the exclusiveness of one's own belief. Second, it stimulated the wish to compare these religions, which also undermined the idea of exclusivity and raised doubt concerning the monopoly of truth by one's faith. Third, as a result of confessional pluralism, a vast doxographical literature appeared that inclined to compare religions. The works of al-Naubakhti, al-Masudi, al-Muhasibi, Abu Mansur, Ibn Hazm, al-Iranshahi, al-Biruni, and al-Shahrastani represented this literature. The further result was the appearance of works that not only compared dogmas, but also promoted arguments aimed at revealing the contradictions among religions. In this sense, different trends of Islamic theological and philosophical thought competed with one another, although the rulers of different Caliphates preferred one or another school in different periods.

During the era of the Ghaznavids and Seljugs, when Arabic-Islamic philosophy flourished, "orthodox Islam" struggled against "heretical" movements. But in reality, this seems unlikely. Besides the Baghdad Caliphate there existed the Cordova caliphate of the Fatimids. The Islam of the Ismailites was considered "orthodox," while in Baghdad the teaching of the Ismailites qualified as apostasy. In short, in the Islamic world no single "orthodox teaching" prevailed.

Even at the time of Frederic Hohenstaufen, the power of a Caliph was compared only with that of the Pope. "The sovereign of true believers" theoretically embodied the unity of both secular and religious powers that presupposed the dominance of theocratic principles in the Islamic East and, hence, the supremacy of a certain orthodox system. However, practically, the situation differed. The process of the separation of secular and religious powers was completed in the middle of the 10th century. The Baghdad Caliph preserved only religious powers, while the former, that is, secular power, passed into the hands of the Emirs and Sultans. Thus, in the Islamic East, religion assumed the same role as in the Christian world, but with one essential difference: It carried out its function with no organized church, no hierarchical and territorial structured net of clergymen, and no church councils whose decrees would be obligatory for all. Instead, numerous teachings

within the framework of Islam achieved the status of doctrine officially adopted by the regime, either due to their concrete political aims, their ability to unite the rivals and enemies of the regime, or the popularity of the doctrine among those strata of the population whose support and tranquility were necessary to the regime. During the whole history of the Baghdad Caliphate, "the sovereigns of true believers" only twice used their religious power for actions that resembled attempts to impose "orthodox" ideas on their subjects. The first such action took place in the 9th century when al-Mamun declared a thesis on the creation of the *Qur'an* to be "a state doctrine." This thesis made it possible to distinguish al-Mamun's supporters and the members of opposition, the traditionalists, who were on the side of his brother al-Amin, contending for the Caliph's throne. Pursuing the same political aims, al-Mamun openly favored the Mutazilites, though he was not a Mutazilite, and the Mutazilites were not anxious to serve him. The thesis on the creation of the *Qur'an*, proclaimed by al-Mamun and supported by his successors (al-Mutazim, ruled 833-842, and al-Wasik, ruled 842-847), was declared untrue in 849, and Mutazilism was then prosecuted. This radical change in the religious policy of Baghdad took place under the Caliph al-Mutawakkil (ruled 847-861). As P. Juse wrote, such a change "had a purely political character"(9, p.81). That was clear if only from the fact that al-Mutawakkil "was a respected Mutazilite"(9, p.81). But on the eve of his accession to the throne in the capital of the Caliphate riots broke out. To save his throne, he was obliged to make concessions to the dogmatists and traditionalists, who had great influence on the majority of the people of Baghdad (*amma*).

The second attempt to define "official dogma" by the Abbasids took place under al-Kadir (ruled 991-1031), when the Caliph's power hardly spread beyond his residence in Baghdad. In the disintegrated Caliphate, centrifugal forces became stronger, and, in order to enhance their freedom, these forces fostered different forms of heterodoxy: Mutazilitism, Shiism, and, especially, the Ismailite trend of the latter that was also supported by dangerous rivals of the Abbasids, the Egyptian Fatimids. Under these conditions, al-Kadir organized ceremonial readings of *Qadiriyyah*. In his palace, a new creed condemned heterodox views (including the thesis on the creation of the *Qur'an*) as contradicting the views of the "Salaf," the first Muslims who were honored as experts of the Holy texts. But neither in Baghdad nor in the provinces did the Caliph have sufficient power to attach the necessary authority to this new creed in the eyes of his people. The only appreciable result of the publication of *Qadiriyyah* was the fact that on the pretext of its defense, the Ghaznawids and, after them the Seljugis, extended their property, to the territory of the emirates that broke off from the Abbasid state. However, when the political situation required, these two Turkic dynasties accepted some trends (excluding the Shiite-Ismailite ones) that were condemned in *Qadiriyyah*.

This feature of Islam analyzed here was the fact that Islam from the very beginning was oriented to the creation of a community intended to embody a "theocratic" state, whereas in reality, a public system, combining both religious and secular power, appeared impractical in the Islamic East. The absence of an institution for the solution of questions provided the opening for the *Ijtihad*, the independent solution of these questions on the basis of free interpretation of the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. In a wide sense, *Ijtihad* meant also the right to independent interpretation of the holy texts with its philosophical content. These texts had a much clearer and monosemantic character in those parts dealing with juridical problems, but even there Islam did not succeed in establishing a single view. In social life, the canonization of a law was the immediate problem. One can believe the legend that, at the beginning of the 9th century, 500 schools of law disappeared, and in the next century, only the juridical schools of the Shafites, Malikites, Saurits, Hanafites, and Zakhirids continued to function. After the 10th century, when the so-called "Gates

of *Ijtihad*" (in the sense of unlimited freedom in the creation of law) were closed, four main schools of law retained the right to function in Sunnite jurisprudence. Shiite Islam, held that the "abolition" of *Ijtihad* was impossible in principle because it expressed the opinion of the "secret" Imam, at least juridically.

As to problems of speculative theology and of the interpretation of the ultimate basis of being, canonization did not take place and "the Gates of *Ijtihad*" remained open. Here, to be a true Moslem, it was enough to recognize a single God, his messengers and Holy Scriptures, angels, the Resurrection, and the Day of Judgement. But each of these subjects of faith allowed the most diverse interpretation, and such interpretations appeared in large quantities, giving birth to many new doctrines, theological schools, and sects. For example, some people said that everyone who recognized the prophetic mission of Muhammad could be considered a Moslem. According to others, a Moslem was one who pronounced the formula: "There is no God besides Allah, and Muhammad is his messenger." A third group considered a Moslem the one who offered prayers five times a day, oriented toward the Kaaba. (7, p. 230-231). The Murji'ites went still further holding that belief was kept in the inmost recesses of the human heart, where it can be known only by God. In these terms, nonconformists early worked out an optimal variant for expressing their views. Representatives of quite different ideological trends resorted to *ta'wil* (the symbolic-allegoric interpretation of Holy texts). As a result, many regarded the *Qur'an* as an arsenal supplying them with means for their arguments. (5, p. 165).

As in Islam, there was neither church nor clergy in the strict sense of these words. For the Islamic community, the highest level of authority was represented by the community itself (*Umma*), by its collective, unanimous opinion (*Ijma*). But, of course, no one could take opinion polls in the multimillion "collective" of true believers. Even if this were possible, it is hardly probable to find unanimity in people divided by social, political, and cultural barriers. In practice, the function of expressing public opinion was carried out by the Ulama, religious figures, experts in the Islamic sciences, among whom the ruling position belonged to the Faqihs, legal scholars. The activity of the Ulama was concentrated, first of all, in working out the laws (*Fiqh*), and also in such religious disciplines as *Tafsir*, the interpretation of the *Quran* (mainly lexical), *Hadith* studies, and so on. In fact, various schools of law treated the Moslem right to think independently differently, but they were united in retaining their function as mediators between the powers and the masses.

The idea of unanimous public opinion, marked by the term *Ijma*, was always indefinite. As the French Islamist, Godfrois-Demonbin, wrote, "*Ijma* is an unstable expression, a kind of a secret truth from the Quran and expressing God's will. Agreement of the scientists-thinkers on this doctrine (the date of its achievement is difficult to define) was not officially confirmed, and nobody declared it to the public. In this doctrine, adopted after long and passionate debates, the total absence of general principles was staggering" (10, p. 89-90). Because the mechanism for deciding on the basis of *Ijma* was never established, the character of these decisions depended on the conditions of time and place, so that something that was thought inadmissible, *bida*, in time became a generally accepted custom (Sunnah). The lawfulness of such decisions was fully defined by the authority of the Ulama and by their important state-administrative and cultural functions, carried out by jurists in the society. Everywhere they played the role of liaison between the rulers and the people, advising on religious problems both for simple people and for the secular power. In the role of guarantors of Islamic piety, they not only reflected but also created public opinion. This fact, together with their great influence on the population, made the rulers listen to them and "formalize" their informal negative sanctions against those who disagreed.

Quite naturally, many Muslim scholars of speculative theology and philosophy treated most of the jurists and, particularly the Ulama, as traditionalists whose main concern was to uphold the literal meaning of the Holy texts (*Qur'an* and *Sunnah*), and not to diverge from the popular beliefs of the *Umma*.

### **Falsafa and Other Philosophical and Reflective Forms of Opposition towards the Sunnits' Traditionalism**

The development of speculative and philosophically reflexive forms of more liberal thinkers among the Muslims of those times symbolized a qualitatively new stage in its evolution, though socio-culturally it is connected with the previous era.

The fact that early Islam, in contrast with Christianity, was formed without the cultural influence of Hellenism considerably preordained the content of its religious knowledge. The latter arises and is formed mainly as the means of understanding and interpreting the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, and its practical aim is to regulate the life of the *Umma* (the Islamic community). So, in Islam, the traditionally religious sciences of interpretation of the Holy texts (*tafsir*, etc.) and jurisprudence (*Fiqh*) developed in close contact with the primordially "Arabic" sciences of grammar, lexicography, philology and history.

The absolutization of this knowledge by the Sunnite traditionalists is manifest, first of all, in the character of theology (*usul ad-din*). Until the 10th century, it existed in the context of *Fiqh* as an applied discipline, reinforcing traditional Islamic sciences. At the same time, it gave birth to a dichotomy between the traditional and originally "Arabic" sciences, the ancient "first" sciences (*ulum al-awail*, *ulum dakhila*), and the natural sciences of logic and philosophy (*falsafa*). From the point of view of Sunnite traditionalists, applying reason to religious problems was invading the sphere of the sacred with imperfect human knowledge, while theology never seriously aimed to justify faith by reason. But the aspiration of harmonizing the intellectual and sacred spheres of knowledge can be traced even to early Shiism, where the idea of the inner and outer meaning of Holy Scripture spread. On the basis of this idea, a method of symbolic-allegorical interpretation of the *Qur'an* developed. In Ismailism, this method became an inalienable part of esoteric teaching; in Sufism and in *falsafa*, it was one of the main means of legalizing doctrine; for Kalam, it was a way to rationalize theological teachings, to comprehend them by conceptual means that, however, led to an affirmation of the superiority of reason over authorities (*taqlid*).

The formation of philosophical knowledge was conditioned by the assimilation of the Syrian-Christian philosophical tradition and guaranteed by "the Translators' Movement" that began in the 8th century and intensified during the next century, especially when Caliph al-Mamun opened "The House of Wisdom" in Baghdad in 833. As a result of the translators' activity, in which Syrian Nestorian scientists played a leading role, the Islamic bookmen were associated with a wide range of ancient philosophical teaching. *Falsafa* or philosophy, oriented toward Hellenic-Hellenistic traditions, developed mainly in the form of peripatetism based on Aristotle's philosophy and using the achievements of Hellenistic thinkers, most of all the late ancient commentators: Porphyry, Phemisty, John Philophon, and Simplicius. The traditions of the Alexandrian and Athenian schools of Neoplatonism greatly influenced the composition of the doctrines of the *falasifa*, which schools were used for the establishment of formal "agreement" between religion and philosophy. Following Simplicius' tradition affirming the principle of the unanimity of ancient sages on the problems of the ultimate basis of being, the *falasifa* (philosophers), who opposed the dogmatic

tradition, supported the idea of the unity of ancient wisdom in understanding truth (as reflected in Al-Farabi's work *On the Unity of View of the Two Sages - Divine Plato and Divine Aristotle*).

The ideas of Aristotle were supported by the Eastern Peripatetics on the basis of their logic, physics, and metaphysics. The ideas of Plato on the basis of politics, was founded on ethics, in turn, depended on the *Nicomachean Ethics* of the Stagirit. The psychology of the *falasifa* also fell under the influence of Plato's division of the spirit into three parts, but mainly on the Aristotelian treatise, *On the Soul (De Anima)*. The Eastern Peripatetics learned about Neoplatonism from the so-called *Aristotle's Theology*, representing a paraphrase of Parts 4-6 of Plotinus' *Enneads*, as well as from *The Book of Reason*, ascribed to Aristotle (extracts from Proclus' *Elements of Theology*). The content of Proclus' treatise, *On the Eternity of the World*, became known thanks to the rebuttal by John Philoponus. In the development of this philosophy with its accent on the natural philosophy of Aristotle's teaching, a great role was played by the acquaintance of the *falasifa* with the treatises of Alexander of Aphrodisias. His analysis of time revealed considerably more influence on the ideas of Stoicism on the *falasifa* than had previously been thought. Genetic ties of Eastern peripatetism, with the later ancient commentators, influenced the form of the philosophical works in Eastern peripatetic philosophy, which had the character of commentaries, though in reality they were not always such. The point is that although parts of these encyclopaedic works were entitled according to Aristotle's works, this does not mean that they were interpretations of Aristotle. On the contrary, close acquaintance with their content shows that they often deviated from the content of Stratigite's works. The interpretation of *falsafa* as mere commentary, as if developed in terms of exegetics, is not consistent with the structure of Islamic learning.

The Hellenic-Hellenistic element in the culture of the Islamic Middle Ages did not present something from the outside or alien, because these elements were present even in the pre-Islamic culture in many ethnic and confessional groups incorporated into the Arab Caliphate. Indeed, the natural and exact sciences developed as a whole unimpeded and, as a rule, were encouraged by the authorities. Nevertheless, the elaboration of the problems of the ultimate basis of being, and sometimes even the study of logic, aroused suspicion and hostile actions by the traditionalists. That is why *falsafa*, as a professional activity, was cultivated mainly in favorable political conditions and was limited to a relatively narrow group of intellectuals. In the East of the Islamic world, its flourishing was often connected with the activity of the *falasifa*. Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina lived at the court of the sovereigns and were in opposition to Sunnite traditionalism. Some joined movements against Sunnit traditionalism, as well as against the Abbasid dynasty, supported by traditionalists (e.g., "Brethren of Purity"). In the West, the development of *falsafa* was conditioned by a short period of liberalization of intellectual life during the era of the Almohades, who tried to limit the absolute power of the Malikite's jurists. It was also not incidental that the great *falasifa* (who mainly were Peripatetics) had the possibility of concentrating on their sciences without any limitation under the patronage of this or that Caliph, emir, or vizier, under whom they served as advisers and doctors. This limitation made their position unstable and subject to the mutability of the political situation, because their philosophical concepts served as a paradigm not only for the natural sciences, but also for civil and moral-political knowledge. This constituted a challenge to the "divine law" (*Shari'a*) and to the authority of the Ulama as pillars of the Islamic community, based on the monopoly of the interpretation by the law (12, p. 3-33).

At the same time, the elite character of Eastern peripatetism as well as of *falsafa* in general made impossible its becoming an ideology for a mass movement, which in the Medieval epoch generally had a religious character. Hence, the originality of their solution to the problem central



to the medieval philosophy—the problem of the correlation of faith and reason— could be approached in terms of the correlation of the *falasifa*'s views with those of the heterodox trends in the intellectual life of the Islamic Middle Ages, which were more or less closely connected with the *falsifa*.

A first such trends both in time and in influence was Mutazilism. Its origin was in a large degree conditioned by "a dialogue" between Islam and Christianity, as well as by the struggle against Manichaean movements. This was an early form of Muslim speculative theology that was soon transformed into one of the main forms of philosophical reflection.

The Mutazilites, ideologically associated with the educated circles of middle class, emerged as one of the religio-political parties opposed to the Umayyads. Their sympathy with the Zaydites defines their negative attitude towards the Abbasids, under whom they were first persecuted. But under the educated Caliph al-Mamun, loyal to the Zaydites, and under his two successors, al-Mutasim and al-Wasit (ruled 813-847), their situation changed. Some held responsible posts, and the adoption of the thesis, common to the Mutazilites and Jahmits, about the created character of the *Qur'an* was regarded as a criterion of the theologians' loyalty to the regime. Under Mutawakkil (ruled 847-881), the Mutazilites were persecuted again, but they appeared in the political arena in the reign of the Bueids (ruled 945-1055). Their activity promoted the formation of philosophical thought, oriented toward the ancient tradition. The "Arab philosopher," al-Kindi was the first representative of such thought.

In the strict monotheism of the Mutazilites, affirming the identity of the divine attributes with each other and with the essence of God emphasized the leading role of the attribute of knowledge. This entailed subordination of the irrational volitional beginning to a reasonable beginning. At the same time, the Mutazilites' recognition of the transcendence of God, with the absence of any similarity between him and created things, appears to be a genuine immanentism expressing a pantheistic view on the correlation of the creator and his "creatures." With the help of such notions as "non-existent" (*ma'dum*) and "hidden under-existence" (*kumun*), they tried to bring their ontological views in line with Islamic theism: *ma'dums* compose a particular world, homologous to the sensually perceived world, but devoid of the characteristics of time and space. Thus, the creation of things was as if a transformation by God from a "non-existent" state to a state of existence, that is, an unfolding in time and space. Later thinkers, Ibn Rushd included, quite correctly compared the Mutazilites' conception of "non-existent" with the Peripatetics' idea of the prime matter. The difference between them was that the Peripatetics' *maadum*, on the contrary, is essentially something nonexistent, but accidentally existing.

Al-Ashari (ruled 873-935), who came from the Mutazilite milieu, was a theologian and the founder of a strain of Islamic theology called "Asharism." This trend in Islamic theology represents a compromise of the position of the Mutazilites and the traditionalists. For example, in the Asharite conception concerning the problem of the relation of the Creator and his creatures, there is a tendency towards negating the theists' positing of the co-presence ("*ryadopolaganiye*") of God and the world in space and time, affirming His immanentness to the world. This is reflected in the theory that "God exists near everything and in everything, that is, He is connected with a thing through His being" (13, v. 1, p. 180). The majority of the Asharites denied the existence of natural causality, but this did not mean for them a transition to the standpoint of occasionalistic indeterminism. The Asharites explained the natural character of the processes taking place in the world by "a custom" (*'ada*) that was introduced by God and never broken by Him, because the order of the Universe "was predetermined" by the eternal knowledge of Allah. The Asharites also advanced "the principle of permissiveness," ("all that is imaginable is also permissible for

thought"). This is a typical variety of the medieval way of philosophizing—the method "of imaginary assumption"—that possessed heuristic potentiality in different fields of knowledge, as well as for the development of a non-Aristotelian philosophy of nature, as asserted by al-Biruni in his polemics with Ibn Sina (14, p. 39).

The difference between the Asharites and the Mutazilites consists in a more careful answer to a number of questions, specific to Kalam. For example, they recognized the eternity of some divine attributes, and deny "the creativeness" of the *Qur'an* as regards "meaning." In this connection, they distinguished a "verbally expressed," "sensual" speech and an "internal" speech or speech "for oneself. They recognized the possibility of some righteous persons beholding God and denied the possibility of explaining how this is practiced.

The Ismailites' were closer to *falsafa* and the *falasifa* from the point of view of their orientation on ancient philosophical and scientific traditions. Their teaching had considerable influence in the emergence of Eastern peripatetism. Ismailism, is a branch of Shiism and also was the ideological banner of different movements in opposition to the Abbasids' regime. As a theological teaching, it was based on the distinction of the outer, exoteric meaning (*zahir*) of the divine word, and its inner, esoteric (*batin*) meaning. The outer side of Scripture, incarnate in its letter, is destined for the ignorant "crowd" (*al-Jumhur*), while its sacred meaning is comprehended only by the spiritual leaders of the Ismailites, the imams. But between the knowledge of the imams and that of simple believers, there is no impassable border. Wide masses of believers sink into the ocean of ignorance that covered the Earth from the time of the Flood, before the true word of God was incarnated in the letter of Holy Book. But the fall into the depths of ignorance is not inevitable, because there is a "Noah's ark" of knowledge, in which everyone can find salvation for him- or herself, by associating with this knowledge under the guidance of mentors or teachers.

The teaching of the Ismailites represented a combination of the ancient wisdom with the religious and philosophical worldviews of the people of the East. Ties with Neoplatonism, in particular, could be found in the Ismailite cosmology: The divine beginning created the world of reason by eternal action from which the prehistoric world soul produced matter and animate nature. Like the Mutazilites, the Ismailites described the divine beginning using negative terms: God, in their understanding, exists beyond existing and nonexisting.

Both in ideological and political respects the Ismailite movement was divided into radical and moderate trends. The radical wing was formed by the Qarmathians under whose egalitarian slogans—at the end of the 9th century and in the first half of the 10th century—anti-feudal uprisings of peasants, nomads and the urban poor of the Middle East occurred. At the Eastern part of Arabia, the Qarmathians founded their own state, basing social life on the principles of egalitarianism (combined with the forced work of slaves). The Qarmathians openly called Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad deceivers who sought, allegedly, to enslave people by their Mecca, captured the Black stone, and plundered the treasures of the Kabba.

Under the Fatimids, who reigned in Egypt in 969-1171, the Ismailites became reconciled to the idea that their community must continue to live in the bosom of Shari'a. They postponed to the indefinite future the abolition of the divine laws and the proximate coming of Kaim, the last or (seventh) Imam. He was to reveal once and for all the world truth, not disturbed by religious dogmas, and to establish an order based on reason and justice. Henceforth they understood the word Kaim simply as a name of the spiritual leader of the Ismailites, their Imam.

Originally Sufism, appeared as an opposition trend. Like the Mutazilites and Ismailites, on the problems of God's attributes the Sufis took the position of negative philosophy subjecting the *Qur'an* to allegorical interpretation and approaching philosophical conclusions which were

pantheistic in character. The specific character of Sufism consisted in the fact that, on the one hand, it propagated ascetism and, on the other hand, confirmed the possibility of knowing God through mystic intuition.

The Mutazilism, Ismailism and Sufism in various aspects and degrees made contact with falsafa; but the doctrines worked out by their representatives, remained theological (or theosophical) in effect, because conceptually they studied more "practical" than "theoretical" fields of knowledge. The falasifa, on the contrary, were first of all interested in theoretical sciences taken from the ancient heritage. This stage of development of falsafa is represented in the works of Al-Kindi (about 801-870), Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib al-Sarakhsi (killed in 896), and Abu Bakr ar-Razi (865-925). Under the patronage of al-Mamun and his successors to the Caliph's throne, al-Kindi aimed to acknowledge the alien sphere of knowledge. He was the first among the falasifa to bring the main ideas of ancient philosophy into general use in intellectual life, above all Aristotelism as well as Platonism, Neoplatonism, and Neopythagoreanism. However, he did not produce a more or less systematic teaching, which is why the opinion that he was the founder of the Eastern Peripatetism must be taken as an exaggeration. Confirming the priority of scientific over theological knowledge, al-Kindi defended the right of philosophers to truth, fighting against traditionalists. At the same time, he formally acknowledged the superiority of prophetic knowledge over any other, including the philosophical. But his statements in this respect did not necessarily express his personal view.

At this stage of its evolution, falsafa, according to the needs of the society, which was in a process of political and cultural development, was interested mainly in logic, natural sciences, medicine, mathematics, and other branches of "theoretical science." The question concerning the place of philosophy in social life had not arisen. Thus, the falasifa determined their attitude towards the dominant ideology more from the point of view of the theoretical, than that of practical reason. They either negated, or only formally recognized, "the question of the possibility of sharing philosophical knowledge with the broad population, not to mention the ability of philosophy to play a practical role in social and political life."

Falsafa of the 10th century represented quite a different picture in the works of *The Brethren of Purity* (Ikwan as-Safa) and of the founder of Eastern peripatetism, Abu Nasr al-Farabi (870-950). His doctrines reflected the ideology of political circles opposed to the Abbasids and involved the Shiits-Ismailites movement.

*The Treatises of the Brethren of Purity and the True Friends* was written by a secret scientific-philosophical organization that considered its own community a prototype of a "state of good," that was to substitute for the "state of evil," embodied in the Abbasids' Caliphate. This multivolume encyclopedia was intended by the Brethren of Purity for those followers, who turned from blind confidence in religious authorities and were on their way to a higher knowledge that transcended the differences among religions and had at its basis ideas of Aristotelism, Platonism, Neoplatonism, and Neopythagoreanism. At their meetings, called "*madjalis*" and resembling the Mutakalims' "discussion club," the Brethren of Purity exposed the prophets with the same ardor as had the Qarmathians. But in their encyclopedia, they published articles for the readers' independent thinking, lest they should pass from faith to atheism in the process of the dialectic debate used in Kalam.

In al-Farabi's philosophical heritage, attention also focused, first of all, on the thinker's conviction that philosophy is destined to provide a theoretical basis not only for the natural sciences, but also for politics. The intent was to help organize social life on the moral principles required to establish the civil and theoretical virtues needed for the free development of the

sciences and for the active participation of philosophers in politics. His main works includes: A Treatise on the Views of the Virtuous City Inhabitants, Politics, The Aphorisms of a Statesman, On Acquiring Happiness, and A Book of Letters. One can see that his philosophy is oriented simultaneously to the education of his contemporary readers and to the future realization of an ideal "virtuous city," built according to Plato's model on reasonable principles. That is why his treatise, al-Farabi, expands the correlation of philosophy, theology, and religion that became a basis for the following generations of falasifa to solve the problem of the interconnection between faith and knowledge, between practical and theoretical reason.

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## Chapter V

# The Ancient Heritage in Kalam Philosophy

Taufik Ibrahim K.

Classical Arab Islamic culture, which became practically the single heir to the ancient philosophical and natural science traditions, not only saved this tradition, but vastly enriched it and promoted its revival in Europe. In the Islamic world, ancient philosophy was developed not by separate marginal personalities and groups, as is claimed in Islamic historical philosophical literature. Besides the oriental Peripatetics (*falasifa*),<sup>1</sup> it was cultivated by the thinkers of Kalam, Sophism, Shi'ism (particularly Ismailism), the Western, Ancient Greek, and Hellenic typified by elemental-analytic and continual-synthetic perceptions of the world.

### **The Place of Atomism in the Doctrine of the Mutakallims**

The disputes around finitism (the existence of a limit to the divisibility of bodies), unfolded among the Mutakallims themselves, as well as between Mutakallims and finitists and their opponents from other schools (in particular, the Peripatetics). These were a continuation of the corresponding debates in ancient thought. In Kalam, with its two main schools of thoughts—Mutazilism (8th–10th centuries) and Asharism (from the 10th century) these disputes and arguments surfaced at the beginning of the 9th centuries.

Following Shi'ism, the Mutakallim Hisham ibn al-Hakam and the Mutazilite al-Nazzam and his successors taught the division of bodies to infinity. Objecting to this idea, al-Allaf and many other Mutazilites upheld the thesis of the presence of a limit to divisibility and the existence of "indivisible particles." Some Mutazilites, including Abu al-Hussein al-Basri, the head of the Mutazilites in Baghdad, occupied a neutral position on the issue of "indivisibles." Similar divergence existed also among the Asharites. While al-Ashari (d. 935) and al-Bakillani (d. 1013) held atomistic views, al-Juweyni (d. 1085) and Fakhr ad-Din ar-Razi (d. 1210) preferred to refrain from joining either the finitists or their opponents. This last tendency was characteristic on the whole of the late Mutakallims. According to Maimonides, most of the late Mutakallims supposed that their predecessors tried in vain to prove the existence of the atom.<sup>3</sup>

Some researchers explain the interest in atomism by the Mutakallims as being bearers of the "specific spirit" of Arab-Islamic culture. They suppose that Arabs and others in the Near East possess "symbolic," "atomic," "discrete," purely "analytical" thinking, ever immersed in the single unit and incapable of an integrating activity, embracing the whole.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the atomistic doctrine served Mutakallims as an ontological basis of theistic occasionalism, with its radical creationism (the concept of the uninterrupted creation of the world by God) and indeterminism (denial of any natural regularity whatever in the whole universe).<sup>5</sup>

Atomistic occasionalism seemed to many authors to be almost the single key in comprehending different cultures, including the history of Arab-Islamic society. This atomistic conception was seen as revealing itself in different trends considering life and the universe as a sum of "static, concrete, and disconnected essences" linking the "essential" features of Arab-Islamic culture.

According to L. Massignon, Islamic art is built on a theory of the universe, founded on the belief about the world, which was persistently defended by all orthodox Islamic philosophers who

did not fall under the influence of the Greeks. According to this theory, the world has no form or images within itself; God alone possesses constant existence.<sup>6</sup>

This theory is also expressed in the fact that the perception of the universe as a Cosmos, as an ordered system of things, is alien to them. The Greeks, when developing metaphysics, turned greater attention to what they called the aesthetic proof of the existence of God, coming from the harmony of things in the Cosmos. Such a proof does not exist in Islamic theology. Its proof of God's existence is founded on the changeability of all that is not God.<sup>7</sup>

From this doctrine, "specific" features of the Islamic science, logic, and music are derived. The "fact" that Muslims had a zealous concern for algebra and chemistry<sup>8</sup> is also associated with the above doctrine. In logic, although Muslims knew the Greek syllogism, they concentrated on the minor term.<sup>9</sup> A similar picture holds for music. Muslims, in general, do not have any idea of harmony, the notion of simultaneous chords, which in themselves are the great discoveries of the Christian West, concludes Massignon.<sup>10</sup> Similar ideas are expressed also about other genres of Islamic art.

Finally, L. Massignon sees the "absence" of belief about the person as an autonomous personality in Islamic culture as directly depending upon the "orthodox" doctrines of atomistic occasionalism. In this, all people are considered puppets in the hands of Allah; in general, the whole world is "a theatre of puppets."

Some researchers, not wishing to declare the atomistic world perception as an inborn Islamic attribute, offer a different cultural explanation for the phenomenon. In the spirit of geographical determinism, Gabriel confirms the determining role of desert conditions in shaping an atomistic doctrine; M. Watt links it with the interest of Arabs in the "linguistic and grammatic sciences."<sup>11</sup>

B. Lewis connects the genesis of atomism to the needs of Islamic society, in which the freer socio-economic life of the commercial epoch yielded to a rigid conservative feudalism, which did not change for many centuries.<sup>12</sup> According to B. Lewis, atomism was not only generated by the socio-cultural specifics of medieval Arabs and Muslims, but became a factor in promoting the "stagnation" of Islamic society after the 11th century.<sup>13</sup> Some authors explain away such a phenomenon as the political disintegration of modern Arab countries by "atomistic determinism."<sup>14</sup>

Such cultural speculations were subjected to circumstantial criticism in the work of the prominent Russian orientalist, A.V.Sagadeyev: "*Humanised World in Medieval Islamic Art*."<sup>15</sup> We demonstrated in our own works the weakness and defects of the appeal to the atomistic natural philosophy of the Mutakallims.<sup>16</sup> However, this chapter will develop several ideas expressed in my works revealing a successive relationship between the atomistic systems of antiquity and classical Islam, revealing the contribution of the Mutakallims to the history of atomism.

The denial by the atomists-Mutakallims of the divisibility of bodies "ad infinitum" was due above all to belief in the lack of localization and the inconceivability of infinitude, especially actual infinitude. For ancient and medieval thinkers, infinity turned out to be "the night," in which "all cats are gray." In infinity such categories as "how much," "equal," and "not equal" are inapplicable, because all infinities "are equal" to each other. In their notions, furthermore, the infinite sum of very small quantities (expressed in modern language as infinitesimal), or quantities that were steadily lost in a definite ratio (2:1, for example) were always infinitely great. It seemed impossible to these thinkers to pass infinity.

Mutakallims and other medieval Arab Islamic thinkers were familiar with the difficulties arising with both the affirmation and denial of the infinite divisibility of bodies. In particular, they

knew Aristotle's famous argument about divisibility in his treatise *On Coming-To-Be and Passing Away*, in which he showed that division to infinity would change a body, and at the same time the whole universe, into transparent dust or haze, and consequently, into a mirage. From this it follows that the division of a body must stop at some point. The particles so obtained could not be bodies, "since then there will be something which has not been divided, and it was divisible throughout." On the other hand, they could not be points because "it is absurd that a magnitude should be composed of things which are not magnitudes."

In denying infinite divisibility, the atomist Mutakallims would have had to allow for such difficulties, and also for the criticism of antique atomism and its two main schools (the Pythagorean-Platonic and the Democritean-Epicurean). But their attention was not focused on building a universe founded on a doctrine of atoms and on explaining the properties of bodies by the characteristics of the atoms composing them. It was centered mainly on the thesis of the existence of a limit of divisibility.

The discussion of "indivisibles" was limited to the context of natural philosophy. Within Kalam as a whole and among its spokesmen, there was no unity on the question of the limit of divisibility but evidence of the absence in the Mutakallims doctrine of some necessary, inner link between the atomistic problematic and the ideological conceptions common to the school, not to mention Kalam as a whole. As a rule, there was no such link in the systems of the individual Mutakallims.

In developing atomism, the Mutakallims did not employ it to substantiate the doctrine of the continuous creation of the world by God—for the dynamic teaching was developed in its most consistent form precisely in the anti-atomist current (by al-Nazzam and his followers). They did not strive for a fragmentation of matter into tiny, isolated particles, in opposition to which there arose the continual empire of God. The finitism of the atomist Mutakallims did not presuppose the discreteness of bodies and promote theistic voluntarism. Mu'ammār, a militant adherent of determinism in nature, was one of the first atomists. They did not assert the absolute omnipotence of Allah. Quite the contrary, the existence of a limit to the divisibility of a body presupposed the impossibility of its further division, or rather threw doubt on divine omnipotence. The opponents of the Mutakallims' atomistic doctrine, like Ibn Hazm, drew attention to that.<sup>17</sup>

In fact, the thesis of the existence of a limit to the divisibility of a body was directly linked, for al-Allaf, the founder of the atomistic doctrine in Mutazilite Kalam, with the thesis on the existence of a limit to divine knowledge and power. Al-Allaf even quoted verses of the *Qur'an* in support:

. . . It is He that encompass All things!  
. . . and /God/ takes account of every single thing.

But to count and embrace, he adds, is possible only for the finite.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore, connection with the localization and cognition of actual infinity led al-Allaf to a limitation of divine power and knowledge and to an ending of the process of divisibility of bodies. It was a different matter that he and his followers, in the context of a polemic with those who saw a restriction on divine omnipotence in the recognition of "indivisibles," demonstrated that it was the denial of God's possibility to stop the division of a body at a particle that was not further divisible that led to such a restriction.

Insufficient attention to such a context was characteristic of theological interpretation of the problem of the genesis of the atomist problematic in Kalam, which came up against the following

"paradox." Namely, how could the teachers of Kalam adopt the ontological principles of one of the most materialist and atheistic doctrines of antiquity—the doctrine of Democritus and Epicurus—and on their basis erect an exclusively theistic system? Propositions were voiced in reply that Mutakallims did not know the real doctrine of the Greek atomists, that the atomic philosophy of Democritus and Epicurus had come down to them in distorted form (in a mystical alchemist envelope),<sup>19</sup> that when the Mutakallims became acquainted with the Greek legacy, atomism was already associated with indeterminism, and so on.<sup>20</sup>

But in fact, the teachers of Kalam must have disposed of quite rich and exact information about Greek atomism (in particular with pseudo-Plutarch's *De Placitis Philosophorum* and Aristotole's *Physics* and *Metaphysics*, already translated into Arabic in the early ninth century), and about the atheistic trend of the philosophies of Democritus and Epicurus, who denied a creator, another world, and so on.<sup>21</sup>

### **The Atom and Its Properties**

By distinguishing between physical and mathematical divisibility, Mutakallims-atomists stopped the process of division at the smallest bodies (*aqall al-ajsam*) corresponding to the primary bodies or atoms of Democritus and Epicurus, and to an even greater extent to the minimal lines of the pythagoreans and Platonists. The parts, they said, were divided down to two after which, if one wanted to divide further, division annihilated them. It was not discovered in the imagination (*wahm*); when one wanted to distinguish them by imagination or in some other way, nothing else was found than their disappearance.<sup>22</sup> The first Mutakallims employed two terms, as a rule, in order to designate the limit of divisibility, the "indivisible part (particle)" (al-juz allazi layatajazza) and "indivisible sole substance" (al-jawhar al-fard allazi layanqasim). Sometimes, the terms "part," "sole substance," or simply "substance" were used as abbreviations. Later, these terms became established in an abbreviated form.

An atom has no independent existence but existed only together with other atoms that compose the given body.<sup>23</sup> Certain atomists, it is true, assumed the isolated existence of a separate atom, but they implied by that a mental, imaginary existence, and not a real one. In that respect, the Mutakallims' "parts" were similar not to Democritus' "atoms" but to Epicurus' "ameres" (mentally distinguishable atoms but not separable from them) and to the monad-points of the Pythagoreans and Platonists.

According to some doxographers the Mutakallims' atoms absolutely lacked magnitude (*kamm*), and did not have body, nor length, breadth, or depth. But they were neither geometrical points nor 'mental' monads. The atomists of Kalam, like the classical atomists, made the minimum a special extension intermediate between corporeality and absolute non-extension.

The anti-atomists pointed out that atoms were either bodies, and then they were divisible, or points, from which it was impossible to form a body or continuum allowing for this. Epicurus put forward a third possibility, "ameres" that occupied an intermediate position between primary bodies and points, "measuring magnitude in their own way." The Pythagoreans and Plato earlier had come to a similar solution. From Plato's point of view (according to Aristotole): "extension is different from magnitude; it is what is contained and defined by the form, as by a bounded plane."<sup>24</sup> The discrimination of magnitude and extension fully corresponded to the Greek philosophical tradition of not including the element or principle of things in their number bounded unity, which was not considered a number because it was the principle of counting.



In the same spirit, but in more precise form, the atomists of Kalam constructed an extension of the "indivisibles." The atom, in their opinion, lacked corporeality, but occupied a place in space (*hayyiz*), possessed a certain extension (*imtidad*), magnitude (*miqdar*), volume (*hajm*), area (*masaha*), etc. Some Mutazilites, for example, gave the atom extension; those from Basra considered it necessary for each atom to have a certain area. Asharites taught that an atom had area, magnitude, and volume.<sup>25</sup> As for the Mutazilites of the Baghdad school, wanting even more to stress the difference between microscopic and macroscopic extension, they refused to characterize the atom in itself as extension, which could be attributed only to the composition of a body. Al-Ashari cited the opinion of several Baghdad Mutazilites that when an atom was joined to another atom, each of them would be a body; but when separated neither of them would be a body.<sup>26</sup> That also corresponds to the testimony of al-Nisaburi that in the opinion of Kabi, the head of the Baghdad Mutazilites, it was impossible to say of an atom that it occupied a place in space or had an area until it was joined to another atom. In fact, as Nisaburi noted, the discord among the Mutazilites of the two schools on the extension of an atom did not go beyond differences in modes of expression because there was no disagreement between the two schools that an atom could exist without occupying a definite place in space.<sup>27</sup>

The atom was thus not a body, did not have length, breadth, and depth, but extended in its own way; its extension was the principle of extension in general, the principle of corporeality. When Mutazilites said (Nisaburi wrote in their name) that an atom occupied a place in space (*Mutahayyiz*), they implied that therefore, atoms increased in size (volume) when they were joined to one another.<sup>28</sup>

But what was the minimum number of atoms needed to form the "smallest body"? At the Mutazilites stage of the development of Kalam, atomists gave various answers, but as a rule built corporeality geometrically. Al-Àllaf, in particular, considered that six atoms were sufficient to construct a body—two atoms in each dimension. Muammar and al-Jubbai held eight atoms—two for length, two for width, while depth was formed by piling another four on them. Al-Kabi built the "smallest body" from four atoms—three forming a triangle, the base of a pyramid, and the fourth constituting the apex.

Al-Futi puts forward an interesting construction. He built a body in two steps. First of all, six atoms formed the side (*rukna*); then, in the second stage, the body was formed from six of these sides (molecules). Some atomists constructed the "smallest body" from seven atoms (one in the center and the other six contiguous to it on six sides). The extreme views can be taken as those of Salihi, on the one hand, who identified atom and body, and, on the other hand, the standpoint of those atomists who refused to name a certain number of atoms needed to form a body, limiting themselves to stating that the number was finite.

At the Asharite stage of evolution of Kalam, an idea prevailed of the smallest body as composed of two atoms, a notion that, according to al-Ashari, had previously been held by certain Mutazilites-Iskai (d. 855) and several Baghdadis.<sup>29</sup> It has to be stressed once more that, in the Mutakallims' arguments about the formation of a body from atoms, it was a matter of a purely mental, geometric construction and not of a real, physical process.

The doctrine of the classical atomists about the building a continuum from indivisibles was developed further in the atomicism of Kalam. The anti-atomists (in particular Aristotle) had, of course, pointed out that atoms excluded a continuum: They could not completely coincide with one another but they merge, and they could not come into contact even partially because they had no parts. The atomists (Pythagoreans, Epicurus) spoke of a third possibility by which continuity was preserved, but in what way remained unclear. By drawing a clearer difference between

physical and mathematical divisibility, the atomist Mutakallims taught that an atom had six sides (corresponding to the positions or turns of Democritus): top and bottom, right and left, front and back. In the opinion of the Basra Mutazilites, these sides (jihāt) pertained to the atom itself, and did not differ from it. Some Baghdad Mutazilites were also inclined to hold this view. Others, including Jubbai and Kabi, considered sides to be accidents of the atom. Asharites, like al-Shahrastani, considered the sides or edges (aṭraf) to be unextended parts of an atom; they were, so to speak, geometrical parts of an atom and not its physical components. In that sense, an atom was indivisible although sides or parts could be mentally distinguished in it. By making contact on sides, which represented attributes, accidents or nonextended parts, atoms could form a continuum.<sup>30</sup>

An atom with six sides could come into contact with six atoms. Those atomists who denied the existence of different sides in an atom considered it capable of making contact with no more than one atom. Such was the view of Abu Bishr Salih ibn Abi Salih, and Salih Qubba (d. 860), who claimed that one of the contacting atoms completely occupied the other because, if it were assumed that an atom could make contacts with more than one atom, the whole universe could fit into a fist.<sup>31</sup>

The problem of the form of an atom was linked with that of its extension, but it did not attract much attention among Mutakallims. Evidence of that, in particular, is the absence of its mention in Ashari's *Maqalat al-Islamiyyin*, in which the dispute around the atom and its characteristics occupies considerable space. That circumstance was because—in contrast to the doctrine of Democritus and his followers—the form of an atom played no role in the constructs of the Mutakallims when explaining differences in the sensory qualities of bodies. It was said in later works that the Mutakallims agreed among themselves that in itself the atom had no figure or shape (shakl), but their opinions diverged about likening it to certain figures. Some likened it to a sphere, others to a triangle, and others to a square. The atomists of Kalam saw the superiority of a square (or rather cubic) shape over a round one, in that squares were able to fit together so that there were no cracks or fissures between them.

This explanation of the preference for the square form expresses such a specified element of Mutakallims' atomism as denial of the existence of void, which played such an exceptionally important role in the atomistic doctrine of Democritus. Atoms did not exist outside a body in Kalam, so that the Mutakallims had no need to explain motion or the uniting and separation of atoms in a void. Al-Kabi and other Mutazilites of the Baghdad school rejected the void even as an imaginary assumption. Other Mutakallims, who assumed the existence of a void, spoke of the existence of a void or space between bodies, but not between atoms.<sup>32</sup>

Mutakallims were also concerned with the problem of the weight (thiqal) of an atom. According to al-Ashari, for instance, every atom had weight.<sup>33</sup> A body, too, had one weight or another depending on the number of atoms composing it.

The atomists of Kalam, especially Asharites, regarded atoms as uniform, and identical with one another. They linked differences between them, as a rule, with their accidents in them. Asharites, and together with them the Mutazilites Salihi, Iskafi, Salih Qubba, and others, endowed the atom with the property of being the bearer of all accidents (except compositeness). Other atomist Mutazilites, in particular al-Allaf, Futi, and Abbad ibn Suleiman, considered that an atom could only serve as a substratum of one or another in the composition of a body. According to al-Allaf, for instance, a separate atom could not be the vector of color, taste, or smell until six atoms had been gathered together. When they came together they formed a body and could be the bearer of these accidents.<sup>34</sup> It would be incorrect to interpret such statements, however, in the spirit of

Democritus' atomistic doctrine, that is, in the sense that the accidents of a body arose from the union of atoms and disappeared when they were separated. It meant only that uniting of atoms was a *sine qua non* (but not the cause) for the "installation" of qualities in a body.

Mutakallims also discussed the question of the qualities of an individual atom, if its isolated existence could be mentally assumed. Certain Mutazilites (for example, al-Futi and Abbad ibn Suleiman) categorically denied the possibility of the separate existence of an atom. Even God, they taught, did not have the power to endow an atom with such existence. Other Mutazilites, who assumed the separate existence of an atom, disagreed among themselves about its qualities. From the standpoint of Muammar and al-Allaf, for instance, an atom taken separately could only move, be at rest, and come into contact with other atoms, but lacked any sense-perceived qualities. Al-Jubbai considered that a separate atom could possess such qualities as color, smell, and taste, although it could not, as such, be a vehicle of life, knowledge, etc. It was characteristic of Mutazilites as a whole to deny that a separate atom could be a vehicle of life and the attributes associated with life. Life, knowledge, will, etc., were accidents of a body as a whole, and not of each of its component atoms. Asharites recognized a capacity for separately existing atoms to possess all the qualities of bodies.<sup>35</sup>

Mutakallims were closer to a geometrical, mathematical atomism of the Pythagorean-Platonic type than to the physical atomism represented by Democritus. They were primarily interested in whether there was a limit to the divisibility of a body. In connection with the substantiation of finitism, they discussed certain attributes of the limit of divisibility of the atom, namely, its extension, sides, form, qualities, etc. The teachers of Kalam did not distinguish atoms by magnitude, position, form, etc., because, unlike Democritus and his school, they did not explain the sense-perceivable qualities of bodies by means of the characteristics of atoms and their motion and did not construct secondary qualities from primary ones.

The conception of atomist Mutakallims set out above is (as was noted in the medieval Islamic literature)<sup>36</sup> one of the four possible versions of the answer to whether bodies were divisible, depending on the character of the divisibility (finite or infinite, actual or potential). These variants were as follows: (1) a body admitted of a finite number of actual divisions and consisting of a finite number of atoms (parts not having parts); (2) a body admitted of an infinite number of actual divisions and consisted of an infinite number of atoms; (3) a body *admitted* of a finite number of potential divisions, and consisting of a finite number of atoms, which existed potentially but not actually; (4) a body admitted of an infinite number of divisions and did not consist of actually existing atoms.

The first answer represented the point of view of the classical atomists and finitist Mutakallims, the last that of the Peripatetics. The third view was that of al-Shahrastani, which (according to Fakhrad-Din ar-Razi) he set out in his book *Al-Manahij w-l-hayanat (Way and Explanations)*. That book, however, has not come down to us. Shahrastani's views are usually compared with the theory ascribed to Plato that there comes a moment in the consecutive division of a body when it is annihilated and transformed into *materia prima*.

The second view is ascribed to al-Nazzam and Anaxagoras, though it is more accurate that al-Nazzam himself did not put it forward but was compelled (according to the well-known method of *Ilzam*) to adopt it. In fact he, like the Peripatetics, denied the atomic structure of a body. He stressed that each particle of a body had a part, and each half a half; a part was always divisible, and there was no limit as regards divisibility.<sup>37</sup> But infinite divisibility, which is at stake here, is more actual (as was held by the stoics) than potential (as with the Peripatetics). Al-Nazzam's claim, explaining the difference in the volumes of bodies on the assumption of their divisibility to infinity,

witnesses to that to some extent: If a mountain and a mustard seed were divided into half (he argued), the half of the mountain would be bigger than the half of a mustard seed, and it would be just the same if they were divided into four, five, or six equal parts; the quarter, fifth, or sixth of the mountain would be bigger than the quarter, fifth, or sixth of the seed, and that would remain true even with such division to infinity.<sup>38</sup> Jurjani, incidentally, pointed out that al-Nazzam did not distinguish between what was potentially in a thing, and what was actually in it.<sup>39</sup> He was, therefore, faced with the problem of complete divisibility (which Aristotle discussed in his *Coming To Be and Passing Away*)<sup>40</sup> : If a continuum could be divided wherever one wanted, at some convenient place, there is no logical grounds for asserting that it could not be divided immediately in all these places. When affirming the actual divisibility of a body to infinity, al-Nazzam should have concluded (according to Jurjani) that an infinite number of parts actually existed in a body, and because any possible division could be considered already realized, these particles should be indivisible. The doctrine of an infinite number of atoms in a body ascribed to al-Nazzam is, thus, only a logical deduction from his doctrine of the actual divisibility of a body to infinity.

The idea held by al-Nazzam (as noted above), that is, of a body as a combination of different qualities, led to a kind of qualitative atomism. The Mutakallims Dirar ibn Amr, Hafs al-Fard, and Najjar became followers of his in the ninth century. In their opinion sense-perceived qualities—color, smell, lightness and heaviness, dampness and dryness, etc.—were elementary entities, "indivisible parts." At least 10 such "indivisible parts" were needed to form a body.

Therefore, Mutakallims continued the antique atomistic tradition, which was almost buried in oblivion in medieval Christian Europe, and promoted its revival there. In working out the principle of finitism, the teachers of Kalam developed a number of ideas, which the thinkers of antiquity were only about to approach. Among them, the distinction between "extension" and "corporeality," "position," and "place," physical and mathematical divisibility, and physical and mathematical minimums (atom and spot). These ideas, apparently, were perceived directly or indirectly by natural philosophers of the Renaissance epoch from the Mutakallims. The ancient concept of "pause," which passed to the atomists of the modern epoch through Kalam, explains the difference in velocities of motion of a body by big or smaller number of "stops."<sup>41</sup> It should also be noted that the main philosophical and mathematical arguments in defense and refutation of "indivisibles" were crystallized in the doctrine of the atomist Mutakallims and of their opponents, arguments and that would be repeated in different versions over the centuries.<sup>42</sup> It is not accidental that even in the 19th and 20th centuries, some European finitists, were among the first in the list of their predecessors and teachers, the Mutakallims.<sup>43</sup>

## **Aristotelianism**

The erroneous stereotypes regarding the fate of the ancient heritage in medieval Islamic culture included the belief in an antagonism of two traditions—paganism and Islamic—supposed to be reflected in the irreconcilable opposition of Kalam against Falsafa. The culmination of this opposition, it is supposed, is the book by al-Ghazali *Tahafut al Falasifa* (*Refutation of Philosophers* or *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*), which, ostensibly, inflicted such a blow on falsafa that it was unable to recover.<sup>44</sup> But according to this view, the rapprochement of Kalam and falsafa, which began after the 12th century, appears as "enigmatic" and "paradoxical," and for this reason is neglected by the adherents of these views discussed in *Overthrowers of Peripatetism*.

Maimonides, in explaining the origins of Kalam, wrote that all the opinions of Mutakallims were based on positions borrowed from Greek and Syrian authors who disputed opinions of

philosophers and criticized their position.<sup>45</sup> Thus, Kalam appeared to protect the teachings of Islam from the destructive influence of falsafa, alien to Islam in its "letter and spirit." Such belief about the origin of Kalam as "anti-falsafa" up to now has been the most widespread view in literature. For example, in one of the most recent works on the subject, it is contended that the opposition between Kalam and falsafa was a continuing opposition between the fathers of Church and traditional philosophers.<sup>46</sup>

It is maintained that Kalam did not only appear as a reaction to falsafa, but became a philosophical system only in its struggle with falsafa. Precisely, the opposition of the followers of Aristotle to orthodox doctrine, according to A. Shekel, forced Mutakallims to leave the ground of simple interpretation of *Qur'an* and try, on the one hand, to prove the rationality of its main positions, particularly those which were in contradiction with philosophers, and, on the other, by rational arguments to refute those who were against it.<sup>47</sup>

The means by which the Mutakallims carried on the struggle with the "heretical" falsafa was none other than the adoption of the logic, dialectics, and even the metaphysics of the falsafa. In this light, the question is about Aristotle's logic, dialectics, and metaphysics. The Mutazilites, maintains Goldtsier, carried on a struggle with Peripatetics' philosophy, under the cover of Aristotelianism.<sup>48</sup> I.P. Petrushevsky states the same, saying that the Mutazilites used the methods, terminology, and arguments of Aristotle's logic and philosophy.<sup>49</sup> Sometimes, it is specified that the Mutakallims took the idealistic elements of Aristotle's doctrine and on this built a scholastic system.<sup>50</sup>

However, none of these authors, postulating in the most general form the borrowing by the Mutakallim of one or another element from Aristotle's philosophy, render their theses concrete, nor note that these statements do not at all agree with their belief about Kalam as a system of "atomistic occasionalism." The most plausible of these theses seems to be the position that Aristotle's logic, first of all, his dialectics, was accepted as an armament by all the teachers of Kalam, both Mutazilites and Asharites. The idea of the dominant role of Aristotle's logic in the theoretical formation of oriental Peripatetics, as well as in their Mutakallim opponents, apparently originated from the appearance in 1934 of the book by an Egyptian researcher I. Madkur, the "*The Organon of Aristotle in the Arabic World*."<sup>51</sup> There, he demonstrated the general presence of the *Organon* in the formation of the creative works of the most prominent teachers of Kalam.

The bankruptcy of the statement on the acceptance by Mutakallims of Aristotle's logic was shown by a compatriot of I. Madkur, A. S. an-Nashar, in his monograph, *Methods of Research by Thinkers of Islam* (Alexandria, 1947). This work proves that the influence of Aristotle's logic on the Mutakallims began only after al-Ghazali. To the argument brought by an-Nashar, it is possible to add the following: In all the publications of the last four decades of the treatises of Mutazilites and Asharites, including *Intisar* of al-Haiyat, *Sharh al-usul al-Khamsa* of Abd al-Jabbar, *Tamhid* of al-Bakillani, and *Shamiland Irshad* of al-Juweyni, we find no traces of Aristotle's logic. Moreover, the trend noted among the Mutakallims, from the 12th century, toward the assimilation of this logic was connected with the general rapprochement of the Kalam with Peripatetism, which was terminated by their merger in the following century.

### **Hostility between Kalam and Falsafa**

Further, the thesis about the initial hostility between the Kalam and falsafa does not agree with many facts related to the histories of the Kalam, not only of Mutazilite, but also of the Asharites.

To begin with, that thesis is refuted by the fact that the Mutazilites were one of the first admirers of the ancient wisdom in the Arab Islamic world and played a considerable role in the familiarization of Arabs with the works of ancient philosophers, including Aristotle and his commentators. According to Steiner, al-Nazzam reports that he studied Greek philosophy and connected its views with the doctrine of his predecessors. Later thinkers followed his example. We can confirm, adds Steiner, that the Mutazilites were the first who not only were acquainted with the translations of works by Greek natural scientists and philosophers, done during the reigns of al-Mansur and Al-Mamun, but also employed the process of Greek education and put their own thoughts onto a new road.<sup>52</sup> On this issue, the legend about *A Dream of al-Mamun* tried to explain the motives that spurred the Caliph to encourage translations of the ancient authors—Aristotle, first of all. This legend was reported in the work of Ibn Abi Usaiba.

"Al-Mamun once upon a time saw Aristotle in a dream and asked him:

-What is a virtuous person (al-husn)? Aristotle answered:

-One who considers virtue reason.

- And what else?

-One who considers virtue the Shari'a.

-And what else?

-One who considers virtue the crowd.

-What else?

-Nothing more."<sup>53</sup>

In this legend, attention is paid to the association between Aristotle and "translation movements" in the epoch of al-Mamun, on the one hand, and Mutazilism with its doctrine on the reasonable nature of virtue and evil, on the other hand. Al-Balkhi notes about al-Nazzam that, having answered a rebuke about being ignorant of the corresponding works of Aristotle, added the following: "Which do you want? . . . that I recite by heart from the beginning to the end or from the end to the beginning?"<sup>54</sup>

The general attitude of Mutazilites to falsafa is expressed by an utterance of al-Jahiz that the true Mutakallim is the one, "who is a master of the questions of religion (Kalam ad-Din) as well as questions of philosophy (Kalam al-falsafa); we consider a good scientist to be the one who combines both in himself."<sup>55</sup> In this light, it is difficult for one to imagine any hostile attitude of the Mutazilites to "philosophy," unless one speaks of polemics on one or another natural scientific question on which, among the Mutakallims themselves, there were no less heated disputes. On the other hand, al-Ashari confirms that in their doctrine about God and His attributes, the Mutazilites borrowed from "their own fellow philosophers" (ikhwanihim min -al-mutafalsifa), but did not voice their own views openly, as the philosophers could afford to do, since -they were afraid of a sword and blows from those in power."<sup>56</sup> But al-Shahrastani accuses adherents of Mutazilism of having "followed in the tail of falasifa."<sup>57</sup>

In the thesis on the irreconcilable opposition between Kalam and falsafa is not confirmed by the works of outstanding Asharites. Thus, in the works that have reached today from al-Ashari one does not find any instructions on polemics with "philosophers." The same can be said of the conserved works of al-Bakillani. In the list of works of the latter, one also does not meet any title, which mentions any disputes of the author with philosophers. This is exactly the same with works of al-Juweyni. In the single place in *Irshad* where al-Juweyni polemizes, on only two pages with falasifa, he is discussing partially natural scientific questions.<sup>58</sup>

The list of the works of al-Ashari includes the treatise *Refutation of philosophers* ("Fi ar-radd ala falasifa").<sup>59</sup> But a question arises, why al-Ashari does not mention this polemic in the work *The Doctrine of Muslims*—more correctly—*Islamiyin*, a large work which reached us safely. Nor were any treatises of this sort saved and there are no references to this treatise among the followers of al-Ashari or among doxographers. Considering the general defensive tactics of the adherents of the Asharite Kalam, it is possible to suppose that al-Ashari did not write such a treatise, but that it is added by his followers to the list of his works, so as to dissociate themselves from falasifa and portray their teacher as an apologetic of "orthodox" Islam.

Therefore, both at the Mutazilites stage of development of Kalam, and the Ashari stage, there can be no talk of any serious confrontations between Mutakallims and falasifa, at least from the side of the former. The hostile attitude to philosophy should be sought among those dogmatic theologians who rejected rationalist methods of falsafa as well as of Kalam. Let us refer to the message of al-Kindi to Caliph al-Mutasim in defense of "first philosophy"<sup>60</sup> and the highly significant fact that the "philosopher of the Arabs," the founder of oriental Peripateticism, shared with the Mutakallims-Mutazilites the ordeals suffered by liberal thinkers during the rule of al-Mutawakil. Some time later around 890, according to the historiographer Ibn al-Asir in Baghdad "from professional copiers it was demanded that they take a vow not to copy a single book on philosophy."<sup>61</sup> This took place when Mutazilistic Kalam was already prosecuted, but Asharism had not yet appeared in the ideological arena.

## **Al-Ghazali**

Consequently, the attacks on philosophy by the conservative circles began before the appearance of *Tahafut* of al-Ghazali, whose author usually is accused of having by his anti-Peripatetic deliberations put an end to the further development of Aristotelism in the Islamic world. To illustrate the exaggeration of the role of al-Ghazali, A.S. Sagadeyev cites the words of Nasir Hisrow, who described in 1964 the fatal consequences of the "witch hunts": "As these so-called scientists (that is, theologians—I.Ö.) declared unbelievers all those who mastered the science of created things, searchers for answers to questions "how?" and "why?" became silent; the interpreters of this science continued to keep silent, and as a result everything fell under the authority of ignorance, in particular in the region of Khorasan and lands of the East."<sup>62</sup> At that time and for more than a decade in Khorasan, Tugrul-Bek prosecuted Asharites, and on his orders famous Mutakallims-Asharites were expelled from this province. The worst was that al-Ashari was publicly cursed in all the mosques of the province. Thus, both the Asharites and Falasifa equally fell victim to the "orthodox" reaction a long time before the appearance of al-Ghazali's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*.

As for the polemics of the author of the *Tahafut* with the Eastern Peripatetics, it should be noted that both the motives of the majority of the polemics, and their place in the creative activity of al-Ghazali as a whole, allows different interpretations, and consequently, also evaluations. An adequate image about the value of these polemics in the history of the relations of Kalam and of falsafa is possible only when the following facts are taken into consideration:

1. Before writing the *Tahafut*, al-Ghazali had published his treatise, *The Aims of the Philosophers* (*Makasid al-falasifa*), in which he had objectively expounded the views of the Eastern Peripatetics, allegedly so as subsequently to refute them. This treatise, however, was met with criticism on the part of religious critics, who accused the author of too wide and uncritical an

interpretation of Peripatetic doctrine. Traditional theologians without bases could not look upon "Makasid al-falasifa" as a further quibble among Mutakallims, whose polemics obviously were unacceptable in the eyes of dogmatists who were concerned mainly over their spread. Here, it is important that al-Ghazali describes, in particular, Peripatetic logic and mathematics, which he intended to criticize. He considered them as neutral sciences, even wholly acceptable. The presentation itself also reminds one of a style of a textbook with corresponding "exercises."

2. In the *Tahafut*, al-Ghazali emerges not as a supporter of Asharism, as usually expressed in literature, but on behalf of "both Mutazilites and Asharites, and also Kalamists," between whom he considers the differences to be "only in details." Later, after his departure from Kalam and entering on the path of Sufism (if we are to believe al-Ghazali's *The Deliverance from Error*), his critiques are similar to those in the *Tahafut*, but based upon his positions as a Sufi, rather than as a Mutakallim.

3. He discusses in the *Tahafut* 20 theses of oriental Aristotelism. These are subjected to an immanent criticism that is philosophically well prepared and well orientated to the Peripatetic reader. But this creates the impression that al-Ghazali wanted only to take revenge on falasifa for their supercilious attitude to Mutakallims as "dialecticians," incapable of rising to the level of apodictic proofs. He wants to show the Peripatetics themselves (or their supporters) that their reasoning is far from perfect. And with this, in principle, agrees even his opponent, Ibn Rushd. Such an argument must be assumed to be the primary task of al-Ghazali's treatise. After all, the main aim of al-Ghazali could not be to denounce the Peripatetics in "orthodox eyes" for the three theses he considers incompatible with Islam—denial of the bodily nature of pleasures and punishments in the afterlife, knowledge by God of single things, and the creation of the world in time—do not require any special comments. Exposing the bankruptcy of the methods by which falasifa proved these three theses could not have been the aim of these statements; otherwise it is incomprehensible why he analyzes with such zealousness the other 17 theses that he considers far from "heretica,<sup>1</sup>" including "On the fact that they cannot prove the unity of God" and "On the fact that they cannot prove the bodylessness of the Almighty God."

4. In other of his treatises (for instance, *Marij al- Kudus*), al-Ghazali holds theses similar to those criticized by him in *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. This "inconsistency" captured the attention of not only the critics of al-Ghazali "from the left" (Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd), but also his critics "from the right," including his contemporaries, al-Maziri and al-Tartushi, who accused him of following the philosophers, especially Ibn Sina<sup>63</sup> even to apostasy. In his answer to al-Ghazali, Ibn al-Salah brought back the famous formula "Logic is the threshold of philosophy, but the threshold of evil is evilness." The unfriendly utterances of al-Ghazali—the Sufi in the address of Kalam and Mutakallims—naturally caused a corresponding reaction on the side of the latter. Ash Shahrastani limited himself by not identifying him as an Asharist, but the Asharite al-Subki persistently refused to identify him as belonging to the Mutakallims and even to have authored any treatises on Kalam.<sup>64</sup>

In the light of all these facts, it is difficult to expect that the polemics of the author of *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* with the Peripatetics could have had some serious negative influence upon the fate of falsafa in the Islamic world. Moreover, regardless of the subjective aspirations of al-Ghazali, his activity on those or other sections of the Peripatetics' philosophy objectively facilitated the beginning of the rapprochement of Kalam and falsafa, which began sooner than expected.



## The Relation of Peripatetic Philosophers to Kalam and Mutakallims

During the times of al-Kindi, there existed only one form of Kalam—Mutazilism. In the list of multiple works, the "Philosopher of the Arabs," one finds only two unknown treatises, whose titles suggest polemics with some Mutazilites: *Treatise on the Bankruptcy of the Statement on the [Existence] of Indivisible Particle* and *Discourse in the Refutation of Some Mutakallims*. As seen, al-Kindi stood not against Kalam, in general, but against "some" Mutakallims only; moreover, if one proceeds from the first of the above-mentioned treatises, he opposed all those who held the principle of finitism. But, as we remember, the concept of indivisible particles was rejected among some Mutakallims-Mutazilites, for instance, al-Nazzam. Consequently, his polemics with the Mutakallims were not universal and in principle, but were particular in nature. In general, the solution of the question of the correlation between reason and faith was consonant with the corresponding prescriptions of Mutazilite Kalam. It is no wonder that in historical-philosophical literature al-Kindi is considered as a Mutazilite, or the one who joined within his doctrine Kalam and falsafa.<sup>65</sup> In particular, S.N. Grigoryan in his book *Medieval Philosophy of Near and Middle East Peoples* writes: "The struggle against Islam in this period was led by prominent representatives of Mutazilism. The most prominent in this school of thought was al-Kindi."<sup>66</sup>

As to al-Farabi, his attitude to Kalam is expressed in the treatises *The Book of Letters (Kitab al-Huru)*, *Classification of Sciences (Ihsa al-Ulum)*, and *On the Value of the Term Reason (Fi maani al-akl)*. In these treatises, Kalam is considered as a science substantially giving a rationalist explanation of religious prescriptions, but accidentally, when necessary, protecting such from critics. The emphasis here is that Mutakallims in this or another event use "dialectical" (in Aristotle's sense) discourses. In the *Virtuous City*, run by "philosophers, Kalam was relegated to be a servant of philosophy. Besides, the Second Teacher has written a treatise entitled *Small Interpretation of Logic in the Style of Mutakallims (Kitab al-Mukhtasar ala tariqah al-Mutakallimin)*, in which Aristotle's logical terms are provided with corresponding terms of Mutakallim logic.

Besides, Ibn , and, therefore, Kalam, can serve as a bridge over which a trained individual could go from religious convictions to philosophical knowledge, based on "apodectical" discourses. If one considers Ibn Sina's critical remarks to be addressed to Mutakallims (though he does not indicate that his criticism is directed against them), as with al-Kindi, these remarks which concern positions accepted among some Mutakallims are discordant with Aristotle's continualism, but not with the general world outlook of Kalam.

Therefore, there are no principle contradictions between "philosophy" and Kalam. There can be no talk of Kalam coming into being as an orthodox objection to the spread of falsafa or that those doctrines of the Peripatetics by their sharp edge were directed against Kalam. Kalam for the Peripatetics was a school, concentrated not around a definite world outlook system, but around definite ways of reasoning which are less productive and less beneficial than the apodectic system of thought. Otherwise, al-Farabi could not integrate this science into the ideological structure of his ideal society.

We should note in this connection that the attitude of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, and later of Ibn Rushd, to Kalam as a science that uses reasoning but whose cognitive value is less productive than the apodectical reasoning of the philosophers, is one more argument that Kalam, including also Asharism, was not a generally accepted orthodox doctrine.

But turning to later Peripatetic traditions of Arab-Islamic philosophers, one finds that the first two representatives of this tradition, Ibn Badja and Ibn Ūfayl, in general do not refer to Mutakallims. Only in Ibn Rushd (1126-1198) do we find multiple critical utterances towards Asharism. These are mainly in his polemical treatises, *The Incoherence of the Incoherence (Tahafut at-Tahafu)*), *Discourse, which Brings Solution to the Relations Between Philosophy and Religion*" (*Fasl al-makal fima beina al-hikma wa-sh-Shari'a min ittisal*), and *Explanation of the Argumentation with Respect to the Dogmas of Religion*" (*Kashf al-adilla an-akaid al-milla*).

To understand adequately the position of Ibn Rushd with respect to the Asharites, it is necessary to take into account the following:

-First of all, the Cordoba philosopher, as well as his compatriot Maimonides, did not possess sufficiently reliable information on the views of Mutakallims.

-Second, the majority of his utterances on the Asharites are done in the context of polemics with al-Ghazali.

-Third, like his predecessor, Peripatetics of the Islamic Orient, Ibn Rushd is concerned mainly with the Kalam's ways of reasoning, rather than with its world outlook.

-Fourth, the falsafa of the East, and first of all, Ibn Sina, were subjected to no less sharp (if not more furious) criticism than the Asharites, and al-Ghazali, who spoke on their behalf.

-Fifth, in criticizing the Mutakallims, Ibn Rushd repeatedly emphasized that the outlook of Mutakallims, in the last analysis, coincided with the outlooks of the "philosophers," and that their differences are not principle in character because they are related to argumentation and expression. In the treatise, *Discourse, Which Brings a Solution on the Fundamental Problem of the Eternity of the World*, Ibn Rushd writes: "As to the question whether the world is eternal, or came into being at a definite time, according to my viewpoint, the differences between the Mutakallims and the ancient philosophers, on this question, is a matter of the different names they use."<sup>67</sup> Ibn Rushd also wrote a special treatise (which has not reached us) about the proximity of the views of Mutakallims and Peripatetics on the existence of the world.<sup>68</sup> At the same time, in *Inconsistency*, the Cordoban thinker agrees with the criticism against Eastern Peripatetics by Hamid al-Ghazali, speaking on behalf of the Mutakallims, that this criticism is only in relation to al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, but not in relation to falsafa as a whole. It is not at all that Kalam had been severely criticized and lost its philosophical appeal.<sup>69</sup> The content and methodological criticism of Ibn Rushd is directed, first of all, against al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, while the "dialectical" method used by Kalam, and which al-Ghazali uses, is refuted by the Cordoban thinker in so far, according to him, as this method has no relation in general to falsafa. More than that, if he forgives al-Ghazali's *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* for the "time and place," he never gives any excuses for al-Farabi and Ibn Sina who distorted the authentic philosophy of Aristotle.

To sum up. In all those points in which the Eastern Peripatetics carried on polemics with Mutakallims (finitism, etc.), the latter also carried heated polemics about them. And of the points on which Ibn Rushd disputed with the Mutakallims, by bringing to the fore, first of all, the methodological questions of argumentation he also disputed with eastern Peripatetics. Consequently, we cannot say that there existed, here, two confronting and irreconcilable world outlooks. We can only speak of two differing ways of reasoning, using different terms, which was conditioned by the different auditors they were addressing: "Philosophers" mainly addressed their

studies to the intellectual elite, while Mutakallims, to the wide circles of educated citizens (burghers).

In other words, there was no intractable abyss between Kalam and philosophy. This was later confirmed, first by their coming together and then by their merging.

### **The Convergence of Kalam and Philosophy**

The first thinker, some of whose works have reached us, and who began the convergence of Kalam and philosophy, was Abu-l-Barakat al-Baghdadi (1077-1164).<sup>70</sup> While keeping, in general, to the views of Peripatetics on questions of logic, physics, and metaphysics, he rejected the theses as unacceptable to the Mutakallims, that the single produces only the single, that the eternal can not be a receptacle for the emerging things, that God can not have attributes in addition to His essence, about the existence of 10 cosmic reasons, etc.

Laying bridges to Kalam from the side of philosophy was continued by the follower and defender of the philosophy of Ibn Sina, Nasir al-Din al-Tusi. He left the book *Explaining Kalam (Tajrid al-Kalam)*,<sup>71</sup> in which, by using the terminological apparatus of Peripatetics, he gave a short exposition of the essence of the doctrine of his contemporary Mutakallims.

At the same time, Kalam was coming closer to philosophy. But it is necessary to underline, that some Mutakallims argued that they began to study "philosophy" in order to criticize those points, which contradict Islam. In explaining this phenomenon, at-Taftazani argued that, later, when many philosophical works were translated into the Arabic language, and Muslims began to study them, they tried to refute the viewpoints of philosophers, which were inconsistent with the Shari'a. At the same time, they enriched Kalam with many ideas from philosophy, although they were mainly oriented to the refutation of the latter. The end result was that they brought into Kalam large parts of physics and metaphysics, and studied mathematics to such an extent that it became difficult to differentiate between the two. The only difference was that Kalam continued to study the religious tradition (*samiyat*). This was how later Kalam (Kalam al-Mutakhirin) looked, concludes at-Taftazani.<sup>72</sup> It is necessary to underline one more point: the manner of expression of the Mutakallims, such as at-Taftazani's, shows that the interest of Kalam in "falsafa" was not only for the purposes of apologetically defending religion.

The most famous representatives of Kalam, who opened the ground for the convergence of the two sciences, were al-Shahrastani (d. 1153) and Fakhr ad-Din al-Razi (d. 1209). About them the following should be noted. In some works on the history of Arab-Islamic philosophy, it is allegedly confirmed that in the treatise, *The Struggle of Philosophers (Musaraat al-falasifa)*, by al-Shahrastani and in some works of al-Razi, Kalam emerges as an irreconcilable enemy of the philosophical approaches of the Eastern Peripatetics. A close familiarization with these works convinces the reader that both these thinkers mounted an immanent criticism of some positions held by the Eastern Peripatetics, finding in them inconsistencies, which were also characteristic of al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, and which were exposed by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. Apart from the Peripatetic theses rejected by Abu Barakat al-Baghdadi, al-Razi, and al-Shahrastani challenged the philosophy of Ibn Sina as logically contradictory on the concepts of "possible being" and "necessary being," and in the doctrine of substances and accidents (the last being the essence of the species, not of its being in general, but only of its possibility).

Characterizing the work of al-Razi, one of his contemporary travelers, Ibn Jubayr, writes that having arrived in the yard, he discovered that al-Razi turned away from the Sunni and forced people to study the books of Ibn Sina and Aristotle.<sup>73</sup> An even more acerbic picture is drawn of

Muhammad al-Shahrastani by one Khorezemia historian who closely knew him: Al-Shahrastani, he informs us, knew theological science well; he could have become an Imam if only he was not disturbed by a lack of faith and by his inclination to philosophical heresy. "We Khorezmians were often surprised by him: that such a person as he with high achievements and a sharp mind, still gravitates towards those matters which have no ground under them. He concerns himself with affairs that are impossible to prove either with arguments of wit, or with the witness of tradition. He drops into the dark debris of philosophy and turns away from the light of the *Qur'anic* laws—the Shari'a. We were his neighbors and good friends. And in vain he used all his diligence to prove the righteousness of philosophical doctrines, and reject all of that was said against them."<sup>74</sup>

These two Mutakallim Asharites propagandized *falsafa* mainly in small conversations and in an indirect way (in particular, in the process of criticizing some Peripatetic positions). Among much later Mutakallims, the integration of Peripatetic philosophy with the Kalam system was realized quite openly.

Below, readers shall be convinced of the groundlessness of the statement of M. Watt that the Asharite school disappeared in the end, so to speak, in the flames of philosophy.<sup>75</sup> D. B. McDonald stated (supported by E. P. Petrushevsky), that to the contrary, at the time of al-Iji and at-Taftazani, philosophy definitely fell from its throne and was transformed into the maidservant and defender of theology.<sup>76</sup> The synthesis of Kalam and *falsafa*, on the basis of the treatise of "Tawali al-anwar"<sup>77</sup> of al-Baydawi (d.1286), served as an example for similar encyclopedic works written by representatives of later Kalam at-Taftazani (d. 1390), al-Iji (d. 1355), and others.<sup>78</sup>

The work of al-Baydawi is composed of an introduction and three books. The introduction states the logical and epistemological principles of research, comprising such questions:

- on the "basic principles," that is, the two main types of human knowledge or "perception" (*Tasawwur*) and "consent" (*Tasdiq*), approximately corresponding to concept and judgment in modern logic;
- on definitions and other logical methods, showing the characteristic features of the unknown through the known;
- on syllogisms and other forms of conclusions (induction, analogy and others);
- on the "matters" of conclusions (*hujaj*), in other words, on premises such as axioms, sensory data, experience, and others;
- and on methodological principles of theorizing and speculation (*nazar*), which are all traditional for Kalam, all of which lead to three main ones: (1) correct theoretical discourse leads to reliable knowledge; (2) correct theoretical reasoning is sufficient for knowledge of God; and (3) theoretical discourse is an obligation for any Muslim without failure.

It is easy to notice, even from this scheme of the general contents of the introductory part of "*Tawali al-Anwar*," that the author of this work follows the Peripatetic tradition and its interpretation of logic, sometimes verbally repeating corresponding statements of Ibn Sina. The difference in this instance reduces itself mainly to the fact that al-Baydawi does not consider the subject of the classification of theoretical discourses, which occupied a significant place in the logic of Eastern Peripatetics, that is, the division of these discourses into apodectic, dialectical, rhetorical, poetical, and sophistic. Al-Sawi explains the above-mentioned difference in this way: The later Mutakallims (including himself) were not interested in the last four types of reasoning in as much as they do not give reliable knowledge. However, it is wholly possible that the reason for

this was the unwillingness of the later Mutakallims to compromise (after the philosophers) those methods of reasoning, first of all, dialectics to which they broadly resorted, just like their predecessors, particularly in meetings organized by them for polemical purposes.<sup>79</sup>

In the discourses on methodological principles of the Kalam, al-Baydawi stresses that correct theoretical discourse is the single method of achieving reliable knowledge that is eternally binding on any Muslim. These principles, as clear from the words of al-Baydawi himself and the commentary on it by al-Isfahani, were directed against: (1) Talimites-Ismailites, who considered as the main source of reliable knowledge the doctrine of the "infallible Imam"; (2) Sufi-mystics, who pretended to know truth through direct suffering in the condition of ecstatic trance; (3) Taqlid-supporters, who found the criterion of truth in the corresponding thesis given in the *Qur'an* or *Sunnah*. Here the general rationalistic spirit of Kalam is revealed, its anti-authoritarianism and aspiration to introduce theoretical means of cognition of the "ultimate bases," of being into wider circles of ordinary Muslims.

1. The first book, *Tawali al-anwar*, is devoted to "possible things" (*Mumkinat*), that is, the main notions and categories in which the empirical is the perceived, the "created world". The following subjects are considered in the book: (1) "General subjects (al-Umur al-kuliya), that is, transcendental notions such as existence and nonexistence, essence of existence, necessity and possibility, single and multitude causes and conditioned causes; (2) accidents (al-arad), which include nine of Aristotle's categories; and (3) substances.

The main differences of the ontological principles of late Kalam from related principles of the Peripatites is that from the beginning, the categories are characterized as higher species not of being as such, but only of the possible. This corresponds with the primary division of the real into possible and necessary, and the further division of the possible real into Aristotle's 10 categories on substance, quantity, quality, etc. Besides, it is characteristic of al-Baydawi, as of the majority of other Mutakallims together with the Eastern Peripatetics, to recognize the division of the real into substance and accident, but unlike the latter they refused to include form, soul, and reason into substances. Substance was for them only the "first substance," that is, the single item whose characteristics are essentially accidental, which they subdivided into quantity, quality, and the relative accidents "where," "when," etc.

The first book composed by Baydawi is devoted to empirical "possible" existence, and he raises the questions of theoretical natural science, discussed by the Eastern Peripatetics, mainly in physics. The following themes are also related:

- the quantitative features of subjects (continuous and discrete sizes, space, time and motion);
- the "sensually perceived qualities" (subjects of the senses of touch, sight perception, auditory perception, and perception of smells); "psychic qualities" (life, perceptions, ability—*qudra*—and will, enjoyment and suffering, disease and health); qualities characteristic of quantity (straightness and curvature, figures, even and odd, etc.), and qualities characteristic of prepossession and acceptance of one or other accident;
  - relative accidents ("where," relation, "when," position, possession, and undergoing action), as well as motion (change in general) in relationship to quantities, qualities, "where," and "when," and condition of its realization (whence it is performed, whither, in what, within what, because of what, and when); and
  - psychic powers, perception power (external and internal), natural forces (which maintain type and genre), and the general power of reasoning.

The natural science concepts stated in the book *Tawali al-anwar* are almost wholly extracted from the physicists among the Eastern Peripatetics. Baydawi refrains from extensive vast reasoning related to the mechanism of the "reasoning power" and, accordingly, from the classification of it into the types of human reason that we meet among Eastern Peripatetics and on which they concentrate greater attention in their teaching about the spirit. The carefulness of al-Baydawi, like other later Mutakallims, may be explained by the fact that in ontology the Eastern Peripatetics in the most clear form rejected the generally accepted beliefs about the immortality of the individual human spirit, acknowledging the "eternity" only of its reasoning power. This they identified with unchangeability, and, therefore, the "eternity" of the truth known by it. Besides, it is notable that al-Baydawi states this theory of the Peripatetics without opposing it to another that is different from his theory, and without accompanying its interpretation by any commentary. As for the life hereafter of a human soul, he cites a standpoint of the "falasifa", according to which the bliss of this soul in the after-life depends on its longing for "authentic knowledge."<sup>80</sup>

As to the teachings about the "indivisible" and connected questions (space, time, motion, being, or nonbeing of void), al-Badawi like other later Mutakallims, limits his standpoint by their objective interpretation with arguments and counter arguments of the supporters and opponents of the theories, acknowledging the existence of the "indivisible things" and of the void. The later Mutakallims, as a rule, refrained from categorical recognition of the truthfulness of the views of these or others, leaving decisions on these questions to the discretion of their own readers.

But in Cosmology, al-Baydawi like other representatives of later Kalam and more definitely than the Eastern Peripatetics (Ibn Sina), spoke for the possibility of the emergence in time of the existing celestial world.

2. The second book *Tawali al-anwar* is devoted to "divine sciences" that is, metaphysics. In it he raises questions of Necessary Being, its essence and attributes. Here the reader comes face to face with the most distinctive trait of the later Kalam, which is an attempt to connect the pantheistic direction of the Kalam with the pantheism of Eastern Peripatetism.

The pantheistic direction of Kalam is here expressed in the teaching of the essence and attributes of Necessary Being, that is, God. Commenting on a given section of the treatise of al-Badawi, al-Asfahani reduces it to the following theses. The will of God is a specification predestined by Him for phenomena through "providing with them actual existence" (Takhsis), that is, in the language of the Peripatetics, through the actualization of the order of preceding one another and following one another (*Taqdim wa Takhir*). In other words, the question is about "unfolding" in space and time that which is "convoluted" in a nonrevealed form in God's knowledge. The latter is characterized by al-Baydawi, in the words of al-Asfahani, as that which is located in all things in the same relations, which is not surprising, as far as these things come into divine knowledge out of space and time. Thus, divine will corresponds here to the action of cosmic spirit in the teaching of the neo-Platonists, while divine knowledge corresponds to their world reason. Pantheistic conclusions follow directly from the following theses: (1) "the being of concretely existing things (aiyan al-mawjudaat) – this is the knowledge of Almighty God";<sup>81</sup> (2) "the essence of God and His knowledge are different not in itself, but depending on [our] way of consideration (bi-l-itibar)".<sup>82</sup>

In a purely neo-Platonic manner, there is explained the correlation of the empirical world with metaphysical, that is from the position of the necessity of existence, his reason (knowledge) and of world spirit (divine will), from which the last two principles mediate two levels of being—the necessity of existence and its "concretely existing" in the empirical world of things. Al-Baydawi

interprets this relation in terms of emanation.<sup>83</sup> It is exactly such an interpretation of the correlation between the Creator and the created world that is founded in the metaphysics of al-Taftazani and other late Mutakallims. Moreover, like Ibn Sina, the difference of these two levels of being, among some late Mutakallims, is explained by reducing the necessity and possibility of existence to an analogy (*bi-Tashkik*).<sup>84</sup>

It is not surprising that the later critics of Kalam speak of its later representatives in harsh terms, particularly their interpretation of the origin (*hudus*) of things as "essential" (*dhati*) or "eternal" (*Dahri*).<sup>85</sup> In this connection, Fakhrad-Din ar-Razi preferred to express his belief in the eternity of the world in the careful form of abstaining from an answer to the question "is the world eternal or temporal?" which he considered "unsolvable."<sup>86</sup> According to Khaiyali, the world (being) should necessarily be eternal in consequence of the eternity of God's "will." Commenting on the given concept of Khaiyali, al-Sialkuti limited himself to its explanation, which indicates his consent.<sup>87</sup>

Such representatives of late Kalam as al-Taftazani, in this metaphysical part of his doctrine, considers the problem of universals and concludes approximately the same as the Eastern Peripatetics to denying the realism of the Platonic types. "Being, writes al-Taftazani, "has several levels: The high forms of being present themselves in concrete things (*fi-l-aiyan*), that is the primary being with which all must agree, due to which things and their essences become real and identical in its reality. Then follows being in wisdom (*fi-l-adhkhan*), that is not primary being, but like shadows of being dropped by the body."<sup>88</sup>

3. Questions related to prophecy, the other world, and other themes, which the Mutakallims referred to as subjects based on tradition (*Samiyat*), are discussed in the third and last book of al-Baydawi. Concerning the subject of prophecy, al-Baydawi in two lines repeats al-Ashari: Prophecy is grace sent to the people, but the remainder of the two pages is dedicated to the interpretation of the corresponding view points of Eastern Peripatetics: Prophecy is the most important factor for regulation of social life, necessary inasmuch as people cannot live aloof from each other; for their common life laws are needed, and consequently, an authoritative lawmaker. In a corresponding way, there is explained the need for all beliefs about the other world and its retributions. Here al-Baydawi wholly restates (sometimes verbally) the conclusive part of Ibn Sina's *The Book of Healing*, where Abu-Ali develops a theory called "natural prophecy," which Thomas Aquinas later subjected to harsh criticism.

Al-Baydawi does not comment either on the point of view of al-Ashari or on the doctrine of Ibn Sina. What then is his own position with respect to what is generally accepted in Islamic dogmas concerning prophecy and the next world? In order to answer this question, two moments are important. First of all, the author of *Tawali al-anwar*, like other late Mutakallims, refers all these dogmas to *samiyat*; secondly, together with other representatives of late Kalam, he confirms, "proof based on traditions (*naql*) does not give reliable knowledge."<sup>89</sup> In actual fact *Samiyat* and *Naqliyat* are synonymous terms, both of them meaning information based on traditions. Consequently, all eschatological images of religion, just as its teaching on the divine origin of prophecy, late Mutakallims almost openly referred to the area of inauthentic knowledge, but more exactly to the area of knowledge necessary not for comprehending truth, but for the achievement of the purely practical aims of maintaining the moral foundations and laws of society.

Before giving a general characteristic to the problematics of late Kalam, it is necessary to point out that the subject of this science was identified with the subject of metaphysics in *falsafar* that part of which interprets questions concerning the essence of God, His attributes and relations

to the existence of possible things. Its difference from metaphysics was seen only in the fact that, research on it is carried out in "accordance with the principles of Islam."<sup>90</sup>

First of all, one should note that the specified difference is purely verbal, because in the works of the late Mutakallims, the exposition of the views of *Falasifa* on nature or their logical outlook, one finds almost no attempts to coordinate them with any principles of Islam.

It is true that they confirmed that the problems of natural philosophy, logic, and mathematics are of interest to them only in so far as the study of nature "leads to reliable knowledge that can be believed"<sup>91</sup> But it can be asked if it was so necessary for the Mutakallims to engage themselves in such vast excursions in the areas of, for example, the classification of minerals with the description of the method used by al-Biruni in determining their specific weight, for the proof of the existence of God and a determination of His attributes? What relationship does this have with, for instance, the minute description of the seven climates or the equator? One does not find the answer to these questions in the works considered here, because their authors do not in the least link these questions either with the essence of God and His attributes nor with the religion of Islam in general.

Besides, if one takes, for example, the works of al-Taftazani and al-Baydawi, the theological (metaphysical) problematics in them occupy only a quarter of the works. The rest belongs to elaboration of questions of natural philosophy.

Now, if we compare the problematics of the works of late Mutakallims with the work of Nasirad-Din at-Tusi, *Tajrid al-Kalam*, the ideas of the first correspond as a whole to the ideas of the followers and supporters of the philosophy of Ibn Sina. The difference between them is only in secondary details and accents. It is not surprising that Ibn Khaldun, in presenting the history of the development of Kalam, stated that the subjects of Kalam and philosophy got mixed up in such a way that these sciences become indistinguishable, as has happened, for instance, in *Tawal* of al-Baydawi and the works of late Iranian scientists.<sup>92</sup> It is not surprising also that later traditionalists not only accused at-Tusi of an attempt to unite Kalam and philosophy, but also that they in every way forewarned their own readers against any acquaintance with the works of the late Mutakallims. According to al-Maraashi, these works, for instance, were "filled with discussions (Kalam) of philosophers, in which their authors passionately state ideas, obviously exposing their lack of faith."<sup>93</sup> This author particularly emphasizes the noxious influence of Kalam on young Muslim students.

Of course, widening the circle of problems considered in Kalam to the bounds of the philosophical sciences in the form in which they are contained in the encyclopedic works of Ibn Sina, representatives of late Kalam could not but resort to *Taqiya*[monotheism]. To the field of *Taqiya* pertains the above-mentioned reservation that the interpretation by them of philosophical sciences is conducted solely, "according to the principles of Islam." Here one should refer to their assurances that the highest aim of Kalam is *samiyat*,<sup>94</sup> that the inclusion in this science of other alien subjects gives nothing but benefits,<sup>95</sup> that "some philosophical subjects are included in Kalam in so far as they do not conflict with religious dogmas, and more so suit [the purposes and essence of] Kalam."<sup>96</sup> There are also multiple references to hypothetical viewpoints ("anybody could have the right to say ") and their hints that in the given section the whole truth is not stated ("there are some secrets, which I can not afford to voice, I put my hopes on your quickness of wit").<sup>97</sup>

There is no need to prove that late Kalam could no longer act in the capacity of the "orthodox theology of Islam." Even the Asharite Kalam was far from that position. Here one notes an analogy: just as Asharite Kalam attempted to legalize the rationalism of Kalam in the conditions



of the Sunnite reaction, without linking it with any particular school, approximately in the same way, that the late Mutakallims strove to legalize the rationalism of *falasifa*, without associating it with Eastern Peripatetism.

Later, as is well known from the history of philosophy, Eastern Peripatetism managed to survive as a result of one more form of convergence, namely, with the Ishraqism of Suhrawardi and the mystic Sufi pantheism of Ibn al Arabi. In comparison with the latter, the convergence of *falsafa* with Kalam had the advantage of saving two of the best characteristics of Eastern Peripatetism: rationalism, which in the West has been alien to all sorts of mysticism, and its orientation to natural science.

To sum up, as a result of the convergence of Kalam and *falsafa*, neither was philosophy transformed into a "maidservant of theology," nor was Kalam burned in the "flames of philosophy." This merging of two currents shows also the unfoundedness of the widespread stereotype of their permanent antagonism.

## Notes

1. Falasifa - representatives of *falsafa*, philosophy developed within the course of ancient, and first of all the Aristotelian, tradition.

2. For details, my article "Kalam as an 'orthodox philosophy' of Islam" // *Narody Azii i Afriki*. - Moscow, # 3, 1986.

3. M. Maimonides, *Putovoditel koleblyushchikhsa* // Grigoryan S. N. *Iz istorii filosoifii Srednei Azii i Irana VII-XII ccenturies* (Guide of the Perplexed. Chapters 71-76) (Moscow, 1960), p. 308.

4. L.Massignon, *Metodi khudozestvennogo virazenia y musulmanskih narodov* (Les methodes de realisation artistique des peuples del L'Islam) (Moscow, 1978), pp. 46-59; H.A.R. Gibb, *Les tendances modernes de L'Islam* (Paris, 1949), pp. 89-90; N. Bummate, *The Status of Science and Technique in Islamic Civilization // Philosophy and Culture: East and West*. (Honolulu, 1962), pp.183-185; B. Lewis, *The Arabs in History* (London, 1964), p. 14.

5. The perception of atomistic occasionalism of the Mutakallims has its origins in the work of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) *Guide of the Perplexed*, whose Latin translation is known as "Doctor perplexorum" and appeared in the first quarter of the XIII century. The picture given in this book, which astounds the imagination of the readers, about the "endless creation" of the world by God passed from one historical-philosophical work into another, while creating a stable stereotype of its perception, which was consolidated by the authorities of Thomas Aquinas, Leibnitz, and especially by Hegel, who called the views of the Mutakallims as vacillation and dizziness of everything existing (Hegel. *Sotchinenia* (Collected Works, v. 11) (Moscow-Leningrad, 1935), p. 104.

6. L.Massignon, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

7. *Ibid*, p. 50.

8. N. Bummate, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

9. *Ibid*.

10. L. Massignon, *op. cit.*, p. 56.

11. M. Watt, *The Formative Period of Islamic Thought* (Edinburg, 1973), p. 303.

12. B. Lewis, *op. cit.*, p. 141.

13. *Ibid*.

14. See: Ben-Tor, "Political Culture, Approach to Middle East Politics," // *Intern. Journal of Middle-East Studies*, 1977-8, # 1.
15. *Eстетика i Zhizn* (Aesthetics and Life. Issue # 3) (İoscow, 1974), pp. 453-488.
16. In my Ph.D thesis, *Atomistika kalama i yiyo mesto v srednevekovoi arabo-musulmanskoj filosofii* (The Atomistics of kalam and its place in Medieval Arab-Islamic philosophy) (Moscow, 1978) and later my Doctoral dissertation *Filosofia Kalama* (Philosophy of Kalam) (Moscow, Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of sciences, 1984).
17. Ibn Khasm, *Kitab al-Fisal*. V. I. (Cairo, 1899), p. 95.
18. Qur'an: 6:80; 2:29; 41:54; 72:28. Al-Khaiya, *Kitab al-Intisar* (Beirut, 1967), pp. 16-17.
19. L. Mabileau, *Histoire de la philosophie atomistique* (Paris, 1895), p. 309; A. O. Makovelsky, "Atomistika na Blizhnem Vostoke" // *Voprosy filosofii* (Atomistics in the Middle East // Problems of Philosophy) (İoscow, 1957), <sup>1</sup> 3, p. 113.
20. H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of Kalam* (Cambridge, London, 1979), p. 468.
21. "If theologians headed by al-Ashari knew the authentic doctrine of Democritus, they with horror turned away from him" (A. Makovelsky, *op. cit.*, p. 113).
22. Al-Ashari, *Makalat al-Islamiyiin* (Wisbaden, 1980), p. 317.
23. *Ibid.*, pp. 316 - 317.
24. Aristotle, *Fisika* (Physics), VI, 2, 209â (in Russian).
25. Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, p. 318; al-Nisaburi, *Al-Masaail fi-l-khilaf bain al-Basriyiin wa-l-Baghdadiyiin* (Beirut, 1979), p. 58; Al-Juweyni, *Al-Shamil*. V. I. (Cairo, 1960), pp. 60-62; Al-Shahrastani, *Nihaiyat al-Ikdam* (Baghdad, no date), p. 507-508.
26. Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, p. 302.
27. An- Nisaburi, *op. cit.*, pp. 58, 61.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Al-Ashari, *op.cit.*, pp. 301-304; at-Taftazani, *Sharh al-Makasid*. V. I. (Istanbul, 1898), p. 289.
30. Al-Nisaburi, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-69; Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, pp. 316 - 317; Al-Shahrastani, *Nihaiyat*, pp. 511 - 512.
31. Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
32. Al-Nisaburi, *op. cit.*, p. 47, 98; Al-Juweyni, *op. cit.*, p 59-62; At-Taftazani, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-311.
33. Ibn Furak, *Mujarrad makalat . . . Al-Ashari* (Beirut, 1987), p. 206.
34. Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, p. 303.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 209-317; Al-Juweyni, *op. cit.*, p. 56, 57.
36. Fakhr ad- Din ar-Razi, *Kitab al-mabahis al-Sharkiia*. V. 2. (Heyderabad, 1343 H.), pp. 8-10; Al-Jurjani, *Sharh al-Mawakif*. V. VII (Cairo, 1907), p. 5-6.
37. Al-Ashari, *op. cit.*, p. 318.
38. Al-Khaiyat, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
39. Al-Jurjani, *op. cit.*, p. 10.
40. Aristotle. I, 9, 316 - 317 (in Russian).
41. About this concept, and in general about discrete and finitist models of movement and time, in kalam, see: T. Ibrahim, A. Sagadeyev, *Classical Islamic Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1990), pp. 88-94.
42. About them, see: T. Ibrahim, A. Sagadeyev, *op. cit.*, pp. 94-100.
43. V.P. Zubov, *Razvitie atomisticheskikh predstavleniy do nachala XIX veka* (The Development of Atomistic Perceptions before the XIXth century) (Moscow, 1965), p. 121.

44. In European literature, the stereotype of the ceaseless struggle of "orthodox" Kalam with the "heresy" of Falasifa (Philosophers) has its origins thanks, on one side, to the transfer into the history of the Islamic world of the very notion of "orthodoxy," characteristic of Catholicism, and, on the other side, the spread to all preceding history of Arab-Islamic philosophy the perception of such a struggle which came into being thanks to the acquaintance with the works of Ibn Rushd (especially his answers to al-Ghazali's *Tahafut* - "Tahafut - at- tahafut"). The works of Ibn Rushd were very popular in European educated circles in relation to the study of Latin Averroism.

45. M. Maimonides, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

46. R.M. Frank, *Kalam and Philosophy* (Islamic Philosophical Theology (Albany: Morewedge, 1979), p. 86.

47. A. Shtekl, *Istoria srednevekovoi filosofii* (History of the Medieval Philosophy) (Moscow, 1912), p. 9.

48. I. Goldziher, *Leksii ob islame* (Lectures on Islam) (Saint-Petersburg, 1912), p. 119.

49. I. P. Petrushevsky, *Islam v Irane v VII - XV vekakh* (Islam in Iran in VII-XV cc.) (Leningrad, 1966), p. 205.

50. *Istoria filosofii* (History of Philosophy. V. 1) (Moscow, 1957), p. 227.

51. I. Madkour, *L'Organon d'Aristotle dans le monde arabe* (P., 1934-1969); *Idem, La logique d'Aristotle chez les Mutakallimum // Islamic Philosophical Theology*. (Albany, 1979), pp. 58-70.

52. H. Steiner, *Die Mutaziliten und die Freidenker im Islam* (Leipzig, 1865), S.5.

53. Quoted in: A. Rifai, *Epokha al-Mamuna*. V. III 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1927), p. 377.

54. Al-Balkhi, *Fadl*. . . . P. 264.

55. Al-Jahiz, *Haiyawan*. . . . V. II., p. 134.

56. Al-Ashari, *Makalat*, p. 483.

57. Al- Shakhrastani, *Milal*. I., p. 30.

58. Al-Juweyni, *Irshad*, pp. 235-236.

59. A. Badawi, *The Doctrine of Islamists*. I., pp. 511, 513.

60. Al-Kindi, *O pervoi filosofii* (On the First philosophy /Trans. by Sagadeyev A. V.) // Selected Works of the Thinkers of the Middle and Near East Countries of IX-XIV centuries) (Moscow, 1961).

61. Quoted in: T. Atawil, *The History of Conflict between Religion and Philosophy* (Cairo, 1958), p. 108.

62. A. V. Sagadeyev, *Ibn Rushd* (Ibn Rushd) (Moscow, 1973), p. 28.

63. See: Al-Subki, *Tabakat*. IV, pp. 123, 132.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

65. Abu-Rida, *Al-Kindi and Philosophers* // Al-Kindi. Rasail. I., pp. 27-31; L. Gardet, *Le Probleme de la "Philosophie Musulmane* // Melanges Etienne Gilson. (Toronto-Paris, 1959), pp. 266-705; *Idem, Signification du "Renouveau Mutazilitie" dans la pensee Musulmane contemporaine*, pp. 72-73.

66. S. N. Grigoryan, *Srednevekovaya filosofiya narodov Blizhnego i Srednego Vostoka* (Medieval Philosophy of the Peoples of the Near and Middle East) (Moscow, 1966), p. 84.

67. Ibn Rushd, *Rassuzdenie*. . . (Ibn Rushd. Discourses.// Sagadeyev A. V. Ibn Rushd (Ibn Rushd) (Moscow, 1973), p.182.

68. Ibn Rushd, *Rassuzdenie*. . . (Ibn Rushd. Discourses.// Sagadeyev A. V. Ibn Rushd (Ibn Rushd) (Moscow, 1973), p.182.

69. E. Akhmedov, *Arabo-Musulmanskaya filosofia srednevekoviya* (Arab-Muslim Medieval Philosophy) (Baku, 1980), p. 38.
70. A. Al-Baghdadi, *Al-Mutabar fi-l-hikma*. Vols: I-III (Heyderabad, 1940-41)
71. This book has been published on the margins of "Sharh" al-Jurjani (Istanbul, 1331 H).
72. Taftazani-Efendi. *Sharh*, p. 22.
73. Quoted in: A. al-Majdub, *Ar-Razi*, p. 125.
74. Quoted in: A.E. Krymsky, *Nizzami i ego sovremenniki* (Nizzamy and his contemporaries), pp. 202-203.
75. M. Watt, *Ashariyya . . .*, p. 696.
76. I. P. Petrushevsky, *Islam in Iran . . .*, p. 233.
77. This work has reached us through the commentaries of al-Asfahani "Sharh matali al-anzar". Below we quote the Cairo edition of 1323 H.
78. The major work of at-Taftazani on Kalam—"Makasid fi ilm al-Kalam"—has been saved in the commentaries ("Sharh") of the author himself. Below we quote the Istanbul edition of 1305 H.; the work of al-Iji "Mavakir" together with the commentaries of al-Jurjani was published in Cairo in 1311 H.
79. See: A. an-Nashshar, *The Research Methods of Islamic Thinkers* (Cairo, 1978), p. 36 (in Arabic).
80. Al-Asfahani, *Sharh matali al-Nazar . . .*, p. 150.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
82. *Ibid.*
83. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
84. Al-Taftazani, *Sharh*. V. I., p. 66; *Ibid.* V. 2, p. 52.
85. M.Hakki, *At-Tanbihat*. (Kazan, 1908), p. 10.
86. See: Al-Ghazali, *Tahafut al falasifa . . .*, p. 307 (commentary of A.S. an-Nashshar).
87. *Sialkuti ala al-Khayali* ( Istanbul, 1308 H.), p. 34.
88. Al-Taftazani, *Sharh . . .* V. I., p. 76.
89. Al-Asvahani, *op. cit*, p. 28; Iji-Jurjani, *Mawakif*. V. I., p. 209; Al-Taftazani, *Sharh . . .* V. I., p. 53.
90. See: Iji-Jurjani, *Mawakif*. V. I., p. 31; Al-Taftazani, *Sharh*. V. I, p. 14.
91. Al-Asfahani, *op. cit*, p. 5.
92. Ibn Khaldun, *Mukaddima* (Cairo, 1327 H.), p. 520.
93. M. Al-Maraashi, *Tartib al-Ulum* (Kazan, 1901), p. 43.
94. Al-Taftazani, *Sharh*. V. I., p. 3.
95. *Ibidem*; Iji-Jurjani, *Mawakif*. V. I., p. 39.
96. Al-Taftazani, *Sharh*. V. I., p. 14.
97. Iji-Jurjani, *Mawakif*. V. I., p. 23.

**Chapter VI**  
**The Political and Legal Culture of Medieval Islam**  
Nur Kirabaev

**Basic Principles of the Political Doctrine of Islam Shari'a and Fiqh: Revelation and Reason**

Practically all Islamic political theories are based on the principal that historically Islam is the basis of the first Arabic state. From the first days of its existence, the state had no conflict with religion, but religion played its integral part: Religion is the essence of the state, and the state is the essence of religion. The Islamic political doctrine does not see any difference between the temporal and secular purposes of the state and the higher, "eternal" goals of religion. The purposes of the state and Islam, as a religion, are uniform and indivisible. There is no antithesis between a historically developing society and religion as the keeper of the general values of the human being's existence. The state is the "given" object, and is not limited in its existence. By itself it suppresses evil and shows the way to religious piety.

Islamic socio-political doctrine has no accurate boundaries between moral, religious, political, and legislative norms, that is, between secular and sacral matters. In reality, the secular authorities on behalf of a Sultan or Emir frequently usurped power, which actually certified the existence of differences between the secular and the religious. However, this difference did not mean an ideological separation of the state and religion. In the history of Islamic thought, no governor or theorist of the law would recognize this difference *de jure* and deny the universal significance of the Islamic doctrine on the unity of temporal and spiritual matters. According to Lambton, the absence of any formal doctrine justifying the separation of the secular from religious had an important result in understanding the individual freedom of a person (18, p. XVI). Any freedom that approved the law of force and led to despotism was limited by religious responsibility. Islam has become an all-permeating ideological system, which has determined the main attitudes to state and society, politics and culture, consciousness and norm based on the confessional principle of solidarity. The idea of political legitimacy and the status quo in the society was connected with Islam. The content of religious traditions was not subject to discussion, and the events that they transmitted and interpreted were accepted as conclusive. Therefore, the social order, which was confirmed by religion, was perceived in the same way.

Islam confirmed the idea of the Islamic state as a religious community, members of which are simultaneously both believers and citizens. Therefore, the concept of political legitimacy was based on the fact that an individual does not have any natural rights and responsibilities conditioned by the relations of civil society. In the Islamic state the only "right" of a person is his/her responsibility to follow the norms of religious law, violation of which assumes possible compulsion of the person from the side of the authorities, that is, all actions by a person are regulated by the "political-legal" code of Islam. In Islam there is no antithesis between the individual and the state or authorities, and consequently, there is no necessity to reconcile or to disconnect this antithesis. Islam does not differentiate between the state and religion. Actually, no distinction existed between state and "church" within the first two to three centuries of the Arabic state's existence. Later, as the history of the Caliphate shows, "on one side there were Islamic jurists and theologians, on the other the Caliph" (7, p. 107). Both the theoretical and acting law were always considered as the subject of activity and control by representatives of the religious law (*Fiqh*). The religious law, that is, certain forms of power and the state.

In the socio-political theories of Islam, the initial item of all doctrines on the state was *Shari'a*, that is, the divine law, which existed to adjust all the spheres of the human being's activity. Theoretically, *Shari'a* was considered eternal, preceding both society and state, and as an absolute virtue. Therefore, Islam was represented not simply as a faith, but also as a political doctrine, a way of life and action.

Thus, the basic principles of Islamic political theory are connected to the idea of the inseparability of religion from politics, law, and morals. The problems, referring to the nature of state, state sovereignty and authority, took a rather minor place in the history of Islamic political thought because political science was an integral part of the religious sciences. The Islamic political doctrine recognized only one distinction: the believer or nonbeliever. A human being cannot change the divine law; he/she has to know or not to know it, follow it or not follow it. Fulfillment or defiance of the law is a matter of not only social or moral order, but also a religious one, because the fulfillment of laws is Islam's sphere of control. *Shari'a* confers a legal status on the rules of personal life and considers them as acting in all times, in any historical conditions and on any territory.

In Islam, the concept of law was based on a religious dogma, which says that the only source of sovereignty and authority is God. The community of believers (*Umma*) considers God as its unique and absolute leader. The will of God, handed over to the Prophet through a revelation, is also a divine law (*Shari'a*). Thus, God is the unique bearer of sovereignty. Therefore, in Islamic political theory, the problem of the nature of sovereignty is not posed at all. The law precedes the state and is eternal and constant at all times and in all conditions. The state acts as a conductor of the divine law.

The first characteristic feature of Islamic law is the law of revelation. The second feature of *Shari'a*, as a rule, is bound up with its broad sphere of distribution and application. Many Islamic jurists considered that the fundamental law was freedom. But human nature is weak and greedy, and God's wisdom, love, and kindness inevitably leads to the limitation of the human being's freedom. These limitations consist of two spheres in accordance with the dual character of human nature (soul and body). The first sphere is connected with the principles of faith and religious practice and determines the responsibilities of a person before God; the second determines the relations among people, the methods of human beings and society and the relations between states. The third distinctive feature of *Shari'a* is the form of its instructions as: necessary (*wajib*), recommended (*mustahabb*), neutral (*mubah*), undesirable (*makruh*), or prohibited (*haram*) type.

The above-mentioned features of *Shari'a* show that it is not a code of laws, but more a code of responsibilities of the Muslims. Though the Prophet Muhammad became in the last years of his life the governor of the state founded by himself, the creation of a new system of law was not the goal of his activity. It is hardly possible to consider Muhammad as responsible for the system of law that was finally developed (18, p. 5).

After his death, "the Righteous Caliphs" had considerably more opportunities to be considered as founders of the theoretical and acting law, to which the *Omayyad* governors adhered. Therefore, the end of the first century of *Hijra* is considered the beginning of Islamic jurisprudence and the formation of political theory.

In the first half of the 8th century, *Fiqh* was being actively developed by the *Ulama* and *Faqihs* of early schools of the law in Kufa, Medina, and Syria. Only in the end of the Umayyad period was the legal practice of the various regions of the Caliphate systematized and codified in Islamic law (*Fiqh*).

The knowledge of the religious roots (*usul ad-din*) and their determined sources became the prerequisite for the cognition of Shari'a as the unique and absolute law of state. The classical theory on Islamic legal principles (*usul al-Fiqh*) was developed by ash-Shafi'i (d. 820) and accepted by many followers from other schools. In 9th century, the following major law schools (*mazhabs*) were defined: Shafiism, Malikism, Hanifism, and Hanbalism. On the whole the Islamic law is characterized as "knowledge of the practical rules of religion."

Usul al-Fiqh has at least five meanings:

1. Sometimes the roots of Islam are considered as authoritative sources of Fiqh, on which legal practice is based. First of all these are the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. *Sunnah* is understood as the traditions (*Hadith*), which contain the expressions, descriptions of solutions, and deeds of Muhammad and his nearest associates, regarding various problems of religion, law, morals, etc. *Sunnah*, as well as the *Qur'an*, are considered to have a divine character and, theoretically, indisputable authority. Of all the hadiths collected only some are considered as *asl* (plural *usul*) (24, p. 262).

2. These two sources of the law are usually supplemented by a unanimous opinion (*Ijma'*) and analogy (*Qiyas*), which are designated by the term *usul* as well.

3. As a rule, the Islamic jurists understood *asl* as the legal systems of the founders of the main law schools. They are considered a basis for establishing an analogy between them and the so-called derivative solutions (*furu*). But sometimes *furu* corresponds with all cases and court decisions, which are established by means of *Ijma'* or *Qiyas*. In this case *usul* includes the limited amount of cases and court decisions based on *Qur'an*, tradition and some authority of the religious law (22, p. 29)

4. Sometimes they understand *usul al-Fiqh* as the fixed or postulated methodological principle.

5. *Usul al-Fiqh* also means the sphere of the theoretical law or legal consciousness; first of all, the established legal texts and the means by which they are applicable in legal practice.

In recent years, researches in Islamic studies have begun to exhibit much interest in Fiqh. And it is no wonder, as the religious law and its doctrines are the key to Islamic political theory (23, p. 14), and the study of Shari'a is important for the understanding of Islamic political ideas (18, p. 9). It is not accidental that in the fundamental two-volume work by Cairo scholars, Fath Nabrawi and Mahmud Nasr Mihna, about the history of political thought in Islam, the basic concepts of Shari'a and Fiqh are given almost 100 pages (3, p. 110-199).

Previously, relatively little attention was given to Fiqh and its role in the spiritual life of the medieval Islamic world. Probably this is related to the Fiqh's complexity, the subject of which includes not only the problems of law, but also the problems of politics, philosophy, religion and morals, logic and linguistics. It is an underestimation of the role of Islamic law in the political life of the Arabic Caliphate; of its influence on philosophical and political, religious, and ethical concepts and theories; and consideration of it only as a practical regulator of the legal problems; and also an underestimation of the theory of the Islamic law (*usul al-Fiqh*).

In fact, the analysis of Fiqh and its doctrines permits tracing the formation and the development of the main problems and methods of substantiating various concepts, which in many respects have determined both the problematic of Islamic politics and the methods for the solution of these problems. First of all, it is related to the clarification of *Ijma'* and the understanding of *Qiyas* and their use. The attitude to these sources or roots of Islamic law allows one to determine the main contradictory directions in the interpretation of the main problems of *Fiqh* and political

theory. Namely, Ijma' and Qiyas as the indisputable authoritative sources of the Islamic law have turned into arenas of fierce disputes and discussions, in particular because of their being the products of human intellect, whereas theoretically law should have divinely revealed character.

In the theory of law and politics, theology and Arab-Islamic philosophy, *Qiyas* was considered as the method of analogy:

1. On the basis of a similarity between the case under consideration and a similar one, the description of which is present in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*;
2. Through the study of a motive (*Illa*), which is the basis of a case described in the *Qur'an* or *Sunnah*, and its application to the considered example.

The argument against analogy or similarity has formed the basis of the literalist (*Zahirist*) school of law, founded by Abu Daud ibn Jalaf (d. 884). He denied the possibility of an independent legal opinion (*Rayi*) and rejected the analogy based on *Illa*. Also Abu Daud rejected *Taqlid*, the blind following and imitating of a lawyer or any law school opinion. This view complied with the motives of ordinary Muslims who were not familiar with the law. Direct reference to the most authoritative legal sources was preferable before asking the religious instructor (Imam) for help. (22, p. 30). Abu Daud wholly denied the possibility of rational proof. This position of the literalists has been especially obvious in the discussion of the problem of the *Qur'an's* creation. Ibn Hanbal, for example, categorically rejected the statement on the *Qur'an's* creation without any proofs. According to another *Zahirist*, Ibn Hazm (d. 1064), the *Qur'an* is a divine speech, and each phrase of this book should be perceived in its spontaneity (*zahir*) without any attempts at interpretation. The authors of the book *The Development of Political Thought in Islam* state that the *Qur'an* has no name symbols, and hence, it is impossible to assert that behind its text any secret religious sense is hidden (3, p. 229).

The founder of one of the schools of the Islamic law, *ash-Shafi'i*, considered that there were two kinds of knowledge. The first one is certain knowledge, established by God, the Prophet, and tradition, based on the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. The second kind of knowledge is determined on the basis of *Ijtihad*, the result of a personal opinion of the lawyer, expressed with caution and prudence. In the second case, an analogy has been applied, which can come from either a direct similarity of the given case in legal practice and described in the *Qur'an* or *Sunnah*, or from the study of motives, defining the possibility of this similarity. Thus, for *ash-Shafi'i* and his followers, *Ijtihad* is also *Qiyas* (1, pp. 242-248).

The supporters of an active use of rational methods, which are based on analogy, tried to expand the boundaries of *Qiyas* by means of *Illa*. They used such methods as *Istihbab* (preferability), *Istislah* (aspiration for the best), and *Istihshan* (more pertinent). These methods, which have an external sound, were used by Islamic jurists, when the basis of the decision was personal, the independent opinion of the lawyer (*Rayi*), taking into account both time and conditions (15, pp. 347-352).

It is considered, that Malik ibn Anas, the founder of the Malik law school, was the first to use *Istislah*. The basis for using *Istislah* is related to the religious tradition, according to which "in Islam the premeditated offense or damage does not exist" (*lya darar wa lya dirar fi-l-islam*) (2, pp. 200-234; 18, p. 4). *Istislah* was considered an allowable method in the doctrines of *ash-Shafi'i*, *al-Juwayni* and *al-Ghazali*.

Thus, *Qiyas* has become a basis for the rationalistic development of *Fiqh*, which allowed legal and political theories to emerge from the strict limits of the religious tradition.



In correspondence with the Islamic tradition, the Qur'an and Sunnah are accepted as the first two fundamentals of Fiqh, and Qiyas as the third; the fourth basis, Ijma' (unanimous opinion), guarantees an authenticity and regularity in the interpretation of the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah*, and the juridical application of Qiyas. The use of Ijma' is based on the tradition according to which Muhammad asserted: "My people will never agree with an error." It is accepted that there can be two types of Ijma': the unanimous opinion of all Muslims and the unanimous opinion of Ulama.

For the majority of Islamic schools of law, Ijma' meant originally the unanimous opinion of the Prophet's associates and their direct followers. Later, Ijma' got the meaning of the unanimous opinion of orthodox theologians (Ulama). Afterwards, the original meaning returned (18, p. 10). The majority of Islamic jurists denied Ijma' as the unanimous opinion of all Muslims (*nazhma al-awamm*). However some of the thinkers, for example Ibn Kutaiba (d. 889), recognized the value of the unanimous opinion of Muslims from Medina, Kufa, and Basra towns (*Ijma ammàtam'-àmsar*). According to Ibn Taymii, only Ijma' was an infallible (*maasum*) source.

At first glance, Ijma' represented the possibility of not accepting or rejecting various solutions as agreeing or not agreeing with the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*, but also proceeding from time and place to further develop a basis of Islam through the innovations' (*biaa*), approval and acceptance. According to Lambton, it is paradoxical, that the jurists transforming the simple idea of the unanimous opinion of the society into a theoretical-systematic concept of unanimous opinions of Ulama, made of it their weapon, rejecting any opinion which is represented as an opinion distinguished from the conventional one (18, p. 12). In the last analysis, Ijma' has become a direct way to Taqlid, a random following of the essential principles of religion, which were established by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. This has added to Fiqh a certain narrowness and rigidity, which guaranteed for the Islamic law a sufficient stability and steadiness irrespective of the changing historical realities. Hence, the absolute and infallible authority of Ijma' has not only determined the key position of Fiqh for religious disciplines, but also has as a stable authority. This remained even without political support and has allowed the Islamic law, in many respects, to determine the character of theoretical legal consciousness and legal practice during the period of decline of the Islamic socio-political institutes. Ijma' has become a bastion of conservatism and dogmatism in all areas of the Islamic thought, in particular the socio-political.

## **Society and State: Shari'a and Caliphate**

Most researchers in Islamic studies emphasize that the basis of the Islamic state is its religious-ideological integration, but not a political, ethnic, or territorial one (18, p. 61; 23, p. 14; 8, p. 1). Therefore, it is considered that the core of Islamic political theory is, as a rule, the doctrine of Umma, the Islamic community. Internally, Umma means a people's association on the basis of faith in the one God (Allah) and his Messenger, Muhammad, and is considered an indivisible organization that accepts Shari'a implicitly and explicitly. External Umma meant originally "*dar al-Islam*," the world of Islam, which was opposed to "*dar al-Harb*," the world of war. Thus, political and territorial boundaries were determined on the basis of religion. However, later in the period of aggressive wars, they began to include in "*dar al-Islam*" non-Muslims as well, who were under the patronage of Islam as a political institution. Nevertheless, the political significance of Umma has remained the same. It has determined socio-political inequality in the Islamic state because of religious inequality. Therefore, the adherents of a different faith (*zimii*) had to pay a pole tax (*jizya*) established for non-Muslims.

The initial principle of Umma is equality of all before God, without any dependence on social status. According to Umma, it was assumed that equality of all believers before God meant also the equality of the citizens in the state. The main functions of Umma follow: strengthening the unity of believers, orientation to being good, rejection of harmful deeds, mutual help, prohibition of usury, establishment of eternal peace among the members of a community, protection of the faith (*jihad*) as a way of strengthening the faith, and protecting "the world of war" from adherents of a different faith. The doctrine of Umma has also determined the Islamic concept of personality. According to È. Boisard, in Islam the person with "its individual witnessing," interiorization of will and personal aims is integrated in an egalitarian collective as a believing individual (5, p. 131).

The security and strengthening of the unity of believers in the doctrine of Umma relates to the strict following of the Shari'a laws and subordination to the community's secular chief authority; the Imam and Caliphate were considered only as symbols of the absolute authority of Shari'a. Thus, in the political doctrine of Islam there is no idea of a human being's "sovereign will" that would dominate over the will of all other people. The Imam or Caliph is the Prophet's deputy and follower, subjected to Shari'a; according to the divine law, he is not an Imam, but a simple believer. Theoretically, the believer should not obey an order that results in violation of the Shari'a laws. This important concept of the doctrine of Umma was based on the Hadith: "There is no responsibility to obey a sin," and "There is no obedience to a creature against God." In Islamic political doctrine, the civil wars of the first two centuries of the Arabic state's existence, political disputes with the Umayyad governors, and fierce attacks on their adherents are considered as an example of the strict fulfillment of these positions (10, p. 14).

The secular head of the community had the title of Caliph as the Prophet's deputy and Imam as the leader of all true believers (*Amir al-Muminin*). In the medieval literature on Fiqh, "the terms Imam and Imamate" have been used more often than "Caliph and Caliphate" (18, p. 15). The Caliph's authority was based on the *Qur'an* and Hadith, according to which obedience to the Prophet means obedience to God, and the obedience to Imam means obedience to the Prophet. If harm comes from the governors, they should be punished, but in that a person does not take any responsibility. In other words, the Caliph's authority has a divine character, and the problem of the justice of his ruling is the matter of "God and his serf." The simple believer should not interfere in the relations of the governor with God.

From the 10th century to the present time, almost all Islamic Ulama and jurists have asserted that their doctrine of Imamate was based on the practice of the first Islamic state. In reality, as is noted by some researchers of oriental studies, the general Sunnite political theory of Imamate developed gradually during the 4th and 5th centuries after the death of Muhammad (11, p. 16).

The contradictions of Imamate were first exhibited during the first civil war, in the development of Shi'ism and Kharijism, in the Abbasid's opposition to the Umayyad, and in the Mutazilites and Asharites movement. Faith in the divine nature of society and the absence of any separation between the religious (or the church) and the state had an important consequence, as there were civil wars and disorders of all kinds. It had the name *Fitna* (plural-"Fitans") and in principle was considered as a revolt against the divine law, that is, civil war and similar kinds of disorder were considered as a rebellion against Shari'a.

A number of events, including the murder of Uthman, Ali's appointment as Imam, and Muawiya's coming to power were involved in the political determination of the Imam's legitimacy and were simultaneously important for faith. This was often called "the first Fitna" or "the great Fitna." Later the term "Fitna" was applied to the periods of disturbances and anxieties caused by schools or trends that differed from the majority of believers (9, pp. 930-931). Every human being

who allows innovations (*bida'*) was considered as a potential instigator of Fitna. The first civil war was supposed to answer the question: "What is the Caliph?" The end of the war, initiated by Muawiya, as the governor de facto, caused a deep disunity among believers in respect to the problem of the religious and political legitimacy of Imamatus. The *Kharijite* movement was related to the problems: "Who is a Muslim?" or "Who is a Muslim, and Who is a non-believer, Who will be saved, and Who will be damned?" The Umayyad's fall and the assertion of Abbasid's strength were related to the solution of the problem: "What is the nature of an Islamic state?"

It is rather remarkable, remarks Lambton, that almost all major Islamic legal theories have appeared, if not during crises, then, at least, when there were a lot of problems facing the Islamic society (18, p. 16).

There was a certain contradiction between the existing principles of political theory and the new historical circumstances. However, the Islamic doctrine of authority has always been based on the principles of Shari'a and, hence, on an invariance of its fundamentals in all times and in all societies. The tradition attributes to the Prophet the expression that after him the Caliphate will exist for 300 years, and then an empire of God will come. It did not become the conventional doctrine, but later Sunnite jurists emphasized the difference between the Medina Caliphate of "the righteous Caliphs" and the later Caliphates that had the character of a world empire. The Medina Caliphate is sometimes known as the "an-Nubuwwa Caliphate," which, according to other tradition, also would exist for 300 years (both traditions are based on "Musnad" by Ibn Hanbal). But this Caliphate is considered adequate to all requirements of the true Imamatus. In the 10th century, the legitimacy of governing by "the righteous Caliphs" and the justice of their actions became a conclusive Sunnite doctrine. It was an integral part of the doctrine on authority, which was protected from any kind of criticism. Also during that period, the doctrine on the Caliphs' hierarchy or superiority (*tafdil*) appeared and was developed. So, Ibn Hanbal considered that "the righteous Caliphs" had superiority in accordance with their principles of life and activity in the Caliphate.

Ash-Shafi'i, who did not limit the true Imamatus to the principle of the greater superiority, also supposed the existence of a less perfect Imamatus (*al-mafdul*), if the choice of a more excellent one resulted in contradictions. For example, some of the early followers of ash-Shafi'i assumed a higher rank of Ali in comparison with Uthman, but a lower rank than had Abu Bakr and Umar. The Uthman Imamatus, though it was a Medina Caliphate, was considered less perfect. On this basis, Sunnite jurists compared late Caliphs with earlier ones, who had been considered the ideal Caliph type (20). In the 11th century jurists had a carefully developed legal system for qualifying the Imam's functions, though among them there were various points of view on the nature of his authority. They did not agree with the idea of the state's existence as an institute which has its own laws, and were critical of the idea of the secular state as a separate institute, which usurped power and was based on elements of corruption.

Therefore, all discussions on the problem of the institutions of power (authority) in Islamic political thought are concentrated mainly around the Caliph, who is the unique holder of authority, and recognize that the state is only a transmitter of Shari'a. The existence of the state implies the availability of a secular authority. However, the state itself has no authority of its own.

The majority of Sunnite jurists consider, that it was possible and necessary to elect the Imam, and tried to substantiate the difference of the procedure of electing a ruler in the spirit of the Medina Caliphate. According to the majority of them Abu Bakr and Uthman had been elected by unanimous opinion (*Ijma'*). The difference in points of view was only in the procedure of electing voters. There was a conventional opinion that they should be from the Ulama.

Muhammad functioned as the judge, secular governor and religious leader of the community in a broad sense. However, according to the jurists his followers should not have the last function. In other words, the Imam has no power to give a new interpretation of religious matters; his function is simply to maintain existing doctrines.

Shari'a speaks about two forms of the law (*Haqq*): the law of God and the law of human beings. The first law comprises the idea of absolute obedience to Shari'a. The second one is considered as an absence of laws in the regular sense. Shari'a, which is the absolute authority, precedes the state, and is the law for the state. An individual has only the right to expect Shari'a observance by the head of the community, the Caliph, and to act within the framework of the divine law.

In the literature on Fiqh behind juridical discussions on the problem of the Imamatus there was a struggle of various trends in Islam. Historiographic works also show that the difference among sects is based mainly on a different understanding of who is an Imam and what are his functions. Sunnite political doctrine developed as a feedback to the position and counter-position of the opposition, in particular the Shiites and Kharijites, and this has led them to formulate the concept of Imamatus. Researchers characterize the tendencies of early opposition movements, as follows:

The Kharijites and Shi'ites represent two extremely contrasting tendencies in interpreting the problem of power in Islam. The first were the most radical group and called for the separation of religion and politics; in their doctrine the religious element was dominant. But the Zeydit branch of Shi'ism began to act against such a tendency. It had features similar to the Kharijites and all Shi'ites and Sunnites, but differed from the rest of the Shi'ites by denying the theory of divine light and refused the Imam the right to appoint his successor. Zeydites and in particular Kharijites, whose movement had forced Sunnite jurists to think deeply about who is a Muslim, and who is a non-believer, played a large part in the development of Sunnite theory during the early centuries of Islam. With unshakable insistence, they posed the problem of the Imam's personal characteristics and the responsibility of believers "to uphold virtue and to prohibit harm". The Kharijites, who had become a serious opposition party in early Islam, were named in this way, because they "deviated" from the Caliph Ali in protest against his position in the battle of Siffin in 657 (by following the arbitration court's decisions, while asserting the legitimacy of his claims on the Caliph's throne after the death of Uthman). The first civil war between Ali and Muawiyah was a direct outcome of the struggle for power. The Kharijites asserted that Ali's consent to hold arbitration was a sin against God, because he had replaced the divine instructions with a court of human beings. In the battle of Siffin they proclaimed the slogan: "Solution by God only".

They denied Ali's claims to the Caliphate, condemned Uthman's behaviour, rejected any attempt to avenge his murder and began to stamp everyone a non-believer who did not accept their tendencies to deny Ali and Uthman. They committed many murders, not sparing even women.

The Kharijites had been crushed by Ali in the battle of Mahrawana in 658, but a series of local revolts took place from 659 to 661. Also there were a number of disturbances under the Muawiyah rule (661-680), all of which had been suppressed. During the civil war which started after the death of Yazid I (683), the disturbances of the Kharijites recommenced.

The doctrine of the Kharijites had great similarity to the Sunnite one, but differed from the latter in three items. First, they asserted that in Sunnism the limitation of the Imam to within the Qureish clan was not legal. According to their point of view there was no necessity for Imam to belong to any certain family or tribe. The only condition was that he should be a devout Muslim and a good governor. They accepted the Sunnite (and partially Shi'ite) doctrine on "a less preferable" (*al-mafdul*) Caliph. The Kharijites considered, that the Imam should be the

commander, judge and religious leader of the society. He should govern in accordance with the Qur'an and Sunnah of the Prophet. The Caliph has no right to change the doctrines, and can only apply them. Secondly, the Kharijites considered that the religious leader should not at all attend to problems of political management. Thirdly, they insisted on preserving the believer's responsibilities for "upholding virtues and prohibiting evil."

## **Classical Theories on the State in the Frameworks of Sunnite Fiqh**

It has been agreed that the doctrines of authoritative Sunnite Faqih are to be taken as the classical theories of the state in Islamic political thought, where the main principles of Islamic doctrine on authority were advanced. There the main problematic was the determination of the circle of the sources by which many subsequent generations of the Islamic jurists, historians and political figures were to be guided. The classical theories of the state were aimed to add special significance to the religious ideal of the Islamic state. They were guided by the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah* traditions and the practice by the Islamic community of the Golden period of Islam, Umma and Ijma' doctrines.

### **Al-Mawardi**

The author of the first classical theory of state was Faqih-shafiite al-Mawardi (d. 1058) whose main work is *Al-Ahkam às-Sultaniya*. As a Kadi (judge) he served in various towns of the Caliphate and eventually moved to Baghdad, where he received the title of supreme judge. Al-Mawardi was one of the main advisers of the Caliphs al-Êhadir (991-1031) and al-Êàim (1031-1075) and actively participated in the negotiations of the Caliphs with the Buid Emirs and the Seljuq Sultan Tugrul-bek.

According to Gibb, the treatise *Al-Ahkam às-Sultaniya* was written with the purpose of strengthening the authority of the Abbasid Caliphs and limiting claims of absolute authority by the Buid Emirs (12, pp. 151-152). As I.À. Faksh remarks, al-Mawardi lived in the period of the decline of the Caliphate power and a significant reduction of the actual role of the Caliph. He was legally the monarch, but actual authority was in the hands of other persons (8, p. 2). In some respects the publication of this work by al-Mawardi had been promoted by a historically favorable moment connected with the reduction of Buid Emirs' authority and the increasing power of Sultan Mahmud Gaznewid. The latter in every possible way demonstrated his loyalty to the Abbasids and in many respects promoted the prestige of the Baghdad Caliph.

It can be asked if the actual authority of the Emirs and Sultans was so strong, why did they finally recognize the higher spiritual and secular authority of the Abbasid Caliph, concluding agreements with him and ordering his name to be mentioned during Friday prayers. The fact is that the state was not thought of distinctly as an Islamic state, but as the religious-political unity. If a Sultan or Emir wished to maintain his authority, he could not ignore the fundamental law of Islam, according to which the absolute authority of the Caliph was based on the Qur'an. The legitimacy of the rank of Caliph was connected with the Ijma' of the Ulama. Only a legal Caliph had the authority that did not depend on the actual secular authority of an Emir or Sultan, but was based on the divine law. This was a fulfillment of religious responsibility and required absolute obedience. Thus, civil loyalty meant loyalty to Shari'a, but not to a secular governor. Theoretically at least, a call for disobedience to the Caliph's authority could not be executed (23, p. 15).

However, in Islamic law there are no strictly determined procedures and canonized institutions for defining the legitimacy of the election or governing of the various Caliphs. That is why the key role began to belong to the Faqihs and the Ulama corresponding to the fact that Ijma' was considered an infallible source of Fiqh. Since the times of the Umayyad dynasty, the governors had ceased to be elected and attained their recognition either by force or by inheriting the authority. Therefore, further development of the political theory was related to the choice by jurists of one of the two ways: either to correct the basic foundations of the Islamic doctrine on authority in correspondence with the actual historical practice of the Caliphate and thus to consecrate the legitimacy and authority of Sultans or Emirs, or to insist on adherence to Shari'a and condemn "illegal governors," calling Muslims to disobedience to the secular governors.

Al-Mawardi was one of the first to understand the need to bring the norms of Shari'a and the existing historical-political situation into the compliance. The main idea of the *Al-Ahkam al-Sultaniya* had been also directed to the theoretical justification of the differentiation of the spheres of authority and power between the Caliph in the area of religious matters and the Emir in the field of civil management on the basis of mutual agreement.

As a Sunnite Faqih, Al-Mawardi developed his concepts on the basis of an ideal Islamic state in the period of the Prophet and the four "righteous Caliphs," which was considered by traditionalists (Salafit) as a unique legal and fair state. Therefore, he considered the Imamate or the Caliphate as a divine institution, based not on reason but on revelation. Hence, the importance for the Islamic state of the definition of the Caliph or Imam as deputies of the Prophet and holders of secular authority. Though the Caliphate, as a form of governing and a type of Islamic state, is not based on any concrete Qur'anic concept, nevertheless it has been recognized by the Islamic jurists as a canonical religious institution. Even Ibn Khaldun, the famous historian and social thinker of 14th century, believed that the Caliphate was a canonical necessity, and the Muslims considered its establishment as a religious responsibility. Accentuating the divine character of the Caliphate and the Caliph was important for Al-Mawardi, namely, because in the 11th century the Caliphate had lost its past power. The need to strengthen the Caliphate was considered by him a religious imperative. The obvious contradiction with historical reality was al-Mawardi's statement that it is possible to recognize only one Caliph legally, while for more than 100 years Caliphates had already existed in Egypt, Baghdad, and Spain. Probably his statement was connected to the real threat to the Abbasids from the side of Fatimid Egypt. Al-Mawardi considered that the Sunnite concept of Imamate could resist Shi'ite claims on its authority. He categorically rejected the Shi'ite concept on the appointment of the Imam. Therefore, al-Mawardi agreed to recognize as legal the election of the Caliph even by one voter (25, p. 7).

Al-Mawardi was one of the first who precisely determined the required characteristics which a Caliph should have: justice, knowledge of the Islamic law, absence of physical and mental defects, wisdom, bravery, and origin from a Qureish family. This last requirement contradicted the fundamental principle of the equality of believers in Islam. He, as well as many other Sunnite jurists, considered that it adhered to the practice of the first Arabic state in the period of the Prophet and his associates. However, it is obvious that the last requirement was directed against the Kharijites.

According to al-Mawardi, the main functions of the Imam are: strengthening and protecting Islam and the Islamic state, the establishment of justice, monitoring the strict following of the norms of Shari'a, collection of taxes, personal responsibility for governing the state, and fulfilling the resolutions. The responsibility of believers was reduced to absolute obedience to the Caliph

and helping him to realize his functions. Thus the Imam's authority and the defense of this authority are in accord with Shari'a, in contrast to those who achieve authority by force.

However, al-Mawardi limits the functions of Imam to the religious, judicial, and executive spheres. In accordance with the basic foundations of the Islamic doctrine on authority, the Imam has no right to issue laws. The legislative function was considered as an integral law of Ijma' of the Umma, which actually was always Ijma' of the Ulama.

The understanding of the large role of Faqihs and Ulama in the Islamic state was exhibited in the statement of al-Mawardi that if the Imam appears to be unable to execute his responsibilities and functions, then the voters can elect a new Imam. At the same time, he considered that a Caliph's displacement could be only for extreme cases and circumstances connected with the possibility of a threat to the state's existence (25, p. 7-11).

### **Al-Juweyni**

The political theory of al-Mawardi greatly influenced the concepts on the state of his contemporary Asharites, such as al-Baqillani (d. 1031) and al-Baghdadi (d. 1037). The most original political theory among Asharites was created by the Faqih-Shafiite al-Juweyni (d. 1085), with the name of whom the legalization of Ashrism under Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1092) is bound.

Until recently the political concepts of al-Juweyni were judged basically on the basis of small chapters on the Imamatus in such works on theology as "Al-Irshad" and "Luma" (26, p. 231-244; 27, p.114-116). The conciseness of these chapters not only makes it impossible to understand adequately and study the political theory of al-Juweyni, but also does not allow an understanding of the nicety and specific features of his doctrine. The recently published treatise-, *Qiyas al-umam fi itias al-zulam*, shows that despite his Sunnite credo, al-Juweyni was not a supporter of the preservation and strengthening of the Abbasid regime. He created a political doctrine, the goals of which were different and independent from all others put forward in the 10th and 11th centuries.

While studying the political concepts of al-Juweyni, as a rule researchers face two difficulties: at first, in practically all modern works devoted to the political thought of medieval Islam, the role and significance of al-Juweyni are ignored or underestimated; secondly, there was a mistaken tradition considering him as a follower of al-Mawardi.

By studying closely al-Juweyni's biography it is possible to identify a number of factors which influenced the formation of his political outlook. There is no doubt that his attitude to the Abbasid regime was influenced by the persecution of the Asharites, including al-Juweyni, by Vizier Tugrul-bek al-Kunduri, and also his assignment to a position as head of the Nizamia University in Nashpur by Vizir al-Arslan Nizam al-Mulk. The period connected in particular with Nizam al-Mulk is marked by prevalence of Seljuq authority over the lands of the declining Caliphate and their aspiration for substantiation of "the greater legitimacy" of their rule in comparison with their predecessors. Tugrul-bek, the first Seljuq governor, who settled down in Baghdad, was proclaimed a Shahinshah of the East and the West. But being unsatisfied with this title, he announced himself the Renovator of Islam and even the head of all true believers (13. p. 28). Though Emirs and Sultans were the representatives of real power, they always needed the support and consecration of their government by the Caliph. The latter was always considered as the higher religious authority, with whom the legitimacy of governing by the Sultan or Emir was bound. Therefore, the political activity of Nizam al-Mulk was directed to drawing together the Seljuq dynasty and Abbasid religious authority.

In this political situation al-Juweyni wrote a treatise, which justified the Seljuq authority's legitimacy. But he understood well that the political-legal theory of his time, especially the doctrine by al-Mawardi, could not justify the high claims of the Seljuq dynasty. The theory of al-Mawardi was directed to the support and protection of a uniform state by means of strengthening the Caliphate as an institution. Therefore al-Mawardi was interested in returning to the Caliph his power under the Buids.

In contrast al-Juweyni seems to have lost hope for revival of the Caliphate and tried to support the idea of a uniform state by such different and more effective means as depending on the Sultan, who was the actual authority and then supporting the declining Abbasid regime.

This is the main difference between al-Juweyni and al-Mawardi. While the latter considered the Caliph as the higher bearer of sovereignty and religious authority and underestimated the significance of the actual military authority of the Sultans, the former based his principals on the idea that the authority of the Sultan was quite legal for all those who wished and were capable of supporting peace and unity.

The political theory by al-Juweyni was based on the separation of spheres of influence between Imam and Sultan. The activity of the first in his point of view is related to the responsibility for the "prosperity of religion"; the activity of the second is related to the uniform state. Al-Juweyni created his own theory on the ideal Imam, in which he considered matters connected to the existence of the institution of Imam based on Shari'a, but he attends to existing political realities and takes into consideration the prospects of political development. He criticized the actual practice of the Imam of his time in his doctrine on incomplete Imam, proved the Abbasid Caliph's incompetence and attributed to him responsibility for weakening the religious-political unity and power of the Arabic state. Al-Juweyni had come to the conclusion that the Caliph was not capable of preserving the Caliphate unity and wholeness. The justification of the powerful central authority of the Seljuq Sultans is the burden of his work. With this, al-Juweyni understood that strengthening and protecting the legal character of Seljuq governance was simultaneously a strengthening of both Islam and Shari'a.

Much attention in the theory about the ideal Imam was given to the consideration of representatives of the Imam authority and their hierarchy, the Imam's functions and the duties to be carried out by the Imam. The requirement for the Imam always to consult with the Faqihs and Ulama on all state and religious problems was reaffirmed. Al-Juweyni made the Caliph responsible for strengthening the unity of the contradictory elements of Sunnite doctrine. But at the same time he should not try to unify the existing four schools of the law (mazhab) or prefer one of them. The main feature of the Imam, according to al-Juweyni, was the power and authority to preserve a powerful central state. Therefore Ijma' should make a decision on the election of a Caliph, proceeding first of all from his ability to preserve and strengthen the Islamic state, because the main purpose of the Imam is a preservation of the unity of Umma. Probably, proceeding from the need to strengthen a powerful central authority, al-Juweyni allowed for the possibility of electing an Imam from outside the Qureish family.

Al-Juweyni, as U. Hallyak remarks, probably more than any lawyer in the 11th century, had experienced the inability of the Abbasid Caliphate to control the state effectively. He gave up on the classical theory, according to which Imam was the unique religious and secular leader of the society, and in exchange tried to justify the actual significance of the secular authority of the Sultan and the Ulama (experts on Shari'a) as the two integrally interconnected elements of the Islamic state (13, p. 41). He provided a new way to look at the correlation of power and authority. And



these two fundamentals of the state he combined in one person - the Sultan. Finally, for al-Juweyni the Imamate had become an embodiment of the Sultanate.

The significance of that fact is that since al-Juweyni some authoritative Sunnite Faqihs began in human respects to recede from the basic foundations of the Islamic doctrine on authority. They tried to adjust the Shari'a norms to changing historical circumstances by analyzing of the theories on state, and paying attention to a lesser extent to the legal-institutional aspect of authority and to a greater extent to the effectiveness and efficiency of state governance. This was the work of thinkers on the so-called "theory of kingship", in which Islamic political doctrines and the Sassanid tradition of state systems have been synthesized. Among these works one must first of all mention *Siyasat-nameh* (29), written by the patron and protector of al-Juweyni, Vizir Nizam al-Mulk, who was the actual governor of the Seljuq empire in the period from 1072 to 1092.

In this work Nizam al-Mulk has tried to formulate the main principles of the theory and practice of the state, which were directed to strengthening the Sultanate as an actual institution of authority. The Arabic word "Sultan" means power or authority. Since the 10th century all independent governors, who denied the need of the protection and leadership of the Caliph's religious and moral authority, were named Sultans. Since the 11th century Turks-Seljuqs had established and strengthened the institution of the Sultanate, which was headed by the higher political sovereign. He was able to ignore the religious authority of the Caliph. Nizam al-Mulk established a close connection between the idea of fair authority, actual reign (kingship), concept of the true religion and the need for a stable and prosperous state. He recognized the Caliphate as a religious institution and the Caliph as a religious leader only, but at the same time considered the Sultan's power as consecrated by divine prestige. Certainly this contradicted the theory of al-Mawardi, which by then had become the conventional theory among the majority of Sunnite jurists. Therefore he got the famous Faqihs-Shafiites al-Juweyni and al-Ghazali (d. 1111) to take part in the religious-legal justification of his ideas, which were reflected in the "Siyasat-name". They were appointed the chiefs of the madrasah al-Nizamiya, founded by him and located in the majority of towns of the Caliphate. His patronage and support of the most authoritative Faqihs-shafiites provided a broad support of the Sultan power by Shafiism supporters in some regions of the Abbasid Caliphate.

Nizam al-Mulk's reliance on Shafiite Faqihs was also for the purpose of limiting claims on power on the part of the governors of Fatimid Egypt and the Alamut state of Ismailites. It is no wonder that al-Juweyni defended the basic foundations of the Sunnite political doctrine quite in the spirit of al-Mawardi, but, contrary to al-Mawardi, eager to justify the legitimacy of a Sultan's governing. The statement of the Shi'ite Imams, that the Prophet secretly nominated Ali as his deputy was categorically rejected by al-Juweyni. He considered that there was nothing about that in the religious tradition and moreover Ijma' always supported the opposite point of view, i.e. the Caliph should be elected, but not be nominated. According to al-Juweyni, no educated person (*Alim*) could deny the fact that election had been a unique practice of the Caliph selection for a long period of Caliphate history. However, taking into consideration the actual practice of Caliph assignments since the Umayyad period, he, as well as al-Mawardi, allowed a possibility of Imam election even by one elector from the number of the Ulama. But at the same time al-Juweyni, in contrast to al-Mawardi, pursued another purpose, which becomes obvious when he asserted the possibility of the simultaneous existence of two Caliphs under the stipulation that they be far apart territorially.

The lack of confidence of al-Juweyni in the ability of the Caliph to save the uniform, powerful and centralized state was already visible in *Irshad* and *Luma*. In these works he allowed the

possibility of displacing a ruling Imam in the case when he sins or the governing by the Caliph is unfair. He sharply objected to the Shi'ite doctrine of an Imam's infallibility.

## **Al-Ghazali**

After the death of al-Juweyni in 1085 his ideas were further developed in the works of another Faqih-Shafiite, al-Ghazali. Al-Ghazali, as well as his instructor al-Juweyni, had become a supporter of the Seljuq Sultans, but at a disturbed time. During this period there was a real threat from the side of Fatimid Egypt. Political murders of the supporters of the ruling regime by the Ismailites of Alamut had become frequent. There were three plots organized against Nizam al-Mulk, and soon the Grand Vizir of Sultan Malik-shah was killed, and then, under unknown circumstances, the Sultan died as well.

As a rule the works by al-Ghazali in the sphere of Fiqh, religion and ethics performed the task of theoretical justification of the need for a powerful central authority. In these works there was a large-scale criticism of political claims of the Fatimid and theoretical research in Arabic-Islamic philosophers on the improvement of society.

For al-Ghazali, politics was a necessary component of religion and morals. It was considered as the art of behavior, according to the specific circumstances of a human being's life and weighting one's deeds with the existing state order. Politics as a science, according to al-Ghazali, leaned on theology (*usul ad-din*), Islamic law (*usul al-Fiqh*) and the theory of the human being as a social animal. On the basis of all these disciplines there was an eschatological idea of human destiny; this world was considered only as a basis for the other world, and politics was a preparation for maximum happiness in the future life.

In his political theory al-Ghazali actively used the experience of the Sasanid state. According to the Sassanid tradition of the state system, religion and power were considered as "twins" (30, p. 95). So according to al-Ghazali, religion is the basis, and state authority is the guardian, ensuring its protection and guaranteeing its firmness. People need a powerful authority on behalf of the Sultan, which, with the help of laws, keeps and strengthens the state order. These laws form the subject of the Islamic law (Fiqh). Therefore Islamic jurists play a large role in the life of the state, and their activity should be considered as the major function of the state; order and justice cannot be provided without them. In addition to laws, according to al-Ghazali, there are religious rules and norms, which are a basis for the true faith. Accordingly "dogmatic theology" (*ilm al-kalam*) takes the central place in the hierarchy of sciences.

First of all the political doctrine of al-Ghazali should be considered in the light of his fears of civil war (Fitna) and various disturbances (*fasad*), which could cause anarchy and disorder. That is why major attention has been given by him to the problem of the mutual relation of Caliph and Sultan. But his criticism of political claims on authority by Shi'ites (Batin followers) can be considered only as an associated criticism, which helps to expose the main problem. Thus, even the request of the Tripoli Kadi Fakhrudin Abu Obeyd ibn Ali in 1107 for help in the struggle against the crusaders remained without a proper political evaluation by al-Ghazali.

The significance of an adequate understanding of the political doctrine of al-Ghazali is evident in the analysis of his works from the point of view of their chronology, starting from "Mustazhiri" and finishing with "Mustasfa". Al-Ghazali considers two aspects of the problem of "Caliph and Sultan": first, the relation of sovereignty (*hukm*) and secular authority (*Sultan*); second, the relation of religion (*din*) and state (*mulk*).

In *Mustazhiri*, which was written in 1094-1095 and was devoted to the Caliph al-Mustazhiri, al-Ghazali considered the problem of the legitimacy of Imam rule and proved the bankruptcy of claims of legal authority by Batinite followers. In this work, quite in the spirit of al-Mawardi, he uncovered features of the Islamic Sunnite political doctrine and described characteristics which the Caliph should have and the procedure of his election.

In *Iqtisad fi-l-itikad* al-Ghazali was more realistic in the evaluation of the Caliph's role in strengthening the Islamic state and introduced the problem of correlating the Caliphate and the Sultanate. Carefully analyzing the basic foundations of the Islamic political doctrine and the historical practice of the Caliphate, he conceived the idea of the necessity of a union of Imam and Sultan.

The theory of Imamatus by al-Ghazali was based on three key positions: 1) authority is required for maintaining order in the state, 2) Imamatus symbolizes the unity of the Islamic community (Umma) and its historical practice: the Sultanate becomes a constituent of the Caliphate; and 3) the functional and institutional authority of the Imamatus is based on Shari'a.

Al-Ghazali considered the Imam to be the higher authority and hence able to be appointed by either the Prophet, or a ruling Caliph, or a person who has authority. At that time the Sultan usually appointed the Imam, and only then was the Caliph formally elected by Ulama. Al-Ghazali tried to fix this situation. He considered that the procedure of Caliph election fully met the norms of Shari'a, and actually the Sultan became a constitutional authority. Imam did not symbolize the unity of Imamatus anymore, and was its constituent only. The Imam's authority was based on the authority of the Sultan, and the power of the latter was consecrated by the Imam's authority. The Sultan, as the constitutional authority, recognized the institutional authority of the Caliph. Thus, the Sultan as a secular governor ensured the unity and power of the Islamic state. According to al-Ghazali Faqih and Ulama should act as a link between Sultan and Imam. Their political functions were: interpretation of Shari'a in correspondence with historical realities, justification of the legitimacy of the Caliph appointed by the Sultan, and issuing religious-legal acts (fetwa), personifying a functional authority of Shari'a.

The late works by al-Ghazali show that as a whole he adhered to the point of view, stated in *Iqtisad fi-l-itikad*. In these works he discussed in detail the practical requirements for observing the religious rules and norms of Shari'a, which ensured the order and prosperity of the Islamic state. "Nowhere else was it more obvious, than in his work, *Ihya ulum ad-din* (Revival of Religious Sciences) that politics for the Muslims was not an independent science, but was the constituent of theology" (18, p. 115).

Besides that, regarding the Sultan as a unique force, capable of saving the uniform Islamic state, al-Ghazali supposed a possibility of absolute obedience to the secular governor even when the Sultan violated the norms of Shari'a and exercised unfair authority. He considered that the main thing was that the secular governor recognized the authority of the Imam. In *Ihya ulum ad-din* al-Ghazali repeatedly warned about the pernicious consequences of civil war (Fitna), disturbances and revolts of any sort. If order could be ensured by the Sultan only, people should submit to him and support him under any conditions.

In his work *Nasihah al-muluk*, he considered the main responsibilities of the governors as mastering the art of effective state ruling. Taking into consideration that this book was addressed not to Faqih, not to Caliph, but exclusively to the Sultans, he underlined the large responsibility of the latter before God and the citizens, showing in every possible way that their authority is from Allah. The first responsibility of the Sultan, according to al-Ghazali, is strengthening his own faith (jihad); his responsibilities toward the citizen are to exercise a just or fair authority. In numerous

examples from religious tradition, the history of the Sassanid state and the Caliphate, he demonstrated how an unjust authority resulted in tyranny, which in turn caused unjust authority. Al-Ghazali called upon the Sultans to listen to the opinion of the Faqihs and Ulama on religious matters and the Vizirs' advice on state matters. He noted the importance of the post of Vizir (and, in particular, of a first Vizir) in the state hierarchy.

In *Al-Mustasfa min ilm al-usul*, written in 1109, he reviewed the problem of society and state from the point of view of Islamic law (*usul al-Fiqh*). This treatise begins with an explanation of the fundamental Islamic doctrine that God is the unique sovereign. Reviewing the Fiqh sources, he underscored that the Qur'an was the unique absolute source. But *Sunnah* is valuable only at the level at which it specifies and proves the existence of the order established by God. Accordingly, *Ijma'* is valuable, as it specifies *Sunnah's* existence. Considering *Ijma'*, al-Ghazali asserted that it meant the unanimous opinion of all members of the Umma. However, considering the laws of those who can be included in *Ijma'* and those who should be excluded from it, Laoust notes that *Ijma'* was the unanimous opinion of Faqihs and the Ulama, who had the right to issue a *fatwa* (19, p. 58).

Concerning the problem of Taqlid a blind following of authority, and Ijtihad a creative development of the Islamic law theory, al-Ghazali asserted the need for the broad public (*amma*) to follow Taqlid. He justified this concept by the fact, that even associates of the Prophet followed the way outlined in advance by Muhammad. Moreover, al-Ghazali considered that original and independent search for truth, justice, and happiness could lead to social instability.

Considering the correlation of religion and state, spiritual and secular matters, he asserted their continuity and mutual conditioning. Umma, uniting people on the basis of faith, has as its goal the achievement of happiness in the next world. Taking into consideration that God is the unique sovereign, the human being is strictly obliged to follow Shari'a. Politics, theology, law, and ethics are inseparably linked sciences, which specify the methods of reaching happiness. Finally, according to al-Ghazali, political reforms are moral reforms: Everyone who wishes to improve the life of others should begin with himself.

Al-Ghazali had always remained a sober-minded Sunnite Faqih and politician, who did not doubt that in the long run the Imamate would cease to be the basis of the political structure of the Islamic state, and in due course, the Sultans and Emirs would establish, both theoretically and practically, independent authority in all regions of the Caliphate. The Imamate would symbolize political unity and, in the last analysis, would reflect only the religious and cultural unity. Al-Ghazali could only hope that the Sultans would recognize Shari'a as a functional authority of the Islamic state. Political wit did not deceive al-Ghazali, since long before the Mongolian invasion in 1258 the Caliphate actually had ceased to exist as a political institution. Many theorists of legal and political thought were not able to avoid this fact.

### *Ibn Taymiyya*

In the period of the 13th to 19th centuries, the general trend of Islamic political doctrines on authority can be determined by the main idea of the famous 14th century Faqih-Shafiite, Kadi of Damascus, Ibn Jamaa (d. 1333). He considered the sovereign to have legal authority until overthrown by a more powerful governor. The latter would then rule under the same titles and have the same authority and recognition; authority, even that which was objectionable or even reprehensible, was better than its absence. Authority meant order, and its absence meant chaos.

In political theory, Ibn Jamaa did not make a distinction between Imam and Sultan. For him, the Caliph is actually the Sultan, and the Sultan is the Imam. If for al-Ghazali, Sultan and Sultanate were the key positions in the theory on the Imamate, for Ibn Jamaa Imamate already meant Sultanate. The latter in his political theory recorded the transformation of the Caliphate into a Sultanate. Ibn Jamaa hoped for a revival of the past power of the Islamic state and, consequently, tried to present the Sultan as a powerful new Caliph, capable of providing political unity for the state.

Adaptation of the Shari'a norms to the changing historical conditions and, accordingly, modification of the direction of the Islamic political doctrine on authority caused extreme discontent among the Salafi (traditionalists) and in particular, of Faqih Hanbal's followers. Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) was one of them. He justified the need to return to the basic foundations of the Sunnite political theory within the doctrine of Hanbalah followers. At the basis of his doctrine is the idea that God created the world that should serve Him. Therefore, religion and authority, according to Ibn Taymiyya, are inseparable. Their separation from each other is the main source of instability and disorders in the state (8, p. 5). The political ideas of Ibn Taymiyya represent a return to the idea that Islam should act as a governor of personal and state life, and the main responsibility of the governor is implementing the Shari'a norms. He does not see any need to discuss the characteristics that the Imam should have. According to Ibn Taymiyya, the real unity of society, which existed during the time of the Prophet and his associates, should lean on religious solidarity. He underlined the importance of strictly following the rule of the Caliph's election and signing an agreement between him and the Islamic community (*Jamaa*). The agreement allows the realization of an effective control over the Imam's activity and guarantees peace and prosperity to the Caliphate. On the one hand, the primary function of the Imam is to establish justice on the basis of Shari'a; therefore, according to Ibn Taymiyya, he is the deputy of God. On the other hand, not obeying the Imam is allowable if his deeds contradict the *Qur'an*, *Sunnah* and the tradition of the first devout Muslims (*al-salaf al-salihun*). In all other cases, disobedience to the Caliph is equivalent to revolt (Fitna), which is a heinous, inexcusable sin.

As a rule, the name of Ibn Taymiyya is bound up with establishing the so-called "salaf method." Ibn Khaldun in "Muqaddima", al-Makrizi in "Hithat", and al-Sabuni in "Akidat al-salaf" mark out the following principles: first, complete rejection of searching for an internal sense of the sacred texts from their allegorical interpretation, and strict following to the letter of the Qur'an and *Sunnah*; second support for the Hadith; third, prohibiting the comparison of God and human beings in any sense; fourth, justifying faith (*nakl*) with the help of reason (*akl*), based on the fact that there are no contradictions between them and cannot be, because the sole work of reason is to understand the text, but not to evaluate it; fifth, the prohibition of innovations. All innovations (*bida'*), according to Ibn Taymiyya, should be attributed to Satan; they lead to a religious and political split (3, p. 254). The political doctrine of Ibn Taymiyya shows that only the first Arabic state was considered by all traditionalists as the sole legal and just one, and the whole further history of Islamic state was a deviation.

Making a general evaluation of the political doctrine of Ibn Taymiyya, J. Makdisi underscores that he was a Hanbalist—a Sufi. According to the opinion of the American and al-Jilani (d. 1166) were Hanbalists. The common point, which integrated Hanbalism and Sufism is reliance on Hadith. This is the reason for naming all of them ahl al-Hadith (traditionalists) (21, p. 62-63). For all of them, the Medina state of the Prophet was their social ideal; their main theoretical and practical activity was in calling-up to *salaf* with the call to return to the religious cleanliness and justice characteristic of the first Islamic state. Probably, the spread of Sufism from the Indus to Gibraltar and the active and passive aversion to political regimes in the numerous Islamic states

by the Sufi orders have been the reasons for the sharp opposition from Ibn Taymiyya and the traditional opponents of Sufism and Hanbalism: Mutazilites, Asharites, Shi'ite and Arab-Islamic philosophers. Ibn Taymiyya criticized some Sunnite Faqihs (4, p. 37-51) and considered the element of compromise in the political theories of his predecessors to be dangerous both for Islam and for the existence of the Islamic state. He not only participated in the military expedition of the Mamluk Sultan al-Malik al-Mansur Lajin in 1297-1299 in Armenia as an expert Faqih, but also often entered into conflict with the governors, calling for strict observance of Shari'a and for reforms in the spirit of the Imamate the period of the Prophet and the four "righteous Caliphs."

According to Ibn Taymiyya, the state has not existed as an ideal Caliphate for a long time. The political unity of the Islamic state in due course had been transformed into the political pluralism of numerous independent Emirates. However, political pluralism developed because of religious monism, as all these Emirs or Sultans justified the legitimacy of their authority on the basis of the Shari'a. They had only one goal, which is the triumph of Islam and the service of God. However, their basis was not a myth about a divine appointment or the Prophet's choice, but the will of governors relying on Shari'a and on their ability and skill to adjust Shari'a to this will. That is why Ibn Taymiyya proceeds from the fact that absolute sovereignty belongs to God, and that after the Prophet's death it is also assisted by all those, who by means of knowledge and virtue could give an authoritative interpretation of Shari'a. Hence, they are responsible for the adaptation of the Shari'a to the new conditions of time and place. No doubt Ibn Taymiyya added himself to "people of knowledge and virtue," and also some others, who tried to find a new solution for old problems on the basis of a reevaluation and appropriate interpretation of the Caliphate history in the framework of Hanbalism.

Ibn Taymiyya did not accept the idea of al-Ghazali that religion and state are "twin brothers"; he returned to a traditional dogma of the inseparability of religion and authority. However, he gave a new justification of this position quite in the spirit of Ibn Jamaa, when the latter justified the necessity of obedience even to a Caliph-Sultan who violates the Shari'a. With reference to Ibn Hanballah, he asserted that any leader needs authoritative power, even an unfair governor, as the power of the latter to perform the laws, ensure safety, protect the state from enemies, and distribute military trophies—and in the end the blessings for religion and all world—depend on it. Thus, the need of authority is justified by the religious laws of Shari'a. The idea of the indivisibility of religion and state brought Ibn Taymiyya to the assertion that 60 years of ruling by an unfair Imam are better than one night without his authority. He separated the personal behavior of the governor from his state functions, which are not dependent on the moral image of the Imam. He criticized the Kharijite idea of insubordination to an unfair Caliph by asserting that the Muslim should not raise weapons against his brother in faith or breach public order and by that commit an inexcusable sin.

He justified the idea of the unity of religion and state not only by the feeling of religious solidarity, but also by the necessity for mutual help among people because the human being in his nature is a political being. So faith and reason as well urgently require a uniform governor.

The political doctrine of Ibn Taymiyya differs from the doctrines of his predecessors in three basic elements:

- the Caliphate is not a mandatory political institution;
- several Imams can simultaneously exist;

- the election of the Caliph and the conclusion of an agreement with him are not limited to the Ulama, but assume the equivalent participation of all authoritative members of the community (Jamaa).

Ibn Taymiyya rejected the traditional Sunnite dogmas that the Imam should come only from the Qureish family, and that he should have many worthy qualities. What is important is that the Imam and the rulers (Umara) should always consult the the Ulama and Faqihs.

As had other jurists before him, Ibn Taymiyya was compelled to take into consideration the realities of history. However, as a traditionalist, he was irreconcilable to deviations from the foundations of Islamic political doctrine and called for a return to the orders prevailing in the "state of the Prophet," while at the same time preserving the right of free judgment.

The force of tradition and religion has appeared so great that any call to Salaf, the demand to return to justice and purity, to the orders of the first Islamic state was embodied in one of the most militant Islamic reforming movements of the 18th century—Wahhabism. Obviously, the Salafists played a major role even among the pan-Islamist reform movements of the 19th and 20th centuries, connected with the names of al-Afghani, Rashid Rida, Muhammad abrahamu, and al-Kawakabi.

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## Chapter VII

# The Humanistic Ideals of the Islamic Middle Ages

Artur Sagadeev

"Man has become a problem for man"

(ashkala-l-insan'ala-l-insan)

*Abu Hayan at-Taikhidi*, 1010

A stereotype of the Middle Ages as dark came to us from the epoch of the Enlightenment, but it first appeared among the scholars of the Renaissance whose self-image required a contrasting image of the preceding era. To create such an image was not at all difficult, for the scholarship of the Renaissance revealed ancient literary texts, whereas in the heritage of the Middle Ages, it found only a dry and sterile scholasticism. The intellectual life of the Middle Ages, like a cloud, showed them only its dark side, and the Renaissance scholars simply did not have enough information to evaluate its lighter side. As a well-known Russian investigator of the Middle Ages, N.A. Sidorova, underlined, the difficulty in studying the unofficial Medieval culture "consisted in the absence of sources of information, from which one could appreciate the bulk and the character of this culture in its genuine state."<sup>1</sup>

But as one English proverb says, every cloud must have its silver lining, and so medievalists sooner or later began investigating "the other side" of the spiritual life of the Middle Ages in order to grasp this life in the unity of the diverse forms of its objective reality. Thus began the dismantling of the one-dimensional image of the Middle Ages.

But the self-image of the humanists was also a stereotype, though with a positive aspect, and accordingly, it also needed correction. Perhaps, it was for such a correction, that some time ago A.F. Losev touched on the problem "of the dark side of titanism."<sup>2</sup> This illumination (no matter that sometimes it was deliberately grotesque and subjective) factually revived, widened, and enriched the traditional, pompous, lacquered image one has of the Renaissance. The idea of the "dark side of titanism" was not approved by some well-known specialists of the Renaissance, who saw in it the request "to search out the dark sides of the Renaissance or to attribute to it the terrors of the inquisition and the counter-reformation."<sup>3</sup> But such an interpretation of the problem would mean regarding the terrors of the Inquisition as unknown in the "epoch of titans" or as something alien to it (as "birthmarks" of the Middle Ages) and a negating of the progressive character of the Renaissance as affirmed by F. Engels in his *Dialectics of Nature*. Of course, the work also contains strong criticism of "the other side of titanism," for example, Engels statement concerning the founder of Calvinism burning Servet for discovering the circulation of the blood,<sup>4</sup> Protestants who "surpassed Catholics in persecuting the free study of nature,"<sup>5</sup> and Luther, as well as other humanists of his time, who protested against the Middle Ages for introducing ancient philosophical notions into Christian theology and thus staining the purity of Gospel traditions.

But in the present context, this is of interest more in its methodological aspect: It is based on the idea of an "essence" that is not clearly understood. "The essence is the inner content of a subject, expressed in the unity of all diverse and contradictory forms of its existence."<sup>6</sup> But concentration of attention on the light side of the Renaissance means accentuating only the advanced aspects of this culture, (which, in turn, actually is reduced to the culture of the Italian Renaissance as the classical expression of Renaissance culture). This is one of the main reasons for the phenomenon, condemned by Renaissance figures, of attempting to see a process of "world

Resurrection"<sup>7</sup> which would be an anti-historical and an arbitrary collage of items taken out of context.<sup>8</sup> The Renaissance was a period not only of bright and flourishing culture, but also of complex, dramatic conflicts that need objective analysis, showing both its bright and dark sides.

## Renaissance

The temptation to declare the Medieval Islamic, Iranian, Central Asiatic culture to be a Renaissance is especially great, because its creators, like the figures of the (European) Renaissance, "revived" ancient science (*'ulum al-awail*). Besides, this culture not only anticipated some features of the culture of Renaissance, but also directly participated in its creation and development.

The discussion of what A. Mets called *The Islamic Renaissance (Die Renaissance des Islam)* began soon after the publication of his book (in 1922) with the same title. At first, it concentrated on the problem of what the author meant when he gave such a title to his book. (A. Mets died in 1917, without finishing his work). Rekkendorf, who wrote a preface to the book, noted that the author was not satisfied by this title, and the word "Renaissance" was used by him alternately to (a) denote the transition of the ancient learning to the Islamic world, and (b) the transformation of Islam in the 9th-10th centuries as a result of the resurrection of the Hellenistic-Christian heritage in the form of a new religious ideal – Ma'rifa, meaning ancient Gnosis. It was also suggested that under the word Renaissance, A. Mets understood first of all the resurrection of classical ancient learning, in the sense in which one speaks of a Carolingian, Byzantine, German, and so on Renaissance.

Scholars agreed that a parallel between the European Renaissance and the rise of Medieval Islamic culture had no objective basis. In particular, V.V. Bartold agreed with K. Bekker that it would be a real misfortune if, under the influence of the Mets's book, the understanding of a flourishing Islamic culture was taken as a Renaissance. Such a parallel was unwarranted because in the history of the Islamic world there was no centuries-old supremacy of barbarity, the enthusiasm for antiquity never reached as high a level as in Europe, and there was no such contempt toward the remote past, called in Europe "vandalism."<sup>9</sup>

During the following decade, Eastern scholarship discovered nothing to justify rejection of the negative attitude of the former orientalist towards the idea of the Eastern Islamic, Iranian, Central Asiatic and other Renaissances. The investigation was broad in scale, in the former Soviet Union, particularly in the states of Transcaucasia and Central Asia.

As bases for the proclamation of the concept of an Eastern Renaissance, they sought parallels with the European Renaissance in a number of cases: first, the idea of philanthropy (*jen*) as interpreted by Han Juy, a Chinese thinker; second, the neoplatonism of the Areopagites, whose Georgian propagandists became pioneers of the neoplatonic Renaissance not only in Georgia, but also in Europe; third, the different manifestations of the Medieval Armenian culture whose flourishing was interrupted by the rise of the feudalism and the Mongolian, Turkish, and Persian conquerors; fourth, the diverse realms of the culture of the Medieval Islamic East that developed under the Iranian, Turkish, and Arab rulers before and after the Mongolian conquest.

As a rule, the authors of these concepts depended upon the interpretation of the Renaissance of Engels in his *"Dialectics of Nature,"* according to which the Cinquencento, Renaissance, and Reformation are used to denote one and the same great epoch, though the content of the epoch is not exhausted by any of these terms.<sup>10</sup> Clearly, however, what is common to the two great phenomena of the Renaissance (resurrection, in its culturological meaning) and Reformation must

be essential for the whole epoch. Namely, it was their socio-economic sources, the destruction of feudal and the origin of capitalist relations, the strengthening the role of bourgeois strata of the society and of the bourgeois ideology as well.<sup>11</sup> It is equally obvious that in the Medieval Islamic world, there was nothing like the formation of capitalist relations against the background of the decay of feudal relations, nor was there any other accompanying processes like a decay of feudal classes or corporate relations, no city communes, no struggle of citizen against feudalism—in a word, there was nothing that made the epoch of the Renaissance a great epoch, rather than simply a period of unusual development in humanistic culture.

As D.E. Bertels noted quite correctly, studying the Eastern Renaissance "in the context of the history of culture, excluding the socio-economic conditions of the development of a society, is doomed to failure."<sup>12</sup> But what must one do if the analysis of the socio-economic conditions of the development of the Medieval Islamic society manifests radical differences in comparison with the corresponding conditions of West European society in the age of Renaissance? One cannot agree with the opinion of those few orientalists (S.D. Goitein, E. Ashto, etc.), who affirm that the whole economic sector had a capitalistic character and, obviously, formed a bourgeois stratum and even a "bourgeois revolution" in the East.

The alternative solution to the problem is found in the idea that the Renaissance took place in the history of all the people of the world at their transition "from the village and castle-estate culture to a city-type culture."<sup>13</sup> The essence of this idea is the negation of the connection between Renaissance and the formation of bourgeois relations and the bourgeoisie, for otherwise, this phenomenon cannot spread to all the people of the world: "The age of Renaissance is feudalism that is being transformed into a new city type period of its history."<sup>14</sup>

To agree with this rejection in the East of a direct connection between the Renaissance, on the one hand, and the appearance of early capitalist economies and the development of capitalist manufacturing, on the other is not to deny this connection in Europe in general. But it is a substitution of concepts to introduce the notion of a city period in the history of Feudalism, anticipated by a village (castle) period. The idea of the Renaissance as a global phenomenon is forced and artificial, due to this substitution, for the constitutive, essential features of such a supposedly global phenomenon cannot depend on absolutely external circumstances such as the presence of some ancient classical culture that might be resurrected. It is not possible to confirm by empirical materials relevant to the history of all the people of the world the proposition that humanistic urban culture develops as a negation of the preceding village (estate or castle) culture, implying for every country or cultural historical community a "Medieval" period of development?

Concerning the Islamic world, to validate the concept of global Renaissance, it is said that their scholars and philosophers created a new education, a new enlightenment, "overcoming a certain historical period between their time and ancient world," the world of "great ancient civilizations," that is, their own "Middle Ages."<sup>15</sup> But, everyone who knows the Medieval Islamic culture can easily notice that in this discussion, the term "ancient civilization" is used ambiguously and, as a result, a logical mistake arises, known as *quaternio terminorum*. In one premise, this term means centuries-old civilizations that appeared in early antiquity in another "civilization" that existed in hoary antiquity and also disappeared in those times. Hence, a false conclusion appears, as if the people of the Medieval Islamic world stepped over their "Middle Ages."

The people of the Islamic East had no "Middle Ages" either as "a historical period," or in that culturological sense in which the authors of the above mentioned discourse used the term as an epoch of village-type culture, developed in feudal castles and monasteries. In contrast to Europe, in the Medieval Islamic East, besides cities there were no other centers for culture could be formed.

A distant resemblance with monasteries could be found, perhaps, in *hanaks*, the places of dervishes, but their cultural role was insignificant, and their spiritual values were derivative from the culture of the cities.

But if the development of humanistic urban culture in the Islamic East did not accompany the decay of Feudalism, if it never replaced some "village" cultures or was practiced in castles and monasteries, and if, beside that, the alien cultural values it absorbed were not restored to life but were adopted from their living bearers, just as the cultural values of the Islamic world were taken in by the European scholastics of the 12th and the following centuries—then is there any basis to speak about the Eastern, Iranian, Central Asian, and other Renaissances? This term was turned into a metaphor, into a kind of a quality sign, and the "city type" culture, discovered here and there, was honored with this sign.

The development of institutes for the study of the Eastern Renaissance reflects the transfer of specific developments of the West-European burgher community to the history of Middle East cities. Some specialists now note: "We think, that we honor the East, finding its resemblance with Europe, but in reality we only hamper the search of the truth."<sup>16</sup> It misrepresents the empirical material by adjusting the subject realm of the concept to an *a priori* scheme, and perverts the idea of Renaissance by alternately reducing it to the period of a flourishing "Renaissance literature" or "Renaissance philosophy" in the East, and broadening its content to the notion of a period of highest development, resurrecting "the progressive moments of the past" through negation of the negation (without the characteristics of the thesis, antithesis, and synthesis).<sup>17</sup>

This fact does not reject the possibility of finding certain common regularities in the development of cities and the city cultures in the East and West, but it is necessary, first, to look for such regularities based upon firm empirical ground, not upon artificial scheme; second, it is necessary to characterize these regularities without using the name of this unique phenomenon "Renaissance," but by finding more adequate, universal categories. This phenomenon can be characterized as Humanism.

At the beginning of the 19th century, the term Humanism was introduced by a German teacher, F. Hithammer, who wanted to promote the teaching of the ancient classics in secondary schools as opposed to the natural sciences and technical subjects. In the Renaissance, beginning from the 15th century, a person was called a Humanist (Italian: *humanista, humanista*), who devoted himself to *studia humanitatis*, to an educational program emphasizing more cultural refinement and the dignity and earthly destination of a human being. But the sources of Humanism go back to antiquity.

The main attribute of Humanism—the idea of the unity of humanity—developed on the ground of the great empires that opened the space for political, commercial, and cultural communication. These, in turn, created conditions for using a single language for interethnic communication. At the period of late antiquity, the language was Hellenistic Greek. In the empire, created by Alexander the Great, a person who knew this language could pass from the Nile to the Indus without an interpreter. Thus, the former boundary line between a Hellen and a barbarian was overcome: Now the term indicated belonging to a definite culture, hence, the stoic's idea of the world state came closer. Theophrast spoke about friendship (*philia*) and union (*syngenes*) that rule in the world, and about the community (*oikeiotetos*), uniting all people. The roots of these ideas can be found already in Aristotele's *Nicomachean Ethics*, widely known in the Islamic world.

For Aristotle, it was the *polis* that represented an ideal context for a human community, and in the epoch of Hellenism, such a context formed the world state. As Stoics thought, humankind was divided into a wise minority and an unwise majority (later the Islamic philosophers used a

similar idea of dividing people into an intellectual elite (*al-khassa*) and the "general public" (*al-amma*).

In the Hellenic epoch, the term Humanism was widely used to mean humaneness. It was encouraged through wars when the humaneness of a conqueror or ruler often was represented as a savior and a benefactor of humanity. The word "philanthropy," originally used in the 4th century BC, meant the charity of Gods and autocrats towards their people, especially toward the helpless and suffering.

The idea of Humanism was further developed in the era of the Roman Empire. Soon after the Roman conquest of the West Mediterranean, Polibius, a Greek, wrote the first general history of humankind, representing humankind as an integral formation. Cicero, who had great influence on the Western interpretation of Humanism, understood *humanitas* to correspond to the Greek words *anthropismos*, cultural humaneness, and *paideia*, education, as well as the word *philanthropia*, meaning humaneness in the sense of merciful.

The appearance of humanistic ideas in the Islamic world was also due to broad interethnic contacts, the development of international trade, and intensive urbanization. Though the Islamic power gradually disintegrated to such a degree that al-Masudi compared the resulting states with the ownership of diadikhs True Muslims were united by a common religion, literary language, law, culture, and citizenship.

A cosmopolitan spirit ruled at the Baghdad school of Aristotelians that united scholars of different confessions. Abu Zakharia Yahia ibn Adi, the head of this school, was a Jacobite and a pupil of the Moslem al-Farabi. A Nestorian, Yuhanna ibn Khailan, was al-Farabi's philosophy teacher. A close friendship connected Abu Nasr and another Nestorian, the interpreter, Matta ibn Junus. Among direct pupils of Yahia ibn Adi were a Nestorian, Abu-l-Hair al-Hasan ibn Suwar ibn al-Hammar (or al-Humar), and a Jacobite, Abu Ali Isa ibn Ishak ibn Zuraa, as well as Muslims, among them the famous philosophers Abu Suleiman al-Sidjistani and Abu Haian at-Tawkhidi. European philosophers, Wabn ibn Yaish and Abu-l-Hair Daud ibn Muzadj, were also in close contact with this school of thought. Vivid descriptions of the cultural activity in Baghdad, left by al-Tawkhidi showed that a scientific circle of al-Sidjistani united Muslims, Christians, Jews, and pagans from all parts of the Islamic world, who shared common spiritual values and aims stimulated by studying the ancient scientific and philosophical heritage.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, scientific meetings of educated people were organized (*medjlis*), and one such meeting is described by an Andalusian theologian, Abu Umar ibn Muhammad al-Saadi, who twice visited such meetings. He wrote of being literally shocked by the atmosphere of free exchange of innermost thoughts and ideas which was supported by the belief that the truth was single and that all religions were expressions of this one general truth. This was common to all humankind, as well as a widely cultivated "ideology of friendship," as described in Ibn al-Mukaffa's book, *Al-adab al-kabir*. This ideology compared with the spiritual contacts uniting the ancient philosophical schools of the Stoics, Epicureans and Neoplatonics and with those of the Italian Renaissance such as Marcilio Ficino's study group.

The thinkers, oriented to the Greek models of philosophizing (*falasifa*), were well acquainted with the universalistic spirit of the ancient cultural heritage, with the continuity between the wisdom of the ancient philosophers and that of the most recent philosophers of Islam, providing links of classical Greek science and wisdom with the rising Arab-Islamic culture. Abu Nasr al-Farabi describes the historical paths transferring ancient philosophy to the Islamic world. At those times, the ancient sciences were considered to be familiar to all people and religious communities and were attributed to the *falasifa* and called *falsafa*\*18

In his treatise, *On First Philosophy*, Al-Kindi expressly depicted the conditions in which the Islamic world became acquainted with the universal ancient sciences: "One should not be ashamed of approving and attaining truth, wherever it came from—be it even from tribes and peoples of countries remote from and not in contact with one's own. There is nothing better for the seeker after truth than the truth itself; one should not scorn and look down on those, who expressed it or passed it on: the truth cannot belittle anyone."<sup>19</sup> Analogous to this statement existed a maxim, widely used by the Islamic authors, that required one to judge a truth by what was said, not by who said it.

## Education

The idea of the unity of humankind, disputed by philosophers, was one of the most important features of the Humanism of Medieval Islamic culture. It had another important feature—an ideal of enlightenment, of intellectual and moral culture, every close to the ancient ideal of *paideia*.

Though the theory of education did not form a special discipline, the problems connected with education were very often discussed in the works in jurisprudence, theology, philosophy, Sufism, and Adab. Jurists were the first to devote works to education (Ibn Sahnun, al-Kabisi, Ibn Jamaa), but their discourse concerned mainly the juridical aspects of education. The connection of education and the upbringing of a person acquired paramount significance in the works of the philosophers ("The Brethren of Purity," Miskawayh, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd) and Sufis (Abu Talib al-Makki, al-Kushairi, al-Suhrawardi). The representatives of Arab literature also showed great interest in the problems of education (Al-Jahis, Ibn Kutaiba, Ibn Abd Rabbih), as well as Ibn Khaldun. Authors of books about upbringing devoted special chapters to the related moral and pedagogical issues (Ibn Kayyim al-Jauzia, Ibn al-Jazzar al-Kairavani). However, a number of works in pedagogy are known only by their titles, mentioned in a bibliographical work of Hadji Halif, *Kashf az-zunun*, and in different catalogues of Arabic manuscripts.

Philosophers regarded their science as the highest aim of humanitarian education and as the cornerstone of all the sciences, as a means of human perfection, of achieving happiness and salvation. Miskawayh represented philosophy as the only mean of genuine upbringing (*al-adabal-hakiki-alethinepaideia*) and the way to salvation (*nadjat-soteria*). According to him, an ideal upbringing is one in accord with religious scripture (*adab al-Shari'a*) in order to teach a child and to conform him to the prescribed rules of behavior. After that a child must study arithmetic and geometry, demonstrative speech and love of truth. Learning must continue until a person reaches the highest perfection and happiness.

The opposite results are achieved, Miskawayh said, when young people are educated on false values, on falsity and immorality, spread by indecent poetry, such as poems by Imru al-Kaisa, an-Nabigi, etc. J. Kraemer sees the last point as reflecting a negative attitude towards poetry by Plato, who excludes poetic activity from his model of the ideal state. Kraemer adds that the charming heroes of Homer, seen by some as insulting for Islam, because in his representation Gods were similar to people and were also insulting and unpedagogical for Plato, one of the main creators of the conception of *paideia*.<sup>20</sup>

The philosophers' ideas on education originated in continuity with the translation of texts from classical Greek science and philosophy and were inspired by Hellenistic—sometimes by neo-Pythagorean models, where the program of education was closely connected with the classification of the sciences. At the source of both was a work of Paul the Persian, included the Miskawayh's

treatise, *Tartib al-saada*, where different stages of human happiness, as well as the ways of their achievement were analysed.

This became the second part of Miskawayh's treatise which was devoted to the classification of the parts of Aristotle's philosophy, divided into theoretical and practical philosophy. Theoretical philosophy has two parts. One deals with nonmaterial objects whether abstracted from matter as in mathematics or separated from matter mentally, or metaphysics. The characteristics of all material objects is studied by Aristotle's physics. Among such material objects there are the eternal and passing objects. The former are treated in Aristotle's treatise "On Heaven". Those which arise and pass away are analyzed either in a general form, in the *Physics* or in "On Generation and Destruction" or in special treatises. Some treat things above the Earth; others treat those that are on the Earth, which are divided into inanimate and animate things. Animate objects are subdivided into plants and animals. The second part of theoretical philosophy includes also a science which is close to metaphysics, namely psychology. To this Aristotle devotes such treatises as "On the Soul", "On Spirit" and "On Senses and the Sensually Perceived". Lastly, practical philosophy is divided into two parts, one of them deals with an individual (ethics) and the other - with his environment (economics and politics). According to Miskawayh, Aristotle's philosophy must be studied, beginning from ethics and then passing to mathematics, logic, physics and metaphysics.

D. Gutas underlines the obvious dependence on this classification of Arab-Muslim philosophers as well as the educational program of the highest level schools in the late period of the Alexandrian learning (5-6th A.D.).<sup>21</sup> He also noted the connection important for understanding the nature of humanism at the Medieval Islamic East, namely that between Paul the Persian and the Alexandrian tradition in their approach to the problem of the correlation of faith and knowledge. In Paul's introduction to logic the most important idea was that knowledge is better than faith, because religious belief is relative and generates quite different ideas. "The objects of knowledge are close, obvious and knowable, while the objects of faith are distant, unseen and cannot be subjected to exact knowledge. The latter are doubtful, the former are not; consequently, knowledge is better than faith." The superiority of knowledge over belief was argued in the same way by David, one of the main Alexandrian commentators of Aristotle, who said: "Divine subjects as such are really invisible and incomprehensible; they are more likely known through imagination, than by strict knowledge."<sup>22</sup> Here knowledge through imagination includes faith.

Behind such reasoning there is hidden a whole tradition of allegoric interpretation of sacred texts, both Pagan and Christian, that was used even in early Hellenism and Neoplatonism. Before Olympiodor, a direct predecessor of the author of this reasoning, a considerable experience in the adaptation of philosophy and religion had been accumulated; Olympiodor himself regarded Christianity as a credo for uneducated common people.

At the court of Anushirvana, where traditionalists had no strong influence, Paul the Persian could openly raise the problem of the correlation of faith and knowledge, as well as underline the epistemological role of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics*, which had not been analysed before in the Syrian tradition in order not to conflict with religion.

The classification of sciences, stated above, directly influenced the classification, advanced by Abu Nasr al-Farabi and represented to philosophers a program of higher grade education.

Such words as *adab* (*paideia*) and *ta'dib* (*paideusis*) were the main terms denoting education in the Medieval Islamic world. The last word denoted the process of education, the first one, its result. Accordingly, *adib* meant an educated man, a carrier of *ada-ba* (*paideutos*). The philosophical theory of education, proceeding from the identification of *adaba* with *paideia*, was

not limited to the circles of professional philosophers, but became a part of "the general course of the Islamic thought" (26, p. 152). The essential features of philosophical education are seen in a number of works on pedagogy, to which belong the works, *Exhortation to the Education of a Young Man*, attributed to Plato and included into the Miskawayh's treatise, *Jabidan Herad*, as well as fragments, traced primarily to Plato and included in the book of Abu-l-Hasan al-Amiri, *Al-Saada wa-l-isad*; and a pedagogical part of a work of a neo-Pythagorean Brison, entitled *Oikonomicos*.

*Exhortation to the Education of a Young Man* declares the formation of character and the acquiring of good manners and good ways of behavior to be the highest aim of education. The treatise has two parts. One part analyses the ethics of the teacher's behavior, the other contains general instructions, addressing those who strive for education. Education will bring the desired results if the pupil is disciplined which, however, does not exclude equality between the teacher and the pupil. Pupils should lead a virtuous life and believe the wisdom of their main instructor—a philosopher. The latter shows them the way of acquiring genuine wisdom. "Those who want to enter the domain of knowledge, must have stainless purity, because association with the almost holy community of those who gain knowledge demands from them the highest level of intellectual honesty, sincerity, humbleness and modesty in their everyday life and work." As to the subjects they study, only military arts and music are mentioned, which correspond to the strictly aristocratic outlook. The original text could have more information about the process and the subjects of education, but probably it was believed that pupils should acquire only certain aristocratic habits, and teaching them concrete sciences was neither necessary nor desirable. The true aim of education was its philosophical content and the code of behavior typical only of true intellectuals.<sup>23</sup>

"Al-saada Wa-l-isad" treats politics as a means of achieving the final end of philosophy—happiness. Here the aim of education coincides with that postulated in the work analyzed above, but not only adults were concerned, but also children. The basis of education from childhood is the firm belief that happiness and blessings are achieved through obedience to the laws (*su-nan*) and to seniors (*akabir*). If there is such a faith, then a law or order can be received as something that gives pleasure.

The treatise begins with the definition of *adab* (education), *mutaaddib* (the one who receives education), and *adib* (an educated one). Plato, it is said here, equates *adab* with philosophy (*hikma*). Another definition comes from the first person (*wa-akul*): *Adab* is human wisdom, and human wisdom is knowledge about behavior that leads to happiness. In Kraemer's opinion, this definition could belong to al-Amiri's pupil, but in Rosenthal's opinion, it could belong also to the commentator of this work.

Referring again to Plato, it is affirmed that the aim of education is to form a virtuous man, who can keep himself from physical pleasures and display emotional indifference whether facing joy, troubles, or other occasions. This person can stay calm always, if only reason impels him to. In the treatise an educated man is equated to a sensible one (*natik*), while the noneducated is compared with one who is sleeping (this last comparison is attributed to Plato, while the Greek tradition attributes it to Antisphen). The education of children must be adapted to their abilities. At the beginning (as Plato taught), serious matters (*djidd*) are represented as amusement (*hazl*) with the help of parables, containing *adab*. For example, with the help of poems that teach virtue and modesty (corresponding ideas are found in Plato's work, *The Republic*), as opposed to poetry that propagates dissipation and idle fun. A human being from his childhood must be taught to be brave, to scorn death, to learn to write, to swim, and to know the rules of etiquette. The highest degree of education—learning philosophy—is prepared for by a propedeutic program (attributed



to Plato) that included arithmetic, the science of measuring areas, geometry, astronomy, music, dialectics and logic. It must also impart disgust as regards what is dirty and ugly.

Though *Exhortation* and *Al-saada Wa-l-usad* contain certain references to Plato, their ancient sources point to Pythagorean literature. The neo-Pythagorean origin of Brison's *Economics* leaves still less doubt inasmuch as for Brison happiness is also the final aim. His work is concentrated on the sphere of home and family life, and the part devoted to education concerns exclusively small children. The problems of higher education, which as a rule, takes place out of the family sphere, are completely excluded. Brison thinks that besides physical qualities and natural talents, the constant education of correct habits plays a great role and is also the most important aim of education. He attaches special significance to good table manners and to developing habits of proper sleep. It is recommended to avoid sexual activity, as well. Respect for elders, endurance, simple tastes, and games from time to time are mentioned among other elements of upbringing.<sup>24</sup>

Brison had great influence on the development of a philosophical theory of education in the Islamic East, beginning from the 10th century. Miskawayh directly refers to Brison as an authority in pedagogy in his work, *Tahzib al-akhlak*. The thought of Miskawayh himself became the basis for the following interpretation of the subject and were included in the works of al-Gazali, *Ihya ulum ad-din*, and of Nasir ad-Din at-Tusi *Ahlak-i nasiri*. Interpreting Brison, Miskawayh characterizes education as a reliable guide in the formation of proper moral and intellectual skills, leading to true humaneness and happiness.

The importance of philosophical theory for the Islamic Medieval culture becomes still more evident if we refer to the Greek-Arabic gnomology. The vast depository of popular wisdom was not only for philosophical or even for court circles, but also for a wider audience. D. Gutas cites a reference from *Al-imta Wal-muanasa* by at-Tawhidi that the typical literature of that kind was to educate and instruct the ordinary reader and that aphorisms and anecdotes of philosophical content were included here along with quotations from Arabic poetry, hadiths, and Quranic verses.<sup>25</sup> Assimilation of this material was not facile, as is evident from at-Tawhidi's statement, cited by the same author: "The sayings of these people are outstanding, positive and instructive; that is praiseworthy. Let Allah help us to gain benefit from their sayings and let Him save us from the evil that is said about them."<sup>26</sup> In this connection, J. Kraemer cites famous words of the Safarid ruler of Sidgistan, Abu Jaafar ibn Banui, included in the book of his protégé, al-Sidjistani, *Sivan al-hikma*. Abu Jaafar used to remember sayings, anecdotes, biographies, and deeds of Greeks as no one else. Usually he said: "These are nuggets of gold and something like metal, unpolished and unfounded into a form." He was so delighted with Greek anecdotes, that he said: "What kind of people they must be when they are serious and apply their full natural talents, if they are thus when joking, amusing, relaxing?" Then he noted: "I like the saying, ascribed to Democritus: "That one who sails on our sea has no other seashore but himself."<sup>27</sup>

But all this did not mean, that philosophical comprehension of the truth was available to the broad population of the Islamic cites. Beginning from al-Farabi in Arabic-Islamic philosophy, it was affirmed that philosophy was the property only of the intellectual elite, while the general population or masses were induced to virtuous life only by the poetic and rhetoric reasoning of religion. According to Ibn Rushd, political education of the citizens of an ideal state was to include several levels of introduction to truth: the lowest level was formed by poetic debates, a higher one by a combination of poetic and rhetorical debate, while the highest level involved apodictic (conclusive) discourse. The lowest level of education used parables and mytho-poetic images. At the same time, Ibn Rushd was radically against using "bad tales," for example, about the other world (as in Plato's works) or describing God as the reason of good and evil. From political

education together with "bad tales," Ibn Rushd excluded the imitations of evil and sophistical statements (sophistry was excluded from the teaching in general). According to him, analogous statements, typical of the Islamic theologians, lead to absolute relativism and subjectivism in defining good and evil. Supremacy of theologians in the state might mean the end of regular social life, because there might be a war of everybody against everybody.

At the same time, one of the main difficulties met by Ibn Rushd while working out his theory of education, consisted in the following: He held the point of view, dating back to Plato, that the highest happiness is gaining theoretical (intellectual, dianoethical) virtue, that is, philosophical knowledge; and at the same time he was to agree with the Islam directive that the main principle of morals, including the teaching of happiness, had already been presented in the *Qur'an*. This difficulty was compounded by Abu Hamif al-Gazali's critique of philosophers, who, in his opinion, when distinguishing between the broad public and the intellectual elite, argued that the Prophet addressed the former with rhetorical reasoning based on allegories and metaphors, or, in other words, he misled them because any allegory and metaphor is a lie. That is why for Ibn Rushd, it was not enough to declare (after Aristotle) that a man could not acquire theoretical virtues if he did not lead a righteous, morally irreproachable life. He underlined that truth is one both for a crowd and for philosophers and that the difference was only in the way it is comprehended. He concluded that both philosopher and a common believer can be happy, but each in his own way.

Adab, who required knowledge of philosophy, history, geography, and other sciences, represented simultaneously a certain art of living, certain behavioral morals, the ethics of the Medieval Islamic citizenry. An adib could be a *fasik*—a sinner or a libertine—or a *zurafa*, sometimes demonstrating even atheism. But whereas, F. Gabrieli considered religiosity to be alien to adibs,<sup>28</sup> P. Brown (a specialist in Western culture of the late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages) contrasts adab to paideia precisely by its religious orientation.<sup>29</sup> He illustrates this idea by the following observation: The inscriptions on gravestones by laymen at the epoch of the late Roman empire up to the 6th century did not mention fear of God or of the Day of Judgement as the reason for those virtues, with which they generously endowed their deceased. From the time of Alexander the Great until the period of the Justinian government, a man was prayed for using adjectives that characterized him as a product of paideia. In other words, paideia was interiorized by a layman without religious motivation. In Islam, however, we have a completely different situation: here adab is primordially, penetrated by religion and in such a form it becomes a code of upbringing for a layman. He finds this interpretation in Abu Hamid al-Gazali's work, *Deliverance from Error*.

Adab had a clearly defined aesthetic character, displaying the highest value in general. It was said by the ancient sages:

"adab for a man is a treasure, that cannot be robbed";

"Adab is like a harbor for everybody";

"When Aristotle was asked about the most beautiful living creature, he answered: "It is a man decorated with good education";

Aristotle said: "Education (adab) is a decoration for the rich and permits the poor to live among their friends" (or to live the life of a free man");

"When Socrates was asked, what things are the most pleasant in the world, he replied: "Education, training and contemplation of things unknown";

"When Socrates was asked: in what respect education (adab) had a wholesome effect on young people, he said: "If the only benefit of education were that it kept them from bad behavior, even that would be quite enough";

"Lack of education (adab) is the reason of any evil."(Pythagoras);

"Education (adab) decorates the wealth of the rich and conceals the poverty of the poor."(Aristotle);

"Train your soul by parts of education (adab), because they are a source and a depository of miracles of thought and of the fineness of speculations"(Aristotle).<sup>30</sup>

In the Medieval West, adab fulfilled the same moral, social, and intellectual mission as the Latin *humanitas*. It implied the values of the city courteous, refined behavior, an index of good breeding, and education. Originally, adab was akin to humanitarian education that made a man cultured and refined. Contacts with foreign cultures broadened the adab's content and began to include non-Arabic literature, expressing in this way a more universal form of Humanism. Secretaries (*katibs*), copyists, functionaries, literarymen, and courts were the main representatives of this humanitarian culture. In these surroundings, wittiness and oratory were highly appreciated. Refinement (*zarf*) (hence, the designation of the above-mentioned social group "zurafa") was a synonym of this culture. The education of secretaries was encyclopedic, combining Arabic and non-Arabic learning (Greek and Persian), for which they were often accused of apostasy.

Adab conveyed the idea of *paideia*. *Humanitas* corresponds to the Arabic *insaniyya*, that in philosophical terminology denotes human nature, a quality, and characteristic of a man as such. But like Cicero's *humanitas*, it also means to be a man in the full sense of the word as a result of self-perfection. (*Insaniyya* as Humanism is a neologism). In al-Farabi's, *Kitab al-huruf*, the word *insaniyya* is used to denote the general quality of people, and it correlates with the Persian *mardumi* (man). Human perfection, "insaniyya," was often used as a synonym for intellect, and the use of intellect, possession of real wisdom or philosophy, was equated by philosophers with happiness (*saada-eudaimonia*). Al-Amiri says that through "divine wisdom" that one can reach humaneness (*kamal al-insaniyya*).

This "humaneness" had different degrees. The most imperfect man, says Miskawayh, is provided with minimal intellect; such people are only "on the border" of the animal world, and an animal soul gains the upper hand over them. Fascinated by sensual pleasures, they can be honored by the designation "al-insaniyya" only in a limited sense. Usually such half-men, half-animals ("barbarians") reside somewhere on the borders of the civilized world. In the middle part of this world, people are more predisposed to intellectual activity, and some of them are inclined even to philosophizing. But the majority of people that have limited intellect and differentiating power (*tamyiz*) cannot overcome their animal inclinations.

Love of persons and of humanity is the third important feature of Humanism in the Medieval Islamic culture. This feeling penetrated the inspired words of Yahia: "The whole people is something single in the many individuals. As soon as their souls are a single whole, and love exists thanks to their souls, then people must feel love and affection towards each other. It is natural for people, until they are ruled by hunger in their souls. When a man subdues his angry soul and obeys his wise soul, then everybody becomes his brother and friend. People may be either virtuous or mean. One should love virtuous people for their virtue and should be sorry for mean people—for their meanness. So a man, striving for perfection, should love everyone, feel pity and compassion for everyone—especially if he is a tsar or a chief; tsar is not a tsar if he does not feel love and compassion for his subjects."<sup>31</sup>

The idea of philanthropy is present in the Islamic conception of Jihad. All the Islamic schools of jurisprudence agree that, for example, during a war against those who are not "true believers," one must not kill women and those underage if they do not fight against Muslims. Some Islamic theologians considered murder of the prisoners of war as an unlawful deed or, to say the least, as reprehensible. There also existed a rule of temporary protection of non-Muslims that guaranteed the inviolability of their lives, freedom, and property.<sup>32</sup>

There is also a general secular interpretation of Humanism in the sense of charity and philanthropy without religious motivation. Thus, at-Tawhidi asked about *zindik*s (atheists) and *adhrit*s (who supported a teaching of the eternity of the world and independence of its life from any other worldly beginning): "What moves *zindik*s and *adhrit*s to do good, to choose noble actions, to show honesty, not to compromise truth, to be merciful to the suffering, to come to those who need help, to support anybody, addressing them with their troubles? They behave like that not in the least hoping to receive otherworldly rewards, waiting for gratitude or fearing retribution."<sup>33</sup>

In this work, we analyzed the ideals of the Islamic Middle Ages mainly to the extent to which they were in contact conceptually with the notions of *paideia* and *humanitas*. But it is not sufficient to show the groundlessness of the statements of a number of authoritative scientists (B. Yeger, K. Bekker, G. Sheder, B. Shpuler, J. Kraemer, etc.), who affirmed that the Medieval Islamic culture appeared to be incapable either of developing its own humanistic ideals or mastering an adequate form of the humanism of Antiquity. Indeed, Sophocles did remain unknown to the Medieval Islamic bookman. Perhaps, they did not feel a vital need for him, because they had at their disposal a heritage of the centuries-old *belles-lettres* of the East, enriched by contemporary poets and prose writers.

If now we return to the argument at the beginning of the article to the Humanism of the Age of the Renaissance and compare it with the Humanistic ideals of the Islamic Middle Ages in its full extent, we find that the ideas that European humanists drew from the Scholastic tradition appear not only in Islamic fiction and general literature, but also in its professional philosophy. Secondly, its secular thinking, in some cases, surpassed even the humanism of the age of the European Renaissance.

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**Part III**  
**Islamic Culture: Classical Paradigm and Modernity**

## Chapter VIII

# Classical Arab-Islamic Culture

Taufik Ibrahim K.

The formation of the Arab-Islamic culture is connected with the birth and strengthening of the Arabic Caliphate, which under the aegis of a new religion (Islam), proclaimed by the prophet Muhammad, has spread over an extensive area, from the Middle Volga in the north down to Madagascar in the south, from the Atlantic coast of Africa in the west to the Pacific coast of Asia in the east. Having united the Hellenic Mediterranean with the Indo-Iranian world for the first time after Alexander the Great, the Caliphate turned it into a new center of interaction and mutual enrichment for different cultural traditions. The "Golden Age" of its civilization grew during the 9th to 12th centuries and defined the level of both its material and the scientific-philosophical world culture.

### The Religious Context

*Theology.* Alongside Christianity and Judaism, Islam represents the family of "Abrahamic religions," which, first of all, are characterized by Monotheism—faith in one God who is Life and Love, All-knowing, Omnipotent, and the Creator of the world. At the same time, Islamic Tawhid claims greater severity and sequence in contrast to Christianity and Judaism. According to Islam, such dogmas as the Trinity and the Incarnation are deviations from the true Monism and blot its essential purity.

The Islamic religion shares some of biblical traditions, such as the world being created within six days, the creation of man in God's image (the Sacred Scripture of Muslims, the *Qur'an*, underlines, the animation of man by the Spirit of God), Adam and Eve as their ancestors, their falling into sin, and their withdrawal from the original Paradise, as well as other events of sacred history connected both with Old Testament names of Noah, Abraham, Jacob and Joseph, Moses, David, and Solomon and the New Testament names of Zechariah, John the Baptist, Mary, and Jesus Christ. But Islam does not recognize the crucifixion of Christ. According to the *Qur'an* another man was crucified instead of Christ, who was taken alive to Heaven. The denial of Christ's martyrdom is explained partially by the fact that according to the *Qur'an*, God forgave the Primogenitors their offense and, consequently, their original sin. Thus the original sin is deprived of its hereditary character and does not require any expiation by divine self-sacrifice.

The *Qur'an* teaches the end of the world, the Day of Judgment, Paradise, and Hell as does the Bible. But in contrast to medieval Christianity, the *Qur'an* did not instill apocalyptic feelings in its adherents, and did not keep them in constant expectation of the Day of Judgment. As Muhammad said, the believer should prepare himself for his future life as if he would die the next day, but he must work in the present life as if he would live forever. For Qur'anic eschatology it typically presents in a concrete, sensual form not only infernal sufferings, but the pleasures of Paradise as well. But for the inhabitants of Islamic Paradise (as with the Christian Paradise) the highest happiness is the spiritual bliss of seeing God.

Like Christianity and Judaism, Islam is a religion revealed by God, who himself reveals to the people his essence and will, granting to them the Holy Scriptures and messenger-prophets. But in Islam prophecy (prophetism) plays such an important role that theocentrism in Islamic history takes the form of prophetcentrism. According to the Islamic prophetology, God grants at least one

prophet to each nation. The total number of God's messengers reaches 124.000. The first one was Adam, and the last was Muhammad. There are about 30 prophets mentioned in the *Qur'an*, including those noted above.

Islam teaches not only the universality of prophecy, but also its unity: All prophets propagate the same faith (dogma); only the laws that regulate the moral-legal and cult-ritual sides of the adherents' lives, can be varied. Thus, not only Muhammad but also all God's messengers before him were Muslims, adherents of Islam, because "Islam," in a broad sense of the word, means Monotheism.

As a rule, God sent His revelation to the prophets with the archangel Djibril (Gabriel in the Bible) in "Scriptures" or "Books." God sent 100 commandments: to Adam—21; to Seth—29; to Enoch (Arab. Idris)—30; to Abraham—10; to Moses—10. Four books were presented: to Moses—the Torah; to David—the Psalter; to Jesus—the Gospels; to Muhammad—the *Qur'an*. The prototypes of all Sacred Scriptures and Books are kept eternally in the celestial "Preserved Tablet." The "Scriptures" and "Books" present by themselves the "dictum" or the "dictation," which comes from God both in content and verbal format. The other part of revelation is the "inspired word;" here the prophet is involved in its verbal expression. In particular, Muhammad's own dictums (so-called Hadiths or Sunnah) compose the kernel of the Islamic Sacred Tradition and refer to this second type. On the basis of the Hadiths and testimony by Muhammad's associates, various versions of his *Sira* (Biography) have been made. The last ones for Muslims are similar to the Gospel in Christian understanding, whereas the *Qur'an*, being an embodiment of God's primeval Logos, is comparable to the Jesus himself.

### *Social and Ethical Principles*

In essence, the ethical and moral doctrine of Islam is closely related to Judaic and Christian ethics. In comparison to the social and moral outlook of the Arabs during the epoch of paganism, it represented a huge step forward. Instead of a sense of a tribal exclusiveness and isolation, the founder of Islam introduced the idea of the equality of all believers, irrespective of tribal and racial differences. Contrary to the well-known heathen custom of blood feud, the Prophet called for tolerance and mildness. Islam condemned the practice of burying newborn girls alive, a practice that was widespread among some tribes. By the sanction of having no more than four legal wives the Islamic law essentially constrained the practice of polygamy, which had been widespread hitherto. The opportunity to divorce, which was rather easy for the Arabic pagans, became difficult. The initiative in the cancellation of marriage, which hitherto had belonged exclusively to men, became accessible to women as well. After entering Islam, the rights of widows and divorced women were rehabilitated: The heathen custom of *levir* was revoked. From this time, women could freely take care of themselves and, in particular, could get married again.

In general, due to this new religion, the social-legal position of women was considerably improved. The current subordinate status of Islamic women occurred much later, partly on the ground of contacts with other peoples who joined Islam. Such institutions as seclusion of women, the harem, and the eunuch were also alien to the original Islam.

The interdiction of wine and gambling, stipulated by Islam, promoted feelings of moderation and a serious attitude to life. At the same time, ascetism was rejected in Islamic ethics. The Prophet said: "The best of you are those not who, for the sake of the heavenly, neglect the terrestrial. The best of you take both." Following this spirit, Islam does not accept celibacy, raising marriage to



the level of a religious responsibility and calling for the pleasures of family life. According to the Prophet: "When spouses caress each other, God looks at them with a gaze full of kindness."

A similar "grounding" in secularity is found in the attitude to work and wealth. The Prophet required each Muslim to earn his living. The Caliph Umar, well-known as Muhammad's companion, said that God rewarded the efforts made by persons to earn their living much more than participation in the war for faith. Although the Prophet promised the poor that on Judgment day they would enter Paradise before the rich, this was not considered an attribute of the superiority of poverty over wealth. On the contrary, prosperity (gained, naturally, in a legal way and "cleared" by paying the religious tax—*zakat*) was a sign of heavenly favor. Muslims did not despise "The Beautiful Life," and even encouraged it. According to the Prophet, "If God made a great favor for one of His serfs, it is necessary for Him to see an attribute of that benefit in the serf."

The activist orientation characteristic for classical Islam agreed easily with the doctrine of divine predetermination (*Qadar*) of the destiny of each creature outlined on the heavenly Tablet. Understanding this doctrine called one to live and act in such a way as if predetermination did not exist. Each one should apply all their efforts to changing what is possible to change. But one should readily accept what seems to him unchangeable. Only after the 13th century, partly due to the Islamic mystic Sufis, did the divine determinism, in the religious consciousness of Muslims, turn into a passive fatalism and an inert quietism.

### *Problem of the Theocratic Ideal*

The correlation of religion and state, spiritual and secular authority in the Islamic society was not so unequivocal and unconditionally theocratic as it appears. It is possible to characterize the authority of the founder of Islam as theocratic. He combined in himself the roles of teacher of dogma and leader of the secular community and the state (army commander). The theocratic idea is also peculiar to the doctrine of the Shi'ites, who trust in God's inspiration of their teachers—Imams from the line of Ali's descendants (son-in-law and Muhammad's cousin). By direct contact with Allah, they have not only legislative, but also God-given political authority. But the "majoritarian" Islam, known as Sunnism, did not share similar ideas and did not recognize the spiritual authority of the Caliph. The Caliph ("governor," "deputy") acts for Muhammad as a community head, but not as a religious lawmaker. After the Prophet's death, the legislative, spiritual authority was embodied exclusively in the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. In contrast to the Pope, the Caliph was never considered as the carrier of sacral grace. That is why he could not introduce new doctrines and rites or establish such institutions as indulgences, interdicts, excommunications, etc. The Caliph possessed executive authority only. His main goal was to see that the life of the community proceeded according to religious prescriptions. Therefore, some researchers avoid applying the term "theocracy" to Islamic realities. When using this term they necessarily add such clarifications as "executive," "protective," and even "secular" theocracy.

State authority in the classical period was not surrounded by a religious aura, though it was considered a necessary institution. In the consciousness of Muslims of that epoch, only the first four companion-successors of the Prophet (Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, and Ali, who ruled from 632 to 661) were real "executive deputies" of the Prophet. Such understanding has remained until now, that is, the leaders of the state have never inherited his prophetic powers of prophecy. They were known only as the "rightly guided Caliphs." All subsequent governors were actually only ordinary kings (*muluk*), though they had the title of Caliph. There is a belief that such a transformation of power had been predicted by the Prophet: "After me the Caliphate will last for

thirty years, and then a reign (*mulk*) comes." In reality, under the Umayyad (660—750), state authorities took an openly secular character. Under the Abbasids (750-1258), it remained the same in general, though the latter sometimes aspired to give to it a religious, theocratic coloring.

The "people of religion," the theologians (*Ulama*) and jurists (*Faqih*s) in their majority, obviously distanced themselves from state authorities, and at times were opposed to them. When some of the governors (in particular, in the 10th-11th centuries) declared themselves "deputies of God," such theocratic claims appeared only in idle declarations, because by that time the Baghdad Caliph had changed into a simple symbol of the empire, which entered into feudal dismemberment. Real power was concentrated in the hands of the Turk praetorian guards, and in the provinces the power had passed into the hands of secular governors, Emirs and Sultans. The emergence of the institution of the Sultanate meant the delimitation of religion and state.

Islam (to be exact Sunnism) did not stipulate such an institution as church, that is, a hierarchically and territorially structured clergy, which would accumulate in itself the mystical presence of God in the world and act as an indispensable link between God and the individual. Islamic faith does not recognize any intermediary who is to carry out the contact between earth and heaven, any organ that monopolizes the right of interpreting the Sacred Scripture, and any instance (like cathedrals and synods) that makes obligatory decisions for the whole community. In Sunnite Islam, only an Islamic community (*Umma*) is considered infallible or to be correct in its unanimous opinion—*Ijma*. But *Ijma*, usually reduced to the consensus of authoritative theologians, is actually represented as a legitimizing instance. As a rule, it legalized those beliefs and rites that long ago had taken deep root. An analogue of the indisputable authority of the church can be found only in theocratic and charismatic Shiism, in its doctrine on Imams as sinless and infallible. Among extreme Shi'ites, Ismailists, Druzes, and Alawits—this cult reached the level of their complete deification.

## Sufism

Though paradoxical, in the Sunnite environment, the existence of some kind of an intermediary between God and believers was assumed by mystic Sufis.

Arising as early as the Umayyad dynasty, Sufism (*tasawwuf*) initially had the form of asceticism, which expressed the lower class's protest against the sharp differentiation in the Islamic community, against the luxurious and idle life of the ruling strata. Later, in the 8th and 9th centuries, it was expressed in a movement oriented to a mystical knowledge of God. Rabya praised love between God and believers. Zun-Nun marked out different stages (*maqami*) on a mystical way (*tariqa*) to God. Al-Bistami considered the wanderer's goal on this way to his final annihilation (*fana*) in the Beloved (God). Al-Bistami is also known scandalously because of his ecstatic utterances (*shatk*) in which theologians saw claims to joining with the deity and even self-deification. His exclamation "Glory be on me!" was considered as most seditious, for in Islamic tradition the epithet "glorified" (*subhan*) is attributed only to God. The other famous daring saying is "I am the Truth (God)" by the greatest mystic of Islam al-Hallaj (d. 922), who developed the doctrine on an incarnation (*hulul*) of the deity in the human soul.

Between the 8th and 9th centuries in Sufi groups, there was a charter of spiritual management: the neophyte Sufi (*murid*) could attain the mystical way of perfection only under supervision by the master (*sheikh*), the will of whom he should obey completely and implicitly. Further, Sufi groups began to unite into large and powerful brotherhoods or orders (*tariqah*). Each had a system of mystical practice, rites of initiation and investiture, and external insignia. At the head of a

hierarchically organized brotherhood was the "saint" (*wali*, "Friend of God "). As a rule, they considered that the "saint" had supernatural abilities, and at times even a divine nature. So the mystics of Sufism introduced into religious life institutions alien to Islam. In a certain sense, these institutions were a mediating link between a believer and God, some kind of a church to which some mystics in Christianity had objected.

As a whole, Sufism acted as a many-sided phenomenon, in which there were the most various social, political, spiritual, and moral orientations: from praising poverty to blessing wealth, from an anarchic aversion of the state to its active support, from indifferent religious toleration to the zealous spreading of Islam by arms, from enthusiasm in speculative theorizing to the sharp aversion of discursive thinking as a dry way of thinking and a barrier between God and the mystic.

Rigoristic Islam, while rejecting the esoteric, libertarian, and pantheistic manifestations of Sufism, simultaneously legitimized the "nomistic" branches of Sufism, supporters of which insisted on strict observance of the instructions of the Islamic law, and obligatory coordination of their doctrines with the *Qur'an* and *Sunnah*. Also, they called the "union" of a Sufi adherent with the Deity a particularly psychological (instead of ontological) act. Thus, the cult of the Saints, not known in early Islam, became a notable element in the religious life of the majority of the people. In many regions, Sufism had become almost the main form of "popular" Islam.

### *Pluralism*

The absence of church in Islam resulted in another feature of Islamic spiritual life: no uniform, institutional Orthodoxy of general importance. During the Middle Ages in the Islamic empire, there were three competitive Caliphates whose capitals were in Baghdad, Cairo, and Cordoba. Within each of them, there were numerous competing religious-political schools, the number of which in the 10th century could hardly squeeze into the framework predicted by Muhammad: "My community will be divided into 73 branches." Under such conditions, naturally, the appearance of conventional "orthodoxy" was impossible, though it did not prevent each Caliphate or each school from considering their own doctrine to be the only correct one. Gradually, the conflicting religious movements came to comprehend the need of peaceful coexistence, which was the dictum of the founder of Islam: "Differences in opinions within my community are a signal Divine favor." An example was the peaceful coexistence of the four schools of Islamic (Sunni) law (*fiqh*): Hanafism, Shafiism, Malikism, and Hanbalism. An adherent of any one could pass freely to another. In turn, it was possible to meet representatives of different schools of law in the same family. It is characteristic that since old times at the four corners of the main Islamic holy place—Kaaba (in Mecca)—there have been centers for each of the four schools. In the oldest Islamic university, al-Azhar (Cairo), teaching was distributed among the four corresponding chairs.

The ideological variety of the Arab-Islamic society was supported also by the fact that alongside Islam, Christianity, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism were recognized as revealed religions. From one side, this coexistence of different confessional groups was an important factor for training in religious tolerance and universalism; from the other side, it determined the character of classical Islamic culture, as not only multinational, but also poly-confessional.

### *Urban Dominant*

Another distinctive feature of classical medieval Arab-Islamic culture is its urban character. In the Islamic society, culture was not concentrated in closed, out-of-town centers of scholarship,

as in the European monasteries. Culture was exclusively the product of townspeople. The high level of urbanization of that world is indicated by the fact that about 20 percent of the population lived in the three largest towns of Southern Mesopotamia: Baghdad, Basra, and Kufa. In the quantity of towns with a population of more than 100,000 people, Iraq and Egypt in the 8th to 10th centuries surpassed the most urbanized West-European countries in the 19th century, such as the Netherlands, England, and France.

The value orientations in the medieval Islamic burgher society is indicated by the reference group with which the society tried to comply. This group was the embodiment of those features supposed obligatory for an educated and well-brought-up person. Such groups were formed by adibi, the carriers of adab (in Greek, *paideia* and in Latin, *humanitas*), which combined the breadth of humanitarian interest and many-sided secular knowledge with high morals, refined breeding, elegant manners, and courteous behavior.

From the adabi environment, there were many outstanding representatives of liberal medieval thinking, which had a relatively wide circulation in the Islamic East. This took diverse forms, from treatises about Moses, Jesus, and Muhammad as "three impostors," to the "dandies" (*zurafa*), who sported their religious nonconformism and skepticism. Usually, the long list of such thinkers of the classical epoch opens with the names of the adibs Ibn al-Muqaffa and al-Tawhidi, the philosophers Ibn al-Rawandi and Abu-Bakr ar-Razi, and the poets Khayyam and al-Ma'arri.

The action of these and other factors of the social-political and ideological kind has determined the character of the classical Arab-Islamic culture as a religious-secular one. Moreover, as we shall see below, in many spheres of spiritual creativity, secular matters were not subject to religious matters, and sometimes came to the fore.

## **Intellectual Learning**

### *Cult of Knowledge*

It is noted by researchers in the Arab-Islamic culture that "knowledge" (*ilm*, also meaning "science") had a significance not found equally in other civilizations. The universal celebration of knowledge in Islamic civilization has been partly promoted by the Islamic religion. The *Qur'an* often emphasized ordering the world according to a system of, and compliance with, law, which is the main precondition for scientific knowledge. Many Qur'anic verses urge the human being to think of natural things because they bear in themselves the "signs" of the Creator and certify His skill, wisdom, and good intention. Moreover, the *Qur'an* declares the human being to be God's governor on the Earth. That is why one is called not only to study the world, but also to transform it. In many respects, the general moral-psychological atmosphere surrounding knowledge and science was determined by Qur'anic prescriptions that represent the world as something final rather than as relative and transient, that is, the emphasis is on the theistic rule of God as stabilizing rather than as capable of working all possible miracles, that would break the usual flow of cause-effect relations, which would subvert knowledge and science.

The Sacred Tradition is eloquent evidence to the worship of knowledge. The founder of Islam called the search for science a "responsibility of each Islamic man and woman." He talked about study as a continuous process which lasts "from cradle to tomb" and requires of a person a brave search for wisdom "even in far China." Such words, as the "ink of the scientist is as precious as the blood of the martyr who died for the faith," or "one hour of thinking is better than 70 years of divine service" belong to Muhammad as well. Orthodox adherents have vainly tried to attribute all

these calls and similar ones to religious and theological knowledge. The rising civilization surrounded any knowledge with respect and honor. This is reflected in one saying, which is sometimes attributed to the Prophet: "Take wisdom even from a pagan's lips".

People of classical Islam not only cultivated knowledge and wisdom, but also enjoyed the magical charms radiated by the word of "knowledge". Knowledge was considered to be required for the soul ("heart") as food and drink is for the body. Sometimes knowledge was so tied to life that if the heart did not receive it within three days it definitely could die. Due to knowledge, one obtains immortality, because "knowledge and books are the eternal posterity of a wise man."

The public prestige of knowledge is indicated by its position as a self-sufficient value, exceeding all religious and secular matters: Knowledge and education put a person on a level equal to the aristocracy and bestowed authority and power. With wide availability for education and the absence of any formal restrictions of caste, race, ethnicity, or even confession on obtaining knowledge, the real prospect of increasing personal social status was open for any ambitious young man.

A respectful attitude to the Book later spread to the Arabic alphabet, instruments and materials for writing, and the writer's profession and reflected the high position of knowledge. For Muslims, the purchasing of books turned into a matter of passionate enthusiasm, becoming a status position. In general, manufacturing paper (the secret of which was borrowed from the Chinese) in the Islamic East began in the 8th century and had vast significance for developing the book business and culture. Subsequently, paper manufacturing was taken over from the Arabs by the Europeans.

The whole Islamic world was covered with a network of numerous and diverse libraries. Libraries with up to 100,000 books (for comparison one notes that in 1340 the famous library of the Sorbonne had only 1720 books) became usual phenomenon. At the end of the 10th century, in the library of the Fatimids in Cairo, there were more than 600,000 volumes, and in Cordoba alone there were more books than in all the rest of Europe. In public libraries the readers, especially visitors who were not rich, not only used the books, but also received paper and writing materials free of charge. There they found both a quiet place and material support. Books from a library could be taken home without any subscriptions, and many libraries were also a kind of scientific club or literary salon.

### *Scientific Achievements*

A tremendous role in the formation and development of classical Islamic culture was played by the so-called "translation movement." Begun in the 8th century, it became quite active in the next century, in particular after the Caliph, al-Mamun (813-833), established in Baghdad the "House of Wisdom." This served simultaneously as a library, academy, and translation office. Many works of the ancient, Iranian, and Indian wisdom were translated into the Arabic language, which became the language of science and culture for the whole Islamic empire.

The greatest interest shown by the was in Greek/Hellenic scientific and philosophical culture. From the Greek language (at the beginning, via Syrian and Persian, there were translations of the philosophical works of Aristotle and Plato, medical works by Galen and Hippocrates, mathematical and astronomical works by Euclid and Ptolemy, and also works on chemistry, botany, pharmacology, zoology, mineralogy, agriculture, agronomy, mechanics, etc. Works on astronomy were translated from Sanskrit, and works of the ethical instruction from Persian. Thanks to the "translation movement," a considerable number of ancient sources in their Arabic versions were saved for history.

After the epoch of translations, which lasted about one century—until the mid 9th century—the period of actual creative development of the inherited cultural traditions followed. From the 9th to 12th centuries, Baghdad, the capital of the Abbasids, had become the center of world science, just as Athens -had once been a philosophical center, and Jerusalem a religious one. Intellectual life prospered also in other large towns of the Islamic empire. A great number of cultural centers were also formed as the result of feudal dissociation, which came after the 10th century, when each independent dynasty aspired to make of its capital a small Baghdad.

Scientists of medieval Islam (as well as the figures of the Arab-Islamic culture in general) were encyclopedically educated people. Often, one person combined a philosopher, mathematician, physician, historian, geographer, poet, and philologist. Having mainly overcome the speculative character of ancient Greek science, they aspired to combine science and practice, theoretical knowledge and technical action. The interest in resolving practical problems resulted for such scientists as Ibn al-Hayssam and al-Biruni in the creation of experimental science long before its rise in Western Europe. In the Islamic world, points of the astronomical system by Ptolemy, Aristotelian physics, Pythagorean optics, and theory of music were experimentally checked and revised. At the same time, due to the high theoretical level of the development of mathematics, its influence on the sciences especially on physics, chemistry, astronomy, and geography was evident. Al-Biruni considered the language of mathematics as the most perfect language of science.

Based on their predecessors' achievements, Arab-Islamic scientists made their own contributions to the development of the exact and natural sciences. In mathematics they introduced a system with 10 numbers (ciphers), subsequently called Arabic numerals (but probably Indian in origin). This system replaced a cumbersome Greek-Roman system of figures/letters and opened broad horizons for the development of mathematics. Both "zero" and "cipher," which with the Europeans originally meant "zero," originated from the Arabic name of zero—*sifr* ("empty", that is, "an empty place"). Along with the introduction of daily arithmetic, the merit of discovering decimal fractions, important for the extraction of square and cube roots, belongs to the Islamic scientists.

The mathematicians of medieval Islam transformed algebra into an exact science and considerably developed it. The term "algebra" (Arabian, *al-Jabr*) goes back to the name of a mathematical treatise by al-Khorezmi (11th century), and the term "algorithm" originates from the author's name, transformed into Latin. The algebraic symbol "X" was taken from the Spanish *xay* which is the phonetically transformed Arabic word *shay*—thing. Islamic scientists created plane and spherical trigonometry. By applying arithmetic and algebra in geometry, they laid the basis of analytical geometry.

As a whole the astronomy of the medieval Islam adopted the Ptolemaic system. Though this system was erroneous in its essence, the Islamic scientists managed to reach important discoveries. At the end of the 9th century, al-Battani was the first to calculate the deviation of the terrestrial axis (so-called ellipticity). In 920, the equinox or precession was predicted, which allowed an adjustment of the lunar and solar calendars. Having found a weakness in the Ptolemaic system, some scientists subjected it to criticism and reformation. Astronomers from Maraga, as well as Ibn al-Shatir (d. 1350)— from Damascus, created non-Ptolemaic planetary models, and al-Biruni conceived the benefit of heliocentrism. In the well-equipped observatories of Baghdad, Damascus, Cairo, Cordoba, Maraga, Samarkand, and other cities, the foundation of astrometry, the whole area of astronomical observation was began. More perfect than those of antiquity and India, the astronomical tables made in the Islamic East were popular in Europe until the middle of the 18th century. Along with the well-known terms: "zenith", "nadir", "almanac," and "azimuth," more than

200 of the Arabic names of stars, among which Aldebaran, Altair, Betelgeuze, Vega, and Rigel, were adopted in Europe.

In the Middle Ages, astrology was closely bound with astronomy. It became the subject of general enthusiasm, despite the negative attitude of rigorist theologians. Abu-Mashar (in Latin Albumasar, who died in 886) was the greatest Arabic astrologer. The Christians of medieval Europe honored him as a prophet.

The geographical literature of Medieval Islam is characterized by an abundance of information and a variety of genres. Arabic geographers and travelers left the description of the whole Islamic world, and also some other countries of Europe, Northern and Central Africa, the East African coast, and Asia from Korea to the Malay Archipelago. They were interested not only in physical, geographical, or climatic conditions, but also equally in life, industry, culture, language, religious doctrines, miracles, and legends. The geographer al-Idrisi (1165), native of Morocco, was the most known in the Christian West. He became famous after preparing for the king of Sicily, Roger II, descriptions of the world on the basis of direct observations obtained by an expedition under his supervision. As an illustration of his work, the scientist created a silver planisphere, on which all cities known at that time (1154) were marked.

Beyond descriptive geography, scientists of the Islamic world successfully developed astronomical and mathematical geography. Under al-Mamun (9th century) in the Syrian desert, the meridian degree was measured with the purpose of subsequently measuring the Earth's circumference. The result of the measurement was incredibly accurate, within several hundred meters. Arab-Islamic geographers had rules that make it possible to calculate the area coordinates, and also the table of latitudes and longitudes for all points worldwide. These tables, created from making corrections and additions by the Arabs to the data contained in the *Geography* of Ptolemy became known in the medieval West as well. For example, the length of the Mediterranean sea was considerably reduced in comparison with the calculations of Ptolemy: from 62 to 52 degrees (al-Khawarizmi), and then down to 42 degrees (az-Zarqali), which is close to correct.

Arab-Islamic achievements in the field of navigation were taken up by the Christian West. In particular, the Europeans borrowed such technical innovations as the compass and the slanting (triangular) sail, which allowed one to move against the wind. Especially due to the latter it became possible to build larger ships which were able to cross the Atlantic and make longer voyages, resulting in great geographical discoveries. Moreover, marine maps (the Portolans), important for seafarers, were made in Genoa on the basis of Islamic marine maps. The evidence of an Islamic contribution to the development of marine culture can be found in the acceptance by Europeans of many Arabic words as international terms: admiral, arsenal, barge, after mast, galley, cable, monsoon, still used today.

The Islamic world promoted great geographical discoveries in other ways as well. Early Islamic geographers taught that there was a certain global center "Arin," looking like a dome and located in India, at the equator, midway between the extreme western and eastern borders of the inhabited part of the Earth. This theory, later perceived by Christian Europe, guided Columbus to the idea of a pear-shaped Earth. Additionally, in the western hemisphere, opposite to the Indian Arin, another center should exist, which was supposed to be higher than that located on the eastern side. So the Arabic geographical doctrine played a certain role in the greatest geographical discoveries of the modern epoch. Columbus in his letter with the inscription "from Haiti" (October, 1498) said that the Arabic-Spanish thinker, Ibn Rushd (Averroes), was one of the authors who opened to him the existence of the New World. It is interesting, also, that Vasco da Gama, used

the services of the Arabic pilot, Ahmad Ibn Majid, to first reach the coast of India on May 20, 1498.

In the history of optics, Ibn al-Hayssam (d. 1039), known in Europe as Alhazen, discovered that the heavenly bodies emitted light, and that time is required for light's movement. He disproved the theory of Euclid and Ptolemy on visible rays, which go from the eyes to an object, and described the visual process as a pure act of perception. Studying light reflection in flat, spherical, cylindrical, and conic mirrors, the Cairo optician investigated the question that to this day is called the Alhazen problem. Ibn al-Hayssam came close to discovering the principle of the magnifying lens that became an initial point for telescope design. While studying light refraction, he managed to calculate the height of the terrestrial atmosphere with rare precision. The scientist's work, known in the Latin West under the name of the *Treasure of Optics*, formed the basis for optical research by Europeans, from Vitello, Peckam and Roger Bacon to Leonardo da Vinci and Kepler.

In the Middle Ages, chemistry and alchemy were indivisible disciplines, and in the Arabic East they were combined under the same term, *al-kimiya*, from which the European names of both sciences originated. Having originated in Greek Egypt, alchemy reached the peak of its popularity in Islamic Iraq. Until the 14th century, the code of works ascribed to Jabir Ibn Hayyan (Lat. Geber, 8th century), served as the most authoritative manual on alchemy-chemistry both in Asia and in Europe. Though the attempts to find such miracle substances as the "Philosopher's Stone" (which helps to transform the base metals into gold and silver) and the "Elixir of Life" (preserving youth and longevity) were doomed to failure, Arabic alchemists during their quests developed a new technology of smelting metals and made a number of valuable scientific discoveries. They essentially improved such main chemical operations as calcination and restoration, and also the methods of evaporation, sublimation, melting and crystallization. Due to these methods, the Arabs discovered the following new chemical substances: nitric acid, borax, arsenic, ammonium chloride, potash, saltpeter, antimony, aqua-regia, etc. The physician and philosopher ar-Razi (9th century), as well as the above-mentioned encyclopedist, al-Biruni (widely known due to his historical ethnographic work on India), who succeeded in measuring with a high degree of accuracy the specific weight of metals and minerals, are considered to be leaders in alchemy.

The medicine of the Islamic East was the leader in the world till the European Renaissance. A powerful stimulus to the development of hygiene and public health services was given by Islam which required its adherents to take care of preserving not only the soul, but the body as well. Muhammad, being extremely scrupulous in matters of physical cleanliness, had given the status of a religious cult to the observance of hygiene (including daily ablutions). The mosques, where there was necessarily a room for ablution, served simultaneously as the centers of hygiene. In addition to such rooms there were numerous public baths—*hammams*—which were a characteristic element of an Islamic town. The founder of Islam encouraged medical treatment, because, as he said: "God does not send diseases for which He does not send an appropriate medicine". Under his name some hundreds of sayings were given, mainly advising on prophylactic, diet and hygiene. Later they were collected under the name "The medicine of the Prophet".

In Islamic cities medical services were performed not only by privately practicing doctors, but also by hospitals, usually established by donations from governors and rich people. Also there were mobile hospitals for the countryside. More often medical aid was free, including the hospital care, medicine and food. Hospitals were subdivided into female and male branches, and also into various categories depending on an illness: fever, eye disease, gastrointestinal, or surgery.



Attached to hospitals there were reading rooms, laboratories, a chapel and also a school of pharmacy. For the first time pharmacology became an independent science, and pharmaceutics a recognized profession. In hospitals students had their clinical practice; this tradition was not adopted by Europeans until approximately 1550. The Islamic world was familiar also with dispensaries, hospitals for lepers and mental hospitals, where experts on nervous diseases cared for patients.

The physicians of the Islamic middle ages carried out diagnostics based on anatomical and physiological data. They also resorted to psychotherapeutic methods, paying attention to the individuality of patients. During medical treatment much attention was paid to correct and balanced diet. The kitchen was considered an auxiliary means for medicine and had many special tasks. Also they used such anesthesiological means as opium, hashish and steam from wine. Physicians did not utilize a human corpse for dissection which had been forbidden by both Islam and Christianity, but they did autopsies on monkeys and thereby gained knowledge of anatomy. In this way one physician discovered the pulmonary principle of blood circulation. In the 12th century an Islamic physician from Seville provided the first description of stomach cancer. The surgical tools were made by highly skilled craftsmen. Ophthalmology was developed; and for the first time an operation to remove cataracts was performed. Admission to medical practice required approval by a state commission.

The medical knowledge of medieval Islam was known in Europe in particular due to the translations of the encyclopedic works by such scientists, as ar-Razi (Lat. Razes, d. 926) and Ibn Sina (Lat. Avicenna, d. 1037). "The Canon of Medicine" by the latter was published in Latin in the 12th century and dominated the medical teaching in Europe at least to the end of the 16th century. In the 15th century, it was published in 16 editions, and in the 16th century in 20. Such terms as alcohol, soda, and syrup were borrowed by the European languages from Arabic medical language.

### *Theology of Kalam*

The religious-philosophical thought in classical Islamic culture was represented by three main trends: Kalam-Islamic philosophical theology; falsafa, which evolved on the ancient Greek model of philosophizing, and speculative Sufism.

Kalam first appeared in Islam and developed as various religious and political groupings appeared on the social and political scene, and in the disputes of the Muslims with the adherents of such other faiths as Mazdaism, Christianity, and Judaism. In these disputes, there took shape a characteristic theological problematic, which included the following main questions: God's attributes and their correlation with his essence; the eternity of the *Qur'an* as God's speech or its creation in time (while writing it on the Heavenly Tablet or sending it down to Muhammad); divine predetermination; and freedom of the will.

Mutazilites, the representatives of the first large school in Kalam, which prospered in the first half of the 9th century, opposed anthropomorphism and fatalism. Mushabbikhits, the adherents of such anthropomorphism, conceived God in human form. The most extreme of them—literalists or Hashawits—insisted on a literal understanding of the words of Sacred Scripture and Tradition referring to the creation of man in "God's image," to "eye," "hand," and "leg," and to His Throne. On the contrary, Mutazlites considered Islamic monotheism to be incompatible not only with polytheism and anthropomorphism, but also with the recognition of the reality and eternity of the divine attributes as certain entities or hypostases distinct from the divine essence. The traditional

list of the main "positive" attributes of God usually included the following: knowledge, power, life, will, sight, hearing, and speech. Among these as substantive or internally inherent to the divine essence, Mutazlites recognized only the first three considering them to be identical to the divine essence and in this sense eternal. The rest of the characteristics they considered "operative attributes" that arise within time, are changeable, and, hence, different from the divine essence. From this follows the Mutazilite doctrine about the creation of the *Qur'an* as God's Word, which does not comply with the prevalent Islamic theological conception of the eternity of the Sacred Scripture. Refuting the determinism of the fatalists, Jabrits, the Mutazlites considered divine justice to assume freedom of choice without which the moral responsibility of a human being for his actions and deeds is inconceivable.

Having become the main school of Kalam after the 10th century, Asharism developed its own way of resolving theological matters as the "golden mean" between the Mutazlites' position and the traditionalist theologians, between libertarians and fatalists in the perception of human action, and between nominalism and realism in their approaches to the divine attributes. In particular they believed, that the *Qur'an* was eternal in its meaning, but not in verbal expression. Moreover, according to the opinion of some Asharites, Sacred Scripture in its verbal expression had been generated within time, and was not necessarily divine: God handed over to the archangel Gabriel only the sense of revelation, which he passed to Muhammad. From this it follows that the verbal content of the *Qur'an* belongs to the Prophet.

In the above-mentioned religious discussions, there developed not only a special circle of theological problems characteristic of Kalam, but also a specific method for their resolution, which excluded references to any authorities (including Sacred Scripture and Tradition), except reason. Mutakallims (teachers of Kalam) proclaimed the unconditional priority of reason over faith, and proclaimed doubt as a methodological principle of cognition. They considered it necessary for each Muslim to pass through a stage in which he had to call into question all religious ideas, in order mentally to convince himself of their validity or falsity.

The ability to think critically was trained and polished in numerous circles (or assemblies, Majalis) organized by the Mutakallims. There, representatives of very different schools and orientations, represented by Muslims, Christians, Jews, and atheists demonstrated their skill in carrying on theological-philosophical dispute. Mutakallims also disputed before the general public; quite often even street shops and markets were places for theological disputes.

However, the problems of Kalam was not reduced to theological questions. It is indicative, that in the classical works on Kalam (13th-14th centuries), theology takes less than one quarter of their volume. The rest of the research was devoted to epistemology, natural philosophy, and ontology. In Kalam were developed the original atomistic concepts, in which the finitist approach to the structure of physical bodies was applied to movement, space, and time. The teachers of Kalam thus continued the ancient atomistic tradition, which had been forgotten in medieval Christian Europe.

The aforesaid main features of Kalam—rationalism, antifideism, and primary attention to actual philosophical problems—explain the fact that the activity of the Mutakallims was perceived suspiciously and sometimes with hostility by the majority of Islamic theologians. On the whole, in Islam, there was no aspiration to rationalize and conceptualize dogmatism and develop speculative theology. It was more focused on developing not orthodoxy as the "correct faith," but orthopraxy as the "correct deed." Therefore, Islamic civilization institutionalized and canonized the law or fiqh but not theology. In addition to law, such disciplines as the science of the *Qur'an* (exegetical) and the science of hadith—the sayings and deeds of Muhammad—were

included in the traditional number of "religious sciences," but not dogmatic theology. Hence subjects similar to Kalam were not taught at religious schools (Madrasahs).

### *Eastern Aristotelism*

If Kalam was born in the bosom of religious disputes, falsafa was a child of the "translation movement." The translation activity, where the Nestorian Syrian scientists played a large role, had resulted in the Islamic world engaging an extensive circle of philosophical ideas of the Greek-Hellenic tradition, the most important of which were the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, Neo-Platonists, Stoics, and Neo-Pythagoreans. Aristotelism and, in particular, its encyclopedic scope attracted the attention of Islamic scribes for the most part. Therefore, falsafa (Arabian, Calque) was represented mainly by the Peripatetics (Aristotelians), who were guided by Aristotle's logic, physics, metaphysics, and ethics. For politics (as the doctrine of the "ideal state" or the "virtuous city"), they used Plato's *Republic*. The most outstanding Peripatetics of Islam were: Al-Farabi (d. 950), who combined Aristotelian cosmology with the emanationist doctrine of Neo-Platonians, Ibn Sina (in Latin, Avicenna, d. 1037) who systematized Aristotelism, and Ibn Rushd (in Latin, Averroes, d. 1198) known in Europe also under the honorary name of the Commentator par excellence.

Where the attitude to religion on the part of some representatives of falsafa was characterized by either formal recognition of the superiority of prophetic over philosophical knowledge (al-Kindi, 9th century), or open criticism of the prophets as deceivers (Abu-Bakr ar-Razi, d. 925 or 934), the Eastern Peripatetics considered religion an important "political art" aimed to control moral and legal relations among people. Such a position was determined by the belief that philosophy could be the property of the intellectual elite, the "select" (*hassa*), while society consisted of the "popular masses" (*amma, jumhur*), unable to think conceptually. That is why it is necessary to express the norms of behavior required for society's well being in the form of laws sent down from above. Religion and philosophy are united by the fact that their subject is the highest basis of existence. But their methods of interpretation vary in principle. According to al-Farabi, religion is a stepdaughter of philosophy, or in the words of Ibn Rushd, its sister.

The Eastern Peripatetics gained new life in medieval Europe. As remarked by R. Bacon, it was due to the Islamic commentators that the Aristotelian philosophy, which had been in oblivion, became popular in the Latin-speaking world. Also, the original works of falsafa left a deep imprint on the philosophy of medieval Europe and the epoch of the Renaissance. Medieval European scribes were familiar with the works of al-Kindi and al-Farabi. The philosophical *Robinsonade* of Ibn Tufayl was very popular among European readers, especially after its translation into Latin in 1671. But the deepest imprint on the philosophical thought of Christian Europe was left by Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd. Their names were bound up with such trends, as Avicennian Augustinianism and the Latin Averroism. As a whole, classical Arab-Islamic philosophy promoted the secularization of European philosophical thought and its consolidation with the natural sciences. Thus it prepared the development of early modern philosophy.

### *Theosophy of Sufism*

The aspiration to self-reflection, the rational understanding of mystical experience, can be found in the al-Hallaj's works and in particular, in the works of al-Ghazali (d. 1111). It gained its most advanced form in the theosophical systems of al-Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi.

The doctrine of al-Suhrawardi (d. 1191), known as Ishraqism (from *ishrak*, "inspiration") or illuminism, represents a version of the "Metaphysics of Light," proceeding from the concept that light is the primary origin, which ontologically is represented as a substantiation of all existence, and gnoseologically as a principle of cognition. From the point of view of illuminism, the world consists of a hierarchy of "lights," at the top of which is the Higher Light of lights (God). On this basis, al-Suhrawardi revised the peripatetic system combining it with a Platonic "theosophy of inspiration," above any Aristotelian "Philosophy of Discourse."

The school of Ibn Arabi (d. 1240), the "Great Sheikh" of Islamic mystics, was more widespread in the Sufi environment. The characteristic feature for this school was the doctrine of the "unity of being" (*Wahdad al-Wujut*), for which it received the name of Wujudism, "ontic monism." According to Ibn Arabi, being is the one and single principle, equally present in all things; it allegedly forms their substance of primary matter, but they are its forms or modes. This Unique Being is identical to God. On this thesis, Wujudists formed the most significant system of philosophical pantheism in the Arab-Islamic culture. The other important theme of the Wujudism is the concept of "perfect man," reflecting in itself the richness of both the Deity and the universe. This concept was developed for the first time in the philosophy of classical Islam by Ibn Arabi; his follower, al-Jili (d. 1428), devoted to it his main book *al-Insan al-Kamil (The Perfect Man)*.

The maghribian Ibn Khaldun (1406) was among the pleiad of celebrated members of the philosophical culture of medieval Islam. He was not a member of any of its schools, but founded the Human Civilization (*umran*) doctrine. This doctrine aimed to transform history from a chronicle of kings and prophets into a strict scientific discipline, which should form one of the important branches of philosophy. The creativity of the thinker was ahead of his time, and only in the 19th century was his true worth appreciated as the founder of historical criticism and of sociology.

## Art

### *The Triumph of Poetry*

The artistic genius of the Arabs found its brightest expression in poetry. In heathen Arabia, poetic creativity was especially cultivated by the nomad Bedouins, almost all were men. In special cases, women could compose verses. Each tribe had its own recognized poet, called to protect its honor by word, and to strike its enemies by poisonous abuse. It was believed that the poet was inspired by the Jinn, which resulted in the poet's magic charm toward the phenomena of nature. The poet's authority was important in decision-making related to private life. For example, it was enough for the poet, al-Asha, to recite a small poem eulogizing the generosity and the hospitality of one of his friends, for members of the most famous families of Arabia to come to the aid of the poor Bedouin, who still had eight daughters to establish in marriage.

At the annual fair in Ukaz (near Mecca), to which people from all ends of the Arabic peninsula came, there were competitions of poets. The verses judged the best were embroidered on silk with gold letters and hung on the walls of Kaaba, to be admired by all the pilgrims visiting Mecca. According to one of the legends, the Mu'allaks (literally, "hung up"), that is, the seven (or nine or ten) poems by the poets of the 6th century, originated from that. The Mu'allaks, in later medieval Arabic culture, were considered ideals for imitation.

The composite form of Mu'allak, which is the main form of the ancient Arab poetry, is the *Qasida* or ode, consisting of 50-120 lines, or, more exactly, of couplets. The verses (*beits*) have

not only a uniform size, but also a uniform rhyme. Therefore, poems are often named with reference to their rhyme: *lamiya*, that is, ended with the *lam* ("L"), *nuniya* with the nun ("N"), etc. Each verse of the classical Qasyds is drawn toward the semantic completeness and, sometimes, toward the topic-figurative independence. Its connections with other verses are determined not so much by the development of a plot, as by the associations prompted by a trick of the imagination.

Actually, the ode (Qasida) represents a monodrama, usually about love, the hero of which is invariably a poet. It begins with a poet traveling by desert who stops at a site that had been left by a tribe. The poet's beloved usually is a member of that tribe, and the poet falls into his memories of her, describing her beauty and mourning his living apart from her. Then the poet, starting again on his journey, turns to the description of his fellow travelers, horse or camel, views of the Arabic nature, animals and birds. In the final part of the Qasida, the poet eulogizes himself, re-reasoning about his arms and feats or the persons to whom he devoted this ode, glorifies his tribe, and derides his personal or tribal enemies.

The ancient Arabic poetry, which was associated with paganism, originally was met with hostility by Muhammad. In the 26th chapter of the *Qur'an*, entitled "Poets," they were blamed for its invention. Probably, the founder of Islam was confused by the fact that he was accepted as an ordinary prophet or poet. Apparently, he had also personal collisions with poets and narrators, who sarcastically and disrespectfully criticized the doctrine he propagated.

Nevertheless, at the last stage of his activity, Muhammad drew upon the services of poets. Two of the most outstanding poets of the time, Kab ibn Zuhayr and Hassan ibn Sabit, delivered panegyrics in his honor. Kab, who previously composed a poem deriding the Prophet and even was wounded in a collision with the Muslims, had been an outlaw. Out of fear for his life, he came to the Prophet in repentance and began to read him a laudatory poem. It touched Muhammad so much that he threw his cloak over the poet's shoulders. As a result, the poem received the name of Burda (Cloak). As to Hassan, the Prophet presented him with a captive, the sister of his own Coptic concubine Maria. From there on, the poet recited many poems with much phraseology from the *Qur'an* and became known as the father of Islamic religious poetry.

However, the poetry of classical Islam did not become a religious poetry; on the contrary, with some exceptions it had a secular character. The Christian, al-Akhtal, who was the main poet of the Umayyad's court, sang proudly about his unwillingness to accept Islam and openly derided the Islamic cult. The love lyrics and the "wine" poetry of Abu Nuwas, the predecessor of Omar Khayyam, was widely popular.

As in pagan times, poetry was recognized as the sole "high" form of literature and held a special place in Arab-Islamic society. In each court, there were poets called to glorify their patron. The study of poetry was one of the elements of general education, and erudition in this area was considered an attribute of good manners. The poetic art of classical Islam strengthened a feature characteristic of ancient Arabic poetry, namely, close connection with recitation, music, and singing. Shows starring poets, musicians, singers, and dancers were the main means of secular entertainment for the nobility and the educated people. In many respects, poetry defined the Baghdad style, and then, in general, the Arabic style of a magnificent and beautiful life.

Medieval Arabic poetry reached its zenith in the 9th to 10th centuries. In this epoch there appeared the drinking and hedonistic lyrics of Abu Nuwas and the freethinking, philosophical, and, sometimes, pessimistic verses of al-Maari, as well as the solemn lyrical odes by al-Mutanabbi who up to now is considered by many the greatest Arabic poet.

During the following centuries, in particular in the 12th to 13th, the philosophical lyrics of Sufism flourished in Arabic (Ibn al-Arabi, Ibn al-Farid) and Persian ("Mesnevi" al-Rumi). The

mystical poems, which were rich with bacchanalian and erotic images, were widely popular even far from the actual Sufi environment.

Classical Islamic poetry remained faithful to lyricism. The epos genre presented in the Persian language by the famous *Shah-nameh* (*Book on the Kings*) by Ferdowsi (10th to 11th centuries), was not appreciably developed. At times, the genre of the "knight novel," *Syra* (literally "Biography") was attributed to the epos genre. This is the product of collective folk creativity, where prose alternates with verses. From more than 20 such novels have come, up to now, the *Syras* of the pre-Islamic poet-warrior Antare, the Mamluk sultan Beybarse and, most famous, the migration of the Hilalits tribe to Egypt and Northern Africa. The tradition of the performance of these works in the streets, squares, and coffee shops by professional speakers, accompanying themselves on the *rabab* (viola), has continued until now.

A significant place in Arabic prose writing is taken by *adab*. This is the original semi-didactic, semi-fictional genre, intended for the education and entertainment of the above-mentioned humans or adibs. In the middle of the 8th century, Ibn al-Muqaffa, who was one of the founders of this genre, translated into Arabic and carried out the literary processing of the collected fairy tales and fables, approaching the Indian *Panchatantra*, and played by animals. This book, known by the Arabs as the *Kalila and Dimna*, made Ibn al-Muqaffa famous and provided the basis for the framed story genre, at the peak of which is the famous folk fairy tales of *The Thousand and One Night*.

Life in the large cities gave birth to an original kind of short story called Maqama. This was a cycle of picturesque stories about the adventures and transformations of a clever tramp. Maqamas were written with refined and rhymed prose mixed with poetic inserts. The best example flowed from the pens of al-Hamadhani (d. 1008) and al-Haryri (d. 1122).

Drama was not cultivated in the culture of Islam. Shadow theater plays were in folk language (oral language only). The Egyptian Ibn Daniyal (13th century) became an outstanding figure in such theater and wrote for it three librettos, which were recognized as belonging to high literature, and in this sense were unique. Later on, there was a doll theater known as the *Aragooz*, named after the main character. A serious kind of folk drama was represented in the Shiite mysteries (*Tazia*, literally *Consolation*), which were shows about the tragic death of Imam al-Huseyn and performed during anniversaries of this event.

As far as the *Qur'an* is concerned, it is considered a unique work, which did not belong in the frameworks of traditional poetry or prose. Written in the form of a rhythmic and sometimes rhymed prose, this book is a divine, not human, word and is inimitable and inaccessible in its artistry. The perfection of the Qur'anic form is also the justification of its heavenly origin, proclaiming the authenticity of Muhammad's prophetic mission.

### *Calligraphy*

In Arab-Islamic artistic culture an extremely high position is held by calligraphy, which represents an alternative to Christian iconography. A respectful attitude to handwriting was incorporated in the Islamic religion, based on the *Qur'an*, not without similarity in Christianity to respect for the person of Jesus. According to Islamic conceptions, the first of God's creations, which appeared even before the sky and earth were created, were writing tools, that is, the pen and the tablet. The Prophet Muhammad guaranteed a dwelling place in paradise to one who beautifully reproduces God's words, particularly from the *Qur'an*, by means of the pen.

Arabic handwriting became the sacred symbol of Islam. Some people considered that each letter from the alphabet represented one of the "most perfect names" of God. During the whole

Islamic history, there was a wide circulation of "the science of the letters," which attributed magical and physical properties to the letters, the perception of which was the key to the mysteries of nature.

In the medieval Arab-Islamic culture, the aesthetic, emotional, and artistic perception of handwriting has been brilliantly expressed, not only in the endless efforts of artists to create new, more perfect forms of writing, but also in numerous sayings in which the writing is compared to such objects of beauty and emotional appeal as jewelry, flowers, fabrics, and gardens. Beautiful handwriting has been described as bringing pleasure to the heart and eye. "Where saffron is a maid's spirit, ink is the spirit of men," the poet exclaimed. In literature, the comparison of corporal features with letters became a standard component of poetic figures: A ringlet on the temple of the beloved can remind the poet of the "nun" letter, and a birthmark on the cheek a point above the "nun," the ligature of the "lam" and "alif" letters, written as interlacing each other, symbolizes love and union.

Being rectilinear, angular and monumental in form, Kufi calligraphy (named from a town in Iraq) was a favorite for the Qur'an for more than five centuries. Subsequently, it was replaced by new, uncanonized styles, mainly by naskhi ("italics"). Both calligraphies were ornamental, often with symbolic content. Calligraphy was not only a matter of patterns (in arabesque; see below); sometimes it represented the completed whole in the form of some kind of a frieze or panel. Sometimes its capricious flourishes, merging together, created images of animals and even people in stories and poems.

### *Arabesques*

Islamic art, especially in its Arabic version, developed mainly as a decorative art. This characteristic ornamentation was given in the West the name "arabesque", which reflects the aspiration to create abstract patterns in infinite variations of the same motifs filling all the graphic space.

Arabesque is a complex interlacing of vegetative, geometrical and calligraphic (epigraphic) elements. The vegetative elements (acanthus, palms, grape leaves, trefoil, pine cones, tulips, roses and almond tree flowers) are stylized and have some elements in common with Hellenic tradition. But geometrical figures are characterized by rich abstractness. A circle or a star are not so much the objects of contemplation, as self-sufficient and perfect figures characteristic of the perception by Greek geometers as the initial point for creating new figures. The third element of arabesque and the most original is calligraphy. The Arabic letters are the most suited for such a purpose and may have no analogues in this respect except possibly the Chinese hieroglyphs.

Arabesque has left a rich heritage in Islamic Spain, and hence in Europe, where it was known as the "Moresque" ("Mauritanian style"). It is remarkable that Europeans did not always realize the Islamic character of the innovations adopted by them, perceiving Arabic inscriptions on fabrics imported from the East only as geometrical patterns. Arabic calligraphy is clearly visible on the coronation attires of German emperors; it can be distinguished even on the band decorating the shoulder of Jesus in Giotto's "Resurrection of Lazarus".

### *Miniatures*

The flourishing of the ornamental arts in the Arab-Islamic culture arose partially from the characteristic Islamic tendency to struggle against icons, according to which depicting not only

God, but also creatures (in particular people) is forbidden. Such anti-iconism reflected unitarism, the denial of any anthropomorphic features of God, the fear of idolatry, and the conception of God as the creator (Mussawir, literally "Form-maker") who gave forms to creatures, but whom it is impossible to imitate. According to this point of view, the artist who depicts a person or an animal encroaches on the prerogative of the Creator and will be strictly punished on Judgment Day when he will be required to breath life into the pictures he created.

However, the interdictions by the theologians on painting and sculpture in aristocratic environments was sometimes no more effective than those on wine. Figured images can be seen on the surviving frescos in the Umayyad Caliphs country castles in Syria and on the Abbasid palaces of Samarra (in Iraq). The Baghdad Caliph al-Mansur (754-775) is mounted on a horse statue on the green dome of the palace in the capital. The Arabic-Spanish Caliph Abd-ar-Rahman III (912-961) crowned with a statue of his favorite wife, az-Zahra, the palace named in her honor. The governor of Egypt, Humarawayah (834-895), decorated the residence with his own image and the images of his wives wearing golden crowns. But nowhere in an Islamic mosque do we find an image of a person or animal. Thus Islam did not resort to the fine arts as a means of propagating religious ideas, as did Christianity and Buddhism. Sculpture, and especially painting, became secular arts patronized by the governors and the aristocracy.

The creative talent of Islamic painters is shown most brilliantly in the miniature, multicolor images by which they decorated and illustrated manuscripts. In the epoch of classical Islam the two main schools of miniatures: the Arabic (or Arabic-Mesopotamia, Baghdad) and the Iranian were developed. The epoch of the glory of the Arabic school was at the end of the 12th century and the first half of the next century. The artists of this school illustrated the scientific works: "Automatics" by al-Jazari, "Pharmacology" by Dioscorides, and the medical treatises ascribed to Galen; as well as the literary works: "Kalila and Dimna" by Ibn al-Muqaffa and "Maqama" by al-Hariri.

Whereas the Arabic school was under Byzantine influence, the Iranian miniature was more oriented to the Chinese tradition. Often there were illustrations for the chronicles "Shah-name" by Ferdowsi, those of at-Tabari and Rashid-ad-Din, and the "Quinary" ("Hamse") by Nezami. The Eastern miniature reached its zenith in the creativity of Behzad (15th to 16th), the Raphael of the East.

The miniaturists, who easily overcame the interdiction against the figured images, did not overcome the temptation to reproduce sacred persons, which the rigoristic Islam prohibited. In the illustrations for the story about a mystical Muhammad's ascendancy to the Sky (Mi'raj) and in the books of sacred history, the Prophet is sometimes presented with a veil on his face, sometimes with his face bare and a flame of nimbus. There were also pictures of the pre-Islamic prophets, Muhammad's companions, Islamic saints and angels.

The "Antifigure" rule was also circumvented in applied works of art. The utilitarian purpose of such subjects as though excluding God's respectful attitude to them, partly explains a relative tolerance of figured images in this sphere. Alongside calligraphic and ornamental motives, bronzes and glass, fabrics and carpets, ceramics and other products were decorated with figures of people and animals (including some that were three-dimensional).

### *Architectural style*

As has been said already, Arab-Islamic civilization is mainly urban. In the conquered countries the Arabs kept all the existing towns, and when founding new towns they did not feel a



need to establish a special "Arabic" architectural type of town. In this respect the medieval Arab-Islamic towns are remarkable for their variety.

The general features determining a classical "Islamic town" are mainly connected with some types of cult buildings, first of all a mosque, and also a madrasah (religious school, college) and mausoleums. The additional universal modes are set by such public structures as baths (Hammam), hospitals, fountains (sabyl), caravansaries and covered markets. Private residences are oriented on the inside court with only high solid fences turned toward the streets, thus preserving the inhabitants of a house from immodest stares.

The mosque (from Arab. Masjid, "the place of worship") represents the main center and the main symbol of Islamic religious life. With all the historical and geographical variety in mosque architecture a number of general unifying elements were maintained. The main one is the orientation of the prayer hall toward Mecca, to which the Mida (a covered room or a door with a fountain or a pool) is adjoined, where a short ablution (Wudu) is made prior to praying. In the back wall of a prayer hall there is a Mihrab or niche indicating for the believer the direction (Qibla) to address while praying. The Mihrab is considered the symbol of Islamic unity because it forces all to look toward the Kaaba, the spiritual center of the Universe, or to the symbol of Muhammad's mystical presence during the prayer of an Imam. The vicinity of the Mihrab is the most sacred and the most decorated part of a mosque.

In the principal mosques, to the right of a Mihrab there is a rostrum—Minbar—from which is read the sermon prior to the Friday prayer. Under Muhammad the Minbar was a high seat, and within the first centuries of Islam it was a symbol of power, similar to the throne. In the middle Ages announcements and addresses of the governors to people were made from Minbars. Here they performed the solemn ceremonies of crowning the governors.

Rising above a mosque is a Minaret (Arab. manara), a tower with a balcony, from which the call to prayer is announced. According to one interpretation, the Minaret symbolizes Islamic monotheism, because it resembles the forefinger, which a Muslim raises upwards when pronouncing the formula "There is no God, except Allah".

Islamic civilization developed different types of mosques, the following three of which are the main types: "Arabic", "Iranian" and "Turkish". The Arabic (or hypostyle, columnar with courtyard) type mosque was developed within the first centuries of Islam. Such a mosque (the mosque of the Umayyads in Damascus, Ibn Toulon in Cairo, Sidi-Ukba in Kairouan, the Great mosque in Cordoba) had a rectangular plan, this included a multicolumnar prayer hall, more often latitudinal with a flat roof (later with a dome) and also a spacious courtyard with a fountain for ablution. This was surrounded by covered galleries where it was possible to rest and be protected from the heat. Beginning from the 12th century, and especially in the Eastern regions of the Islamic world, the Iranian type (Aiwan) of mosque was more prevalent. It had a relatively small prayer hall under a dome (but without columns), four aiwans (high positioned niches under an arch) on the axes of a courtyard and monumental portals (with two decorative minarets) on the main facade. The Dark Blue mosque in Tabriz, the Great mosque and the Shah mosque in Isfahan are famous buildings of this type. The Turkish type of mosques, with a dome in the center, spread under the Ottomans and is represented by such masterpieces as the Suleymaniya and the Ahmadiya in Istanbul, and the Selim in Edirne.

Palaces were also remarkable samples of Arabic secular architecture, the fabulous luxury and the fantastic magnificence of which made a magic impression on foreigners, especially from Western Europe. Their characteristic feature is open courtyards surrounded by colonnades, around which there were groups of halls and rooms. An abundance of mirror pools, fountains and babbling

streams also were typical. Around the palaces there were shady rustling gardens. Unfortunately, not many of these numerous palaces remain, but one is the magnificent Alhambra palace-fortress in Spanish Granada.

### *Music in Islam*

Research on the religious and cultural originality (in particular emphasizing its difference from Christianity) reveals that Islam did not allow instrumental music in cult. Nevertheless, the prophet Muhammad was tolerant of such musical genres as military, pilgrim and holiday (public and family) songs. Moreover, from the beginning of his stay in Medina the Prophet founded Azan, a call to prayer, performed by a harmonious human voice. Later he permitted the believer "to decorate reading the Qur'an with a good sounding voice", which is the basis for the art of Tajwid, the melodic recitative of the Sacred Scripture.

Other kinds of spiritual music were also developed in the Islamic religious tradition. During the nights of Ramadan (month of fast), special melodies, fazzariyat, were performed. On the Prophet's birthday (Mawlid) hymns and songs telling about his birth and life were performed. Music accompanied celebrations devoted to the famous Saints, in particular during the above-mentioned Shiite mourning ceremonies (Tazia).

Music has been especially popular in the Sufi orders. Dhikr, a ritual mentioning the name of Allah, became the main element of religious practice of Sufism. The ritual of Dhikr was combined with certain body movements, which in some brotherhoods was performed with a drumbeat. At similar "meetings" it was the practice to sing love and drinking verses, quite often accompanied by musical instruments, in particular keys. Thus Dhikr developed into the practice of sama' (literally "listening"), sometimes with ecstatic dancing (raqs). The "Swirling Dervishes", who were the members of the Mawlawi order founded by the famous Sufi poet, ar-Rumi (1273), performed these dances most brilliantly.

Strict adherents of theology, as a rule, condemned these practices and similar forms of joining music with religious cult. They allowed only vocal music, calling musical tools the instruments of temptation. Therefore, the music of classical Islam was primarily secular in character and focused mainly on the tastes of the palace aristocracy and other higher levels of the urban population. The hostile attitude to secular music from the side of pious theologians and society was stimulated in particular by its association with erotic dances and wine parties, and also by the socially reprehensible moral character and behavior of many woman-like (mukhannasan) actors and musicians.

Developing as a synthesis of ancient Arabic, Persian, Byzantine and other traditions, Islamic music was always closely connected with poetry. Primarily it was vocal in character. The most common genre was a small vocal and instrumental group, consisting of a group of soloists of whom usually the singer was dominant. The other feature of the music of medieval Islam is its micro-key, tonal richness, in which can be found not only semi, but quarter tones as well.

The four or five-string lute (al-'Ud) became the favorite instrument for Arabic classical music. This instrument was glorified by poets and played an important role in theoretical and cosmological constructions. National storytellers accompanied their recitation by playing rabab (the base of the European "Rebeck", an original viol). The trapezoid eve (European "kanoon" originated from it) and kaman (a kind of viol) were the other popular string instruments. There were a variety of flutes and pipes, often double. Among percussion instruments a drum tambourine was the main instrument, while a regular tambourine was popular at all levels of the society. The

drum (tambl, transformed by Europeans into timbal), the kettledrum (nackara, transformed into European naker) and the dulcimer (kasat) were parts of a military orchestra, which also included the wind instruments, horn (buk) and pipes (nafir, *plural* anfar, origin of fanfares). Besides the purely military function military orchestras played an important role in public processions and ceremonies.

In Europe minstrels spread the music of the Arabs, with their manner of singing and playing instruments. "The Morris dancers" (came from "moorish"), who made shows with toy horses and bells, were reminiscent of that. European names of the notes: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, came from the names of those Arabic letters which represented the notes in Islamic countries in the middle ages.

After the fall of Baghdad under Mongol pressure in 1258 and the destruction of the Abbasid Caliphate, the Golden Age of Islam and its culture ended. After the 13th century there was a deep fragmentation of the culture which previously had been uniform. Such relatively independent regional cultures as Arabic, Iranian, Turkish and Islamic culture in India as well as others became prominent.

Within the next two centuries, 14th and 15th, the heart of Arabic culture continued to beat, though not strongly under the Mamluks in Egypt and Syria, and also in Andalusia. That was its Silver Age marked mainly by the epoch of compilations and commentaries. The Arabic world began to overcome the economic decline and cultural semi-stagnation only since the middle of the 19th century. Modern culture in the Arabic countries developed in the process of a complex interaction of the three major factors: reforming religion, revival of the classical cultural heritage, and the adoption of the values of European (Western) civilization.

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## Chapter IX Islamic Culture as Search of a Golden Mean

Maitham Al-Janabi

### **The Culture of High Restrictions: A Monism of Culture and the Plurality of Self-Identification**

The development of culture and its lofty aims presupposes in some degree a systematic factor which pervades both its theoretical and practical reason. These realize its basic principles and values so that everything proceeds according to its methods of comprehending the essence of being and non being, of the absolute and nothingness, true and false, beautiful and mean, past and future, life and death, "us" and "they".

Although culture is irreducible to a logical system with a number of axioms, it has at the same time its own logic. The essence is the ways and methods, cultivated in and by it, for solving the major problems of physical and metaphysical existence. In aggregate, these solutions form a cultural code which, in response to historical challenges, become a transitional unity of the physical and the metaphysical both for the individual and for society as a whole. This unity arises in historical experience (social and political, ideological and moral) which realizes the structure of the world cultural outlook. The latter is nothing but the wholeness of the principles that constitute the spirit of a culture and the methods of its realization through knowledge and activities.

In the formation of Islamic culture an accumulation of elements took place. These elements led to the well-known Hadith: "Islam came as a stranger, and shall come back as a stranger. Honour be upon those who welcome it!" This somewhat expresses the fact that every step forward is at the same time a return to the beginning. However, this should be seen in the terms, not of an absolute but of a moral spirit, proceeding from its own (Islamic) understanding of the relations between the physical and the metaphysical.

Originally Islam, in solving the unity of the physical and the metaphysical, proceeded from the problem of life and death, i.e. from the mythological 'eternal' and its logical prerequisites. Whatever its manifestation, this unity always remained a dilemma of the 'beginning and end' at whatever level it is acknowledged. Directly and indirectly it existed in the minds of the Muslim and in his/her use of Qur'anic images and symbols. The latter, as a rule, rotate around the opposites of dawn-sunset, knowledge-ignorance, day-night, sun-moon, light-dark, sky-earth, that disclose the inner and highest moments of being. In this sense, they turn into signs of a moderate worldview built from the opposites of soul and body, the celestial and the terrestrial.<sup>1</sup> Oaths to Day and Night, stars and celestial bodies, Sun and Moon are vestiges of pagan symbols. But these set the boundaries of the physical and metaphysical as defined by reason and served in the formation of a monotheistic vision of the goals and meanings of history. The Qur'an swears:

". . . by the Moon,  
And the night when it withdraweth  
And the dawn when it shineth forth",<sup>2</sup> and also,  
"By the sun and his brightness,  
And the moon when she followeth",<sup>3</sup> and  
"Nay, I swear by the places of the stars",<sup>4</sup>

The Lord of the East and West, the wholeness of Being, Beginning and End: These symbolize a continuing change of meanings. For according to monotheistic logic, this presupposes the intention of consciousness that searches the true beginning, and hence works out the inevitability of the values of the existence of the soul in the other world.

"When the heaven is cleft asunder,  
When the planets are dispersed,  
When the seas are poured forth,  
And the sepulchers are overturned,  
A soul will know what it hath sent  
Before (it) and what left behind.<sup>5</sup>

However, this inevitability that accompanies the existence of things and man is not identical with the pagan understanding of fate that accompanies Time (Dahr). Rather, it is a bodily and spiritual transformation of the meaning of Eternity. The fact is that Arab paganism considered time as the unique force of the existence of things and man. Therefore, everything and everyone is but an instant of time, which reduces the beginning and end to an eternal transient instant. From this follows their fundamental principle of life and death which says: ". . . There is naught but our life of the world; we die and we live, and naught destroyeth us save time."<sup>6</sup> In other words, the fundamental meaning of time is its capacity to destroy and create components of the universe.

Islam juxtaposed this cold and soulless understanding of time by the Jahiliyah to a heavenly time warmed by the human soul, stating: "A Day with God is as a thousand years of what ye [pagans] reckon."<sup>7</sup> Thereby Islam attempted to unite the limited and the boundless in a human vision of life and death. If death for the Jahiliyah consciousness is the destiny of human beings and an inevitable action of time, then Islam gave this destiny a boundless measure by incorporating death into the serial meaning of human actions. Islam supported the conviction that "Flight will not avail you if ye flee from death."<sup>8</sup> Islam incorporated this conviction into moral metaphysics by uniting destiny and death in the act of journeying to God, by declaring in the words of the Almighty: "Lo! It is We Who quicken and give death, and unto Us is the journeying,"<sup>9</sup> "Every soul will taste of death. Then unto Us ye will be returned."<sup>10</sup> This journeying to God is defined by "God's leave", since "No soul can ever die except by God's leave and at a term appointed."<sup>11</sup> For "He keepeth that (soul) for which He hath ordained death and dismisseth the rest till an appointed term."<sup>12</sup>

The journey to God is the journeying of the soul to its source. Its existence and death ceases to be a transient moment in the absolute indifference of becoming and disappearing; it becomes an act of divine choice in the process of its permanent re-creation in the cycle of birth—death—resurrection.

The Qur'anic world view is not burdened by polemical searches of boundless horizons for a final sense of the individuality of the soul; rather, it is concerned with the confirmation of its divine (God's) choice, for it is said in the Qur'an that "Every soul is a pledge for its own deeds,"<sup>13</sup> and "We verily created a man and we know what his soul whispereth to him and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein."<sup>14</sup> This world view demonstrates the attempts to define and limit the time of human existence by the moral absolutes of life and death; it supposes that, irrespective of one's aspirations, man will meet God. This worldview crowns life with death, and death with life by including them in an eternal circulation of God's deeds.

If Jahiliyah considered life as an entertainment and game, and a competition in the amount of one's property and children, then in early Islam the blessings of life are considered as "but a matter of illusion."<sup>15</sup> "The life of the world is only as water which We send down from the sky. When the earth has taken on her ornaments and is embellished and her people deem that they are her masters, Our commandment cometh by night or by day and we make it as reaped corn as if it has not flourished yesterday."<sup>16</sup> It is enough for the human being to pay a visit to the graves in order to understand the transient nature of earthly life.<sup>17</sup>

These perceptions constitute a positive context for considering free deeds in relation to true life with God. For "This life of the world is but a pastime and a game. The home of the Hereafter—that is life."<sup>18</sup> More than that, "Wealth and children are an ornament of the life of the world. But the good deeds which endure are better in thy Lord's sight for reward, and better in respect of hope."<sup>19</sup> It is underscored in the Qur'an that those "who love the life of the world more than the Hereafter, and debar (men) from the Way of God and would have it crooked: such are far astray."<sup>20</sup> This warning is noted in the Qur'an in various forms—from soft criticism to threats of eternal punishment: "Let not the life of the world beguile you, nor let the deceiver beguile you, in regard to God."<sup>21</sup> The conclusion is clear: these are attempts to unite the act of surmounting self-deception or pagan conviction in the worldly life with the principles and values of self-limitation in the absolute, proceeding from the fact that God is the Truth.

The last idea is the core of Islamic monotheism, since it reduces the various forms and levels of vision of the Uniform True. From here comes the Qur'an's appeal to the pagans: "Cry unto God, or cry unto the Beneficent, unto whichsoever ye cry (it is the same). His are the most beautiful names."<sup>22</sup> God is the Lord of mankind, the King of mankind, the God of mankind.<sup>23</sup> "Who in the heaven is God, and in the earth God."<sup>24</sup> "All that is in the heavens and all that is in the earth glorifieth God."<sup>25</sup> And "unto God falleth prostrate whatsoever is in the heavens and the earth, willingly or unwillingly."<sup>26</sup> "Therefore glory to Him in Whose hand is the dominion over all things! Unto Him ye will be brought back."<sup>27</sup> All the rest with the exception of Him are but names. "There is no God save Him."<sup>28</sup> It is He "Who createth, then disposeth; Who measureth, then qudieth."<sup>29</sup> "He, the beneficent, has created men, He has taught him utterance, And the sky He has uplifted; and He hath set the measure, But observe the measure strictly, nor short thereof".<sup>30</sup> Those who can fly cannot do so, and will never attend to their thirst, and no fire can be ignited, and nobody may live or die without Him. He is the primary, the cause of everything, and everything will disappear, save Him. "There remaineth but the Countenance of thy Lord of Might and Glory."<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Islamic monotheism transformed God into an absolute source of existence and action. Their purpose was to turn Him into the beginning and end of everything (32).<sup>32</sup> "He is the Primary and the Last, and the Outward and the Inward"<sup>33</sup> He is the "Light of the heavens and earth. . . . He is the Light of all Lights."<sup>34</sup> He is a pure being, within Himself He supposes the meaning and value of every action, and the whole world is of equal worth to Him. If He "openeth unto mankind of mercy none can withhold it; and that which He withholdeth none can release thereafter."<sup>35</sup> Reality and fate dissolve into this wholeness, and there is not a trace of indifference in this, since everything that He undertakes is undertaken with wisdom. He is closer to man than his jugular vein. "There is no secret conference of three but He is the fourth, nor of five He is the sixth, nor of less than that or more, but He is with them wheresoever they may be."<sup>36</sup>

This monotheistic view has determined, in its turn, the substantiality of God in His actions and the acts of individuals and community; and precisely because of this, the substantiality of the Single. That is why every call, pray and appeal should be ascribed to Him only.<sup>37</sup> "If there were

therein gods beside God, then verily both (the heavens and the earth) had been disordered."<sup>38</sup> "Unto God belong the East and the West, and whithersoever ye turn, there is God's countenance."<sup>39</sup> From this follows the identity of God and Truth, and the singularity of God means the singularity of Truth; He is the True, and "that which they invoke beside Him is the False."<sup>40</sup> He is the King of Truth, and "There is no God save Him"<sup>41</sup> "The decision is for God only. He telleth the truth and He is the best of Deciders"<sup>42</sup> in existence and actions, since He is the source of universal wisdom of being whose sign is found in the body and soul until the Truth becomes manifest to all.<sup>43</sup>

The ideal incarnation of God's wisdom in the social and spiritual existence of humankind is society (Jama') and the community (Umma). The practical manifestation of monotheism is the transformation of society and community into ideal samples of the socio-spiritual existence of humankind, which assumes the harmony of the monotheistic view in the specimen of the Muslim, and the community—as a community of believers. Their unity is confirmed and understood in the universal principles of Islam and its basic rules: prayers (five times), fast in the month of Ramadan, the Pilgrimage to Mecca, and alms-giving (Zakat). In its turn, this is only the minimum bounds of a wholeness of society and community. These bounds also reflect the spirit of moderation. Society is an integral wholeness which resembles Him, since if the Lord "had willed, He verily would have made mankind one nation, yet they cease not differing."<sup>44</sup> But "He sendeth whom He will astray and guideth whom He will, and ye will indeed be asked of what ye used to do."<sup>45</sup>

Thus, Islam expresses in its basic principles the Truth and the Uniform in their quality as the highest ideal to be imitated in going along the path of Truth. This is by uniting with moderation the possibility of imitating through identifying society and community with truth. If the principle of monotheism is a principle of unity (of society) and the principle of spiritual unity (of the community), then their synthesis inevitably leads to the formation of an image and idea of middle community as a practical sample of monotheistic socio-spiritual spirit. From here follows the Qur'an's appeal to the Muslims: "Thus We have appointed you a middle nation, that ye be witnesses against mankind."<sup>46</sup> Thereby, the middle character of the community is defined not by temporal and historical criteria, but by the demands of moral moderation. From this follows its rigorous imperative: "And there may spring from you a nation which invites to goodness, and enjoins right conduct and forbid indecency".<sup>47</sup> The essence of the duty in the historical formation of the community is reflected in the verse which names it (community) "Ye are the best community that hath been raised up for mankind. Ye enjoin right conduct and forbid indecency; and ye believe in God".<sup>48</sup> This evaluation is based not on its exceptionality, but on the superiority of the middle community as an ideal community. In other words, the middle community is the realization of the ideal of middleness as a universal virtue, and that is why the middle community is the community of good, and vice versa.

The society guards moderation of the community exactly in the same way as its moderation creates its socio-spiritual wholeness (Umma). The society and moderation as the intrinsic components of the religious unity led to the creation of a cultural unitarism. The point is that the constitution of society with the help of moderation, and the comprehension of the later in the tradition of the former, have basically created in the process of the development of Islamic culture the idea of the bases of Islam. Its corresponding ways of the unity of the reasonable and the transmitted (Al-Ma'kul wal Mankul) as the universal theoretical forms of the expression of moderation in the Hadiths, in the form of traditional and critical perception (Riwaya-Diraya); and in Fiqh, in the form of free interpretation and agreement between the authorities (Ijtihad-Ijma). Thus there opened the possibility of the transformation of the community in the wholeness of

diverse searches for true moderation. This, in turn, led to the growth of the value of Sunnah as the practical form of moderation, both religiously and secularly (ad-Din wa-d-Dunya)—in politics, social and religious-rituals (Adat-ibadat)—in Shari'a. As to their constant synthesis (theoretically and practically), it has made inroads into all the major binaries of Islamic culture (esoterism and exoterism, ancestors and inheritors, Islam and faith, this world and the hereafter, etc.).

The formation of cultural unity with its fundamentals (usul) has enabled the possibility of speeding up the multiform self-identification, whose ideal type is embodied in the so-called "rescued sect". The latter represented a self-renewing quantity of Islamic knowledge and action which tried to find the ideal moderation, enshrined in the following Hadith: "Jews were divided into 71 sects, Christians into 72, and Muslims into 73 of which only one was rescued—the one which followed the Sunnah and society.<sup>49</sup> In other words, the struggle in the Islamic community which accompanied the formation of statehood, inevitably produced the worth and efficiency of the "rescued sect as an embodiment of the possibility of finding moderation and truth.<sup>50</sup> Consequently, it facilitated the working out of the necessary bases of the paradigmatic moderation in society and vice versa.

If we take into consideration the fact that the Sunnah historically is the Sunnah of the society (or its laws—Shari'a), in the sense of accumulating its own experience of what can be an acceptable coordination, then what is an acceptable (in faith) coordination is but what is accumulated in the cultural understanding of the bounds of moderation. Proceeding from the above-mentioned, it is possible to assert that the principle of the unity of the Makul and Mankul and the principle of a practical (moral) unity of the religious and the secular become dominant in working out the bounds of moderation. The comprehension of the unity of theoretical and practical principles by the community would be impossible without the perception (refraction) of monotheism in its socio-political and moral experiences in such a way that history and monotheistic views could join in the creation of the components of moderation. However, this does not mean, that the latter had a theological nature. Rather, in its torments and happiness, victories and defeats, it wove its fibre of perceiving what had been and what would be. It is those extremes which unite in the course of the formation of moral and religious consciousness.

Therefore, it is not accidental that religious fervor and the Qur'anic word captured the minds of the "first Kharijites" when they revolted against and assassinated the third Caliph (Uthman ibn Afan). They saw in his behaviour a deviation from justice (moderation and truth). The same motive guided their supporters (Al-Muhakims, or pure Kharijites) in their actions under the banner of "divine court". They tried to transform God into the single one who hands true justice, i.e. fair justice,<sup>51</sup> thereby facilitating the working out of true values (just and moderate laws) and placing it on the foreground in the moral evaluation of socio-political practice. The outcome was an indiscriminate accusation of all those who did not share their understanding as apostates.

This practice, which outwardly looked as a violation of the community's unity in the name of Islamic moral rigorism, was factually a result of a "historical violation" of the socio-political nature of monotheism and its moral spirit. If it was difficult for the Kharijites to have relations with this reality from a position which took into consideration the overall state interests, for the state had no right of existence outside the universal principle of truth. They tried to unite the moral-social-political components, with the help of a uniform principle (justice), by converting it into the beginning and end of the being of the Islamic community. It is clear from this why they ignored the theoretical reason in their debates about the distinctive features of the believer, proceeding from the fact that action is the true criterion of faith. They were not able to interpret humankind in the categories of body and soul and were not interested in the value and meaning of dividing into



parts what in reality is one. In other words, they did not reach the level of metaphysics in order to perceive the world and its events, and likewise they did not try to find in the endless depth of justice the meaning of predetermination and freedom of will, since they reduced everything to appeals for action. From here follows, the incessant resistance of the state to the Kharijites, aggravated by its attempts to present itself as a unique force capable of defending the interests of the community and the harmonious unity of the religious and the secular. This antagonism sowed within the first century of the Hijra all the seeds of future plants, which seek the warmth and light of true Islam, i.e. it led to the formation of the wholeness of the Islamic culture in its aspiration towards unity and moderation.

If the Kharijites brought to life the problem of "heinous crimes" and the rigorous moral which follows from this as the only criterion of faith, then Murji'ites became their opponents, since they asserted that faith is one and indivisible. They accepted the formal premise of the Kharijites' moral on the unity of word and action, Islam and faith, but incorporated them into the orbit of perceptions on the priority of intentions upon deeds (actions). The result of this was the famous phrase: "You cannot damage faith with a sin, and cannot rescue it by apostasy and obedience". In spite of the fact that the Murji'ites' mastered the Kharijite tradition of severe limitations, in the end they overcame the practice of indiscriminately accusing them of apostasy by diverting the opposite terms faith and usefulness, faith and disbelief, sin and obedience into the outward characteristics of faith understood as an internal condition of man, in his/her heart, intentions and knowledge. Murji'ism found a new way of finding a free compromise in thought and conduct.

Both Murji'ism and Kharijism were haunted by the extremism of exoterism and esoterism, i.e. everything that called for the destruction of the necessary minimum of a realized unity of knowledge and actions, and the very fact of belonging to the Islamic community. This was especially and obviously exhibited in the activities of the gulat—"extremists". This trend limited its future and past within the framework of moral intuition. For the gulat the fall is a deviation from truth and justice. However, the extremists considered truth and justice not as independent principles, but rather as an act, which by its manifestation and spirit is closer to an "intense" political choice. From here we can understand the secrecy of the various positions and evaluations of the essence of al-Gulat (extremists and extremism) and their characteristics in emphasizing the important place of divine metaphysics and politics in their doctrines.

This fact is mainly connected with the place that politics holds in their attempts to incline God to their side in the struggle through the interpretation of that which is considered as true and sincere, false and unfounded in words and deeds—theirs and those of their opponents. However, this hindered the accumulation of objective judgments about the essence of extremism. On the contrary, these judgements developed within the first two centuries of Hijra through the determination of the essence of the Muslim, instead of the believer. Some considered that a Muslim is one who recognizes the prophecy of Muhammad, the truthfulness of his mission, irrespective of what he said later. Others considered a Muslim as anybody who pronounces the Islamic recognition: "There is God save God and Muhammad is His Messenger!", irrespective of whether one pronounces this recognition sincerely or not. Others considered as a Muslim the one who conducts the daily five prayers in the direction of Ka'ba. Others were stricter in defining who is a Muslim. They considered as a Muslim the one who recognizes the eternal existence of God, and that He is the creator of everything, and who recognizes all the fundamental rules of Islam, and clean him/herself from all innovations [Bida'] which lead to apostasy<sup>52</sup> In this regard, the essence and definition of Islam and the Muslim were identified with external (exoteric) manifestations of faith as truth (moderate), and all that contradicts this understanding was regarded as extremism.

If this position opened the possibility of rebelliously deepening esoterism as something that does not deserve to be included in the pyramid of dogmas, at the same time it led to the substantiation of the necessary minimum of unity (in body, soul and language). That unity already permeated the feelings and consciousness of the community that was finding and substantiating its values and actions as conditions of moderation. Owing to this understanding, the primary agreement of the community (Ijma'), including its Shiite part, to recognize the Shiite Saba sect as extremist, i.e. as being outside the framework of Islam, was not accidental, since this sect propagated the divine nature and origin of the Shiite Imams, and identified truth (justice and law) with a Person, and the community with its separate members, thereby promoting an extremist psychology, which the moderate Islamic tradition called "the expectation of the deceased Imams". This conditioned the transformation of the idea that holds that everything is free and legal for those who knew the Imam,<sup>53</sup> into the slogan of the infallibility of the trend itself.

The point is that esoteric extremism personified truth (justice, law) to such an extent that it praised its trends and emasculated the world in the name of a shadow, and was carried away with the idea of turning the bodies of their Imams into the history of the divine creation of Apparition (of shadows and bodies) and Souls (of a law and truth).<sup>54</sup> Consequently, the idea of incarnation turns into a rational type of expressing perceptions of justice and truth. That is why some of these sects, for example, Al-Mansuria, could conclude that paradise is a man, the sovereign of time, which we are obliged to join it; and hell is a man, the enemy of the Imam, for whom one must to be in enmity. Consequently, one who found the Imam is free from all obligations of external faith,<sup>55</sup> for rites, as the Jinahiya (an extremist Shi'ite sect) contends, are but allegories that solely indicate who has to be supported among the Prophet's family (the Shi'ite house).<sup>56</sup> The quintessence of these positions and ideas is reflected in the socio-political views (for example, of Al-Jarudia) that accused the community of apostasy and deviation from truth since it refused to support Imam Ali, the historical and spiritual father of Shi'ism, in his struggle for the Caliphate,<sup>57</sup> or those who went further, such as Al-Mansuria that declared that God sent Muhammad with Revelation and Ali with Interpretation. From this follows the practical (political) conclusion of the possibility of the terrorist murder of one's opponents as a secret (internal and true) duty in the name of the faith.<sup>58</sup>

The personification of deity, the prohibition and prescriptions of religious and secular life (ad-din wa-dunya), the external and internal (az-zahir wal-batin) in the critical perception of tradition (ad-diraya) and its strict reproduction (ar-riwaya) enabled extremism to take deep root. The result of this was a strengthening of the inclination towards sobriety and deliberating the meaning and values in working out its own ideas of reason and faith,<sup>59</sup> i.e. everything which facilitated finding in its own conduct reason and conscience of the moderate synthesis of the reasonable and just (reason and faith). This means the activation of the rational, realistic and moderate elements in extremism itself, since the latter, essentially, is the emotional manifestation of the principle of truth and justice. The moderate synthesis of the reasonable and the transmitted (Makul wa Mankul) organizes the rational realistic moderation within the limits of efforts sanctified by principles instead of persons, by metaphysics instead of history, by moral instead of politics, i.e. by social-moral and spiritual monotheism.

An example of this is Hassan Al-Basri, in whom the major principles of Islam were personified: in history the metaphysics of Islam, in politics the morals of Islam. He reproduced in his behaviour the lofty moral spirit of Islam. He turned his body into a pious mirror of fear of God and emotional speculation of being. He expressed these emotions by means of grief, as if he wanted to bemoan the world for its past, present and future, while wondering and feeling the discontinuity

of its aspirations and the will's weakness in attaining perfection. His behaviour and way of life caused him to be called "the adept of grief, who was accustomed to a life with diversion, distress and sleeplessness!" Others "never saw any other human being so filled with grief", and stated that "his heart was filled with grief."<sup>60</sup> His grief found expression in the idea of the fear of God which dominated his speculation and behaviour. From here follows his idea that "one who knows that his life will end in death and will inevitably face God has to be in constant grief." "Constant grief facilitates undertaking good deeds;" "the true believer is in grief in the morning and in distress in the evening, and it can not otherwise, for his life is in between two griefs."<sup>61</sup> Hassan Al-Basri overcame the narrowness of politics and the extremes of its creators.

Because of this, the extreme Shi'ites accused him of being the "mouthpiece of the Umayyad dynasty". In their criticism of him, they compared his "merits" with the "merits" of the then cruel ruler of Iraq (Al-Hajaja) in the following words: "If not for the rule of Al-Hajaja and the tongue of Al-Basri, the Umayyad dynasty would not have lasted a day". On the other hand, the Umayyad power interpreted his silence as a secret protest, and his ideas of freedom of will as a challenge to its (political) fatalism.

In reality, the self-grief and distress embodied in him is nothing more than a personification of the socio-political protest against social and political vices. An obvious proof of this was his appearance and behaviour, body and soul, words and appeals, addressed to the community and to the authorities. His ideas of freedom of will, they were but a lofty aspect of freedom in understanding the substantial forms of truth (legality and justice). Thus, in his famous reply to the letter of the Caliph Abd al-Malik ibn Marawin (d. 704 A.D.) who asked Al-Basri whether his idea of the freedom of will corresponded with what is said in the Qur'an and Sunnah, he underlined (in his reply) that the most important thing in this problem is the proof of God's existence (truth), and not one's own desires, since the meaning of will and its essence is to follow truth and the truthful. Likewise, God's direction is His command to observe good, justice and benefaction.<sup>62</sup>

The fact that he stood above the zealotry of the opposing forces and their mutually exclusive positions and evaluations is a lofty moral form of justice. That is why, in his personal integrity, he became a representative of a unity of contradictions. In reality he was a typical embodiment of the socio-moral and political moderation of his epoch by "withdrawing" from extremes. He himself became the source of the "withdrawal" of the first Mutazilites. If the outward view of the actions of the first Mutazilites took the form of a withdrawal, the historical (cultural) meaning of that act was, in reality, an intimate step towards God. He himself paved a solid way for elaborating and accepting the idea that the middle way, between the two extremes, is the most acceptable form of the theoretical and practical moderation established in the first century of Hijra. Here, Islamic vision has somehow closed its primary circle, by returning, as it were, to the very same elements accumulated from the very beginning of Muhammad's calls and appeals, which led to the elaboration of the Islamic universal principle of moderation, consisting of the recognition that monotheism is a prerequisite of moderation.

The fact that Mutazilites began their movement with the idea of the middle way between two extremes and ended in the recognition of reason as the last judge reflects the necessary way of the first Islamic self-consciousness through overcoming the extremity of the conflicting forces and the rigid contrast of their doctrines. This clearly shows the historical and cultural merit of Mutazilism as the first trend in Islam that established the theoretical bases of the idea of moderation by negating the exoteric and the esoteric, and by replacing extremism by the centrism of the rational vision of moral monotheism. From here follows the self-evaluation of Mutazilism reflected in their title: the people of justice and monotheism! The achievement of this level by

Islamic culture means that it passed a primary and necessary stage of understanding its own lofty limits by theoretically substantiating the systematic character of practical (moral) reason and having tried to realize it in all spheres of the social life of the Caliphate.

### **Rational-Theological Limit of Islamic Exoterism: The Dilemma of Reason and Shari'a (Reason and Faith)**

The achievement of a systematic level by Islamic theoretical (rational) Reason in the first two centuries, and the consciousness of the moral need of action for the construction of the socio-political wholeness of community (for the Mutazilites), means that the culture achieved its primary lofty limits, since thought itself assumes the unity of theoretical and practical components, and the need to constantly confirm its initial principles. The latter realized itself in the society and in moderation as the organic component of the physical (socio-political) and metaphysical (spiritual) existence of the community. The return to the initial principles (fundamental) was a conscious act of refining moderation and middleness in all the basic components of the historico-cultural moderation of Islam: the religious and the secular (Din wa Dunya), this life and the hereafter, customs and rites (Adat-Ibadat), ancestors and successors (Salaf wa Khalaf), critical perception of traditions and traditional acceptance of heritage (Diraya wa Riwaya), free interpretation and authoritative agreement (Ijtihad wa Ijma'), external and interior (Dahir wa Badin—Zahir wa Batin), elite and mass (Khawas wa Awam), law and truth (Shari'a and Tariqah).

The correlation of reason and Shari'a (the established order of faith) is one of the most universal dilemmas which embodied in itself the unity of the historical and logical in the formation of the basic binary of Islamic culture. It united within itself and allowed the coming together of different components—ontology, metaphysics, knowledge—into the process of the formation and development of cultured Islam's dilemmas reflected in the binary. In aggregate, this is the wholeness of the different aspects of moderation, since these aspects limited each other, thereby facilitating the elaboration of rules of self-limitation. The unity of the religious and the secular, this life and the hereafter, customs and rites, ancestors and successors are types of the socio-political, legal and spiritual wholeness of the community. The traditional transmission of the oral heritage and its critical acceptance, the rational and traditional acceptance of faith, free interpretation and authoritative agreement, all are the ways of knowledge and action of the community. Its metaphysical and spiritual world feeling, world perception and world understanding, was formed in the binary of the internal and the external (esoteric and exoteric). In this sense, we can say Islamic culture, in a definite sense, represents a culture in which self-limitation is identified with the presence within it of fundamental principles. This, mainly, explains its capacity for self-organization and self-reconstruction. However, this does not mean an absence of the "rebellious spirit"; nor does it not mean the end of idle contemplation. One can only comprehend its complexities with the help of such separate (or systematized) concepts such as conservatism, irrationalism, reticence, theocracy, or through their opposite terms. The point is that the Islamic culture from its very inception embodied in itself what later was called the unity of the religious and the secular. The legal realization of this unity found its reflection in the Shari'a.

Thus, the Islamic Shari'a is but a way of existence and ordering of its own trials in the religious and secular world. Therefore it is natural that the Qur'an, in its capacity as a historical and supra-historical source of revelation, holds a top position in the Shari'a.

The eternity and creativeness of the Divine Word became the object of hot discussion in Kalam and Fiqh; its historical and supra-historical character inevitably conditioned the theoretical

and practical value of the Sunnah. The latter acted as a criterion of the authenticity of Islamic faith stated in the Qur'an. Its inclusiveness into the system of Islamic fundamentals (usul) is but a widening of the necessary range of the comparisons corresponding to the needs of state formation.

The formation of the Islamic community (Umma), historically, was the realization of its revelation, while the state, the Caliphate, was a realization of the community's will. The chain of revelation, the community-state, was closed, in-so-far as the volitional return to its initial principles became an inevitable cultural act. This examined and refined its own judgments in relation to the innovations introduced into the religious and secular life of the community. This return led to the Islamic mentality, which was highly tempered in political and military battles, and to political and theological commentaries (Tafsir) and interpretations (Ta'wil) of the Qur'an. Therefore, "practical reason" turned into a corresponding measure of the perception of "true revelation". In aggregate, these processes led to the trinity of revelation (Qur'an), conduct (Sunnah) and comparison (Reason). Further, the components of this unity were formulated into the legalized universal bases of religion (usul ad-din).

In order to reach this level, Islamic culture was bound, at least, to overcome the self-sufficiency of its initial revelation. The point is that the dissolution of the initial revelation into statehood and law (Caliphate and Shari'a) gave a relative independence to the unity of the religious and the secular and, thereby, engaged problems in politics and knowledge whose theological-philosophical form was the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith (Shari'a).

Here, it is necessary to underscore that the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith is the result of the separation of spiritual-intellectual and social-political activities, which brought into being the collision and clash of inquisitive reason and conclusive codes. This is how, inevitably, the unity of opposites emerges, since the "overwhelming" force of reason is not separated by an "iron curtain" from its apologetic, guardian abilities, while the limitation of dogmas contains elements quite suitable for the reasonable regulation of ideas and feelings. Reason cannot be isolated from the regulators of a concrete type of culture; it does not hold back culture's internal transformation or rethinking of its premises. At the same time the limits imposed on culture by dogmatic-legal prescriptions are not so narrow as to hamper its internal revolutionization, since the prescriptions of faith are nothing more than reason historically transformed into untouchable "holy commandments".

In this sense, the problem of the correlation between reason and prescriptions of faith posed by the Islamic culture is only the "historical-Islamic" formulation of a general cultural problem born out in the course of the political and spiritual-intellectual struggle within the Caliphate. This problem faced, albeit not simultaneously, thinkers of diverse cultures. If one compares the world of Islam and its problematic tasks with that of Christian culture and the religious-philosophical consciousness, then one can say that the problems solved by them emerged against a concrete historical background; consequently, each one of them has its own cultural image. Like everything which has a "will to live", former problems pass from simple to complex forms. Ideological "infancy" is no less complicated than ideological "senility", simply because the latter overlooks the sufferings of the first.

The problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions had its political and spiritual-intellectual prehistory. It engaged and tormented one entire generation. It was achieved by much suffering through social collisions, by methods of politicizing and ideologizing which became the interpretation of the "Divine Scripture". It is nothing more than politicized reason in its relation to prescriptions and ideologized formation in the heat of political-religious conflicts. Their wholeness was bound to collapse, for the different spheres of practical religiousness and religious

consciousness had to appear. Within the framework of this process reason was to interact with the socio-political and spiritual-moral realities, while simultaneously drawing from the Qur'an the basis of its symbolic interpretations. This situation, in turn, engendered the problem of the creation and eternity of the Divine Word. The early Islamic consciousness conditioned this problem in the course of sharp polemics about the "nature"—created and eternal—of the Qur'an as a Divine Word. In the spiritual life of the Caliphate this problem remained central for a long time, and was the seed of the later problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions. Polemics about whether the Qur'an existed eternally or was created was, in essence, the beginning and the outcome of controversies about divine attributes. The famous Kharijite phrase that "no one is given to judge, save God" engendered the religious-political unity of the community on the question of the legitimacy of the power of Caliphs. This was an address against the habit of the people to discuss and make their judgements about questions which had already found their solution and in a sense received "divine solutions".

The movement of the Kharijites was the initial practical expression and political formulation of the correlation between reason and prescriptions which delivered it to the plane of political-theological and moral delimitation. For the Kharijities, the word carried a major meaning, being by itself void of any values. This, to a certain extent, is connected with the pagan traditions (Jahiliyah). The pre-Islamic tradition never knew the separation of word and deed, since it knelt at the altar of loyalty to the word. The Kharijite movement deepened this trait of Jahiliyah in its dogmatic prescriptions and political actions.

But word and deed, unlike their cherished unity, do not always totally coincide. The aspiration to unity that reveals itself in the activities of political groups is regarded as the necessary situation of unity, in order to once again become a "victim" of unity's constant negation. The Kharijite movement, which first subjected revolutionary negation of the availability of "unity", actually aspired to re-establish the lost social-political and ideological unity of the community. The fact that the Kharijites gave only God the right to judge does not mean the negation of reason by declaring the priority over reason of Shari'a and the "Divine Scripture," but is a practical attempt to unite them on a moral basis. This was how the initial background of the delimitation of the social forces was created, insofar as reason was not isolated as an independent form of action having its own system.

Thus, it is understandable why the Kharijite call of punishing "those who committed heinous crimes" turned into the major slogan of this movement. This is not an external world of politics in opposition to the innermost world of faith. Nor is it the world of Kharijite faith opposed to the world of the Murji'ites' conventional faith (Itiqad), although both of them, more or less, reflected this tendency. This is a living expression of the methods and forms of revealing the practical realization of the correlation of reason and the prescriptions of faith. For example, the Najdites-Azarites resolved the problem of political forgiveness (Itizar) of political opponents to the level of Ijtihad, thereby delegating reason to solve the task of applying the prescriptions. In this way, based on the assertion "on forgiving those who do not know the prescriptions," Najd ibn Amir al-Hanafi opened the road to a rational (practical) approach to "written" prescriptions. Later, this problem for the Kharijities took the form of relation to religion. They asserted that knowledge about God and prophets and their recognition is a must, and ignorance about them is not forgivable. In all other cases forgiveness is admissible, till a criteria is worked out for what is allowed and what is prohibited. More than that, they held that before establishing an appropriate criterion, it is godless to accuse one who is searching such a criterion or realization (Mujtahid) of a mistake.

Here, we have one of the initial and, to large extent, primitive forms of delimitation in the world of politics, between the unity of moral knowledge, legislative practice and the possibility of independently undertaking Ijtihad. This is not subject to interdiction, so long as, in the given situation, a practical realization comes into force. The spirit of realized morals prevailed in Kharijism to such an extent that it considered the Sura "Yousef" not to be related to the Qur'an, only because in their opinion a love story cannot belong to the Qur'an. Notwithstanding the different motives of such an extreme negation and difference in its realization all these sects emerged on the basis of uniting the values of reason and morality with the "Divine Scripture". In one of these trends, Ajariditism, these trials to unite turned into an "extreme" heresy that was absolutely opposed to Sunnism. This was a realization of the ethics of critical reason, which stood in defense of the true law.

This sect did not forward the principle of the interaction of reason and dogmatic-legal prescriptions; however, it proposed the principle of moral prescriptions, considered from the practical and critical-rationalistic view. This explains the first courageous attempts by some sects, such as Kharijites-Atrafites, to pose the question of the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith. As al-Shahrastani notes, this forgave those members from remote communities, having poor access to Islam, left the unknown Shari'a rules, if they did this on the basis of reason.<sup>63</sup> At the same time, some of the Kharijites-Ibadities admitted the possibility that God can send prophets without any signs, who therefore were not obliged to demonstrate wonders.

The Kharijites formulated into a set of concepts the problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith, and revealed its practical importance, without promoting it to a level of "theoretical abstraction". This coincides with the conceptions of early Shi'ite sects. They also followed the road of "theological ailments" i.e. the road of political "divine theologization", by suggesting that problem of power (Imamt) was a fundamental one, and making it the core of examining the problem of reason and the prescriptions of faith. This problem in different Shi'ite commentaries took the character of direct or indirect, rational or irrational "political" speculation. The esoteric interpretation of this problem, mainly by the Shi'ite "extremists", was also a way of posing and suggesting the problem of reason and prescriptions. The Shi'ites proposed many fruitful ideas, but were unable to create a strictly universal "theory" of the correlation of reason and prescriptions.

The possibilities for a rational-esoteric commentary of the Divine Scripture were infinite. Thus, for example, Ismalite thought demonstrated as before that reason was obliged to fulfill its interpretative functions in the process of spiritual emanation as an expression of the intellectual and spiritual "power" of the Imam. As the rescuer Imam expected by them keeps a daily-cosmological and spiritual-political position, it was difficult for their principle of following the Imam to become hardened into a strict form of traditional theory.

The task of Shari'a is to bring the movement of the soul and body to perfection, which is but attaining cosmic reason and intermingling with it as a mediator between the creation and the creator. Hence the final refuge of everything that exists, precisely because of their correlation, can be neither mechanistic, nor even historical (temporal). This correlation is constantly interchangeable, and its content is predetermined not by subordination or correspondence, but by its aspiration towards unity, of which the highest manifestation is the Imam. Thus, the correlation between reason and prescriptions enters the boundaries of what can be called the absolute ideal of material and spiritual relations of the world. This is because the legislative prescriptions, according to the ideological representatives of the Ismailites, are nothing but "eternal spiritual worlds given

by God", and these worlds, in turn, are no more than "created and embodied legislative prescriptions".

This formulation of the correlation of reason and prescriptions has its foundation in the Shi'ite heritage, as well as in Islamic culture. It has a real-historical foundation as do other spheres of social life, since the fundamental problems of the "world of reason and prescriptions" in Caliphate culture are products of Ijtihad, which was dictated by the realities of political and spiritual evolution. At that time such concepts as Scripture (kitab), tradition (Sunnah), agreement (Ijma'), analogy (Qiyas) were formulated, and the "fundamentals" of Ijtihad were formed. In due course, differences appeared concerning whether the "fundamentals" are conventional. For example, many leading thinkers of different trends and schools did not agree that Ijma' is mandatory. Among them al-Nazzam (d. 845), Ibn Rushd (d. 1198), al-Ghazali (d. 1111). Different attitudes were generated towards the formulation of agreements, on whose basis the correlation between reason and prescriptions could be built. The Hadiths—widely used in Islamic law and saying: "Divergence among my community is virtue", and "My community is not united on delusion"—do mean a general formulation of a defense of freedom of thought, divergence of views and the legitimacy of independent judgment.

However, this phenomenon has its "weak points". The major problem here lies in the fact that the theoretical formulation of these or other solutions of the problem of correlation of reason and prescriptions is itself a product of a concrete phenomenon that is connected with the fact of Islam's domination and with the realities of the development of the Islamic state.

Ideological divergence, and sometimes even contrasting positions, became the initial concrete way of realizing the abstract formulation of the correlation of reason and prescriptions. The legal basis and Islam's heritage as a field of conflict produced, at the beginning, two schools—"the people of Hadith" and "the people of opinion". Among the adherents of the first school were: Malik ibn Anas, Sufian al-Sauri, Idris al-Shafi', Ahmad ibn Hanbal and Daud al-Isfahani. To them, reason never lost its real force, but it was reduced to such an extent that it became secondary in comparison to the Divine Scripture. A typical formulation of this relation is ash-Shafi'i's judgment: "If you find for me a doctrine, or information that contradicts my doctrine, know, that my doctrine is that information".

It will be incorrect to approach this idea on the basis of modern political culture and established scientific principles. The idea, proposed by ash-Shafi'i might make old doctrines an object of correlation with the new "true information and texts". However, since these "information and texts" cannot be infinite, consequently, the very idea ends in a cul-de-sac. But this cul-de-sac is liquidated if one looks at its principle as narrow rationalistic and practical approach towards texts which have to be permanently critiqued. At the same time, such a conclusion is not a product of the conservative stand of Hijazian retrogrades; rather, it is the culmination of its refraction in the spiritual forces of a living and growing culture, whose fundamentals and understanding are broader and more universal than any divine texts, which inevitably suffer limitations.

This position reached its most abstract culmination only after the "people of opinion" such as Abu Hanifa, Abu Yusuf al-Kadi and others began their active discussion. They made free opinion a necessity in relation to Scripture, and the divergence of ideas. That is why Abu Hanifa could not repeat ash-Shafi'i's judgment and instead declared: "The best he reached is that he can judge things according to his own opinion. Who is capable of doing something else can also have an opinion, and we have our opinion". Reason, apparently, became operational and active in dealing with Divine Scripture.



However, this position was formulated fully only in the premises of the systematized theoretical thought of the Mutazilite school of Kalam. The major principles of Mutazilite thought predetermined the general tendency of their views and positions in the problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions. At the hub of the general principles which the Mutazilites shared is the idea that humankind is capable of creating both virtue and evil. God creates only the good and the just, since His wisdom binds Him to observe the interests of His subjects. The basis of knowledge and gratitude for beneficence are mandatory, even before the appearance of Divine Scripture, and the good and evil have to be cognized through reason.<sup>64</sup> For example, the Mutazilite al-Allaf (d. 849) proposed the idea of the mandatory knowledge of God for the mature believer not by reason, but by instruction; he has to know the blessing of the blessed, and the abominableness of the abominable, perform good deeds i.e. has to be honest and just, and avoid what is abominable, namely, injustice and falsehood.<sup>65</sup> This idea was also shared by al-Nazzam who said that a thinking man, if he is reasonable and capable of intellectual pursuits, before the appearance of the Scripture, has to know God with the help of reason and logic. More than that, reason has to give evaluations to all conduct in terms of their blessing or abominableness.<sup>66</sup> The other famous Mutazilites did not differ from him in the treatment of this idea. Sumama ibn Ashras (d. 828), for example, added to the above-mentioned thought what he called the possibility of excusing the non-believer of his ignorance of God. All knowledge is necessary, consequently knowledge about God is not among what is commanded, it is not compulsory. Man "as every animal was created for edification and labor".<sup>67</sup> At the same time, the Mutazilite Isa ibn Sabih al-Mardar asserted that reason obliges man to know God with all His attributes and commands even before the appearance of prescriptions of faith.<sup>68</sup> Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab al-Jubbai (d. 915), another leading Mutazilite and also his son Abu Hashim al-Salam al-Jubbai (d. 933), formulated the idea of the correlation of reason and prescriptions in the following way: Knowledge of God, gratitude to the Beneficiary, knowledge of blessings and the abominable is the responsibility of reason. This idea prompted them to talk about the "rationalized Shari'a"; at the same time that they reduced the "Shari'a of the Prophet" as "definite commands and authentic rituals" to which reason may not appeal, and which does not take thought as a guideline. By virtue of reason and wisdom God should remunerate the obedient and punish the disobedient, since sending codes and prophets to this world is but God's grace.<sup>69</sup>

In their ideological premises Mutazilites gave a precise formulation of the problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions. Their solution of this problem outside the framework of the dogmatic-textual theology also differs from the judgments of the early Islamic thinkers. They developed rationalistic conceptions of this problem to such an extent that al-Ghazali later spoke about the "extremism" of the Mutazilites, which contrasted reason with prescriptions.<sup>70</sup>

Indeed, the rational proof of the existence of God which factually placed the judgment of reason above all other courts, has received its brilliant embodiment in the assertion of al-Nazzam on the absolute independence of reason's capacity to judge everything that is related to mankind. At the same time, according to Sumama ibn Ashras, legal responsibility loses its value when compared with rational knowledge, in so far as knowledge "is necessary by itself". The same idea prompted al-Mardar to assert the independence of reason in knowing God in its judgments, irrespective of any legal Code. Consequently, as al-Jubbai would later say, the existence of a rationalistic "non-Divine" Shari'a is possible.

The Asharites, in general, followed in the footsteps of Mutazilites, especially in matters concerning the application of logic to the problem of reason and prescription. However, they solved this problem in a somewhat different way, which later received the name of "Asharism".

Al-Ashari asserted "cognition of God by reason is admissible, but there must also be faith". In this sense, he created this duality, when the power and necessity of reason is recognized, while at the same time, the role of prescriptions is kept intact as the highest judge. This is not an attempt to subordinate reason to prescriptions, but an attempt to determine the functions of each with the recognition of the right that prescription has to be the last judge. Therefore, God's forgiveness of his subject, according to al-Ashari, is beyond any rational judgment, since injustice is not part of God's essence. Everything that is part of the obligations defined by prescriptions is not subject to the judgment of reason, since reason never obliges and never sorts conduct into blessings and abominables. Everything that belongs to the Hereafter, such as rewarding the obedient and punishing the disobedient has to be recognized as belonging to "faith", and not to reason. God never binds reason to goodness, nor softness, nor to any other obligation, since everything that is dictated to reason from the point of view of mandatory wisdom has its opposite side.<sup>71</sup>

However, this theological truism withers away in the duality of reason and prescription, if one looks at it from the point of view of what is characteristic of their necessary unity. If some Mutazilites almost achieved their full isolation, instead al-Ashari attempted to join the two together. Factually, it was no more than an attempt to unite some premises and methods employed in the Mutazilite Kalam with Sunnite trends, for example, with the "people of Hadith". Nevertheless, this was a major step forward, of course, not in the direction of creating an artificial eclecticism, but in the direction of creating a moderate trend in theological thought, having effective political and spiritual positions in the situation of tough ideological confrontations. It was a moderate synthesis which should be realized in the course, or upon the termination of deadlocked struggles (*cul-de-sac*). When al-Ashari gave this position independent features, his followers, in essence, devoted themselves to the same "schoolboy" position among the rivaling ideological-world forces.

Al-Ashari underlined the importance of reason in its correlation with prescription, without giving the former a priority, and underlined the importance of the latter in its correlation with reason, without relegating it to a secondary status. He included them in the correlation of the possible and the obligatory. Rational cognition of God, asserted Al-Ashari, is possible, but cognition of Him through faith is a must. In this sense, he indirectly depicted the subordination of reason to prescription and opened the way for an all-embracing polemic with the Mutazilites on this problem, without transforming it into a banner of enmity.

This aspect has, more graphically, revealed itself in the works of such famous representatives of Asharism as Al-Bakillani and al-Juweyni. Al-Juweyni, in engaging polemics with the views of "Brahmans" concerning prophecy, reason and prescription, often deviates from the views of al-Ashari, however, in general he keeps to his major position. As al-Ashari, he negates the capacity of reason to judge about blessed and abominable conduct, by asserting that only prescription may pass on them a lasting judgment.<sup>72</sup>

In discussing the relation of reason to problems of faith, he directs reason along a path that obliges it constantly to search for justifications and affirmations for prescriptions. Prescription is necessary for reason, since it cannot grasp the blessings of justice and the evil of oppression and infringements. If that is the case, then all would have come to similar judgments; whereas, in real life some consider that this or that thing or conduct is abominable owing to these or other motives, while at the same time others consider the same conduct as a blessing. The final conclusion of Al-Bakillani is this: "Reason attains its perfection not by itself, but thanks to its subordination to Shari'a and in addition to it."<sup>73</sup> Later, al-Juweyni shortly and sharply formulated this same idea in the following aphorism: "Prescription refutes reason and agrees with it; it refutes reason where it does not agree."<sup>74</sup>

The variety of views expounded above reflect the theological-philosophical level of solving the problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith. That is, it does not embrace the canonical realization of this correlation in different cultural aspects; rather it shows a model of constructing the general positions of different trends and their refraction through a prism of substantial problems of divine metaphysics and the socio-historical existence of the Caliphate.

Despite the differences (sometimes diametrically opposite) in their positions relative to the problem of the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith, what is common to all is that they moved in the direction of exoteric tradition on the priority of reason or Shari'a.

### **Rational-Philosophical Limit of Islamic Exoterism: The Dilemma of Wisdom and Shari'a (of Philosophy and Religion)**

A merit of the confrontational trends of Kalam was the preparation and elaboration of exoteric tradition in the correlation of reason and prescriptions of faith, equivalent symbolically to the theoretical and practical comprehension of the necessary physical limits of "I" and society. The latter could not act without constraining restrictions, for it was their necessary realization. That is why in Islamic Fiqh, the domination of such concepts as preference and necessity is not accidental. Fiqh somehow shows that every step in the direction of freedom presupposes, as a minimum, a correspondence of the preferred and the necessary norms to the prescriptions of faith and reason. The end result has to a large extent, determined the influence of the above-mentioned binary on the socio-cultural existence of the Caliphate in its heyday. This resulted in the limitation of theoretical and practical reason in their own logical (systematic) and cultural (comprehension of its authenticity) fetters and a revolution of its own problems and anxieties. Accordingly, a permanent possibility of creating the values of moderation was created; moreover, the probability of moderation to get congealed (immersed) in the "official ideology" and dogmas remained. At the same time, as the binary of Islamic wholeness wove the fibre of thought systems and kept them from extremity and kept society from going beyond the bounds of the "true path," by condemning practical mindlessness and the dismemberment of the values of principles, yet the danger lay in the possibility that they would be included in canonized dogmas.

In other words, the danger of that outcome consists in the possibility of the transformation of moderation into dogmatic rules that might hinder a renewed synthesis of authoritative agreement and free creativity. The latter equation in its cultural content presents itself as an all-embracing form of ideological and spiritual dynamism of the norms of Islam, which express their logical stability through the theoretical and practical comprehension of the meaning of cultural limits. In this sense, enthusiastic theorizing of moderation as such could have led to nothing more than the conservation of moderation itself. The point is that such enthusiasm was incapable of realizing the essence of moderation as "true revolutionizing" [act], as "pure logic" and as the "highest good". The conversion of the fundamental principles of Islamic faith (including its ideological paradigms) onto the plane of legal and theological dogmas inevitably led to a freezing and severe canonization of the legal doctrines and theological sects in traditions. In aggregate, this led to the dominance in devotion, of the whip of the law; in political view points of the apology for necessity; in thought of logical paradoxes and sectarianism. A classical example of this situation is Asharism. It embodied in its "historical" answer to the rational extremism of Mutazilites what can be termed a conservative moderation and, in its realization of the project of cultural authenticity what can be called a conservative synthesis. That is why an historical answer was given on the side of esoterism by the Brethren of Purity, and a cultural answer by philosophy.

In its theoretical and practical alternative the esoterism of the Brethren of Purity was a historical answer to the theologically canonized form of dogmatism. Hence, its inability to overcome fully the exoteric tradition in a such way as to adapt it into a reasonable and acceptable system for the community (of course, within the framework of its tradition of reason and prescriptions of faith) and likewise its inability to draw exoterism into "total esoterism", as did the Sufis. This also explains its vacillations in the cultural wholeness of the world of Islam of those times. However, the Brethren of Purity, in their vacillations between consistent exoterism and esoterism, succeeded in overcoming the fragmentariness of the traditional binary of reason and prescriptions of faith by including it in the systematic outlook of their alternative. Having kept reason in unity with prescriptions of faith, they defined for each one of them its own rule within the framework of the correlation of philosophy and Shari'a as the widest and deepest forms of a community's unity. They found a way to re-establish true monotheism (and consequently, unity) in the flexible unity of the rational and the moral, and thereby, the liquidation of political and world-outlook differences. Hence, their attempts to explain the causes of differences in general and also their concrete types. Simultaneously they studied the causes and levels of these differences. They reduced the causes of differences, mainly, to the construction of bodies, to the nature of Environment, to traditions, religion and also to the signs of the Zodiac and the disposition of the stars at the moment of birth.<sup>75</sup> This natural-historical premise finds its reflection more in a cultural outlook, than in comprehending as such the essence of things. It determines the nature of the difference, rather than the quality of knowledge, since the latter has its own basis in levels of knowledge (sensory, rational and metaphysical).<sup>76</sup> The quantitative aspect of these differences is determined, according to the Brethren of Purity, by the fineness of meaning, differences of paths that lead to knowledge, and also differences of people in intellectual capacities, i.e. they reduced to the unity of the object methods of knowledge and diversity of the intellectual capacities of the soul.<sup>77</sup>

The quantity of differences related to the "fineness of meaning" and to the "diversity of the intellectual capacities of soul" are the object and subject of knowledge. Similarly the "different paths leading to knowledge" is the environment in which the nature and content of theoretical and practical differences are reflected,<sup>78</sup> since it considers the dilemma of the essential and the secondary in sensual and rational knowledge in the form of the substantial and derivative methods of cognition. The Brethren of the Purity concentrated their attention on the problem of analogy as one of the major sources of ideological and religious differences, because it is, according to them, the most widespread method of attaining human knowledge. However, analogy is many-sided. It is a sum total of methods and of cognition and scales to which people take refuge in order to attain justice, truth, the good and unity.<sup>79</sup> In other words, analogy unites in itself logical, social and moral truth, as well as justice. The Brethren of Purity considered analogy to be capable of attaining truth and of overcoming differences, if and only if it lacks deliberate deceit, mistakes, ignorance and non-observance of the rules of analogy.<sup>80</sup> If deliberate deceit, mistakes and ignorance are an outcome of the "disordered" intellectual capacities of the soul in knowledge and action, then a deviation from the strict rules of analogy is a deviation from analogy as from the just scales of the truthfulness of knowledge. Hence, they gave especial attention to any "deviations from the just analogy in reasonable thought and beliefs".

They attempted to show that every representative of reason (rational theology, philosophy) and of faith (religion) aspired, in proportion to his possibilities, to attain truth. Hence, their judgments and conclusions are different depending on their proximity to, or remoteness from, truth. In this way, they attempted to substantiate the objectivity of truth in analogies and the

possibility of differences of opinions in such a way that dualism in general (and Manicheism, in particular) ceases to be atheism and apostasy. An opinion formed as a result of absolutizing the diversity of causes is analogous to what is available in life (virtue and evil, light and darkness, etc.). The same is true in relation to the definition of reason, whereby opinion differs, mainly, on the occasion of the "attainability" of its aspect (historical and empirical), instead of reason as such.<sup>81</sup> They applied the same approach to the epochal differences over fundamental world-outlook.<sup>82</sup>

In other words, the exposition and analysis of the fundamental differences of the epoch for the Brethren of Purity contain an attempt to construct a system of the necessary conditions of authentic knowledge. They proceeded from the fact that premises of authentic knowledge are within the bases of the knowledge of every science. Any science, as any art, has, according to the Brethren of Purity, its own representatives and its own bases. They agree on the fundamentals of their science and differ on details.<sup>83</sup> Such fundamentals, for example, in arithmetic is the digital number and the reproduction from one; in geometry the three dimensional space; in music understanding the harmony of sounds; in physics matter, form, space, time, movement, etc.<sup>84</sup> They attempted to construct a more consistent system of sensual and rational knowledge through the identification of the substantial and accidental in them with the fundamentals and parts in methods and in cognition: that is to say, they aspired to justify the authenticity of the fundamentals of knowledge and their methods, and likewise the possibility of differences in the particulars of science. They saw in this not only the natural state of things,<sup>85</sup> but also a guarantee of deepening and refining theoretical and practical reason. They also deliberated about the "usefulness of differences"—the aim being the further refinement of proofs, the search of fine and exact definitions, the reproduction of new analogies, the widening of knowledge, criticism and self-criticism of the soul for the sake of attaining further qualities of virtue.<sup>86</sup>

The harmonization of the fundamentals and refinements of knowledge in the system of the Brethren of Purity was called to fulfill not so much theoretical, but mainly moral-practical functions. Harmonization served and promoted the revival and realization of the values of the socio-spiritual unity of community: thus, their aspiration to identify the so-called "bad knowledge" and their criticism of the "disputes of bad scholars". By identifying "bad knowledge" with extremist (Gulat) ideas of diverse sects concerning the questions of theology, politics, moral, they proposed in their alternative system the law of moderation.

In considering, the major ideological differences of that epoch, they gave special attention to the analysis of religious differences, since they saw in them the possibility of unity and dissociation. Having divided religious sciences into the rational and prophetic, they attempted to define rationally the essence of religion as an amalgam of convictions, conscience and secrets. This amalgam is regarded by them as the basis of religion, while language and actions (publicly and openly) were recognized by them as secondary additions.<sup>87</sup> As for conviction, it divides into three types: one for the elite, another for the mass, and the third is general. The last is the best, since it embraces all. It synthesizes within itself the fundamentals and additions, or conviction and action, in order to serve the socio-spiritual wholeness of the community. Conviction, according to them, has two components: 1) "reasonable consideration" and "cordial authenticity, purified of all sins", based on an analysis of sensual data, on fine rational theorization, knowledge of mathematics, a good grasp of logic (similar to that of the ancient sages and their followers); 2) the obedience or subordination of those who are liable to be obedient.<sup>88</sup>

The unity of conviction and obedience represents the theoretical form of a unity of "refinement of soul on a direct path" as the method for the realization of a conceptual—practical alternative.

The Brethren of Purity reduced the last to necessity: to observe Shari'a norms, prophetic admonitions, the instructions of wise men; to reject dissociation, bad customs; to avoid bad doctrines; and to take possession of knowledge (rational, Shari'a, mathematical, physical, or divine).<sup>89</sup> The concept "refinement of soul"—meant for them the necessity of the refined soul to return to its primary divine condition.<sup>90</sup> The practical method of reaching this condition is the shortest and most precise path in which barriers are overcome by the diligence of a renewed heart, the support of individual inspirations and the heritage of the wise and holy elders.<sup>91</sup>

The Brethren of Purity, thus, tried to construct a system of bases and paths, having realized it in the unity of the refinement of soul and direct path. They did not consider their approach as something new; on the contrary, they underlined its theoretical continuity with the traditions of wise men, virtuous Faqihs [law-makers], and, in a practical aspect, with the traditions of the prophets and their true followers.<sup>92</sup> They wanted to achieve an integration of all cultures in the wholeness of their alternative system, expressed as follows: " We slept in the cave of our forefather. The times and events replaced each other, until the time to resurrect in the empire of the great Nomos has not come. And we saw spiritual hailstones, dwelling in the air".<sup>93</sup> The continuation of this vision was their request to sit in Noah's ark in order to rescue nature and matter's waves from flood; to see God's empire as Abraham has seen it; to come on God's commandment and fulfill one's duty as Moses had done; to execute this work so that God's benevolence had touched you, and you would see the Rescuer sitting at the right side of our Lord; and to leave the darkness of Ariman, in order to behold Ahura-Mazda, shining above Avrikhon; to enter into a temple of Athens in order to see the celestial orbits woven by Plato; to fall asleep in the night of Power in order to see the Ascension at dawn.<sup>94</sup>

Thus, they wanted to acquire a cultural wholeness by integrating into themselves the spiritual edges of the historical experience of mankind. They attempted to present the laws (Shari'a), the deeds of the prophets and reason, and the logic of wise men (i.e. reason and prescriptions of faith as the cumulative experience of humankind) as the necessary unity of a conceptual-practical alternative capable of restoring order and justice (i.e. creative moderation). They saw in the unity of religion and philosophy a more adequate, more ideal method of overcoming the traditional dilemma of reason and the prescriptions of faith, since such a unity would complete the task of mastering the cultural wholeness of mankind. Thus, they repeatedly asserted that the constant confrontation of ideas and expressions of philosophers, with the prophets showed the ignorance of those who are not versatile in philosophizing, but know only its general fundamentals, and those specialists on religion, who know only the external aspects of the true sacraments of faith. The consequences of this situation have been stupid confrontations, fruitless controversies, and the contrasting of philosophy to Shari'a and vice versa.<sup>95</sup>

It is necessary to underline, that any attempt to construct a whole of the world cultures and not attempt to be consistent in its synthesis is not protected against the temptation of eclecticism. If the latter also represents one of the channels of tolerance and openness, then its proclaimed purpose—moderation—nevertheless remains an object of scepticism and controversy owing to the weakness of its realization within the criteria and values of its own culture. This weakness accompanied the ideological system of the Brethren of Purity in their effort to realize moderation, and because of this their system became an object of cruel doubt and humiliating criticism. So, à-Tawhidi remarks in his book, *Pleasures and Entertainment*, that when he got into his hands the letters of the Brethren of Purity he was amazed by their incompetence. In aggregate, these letters are but a compilation of myths, fables, allegories, eclectics, joined together by cutting and pasting. When he transmitted these letters to his teacher Sheikh Abu Suleiman al-Sajitani, the Sheikh

described them (after careful consideration) as follows: they carried water in a sieve, walked around the source, and could not even drink that water.<sup>96</sup> Therefore, al-Sajitani saw in their aspiration "to clear Shari'a from ignorance with the help of philosophy" as no more than an illusion about the possibility of putting philosophy into Shari'a or subordinating Shari'a to philosophy. In other words, the critics of the Brethren of Purity saw in their attempt to unite philosophy and Shari'a, only an eclectic approach deprived of any hopes for success.<sup>97</sup> The point is that, the assertions of the Brethren of Purity about the Shari'a as a medicine for the patients and a philosophy for his health<sup>98</sup> were considered by these critics as deprived of any sense, for there is no one medicine for a patient and for health.

From the above-mentioned follows the conclusion that direct and indirect criticism of the eclecticism of the Brethren of Purity was directed to revealing the inconsistency of their attempts to synthesize philosophy and religion. This inconsistency was an inevitable outcome of the fact that all attempts at synthesis of world cultures were undertaken outside of a critical analysis of the cumulative achievements of Islamic culture. The idea of moderation is a unity of philosophy and religion was a brave act utopian in spirit. Despite their repeated assertions about the necessity and usefulness of a unification of philosophy and religion,<sup>99</sup> they could not overcome the historical-cultural barrier between Islamic Shari'a and Greek philosophy. Their attempt to identify Shari'a with the faith of the masses, and philosophy with reason and an intellectual elite, compelled them constantly to feel their actual estrangement from the cumulative achievements of Islamic cultural wholeness. In other words, their theoretical and practical attempt to decide the problem of the unity of philosophy and religion remained captive to an intellectual haughtiness that is characteristic of the eclectic spirit. The parallelism of philosophy and Shari'a—the former as conclusive, authentic and spiritual, and the latter as imaginary, traditional and solid—remained an integral part of their approach to this problem.

Another attempt to solve this problem of moderation was undertaken by the well-known philosopher—Ibn Rushd. He considered the problem of philosophy and religion within the framework of the relation of wisdom and Shari'a, i.e. he included it in the language and logic of the culture (Islam), trying thereby to solve it in the traditions and criteria of Fiqh. Not incidentally, he put in the beginning of his study of the correlation of philosophy and religion the problem of whether the study of philosophical sciences and logic is allowable or prohibited.<sup>100</sup> He tried to logicize and to legalize this problem in the Islamic vision, i.e. to take al-Farabi's ideas to a logical conclusion. He shared with al-Farabi the idea of joint efforts of philosophy and religion to look at the world reasonably. According to Ibn Rushd, if the operation of philosophy is no more than the rational consideration of things from the point of view of their focus on the existence of the Creator, then Shari'a is oriented in the same direction, but only from the standpoint of what is allowable and mandatory. Besides, there is a huge number of verses that call for the mandatory use of reason and rational consideration. Since Shari'a regards that as a must, and the rational consideration of things, writes Ibn Rushd, is nothing other than the deduction of the unknown (which, in turn, is nothing more than an analogy), we should consider things with the help of rational analogy.<sup>101</sup> This analogy, in the last analysis, determines such purposes as wisdom (philosophy), and as Shari'a (religion). On this basis, he concludes to the identity of the purposes of prescriptions of faith (Shari'a, religion) and wisdom (philosophy). However, each one of them has its specificity. If Islamic Shari'a, writes Ibn Rushd, calls for the comprehension of truth, then rational proof (philosophy) should not lead to contradictions with the prescriptions of faith by recognizing that truth does not contradict faith; on the contrary, they correspond and support one another.<sup>102</sup>

In other words, Ibn Rushd tried to substantiate a cultural vision of wisdom so that it could be acceptable both in the tradition of Islam (religion), and in the tradition of logic (philosophy), thereby removing a possible contradiction between faith and proof (reason). He aspired to consider the rational scope of Islamic culture as a necessary condition of ideal moderation. He regarded this as a method of overcoming sectarianism and dogmatism, lies and defects, and establishing a rich unity of truth and virtuousness. From here follows, his re-working and reformulation of the achievements of theoretical thought on the correlation of wisdom and Shari'a within the framework of searching their connections and similarities, i.e. within the framework of searching a new unity of culture and logic.

Ibn Rushd proceeded from the recognition of the fact that the purpose of religion is to teach the people true knowledge and true action. True knowledge is knowledge of God and all things as such, also happiness and misfortune. True action is deeds leading to happiness. If the teaching of true action is realized through moral and legal knowledge (science), the teaching of true knowledge is realized through rational perceptions and rational proofs. Since the means of rational perceptions are perceptions about the things or their similarity, then the means of proof are methods of rational cognition, i.e. authentic, dialectic and rhetorical. Philosophy (wisdom) assumes necessarily raising its rhetorical proof up to the level of authenticity, while the primary task of religion consists in teaching all. This implies that religion embraces all the means of rational perceptions and proofs,<sup>103</sup> i.e. Ibn Rushd aspired to overcome the "logic" of opposition and alienation between philosophy and religion by including them in the means of logic. Therefore, he considered "wisdom as the girlfriend and dairy sister of Shari'a, irrespective of quarrels and disagreements between them, for they are, by nature, amicable and love one another as a matter of fact and instinctively".<sup>104</sup>

Ibn Rushd aspired to "legalize" philosophy and philosophize the Shari'a by the harmonization of wisdom and Shari'a and by the dissolution of this harmonization into the accumulated unity of the theoretical and practical experience of Islam. This harmonization comprised a synthesis of the rational and religious wholeness of Islam and was called to substantiate the cultural and logical vision of humankind's highest purpose—happiness. It assumed in itself new possibilities of rationalizing religion and its fusion in an open humanism of true knowledge and action.

This was an historical-cultural form of mastering the various attempts and possibilities of the synthesis of reason and wisdom, development of rational wisdom and wise rationalism, which, in turn, were nothing else but the wholeness of the moral spirit or monism. The above historical (absolute) principles in their embodiment assumed the harmony of society and moderation. The specific refraction of these principles in the attempts to unite and harmonize religion and philosophy is only the theoretical form of substantiating the legitimacy of the community in the criteria of reasonable moderation, i.e. the rational form of eternal wisdom, the ideal of Islamic culture.

## Notes

1. This moderation paved, for itself, the way, including in the phraseology of the Qur'an's verses and Ayats. The latter, as a rule, is composed (in the original) of two or three rhythmetized words. This is the form of the unity of the binary and contrast components of phrases and, because of this, influenced the formation of the psychological background. A proof of this may be hundreds of Ayats, especially the Meccan ones, about the different moral aspects of existence and metaphysics. For example, it is said in the Sura "The Night":



"And for him who giveth and is dutiful (toward God)  
And believeth in goodness  
Surely We will ease his way unto the state of ease.  
But as for him who hoardeth and deemeth  
himself independent,  
And disbelieveth in goodness,  
Surely We will ease his way unto adversity". (92: 5-10);

Or in the Sura "The Cleaving":  
"When the heaven is cleft asunder,  
When the planets are dispersed,  
When the seas are poured forth,  
And the sepulchers are overturned,  
A soul will know what it hath sent  
Before (it) and what left behind. (82: 1-5)

2. Qur'an, 74: v.32-34
3. *Ibid.*, 91: v. 1-2.
4. *Ibid.*, 56: v. 75.
5. *Ibid.*, 82: v. 1-5.
6. *Ibid.*, 45: v. 24.
7. *Ibid.*, 22: c. 47.
8. *Ibid.*, 33: v. 78.
9. *Ibid.*, 50: v. 43.
10. *Ibid.*, 29: v. 57.
11. *Ibid.*, 3: v. 145.
12. *Ibid.*, 39: v. 42.
13. *Ibid.*, 74: v. 38.
14. *Ibid.*, 50: v. 16.
15. *Ibid.*, 57: v. 20.
16. *Ibid.*, 10: v. 24.
17. *Ibid.*, 102: v. 1-2.
18. *Ibid.*, 29: v. 64.
19. *Ibid.*, 18: v. 46.
20. *Ibid.*, 14: v. 3.
21. *Ibid.*, 31: v. 33.
22. *Ibid.*, 17: v. 110.
23. *Ibid.*, 114: v. 1-3.
24. *Ibid.*, 43: v. 84.
25. *Ibid.*, 64: v. 1.
26. *Ibid.*, 13: v. 15.
27. *Ibid.*, 36: v. 83.
28. *Ibid.*, 23: v. 115.
29. *Ibid.*, 87: v. 2-3.
30. *Ibid.*, 55: v. 1-4, 7-8, 33.

31. *Ibid.*, 55: v. 26-27.
32. *Ibid.*, 43: v. 13.
33. *Ibid.*, 57: v. 3.
34. *Ibid.*, 24: v. 35.
35. *Ibid.*, 35: v. 2.
36. *Ibid.*, 58: v. 7.
37. *Ibid.*, 72: v. 18, 20.
38. *Ibid.*, 21: v. 22.
39. *Ibid.*, 2: v. 115.
40. *Ibid.*, 31: v. 30.
41. *Ibid.*, 23: 115.
42. *Ibid.*, 6: v. 57.
43. *Ibid.*, 41: v. 53.
44. *Ibid.*, 11: v. 117.
45. *Ibid.*, 16: v. 93.
46. *Ibid.*, 2: v. 143.
47. *Ibid.*, 3: v. 104.
48. *Ibid.*, 3: v. 110.
49. For detailed elaboration of this aspect see my work: Al-Janabi M.M. *The Islamic Doxography* (Damascus, 1995) (in Arabic).
50. The words "moderation" and "justice" in Arabic have the same root: *adl*—truth, justice, middle, equal, alike; *i'tidal*—moderation; *'adala*—justice.
51. The word "truth" originates from the word "hak". It has in the Islamic lexicon a broad and deep meaning, including the concepts God, the Absolute, justice and legality.
52. Al-Baghdadi. *Al-Fark bein al-Firak* (in Arabic), p. 176.
53. An-Naubakhti. *Firak al-Shiiat* (in Arabic), p. 32.
54. A classical manifestation of this approach can be found in the work allegedly written by al-Juweyni *Al-Hift wa-al-Azdilla*.
55. Al-Shahrastani. *Al-Milal wa-n-Nihal*. V. I, p. 179.
56. Al-Baghdadi. Op. cit., p. 187.
57. An-Naubakhti. Op. cit., p. 21.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 38.
59. Al-Shahrastani. Op. cit., v. I, p. 181.
60. Al-Isfahani. *Huliat al-Awlia*. V. 2 (Beirut, Dar al-kutub al-ilmia), p. 133.
61. *Ibid.*, v. 2., p. 132.
62. Hassan Al-Basri. "Jawab ala Kitab Abd al-Malk bin Marwan", *Arabic Moral Thought* (Beirut, Dar al-ahlifi, 1986), pp. 20-28.
63. Al-Shahrastani. *Al-Milal wa-n-Nihal*. V. I, p. 130.
64. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
65. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
66. *Ibid.*, p. 58.
67. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
69. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

70. Al-Ghazali. *Al-iktisad fi-l-iktikad* (Cairo, no date), p. 2. A detailed analysis of this question: Maitham al Janabi. *Al-Ghazali: Sufi Theologico-Philosophical Synthesis*. v. 2 (Damascus: Al Mada, 1998), pp. 11-36.

71. Al-Shahristani. Op. cit., v. I, p. 101.

72. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

73. Al-Bakillani. *At-Tamhid* (Cairo, 1947), p. 97.

74. Al-Juweyni. *Al-Luma fi kawaid ahl-al-Sunnah* (Beirut, 1968), p. 173.

75. Ikhwan al-Saffa. *Ar-Rassail* (Kum, 1405 Hijra), v. 3, pp. 401-402.

76. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 402.

77. The Brethren of Purity stated the fact of the intellectual capacities of people depending on their social origin and professional qualifications: thus, their conclusion that differences in the intellectual capacity of people is directly related to the position this or that person holds in the religious or secular life. They classified these differences into nine categories: prophets, priests, sages, kings, peasants, craftsmen, traders, servants, the property-less. For details, see: *Ar-Rassail*, v. 3, p. 428.

78. Ikhwan al-Saffa. Op. cit., v. 3, p. 403.

79. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 448.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 467.

82. *Ibid.*, v. 3, pp. 464-516.

83. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 432.

84. *Ibid.*, v. 3, pp. 432-436.

85. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 431.

86. *Ibid.*, v. 3, pp. 490-436.

87. *Ibid.*, v. 3, pp. 451-452.

88. *Ibid.*, v. 3, p. 453.

89. *Ibid.*, v.3, p. 538.

90. *Ibid.*, v. 4, pp. 6-7.

91. *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 9.

92. *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 126.

93. *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 18.

94. *Ibid.*, v. 4, pp. 18-19.

95. *Ibid.*, v. 4, p. 36.

96. At-Tawhidi. *Al-Imta wa-l-Muaanasa* (Beirut, no date), v. 2, p. 6.

97. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 9.

98. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 11.

99. *Ibid.*, v. 2, p. 16.

100. Ibn Rushd, *Fasal al-Makal wa Takrir ma bein al-Shari'a wa-l-hikma min al-itisal*. (Algeris, 1977), p. 5.

101. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

102. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

103. *Ibid.*, p. 30.

104. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

## Chapter X

# Wahhabism and "The Peoples' Islam" in the Arabian Peninsula

Alexander Rodrigues

This study is composed of two interconnected parts, the first part of which examines the powerful heritage of religious vestiges of pre-Islamic beliefs, rituals and customs which have remained in Islam from the beginning to the present. Side-by-side and intermingling with Islam, these vestiges, not recognized formally by the orthodox Ulama (savants, sing: Alim), are widely spread among the peripheral nomadic and semi-nomadic populations of Arabia. Engulfing the entire fibre of social life and, at times even replacing official Islam, they usually are called "the people's Islam".

The second part of this study elaborates the role of Wahhabism in the formation and development of modern Saudi Arabian state structures. However, the most important and most directly connected with the theme of the first part of this paper is that Wahhabism appeared and established itself as the most serious attempt to struggle with apostasy and pre-Islamic vestiges among the majority of the Arabian population—nomads and semi-nomads. Wahhabism, at that time, essentially meant declaring war on the people's Islam.

### **Religious Vestiges of the Nomads in the Wahhabist Ideology of Saudi Arabia**

#### *History*

The problem of the place and role of the Arab nomads as a part of the Arab-Islamic world has major significance for the history of Islam. It is notable not only for the purpose of studying the formative period of Islam, the birth of the Arab Caliphate, and the subsequent development of the Islamic world, but in particular for studying the modern Saudi kingdom. In that time nomads were a large part of the community and played a major role in the socio-economic life of the Arabian peninsula. They also acted as the keepers of a powerful layer of pre-Islamic, pagan beliefs, a large part of which were later incorporated into the Islamic faith.

More than 1,000 years have passed since the birth of Islam, the formation of the Arab Caliphate and the modern age (including modern Saudi Arabia). This study embraces that long period. From being the backbone of the society nomads and semi-nomads have turned into a marginal group in modern, prosperous Saudi Arabia. At the present time nomads are about one third of the kingdom's population. In fact, this is a social mode, deliberately preserved by the government through generous subsidies. The reason being that the Saudi clan considers the Bedouins as strata that have not yet lost its tribal feelings of superiority, while still remaining a staunch supporter of the regime.

The thrust of this study is not the analysis of the socio-economic situation of the Bedouins. Other studies have been devoted to those problems (see, i.e. A.M. Rodrigues, *Oil and the Evolution of Social Structures in the Arabian Monarchies*. Moscow: Nauka Publishers, 1989). The thrust of this study is on the religious beliefs of the nomads, since nomads indifferently observe the main prescriptions of Islam, while carefully observing their pre-Islamic customs and rituals. In this sense (of course, with a few exceptions, such as spreading Wahhabism among the Bedouins, which was carried out by the brotherhood sects in the beginning of the 20th century), the Bedouins have not adopted, either factually or formally, Islam as an integral system of ideas and world perceptions.

Similarly the nomads did not have a developed system of pre-monotheistic beliefs in comparison with the settled Arabs during the era of Jahiliyah. Their beliefs were a jumble of customs, mainly of pagan character. The actuality and complexity of these realities lie also in the fact that nomads are part and parcel of the Saudi society, which is permeated by Wahhabist ideology—an ideology of zealous supporters of Islam's "purity". Of course, both religious and secular representatives of the state consistently attempted to Islamize the nomads. With time, the religious beliefs of the Bedouins have undergone major changes. Islam formally supplanted the most obvious manifestations of polytheism and partially replaced them with those Islamic beliefs which are closer in form to their pagan beliefs. In the last analysis, Islam was incapable of expunging the essential parts of nomad customs and rituals. Some of them will be elaborated in this study.

Islam arose in the 7th century A. D. in Arabia and spread its influence within one or two centuries over an enormous territory, including areas which were under the influence of Ancient and Persian cultures. It brought to these countries a new world view and much influence on the further development of their culture and ideology; it has become, along with the Arabic language, a factor of self-identification for the conquered peoples. However, being a reasonably flexible religious system, Islam has not destroyed, as did other world religions, most of the vestiges of paganism. The latter have even remained in the Islamic faith and turned into such cults as Ka'aba, Hadj, sacrifices, and many others, including manifestations in the so-called people's Islam. The pre-Islamic layer of culture and beliefs exists in every region where Islam has spread—North Africa, Egypt, Arabia, Iraq, Syria, Iran (not to mention other major regions and countries, where Islam dominates). Islam could not destroy them and could not unify them both religiously and culturally. Regional differences remained and flourished.

The history of religion does not record any example of the total annihilation of former beliefs after the adoption of a new religion. "The intermingling of different religious systems and cults was the rule in all times".<sup>1</sup> A "pure" Islam, completely based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, has never existed; there were regional syntheses with paganism only. Usually in this synthesis Islam's share dominated, but the pagan traditions, which were strengthened in the consciousness of the people as the 'true' Islam, have retained a major place especially in the daily life of Muslims. It should be noted that paganism (in the form of quasi-Islam) contained a colossal emotional-psychological charge which has attracted broad strata of the population. If "religion is man's attitude to the imagined supernatural world,"<sup>2</sup> then in paganism that supernatural world was closer to man, more colourful, more understandable than was the Islamic doctrine. In Arabia Islam was also a syncretic formation of the Qur'an, Sunni and the beliefs of Jahiliyah. As von Liphardt has noted, Muhammad killed the ancient freedom of people's life and desert poetry, and gave a new direction to their thoughts, feelings, occupations and relations.<sup>3</sup> However, in order to destroy the spirit of the desert inhabitants, and accordingly, a significant part of their ancient beliefs, it was necessary to change their way of life, i.e., to turn them into settlers. Many governments have tried to no avail to tame or to subdue the Bedouins; yet they have existed almost 1500 years, and still continue to exist.

In this sense, it is important to note an example from own days. The King of Saudi Arabia, Fahd, declared that every citizen of his country must have a house, and for this purpose has built for one of the Bedouin clans an exemplary village in Askan with all modern facilities—swimming pool, bathrooms, piped water, etc. Some of the Bedouins were interested in the project and moved to Askan. They drank water from the swimming pool which reminded them of a lake in an oasis, never used the toilets, played with the water faucets, and then abandoned the village, politely having explained to the monarch that they prefer to sleep under the stars as they always did.<sup>4</sup> To the Bedouins, just as to the settled, the Islamic dogmas clashed with their pagan beliefs, and since

the latter were more adapted to desert life, these beliefs played a major role in the religious practice of the nomads. Not a single Islamic tradition or custom replaced the pagan custom existing before it. The Bedouins more readily began to pronounce the name of God—Allah—in their daily life, in sacrifice and other ritual ceremonies, but this did not change their pagan character at all. Apparently, citing the name of Allah has replaced mentioning their erstwhile gods, the top Arabian gods, tribal gods and totems. Islamic customs were superficial, and were not capable of changing the essence of their customs. More than that, in the period under survey Islam was not in its best days. By the beginning of Modern times the positions of Islam as a monotheistic religion were undermined.

The paganism of the Bedouins was underscored by many travelers who lived with them or met them.<sup>5</sup> Their non-believing status is directly connected with their mode of production, style of life and the specific features of their world outlook. The centuries, which passed after Muhammad's prophecy, have not changed these people. Niebuhr correctly underscored that Muhammad and his heirs have limited their mission to the Arabs who live in towns and villages, and left the nomadic Bedouins unconquered.<sup>6</sup> The Bedouins have no 'religious people', who could teach them the basics of Islam.<sup>7</sup> They do not know the religious legends that are well known to many Muslims.<sup>8</sup> The nomads are indifferent to the stories about the Haj, about the Prophet and his precepts.<sup>9</sup> Bedouins explain their indifference to fulfilling Islamic norms by saying that Islam is not adapted to their way of life. How can we clean ourselves before prayer when we have no water? Why should we pay Zakat, if we are poor? Why should we fast in Ramadan, when we fast all the year? Why should we pay visit(s) to Mecca, when God is everywhere?<sup>10</sup>

But it would be a major mistake to say, that the Bedouins have no Islamic beliefs. Among many clans, mainly among the semi-nomads and those who do not live at the center of deserts, Islam has put deep roots. Blunt writes that Arabs who live at the boundaries have a more profound understanding of religious matters than do others.<sup>11</sup> The semi-nomad tribes around Baghdad were fanatical Shiites.<sup>12</sup>

Some elements of Islam penetrated the Bedouins in three ways. The first is based on the common items of Islam and the beliefs of Jahiliyah; Islam has borrowed a lot from pagan-Arabs and implanted them into its dogmas. Three of the Harams of the Bedouins: pig meat, dead body and blood, have penetrated into Islam in this way.<sup>13</sup> The second way of penetration is through Islam itself, e.g. the doctrine on Muhammad on the order of inheriting sanctioned by the Qur'an,<sup>14</sup> and some other elements such as citing Allah's name. The third way is through the doctrine of Wahhabism, which was inculcated into the hearts of the Bedouins.

We have already mentioned that Wahhabism dealt serious blows to paganism. Some aspects of this process will be discussed in the second section. Here it is important to concentrate on some aspects of the religious practices of the mutual penetration and interweaving of the two traditions in the past and present of Islam.

### *Prayer*

One of the five pillars of Islam is prayer five-times daily. All Muslims must fulfill this task, since ignoring it is regarded as a retreat from Islam. The fact that Bedouins ignore this norm (although it is basically an external factor which does not guarantee that a person is a true believer) is considered by Islamic people as a clear proof of their ignoring the religion of Allah.

To say unequivocally that Bedouins never pray, is not right. It is also not correct that, if the tribe does know the prayers, all its members fulfill them. The prayers by themselves were not

important to Bedouins; their version of Islam is contingent on the fact they have to be seen by others as orthodox Muslims. Buckhardt states that the Bedouin sheikhs who were connected to state cities close to their neighbourhood, support the practice of prayers while they are in the cities in order to be respected.<sup>15</sup> The ordinary members of the tribe never burdened themselves with these tasks (*Ibid.*). Blunt writes that the real Bedouins are not religious even when compared with the semi-nomads.<sup>16</sup>

Most of the travelers share the opinion that even if Bedouins tried to fulfill some prayers, those prayers do not compare with real Islamic prayers. Having no knowledge about the prayers, they simply look at the sky and say something and add 'Oh God! Let this day be good for us, so that we do not meet a devil'.<sup>17</sup> More than that Bedouins widely use ashes and dust on their heads, which is not allowed by Islam. Doughty writes about another prayer which is not accepted by Islam but practiced by Bedouins: "My God, make it so that we have not seen evil! Also make it so that this day was not a day of death to one of us or a day of losses."<sup>18</sup> The low stage of social development of the nomads and the severe life of the Bedouins made their prayers similar in content to the prayers which existed in the early days of humankind, when prayer had no moral basis. These prayers were oriented towards the fulfillment of desires, but only desires of personal benefit. Only at later stages of religious development, came the idea of not only asking for the fulfillment of personal desires, but also of asking God to help the praying person in undertaking virtues and avoiding evil.<sup>19</sup> Prayers became an "instrument of morality" in Islam only, but the Bedouins' thanksgivings to God, which are basically pagan, were henceforth oriented towards not their tribal gods, nor to an abstract god, but to the Muslim Ar-Rabb—Allah.

Many sources also cite the prayers often offered at the tomb of ancestors. We shall come back to this question in connection with the rite of sacrifices. Whole tribes of Bedouins usually offer these ceremonies at the tombs.<sup>20</sup> The adoration and worship of different saints also required some communication with them through offering sacrifices. This was a widespread practice among them.

All the above-mentioned facts, to some extent, refute the complete irreligiousness (from the standpoint of Islam) of the Bedouins. Therefore, it is more correct to assume that the acceptance of Islamic rules and traditions has varied from one tribe to the other. But there are also many examples that witness that the Bedouins usually did not observe the commands of Islam, especially the prayers. Buckhardt considers that "very few among the Bedouins knew the prayers", i.e. no more than half of the nomads (men). He also writes that it was rather rare to see a woman offering her prayers with the exception of the month of Ramadan. According to him, more than that, most of those who offered their prayers, were the worst among the Bedouins.<sup>21</sup> Blunt adds that prayers, as an external characteristic of religiousness, were never practiced by 'pure' Bedouins.<sup>22</sup> Cheesman never mentions prayers in his description of the morning timetable of the Bedouins.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, we can say that the major tendency is obvious; but we have to take into consideration the imperfect character of many sources, their tendency to generalize and the usual contradictions of these sources as well.

### *Sacrifices*

Another important element of the religious practices of the Bedouins is the ritual ceremony of offering sacrifices. This custom was widespread, and the Bedouins inherited it from their ancestors who lived outside of the Arabian peninsula. There is no doubt that it can be regarded as one of the oldest customs, carefully kept by the nomads even today.

This ritual custom has its roots in the anti-mystical system. It is the way of offering presents to the deity as a human being.<sup>24</sup> According to Taylor there are three theories about sacrifices: the theory of presents, the theory of honoring and the theory of deprivation.<sup>25</sup> The Bedouins fall into the second theory. In the course of its evolution this custom has gone through definite transformations, especially in the developed religions, 'from a real act to a formal ceremony'. The offers of valuable things were later transformed into giving less valuable things, till the whole ceremony turned into symbolical offerings.<sup>26</sup> In general for the Bedouins, Arabs and Muslims offering sacrifices is not only a symbolic act. Nomads usually offer sacrifices on all major occasions.

In explaining the motives behind offering sacrifices Taylor observes that if one takes into consideration the major point of Animism, saying that the human soul is a prototype of the idea of deity, then human relations should be explained in analogy with the motives of sacrifice-offerings. He compares offering sacrifices to the deity with offering presents to a leader in order to get some benefits, or to avoid something bad, get help from him or for forgiveness.<sup>27</sup>

S.A. Tokarev divides sacrifices into the following five groups: sacrifices related to the conditions of a primitive economy (hunting, livestock rearing and agriculture); sacrifices related to age-sexual interrelations; those which are related to the attitudes towards the dead; those connected with intertribal relations; and those which are connected with the first elements of social differentiation.<sup>28</sup> Of the five groups, the Bedouins have never practiced the last two.

Let us review all these groups in detail. The Bedouins, i.e. pastoralists (both nomads and semi-nomads), offered the life of their animals: camels, sheep and goats—as sacrifices. Islam, with many of the pagan norms remaining in its ritual system, changed neither the meaning nor the pagan forms of offering sacrifices; instead of the tribal gods, Allah became the subject of sacrifices. In parallel with the all Muslim sacrifices (for example at Mount Arafat), Bedouins continued to use their pagan sacrifice offerings, whose deeper meaning probably was lost for the nomads. For example, Burton writes that they "visit a drowning sheep and offer sacrifices to it."<sup>29</sup> Poggenpol tells us that once a year the Bedouins offer sacrifices to the ruins of a Mosque (built in the 15th century) at Jebel Musa in the Sinai.<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to assume that the ruins of the Mosque had any associations with Islam in the minds of the Bedouins. It is more probable to assume that the ruins became a new place for offering sacrifices to Allah (to be correct, to an abstract God, which is known to the Muslims as Allah, but whose essence remains pagan to the Bedouins).

The sacrifice, known as "life for life", also belongs to the first group. If life is taken for life in general, then a life in danger can be sacrificed for another less valuable life.<sup>31</sup> A hierarchical system of offering sacrifices is common to Bedouins. Sacrificing one life for another does not mean that the life of the second is in danger. For example, a Bedouin swears that he will kill a camel if his horse produces another horse, and after this he kills his camel.<sup>32</sup> For the health of a sick camel a goat may be offered as a sacrifice.<sup>33</sup> Offering sacrifices was also practiced during the birth of a son (for girls no sacrifices) and also during wedding ceremonies "when the two sides have agreed"<sup>34</sup>

The Bedouins of modern times could not perceive that in their country there was a time when such a "horrible tradition" existed as burying girls alive in sand.<sup>35</sup> Since sources do indicate its existence and the fact that Muhammad condemned it, it may be assumed that it was not widespread, but it was also not a rare phenomenon. Researchers explain this tradition in the sense that girls were a liability to their poor nomad families.

The second group includes all sacrifices related to the age and sex division of the tribe and was expressed in the custom of circumcision. This custom to both Arabs and Jews is a survival of



an ancient institution of age initiation, a milestone for babies. After it, their adult life began. The initiation customs were painful, and were some sort of offering sacrifices. Once circumcision became part and parcel of Islamic rituals, it achieved a new status and completely lost all connections with sacrifice offering customs.

At the same time, during the modern era, many tribes have retained a way of circumcision akin to the ancient forms of initiation. In addition to the all-Islamic type of circumcision, even as late as the second half of the last century some Bedouin tribes in Hijaz and in Asir kept intact an ancient type known as Salkh (removing the skin), a very painful operation undergone by 16-17 year old boys who were not permitted to give a hint of pain.<sup>36</sup> It is interesting to note that the inhabitants of Socotora, which was a part of the ethnocultural organism of Arabia, performed circumcisions only after their boys reached sexual maturity. The operation was carried out on a rough stone stool, where the boys usually coming from afar were seated.<sup>37</sup> One can view this pagan custom as the 'stool' playing the role of the altar.

Let us come to the third type—sacrifice offerings to the dead. This type is closely connected to the cult of ancestries. The cult of ancestries "corresponds to the patriarchal stage and is encountered in peoples who have kept many aspects of the patriarchal communal epoch".<sup>38</sup> Tokarev defines the third type as paying homage to the dead forefathers and relatives based on the belief that the dead ancestor protect their living relatives and descendants, and hence need to observe these customs of paying homage to them;<sup>39</sup> in other words, belief in the living souls of the dead. He contends that the practice of respecting all tribal ancestries also belongs to this cult. Every example of sacrifice offering at the tomb of a dead relative or that of the mythical founder of the tribe at the same time is also a proof of the existence of the cult of ancestries.

Information about this type of sacrifice offering is substantial. When a Bedouin dies his relatives sacrifice a sheep to his tomb, boil the meat and give it to the participants of the burial ceremony. Sometimes they even put some of the personal properties of the dead into the tomb. This tradition—presents to the dead—is widespread among many peoples. After a short time a she-camel is sacrificed.<sup>40</sup> When a tribe visits the tomb of an ancestor, they sacrifice to him a he-camel: the tribe Khuwaitat ibn Jad—to the tomb of their ancestor -with the eponym Jad; the banu Sahr—to the tomb of Fanda; the Tarabinto—the tomb of Atia; different clans of Tayakha—to the tombs of Dullam and Amra.<sup>41</sup> During the sacrifice offering ceremonies rich members of a tribe kill camels in honor of their fathers and the fathers of the poor Bedouins.<sup>42</sup> Sacrifice offering has passed from one generation of Bedouins to another and is an inalienable part of their beliefs. A son will bury his father in a dignified way, and year after a year will come to his tomb offering sacrifices and praying.<sup>43</sup> On the day of sacrifice giving at the Mount of Arafat, every Arab family kills a number of camels corresponding to the number of adults in their family who died that year, irrespective of whether the deceased was a man or a woman. On the other hand the same author states that a woman who died alone never received sacrifice gifts.<sup>44</sup> If the dead person bequeathed only one camel to his successor, it should be killed; if not, his relatives kill their own camel.<sup>45</sup> Doughty has observed that sacrifice offerings for the Bedouins continued up to the third generation.

Tokarev did not include in his system of sacrifice offerings to the saints—*Wali*, although it can be added to the offerings given to ancestors. The *Walīs* have never been purely Islamic elements, but were based on the ancient traditions of Bedouins, and reflect the ideas of the Bedouins both in the times of Jahiliyah and in modern times.

In the custom of sacrifice offering the Bedouins have accepted one Islamic rule: the head of the animal to be sacrificed is always directed to Mecca. Pronouncing Allah's name at these

ceremonies was a pure formality to the Bedouins, since it never cost them any labors (in comparison to prayers and fasting). This custom of sacrifice offering also had a practical meaning for the Bedouins, especially for the poor among them. The meat of the sacrificed animals was a good addition to their meager menu, though the meat eaten in that friendly atmosphere did very little to alleviate their constant hunger.<sup>46</sup>

The custom of offering blood to the deity requires special consideration. It was a part of the sacrifice offering. It has already been noted that the God of the Bedouin uses only the spirit of sacrificed animals, leaving the body untouched. As Taylor underscores, from this group of their beliefs, the most naive and realistic is the belief that life itself is blood. In accordance with it, the sacrifice offered to the deity is blood, and even bodiless spirits are regarded as capable of consuming it.<sup>47</sup> In this sense the sprinkling of blood is part of the sacrifice offering ceremony. Apparently, some of the deities regarded that what is sacrificed to them is the blood and not the bodies of the animals. But these differences have lost their meaning to the Bedouins in the period under study, since the sprinkling of blood always followed sacrifice offerings. These two rituals were inseparable.

For example, Bedouins offer their sacrifice to the tomb of the sheikh and sprinkle blood on the stones of the tomb. The same is true of the ruins of the Mosque where they sprinkle blood on its walls.<sup>48</sup> In the Northwest of Arabia, while offering sacrifices to the holy tree, they sprinkle blood on its leaves.<sup>49</sup> This is an example of the direct ‘feeding’ by blood to the sacrifice-receiving subject. There were cases when blood was sprinkled not on deities, but on other subjects for whom the sacrifice offering was intended. For example, the tribes of Rual and Shararat even today sprinkle blood on the head and hands of the bridegroom.<sup>50</sup> The ceremony of sprinkling blood was used during the opening of a new well, or the widening of an old one, or the opening of a new water source and in many other cases related to the life of the tribe and clan. All these examples show that the pre-Islam customs remain strong among the Bedouins.

### *Saints*

The widespread practice of the *cult of saints* is a stable and paradoxical phenomenon in Islam. In the descriptions of travelers and in chronicles of modern times (to say nothing of the Middle Ages), there is much information on the shrines and tombs of the saints practically in all parts of the world where Islam has spread. The cult of the sacred was known also to the Bedouins, although its basis was somewhat different, as we shall see later.

The paradox lies in the fact that the Qur’an negates the cult of saints and their ability to offer help and protection to the people (Qur’an, 9, 31; 10, 19; 13, 17; 39, 44 etc.). Goldziher observes that the saints (Awlia) must have had a huge and attractive force, if, though in opposition to the Qur’an, such a cult existed everywhere and had many adherents.<sup>51</sup> The cult of saints within the body of a monotheistic religion meets the polytheistic need to fill the large gap between the people and the deity.<sup>52</sup> As V. V. Naumkin notes, the idea of an intermediary between the people and God was characteristic of the ancient religion of the inhabitants of the Arabian peninsula, where, in the period before the rise of Islam and aside from the higher deities there also existed a class of lower deities, which came to Islam in the form of devils (Jinni).<sup>53</sup> The cult of saints completed (continuing the tradition of Jahiliyah) the abyss between the human being and God, as sanctioned by the Qur’an. At first it happened through Muhammad—a deitised Prophet—and later the Awlia appeared, which can be seen as a definite analogy to the institution of the church.

The word Wali (Awlia) comes from the root which expresses in the Semitic languages closeness, relatedness and proximity and has as its primary meaning: the one standing near you, adherent, friend, relative. This specifically means blood relatives, who are obliged to blood vengeance for a murdered relative or who have the right of inheritance.<sup>54</sup> Later on, this concept expanded and began to mean protector, patron—somebody who is equivalent to the pagan deities—protectors. The Muslim Walis were not well-versed in the Islamic dogmas, but were men with ‘enlightened’ souls. In the cult of saints, women also played a major role, since they were respected on a par with men. The belief in the saints was widespread and, even “true” stories about the real lives of some of them never affected their high status, although some were known as not having a good reputation.<sup>55</sup>

From the moment of the rise of Islam and up to modern times, the cult of saints has gone through interesting transformations—from its total rejection by the Qur’an to its acceptance in all corners of the Muslim world. With time the respect given to the saints developed in leaps and bounds. A peculiar cult of tombs developed everywhere, disguising the old pagan forms of worship which still live, but which, through Islam, were transformed into the cult of saints notes Goldziher.<sup>56</sup> The closer we come to the modern times, the more attractive the shrines and tombs became to the people. The cult of saints, in the heart of Islam reflects an apparent individuality, whose provincial character the universal and egalitarian tendency in Islam has not so far been able to obliterate.

Factually, the Arab legends about the saints are less hyperbolic and less beautiful than, for example, the Persian ones. For the Bedouins (not only for Arabs, but also for nomadic Berbers) this cult has been less entrenched than for more sedentary peoples. But D’Arvil observed that holiness was one of the most valued qualities among the Bedouins.<sup>57</sup> Buckhardt writes that the tomb of some saint was always to be found near the site of the nomadic tribe. All the Bedouins near that site turned their prayers in the direction of that tomb. Once a year many Arabs visit such tombs and offer sacrifices. These prayers are recited in the hope that one may get a son, inheritor, or many horses and camels.<sup>58</sup> The honoring of the saints by the Bedouins abounds with idol-worship; they believe unconditionally in the power of the saints to influence the skies for their own benefit in this and the other world. The tombs of the Bedouin saints are usually located on hilltops. The day when they visit the tombs of the saints becomes a holiday or a ceremonial day for all the tribe and their neighbors. Women wear their best dresses, and the camels are beautifully saddled.<sup>59</sup>

The cult of saints for the Bedouins, being a transformed form of their ancient ideals, is related to the cult of heroes (Muruwi). The Bedouins also have their heroes, whom they respect posthumously. This honoring, according to Islam, could be related to the category of the cult of saints – Walis.<sup>60</sup> Goldziher comes to the conclusion that the legend related to the tombs of Arab heroes is related to certain views specific for the Bedouins. He describes a typical burial ceremony of sheikh Zuweid. Today, as in ancient days, the local Bedouins regard his tomb as a holy spot. The door of the tomb is always open. There is a belief among them that the property inside the tomb will never be looted, and that everybody will receive a protection and asylum from this holy tomb. This Bedouin legend of their saint both in content and form is different from the legends and miracles usually ascribed to the Islamic holy tombs. The Bedouin saints are not so much instances of piety; rather the legend of the Bedouin saint acclaims the good deeds of their chief which are part of the religion of the desert heroes. These continue even in the tomb of the clan sheikh. The last one, after his death, continues his worldly task of welcoming everybody who comes into his nomadic house and must provide him his full protection even at the cost of his own

life.<sup>61</sup> In other words his tomb is open to all who need his protection, as his house, during his life, was always open to them.

The same understanding of the cult of saints is embodied in another place—the tomb of sheikh Serak in Khairan. His tomb instills an ‘indescribable fear’ in the Bedouins, which helps the settled inhabitants of these areas to be saved from the “robbery of Bedouins”. If a local inhabitant leaves his country for a long time he brings his wealth—arms, precious metals and stones, carpets, dress, and even money into the tomb of sheikh Serak—in the confident belief that everything will be saved until he comes back. In the hot seasons the Bedouins even leave with him their bread left from the winter season, feeling confident that no one will touch that which has been entrusted to sheikh Serak. The same is reported of other holy tombs which even the thieves are afraid to rob, and where Bedouins save whatever they want saved.<sup>62</sup> Basilov also cites analogous examples, when the fear of retribution of the ancestors’ souls, who once were the Central Asian saints, kept the property of their ancestors from thieves and robbers.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the Bedouin’s saint is not the protector of his sinful admirers. He is not a miracle-worker, and has no close relations with Allah as the true Muslim Walis. His major functions are the protection of property, vengeance for the violation of an oath, overall protection, hospitality and defense from insults. Even in his temple he presents food to his visitors, just as the sheikh has done in his house. Sometimes, the quality of a ‘desert healer’ was attributed to the Bedouin saint since, according to the legend, his tomb is able to heal both people and animals.

This is confirmed by numerous legends about the tomb of Khatim from Tai tribe, around which his contemporaries built sculptures which looked like grievers. According to one legend about this tomb, Arabs who passed near it believed that they would receive hospitality from this place. The dead hero also believed that all his good deeds and properties in his life would be with him in his tomb, and would help the needy and insulted. Thus, the hero turned into a saint.

Among the Bedouin saints there frequently were certain historical personalities reflecting the other side of the Bedouins’ heroes: predatory attacks on caravans, robbery and holy wars. Modern Bedouins remember those heroes, who became famous for the murder and robbery of enemies. The temple of Abu Gosha is well known to them. Being hanged as a robber, Abu Gosha became a symbol of love to his relatives: they considered him a ‘martyr hero’.<sup>64</sup> Another place of worship is the ‘sacred valley’, the tomb of the hanged knights-robbers, at Mount Abu Nuseir. If any Arab passes through this valley he will enter it if he says ‘with your permission, the blessed’. Walking further, he will kiss every monument of theirs. Goldziher reminds us of sheikh Shabla, whose temple became a respected place, and who was a well-known head of Bedouins robbers.<sup>65</sup> The same is true of the central Asian saints: the holy helped and protected all those who stole rams from Iran.<sup>66</sup>

The Bedouin cult of saints was formed as a result of the influence of Islam on pagan’s beliefs. The old pagan traditions, having taken a new form of paying homage to Islamic saints, actually continued their existence among the Bedouins. A closer look at them shows the rigidity of their initial pagan nature. Perhaps this may become apparent when we compare one custom which received two opposite interpretations. Goldziher reports that the Bedouins of the Sinai peninsula kept intact one of their pre-Islamic customs of a peoples’ festival which could be retained within Islam only if related to the quasi tomb of prophet Salih, whom God sent to the tribe of unbelievers of Samudeys. Yearly the Bedouins of this peninsula hold major festivals with many sacrificial offerings and amusements (including camel competitions) at his tomb (apparently an old sacred place). After these competitions, people go around the tomb, and cut the ears of animals for sacrifice, in order to sprinkle their blood on the temple’s walls.<sup>67</sup>

However, Stanley reports that the tomb of sheikh Salih is visited only by the Tawar tribe, although one cemetery belongs to them. Therefore, it is possible to assume that sheikh Salih was the progenitor of this tribe, and Bedouins do believe that he is their relative even though mythical. In the same work Stanley also reports that sheikh Salih was their founder, and his simple tomb was located in Wadi al-Sheikh. He reports that this tomb for contemporary Bedouins is a temple on a peninsula. When Bedouins touch the tomb they exhibit religious feelings which they never show in their daily lives. Once a year they all come to the tomb. There they dance and compete in horse racing.<sup>68</sup> The author contradicts himself by stating that only the Tawar tribe visited the tomb, but in any case sheikh Salih is their progenitor. The traveler also notes that Bedouins who entered the temple felt uncomfortable, and impatiently waited for Stanley to come out.<sup>69</sup>

Nomads not only paid homage to the tombs of their saints (or their Bedouin heroes), but also, for example, frequently visited the tombs of Avel, Noah and Cane which are in Syria between Tripoli and Khoms.<sup>69</sup> The Bedouins considered an oath on a tomb of saints solemn, and since they usually violated the simple oaths, it was difficult to compel them to take oaths to the tombs of saints: the nomads were afraid of being punished if they violated the oaths.

In general the Bedouin's cult of saints can be described as a mixture of a 'minimum of religion' and the cult of heroes. The cult of saints is another example of the parallel existence and intermingling of pure Islamic and pagan, pre-Islamic traditions and beliefs.

### *Superstition*

This was another important part not only of daily religious practices, but also of the way of life and behavior of the Bedouins. As with many other people at a low stage of social development, many ancient superstitions and prejudices were spread among the nomads. Although Blunt considers the Bedouins to be indifferent to supernatural things and superstitions,<sup>70</sup> we do find many contrary examples. The belief that some horses bring evil was widespread. It was evident in the marks on the body of the animal. If there was a star on the right side of the horse's neck, that meant it would be killed by a spear. If a star was on one of the bones of the shin, it meant that its owner was not honest, and therefore, not a good Muslim. There were more than 20 such marks which could bring evil of this type.<sup>71</sup> Blunt, accepting the existence of superstitions about the colors of horses, at the same time states that nobody would refuse a good animal for such reasons.<sup>72</sup>

A sacrificed camel's brain was only eaten by women, since men supposed that it could worsen their eyesight.<sup>73</sup> Shtein writes that brains were given to women so as to make them afraid of men.<sup>74</sup> It is not clear why Bedouins suspected the selling of gee and milk. The Bedouins of Kerek regarded selling gee as shameful; while those around Mecca regarded the sale of milk shameful. To be called a milk-seller (labban) was the worst possible shame, although during pilgrimages milk cost a lot. But the Banu Kureish—the desert aristocrats—allowed themselves to deal in this trade.

The Bedouins of the Sinai peninsula were infinitely afraid of the monks in monasteries, believing that they had the power to call in or stop rainfalls.<sup>75</sup> Burton reports that in the desert region of Northwest Arabia there was a stone, which the Bedouins called 'Hajar-al-Kidr' (the stone pot). Everybody who passed by either threw a stone at it or wiped a stick on it, believing that it would sprinkle a golden rain.<sup>76</sup> Bedouins were also afraid of bad omens: if they saw a bird or a cow, which according to them could cast a bad spell on them, they remained in their tents and nothing could force them out.<sup>77</sup> Taylor calls bad omens the "principle of direct

symbolism".<sup>78</sup> Perry-Fogg reports a curious fact, that Bedouins of Iraq considered mane-less lions as Muslims, lions with long manes as Kafirs. They approached a Muslim lion with respect by reciting holy words, believing that it would be kind to them; from Kafir lions they could expect no mercy.<sup>79</sup>

For the Bedouins the knot was a symbol of strong relations between peoples. The meaning of the knot was later transformed into the concepts of help and protection.<sup>80</sup> The knots had different meanings to different peoples, including the sedentary Muslims. Pilgrims to Mecca were not allowed to carry rings, nor to fasten knots on their clothes.<sup>81</sup> To the Arabs knots were also considered as a method of keeping the beloved; knots save from death.<sup>82</sup> The last two examples are somehow closer to the Bedouins' understanding of knots.

A large part of the Bedouins' beliefs are beliefs in various spirits, devils (*Jinni*), angels and the spirits of the dead as well. Kelman writes that *Jinni* and miraculous wheels, dragons and demons which howl and wail in the "desert home" were normal sights and sounds for the eyes and ears of the Bedouins.<sup>83</sup> Strictly speaking all these things should be differentiated, since beliefs related to them vary. However, the deficiency of materials allows us to group them into one, and to regard them as supernatural objects of worship or fear. Aside from natural differences, they are close enough typologically.

Let us begin with the question of spirits, or the souls of the dead. Belief in the spirit of the dead became for the Bedouins, just as for other peoples, the cult of ancestors. Sacrificial offerings are made to them, because people believed that the souls of the dead watch over the life of living relatives.

Respect for the spirits or souls of the dead actually repeat the social relations of this world. The dead ancestor who is turned into a deity continues to protect his living family, and continues to receive their attention and respect. This is also related to the cult of the saints.

Bedouins trusted in the spirit not only of their tribal members, but also of strangers, who occasionally instilled fear in them. This fear was even greater than their fear of God's chastisement. Nomads from one tribe in the nighttime never used one road in the valley, saying that the spirits of the infidels inhabited there.<sup>84</sup> The Sinai Bedouins were always afraid of the 'mount of death', where some time before Orthodox priests were killed; they refused to be guides to that mountain. An old Arab legend says that the mountain had swallowed a Christian monastery, and today the ringing of its bells can be heard even by the neighbourhood villagers. The Bedouins are very afraid of this sound.<sup>85</sup>

Nomads believe both in evil and kind spirits, which they usually called *Jinnis* and demons. These spirits usually inhabit the desert and deep rocky regions. For example, Samum, the whirlwind of the desert, was called an evil spirit.<sup>86</sup> Old Bedouins knew how to deal with *Jinnis* and *Ifrits*, both evil and kind ones. Bedouins believe that spirits bring to the people, in accordance with their mood, either good or evil deeds.<sup>87</sup> The rich imagination of the Bedouins turns heaps of stones, parts of mountains spread unevenly in a place, into places where the *Jinnis* play by throwing stones at each other.<sup>88</sup> The Bedouins considered evil spirits those who brought illness. In the Oasis of Kheibar at Hidjaz, during a malaria epidemic, Bedouins cried like donkeys, as if to inform the malaria that only donkeys lived there.<sup>89</sup> Freizer writes about the expulsion of the spirits of cholera through shouts, wild screams and drumming.<sup>90</sup>

Bedouins approached old ruins in a variety of ways. In Sinai there was a place they called Jardania. Buckhardt found there a semi-dark asylum which the Bedouin vagabonds used as a shelter and a hiding place.<sup>91</sup> Nieburh reports that when he got information about the ruins of an old town, not far away from his route, on the sea coast of Sinai, he decided to visit it. But when

the Arabs understood that he wanted to go there, they abandoned him, without explaining anything about the place.<sup>92</sup> Piren noted that Bedouins visited Palmira with great reluctance and uneasiness, since they mistrusted their inhabitants as infidels damned by God.<sup>93</sup> From these examples, we can infer that Bedouins dislike visiting old ruins, justifying their behaviour by various reasons and pretexts. This fear of the Bedouins, who are such courageous and fearless desert warriors, can only be explained by their belief in supernatural forces, which, according to them, live in these ruins.

The Bedouins believed that Europeans who visited their regions were interested in using their miraculous art in order to take possession of the great treasure buried under the ruins which the spirits guarded.<sup>94</sup> The Bedouins of Bannu Khumaid, in Palestine, according to Burton, broke an antique stone with inscriptions. Its chips were distributed among the families. Each family placed its chips in its barn, since they believed that these chips would save their grain from diseases.<sup>95</sup>

The Bedouins attributed many inexplicable phenomena to the work of the spirits and Jinnis. The phenomenon of falling rocks was prescribed to the work of spirits.<sup>96</sup> Even the sands, moved by whirlwinds which bring death, acquired supernatural qualities among those who lived in these areas.<sup>97</sup> Bedouins doubtless accepted these objects as the homage of spirits, which could inhabit any object.

Different spiritual creatures such as souls are believed to have life and to freely fly, or to enter and live in different bodies for long periods.<sup>98</sup> This is the so-called theory of incarnation which results in fetishism and idolatry. In the Sinai there were two stones, each having 12 holes from which at some time water sprinkled; but in the 19th century the sources dried out. These stones are related to one of the biblical stones. Taking into consideration that the places related to the biblical legends were, as a rule, far away from towns, we can assume that the sources talk about Bedouins. The sources also note that Muslims paid a great respect to these stones.

Stanley wrote about this place. The Mount of Moses in the Sinai, mentioned in the Bible, has 12 mouths for the 12 tribes of Israel.<sup>99</sup> The Qur'an also mentions this mountain.<sup>100</sup> Taylor writes that the mention of this place in the Qur'an has apparently increased, if not caused, the Bedouins' respect for this mountain. They used to throw leaves into its supposed mouths and recited prayers at its foot.<sup>101</sup>

Badr—another holy place where the Prophet Muhammad won his first battle—writes Philby, continues to instill a real horror to the Bedouins passing by. They believe that supernatural forces inhabit the sandy hills which under certain climatic conditions produce deep voices.<sup>102</sup>

In many cases, the spirits which were thought to inhabit known places summoned not only fear, but also respect and adoration. Sacrifices were brought to them. In the land of Midian, a pyramid of sands, created by the winds, was known as 'the screaming heap of sands' by the Bedouins. During the pilgrimage people walking near it heard music coming from inside.<sup>103</sup>

Only one author, Doughty, reports that the Bedouins believed in angels and heavenly spirits, i.e. entities of the Islamic mythology. He lived, for some time, among the Moahib nomadic tribe and wrote of their beliefs. They told him that in the desert there was a place to which all angels fly. That place was near a wild coppice where the tribal tomb was located, reports the traveler.<sup>104</sup> The fact that, the place is near a coppice underlines the connection of their beliefs with the belief in spirits of trees, widespread in pre-Islamic Arabia. In the given example the angels and spirits of the trees are connected; this is a key to understanding the cult of trees.

When Doughty told them that angels could not land on the ground, the Bedouins replied to him: "Though we have not seen them, our fathers saw them. In our tribe there are people who swear by the faith, that they have heard dancing steps, their sounds, night songs and have understood the words. They came to this land of Dibr for hunting, believing that not a single Arab

lived here.<sup>105</sup> Angels were believed to come onto the ground from one of the trees, which the Bedouins regarded as their home. They think that if anybody pulls a leaf of that tree he will be taken into the heavens and never will return. At one time a Bedouin kindled a fire under that tree, and after a short time fell ill, his intestines erupted and he died horrifically. His sons and his animals met the same death. <sup>106</sup>

That is how the angels or the spirits of the trees punished those who did not respect them. Nomads considered that an angel was but an ancestor of somebody, and that all angels were ancestors of the tribe which by such visits paid attention to them. "If these appearances are not from the angels, then from whom are they?" In fact Bedouins totally associate angels with the spirits of ancestors by declaring that angels can be seen in the air like horsemen swinging from side to side, and when you come nearer to them, they disappear.<sup>107</sup> The traveler writes that respect for sacred trees as the home of angels in Wadi Dibr (in northwestern Arabia, Taim region, Safarj) is a normal phenomenon, perceptible in any camp of nomads. These are ordinary trees and even small shrubs. Nomads come to these tree; the sick among them offer sacrifices of sheep or goats to them for their health and sprinkle blood on the tree(s). The meat is cooked on the spot and distributed to friends, leaving some pieces at the tree. Then the sick sleep, in the belief that the spirits will cast a shadow on them and that they will wake up in the morning healthy. <sup>108</sup>

In the case of offering the tree spirit sacrifices, the tree can serve as a convenient place for the sacrifices.<sup>109</sup> The angel or tree spirit in the above-mentioned examples became a heavenly protector and helper; the same function being fulfilled by Islamic saints (or the Bedouins' pagan saints), with the only difference that in the past they could be real persons.

In this sense, it is clear that the belief of the Bedouins in angels is not related to the belief of a Muslim. The first nature of angels, doubtless, was pagan, but at the same time their dependence on the will of Allah and their function of bringing the world of Allah (for example, Gabriel) to the people pushes their pagan elements into the background. The Bedouin angels are pagan spirits which have nothing to do with either Allah or religion in general. The Bedouins themselves confirmed the pagan origin of their beliefs in those angels, and declared to Doughty that their beliefs are superstitions.<sup>110</sup>

The cult of trees, as well as other pagan cults, were the products of their world outlook. As we can see, according to their perceptions, these spirits could inhabit mountains, sand and also people. The world to the Bedouin is inhabited by spirits; trees and plants are not an exemption to this rule. The Bedouins believe that trees and plants also have souls, and therefore summon them.<sup>111</sup>

The pagan custom of decorating trees with clothes and other things remains with the Bedouins.

### *Conclusions*

In this section, we have analyzed many of the customs and rituals of the pastoral society—a part of the Islamic civilization—which were inherited from the era of Jahiliyah, and practiced even today. We have touched upon the practice of prayers, sacrifice offerings and the cults of saints, spirits, Jinnis, angels, and also of the souls of the dead. Unfortunately, the limits of this paper do not give us a chance to analyze the impressive layers of superstitions such as worship of spirits, burial ceremonies, oath-taking customs, amulets, witchery, magic and many others. However, even the above-mentioned part allows us to make certain conclusions.

The society of Bedouins—pastoral Arabs—being a part of a larger Arab ethnos, was and is a unique organism, living in the harsh desert and semi-desert climate of the Middle East. The nomad world, surrounded on all sides by more developed sedentary civilizations, to a large extent, has



kept its economic, cultural and religious autonomy. The expansionist campaigns of the 7th century and the formation of Arab Caliphate led many pastoral peoples to assume the sedentary way of life. While these processes undermined the economic life of the nomads, leaving it to stagnate, the old traditions and customs of ancestors were rejuvenated. The way of life of the Bedouin tribes is basically patriarchal and tribal, and, in spite of modern technology, it changes slowly.

The capacity of Islam to flexibly adapt itself to the pagan cultural and religious traditions of different countries and regions was what made it extremely attractive to the peoples who wanted to perceive themselves as Muslims, without totally rejecting their pre-Islamic traditions. But Islam is, first and foremost, the religion of a sedentary society; despite its flexibility, it was unable to adapt itself to the world of the nomad. As corollary, this is why many pagan traditions have remained among the nomads, unlike the peasants and urbanized Muslims.

European travelers who visit pastoral peoples in modern times share the opinion that the nomads cannot be called 'pure' Muslims. Many facts show that they do not wholly believe in Allah and do not observe the basic demands of Islam. Among the pagan elements still widespread is the cult of saints, which is not equivalent to the Islamic cult of Wali, but is a transformed cult of heroes (Muruvvis)—the Code of Honor. Within the context of various ceremonies and customs, offered the Bedouins daily sacrifices. This tradition, in certain aspects, is akin to the Islamic sacrifice offering, but more often than not it had a pagan character. Apart from the above-mentioned customs and rituals, many other similar rituals and customs existed among them. In general, one can conclude that Islam was unable to get rid of this strong layer of beliefs and rituals inherited from the era of Jahiliyah. Islamic customs rarely replaced them.

## **Wahhabism: The Formation and Development of an Ideology**

### *Early History*

The Wahhabist doctrine of Islam exerted and continues to exert exceptional influence on all spheres of social life in Saudi Arabia. In comparison with other large Islamic states (with the exception of Iran), Islam is accorded a special place in Saudi Arabia. This is predetermined by three major factors: the Arabian peninsula is the cradle of Islam; it is the cradle of Wahhabism which is the official ideology of the state; and lastly, the ethnic genesis of the Arabs took place in Arabia. These factors are widely used by the monarchies in articulating their exceptional role in the modern Islamic world. These pretensions are supported by the phenomenal economic and geopolitical potentialities of Saudi Arabia. However, Wahhabism has existed for more than two and a half centuries, and plays a key role in the formation and development of the Saudi state. An analysis of these aspects of the history and development of religious thought is the theme of this paper.

The birth of Wahhabism is related to the most serious trials of uprooting faithlessness among the majority of Arabian people, the nomads. In the history of Islam, the problem of the place and role of Arab nomads as part of the Arab-Islamic world always had major importance. During the time of Prophet Muhammad, nomads played a major role in the socio-economic relations prevailing in the Arabian peninsula. They were also the repository of strong pre-Islamic traditions and pagan beliefs and Islam later borrowed some of these traditions and beliefs.

From the 7th century and up to the spread of Wahhabism in the 18th century, the Bedouins of Arabia never adhered to a single dominating Islamic ideology. The history of no monotheistic religion, including Islam, provides an example of a complete and unconditional obliteration of old

beliefs and cults, even after the triumph of the new religion. In general, a 'pure' Islam never existed in the Islamic society, to say nothing of its nomadic periphery. A synthesis was always the end product whereby the pagan traditions unintentionally or purposefully were incorporated and assimilated by the new religious system. Usually in this synthesis Islam held a dominating position. However, the pagan traditions taking Islamic coloring took deep root in the minds of the people, in the form of quasi-Islam, which had a large place in the daily life of the nomads. These traditions also had great emotional and psychological energy which attracted large sections of the population.

Islam in Arabia became an ideational system based on the holy religious heritage of the Qur'an and Sunnah, as well as on the firm beliefs left from the epoch of Jahiliyah. The new religion could not, and was not oriented towards totally destroying the spirit of the desert people and, correspondingly, a large part of their ancient beliefs. The eradication of these ancient traditions became possible only after the nomads joined a sedentary way of life. The pastoral life existed for more than a millennium and a half, and exists up till now. For the Bedouins, just as to the sedentary people, Islamic dogmas came into contradiction with their pagan dogmas; and since the latter were more adapted to life in the desert, these traditions acquired leading positions in the religious beliefs of nomads. Not a single Islamic tradition replaced a pagan one. The Bedouins more frequently merely pronounced the name of Allah in their daily life, in sacrificial offerings and in other ritual ceremonies, which in no way changed the pagan nature of these traditions. Mentioning the name of Allah, apparently, just replaced the reciting of their erstwhile gods: the chief Arab deities, the tribal deities and totems. The Islamic borrowings were simply an outward borrowing, which did not change the essence of these phenomena. It is necessary to underline that in this period, Islam faced difficult problems: on the eve of the modern age, a renaissance of pagan beliefs became markedly obvious, and the position of Islam as a monotheistic religion was undermined to some extent. In the modern age Wahhabism became the first serious challenge to these beliefs and called for a return to the 'purity' of classical Islam. It condemned the widespread beliefs of paganism.

The Wahhabian doctrine is named after its founder Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, a descendent of a settled tribe—Banu Tamim. Born in 1703 in Aiyah (Nejd), he belonged to a family of hereditary Ulama. In preparing himself for a spiritual career, he traveled widely, visiting major religious centers such as Mecca, Medina and possibly even Baghdad and Damascus. Everywhere he was a student of the leading Ulama (savants), and actively participated in religious disputes of those times.<sup>112</sup> Being still a young man and long before he became a preacher, Muhammad ibn Abd Al-Wahhab appealed to the people to return to the norms of true monotheism in Islam. According to him, monotheism boils down to the belief that Allah alone is the Creator of the world, its master, who gives it laws. Among His creatures no one is equal to Him and capable of creation. Allah needs no help or support from any one no matter how close to Him. The ability to do good or evil is in His hands only. No one is worthy of glorification or worship other than Allah.<sup>113</sup>

Wahhabists have a specific attitude to Muhammad, the Prophet and Founder of Islam. They consider him as an ordinary human being, a person whom Allah selected for a prophetic mission. Therefore, it is wrong and unacceptable to look at him as divine, to worship him or to ask any help from him as a 'deity'. No site related to the life of Muhammad should be turned into a place of worship.

All types of worship and beliefs that contradict these norms were considered to be apostasy, *shirk* or polytheism. Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, though he did not emphasize this, called for a struggle against magic, witchcraft and soothsayers. He also condemned such pagan remnants as exorcism, amulets and talismans.

At the same time (and this is important for this theme) Wahhabism was also directed against the official 'Turkish' Islam. He called for a relentless struggle against apostates—Shiites, Ottoman Sultans (as pseudo-Caliphs) and the Turkish Pashas. The anti-Turkish aim of Wahhabism was the expulsion of Turks, the liberation and uniting of Arab countries under the banner of 'pure' Islam.

Wahhabism—the title, given to this doctrine by its opponents or by non-Arabs—became its official title also in oriental studies. The followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab called themselves monotheists or simply Muslims, but never Wahhabists.<sup>114</sup>

A widespread notion about Wahhabists in European literature was that they are 'Puritans' or the 'Protestants' of Islam. These notions were adhered to by El Coransez<sup>115</sup> and later by I. Buckhardt.<sup>116</sup> However, the comparison of Wahhabism with the trends of the European Reformation is just an outward comparison, based on the need to 'purify' Islam and return to its first and true variant. This outward likeness hides the total socio-political differences of the two movements and the trends.

Wahhabism has seriously undermined paganism in Arabia, although all attempts to turn Bedouins into real Muslims failed. (Only at the beginning of the 20th century was this aim attained). We shall elaborate on this below. Wahhabism did not change the inner world and beliefs of the Bedouins, but made a mark on their outward attitude to Islamic dogmas; the less the direct pressure of Wahhabists on the Bedouins, the quicker and easier they turned back into their age-old paganism.

However, even in those conditions the influence of Wahhabists left an indelible mark on the Arabian Bedouins. New people—Mullas—who knew and loved Islam came to the Bedouins. Their task was to spread the Wahhabist ideology among the desert tribes. Later, being the only educated strata among the Bedouins, they became teachers, rather than direct preachers. They taught elementary education to the sons of tribal chiefs and the rich. Sometimes, they were even used as secretaries. The English traveler Blunt noted that the Mullah was an important figure in the tribe, and not only because of his religious obligations: in fact he was the only educated person in the tribe. He read and wrote all letters and conducted all diplomatic negotiations between the Sheikh and his neighbours.<sup>117</sup>

Yet, Wahhabism never took deep roots among the Bedouins during the first half century from its birth. This ideology came into being during a trying period for the Arabians, a period of intense psychological crisis, when many people were not happy with the spiritual situation in Arabia. As an ideology it was a reaction to the crisis of this society, which was in need of spiritual innovation.

Meanwhile, in the history of Islam different ideological trends appeared, some of them with no future. Wahhabism had been very successful. It became the official ideology of Saudi Arabia and, to my point of view, also the forerunner of modern Islamic fundamentalism. Its success was made possible because the leaders of a small ruling feudal family in Nejd—the Dariya—accepted Wahhabism in the mid 18th century, apparently for its unitive force, and concluded union with Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in 1744. That small kingdom was ruled by Emir Muhammad ibn Saud (d. 1765), and his son Abd al-Aziz (d. In 1803). From that time onward, this dynasty continuously fought for uniting the Arabian lands under the banner of Wahhabism. With time, this dynasty succeeded in bringing the whole of Nejd and other tribal lands under its control.

In the mid-1890s the Saudis actually had under their control the whole of Nejd. As a result, the former warring emirates formed one large (on the Arabian scale) feudal-theocratic state. When Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab was still alive, the secular and religious aspects of the state were separated, but after his death in 1791, the Emirs of the Saudi dynasty united the two aspects and concentrated both secular and religious powers into their hands.

The victory of Wahhabism in Nejd and the formation of the Saudi state did not create a new social formation, and has not brought to power a new social class. However, Wahhabism and its adherents have succeeded in surmounting the feudal anarchy in Arabia, and in this sense it was a progressive ideology.<sup>118</sup>

However, the Wahhabists, in the early days, were unsuccessful in creating a centralized state. The rulers of the conquered towns and villages were left as rulers on condition that they accept Wahhabism and the overall sovereignty and spiritual leadership of the Saudi dynasty. In the 18th century, both Wahhabism and the state were very weak, and were confronted more than once by different feudal and tribal uprisings. These uprisings were a common factor in the life of the early Wahhabist state, whose army moved from one region to the other to suppress the apostates.

After strengthening their control on Nejd, the Saudi dynasty began their expansionist policies against neighboring territories. This began in 1768 when they attacked the al-Khas region, a coastal area at the Persian Gulf. After seven years that region was conquered by them. So began the Wahhabist conquests beyond Nejd. After the death of Abd al-Aziz, Emir Saud (1803-1814) continued these policies, and as a result united almost the whole of the Arabian peninsula under one state.

The conquest of Hejaz with its major holy cities, Mecca and Medina, in 1803-1804 was a major step in this direction. This event played a major role in the fate of the Wahhabist movement and the Saudi state. The Wahhabists had destroyed all the mosques and mausoleums built in honor of the heroes of early Islam. They destroyed all buildings whose architecture was not consonant with the dogmas of Wahhabism. They obliged the inhabitants of Mecca permanently to conduct the prayers, not to use silk dress, and never to smoke in public places. All prayers for the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire were prohibited. A new governor and a new judge were appointed for Mecca, who became famous for their just judgements, unlike their Ottoman predecessors.<sup>119</sup>

More than that, Saud sent a letter to the Ottoman Sultan Selim III. Different sources do indicate the existence of that letter, in which Saud declared that he took Mecca on the 4th of Muharrem in the year 1218 (26.04.1803), and brought peace to its inhabitants. Saud says that he destroyed all pagan monuments and prohibited all taxes with the exception of those allowed by Islamic law. The Emir told the Sultan that he should give orders to the Governors of Damascus and Cairo not to send to Mecca messengers with Mahmels, drums and other prohibited musical instruments, since these things are not needed by religion.<sup>120</sup>

This severely wounded the prestige and authority of the Sultan-Caliph, the Protector of the holy shrines. He was accustomed to being the servant and protector of the holy shrines of Mecca and Medina and also of Jerusalem. He declared himself the supreme Caliph and king who rules uncountable empires, provinces and cities and who incurs the envy of the rulers of other parts of the world. These territories were located in Asia, Europe, at the Mediterranean and Black Seas, in Hejaz and Iraq.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, the case was not only confined to the fact that the Sultan was insulted. With the loss of the holy shrines, he also lost the right to hold the title of Caliph (which he had received at the beginning of the 16th century with the conquest of Arabia), and the huge incomes from the pilgrimages to those shrines. The general crisis of the Ottoman empire, aggravated by its military defeats, its socio-economic difficulties coupled with the lost of Arabia, hastened its decline. The government of the Sultan was not able to send its own army against the Wahhabists. This task was left to the rulers of Baghdad and Damascus who, instead of attacking the Wahhabist strongholds, only defend themselves from the forays of the Wahhabists. The only force capable of defeating the Wahhabists was the new Pasha of Egypt—Muhammad Ali—and his army.

When Muhammad Ali established his power in Egypt, and in 1805 became the Pasha of Cairo, the Ottoman rulers ordered him to retake the holy shrines for the empire. In the first years Muhammad Ali was occupied in strengthening his power against his local opponents, waging struggles against the Mamlukes and defending Egypt from English attacks, while at the same time carrying out major internal reforms. But by the end of 1809, he began to give serious attention to dispatching an expedition to Arabia.

The famous desert wars between the Egyptians and Wahhabists began in 1811 and ended in 1818. Both sides committed large forces and fought heroically. In the first years the Wahhabists were stronger and luckier than the Egyptians, but towards 1817 the tide turned against them. On April, 1818 Egyptian forces surrounded the capital of the Wahhabists, Ed-Dariya. After six months, the first Saudi state collapsed, and Emir Abdullah was arrested and executed in Istanbul. However, the downfall of that state did not mean the death of Wahhabism as an ideology. The doctrine of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab which seemed a "pure" Arabian phenomenon found many adherents in countries thousands of kilometers from Arabia. Wahhabism, as a matter of fact, became the forerunner of modern Islamic fundamentalism, but this aspect is beyond the framework of this paper. For the given theme, it is more important to underline that Wahhabism found in itself sufficient resources for its re-emergence in the Arabian peninsula to play an active role in the creation of the second and third modern Saudi states.

Wahhabism in the second state lost much of its fanatical character. This state, with various ups and downs, existed from 1843 to 1891 and never achieved its former strength. Nevertheless, the support of the Wahhabist priests who were interested in uniting parts of the aristocracy, merchants and farmers, strengthened and promoted the prestige of the Saudis and helped them extend the authority of Riyadh to a significant part of central and eastern Arabia. But owing to internal rivalries in the ruling family, which began in 1865, and the 'independent' deeds of the Bedouins, the second state lost much of its power, and later collapsed.

### *The Establishment of a Central State*

The third and last attempt to create a centralized state in the Arabian peninsula began in the first quarter of the 20th century. The founder of this state was the legendary military leader and statesman Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud. When in 1902 he began his campaign to regain Nejd, the fact that the title of Imam remained in the hands of the Saudis greatly helped him. It allowed him to send messengers to all other tribes in order to rally them under his banner. In the struggle for re-establishing the Wahhabist state Ibn Saud, just as his predecessors, tried to minimize the power of traditional rulers and to bring a large part of the Bedouins to a sedentary way of life. He used the influence of the Brotherhood movement which appeared in Nejd on the eve of the 20th century. This new movement had a major influence among the Bedouins of Arabia, and Ibn Saud grasped quickly the vast possibilities of this rapidly spreading movement as a tool of strengthening his authority among the Bedouin tribes. He began to help the Brotherhood movement by giving them financial and other support (crops and agricultural equipment, building houses, schools and mosques). They also received weapons and equipment from Ibn Saud for 'the defense of religion'. The Saudi leadership and their clan were wary of this movement, both by virtue of its Bedouins roots and of its strong egalitarian tendencies. But with the support of the Brotherhood, Ibn Saud surmounted the resistance of the powerful Bedouin tribes in central Arabia and, in the words of the English scientist and traveler, Philby, brought unprecedented order into Arabia.<sup>122</sup>

In these and consequent events, the most important for us is the religious—Wahhabist aspect. Strict demands were presented to the members of the Brotherhood movement: observance of the five basic pillars of Islam; loyalty to the members of the brotherhood; no communication with Europeans and with the population of the territories ruled by them; and last and most important demand, unconditional loyalty to the Emir, the Imam of the Wahhabists.<sup>123</sup>

The religious enthusiasm of the Brothers organized in 'Khidjrs' (special settlements) was to be directed towards worshipping Allah, and naturally should serve His representatives of the Wahhabist state as a truly Islamic state. Their religious and secular zealousness was to be remunerated as before by military booty, but at this time not through intertribal wars and pillage, but through a war against the 'polytheists' i.e. non-Wahhabists. Religious leaders educated in Riyadh and in other centers, who represented the last echelon of the Ulama, were sent to all settlements. They fulfilled the onerous task of being the ears and eyes of the central government. The founder of the doctrine usually sent into the biggest settlements Kadis, judges, from the Sheikh's family (the ancestors of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab).

Most of the Bedouins who joined the settlements considered that they had abandoned the traditions of Jahiliyah i.e. the condition of pre-Islamic ignorance, and usually became devoted Muslims. Their religious zealousness led them even to punish nomads and sedentary peoples who refused to join the settlements, labelling them as non-Muslims. Their zealousness reached such heights that even Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud together with the Ulama was compelled to issue a special edict (the highest theological conclusion) calling the Brothers to be more tolerant. <sup>124</sup>

The transformation of the Bedouins' spiritual and practical life from tribal rules to Shari'a was dramatic. They became converts who were ready to fulfill all the rules of Islam and even to beat the insufficiently zealous who dressed differently from other Muslims and whom they regarded as 'polytheists.' They prohibited listening to music, drinking coffee and alcohol, etc.

With time, the fanatical converts who defended the egalitarian principles would turn into a great threat to the very existence of the state which they helped to create. In 1929, after only three years of the formation of the new Saudi state, the Ikhwany (Brothers), defending their egalitarian principle of state and social life, organized a revolt against the state, which nearly overthrew the new king Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud. Characteristically, both sides used religious arguments in this battle. In December 1926 the King was presented with a list of accusations, the major points being: religious tolerance, introduction of some technical innovations (the telegraph and telephone) and dealings with the infidels (his negotiations with the British). In turn, the King, with the support of the hereditary Wahhabist Ulama, accused the Ikhwany of defaming 'true Islam'. By January 1930 the rebellion of the Ikhwans was suppressed, and the process of settling the Bedouins was temporarily halted. As a result of the suppression of that rebellion the central state became far stronger than hitherto. The Wahhabist religious-political movement, after defeating its radical wing, Ikhwany, managed in its third attempt to triumph in Arabia. The union of the top layers of the Wahhabists and the Saudi clan which began in the 18th century laid the foundations for the modern Saudi state.

Instead of the 'primitive' social-tribal system, a new state emerged; and although this state was based on the absolutism of the Saudi clan, paternalism and Islamic traditionalism, its very formation was, historically, a new development in the history of Arabia.

Oil became a new catalyst for the strengthening and development of the Kingdom. In the 1940s to 50s the Kingdom still remained an underdeveloped part of the Middle East; but by the 1960s, a new period began. Petrodollars created a solid and constantly expanding basis for the fast growing national economy. In turn, this led to sharp shifts in the social structure of the country,

speeded up the process of class formation and modification of the role of traditional social strata. In the last quarter century, Saudi Arabia has played a noticeable role on international arena and has become one of the centres of power in the Islamic world so that Saudi Arabia became a major world financial player and a regional power to be reckoned with.

During this whole period, the state ideology, Wahhabist Islam, played and continues to play a huge role. And, if in many Islamic countries some form of re-Islamization was observed, for Saudi Arabia this term is inapplicable. Moreover, from the 1960's Islam was more active than before in politics and became more politicized. But this phenomenon is not new to the history of the country, which is truly obliged for its formation to the alliance of secular rulers and the ideologists of Wahhabism.

Here it is pertinent to note that the latter have always insisted that Wahhabism is part and parcel of Sunnism and not a new trend. The founder of the modern Saudi kingdom Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud, in trying to prove that Wahhabism is not a new religion, but the same orthodox Sunnism, declared on 11 May, 1929 that although we are called Wahhabists as if it is a new trend, this is an extremely erroneous perception which has arisen from false propaganda. He added that they have never proclaimed a new trend or dogma.<sup>125</sup>

Saudi Arabia is the only Islamic state where the Qur'an and Sunna fulfill the function of the constitution and all legal norms are regulated, first of all, by the instructions of Shari'a. Despite the impressive successes in economic development and the rapid changes in the social sphere and infrastructure, Saudi Arabia is, in matters of state organization, structure and functioning of the political mechanism, an archaic society. The state and political systems are based on the following principles: preservation of the hereditary principle of supreme state power transmitted from the father to the elder son and the son to his brother; a strict control of state organs by the Saudi clan and other close tribes; underdevelopment of representative institutions; prohibition of all political parties and mass organizations (trade unions and other social organizations); regulation of social and political life, legislation and judiciary system through the Shari'a norms and non-written tribal norms.<sup>126</sup>

As mentioned above, as Saudi Arabia has no written constitution the power of the King is limited only by the Qur'an (and Sunnah). From the legal point of view—structures and organizational principles of the state power—Saudi Arabia is an absolutist state. However, the political functioning of the monarchical system in Saudi Arabia has its own specifics, unique in the modern world.

In this case, the discussion is not so much about the absolute power of the monarch himself; rather, it is about the absolutization of the clan which has historically turned into the ruling class of the country. The king, as a matter of fact, is the personified embodiment of the power of the clan, which is recognized as the ruling tribe. Therefore, the definition of the form of rule in Saudi Arabia as an absolute monarchy requires certain clarifications and reservations which have manifested a Wahhabist colouring. According to the Wahhabist interpretation of Islamic law, both religious and political power should belong to one person—the King, i.e. he is the Imam and the ruler. The legitimacy of the political authority emerges, therefore, not from its legal basis secured in a constitutional form, but from the oath of loyalty to this or that ruler, which is, in turn, limited by his own activities as the head of religious power only by the instructions of the Qur'an and Shari'a. On this basis, the Saudi authors argue that their political system is not autocratic, since the power of the King is based on the norms of Shari'a, and its violation would necessarily lead to his dethronment ('impeachment').<sup>127</sup>

Legislation, not within the perimeter of the Shari'a, is one of the top secular prerogatives of the King. The King has to take into account the 'social interests' in his legislative functions. These are some general-theoretical positions which characterize the concepts of the state system and the status of supreme power in the form developed in Saudi Arabia.

In this paper we cannot go more deeply into the legislative functions of the ruling royal clan from 1924 onwards, when it conquered Hejaz, a more developed region. Notwithstanding, an analysis of the constitutional-legislation which regulate the modern structure of state power in Saudi Arabia shows that the legislative system of the country is based on an hierarchical principle which has not change essentially. Here, it is pertinent to characterize some legal acts related to the religious situation in the country.

In the practical aspect, the formation of the secular statehood and legislation in Saudi Arabia began in 1924, after Ibn Saud conquered Hejaz. Before 1924, tribal and religious laws totally dominated in that state. These laws, coupled with military force and the fanatic belief in the sacred mission of the Wahhabist doctrine, were at the basis of the state system and the ruling hierarchy. After conquering Hejaz, King Saud issued new decrees and proclamations, which later spread to the other regions of the country. According to the well-known jurist Abdel Jawad, the legislative activities of the King later became the basis of legislation in the Kingdom. Some of the decrees issued in those days continue to have a legal force in Saudi Arabia.<sup>128</sup>

In 1924, after conquering Hejaz, Ibn Saud being the Sultan of Nejd, issued a decree concerning this new province. It said that all legislative and administrative acts must be "the subject of consultations between Muslims" (Shura).<sup>129</sup> In the development of this decree, the Consultative Council was created, its task being to advise the king on legislative and administrative matters. This council was the prototype of the modern General Consultative Council under the King of Saudi Arabia. Its activities are based on Shari'a.

The central administrative apparatus of Saudi Arabia, as such, began to take shape after the 1950s. The strengthening of the monarchy, centralization of power and the spread of its sovereignty to the provinces took place in the early stages on the basis of clanish dependency. King Ibn Saud, as the military, political and religious head of the state appointed his relatives (clan members) to head different provinces and regions, where they had absolute power. They also kept the support of the sheikhs, Ulama and Kadis (Shari'a judges). Thus, the tendency of institutionalization of clan-tribal structure into one state based on the strict unitary concept of the Wahhabist doctrine operative formed from the very beginning of Ibn Saud's rule was granted organizational-legislative substantiation.

King Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz (1953-1964) kept intact the hierarchical system of state administration created by his father, although he lacked the religious and political authority of Ibn Saud as founder of the modern and united Saudi kingdom, or, as he is known in the western historiography, the 'Bedouin Bismarck'. In 1953 a significant step was taken in the further creation of state structures. The King issued a new decree, the first in the history of Saudi Arabia, instituting the Council of Ministers headed by the vicegerent of Hejaz, the heir prince Emir Faisal. In 1958, another decree (#38) signed by the King gave the Chairman of the Council full power to conduct both the internal and foreign policies of the kingdom.<sup>130</sup>

The decree on the Council of Ministers actually did not mean a division of power between the King and the head of the Government. In fact, it was a result of the inner struggle among the Saudi clan members. In 1964, the new King Faisal, after deposing Saud ibn Abd al-Aziz, amended the 1958 decrees of the Council of Ministers. His idea was to liquidate the dualism of top state power between the King and the Chairman of the Council. This amendment, as always, was supported



through religious canons; and the former practice was declared wrong, since, according to the Shari'a, the spiritual and secular head of the state should himself carry out both functions (something akin to Presidential-type republics). The temporary exclusion of the king from the functions of the Prime Minister was based on the need to correct the mistakes committed earlier and for the sake of preserving Islamic legality.<sup>131</sup>

The amendments were: first, the Council of Ministers was declared a permanently working institution to be headed by the King. All its sessions were to be chaired by the King or by the first deputy of the Chairman. Second, in contrast to the decree of 1958, members of the council were appointed, released from their posts or retired in accordance with a decree signed by the King, and were responsible directly to the King.<sup>132</sup>

As is clear from the above, the essence of the amendments, after Faisal's coming to power, boiled down to the re-establishment of the real control of the activities of the Government by the royal family, without, at the same time, weakening the wide administrative-executive powers given to the government in the decrees of 1958. The Rule of 1958 on the status of the Council of Ministers with the amendments of 1964 are the only legal acts with constitutional character, which regulate the formation and the structure the major state organs in Saudi Arabia.

The religious leaders—Ulama – remain an important and a traditional support base for the political system of the kingdom. They have direct influence on decision-making. The majority of them belong to the family of Al-Sheikh, whose founder was Abd al-Wahhab. They have a decisive voice in the formulation of matters concerning current internal policies, the working out of laws and also court matters. The Shari'a theologians, Kadis (judges) and preachers, try to control the key spheres of the life of the Saudi society, following all the Wahhabist rules on the internal policies of the government, and also on the private life of the citizens. "The Council and acceptance" of the Ulama is needed in all matters concerning changes and amendments to the legislation, education, information and the daily life behavior of the citizens, etc.<sup>133</sup> .

The committees for controlling social morals are a strong weapon in the hands of the Ulama. Created in the 1920s in order to spread the Wahhabist doctrine, they turned into a force which dictated to society 'correct' morals and behavior. They carefully assured the entrenchment of the segregation of women, prohibition of smoking, alcohol and dances.<sup>134</sup> In the 1960s, these committees were compelled to accept the appearance of modern radios and music players, the selling of tobacco, the appearance of modern illustrated journals and newspapers and the fact that women began to work in radio broadcasting.<sup>135</sup> Since no human monuments and figures could be exported to Saudi Arabia, the Ulama also prohibited all commodities which resembled a cross.

The judiciary system is still under the total control of the Ulama. In the 20th century the majority of Islamic states adopted new commercial, criminal and even civil codes. Saudi Arabia is the only country where Shari'a is preserved in its "primary purity". The judiciary and legal systems in Saudi Arabia, adhering to the needs of a centralized feudal state, were not prepared to tackle the socio-economic problems created by the development of Arabian society. The Wahhabist doctrine kept intact the canons which formed in the first three centuries of Islam and rejected all later innovations as Bida'. Here lies one of the major difficulties which that society faces, since it is difficult to apply the laws of the Middle Ages to the situations of the 20th century.

The need to adapt the Shari'a to the modern situation has compelled the Ulama to search for loopholes in the Shari'a for the approval of new legal norms. For example, by using some theological substantiation, the authorities allowed the Shari'a courts to transfer some of their competencies to the administrative organs or to social institutes such as the trade and industrial chambers.

However, all these innovations have not principally changed the Wahhabist judiciary system which came into being in the 1920-1930s. The role of the Wahhabist ideology and its servicemen—the Ulama—in implementing the social order and the functioning of the judiciary system is, as before, strong and decisive.

We have analyzed only some of the obvious examples indicating the influence of the Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia. In a short paper like this, it is difficult to analyze the influence of this ideology on all social structures, including finance, industry, education and the mode of life. However, the analysis done here leads to this conclusion: the fast and deep capitalist transformation which Saudi Arabia has undergone is in direct contradiction with 'Wahhabist values' both in the economic and socio-political spheres. Only the near future can show whether these contradictions can be resolved in an evolutionary manner.

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## Chapter XI

# Ethnicity, Religion and State in the Horn of Africa

Abdillahi H. Jama

The term "Horn of Africa" has quite recently attracted the attention of scholars, experts, students, travelers, journalists and the mass media at large. It became popular in the mid 1970s and now has earned a status bigger and weightier than a mere cartographic term. So far there is no agreement among researchers about the content of this term. Some use it as a cartographic concept (equating it with the term Northeast Africa);<sup>1</sup> others interpret it as widely as possible,<sup>2</sup> while the third group uses it in a narrower way.<sup>3</sup> In this study, the term is used neither as a cartographic, nor in its widest interpretation, nor in its narrow sense, but as a term that more or less accurately reflects the contours of the existence for centuries of a unique<sup>4</sup> regional and historical entity, an entity different from both of its neighboring civilizations—Arab-Islamic and African. The Horn of Africa is clearly a geographical, anthropological and cultural entity, but, in its own way, it is a diversified entity. More than that, it is the 'umbilical cord' of the last two major and ever-rejuvenating civilizations—Arab-Islamic and African.

The Horn of Africa, in this understanding, 'naturally', is composed of four countries only—the Republics of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia. The majority of the Sudanese identify themselves as part and parcel of the Arab World, which distinguishes them from the rest of the peoples of the Horn. Just a century ago the map of the Horn looked like this: British Somaliland, Ethiopian Empire, French Somaliland, Italian Eritrea, and Italian Somalia. The area of the Horn is about 1.871.6 thousand square kilometers. In Africa only the areas of the Sudan and Algeria are bigger, while it is double the size of Nigeria. The seacoast of the Horn of Africa is the longest in Africa.

The current territory of the Horn has been, and to a large extent remains, a homeland for Cushitic peoples. But in the mid-first millennium B. C. "large groups of soil tillers and traders from various tribes, including the Sabaeians"<sup>5</sup>, moved to the northern part of the region from south Arabia. Their migration went on for many centuries (from the 5th century B.C to the 1st century A. D.) The Horn of Africa region was attractive to the south Arabians for its essential commodities (ivory, spice, etc.). There was a thriving trade across the Red Sea even in those early centuries. These commodities were important for the south Arabian states (mainly for their trade with other countries—from Zanzibar in East Africa to India and further east). The majority of the colonists from south Arabia settled in present day Eritrea and the Tigray province (state) of Ethiopia where in the 1st century A. D. they formed their own independent province. At the same time, they intermingled with the local Cushitic ethnic communities. After few centuries, a new civilization—Axumite—sprang from this cultural and social intermingling. The language of that civilization was Geez (a Semitic language influenced by the Cushitic languages' lexical structure).

The Axumite civilization flourished from the 2nd to the 8th centuries and adopted Christianity from the 4th century A. D. Later, Axum, as a major Christian state, with the support of Byzantine (Emperor Justian), carried out in the 6th century major battles against the south Arabian states; but the tide turned against it in the next two centuries, since a new monotheistic world religion—Islam—had emerged in Arabia and had united the Arabs and rapidly spread to the neighboring regions. The formation of the first Islamic state, and later of the Caliphate undermined the trade routes of Axum and thereby monopolized the trade routes from the Mediterranean to India (7th-8th centuries).<sup>6</sup>



But before these major events, there was an earlier chapter in the history of Islam and of the Horn, the Axumite Empire. This chapter concerns the rarely well-documented Axumite Hijra (sometimes called the Ethiopian Hijra). This Hijra is not well known in the Islamic world, to say nothing of other world cultures. In the seventh year of the Main Hijra (Hijra al-Nabawiya—from Mecca to Medina), when the Muslim migrants to Axum came back to Medina, Umar ibn al-Khattab (the second of the Four Righteous Caliphs) accused them (those who went to Axum—and hence, the Axumite Hijra) of having left Arabia during the most trying years for Islam; but when the returnees lamented to the prophet about Umar's words, Muhammad called the migration of some Muslims to Axum a "Hijra", thereby giving it a touch of holiness. That Hijra was led by one of Prophet Muhammad's closest relatives—Ja'afar binu abu Talib—and the Prophet himself made use of that Hijra, since he married, through the mediation of the Axumite king, Umm Habiba, the daughter of Abu Sufyan, the head of the Meccan anti-Islam and anti-Muhammad Quraysh leadership, and the widow of Ubeidallah binu Jahsh.<sup>7</sup>

This Hijra paved the way for the later Main Hijra.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, the Horn of Africa has its own unique page in the history of Islam, and Islam is an inalienable part of the history of the peoples of the Horn.

The Horn of Africa as an entity has encompassed at different periods of world and regional history the current territories of four countries, namely: Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia (and sometimes, other neighboring territories), a territory inhabited by various, although closely interrelated, ethnolinguistic communities. The majority of the peoples of the Horn are part and parcel of the large 'Ethiopian' race, (Here, the term 'Ethiopian' is used not as a polity, but anthropologically); or to be more neutral, one could say the 'race of the Horn'. The absolute majority of the peoples of the Horn, (the exception being some ethnic minorities inhabiting border regions), belong to the Afro-Asian linguistic family, namely to its Cushitic and Semitic branches.

### **Ethnic and Religious Processes in the Horn**

The term ethnic processes is here used in a wide sense encompassing evolutionary and transformational ethnic and religious changes, such as ethnic and religious composition, ethno-demographic composition, other ethnic processes such as integration, assimilation, etc., including state policies towards all these processes in historical perspective.

The ethnoreligious structure of the peoples of the Horn of Africa is complex enough, but not as intricate as in many other regions of the Afro-Asian worlds. More than 100 ethnic communities and groups inhabit the current territory of the Horn, but the four largest communities—Amhara, Oromo, Somalis and Tigrayans—constitute more than 70 percent of the population of the Horn. The Amahara, Oromo and Tigrayans constitute more than 60 percent of the population of Ethiopia, the Somalis more than 98 percent of the population of Somalia and more than 60 percent of the population of the Republic of Djibouti. In Eritrea, the Tigrayans constitute approximately 40 percent of the population. Linguistically, more than 60 percent of the peoples of the Horn belong to the Cushitic branch of the Afro-Asian family, while the majority of the rest belong to the Semitic branch. The religious composition is almost the same for the Horn as an entity: more than half are Muslims, the majority of the rest, monotheism Christians.<sup>9</sup>

This ethno-religious picture becomes more complicated when we go deeper into the ethnic and religious composition of all the major communities and the ethnopolitical situation in the Horn.

The peoples of the Horn divide into three major ethnolinguistic groups: Semitic peoples, Cushitic peoples and others. Among the major Semitic peoples are (listed in terms of their

numbers): Amhara, Tigrayans, Gurage, Tigre, and Harari. The first two constitute more than 70 percent of the Semitic-speaking peoples of Ethiopia. More than 80 percent of the Semitic-speaking peoples of the Horn inhabit mainly in the Amhara, Tigray and Gurage provinces (states) of Ethiopia.

The Cushitic-speaking peoples of the Horn inhabit all of four countries. In Djibouti and Somalia, they constitute the absolute majority (more than 98 percent of their respective populations), in Ethiopia more than 60 percent, and in Eritrea almost a third. Among their major groups (listed in terms of their numbers) are: Oromo, Somalis, Ometo, Sidamo, Afar, Saho, Kaffa, Agaw and many others.

### *Oromo*

The largest single ethnic group in the Horn is the Oromo (90 percent of whom inhabit Ethiopia), subdividing into major sub-ethnic groups—Raya, Wallo, Karaiyu, Afran Kallo, Leqa, Mecha, Tulama, Guji, Arussi, Boran and some others.<sup>10</sup> According to different sources, the number of the Oromo is estimated at 15 to 30 million.<sup>11</sup> In terms of religious affiliation the Oromo are divided into three major groups: Christians, Muslims and followers of traditional religions. The numerical correlation of the Christian and Muslim Oromo is a matter for future exact statistics.<sup>12</sup> But one thing is clear: Islam played and continues to play a major role in the fate of the Oromo people.

The Oromo people, insultingly called Galla until recently, were characterized by some authors as a wild people who contributed nothing to the Ethiopian civilization<sup>13</sup> having migrated, in the main, into the Ethiopian highlands in a major wave from the mid 16th century. Owing to their military might and skill they overran traditional Abyssinian territory and reached even to its heartland, Begemdir; and already in the 17th century being the largest single ethnic community in both Ethiopia and the Horn, the Oromo played a major role in the social, economic and political life of the Ethiopian society.<sup>14</sup> But since the Oromo encountered in the Ethiopian highlands people who were more developed "culturally" and economically, they turned from pastoral pursuits settled as peasants and a large number of them later adopted Christianity.

*By that time (17th c.) Christianized Oromo families were* the rulers of Abyssinia from its capital city, Gondar (Begemdir province). Owing to this, a large body of the Oromo who settled in the Ethiopian highlands adopted Christianity and much of the Amhara culture, including the language. Many of the Oromo people who inhabit the central and southern regions of Ethiopia turned to Christianity after their forced inclusion into the Ethiopian Empire from the mid to end of the 19th century. Among the major reasons many Oromo adopted Christianity one can mention the following:

- Christianity was for a long time the state religion, and the bedrock of the Abyssinian, later Ethiopian, culture and statehood. Therefore, in order to climb the ladder of power (political, social and economic) in Ethiopia, it was absolutely necessary to become a Monophysite Christian and to speak Amharic, or, to be more exact, to "become" an Amhara;

- For the southern Oromo (and other peoples of Ethiopia) after their conquest in the late 19th century, the only way to save one's property and power was to join, or at least outwardly submit to the will of the conquerors, i.e. to adopt Christianity and "become" or imitate an Amhara (at large an Abyssinian).

- The West European powers (mainly Britain, France and Italy) who participated in the scramble for Africa were also Christians (although not Monophysites), thereby adding one more 'proof' to the myth that only Christianity (with its major divisions—Catholic, Protestant, etc.) could lead to progress and might, since it is the only "right" God ordained religion, while other religions, especially Islam, could lead neither to progress nor to moral perfection. In this sense, European Christianity with the first product of the Industrial Revolution. Its firepower and bureaucracy created a new power, a spiritual power legitimizing colonial expansion and conquest, and local Christianity became, in this colonial endeavour, its junior partner. But with time, this myth, widely used by Ethiopian rulers was exploded by the backward Solomon dynasty, and also by the harsh and inhuman exploitation of the southern peoples of the Empire symbolized by the infamous *Gabbar*(serf) system.

Other Oromo groups adopted Islam as a form of resisting the assimilating force of the Ethiopian state and church (examples, the Raya, Yejju and Wallo); while some of the Islamization of Oromo regions took place centuries before the Oromo settled these regions. According to J. S. Trimingham, the Oromo who settled in the highlands, next to the Amhara and Tigrayans, in the 18th century massively adopted Islam "as a bulwark against being swamped by Abyssinian nationalism".<sup>1 5</sup>

The Ethiopian empire, especially during the reigns of Menelik II and Haile Selassie I, subjected the majority of the Oromo, especially their southern sub-ethnic groups to harsh feudal exploitation and were earmarked for total assimilation ("Amharization" meant Christianization and ethnic assimilation into the dominant Amharic culture and language). Here, the Muslim Oromo played a leading role in resisting these schemes, and, as we have indicated earlier, Islam became for a large number of Oromos an effective spiritual and political means of resistance to Amharization.<sup>1 6</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Islam is an inalienable part of the history of the Horn, and this has led to the appearance of major Islamic studies centres in many regions inhabited by the Muslim peoples of the Horn. The most famous among the Oromo Muslim centres is in the Wallo region. According to oral tradition, the Islamization of eastern Wallo took place from the 9th to 12th centuries. In fact the migration and settlement of the Oromo in this region "brought about a temporary disruption in the process of Islamization" which gained major momentum during the time of Imam Ahmad Ibrahim "Gurey" (1506-1543), since the local Muslim communities were being cut off from other Islamic centres such as Ifat and Harar.<sup>1 7</sup> The majority of the Oromo who settled in the Wallo region adopted Islam in the 18th to 19th centuries, which boosted Islam's further spread in Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Islam played a major role in the ethno-national awakening of the Oromo. The Muslim Oromo were the first to begin a real resistance against the assimilation policies of the Ethiopian regime. The long and bloody uprising of the Oromo of the Bale region in the 1960s led by the legendary Waqo Guto is but an example. Nowadays, a complicated process of uniting politically the confessionally divided Oromo is going on. As a rule religion may divide an ethnolinguistic community into two or more ethnically independent, parts as has happened with the Bengalis in India and in Bangladesh.<sup>1 8</sup> Here, as it were, the political will to create an Oromo nation-state will be crucial in surmounting the religious, social and linguistic cleavages characteristic of the Oromo people.

The current situation in Ethiopia, when for the first time the Oromo achieved autonomy and even an ethnic Oromo as President (although this office has little power constitutionally) of the

new state, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) enhances the possibility of consolidating the integrative ethnic processes unfolding among the Oromo. This is taking place through the standardization of their language based on Latin script and ultimately through cultivating and creating a political community which will overcome their socio-cultural differences.

Lastly, even today the further Islamization of certain Oromo groups in Ethiopia is going on.

### *Amhara*

The second largest ethnic group in Ethiopia is the Amhara (almost 100 percent of them inhabit Ethiopia—mainly in three provinces—Begemdir, Gojjam and parts of Shoa, and now in one of the nine ethno-regional states, Amhara). The problem of defining the Amhara as a distinct ethnic group is one of the most complicated tasks, and therefore, it is necessary to study it in some detail.

The term 'Amhara' since the mid 19th century has not been used primarily as an ethnic concept. According to Chernetsov, a prominent Russian Ethiopianist, it is not correct to talk about Amhara domination as an ethnic domination, especially before the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. After analyzing the usage of the term 'Amhara' in the literature of the 14th to 17th centuries, Chernetsov came to a very important conclusion: "In the 17th century in contrast to the 20th century, the word 'Amhara' was not yet an ethnonym". If we postulate, continues Chernetsov, that the "Amhara were not an ethnic community, but rather a military strata within the Ethiopian feudal state, then it becomes clear why and how the Amhara played both the role of the pillar of statehood and the bedrock of the power of the kings, and thereby dominated the other population" of the country. "Although nowadays the term 'Amhara' is used as an ethnonym, it would be a mistake to use it only in this regard" concludes Chernetsov.<sup>19</sup> With time this special strata developed into an ethnic community (this is usually a long historical process). Since the 13th century, the Amhara remained the leading political power and the main force in state-building in Ethiopia; and as empire-builders, their ethno-political consciousness, or self-identity, was closely associated with the name of the state (politonym), first with the Abyssinian state (hence Abyssinians), and later with the Ethiopian empire (hence Ethiopians). To the majority of the Amhara, even quite *recently*, the terms 'Ethiopian' and 'Amhara' were virtually synonymous. This is one of the major reasons why for a long time the ethnic self-identity of the Amharas could not differentiate itself from the politonym.<sup>20</sup> In this sense, the ethno-national consolidation of the Amahara, as that of the majority of the peoples of the Horn, is not yet finished.

In world history this is not unique to the ethno-confessional and ethno-political situation in Ethiopia. The Turkish thinker Zia Gokalp, analyzing at the beginning of the 20th century the crystallization of the ethno-national self-identity among the different constituent peoples of the Ottoman Empire, remarked that ethno-national identity took place in the following sequence:

- first it appeared among the non-Muslim peoples of the Empire;
- then it appeared among the Albanians and Arabs; and
- at last it captured the imagination of the Turkish population of the Empire.

In this regard, the conclusion is clear and Gokalp draws it: the fact that the ethno-national identity (of which the ethno-confessional is an inalienable part) emerged among the peoples of the Empire in that sequence is not accidental, since the Turkish population and specifically its ruling elite believed *more and longer* than the others in Ottomanism.<sup>21</sup> The Kemalist Revolution in

Turkey was a revolution against Ottomanism, a national, i.e., Turkish revolution. In this sense, Ethiopia, congruent to the new historical conditions, follows in the footsteps of the decay of the Ottoman Empire. First, almost all other major ethno-confessional groups revolted against Ethiopianism (understood as Amharadom). Here, the sequence was different: first the Muslim Somalis and Eritreans and Oromo began to revolt against the Empire; then the Christian Eritreans and Oromo joined that struggle; and later, the most ancient of all Christian peoples of Ethiopia, the Tigrayans, joined it. The rationale was that the Christian Ethiopians were more incorporated into the system and received certain benefits from it, as long as they accepted an Amharic dominance of culture and power.

Another question which complicates the ethnic and demographic composition of the Amhara is related to the problem of the Amharic language. For the last 100 years this was *de facto* the official language of the Empire and was a major instrument in the assimilation of other ethnic communities. (Amharic was the only language that the state, both in the Imperial and post-Imperial eras, supported and developed). One example: The Government of Emperor Haile Selassie I introduced into the educational system state examinations at grade 6, 8 and 12. Those examinations included fluency in Amharic both oral and written. As a result, the majority of the pupils did not pass these examinations, "especially the Amharic language".<sup>2</sup> This screening system was mainly directed against the non-Amhara pupils. Here, as it were, it is also necessary to differentiate three distinct categories of Amharic language speakers: Amharic-speaking groups; native Amharic-speakers; and the Amhara proper (as an ethno-confessional community).

Amharic-speaking groups are all those who have learned this language (either in the schools, or in daily life), but who have and *speak* their own mother tongues; the native Amharic-speakers are those people to whom the Amharic language is their mother tongue (but who had another mother tongue which they do not speak as a result of language assimilation, and who do not identify themselves as Amhara); and the Amhara proper, those who speak Amharic as their mother tongue and identify themselves as Amhara. These three categories of the population, especially the last two, should be differentiated when it comes to ethno-linguistic classification, and also to the determination of the ethnic composition of all multi-ethnic and multi-confessional countries. The reason behind this is that the first two categories are not identical with the last. Among other things, this is a reason why the estimate of the Amhara population in Ethiopia varies widely from 5 to 18 million.<sup>2 3</sup> The identity of an ethnic community depends not only on common language, common religion, etc., but also basically on common self-consciousness. When this consciousness, both on the individual and group levels, is eroded, we talk about an assimilated individual and/or group. (A person can belong to a modern polity, but still retain his/her ethnic identity. This is the contradiction between ethnicity and citizenship. Here the rule is: the more the citizenship principle is the defining factor in the political and cultural history of modern nations, the less the ethnic factor maintains its status on both the individual and group levels, and vice versa).

### *Somalis*

The third largest ethnic group in the Horn is the Somalis. More than 10 million Somalis inhabit the Republic of Somalia (slightly over 50 percent of all Somalis), the Republic of Ethiopia (12 percent), the Republic of Djibouti (above 60 percent of the population) and the republic of Kenya (more than half a million, not counting the current Somali refugees there).<sup>2 4</sup> The absolute majority (99 percent) of all Somalis in all four countries are Sunnite Muslims of the Shafi'i School.

The Somali cultural nation existed for many centuries based on ethno-linguistic and ethno-confessional and historical unity. Somalis also share common territory, more or less 'defined' historically, culturally and geographically, which does not mean a commonly shared political territory or a polity.

The crystallization of the ethno-national identity of the Somalis passed through three major stages:

1. The Cultural Revolution was carried out by the renowned Somali scholar Sheikh Yusuf Al-Kawnin, who invented the Somali alliteration of the Arabic phonetic system (known in Somalia as '*Alif la kor dhabay, Alif la hoos dhabay. . .*'), so that the Islamic education of the Somalis could be based on the Somali phonetical system instead of the Arabic. This facilitated the deeper mastering of Islam by the Somalis; at the same time it showed that the Somalis were already an established ethnic community, which could not be assimilated even through Islamization (read Arabization).

2. The Daraawiish Movement (1899-1920) led by the legendary Sayyid Muhammad Abdille Hassan.<sup>2 5</sup> This movement was basically a resistance movement and a challenge to the colonial partition of the Somali peninsula. It was targeted against both Britain, Italy and the new imperial state formed in Ethiopia. Its ideology was ethno-confessional, juxtaposing the Somali Muslim of the Salihia order against the Christian British, Italian, Ethiopian, and also against the Somali 'collaborators' of such other Muslim orders as the Qaddiriya. The Daraawiish battle cry was not "We Somalis" against foreign rule; rather it was 'We Somali Muslims' against foreigners of Christian faith. It follows that, at this stage the confessional aspect still dominated over the crystallizing Somali self-identity. In this sense, the Daraawiish movement was not only Somalian, not only Muslim, but also of the Salihia order, i.e. it was a movement of the Somalis within a special Salihia order; and there lay its strategic weakness. Such movements were not uncommon in the Muslim world of that time.<sup>2 6</sup>

These two stages can be termed as the ethno-confessional stage of the awakening of the Somalis. Historically speaking, such types of movements, especially the Daraawiish movement, were an essential step forward, for they called the people to challenge foreign rule used new non-clannish ideology, Islam of a definite order. The colonial experience and the resistance to it led to the awakening of the Somalis, since 1) many Somalis were jarred "enough to think about cultural pride and masterlessness, as well as Islamic holiness, and 2) they brought to the fore the debilitating weakness that accompanies uneven development and, conversely, impressed on the Somalis the peculiar and formidable calculating rationality behind the triumph of colonialism".<sup>2 7</sup> The seeds sown by the Daraawiish movement, although defeated, were the first offshoots of modern Somali nationalism and began to flourish within a short span of time.

3. The third stage we ushered in the 1940s when the first nationwide political party came into being, the Somali Youth League—SYL. At this stage the ethnic and confessional identities merged into a new national consciousness. The battle cry was "We Somali-Muslims" against all foreign rule. This liberation movement culminated in the birth of the Somali Republic on July 1st, 1960, the result of the free and voluntary union of the former British Somaliland and the former Italian Somaliland. The new state declared Islam as the single and sole official religion of the country. Islamic studies were widely encouraged by the government both in pre-formal Qur'anic schools, Medrasas, and also in the official education system of the country.

Some of the objective factors which hindered the flourishing of this new Somali national identity were:

- First, the segmented character of the traditional Somali society, or the sub-ethnic loyalties prevalent in the Somali society. Here, much depends on the hierarchy of loyalties. In the Somali case these loyalties can be divided into four major levels: 1) the confessional feeling that Somalis belong to the worldwide Islamic Umma; 2) the ethnic identity of all Somalis, be they in Somalia, Djibouti, Ethiopia, etc.; 3) the national identity (still at its formative stage) of the Somalis of the Republic of Somalia, and 4) the loyalty and identification of Somalis to their clans (sub-ethnic level). The clans have also their sub-divisions, which means that constantly shifting alliances and loyalties are a common feature of Somali society. The current political and military organizations in Somalia, which control different regions of the country, are based on clan loyalties.

- Second, the leadership of the national liberation movement, which later transformed itself into the new ruling class of Somalia was recruited from small traders, merchants, lower rank bureaucrats and Ulama. They were either intimately connected to the world market, which made the traders and merchants play the role of ordinary middlemen between this market and the pastoral peoples and peasants, or they were direct products of the colonial administration. Analyzing the contradictions inherent in this situation, Ahmed I. Samatar remarks that the "severe contradictions between these two identities [middlemen and national liberation leaders—A.J.] of the cadres of independence movements became highly pronounced as the end of the colonial order grew closer".<sup>28</sup> Their specific interests (continuation of the exploitation of the pastoral peoples and peasants through vastly unequal exchanges, through merchant capital, and as the new ruling class viewed the state as their 'property')<sup>29</sup> were in direct contradiction to the onerous task of building a democratic nation-state. From the First Republic (1960-1969), through the military dictatorship of Siad Barre (1969-1991) and the ensuing more than a decade of failed state (1991-2002), this class has failed Somali national aspirations and trampled the Islamic holiness of the people.

- Third, as a direct result of the partition of the Somali peninsula into five different entities, only two of them have united and created the Somali Republic. Djibouti in 1977 opted for independence, while the remaining two are parts of Ethiopia and Kenya. In such a situation, the rule holds that the longer a people is split up and its parts separated by state boundaries, the more the differences between the divided parts increase under the growing influence of the social, economic and political conditions under which the parts live. The struggle, either through negotiations or even wars, or bringing the Somalis under one state met in the 1960-70s with little support, if not total rejection, from the majority of the world community.

But there are other vital factors which modify this difficult situation for the Somalis. 1) the ethno-confessional unity of the Somalis (Islamic faith, common culture, language, etc.) sharply differentiate the Somalis from both the Kenyan and Ethiopian societies and their ruling Christian classes; 2) almost half of Somalis still carry on a pastoral way of life which allows them to have constant cross border contacts throughout the parts of the Horn and Kenya inhabited by Somalis (the Somali-inhabited part of the Horn and Kenya is a compact area divided only by state borders, most of which are not even marked); 3) the mass media, especially radio broadcasts, also greatly facilitated the ethno-confessional unity of the Somalis; through these broadcasts the entire Somali population and diaspora have access to world events and to the rich Islamic and Somali culture (especially drama and poetry); 4) the role of the elders and Ulama, the keepers of the noble norms of the Somali culture and the holiness of Islam. The role of the Ulama is immensely important, for they are among the small groups capable of surpassing the segmentary character of the Somali society. In fact, they and the elders are the spiritual backbone of the Somalis, and a unifying force;

5) the introduction of an official orthography for the Somali language, based on the Latin script (in 1972) also gave the Somalis a major means of written communication, and, in the words of the late Macallin Guush, was one of the "most important events in the cultural history of Somalia"<sup>3 0</sup>; 6) the collapse of the central government in Somalia has, strange as may it may seem, also strengthened the age-long ethnic consolidation of the Somalis in neighbouring countries, since the majority of the Somali refugees from the Republic have moved into Ethiopia and Kenya.

The first five factors contribute strategically to the consolidation of the ethno-national identity of the Somalis and are major factors against its disintegration. The three other factors, elaborated before the last six factors, on the contrary contributed to the temporary disintegration of the Somali state. As a result, the Somali cultural nation is still in search of its own state (polity) after an incalculable loss of life, property and dignity.

### *Tigrayans*

The fourth largest group—the Tigrayans (almost 60 percent inhabit Ethiopia, the rest, Eritrea) is one of the oldest ethnic communities in Ethiopia. The majority of the Tigrayans inhabit the province of Tigray (almost 90 percent of the province's population) and parts of Eritrea. Large parts of the Tigrayans live in big towns, mainly in Addis Ababa. Their language is closer to the dead Geez language which was the Church language.

The Tigrayans are very proud of the fact that their land was the center of the ancient Axum state, and also that their language is closer, in comparison with all other major Semitic-speaking peoples of Ethiopia, to that of the Axumites. But as Kobishchanov correctly remarks, "it was precisely this closeness which hampered the development of the Tigrean language for a long time as the Geez language had been the standard language [of Abyssinia, and later, Ethiopia] till the late 19th century".<sup>3 1</sup> At the same time, because of that closeness and the fact that Geez was not only the Church language, but also the official state language, the Tigrayans rightfully became, in the words of Donald Levine, the 'cultural aristocracy of Ethiopia'.

The majority of the Tigrayans are Monophysite Christians, while the minority are Muslims and Catholics. But this religious difference does not affect their ethnic consciousness, for all of them identify themselves as Tigrayans. In this sense, among all the major Ethiopian ethnic communities, the Tigrayans are the most advanced in terms of their self-identity as an ethnic community. The Weyene uprising in 1943 against the Haile Selassie I regime was an important milestone in the consolidation of the ethnic identity of the Tigrayans. Haggai Erlich called that uprising a major step towards "Tigrean separatism".<sup>3 2</sup> In fact, the Weyene uprising was not a separatist movement, but rather an attempt to defend the historical autonomous status of that province against the formation of the absolutist monarchy in Ethiopia, which was by its nature committed to the political, economic and administrative centralization of Ethiopia. The absolute power of the Emperor was also against the very historical experience of not only the Tigrayans, but also of the other northern provinces of Ethiopia, i.e., historical Abyssinia.

During the 1980s the Eritreans (mainly the EPLF) and Tigrayans (TPLF) for different purposes were at the forefront of the armed struggle against the military dictatorship of Colonel Mengistu Haile Maryam. The umbrella organization (EPDRF), created by the TPLF leadership, was able to overthrow that regime (May, 1991) and began a new democratic process in Ethiopia, by first accepting and then recognizing the right of the Eritrean people to self-determination. This culminated in the birth of an independent Eritrean state (1993) by dividing Ethiopia into nine major ethno-regional provinces, and constitutionally accepting the right of all peoples in the FDRE to



exercise their right of self-determination if they felt their interests were not guaranteed in the new federation.

These four ethnic groups together with ethnic groups kindred to them (Gurage, Afar, Saho, Tigre, Harari and some others) comprise more than 80 percent of the population of the Horn of Africa.

Eritrea is also a multi-ethnic society. Among its major ethno-linguistic groups are the Tigrinya speakers (Tigrayans), who are about 40 percent of the population, live on the plateau and are mainly Christians; the Tigre speakers (about a third of the population), who are mostly Muslims; the Saho (about 10 percent of the population), of which the majority are Muslims and pastoral peoples; and the Afar (about 6 percent of the population) who are Muslims, the majority of which are pastoral peoples. There are also other ethno-linguistic groups such as Beja (the majority live in the Sudan), Kunama, Baria, Bilen and others.

In terms of religious structure, Eritrea is more or less evenly divided among Christians and Muslims. The two numerically strongest ethnic groups in Eritrea, Tigrayans and Tigre, are also Christian and Muslim respectively. Whenever these two communities are divided politically (which has happened many times in the history of Eritrea), political rivalry usually takes on an additional ethno-confessional coloring.

Colonial rule in Eritrea brought about two major transitions: the creation of the industrial and service sectors, and increasing trade between nomads and urbanization. These two factors modified, but have not altered, the age-old rivalry between the peasants and the nomads. The two different patterns of social and economic life were at "the root of the divisions between the Eritrean political parties in the 1940s and 1950s,"<sup>3 3</sup> and also in the late 1980s.

Another major hindrance to the development of the Eritrean society was its division into serfs and aristocratic clans, Tigre and Nabtab. "The aristocratic clan levied tax[es] on the conquered subjects who payed a range of dues and provided services in return for protection." The Italian colonial administration actually "perpetuated the political subjugation of the serf through a pyramidal 'native' administration system."<sup>3 4</sup>

This ethnic and confessional structure of Eritrean society played a major role in the political and social life of the country. During the British military administration of Eritrea (1941-1952), the major political parties were created largely on a confessional basis. This has had its imprint on the way Eritrea lost its chance to obtain independence. Ethiopia, a landlocked state, fought to the end to regain Eritrea, and, with the support of the USA at the UNO, secured this arrangement through the well known federation system, which existed until 1962. This led to the formation of the Eritrean Liberation Front (ELF), mainly led by the Muslims at its early stage. In the mid 1970s, the leadership of the national liberation movement of the Eritrean people passed into the hands of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front (EPLF), a movement for land and social reform and for the enhancement of the role of women. (In 1994 the EPLF was renamed the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). In Eritrea, historically, the "two religions generally coexisted in remarkable harmony".<sup>3 5</sup>

## **Islam and the Horn of Africa**

Islam is not a newcomer to the Horn. It dates from the days of Prophet Muhammad, when the first Hijra to Axum took place. But its impact on the whole of the Horn began from the 11-15th centuries, when different Islamic states, Shawa, Ifat, Harar, Adal and others were established in the region.

In the Horn of Africa, at least for the last five centuries, attempts were made by the ruling political, social and religious groups of the region to create a confessionally homogenous regional polity encompassing the majority of the peoples and territories of the Horn. The most ambitious attempt took place in the 16th century which is famous for the Thirty Years War (1529-1559)<sup>3 6</sup>, during which the Imam of Harar, Ahmad Ibrahim "Gurey", occupied the majority of the territory of the Abyssinian Christian state reaching even lake Tana and converted to Islam not only pagans but also a large part of the Christians inhabitants of the highlands.<sup>3 7</sup> (30, p. 62-63).

In the 18-19th centuries, when Islam already had firm roots in present-day Djibouti, large parts of Eritrea and Somalia and the eastern regions of Ethiopia, the adoption of Islam by the inhabitants of the highlands, mainly Oromo, was related to their resistance to Ethiopian nationalism, based on Christianity. At the same time, Islam had made inroads into the core ethnic communities of historical Ethiopia, Tigrayans and Amhara. In general, Muslims from these groups were known as Jabarti.

Another major attempt was carried out by Menelik II (1889-1913), when he created the largest Ethiopian Empire in the Horn and tried to Christianize its new subjects.

But both attempts failed, since both Christian and Islamic communities had lived side by side for centuries, and neither side could surrender its religion, which was the bulwark of its self-identity.

In historical Ethiopia, as a Christian state and society, Muslims were barred from land possession in most areas, although they had the right to purchase land.<sup>3 8</sup> The major occupation of the Muslims in traditional Ethiopia was trade, which the Ethiopian Christians regarded as a demeaning enterprise. This put commerce in the hands of the Ethiopian Muslims.

In Ethiopia, the major centres of Islamic studies and education are located in the town of Harar (a town revered by all Muslims of the Horn for its great role in Islamic studies through its famous Islamic schools and holy Ulama), and in the region of Wallo. In Somalia, Mogadishu, Sheikh, Zaila (the former Adal), Merca and other towns, are famous for their Islamic centres of education.

Of all the universally recognized schools of Islamic law, Shafiism is the most widespread in the Horn of Africa. As for orders, the Qadiriya [founded by Abd-al-Qadir al-Jilani (1077-1166)] is also the most widespread in the Horn. There are also other orders such as Salihya, Ahmedia, Samaniya, Rifaiya, Husseniya, etc.

The challenge to the Muslim world by Western civilization and technology has not bypassed the Ulama and Muslim communities of the Horn. Since these centres are centuries old, a new generation of Ulama, which could be called modernists and reformists, is emerging in their midst. Some take their bearings from the Islamic Brotherhoods (Hassan Al-Banni), while others, after mastering Western social and philosophical thought, go further, to classical Arab-Islamic philosophy, to find solutions to the outstanding problems of rejuvenating the spirit of that 'golden' Islamic culture. A third group, mainly historians and students of culture, try to redress the neglected aspects of Islamic history, culture and education in the Horn of Africa.

As a preliminary conclusion, one can say that a revival and further spread of Islam is going on in all parts of the Horn of Africa. This revival does not entail any sort of uniformity, but in actual fact is a revival in diversity, as a reflection of the essence of Islam, both spiritual and political pluralism.

## Notes

1. See most of the books published about the Horn before mid 1970s.

2. See Greater Horn of Africa Initiative. (Source: Internet. [Http://www.info.usaid.gov/Horn/GHAI/cycle/framewrkhtml/04.04.2002](http://www.info.usaid.gov/Horn/GHAI/cycle/framewrkhtml/04.04.2002)).

3. In Somalia, especially in the 1960s, this term was used as the part of the region that Somalis inhabit.

4. Unique in the sense that every entity as every human being is a unique phenomenon.

5. Y.M. Kobishchanov, Etnosy i kultura Efiopii (Ethnic groups and Cultures of Ethiopia // *Ethnocultural Development of African Countries*) (Moscow, 1986), p. 161.

6. Y.M. Kobishchanov, *Axum* (Axum) (Moscow, 1966).

7. M.B. Piotrovsky, Ob Efiopskoi Hijre (On Ethiopian Hijre // *Ethiopian Studies. History. Culture*) (Moscow, 1981), pp. 16-21.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

9. Most figures concerning the number of ethnic groups and confessional communities are tentative, although calculated on the basis of different statistical sources.

10. P. Baxter, The Problem of the Oromo or the Problem for the Oromo // I.M. Lewis, (ed.), *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London, 1983), p. 130.

11. P. Gilkes, *The Dying Lion. Feudalism and Modernization in Ethiopia* (London, 1975), pp. 204-205; A.P. Wood, Rural Development and National Integration in Ethiopia // *African Affairs*, (1983), V. 82, No. 329, p. 510; R. Hess, Ethiopia // Gwendolen M. Carter (ed.). *National Unity and Regionalism in Eight African States* (N. Y., 1966), pp. 8-10.

12. According to the leading Oromo historian, Mohammed Hassen, "[a]bout seventy percent of the Oromo are Muslims". See, Mohammed Hassen, "Islam as a Resistance Ideology among the Oromo of Ethiopia. The Wallo Case, 1700-1900" // Said S. Samatar (ed.), *In the Shadow of Conquest. Islam in Colonial Northeast Africa*. The Red Sea Press, Inc., Trenton, New Jersey, 1992, p. 76.

13. E. Ullendorf, *The Ethiopians. An Introduction to Country and People* (London, 1966), p. 76.

14. M. Abir, *Ethiopia: From Autocracy to Revolution* (London, 1975), p. xxiv.

15. J. Trimingham, *Islam in Ethiopia* (London, 1965), p. 109.

16. On resistance, see Mohammed Hassen, *op. cit.*

17. Hussein Ahmed. Traditional Muslim Education in Wallo // Gromyko Anatoly A. (ed.) *Proceedings of the Ninth International Congress of Ethiopian Studies* (1986), (Moscow, 1988), p. 96.

18. A. D. Smith, *National Identity* (London: Penguin Books, 1991), pp. 6-7, 23-29.

19. S.B. Chernetsov, Kto takie Amhara? (Who are the Amhara? // *Ethnic History of Africa: Pre-Colonial Period*(Moscow, 1977), pp. 19-26.

20. On the differences of ethnonym, toponym and polytonym, see Y. V. Bromlei, *Ocherki teorii etnosa* (Theoretical Ethnical Studies) (Moscow, 1983), pp. 46-47.

21. Z. Gokalp, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), pp. 71-72.

22. Teshome G. Wagaw. The Burden and Glory of Being Schooled. An Ethiopian Dilemma // Rubeson R. (ed.). *Proceedings of the Seventh International Congress of Ethiopian Studies* (Addis Ababa, 1984), p. 488.

23. I.M. Lewis, (ed.). *Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), pp. 1-3.

24. *Ibid.*

25. For details see: Said Samatar, *Oral Poetry and Somali nationalism: The Case of Sayyid Mohammed Abdille Hassan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). For the British colonial reaction to him, see: D. Jardine, *The Mad Mullah of Somaliland*, (London, 1923).

26. I.M. Lapidus, *State and Religion in Islamic Societies // Past and Present*, (1996), <sup>1</sup> 151, pp. 20-23.

27. Ahmed. I. Samatar, (ed.). *The Somali Challenge. From Catastrophe to Renewal?* (London: Leynne Reinner Publishers, 1994), p. 112.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Abdi I. Samatar, *The State and Rural Transformation in Northern Somalia. 1884-1986* (London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989).

30. B.W. Andrzejewski, *The Impact of the Introduction of a National Orthography on the Development of Somali Studies // Revue D'Etudes Somaliennes*, (1987), <sup>1</sup> 4-5, p. 9.

31. Y.M. Kobishchanov, *Axum (Axum)* (Moscow, 1966), p. 170.

32. Haggai Erlich, *Ethiopia and the Challenge of Independence* (Boulder, Col., 1986), p. 191.

33. D. Pool, *Eritrean Nationalism // Lewis I.M. (ed.). Nationalism and Self-Determination in the Horn of Africa* (London, 1983), p. 180.

34. *Ibid.*

35. Bereket Habte Selassie. *Creating a Constitution for Eritrea // Journal of Democracy* (April 1998), <sup>1</sup> 9, pp. 164-174.

36. A. Bartnitsky, I. Mantel-Nechko, *Istoria Efiopii (History of Ethiopia)* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1976), Chap. 8.

37. J. Markakis, *Ethiopia: Anatomy of a Traditional Polity* (Oxford, 1974), pp. 62-63.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 65.

**Chapter XII**  
**Islam in the Context of Modern Civilization**  
Nur Kirabaev

The complicated and inconsistent character of the modern epoch, the rapid development of scientific and technical revolution, and the values of cultures, religions and civilizations in the mutual understanding and cooperation of the peoples living in various countries, West and East. To a large extent, the interest in a probable dialogue of civilizations has increased in connection with the increase of the weight in global politics and economy of the countries of the Islamic East. This is understandable for, on the one hand, the Islamic civilization has been historically part and parcel of the Mediterranean civilization. On the other hand, the strengthening social and political role of Islam from the days of the Arab-Israeli war of 1967, the growth of Islamic "revival" movements after the Iranian revolution of 1979, and the strengthening tendencies of international Islamic solidarity have generated in the minds of the Western people a feeling of danger and fear. Accordingly, there has been a rejection of what is known in the Western literature as the militant Islam, while for the Muslims a return of the feeling of dignity and piety towards religious traditions. In conditions of deep social changes in these countries, there is an increase of the role of the factors of consolidation, integration and self-determination, in which a major role belongs to the religious factor.

In connection with this many questions which arose have to be addressed. What are the peculiarities of the Islamic civilization? Which place does Islamic civilization have in the movement of humanity to its real and true aim—liberty of the human being? And how could this be realized, while taking into consideration the increasing role of fundamentalism, which is oriented towards the past?

Not claiming at all exhaustive answers to for those questions, this paper try to analyze these questions.

Z. Sardar considers the following to be the main parameters of Islamic civilization: (a) the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which compose an absolute system of coordinates of Islamic civilization; (b) an organic synthesis of types of world outlook: materialism, rationalism and mysticism (since Islam to a larger extent than other religions is a "religion of the human being," ensuring to the human being and society all necessities of life; (c) an epistemology as a special path of cognition based on an absolute system of coordinates (whose main characteristics are: activity, objectivity, public character, a mainly deductive integration of knowledge on the basis of the values of Islam, consideration of levels of consciousness or of subjective experience etc.) and; (d) the system of Islamic values based on the concepts: Tawhid (unity of the God), the human being as the highest divine creation and deputy of God, equality as a basic social concepts (13, pp. 35-39). As a synthesis of these aspects of civilization, Islam approaches the human being with its strengths and weaknesses, needs and desires (13, p. 32).

According to N. Daniel, it is better to study the specific features of Islamic civilization in comparison with European civilization as regards what is common to them, what integrates them, or what distinguishes them from one another. As a rule, the majority of Muslims very painfully react to any disrespect and belittling of the role of Islamic religion and tradition. For example, they ask the following questions: why do Europeans speak about the illnesses and strangeness of the Prophet, while in Islamic tradition there is always a respectful attitude to Jesus and his mother? In order to prove the superiority of one religion and culture, is it necessary to discredit the other?

Muslims, even if not believers, always recognize the Islamic nature of their culture. In contrast, the European nonbeliever prefers to consider the state as something secular, and is surprised occasionally, to find vestiges of official religion in his/her own culture (6, p. 4). Thus, the well-known contrast of Islam and Christianity is, rather, an historical problem. When we speak about religions, we speak about Islam and Christianity; when we speak about culture, we should speak about the values of Islamic and European cultures.

In Europe as a whole it is impossible to think of any specifically Christian government. Therefore, the aspiration of radical Islam, for example, in the Iranian revolution to capture power has caused shock waves in the West. Any progress connected with religion, the revolutionary character of religion which assumes the support of religious authority is considered in the West as a strengthening of conservatism, as a historical deviation from the path of progress.

In the last two or three decades, the problem of the "spirituality" of the East, and "materialism" of the West has been widely discussed. This is based on a typical error of some Islamic contributors. When Islamists investigate and analyze the role of religion and church in the West and find that it is somewhat insignificant, they conclude that the Europeans are ripe for conversion without delay to Islam, rather than any other faith. Such an erroneous conclusion is connected with the fact, that it is difficult for Muslims to understand and imagine the very existence of a secular state and the fact that there exist more complex societies than theirs (6, p. 4).

In Islam lack of faith is considered as a personal matter, while secularization is a matter for all: the community and society. Religion is the common task of believers, not a matter of private faith. A person can be an atheist, but should be a Muslim or a Christian. Atheism is one's personal judgement, while Islam or Christianity is one's religion. Even religious practice can mean simply loyalty, rather than positive faith. This does not mean that society can exist without religion. It is always possible to say that religion is a social phenomenon, and that faith is the cementing of any social structure. Western students of Islam underline the communal character of Islam both as a religion and as a culture. But how to distinguish Islam as a religion from Islam as a culture. One opinion holds that it is difficult to imagine Islam in a non-Islamic medium. Obviously, for Muslims living in the countries of Northern and Western Europe it has been difficult to adapt to new conditions, but they have adapted. But Europeans obviously cannot adapt to conditions, for example, in Islamic society though as a whole, any person would feel ill at ease when far from home. However, as the religion of community Islam generally has been rather tolerant of coexistence with foreign communities, including Christians and followers of Judaism inside itself (6, p. 5).

Historically, medieval Christian society was more unified than is Islamic society today. It did not retain alien communities inside itself, but actively suppressed them by force of law and courts of inquisition dealing severely even with individual deviations from devout Christianity. Its uncompromising stand and intolerance generated the hundred years' war and other conflicts within Christianity. The principle of tolerance actually has pushed Europeans to work out the idea that faith is a private matter, instead of being loyal to the community. The reaction to a single belief later developed into indifference and even animosity to all religions. This is characteristic of a large part of modern European thinking. From the European experience, it is possible to extract two lessons for the future of Islam. First, something similar could also happen to Islam. The ongoing transformations today could destroy tradition and, on the basis of reason, create something new. Second, the changes in Islam might differ from the Christian experience which created modern Europe. It would be an expression of haughtiness on the part of Europe and humiliation for the Islamic world to assume the European path of development to be the only possible and

correct path. It is impossible to assert that Islam is unchangeable, rigid and invariable society, but only in the most general form is it possible to propose the specific features of the future development of Islam. We cannot tell about the possibilities of the secularization process, about its possible forms, and what sort of a character it might take, but it is possible to forecast that the community nature of Islam will remain today and always. This should be taken into account in any possible dialogue between Europe and the Islamic world. It is necessary to overcome mutual suspicions whereby the parties hear only what they expect or want to hear.

In trying to find common ground between cultures and civilizations, it is necessary to remember the lessons of the recent past, which, to a large extent, determined the modern psychology of the European, and the Muslim. One hundred years ago, the aggressive West dominated a silently resisting Islamic East. But for the last 25 years, the West has been surprised by criticism from the Islamic East. Their control of the production and distribution of petroleum made clear the boldness and resoluteness of their anti-Western position, related to the collapse of the hopes and expectations of adapting European ideals and values. Today Islam demands of the West respect for its ideals and traditions. At the same time, the problem of the correlation of the religious and the national remains significant. The brilliant past of Islam, especially for the Arabs, has both a religious and a cultural sense.

The superiority of Europe in scientific and technical progress is clear; however, some Islamists assert that a return to the practices of early Islam would lead to the economic and scientific revival of the Islamic world. They consider that Islam could and should accept the challenge from the West and adopt the methods and results of science and progress. Islamic modernizers promote the doctrines of such great reformers as al-Afghani (d. 1897), M. Abduh (d. 1905), R. Rida (d. 1935). The idea of the openness of Islam and consistency of dogmas to scientific and historical knowledge lies at the basis of their doctrines. These Islamic thinkers rethought traditional theology in such a way that it has found a new expression quite adequate to the realities of the new century.

Other representatives of Islam, known as traditionalists or fundamentalists, reject all attempts of rethinking religious traditions. They look at the future of Islam focusing their attention on the Islam of the times of the Prophet and his four "righteous Caliphs", while considering the methodology of modern scientific knowledge to be a "methodological atheism".

Faith in the Qur'an, however, does not necessarily mean a demand for the inalterability of all traditional trends in the Islamic law, dogmas, exegesis, politics, economy, etc.

The first example is connected to the history of the development and systematization of Islamic law. Considering the sources of Islamic law, importance should be given to those laws which allow taking into account the conditions of time and space and were considered no less authoritative than the Qur'an itself. These are, analogy (Qiyas), the unanimous judgement of authorities of religious knowledge (Ijma'), and the historical practice of the times of the Prophet and his followers (Sunnah). Moreover, the use of methods "of free reasoning" (Ijtihad, Ra'yi) allowed the study of the legal heritage of Roman-Byzantine culture. Thus, the whole history of Islamic law shows that early Islam and its practice, in contrast to modernity, were open to finding solutions to the ever-emerging and existing problems.

The second example concerns the history of the development "of speculative theology," philosophy and science. An analysis of practically all areas of knowledge reveals that the flowering of the philosophy of science and medicine, which, in many respects determined the character of development of medieval Europe, took place within Islam. The doctrine of Averroes about truth received its further development in the so-called theory of dual truth of Latin Averroists, and instituted the trend of independent thinking and the adventurous spirit of philosophy. But here an

important question arises: was Averroism also known to the Islamic East? Everyone, who is slightly familiar with the history of classical Arab-Islamic philosophy knows that this was not the case. As Wahba remarks, there is a paradox here: though Ibn Rushd (Averroes) came later in life from Spain to the Islamic East, Averroism did not. The role which the philosophy of Ibn Rushd played in the development of human civilization is determined by its paradox of Averroes (16, p. 84). It is still an open problem, whether the doctrine of Ibn Rushd can play in the history of Islamic East the same role it played in the Christian West.

In determining the specific features of Islamic civilization, a significant role belongs to the interaction of Islam and nationalism as socio-political and cultural phenomena both historically and theoretically. Beyond doubt, in the development of Islamic civilization, in addition to Arab-Muslims, so large a contribution was made by Christians and Jews, Persians and Turks, Copts and Kurds that their cultures should be considered a constituent part of Islamic civilization. But another fact of the recent history of Islamic countries is also pertinent: that the consolidating basis in defining the paths of social development in these countries frequently became not religion but nationalism. The key problem of the modern history of the countries of the Islamic East is reconciliation of Islam, nationalism and modernism. Which tendencies will predominate in modern conditions: the religious or the nationalistic? The answer to this question is vital both for politics and for culture. The practice of such organizations and movements as Ba'th (The Party of Renaissance), the FNL of Algeria, "the third force" of Khomeini, "Islamic-Marxism" of Ali Shariati, "The Muslim Brothers" etc., does not give an unequivocal answer to this question, nor do the solutions offered by them, provide a basis for stable social development.

Concerning this problem, as a rule, two approaches are distinguished: the dogmatic-religious and the socio-cultural. The religious elements of Islam were integrated into the national cultures of the peoples who accepted Islam. African Islam, for example, contains a set of traditional African beliefs. We cannot study African Islam without a preliminary study of pre-Islamic African culture. The fact that African Islam does not speak the Arabic language means that native languages are part of the cultural identity of these peoples. In speaking about the language situation, some authors remark that the situation is not that much different in Arab and non-Arab countries. For example, in Morocco even today 60 percent of the population are Berbers and half of them speak not Arabic but a Berber language. Even the first Islamic republic, established in the north of Morocco in 1920, was Berber-speaking (8, p. 130).

From one point of view the problem of language is not so essential; what is important is that which integrates, namely, religious dogmas, tradition and practice (4, p. 19). The religion of Islam, based on the Shari'a, has unequivocally solved the main problem of the practice of any state by asserting the leadership and sovereignty of God; Christianity "handed Caesar Caesarship, and God to divinity."

An analysis of the historical situation in Turkey after the disintegration of the Ottoman empire is interesting. Throughout many centuries the Ottoman empire was an embodiment of the power and prosperity of Islam, its firm advance post and a counterweight to the rest of the world. But in the beginning of our century it simply collapsed like a house of cards, Islam as a religion, way of life and institution of power conceded its role and place to nationalism. An analysis of the opposition of Turkish nationalism to Islamism and to Westernization may shed light on the path of the Turkish Republic's final choice of its path to development: secularization, modernization, and the nationalism of Kemal Ataturk.

Considering the intellectual situation in the last years of the Ottoman empire and paying special attention to the second constitutional or young Turk's period (1907-1918-), E. Ozbudun



underscores the significance of the opposition between the Islamists and Westernized nationalists. The position of the latter was reflected in the well known declaration of their leader Kevdet: "There is no second civilization; civilization means European civilization and should be imported with its roses and thorns" (12, p. 41). The supporters of the Western orientation, though personally not anti-religious, did not keep Islam as the basic element of their theoretical views. Both the Islamists and nationalists undertook collective efforts to preserve Islamic identity and were conscious enough of the necessity of modernization as a prerequisite of the survival of the Turkish state. However, they differed on a number of key questions.

The Islamists can be divided into three groups: Islamic modernists, Islamic fundamentalists and supporters of a militant political Islam. The last group composed the basis of the movement "Union of Mohammed", headed by D. Wahdeti. This movement was violently suppressed for its participation in counter-revolutionary and anti-state activities. The second group (Islamic Fundamentalists) did not put any major emphasis on ideological controversies and justified its position by traditional religious arguments. The first group (Islamic modernists) was led by Halim-Pasha (Prime Minister from 1913 to 1916), the poet-Mehmet Akif, Mehmet Shamsuddin, and later by Gyunaltai (Prime Minister from 1949-1950).

On the problem of the compatibility of Islam and modernization, the Islamic modernists based themselves on the doctrine of Abduh, who was well known and popular among Turkish nationalists. They believed the following: (a) that Islam does not hinder the development of science, rationalism and progress: on the contrary, Islam itself is a factor of progress; (b) that the source of the backwardness of Islamic countries should be sought not in Islam, but in ignorance, illegal innovations (Bida'), superstitions, obscurantism and despotism; (c) that it is necessary to return to the original and pure Islam and open the gates of Ijtihad and; (d) that that Muslims do not need to borrow any moral values from the West, since the Islamic values are superior to European ones. However, our interest in the West lies in its technology and economy, and in these spheres it is necessary to learn from it and even borrow certain things for the economic development of one's own state.

This position can best be defined as "limited rationalism" (12, p. 43). In counterbalance to rationalistic philosophy in general, "Islamic" rationalism begins with dogmas (an-nas) and attempts to conclude from these various judgments by means of rational reflections. More than that, the interpretation of the sacred text (Qu'ran, Hadiths) is supposed to be carried out in such a way as to be compatible with the conclusions and results of modern science and correspond to the ever changing conditions of time and space. But reason is free only within the framework of the interpretation of the Qur'an and Hadiths. Therefore, for example, Abduh determines circumstances in which reason is free in its interpretation of what, in the Qu'ran and Hadiths, has no precise and clear explanation or instructions.

Although "individual Ijtihad" is rather important it cannot explain something which lies outside the framework of the Qur'an and Hadiths. If, in the sacred texts, something is incompatible with reason, there is need of additional efforts to explain it or it is accepted without understanding. The difficulty of such an interpretation lies in the possibility of over accentuating religious meaning. This would limit the sphere of reason, in particular in cases where dogma is clear and constant. On the other hand, it is possible to so emphasize the rational content that religion ceases to be actually a religion and is transformed into a system of ethics and rules of good behaviour in this life. This interpretation of Abduh opened the possibility of bringing into Islamic doctrines and laws various kinds of innovations from the modern world. This understanding of the above-mentioned problem not only became an alternative to secularism, but also allowed it to go far

beyond its framework. It is not accidental that one group of students of Abduh further developed this doctrine in the spirit of absolute secularism. The Turkish Islamic modernists, however, have not gone so far, but act counter to the will of the Islamic fundamentalists.

The problem of the correlation of religion and state was resolved in the same way. The Islamic modernists believed that Islam is a social religion, which confers the rules of power and management. Therefore, religion cannot be separated from the state. The source of the sovereignty of the Islamic forms of power has a divine nature. However, their existence is limited by the principles of justice and collective leadership. The Islamic modernists reject absolutism as contradicting both Islam and reason. All Muslims have the right to rise against an unfair ruler. At the same time, obedience to the ruler is a prescribed responsibility of religion when power corresponds to the rules of Shari'a and the practice of collective leadership. If these conditions are observed, then Islamic rule may be either republican or monarchical in form. Some Turkish Islamic modernists, however, described the ideal Islamic form of rule as the "the perfect Caliphate," that is, where the people themselves elect the Caliph.

Although all Islamic modernists prefer constitutional rule, they deny people the right of sovereignty, preferring the sovereignty of Shari'a and the rule of Ulama. So, they consider parliament as a source of all troubles and the constitution as "a weak medicine" (12, p. 45). To them, constitutionalism represents a product of the erroneous ideas of Westernized reformism. They also criticize the usage of the terms "law-making" considering the exclusively a divine prerogative.

At last, on the question of nationalism and national self-consciousness they are close to the positions of fundamentalists, who consider nationalism a threat to Islamic unity. For example, Mehmet Akif exclaimed: "Oh! the Islamic society, you are not Arab, Turkish, Albanian, Kurdish etc." (12, p. 46). It is impossible to conduct nationalistic policies without rejecting Islam. Islamic modernists believe there to be no Turkish history distinct from the history of Islam. At the same time, they try soberly to look at this problem. Understanding that in the realities of present times it is impossible to establish united rule for all Muslims and create a single Islamic state, they have proposed the idea of an Islamic confederation, reflecting al-Afghani's thesis of the absence of any contradictions between Islamic unity and local nationalism.

The problem of Turkish nationalism stands by itself, since it soon became the dominating idea in all political programs. The first indications of Turkish nationalism can be traced back to the second half of the 19th century, when a new interest in Turkish history, language, and folklore awakened. Turkish nationalism (Turkism) as a political doctrine was formed during the activity of the Young Turk movement). However, in the first years of their rule even the Young Turks did not openly propose nationalistic policies, since they were afraid of the possible disintegration of the empire. They preferred to speak about Ottomanism, which had given freedom and equality to all peoples of the empire, irrespective of their races, creeds and languages. However, after the loss of almost all the European provinces of the empire, nationalism among the Arabs, Armenians, Albanians, etc. became very popular. Consequently, Turkish nationalism became the single realistic basis for the future Turkish state. At the same time, the Young Turks took huge steps in preserving the administrative centralism of the Turkish language, thereby preserving the unity of the state. They struggled against the separatism and nationalism of non-Turkish parts of the population of the state.

Turkish nationalism in the interpretation of Zia Gokalp represented a symbiosis of nationalism, Islam and modernization; it differed considerably from the ideas of the Islamic modernists. One of the best known pamphlets of Gokalp was called "Turkization, Islamization,

Modernization". He considered Turkish nationalism and Islam as two different realities, both nationally and internationally. Neither of which contradicts modernization. Modernization requires an adaptation to Western science and technology. The satisfaction of moral demands should be accepted from national and religious sources. These three realities, supplementing one another, ensure an effective development known "as modern Islamic Turkism" (12, p. 48).

The application of the experience of Western civilization is, thus, confined to the usage of Western technology and science. In this question, the position of the Young Turks and Islamic modernists were very similar. At the same time, Gokalp considered that the civilizations based on religion were being historically replaced by new civilizations based on positive sciences. The joining of Japan and Turkey into the European community of nations gave the latter an international character without a religious character. Hence, the spheres of internationality and civilization are, accordingly, separated from one another. For Gokalp the Turkish nation today is a society that belongs to the Ural-Altai family, to the Islamic Umma and to European civilization. In his "Basic Foundations of Turkism" he asserted that societies which differ from one another in culture and religion could, nevertheless, belong to one and the same civilization.

Civilization, from the point of view of Turkish nationalists, is then something distinct from religion. There is no civilization with one specific religion. Since, there is no Christian civilization, so there is no Islamic civilization. Considering civilization in an international context, Z. Gokalp defines culture as a purely national phenomenon.

What then is the role of Islam in defining Turkish identity? For Z. Gokalp, membership in a nation is determined to a large extent by the existence of a common language, culture and ideals. It is not difficult to agree with some researchers who assert that, in the synthesis of Turkish culture and Western civilization carried out by Gokalp, no place remained for Islam. Thus, Islam began to be considered as a junior partner accompanying this trinity. The insignificant role of Islam in Gokalp's doctrine can be understood also from his program of "Islamization", which contains the following positions: preservation of the Arabic alphabet for all Islamic peoples; organization of a terminological congress on the creation of a common, unified scientific apparatus; organization of a pedagogical congress with the purpose of establishing a common educational system; maintenance of constant contacts among the Muftis of all Islamic countries; and preservation of the sanctity of the crescent as the symbol of the Islamic community.

These positions of his program clearly show that by Islamization, Gokalp understood to a large extent the establishment and consolidation of cultural relations between various Islamic countries, without any orientation to their political or cultural unity. The program of Gokalp and the reforms of Ataturk appear to have much in common. Turkish nationalism achieved great influence in the epoch of the young Turks and became the dominant doctrine in the Kemalist republic.

## **Secularism**

In modern Turkey the study of Islam is concentrated on the problems of secularism and secularization, but in other traditional Islamic countries these problems have not yet become subjects of open and broad discussion. On the one hand, this is connected to the need carefully to look back on the religious tradition. On the other hand, secularism was always considered a European innovation, the essence of modern Western "materialistic" civilization.

The term "secularization" has a Latin origin, meaning worldly or related to events in the world. In Europe secularization, which has its roots in the Reformation, is connected with the

development of modern industrial society. The process of secularization began from the peasant disturbances led by the priest, Thomas Munster, and was directed against the feudal lords and high clergy. In contrast to Europe, in the Islamic world the term "secularization" has a strictly negative connotation. It is usually considered that, since that there is no clergy in Islam, then there can be no conflict between religion and state. As Tibi remarks, what actually happens is the substitution of the ideal for reality. A number of studies on Islam published in the 970s, demonstrated the existence in Islam of religious institutes that reproduce their own clergy (14, p. 70).

If one proceeds from the thesis that secularism is a prerequisite of modern society; an analysis of the problem of the applicability of the concept "secularization" to the history of Islam from the point of view of the sociology of religion requires an answer to the following questions: have any attempts at secularizing modern Islam been undertaken in the Islamic world, is Islam as a socio-cultural system compatible with a secularized religion; and what form may secularized Islam take in the future.

Defining Islam as a highly developed civilization of the pre-industrial period and as a principle of legitimizing power of the mighty state created under its aegis, it is necessary to take into consideration that pre-industrial empires were not functionally differentiated systems. In these empires, political dominance was achieved on the basis of an alliance between religion and political leaders, whereby, the former ensured religious legitimacy to the political rule of the latter. In such empires the religious leaders supported the political legitimacy of the system. They were required to formalize and formulate faith and traditions in such a way that they could be expressed and organized at a developed cultural level. They were also obliged to adjust and to direct the various dynamic tendencies and elements originating in religion and to support internal organization and discipline. Such internal problems promoted the emergence of specific models of behaviour of the religious elites and organizations in these societies. These were based on fidelity and loyalty to ruling authorities and excluded any kind of opposition to them. Thus, in the traditional system where politics is sacral, religious leaders ensure the preservation of the traditional style of thinking and control the development of critical, independent public opinion.

As the Islamic religious leaders were not organized into a separate church or society, they depended heavily on the rulers. Taking into account that religious leadership played a decisive role in determining the cultural and political value-orientations of the traditional system, one can assert that this dependence of the Islamic religious leaders on the rulers became a conventional norm in the history of Islam. Members of society are not citizens in the fullest sense of the word, but subjects having their corresponding relations with the authorities.

According to the German sociologist of religion, N. Luhmann, modern societies should be considered socially developed and differentiated systems; and secularization is connected with the differentiation of functions.

At the same time, secularization in no way means the abolition of religion. In a functionally differentiated world the system of religion simply fulfills other functions. Secularization is one of the results of society's reorientation into a functionally differentiated system, in which each functional sphere requires a high level of independence and autonomy, but, at the same time, each function depends more on the fulfillment of functions and how they are fulfilled (20, S. 227).

The idea of the existence of a connection between secularization and the level of domination over nature is very important. A close relationship exists between secularization and politics in societies which are oriented not on the domination of nature, but on relating to it and consider themselves as a prolongation and reflection of nature.

If we address the main sources of Islamic religious system, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, we cannot find in them any hints of intermediaries between God and the human being. It is frequently concluded, therefore, that there is no clergy in Islam, since there is no necessity for such an intermediary. However, there is a yawning chasm between ideal images and reality. Though the ideal Islamic community (Umma) does not recognize any clergy, nevertheless, the actual history of Islam testifies to the formation of a stratum of Islamic authorities on religious knowledge (Ulama), which partially fulfilled the role of clergy. Yet, it can be said that an important difference between Islam and Christianity consists in secularism being more inherent in Islam than in Christianity. This can be said in as much as all Islamic reformist movements against the traditional clergy, Ulama, for hindering the social modernization and development of the Islamic religious system are considered secular

The problem of the correspondence between the sacral and political during the Islamic middle ages deserves attention, since that was when Islamic culture achieved its golden age, which could have been followed by the industrial revolution. Despite its pre-industrial stage of development, the Islamic empire achieved a high level of social differentiation, favorable to the development of science and technology.

According to studies carried out by the modern Syrian philosopher Taiyib Tizini, who devoted a long time to the history of Arab-Islamic philosophy, Islamic philosophers were among the first who undertook a secularized, scientifically substantiated interpretation of the Cosmos. One of the early trends of the secularization of Islamic society can be found in the philosophical works of Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Rushd (Averroes), Al-Farabi, Ibn Tufayl and others, and also in the philosophy of history and society of Ibn Khaldun. Another secularizing trend in Islam was the Sufi tradition, which contained protests against the rule of the Islamic clergy in union with feudal aristocracy. If the "heretical" Islamic philosophers, the Islamic Sufis, had won the upper hand in Islamic history and the Ulama had been less successful, probably an important contribution to the industrial development of Islamic society could have been made in terms of socio-economic relations. However, the transition from a developed commercial capitalism to an industrial society was not achieved, and the Arab-Islamic empire stagnated.

In the study of secularization in the context of modern Islam, it is important not to lose sight of the fact that all varieties of modern developments of Islam can be adequately understood only in the context of its confrontation with the West-European culture, which is interpreted as the embodiment of the modern scientific and technical epoch.

Paying attention to the fact that since the 19th century in the Islamic countries a sense of their backwardness in comparison to the world of Europe was growing alongside economic expansion, there was also a cultural expansion in the region, having responded in various measures towards safeguarding its cultural heritage. Tibi formulates the problem of the Islamic world and culture as follows: how far can the pre-industrial culture accept modernization without violating its basic characteristic or essence. In characterizing modern Islam, Von Grynbaum, remarks that for the Islamic world the main difficulty in its struggle against Westernization lies in the contradictions between the successful acceptance of foreign ideas and its inability to overcome traditional principles and norms.

The Reformation of Christianity preceded the industrial revolution in Europe, and its results were not only the struggle against a concrete religious institute—clergy—but also the depoliticization of religion and the creation of new religious ethics. The Enlightenment and the secularization of all spheres of life was the culmination of that trend. Through scientific and technical achievements, Europeans were able to free themselves from the power of nature; indeed,

the domination of the forces of nature became a distinctive feature of European culture. From this followed the transition of the correspondence between the sacral and political into the technical-scientific culture and its secularization correspondingly, S. Freud's analysis of religion by giving due to religion proposed and supported the idea of a "rational substantiation of cultural images."

The founder of Islamic modernism in the 19th century and the spiritual father of modern Islam, al-Afghani underlined the significance of the Reformation for the subsequent achievements of Europe. Of Luther, he wrote: When we want to explain the reasons behind the revolutionary transition of Europe from barbarity to civilization, then, we discover that these changes were possible thanks to the religious movement begun by Luther. This great man had seen what disturbed the ambitions of the Europeans, and the extent to which they were due to the clergy. He also understood how tradition undermines everything that is not based on reason. He urged European nations to awake from their lethargy and convinced them to reform their values. He explained that they were born free, but remained in shackles (19, p. 328).

The activity of Luther was an example for Islamic modernization, and al-Afghani doubtless saw himself as the Luther of Islam. According to al-Afghani, only a new reformed Islamic movement, equally against both the European forces of colonialism in the Middle East and against Islamic clergy, could promote the beginning of a development similar to the European.

From the point of view of Islamic modernists who respect the Islamic ideal, the prevalence of Ulama in Islam is not legitimized by Islamic dogma. They consider Luther as a product of his time, and the Reformation and secularization as the result, not the cause of the changes in Europe and the development of modern society. They believe that a correct following of the religious instructions of Islam in itself is capable of overcoming the backwardness of the Islamic world. An illustration of these views can be observed in an article by the Islamic modernist Arslan (1869-1946) in "Al-Manar," a journal edited by R. Rida. In this article, published in 1930, an answer to the following question is given: why have Muslims lagged behind despite observing God's demands, whereas others have developed? The answer was also published as a book under the same title which was reprinted several times, and is still read today. These words from the Qur'an form an epigraph to the book: "God does not change for the people what they for themselves will not change." The meaning of the answer is that the Muslims have lagged behind because they have neglected an essential position of Islam, which consists, according to al-Afghani, in maintaining their "prevalence and superiority".

Arslan argues this idea as follows: it is erroneous to suppose that the acceptance of the relativity theory of Einstein, or other natural and scientific discoveries would become a panacea for Muslims. In reality, all these achievement are but products, not the causes. Only sacrifice and sacred war are the top sciences, enlightening all other sciences. When the community (Umma) accepts this science and lives according to it, then only comes the mastery of all other sciences and areas of knowledge and all possible progress. If Muslims will live in accordance with the rules of the Holy Book, then they will attain the level of the Europeans, Americans and Japanese, while continuing their adherence to Islam (14, p. 73).

This is a typical position of the supporters of modernized Islam, as well as of their intellectual predecessor al-Afghani, who were in opposition to the Islamic clergy. But neither al-Afghani, nor Arslan perceived Islam as a pre-industrial culture, to be adapted to the demands of the scientific and technological era. Dogma remained central to their reflections. This operates with abstractions which cannot be verified by analysis. In this respect, it does not consciously deliberate on its social functions or context but tends to apply itself categorically. Being considered universal and hence non-contextual in applicability, it supposes indefinite boundaries of interpretation.

This interpretation holds captive the social function of Islamic dogma and its response to the penetration of the modern world through its superior scientific and technical culture. This is not reflected in modern Islamic thought, which remains in the custody of dogma. Islamic modernists who discussed the problem of the common points of Islam and modern scientific and technical culture, never succeeded in going beyond the dogma. In as much as truth cannot contain contradictions, since, on the one hand, truth is God, and on the other, science by its very nature is also based on truth, it can be concluded that Islam does not contradict science. But for Islam, as well as for any other religion, the method of knowing truth consists mainly in commenting on the religious texts, which are announced as "sacred," or on the works of commentators on these texts. The scientific method is far from the religious exegesis: reconciliation remains within the framework of religious dogma.

The attempt to find a difference between religion as the content of a specific culture and religious consciousness as the form of spirituality shows promise. In the Islamic East, religious consciousness was literally overwhelmed by the traditional forms of faith and religious practice. This religious consciousness must be freed from its fetters, and reflect in such a way as to adapt itself to the conditions and demands of the new century. One of these paths of liberation is cultural renewal, a process which includes, among other things, the modern understanding of Islamic culture.

It is possible to divide all the positions of the supporters of secularization in the Islamic world into following:

1. Today Islam is in need of reformation, which will lead to a separation of the sacral and the political.
2. Secularization will follow this reformation.
3. This process presupposes the development of a culture, characteristic of an industrial society, with a scientific and technological base.
4. As in Europe secularization did not mean the end of Christianity, so in the Islamic East it will not undermine the positions of Islam. Islam will become depoliticized and will be an important part in a wholeness of the social system based on faith.

In contrast to the point of view of Tibi, who sees the differences between Europe and Islamic countries on the level of industrialization, Mercier considers the divergences between North and South to be not simply socioeconomic or connected to the level of industrialization, but to lie rather to lie in the absence of a long tradition in philosophy which is capable of separating and developing outside religious frameworks. Islam and Islamic culture today, to a large degree, are in dire need of such philosophers as Descartes and Kant, who separated the spheres of religion and philosophy (11, p. 109-111).

B. Eisenblatter, in speaking of the differences between a society of believers and non-believers, or the Islamic countries and Europe, remarks that one should consider the differences in mental horizons and conditions of consciousness of these two types of societies which hinder dialogue and communications between them (7, p. 165). Z.N. Mahmoud considers the safest path for Islamic countries to be in their own cultural and philosophical traditions. On the basis of Islamic faith the person can reasonably resolve the emerging problems without support from above. Reason, according to him, and the method of deduction provides objective consideration of facts and the search for appropriate solutions, which are universal and moral, and whose principles and rules depend neither on time, nor on space (1, p. 2).

The pre-Islamic world, says Mahmoud, knew two civilizations: Greek (Western) and Persian (Eastern). Only Alexander the Great, and for only a short time, succeeded in uniting these two civilizations. In the 7th century, with the birth of Islam, the boundaries between East and West were once again eliminated, uniting all humankind. The essence of these unifying tendencies was the Islamic faith, which created citizens of the world, and a new cosmopolitan spirit. In uniting Persian wisdom and Greek reason. Islam generated surprisingly harmonic new civilization, namely, the Islamic.

The intellectual tradition connected to the development of Arabic grammar, the development of various Islamic schools of law, the preservation and enrichment of Ancient philosophical traditions by the famous representatives of Arab-Islamic philosophy, great discoveries in mathematics, astronomy, optics, medicine etc., were formed around the Qur'an. At the same time, there remains a question, which should be carefully studied today: how to compare the cultural history of Islam, which was open to all other cultures, and the modern Islamic culture, which is, objectively, resisting the integration of European and Islamic cultures?

By way of a conclusion, let me make the following suggestion: problems concerning the specific features of the Islamic civilization should be considered not in a context of the opposition of East or West, old or new, past or present, origin or modernity, traditionalism or rationalism, faith or reason, heritage or renewal, religious or national, but on the basis of their interconnections.

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