THE CONCEPT OF THE MAGIAN SOUL IN OSWALD SPENGLER'S "Decline Of The West": An Evaluation

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I

ORIGINALITY per se could be a rather risky affair. A work like Der Untergang des Abenlandes is possibly a work entailing that risk: it is an attempt at the interpretation of various cultures, but such an effort is more often than not likely to overemphasize certain points and to minimize or underscore others. What is however unique about the work is the vast—indeed, staggering—array of facts which the author has marshalled in support of his hypotheses, and by any measure even its adverse disclaimer will have to admit the grand design and the dedication of the author to his viewpoint, Spengler's avowed purpose in it is to show that the "Second Cosmos" or World History has a different content and a different trajectory or movement when contrasted with the "First Cosmos" (Nature) insofar as it obeys Shiksat (Destiny) against the law of causality operative in Nature. He also intends telling his fellow-Europeans that, as with all cultural souls, the epiphany of the Western intellect and material prosperity which has lasted for some half a millinium is about to draw to its close.

It is but natural that in such a work certain discrepancies and manifestations of unevenness are bound to be displayed. Spengler is obviously not at home with certain cultural souls, such as the

Chinese, Aztec, and South-East Asiatic. Certain other facts to which he refers for the establishment of certain premises are awkwardly inaccurate, e.g., when he refers to the Civil War between Othman and Ali (A.D. 656-61) as an "expression of a true Fronde."[280] Similarly, Spengler has overemphasized the various similarities between the different Semitic culture-souls and the Persian civilization, but his attempt at the creation of a unitary pattern—that of the "Magian" culture—has resulted in the advancement of the theory of historical pseudomorphosis (in which an entirely different or older civilization is submerged under the high flood-tide of a more recent and dominating civilization, e.g., the Russian under the Faustian since the time of Peter the Great,[281] Syriac under the Roman and the Aztec under the modern European). It has been held by Toynbee to be "one of the most illuminating of his intuitions."[282] That too is perhaps an understatement; it is perhaps, oneof the brightest spots in historiography.

Thus, while one might reject Spengler's hypothesis of a unitary Magian soul (the term, Magian, in itself is entirely non-Arab) pseudomorphosis should prove to be a very useful medium in the determination of the impact of one civilization over another, sometimes in a staid, at others in a bravura fashion. The unfolding of a complex picture—and that too on the canvas of

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[280] D.W., II, p. 424.

[281] Ibid., p. 192.

[282] Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, XII, p. 670.

world history—could never be a simple task, but Spengler has not shirked from it, whereas most of the others have.

No writer can free himself from the debt he owes to his predecessors in his field of work. Spengler is no exception to this generality. The foundation for such a work—this is not to say that Spengler does not bring to bear the flashes of his intuition into his 935-page Decline—was laid by Vico in 1725 with the publication of his Principles of a New Science Treating the Common Nature of Nations (Principii d' una scienza nova) and represents a revolt against the Newtonian concept of history. Nietzsche, with his dictum, "God is dead", emphasized the sterility of the modern age, with its image-making powers having become extinct. Nietzsche's influence on Spengler, as also on his contemporaries, is visible in the Decline. Both betray positivistic overtones.

The German romantics, and Herder in particular, had postulated a return to the mediaeval past of Germany, and this might help to explain (as suggested by Dawson) in part at least Spengler's anti-intellectual and relativistic attitude. For Spengler, each culture possesses its own ethos and "feel" which results in certain characteristics enchorial to each culture in spite of its undergoing interaction with other cultures. Even, if such an interaction results in pseudomorphosis, the original characteristics of the culture, nevertheless, assert themselves in the long run. Each culture therefore possesses its own soul, can feel its pulse alone, and has its own characteristic expressions which manifest

themselves in architecture, literature, music, and belle lettres. It also pictures world history in its own way.

The appearance of the Magian culture, according to Spengler, dates from the time of Augustus "in the countries between Nile and Tigris, Black Sea and south Arabia"[283] whose picture of world history is cavern-like, with everything pre-ordained and for which "the When...issues from Where"[284] Such a civilization would, on Spengler's analogy, look to hte planets. (dominated as it is by the clear cerulean sky) to determine auguries and portents pertaining to individual and collective destinies as typified (according to Spengler) by the Chaldeans. Here there is neither the Apollonian body-sensuousness nor concern with the mere present nor the symphonization of the individual will. The individual, on the other hand, looks on life as a series of constant expectations. The flux of life is thus viewed apocalyptically. The Magian concept of time also is cavern-like, since both the creation and the end of the world have been pre-ordained by the Creator.[285]

Another characteristic feature of the Magian culture adumbrated by Spengler is that the Magian man worships one God (whether He is called Yahweh, Elohim, Ahura-Mazdah or Marduk-bal) who is the the principle of good, all the other deities being evil or impotent.[286] One might stretch Spengler's hypothesis further, and on his analogy also say that Neus (Plotinus'

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[283] Ibid, p 183.
[284] D.W., p. 238.
[285] Ibid, pp. 174, 209, 215.
[286] D.W., p. 206.

transcendent First Principle), Annum of the Akkadians, and Enlil of the theolgians of Nippur (Mesopotamia) could also be so categorized. In this connection the Muslim philosopher, Iqbal, says: "If this view of the prophetic teaching is meant to apply to Islam, it is obviously a misrepresentation. The point to note is that the magian admitted the existence of false gods, only he did not turn to worship them. Islam denies the very existence of false gods...Spengler fails to appreciate the cultural value of the idea of the finality of prophethood in Islam. No doubt, one important feature of magian culture is a perpetual attitude of expectation, a constant looking forward to the coming of Zoroaster's unborn sons, the Messiah, or the paraclete of the fourth gospel. I have already indicated the direction in which the student of Islam should seek the cultural meaning of the doctrine of finality of prophethood in Islam...It may further be regarded as a psychological cure for the magian attitude of constant expectation which tends to give false value of history. Ibn-i-Khaldun, seeing the spirit of his own view of history, has fully criticized and... finally demolished the alleged revelational basis in Islam of an idea similar, at least in its psychological effects, to the original magian idea which had reappeared in Islam under the pressure of magian thought."[287]

Iqbal does, however, concede the growth of a Magian crust over Islam as practised by certain sects but he strongly criticizes Spengler for the latter's postulation of the cavern-concept and on

[287] M. Iqbal, Lectures, pp. 144-45.

his ignorance of the existence of "I" as a "free centre of experience" as an expression in the religious experience of Islam.[288] I shall, however, revert to a detailed discussion of this and allied aspects later on. In the meantime, however, it would be well worth pointing out that it is actually the grouping by Spengler of the Semitic Sumero, Akkadian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Syeriac, south Arabian, Judean, primitive Christian and Muslim cultures with the non-Semitic Iranian civilization that is most open to question.

Turning to the cavern concept—the visualization of closed space and time—this view, even if it were applicable to the so-called Magian man, is not any different from that held by the physicists and astronomers of today, whether they are the exponents of the steady-state or explosion theory, on the probable evolution of the cosmic system. At a distant time (thousands of million years ago) the element of Destiny or Chance led to the formation of hydrogen and thence to the higher elements, after which the coalesence of particles commenced, leading, finally, to life. Likewise, the end of the solar system (of which our world happens to be a part) is equally pre-ordained (the radioactive process undergoing in the sun and the energy loss under-gone by it in the energy process has been worked out in detail by Hans Bethe), so that, in the ultimate analysis, it is doubtful if the concept of time attributed by Spengler to the Semitic world-picture is applicable to it in the sense in which it is meant by him.

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[288] Ibid., pp. 143-44

Nor is it in any way different from the modern scientific (or shall we say the Faustian?) concept of time, whether considered on the cosmic, physical, biological, and rhythmic time levels.

An intriguing point about Spengler's characterization of the Magian soul is its expression as displayed through its architecture. According to Spengler, in the Magin architectural design it is "a definite roof that is emphasized (whereas in the other domain the protest against the classical feeling led merely to the development of an interior)".[289] This is an acute, if a rather generalized, observation. The Byzantinian dome built over the centre of the basilica created the impression of dividing off the interior, and the art of balancing the dome over a square is a Byzantinian contribution.[290] The effect produced by chiaroscuro—that in which the shades alternate and present a non-sensuous pattern—should be absent in the Byzantinian mosiacs on Spengler's supposition. The Byzantinian art however is a compromise between the Hellenic and Aramaean spirits. The Greek sense of pro-portion and the "newly released Armaean energy concentrated on thin, small, and easily portable miniatures."[291] The arabesque design, which Spengler attributes to Magians, was more probably due to the Armenian-Iranian non-Semitic influence, as exemplified by Naqsh-i-Rustam, and was carried to the farthest limits of perfection by the Arabs in Spain. However, if Spengler holds cupola to be the basic expression of the Magian

[289] D. W., I, p, 210
[290] Sir Steven Runciman, Byzantinian Civilization, p. 258
[291] Ibid., p. 267

culture in terms of the roof-concept, then the Aramaean architecture represents a radical departure from the Iranian architectural expression. The latter is based on square-shaped columns and flat roof, e.g., the Xerxes Hall of Hundred Columns which had a wooden vault once. The art of making stained glass has been brought to Europe by the Byzantinians. The Achaeminid and Sassanid architecture of Iran bears close resemblance with the Indian Hindu and the Far Eastern Hindu (e.g., the Angkor temple in Tahiland) architecture. In the Zoroastrian fire temple it is the interior—more so than it is in the Hindu temple—that is shut off from the exterior.

In the Muslim architecture, however, open spaces predominate, more so than in the Western churches and synagogues. Generally, the mosque is transepted into a hall which is closed from three sides and from which the imam leads the prayer. The hall is contiguous with a courtyard which is generally larger than the hall and bears a roof. It might be possible that Spengler's idea of Muslim architecture was largely derived from the architectural pattern of the Church of St. Sophia in Istanbul converted into mosque by the Turks after the fall of Constantinople in A.D. 1453.

The earlier Iranian sculpture also takes more after the Hindu than the classical mode; it is sensuous and non-proportionate. The contours of the body, ornaments, and the overall general pattern (as in the pre-served statue of Anahita, the gooddess of waters and fertility) is sharply reminiscent of the Ghandara statues and

nudity which is singularly absent in the Arab-Byzantinian art or in the latter-day Iranian art itself, is not abhorred. In the field of poetry also Persian and Arabic poetry are far apart. In the corpus of Arabic poetry we find similes outnumbering metaphors and a very extensive vocabulary, with strong emphasis on the narrative, which is amply displayed in parables. Persian poetry, on the other hand, by and large, is metaphorical, with images transfigured into metaphors. In the result, Persian poetry is mainly abstract and metaphorical and singularly lacking in contours. The description of Raman Sahira in the Shahnamah is an instance of contourless delineation; her appearance is conveyed to the reader through generally employed similes. Arabic poetry, on the other hand, describes the contours fully and sensuously. A narrative poet like Imr-al Qais would perhaps be closer to Homer than to Firdausi in spite of the latter's substantial Arabic background. Persian poetry primarily believes in images which recall features vaguely than in bold concrete descriptions. Its attitude is therefore classical, if "classical" implies the deliberate rejection of realism and the adoption of a formal style.

It is also hard to believe that Islam as a world religion should not have felt the impact of cultures which it has absorbed or displaced. Islam in Al-Magrib, the Sudan, Burma, Malaysia, Indonesia, Central Asia, southern Russia, the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, and West Africa would naturally absorb the "soul-expressions" of the cultures in these areas and, in many cases, even retain the animistic substrates of the original cultures which it has either overwhelmed or displaced. The same process has

been experienced by Christianity in Latin America, Haiti, the Caribbean islands, and in many parts of Africa. Possibly visitations to shrines and graves of saints are the reliquae of the animistic residue which has become part of the collective unconscious of the Muslim community of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.

Having made a few general observations on Spengler's concept of the Magian soul and what it stands for in the Decline, it would perhaps be germane to our purpose to examine the racial cultural components of the soul, viz., those that extend from Iran to Asia Minor in the north and from the latter to south Arabia in the south. It is to be seen whether Iran and the Semitic areas grouped by Spengler with it on the basis of its argument that both obey the principal Magian characteristics and constitute a unitary pattern which could be fitted into the Magian culture-soul. Linguistic and anthropological evidence, how-ever, points to the Aryan or Indo-European origin of the Armenians and Iranians, and, if the pre-Islamic Sassanid Iran cannot be regarded as a sibling of the Semitic culture during the period envisioned by Spengler, then Spengler's hypothesis obviously suffers from certain serious drawbacks. In effect, it is to be seen whether Spengler is justified in grouping Iran during the Sassanid period with the Semitic cultures as constituting a Magian whole. Although the considerations might at first sight strike as being empirical, there are broader aspects that transcend the bounds of empiricism and are fundamental.

II

Whatever the origins of the religions of great civilizations, with their history shrouded in the horizons of the distant past, it might be legitimate to infer that no civilization is insular enough not to borrow from other civilizations either coeval with or preceding it. During the second millennium B.C. considerable trafficking by various races occurred in the Mesopotamian and Anatolian regions, mainly by the Hittites, Mitannians, and the Kassites, who belonged to the Indo-Aryan linguistic group. The continguity of the frontiers between the Iraqi and the Iranian regions accelerated the process of racial admixture, with the original Iranian cast being reinforced by the Semitic, and the original Sumero-Akkadian racial pattern being rendered more complex through interaction with the Aryan racial invasion. One such direct exchange of ideas might have occurred in the case of Zoroastrians vis-a-vis Judism, and later on in Christianity.

Spengler gives rise to what might constitute the hub of a controversy by asserting rather boldly that the Sassanid empire was the nation of the "Persian" people, and that in the Sassanid period the belivers were of Semitic origin. For Spengler, there are no "proto-Persian people branched from the Aryan."[292] He further elaborates the above point by averring:

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[292] D.W., II, p. 168

"The Persians of the Sassanid period no longer conceived them-selves, as their predecessors of the Achaeminid times had done, as a unit by virtue of origin and speech, but as a unit of the Mazdaist believers, vis-a-vis unbelievers, irrespective of the fact that the latter might be of Persian origin (as the bulk of the Nestorians were), so also with the Jews, and later the Mandaeans and Manichaens, later again the Monophysite and Christian—each body felt itself a legal community, a juristic person in the new sense."[293]

In other words, what Spengler implies is that, whatever the con-figuration of the Iranian culture during the early period—that is, that of the Medeans and the Achaeminids—the "soul-expression" of the Zoroastrian-based Iranian culture had become Magian both in thought in spirit, with the Ohrmazd-Ahriman dualism (with evil victorious in the middle and good triumphant in the end) leading to the worship of one god, and Ahriman symbolizing the evil god. One classic parallel which might be cited here is offered is that of Egypt since the advent of Islam. Till the advent of Islam, Egypt went through a period that was akin in many ways to the Seleucid period in Iran, but the Hellenization of Egypt had proceeded further because of its geographical proximity to Greece and Rome. Its population, preponderantly Hamitic, had first had Hellenic, later on Aramic, and finally Arab infusions. But a transformation of such kind can be better explained on the basis of pseudomorphosis than by asserting that

[293] D.W., II, p. 69

there is no pro to-Hamitic component in the Egyptian-Arab culture. It is possibly the momentum of such a pseudomorphotic transfiguration that counts. One might see the same process at work in Al-Magrib, with the original Berber, Nilotic, and Nordic casts being flooded by the Arabic: in the result, North. Africa has become the avant grade of Arab renaissance.

Unfortunately, no tangible evidence which could lead on to the spoor of the religious beliefs of the pre-Zoroastrian Iran is available. But what could be inferred is that, consequent upon the extinction of Assyria and later of Chaldes and the ascendancy of the Medeans, the extent of ex-change between the Semites east of Syria and Iranians increased: the transfer of the Jewish population from Jerusalem to the land of Medes accentuated and furthered this exchange. It is perhaps equally justifiable to assume that modification in the pantheon of a culture is not always the result of borrowing, and may be arrived at independently. At the same time the myths of the same culture may be contradictory. Such is the case, for example, with the Sumerian and Mesopotamian eschatology. One Sumerian version of the after-life suggests a "land of no return", a vast space somewhere underground where Ereshkigan, the Sumerian Demeter, and Nugal, the god of war and pestilence (and her husband) reign, and yet another version states that the sun lights the underworld, and Utu, the sun-god, pronounces judgment on the dead.[294] It would therefore be a rather bold hypothesis to advance that one culture has borrowed

[294] George Roux, Ancient Iraq, p. 91.

the components of its pantheon directly from another and has not arrived at them on its own. In the Mesopotamian eschatology also the dead spirits had to cross a river by ferry, as in the Greek. Roux suggests:

"...The famous Babylonian 'pessimism' was much more than a temporary outburst of despair. It was metaphysical in essence...The Tigris-Euphrates valley is a country of violent and unexpected changes...Each spring, therefore, a great and poignant ceremony took place in many cities and especially in Babylon: the akitu or New Year festival which combined the Sacred Marriage of the gods. the great drama of Creation, and the annual reinstatement of the king, and culminated in the gathering of all the gods who solemnly 'decreed the Destinies'. Only then could the king go back to his throne, the shepherd to his field. The Mesopotamian was assured that the world would exist for another year."[295]

Such an attitude does not substantially differ from the ancient Hellenic propitiation of the gods through immolation. It has been claimed that the concept of after-life came to Judaism through Zoroastrianism, but it would seem that the very germ of the concept of after-life was present in the Mesopotamian theology and, if Judaism did borrow the concept of after-life, Babylonia might well have been as good a source as Zoroastrianism. The fact is that we do not know. Much has also been made of Zoroaster's postulation of monotheism. The concept however of

[295] Ibid., p. 93

the external world as the projection of the mind of the mind of God is not the preserve of one people alone; it is the nature of the concept and not the mere elementary postulation that is more important. Speaking of Akhnaton (Ikhnaton), White remarks:

"This view of cosmos and reality is world-wide. In Egypt we. find it expressed in the conception of the god Ptah. In his early days Ptah was the patron of architects and craftsmen. But eventually he became the supreme mind from which all things were derived. The world and all that is in it existed as thought in his mind—and his thoughts, like his plans for building and works of art, needed but to be expressed in spoken words to take form as material realities."[296]

Thus in Egypt, in the 14th century B.C. monotheism was established by Ikhnaton. As for Breasted's contention that "consciously and deliberately by intellectual process he (Ikhnaton) gained his position" or that he was the "first individual in history"[297] is an altogether another matter. Be that as it may, what can be said with certainty is that, given proper environment, multiple cultures can postulate analogous thought-attitudes to theology.

One might therefore wonder whether, in considering Zoroastrianism, it would not be profitable to invoke Spengler's hypothesis of pseudomorphosis and to regard the original Aryan-

[296] Leslie A. White, The Science of Culture, p. 234.
[297] J.H. Breasted, Encyclopedia Britannia, 14th Ed.

Iranian substrate as the foundation on which the edifice of the Zoroastrian theological system has been constructed. The Zoroastrian theological system incorporates several basic characteristics which were inherent in the Aryan-Vedic culture and its pantheon. The chief point of difference lies between the geographical situations of Iran and the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent. The Vedic theological system because of the, as it were, closed geography of the subcontinent, remained impervious to impact from foreign cultures to the extent of Iran. Buddhism therefore possibly represents an internal revolt and an overflow resulting in a different configuration, as the Vedic culture soul could not suffice for the complex and enlarged world picture that was unfolding itself with riotous rapidity before its view. The case with Iran was altogether different; it was open to osmotic pressure from all sides. The Kassite, Barthian, Sumero-Akkadian, Armenian, Judean, and Hellenic influences—both on intellectual and racial planes—interacted with, and finally modified, the original Iranian pantheon. Mesopotamia underwent the same process of interaction. Kassites, an Indo-Aryan people, who invaded Mesopotamia from Luristan, immediately to the south of Hamadan, governed the country from 1594 to 1171 B. C. As result of the Kassite influence, the Mesopotamian pantheon of the period incorporated such Indo-Aryan deities as Shuriash (Ind. Sury), Maruthash (Ind. Marut), and Buriash (possibly identical with the Hellenic god of north wind, Boreas). These deities occur

side by side with the Sumero-Akkadian gods, Kashahu, Shipak, Harbe, Shumalia, Shuqama, etc.[298] The same process, it is more than probable, occurred in Iran during the formative period of its cultural expression.

If the *Gathas* are taken to be the guide, a rather clearer picture emerges. Zaehner has dwelt on this point in some detail. The Iranian *devas,* for instance, correspond to the Indo-Vedic *Devas.* The Indo-Aryan Sarve or Rudra who later turns up as Siva runs parallel to the Iranian Saurva and Nanhaitya to the two Naslyas or Asvins of the Vedic texts. The *devas* themselves were regarded by Zoroaster as malilicent powers who refused to fulfil the commands of Ahura-Mazdah or the Wise Lord.[299] The Rigveda recognizes two types of deities: the *asuras* and *devas.* The former are removed from man, and possess cosmic significance--that is, they are more concerned with the right ordering of the cosmic system. The *devas* are regarded as being closer to man, and, what is more, are associated with the advancing Aryans into the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent.[300] But the collective unconscious of the Iranians during the thousands of years covering this migratory process and the appearance of Zoroaster had produced a considerable body of changes both in the Iranian pantheon and in the theological system.

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[298] George Roux, *Ancient Iraq,* p. *202.*

[299] R .C. Zaehner, The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroasterianiam, p. 40

[300] Ibid., p. 39

Now Spengler's view is that, by virtue of the intense Zoroastrian vizualization of the struggle between good and evil, Zoroastrianism is Magian through and through. If the latter-day Zoroastrianism is adopted as the standard, this might well be the case. Zoroaster's antithesis was that of *Asha* (Truth) and *Druj* (Lie). Such an antithesis is derived from the Rigveda. It is the Iranian prophet who brought this duality to the forefront. In the later-day Zoroastrianism, less so during the Achaeminid, Seleucid, and Arsacid periods, but with the display of a remarkable intensity during the Sassanid period, the original Aryan concept of the dualism between Truth and Lie was made to crystallize as one between Ahura-Mazdah and Ahriman. This dualism, as pointed out by James, is also reflected in the Judeo-Christian eschatology and angelogy, and occurs time and again "in relation to dualism and the concept of evil".[301] Whereas in the Gathas, Ahura-Mazdah, who later personifies the principle of good life, is regarded as the twin author of Spenta Mainyu (the good) and Angra Mainyu (the evil), the latter-day expanding world-picture which faced the "Magians" of the Sassanid era (A.D. 224-650) probably rendered the solution insufficient, and hence arose the Ohrmazd the latter-day version of Ahura-Mazdah)-Ahriman duality. A simple theological system was thus made more and more complex.

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[301] 22. E.O. James, The Ancient Gods, p. 281

Zaehner claims that this transfiguration of the Vedic gods, such as the devas, derives from Zoroaster's world-vision which is rooted in the pastoral conditions of his time. He observes:

"He (Zoroaster) does not, however, start from any abstract principle, he starts from the concrete situation as it faced him in eastern Iran. On the one side, he found a settled pastoral and agricultural community devoted to the soil and the raising of cattle, on the other hand he found a predatory, marauding society which destroyed both cattle and which was a menace to any settled way of life. The gods were like unto them: never were they good rulers, delivering over, as they did, the ox to fury (aeshma) instead of providing it with good pasture."[302]

It has not been found possible to ascertain and pinpoint the birth-place of Zoroaster. Nyberg assigns the place of his birth to some-where between Oxus and Jaxartes, inhabited by savage tribes, before the conquest the region by the Persians. He also ascribes to the prophet the role of a shaman.[303] Such a hypothesis Nyberg bases on the principal desiderata of shamanism which are the two requirements of equal importance, the ordeal and the Maga. It is on this basis, according to Nyberg, that the whole edifice of Zoroastrianism has been constructed, and from which have been derived the concepts of after-life, ordeal by molten metal, and judgment. Herzfeld, the noted archaeologist, attributes to Zoroaster in his Zoroaster and His World the role of a crafty

[302] R.C. Zaehner, The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism, p. 40
[303] H.S. Nyberg, Die Religionen des Alten Man, p. 45

politician. A study of the Gathas would however show him to be a man of sensivity and deep insight, cast in the mould of Ikhnaton.

It would therefore be fair to conclude that Zoroastrianism first grew on a pattern similar to that obtaining with regard to the Indo-Aryan pantheon, but that ultimately, through its interaction with the other extraneous—mainly Semitic theological systems—diverged from its original course. For instance, in the Sumerian mythology the first man is Adapa whose loss of immortality results from his blind disobedience and who is condemned by Anu to pass his days on earth as a mortal. Similarly the fall of Man described in Genesis might have influenced the latter-day Iranians, as is amply shown by the legend of Mashye and Mashyane in Bundashisn, a Pehlavi text describing the origin of the world. The legend finds no mention in the Gathas and is clearly of a later provenance. Likewise, Ahriman represents an extension and embellishment of the original concept of Deaf (Lie) as postulated by Zoroaster, to which the latter-day theologians added their own panoply of symbols and exegeses, so much so that Mani, although he retained the names of the original Zoroastrian deities, rejected the dualism of good and evil as abstract principles. In this context Cornford observes.

"...no student of Orphic and Pythagorean thought will fail to see between it and the Persian religion such close resemblance that we can regard both systems as expressions of one and the

same concept of life, and use either of them to interpret the other."[304]

James holds that Aristotle extends recognition to the affinity existing between the dualism of the Magi and the Platonic distinction between Form and Matter. He further affirms:

"The Pythagoreans made a similar distinction between the principles of good and evil, corresponding to the contrast of soul and body. For Empedocles, these primary elements of 'roots of things' were held together by two contrary forces, love and hate, producing a state of tension with order and harmony emerging from strife and discord and the reign of chaos. All constructive forces of reality arose from love but only as a temporary measure destined to give place to the dominance of discord as the ever recurrent sinister element in the world".[305]

This basic correspondence has, however, emerged as a very dominant characteristic of Iranian cosmogeny and religion, with a colouring of its own (Spengler has not discussed the Apollonian dualism of virtue and wickedness in unequivocal terms which accorded recognition to such a dualism). This would naturally lead us to question Spengler's assertion about the classical man that "only concretes ..condensed into being for him".[306]

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[304] F.M. Cornford, From Religion to Philosophy, p. 174

[305] E.O. James, The Ancient Gods, p. 283.

[306] D.W., p.402.

Mani's dualism was that of light (spirit) and darkness (matter). In Mani's philosophy Zurvan was the father of light and Zurvanisnn was used as an instrument for the creation of a welded Iran by uniting its heterogenous components during the Sassanid period. The concept of God had also become vastly different. Zoroaster had originally vizualized the world and flesh as "the projection of the mind of God": the latter-day Iranians, were, however, led into other ways of thinking. In this context it might again be worth our while to quote Zaehner:

"Zoroaster's God creates ex nihilo—he thinks the world into existence. Both the Greeks and the Indians, howeyer, accepted it as axiomatic that nothing can arise out of nothing, Either, then, God emanates both the intelligible and sensible orders from himself, or he gives form to an eternally existing final matter. It was the latter view that prevailed in the Sassanian orthodoxy, and we find it explicitly stated (in Denkart, ed. Madan, 250. 3-4 and Sikand Gumanik Vichar, 6) that no form can be brought into being from not being, nor can it be made to return thither. Creation is no longer a philosophically respectable idea; the prophet's insight had been forgotten and the Sassanian theologians became the yictims of two alien (i.e., Indian and Greek) philosophies which had no roots in Iran."[307]

Something very similar had happened in Egypt. Ikhnaton having died in about 1369 B.C., his successor, Tutenkhaten, abandoned lkhnaton's monotheism in order to placate the priestly

[307] R.C. Zaehner,--The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism, p. 199

class. The resemblances, however, between the early Zorastrianism and the Semitic religions (particularly the earlier ones, especially Judaism and Christianity) are so pronounced as to trigger off attempts to determine whether it was chronologically at all possible for Zoroaster to have been influenced by some source which came not from the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent but from the Semitic lands. Toynbee is essentially correct in suggesting that Zoroaster "turned his back on the Irano-Indian pantheon", and that "he saw the godhead as singular, not plural, and as being righteous, not as being the morally indifferent source of Evil as well as Good."[308] Toynbee's tentative suggestion is that Zoroaster might have been influenced by the Israeli exiles who, according to 2 Kings XVII. 6 and XVI11. 7 were settled by the Assyrians in the "cities of Medes" consequent upon the capture of Samaria and the decimation of Israel in 722 B.C.[309] But he also keeps the alternative view (and this seems to be much more probable) in sight that the similarity between Zoroaster's vision and Deutero-Isaiah can also be explained not as a result of "stimulus diffusion in either direction, but as a result of independent similar reactions to similar experiences."

It therefore seems probable that the configuration of the Iranian culture-soul is complex in the extreme. The original overlay of the Indo-Aryan pantheon and life-view were submerged under Zoroaster's monotheism. This monotheism

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[308] Arnold J. Toynbee, A Stndy of History, XlI, p. 435.

[309] Ibid., p. 435

later on sinks under the complex flood-tide of ideas pouring in from all directions. Nevertheles, if the configuration of the Iranian culture during the Sassanid period is to be examined from the Spenglerian theory of the Magian soul, the non-Magian characteristics of the Iranian culture during this period would be: the Magil (rather ironic, but then the Magi constituted a phalanx of inherited priesthood, and like, the Brahmins, were originally philosophers and teachers to the Achaemenid kings; Judaism, since the days of the Judges, did have an inherited priestly class, e.g., the Cohens, but Christianity and Islam have none); the ritual, particularly with respect to the Hama plant, which correspnds to the Indo-Aryan Soma plant; and the conflict between Asha and Druj which was stretched by some of the magi to the Zurvan-Ohrmazd-Ahriman triumverate, with Zurvan-Time existing co-eternally with them. Indeed, Ahriman is so intensely Iranian that one would hesitate to arrogate to it any Magian colouring in the Spenglerian sense. The Magian characteristics of the Sassanid Iran, on Spengler's analogy, would be the concepts of Apocalypse, Resurrection, Reward and Punishment, and the non-mortality of soul. If, however, the examples of Marcion and Ibn Daysan, the Syrian philosopher, are taken as parallels, then one might also show that Ibn Daysan was of Persian origin and Marcion's. philosophy rested on the rejection of the Old Testament.

There is another very important point about the pre-Islamic Iranian culture soul, and this might well be considered from Spengler's concept of the form of culture soul Iran's is a very old civilization and one therefore wonders why it should not be

allowed to stand on its own in the Sassanid times. The Sassanid influence has persisted even to this day in one form or the other. Firdausi, a Muslim, displays at times the residue of fatalism that characterizes much of the pre-Islamic Iranian soul-expression. Sal, the father of Rustam, when summoned by the king to appear before the Magian priests who put to him several riddles, says about time that it is like a wood-cutter, and we, men, are like grass to him.[310] This is how Omar Khayyam also visualizes life. He is at times an epicurian, stoic, and at other times displays expiatory moods, but all through his Rubayat runs the strand of unmistakable fatalism.

This strand of fatalism runs through Persian poetry in one form or the other and the genre of ghazal (lyrical poetry) which later gained ascendency over the other genres amply attests to this. Persian poetry is the poetry of desire but of non-fulfilment, of idealization accompanied by timorousness lest the ideal be shattered. Almost utterly non-sensuous, it is unlike the Western poetry or, for that matter, any other poetry. It shows a clear departure from the Sanskritic poetry, since the principal characteristic of the latter is equilibrium, of which Kalidasa's Shakuntala is a patent example. It approximates somewhat to the European Mediaeval Courtly Love, but is more sublime and noble. The Iranian mysticism has a colouring of its own; fulfilment both in the realms of temporal and religious love becomes a marathon—indeed, almost a Sisyphean—task. No

[310] Firdausi. The Shahnamah,, ed. Vullers, 208-11.

poem could illustrate this high—almost-out-of-reach—degree of idealization than the Mantiqat-i-Tayr (The Paraliament of Birds) of Farid-ud-din Attar which is a splended allegory, with the various birds symbolizing the spiritual evolution of man. Attar postulates the journey of life through seven valleys of search. This is not to say that the Iranian mysticism and poetry in general have not been influenced by Arabic: indeed, the influence of the latter has trans-formed the vocabulary, symbolism, and the thought-structure of Persian. But, even keeping the Arabic influence in sight, a good deal of difference is visible on the surface, notwithstanding the symbols and allusions bequesthed by Arabic to it.

Whereas Arabic is a vigoruous language, having a vast storehouse of words as wide and panaromic as as the expanse of the Arab desert, Persian is, by and large, metaphorical, volatile, and hauntingly fatalistic. It is abstract and eschews contour-drawing; but primarily it reflects the conflict between escapism and fatalism.

For instance, Hafiz says:

از قال و قیل مدرسه حالے ولم
گرفت
یک چند نیز خدمت معشوق و
مے کنم
کی بوددر زمانه وفا جام ومے بیار

تامن حکایت جم و طاؤس کے کنم

"This heart of mine is oppressed with the catechism of how and why. Let me for some time at least serve the beloved and the liquid ruby.

When was there any fidelity in our world? Come; let us regale ourselves with wine and with the stories of Jamshed, Kaus, and Kai."

Even behind this apparent jocularity lurks the unmistakable Iranian fatalism. It is not a conflict between catechism and delight, but between the individual intellect and reality which the poet finds so oppressive and which has very little to offer him.

The poetry of the post-Islamic Iran has an individuality of its own, and, if it resorts to Arabic symbols, it is also irresistibly drawn towards the myths and symbols of an age that lies beyond Rudagi, beyond the Sassanid, even beyond the Achaeminid, and the Medean eras, to the primoridial past of Iran when its racial consciousness had its birth. This is the age which Firdausi so longingly visualizes.

One is therefore led to believe that since the Safavid period the Iranian culture-soul has been trying to discover and thereby retrieve or revive its past heritage through the employment of new symbols from its glorious and chequered past, witness the poetry of Pur-i-Dawud. Whereas the Arab language has unified heterogenous people, such as the Berbers, the Sudanese and the Hamites, and has conferred upon them the Arab mode of

thought, the Iranian, though Muslim, is essentially non-Arab in his soul expression.

Pur-i-Dawud, rather well known for his penchant towards the purgation of non-Persian words, concretizes the longing of Firdausi

when he says:

گراز ستم کیتی آتشکده شد ویران

درکاخ دل افروزم کالون اوستارا

"If through the cruelty of Destiny, the Fire temple is quiet, still shall I enkindle anew, in the receptacle of my heart, the altar of the Avastha."

The maqtah (last verse) of another celebrated poem by Pur-i-Dawud echoes the same idea in rather more drastic terms:

اگر پرسی ز

کیش پور داود

جوان پارسی

ایران پرستد

"If one asks the creed of Pur-i-Dawud, he would say: Let the young Parsi (Persian) worship Iran only."

The modern Iranian, for Pur-i-Dawud, should be a throw-back on the original Zoroastrian.

The alternatiye suggestion that might therefore be advanced in this context is that during the Sassanid period Iran underwent a process of pseudomorphosis (in part, at least), retaining some of the original Iranian characteristics. No Semitic religion before the latter-day Zoroastrianism had raised Satan (or Eblis) to the pedestal of Ahriman, for and against whom even the planets join into the fray.

III

The nexus in the Spenglerian thesis regarding the unitary nature of the Magian culture is the worship of one God, who is the principle of good, whereas the other deities are either impotent or evil (e.g., Ahriman), that is, they have either been relegated to a secondary position ritually or otherwise or have been interred deep within the collective unoconscious of a community to erupt all of a sudden and then subside and so on. Instances of such a kind are provided by the Old Testament, to which reference would be made later.

The corpus of the Faustian or Western literature would, however, go to show that this peculiarity, if it at all obtains in the Magian culture, is not endemic to it alone, and that the acknowledgment of an impotent deity can be made on a symbolic level also. Milton's Paradise Lost written during the "summer" of the Faustian period displays a rather potent Satan, and the Romantic evaluation of the role of Satan as the real hero of the

epic has demanded considerable effort at rebuttal. The same thing more or less could be said of the Dark Angel and Mephistopheles. Evil as a concept had been trans-figured into a symbol both in the Renaissance drama and poetry. But even otherwise evil was a crucial point for discussion and polemics during the Reformation period. In Paradise Lost the character of Satan has undergone a change in keeping with the more complex world-vision, and, instead of being an extraneous, depersonalized force, he emerges as force lying latent within the intellect, emerging at times with shattering effect. Withal he persists. Lionel Johnson's poem, The Dark Angel, is rather illustrative of this transfiguration. For Johnson, a Catholic poet of fin de siecle, the immanence of the Dark Angel derives from his harbourage within, who can at best be sup-pressed but not destroyed. In other words, this is the symbolic transfiguration of the anthropomorphic Ahriman. The modern Christian attempt to evolve a kenotic concept of God (that is, in which God has emptied His characteristics in Jesus) is also an attempt to resolve the question of evil.[311] Later on, in this essay, I shall have the occasion to discuss how Islam has dealt with the problem of evil.

[311] In the letters and fragments written by Nietzsche Dionysos and the Crucified merge into one symbol. Holderlein celebrates in his last hymn the union of Jesus and Dionysos. The gnostic theogeny of the early 17th-century mystic Bohme also provides just another garb to gnosticism in his Everlasting Yes and Everlasting No. (Jacob Taubes, On the Nature of the Theological Method: Some Reflections on the Methodological Principles in Tillich's Theology, The Journal of Religion (Jamiary 1954)

It is generally thought that, with the conclusion of the covenant between God and Moses, Judaism became a purely monotheistic religion. This conference is, however, rather debatable. Mere belief in one God is something different from the practice of monotheism. In Isaiah (6:1-2) we read:

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain, he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly."

God is thus visualized in clear and unequivocal human terms. This naturally means that the prophet's mind, as presented through the medium of the Old Testament, has not been able to present the attributes of God in non-reified terms. Man's conceptualizing faculty, based on a sequential and sensuous world, obviously fails to express the non-external world which is the preserve of the religious and mystical experience alone. Christianity has evolved further and demonetized the Hebrew concept of God; but in its totality the abstract concept of God, beyond the ordinary mundane understanding of man, has been conveyed to man in the Quran, and the Quran, alone.

Even though idolatry had been abolished in Deuteronomy 12, with the period probably around 1451 B.C., notwithstanding this edict, till as late as 705 B.C. and 621 B.C. Hezekiah and Josiah had to purge Solomon's temple of the brazen serpent, Nehustan; the

god, Baal; the goddess, Asherah; and the heavenly bodies. In 2 Kings 23,4 we are told:

"And the king commanded Hilkiah the high priest, and the priests of the second order, and the keepers of the door to bring forth out of the temple of the LORD all the vessels that were made for Baal, and for the grove, and for all the host of heaven; and he burned them without Jerusalem in the fields of Kidron, and carried the ashes of them unto Bethel."

The above passage substantiates Toynbee's view that the Hebrewes, who had by this time built up agricultural settlements were subject to certain traditions which were being practised in Syria at the time, e g., rural prostitution which was an agricultural fertility rite common to the Syrian and the Sumero-Akkadian civilizations, and that "at this stage of religious development it was natural that the peoples of Syria, including those that were Yahweh-worshippers, should each tolerate and even welcome of its neighbour's god with its own national god."[312] It was from the time; of Elijah and Elisha that monotheism, based on a new vision, was reinforced by the Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, and Jeremiah, amongst others.

The Jewish eschatology also underwent a change. Thus, Ecclesiastes (9: 10) says:

[312] Arnold J. Toynbee, A Study of History, XII, p. 425

"Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave whither thou goest."

Prior to Isaiah the Jewish belief in after-life was confined to sheol—a shadowy, depersonalized existence that would be the fare of all men, whatever their deeds on earth—which has something in common with the Sumerian eschatological legends and the Sumero-Akkadian pessimism. It has been categorically affirmed by eminent authorities on comparative religion, particularly by E.O. James and R.C. Zaehner, that contact with Zoroastrianism makes Daniel conscious of after-life. The concept of Reward and Punishment also occurs in Isaiah (26:19) and Job (19:25-26), besides Daniel (12:2) but one wonders whether the matter is all that simple: there is also the possibility that the Israelite exiles in Babylon during the Chaldean days might have drawn on Sumerian eschatology which postulated in some of its versions judgment by the sun-god, Utu, on the dead.

While we do not know as to who borrowed from whom and how far during the period leading to the decline of Assyria and Chaldea, the relevance of all this to Judaism—and for that matter to all religions—is that each religion, with the passage of time, has to face up to a changed environment and expanding world picture. The Aivlik Eskimo, for instance, believes death to be a temporary sleep; soon the body will reawaken, and life therefore is above time. Ideas such as these possesses the germs of the immortality of the soul. But the Eskimo had almost no contact

with foreign cultures till the recent times, and his theological system had sufficed for him for the time being. No teleological or ontological apercus were required for the simple reason that his life was simple and confined to chores that just led him to survive. Not so with the Classical and Semitic worlds: history did not pass them by as it did the Eskimo; they made history. It would therefore be a bold task to ascribe or pinpoint either the extent or the period when any such borrowing was effected with any degree of certainty.

Regarding the ancient syncretism, Spengler claims: "The Roman people admit that the circle of its own gods is momentarily bounded... According to its sacral law, the annexation of foreign territory involves the addition to Urbs Roma of all the religious obligations pertaining to this territory and its gods—which of course logically follows from the additive godfeeling of the Classical."[313]

Mention has already been made earlier of the array side by side with the Sumero-Akkadian deities of the Indo-Aryan Kassite gods during the first millenium B.C. in Mesopotamia. The additive god-feeling of the Classical world was nothing new and on Spengler's analogy, considering the latter-day theological structure of Iran, the immigration of the Iranian god, Mithra, as Mithras to Rome during the latter-day pre-Christian Roman Empire, and the Kassite syncretism, might not one ascribe the additive god-feeling

[313] D.W., I, p. 405.either in the panoply of symbols or has invisibly penetrated deep into the fundamental precepts of Islam.

to have been a characteristic of the Indo-European group? Also, Mithras who had to compete with one God of Christianity was not just confined to the sensuous world; he becomes the saviour who frees the human soul from the trammels of the purely mundane existence controlled by the hostile Zodiac and the planets, themselves the agents of a blind fate, Ananke. On Spengler's analogy, which adopts sensuousness as the prime measure by which the Classical world is to be judged, even though Mithras would still be enveloped by sensuousness, the Classical man was at least making an effort to move out of the confines of the senses to some-where beyond. I would however, discuss this point towards the concluding part of this essay from another angle. In the original Zoroastrian pantheon, Mithra (Ind. Mitra) ranks second to Ahura-Mazdah only and is the just judge who, assisted by Rashnu and Sarosha (whence the modern Persian word, sarosh) judges the soul of men in accordance with how they have lived on earth.

If Spengler's statement about the preponderance of one god and the impotence or wickedness of the secondary gods, if any such gods are either symbolically or ritually acknowledged in Islam, bears any relevance it is this: we must determine whether there is any such deity or any deity that is masked by any overlay of monotheism, whose worship has been suppressed in Islam, but who nevertheless exists.

We are naturally led forth to Satan. Iqbal has discussed the position of Satan in Islam rather acutely and brilliantly in his

Lectures.[314] He interprets the Fall of Man not as the result of Original Sin but as an exercise of the expression of free will which had its birth in the consciousness of Adam and Eve. Satan in Islam never emerges as the equivalent of the Satan of Paradise Lost or the Dark Angel of Lional Johnson, but"represents--clearly and unequivocallya!-nafs-al-ammara, which in turn, denotes the uncontrolled, appetitive soul; extension of the concept would lead us to Satan symbolizing division in the ethical substance of man and the distortion of free will. What is perhaps more relevent for our examination is the fact that the Quran altogether dispenses with the story of the Serpent and thereby eliminates the importance allotted to Satan in Genesis (3). In Genesis (3:7) after the commission of the Original Sin by man we are made to read: "And they heard the voice of LORD GOD walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of LORD GOD amongst the trees of the Garden."

Such a description—the discevery of the Original Sin after the lapse of a certain period—obviously tends to represent God in purely human and sensuous connotations. In Genesis (3:5) the Serpent says to Eve:" "God Both know that in the day ye eat thereof (i.e., the forbidden fruit)... your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In the Quranic version, on the other hand, all description militating against the concept of God as the omnipotent and omniscient being has been

[314] Iqbal, Lecture pp. 82-3, 86-7.

utterly eliminated. In the Book of Genesis Adam and Eve try to hide themselves from the presence of God (the implication is obvious). In the Quran they try to hide their nakedness with the leaves of Paradise. In the Genesis version Adam and Eve still think that they can deceive their Creator; in the Quranic version they discover the enormity of the sin, and feel con-trite. In the corresponding version of the Quran God addresses both of them immediately after the commission of the Sin. In the Biblical version Eve emerges as the more culpable of the two, having induced Adam to partake of the fruit; in the Quranic version the apportionment of blame is equally distributed.

Iqbal's interpretation of the Fall of Man is worth quoting: "The 'Jannat', mentioned in the legend, cannot mean the eternal abode of the righteous...In the second episode of the legend the garden is described as a 'place where there is neither hunger, nor thirst, neither heat, nor nakedness'. I am therefore inclined to think that the 'Jannat' in the Quranic narration is the conception of a primitive state in which man is practically unrelated to his environment and consequently does not feel the sting of human want, the birth of which alone marks the beginning of human culture."[315]

It will be also seen that the God of the Book of Genesis (1) if He creates the world ex nihilo ("And God said, Let there be light; and there was light"), He still retains certain anthropomorphic

[315] Iqbal, Lecture pp. 82-3, 86-7.

traits ("And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from darkness"). Such traits present God in purely conceived terms, for the Divine lies beyend the conceptual sensuous limitations of man. Such a representation of God, however, has been absolutely eliminated from the Quran. Further, since the Being of God in the Islamic theology is entirely different—in the sense that man is limited by his senses, time-sequence, and dimensions—no interaction between a dimensionless Being and Satan, who cannot be so, is possible. Islam thus eliminates the Ohrmuzd-Ahriman duality completely without any kind of equivocation being possible.

Since the Quranic version states that Adam and Eve hope to achieve immortality by eating the forbidden fruit, they are mortal and this might well point to the assertion of free will for the first time by man. Since man by his very nature is governed by senses and time sequence, the absence of any time sequence in the sense that we under-stand it is an impossibility, and therefore the banishment of Adam from Paradise symbolizes his re-adjustment—that is, he asserts his free will and brings himself into a closer and more harmonious relationship with the world which he inhabits.

Islam represents the acme of monotheism for several reasons. In the first place no other religion has no many symbolic connotations (isma ul uzma) with regard to the transcendent attributes of God as Islam—connotations through words that can be used for God alone. Rehmat, Fazal, Qehr and a host of other

attributes and their derivatives-(ninety-nine such attributes have been mentioned in the Quran) have raised God to a symbolic plane having no parallel in other religions. But even otherwise many other facts stand out. Genesis, for instance commences with the fact of the creation of the world by God. The Quran, on the other hand, commences with man's relationship with God. And not only that, He has been called rabul-Alarneen, that is, the Lord of the cosmos, not of the world or the solar system which we inhabit, alone, but of the total expanding universe. Surely, in suchconcept, the most transcendental, the farthest that has been bequeathed to man, no anthropomorphic or near-anthropomorphic attributes could be possible.

It is rather surprising that Stace, in his rather thoughtful essay, Space, Time and Eternity, should have averred: "The Islamic conception of God is deeply anthropomorphic, and the notion of His personality and consciousness belongs rather to the positive than the negative conception, and direct affirmations of the nothingness are not as a rule to be found in Sufi literature."[316]

Surprisingly enough, Stace does not refer to the Quran but only to Jili and ibn al Arabi, the Muslim mystics. It has been emphasized at many a place in the Quran that the time of man and the time of God are entirely different, and, since Stace's contention is that intuitive understanding of God must evolve symbolic connotations, of the array of expressions by which an

[316] H.A.R. Gibb, Studies on the Civilization of Islam, ed. S. Shaw and W. R. Polk, pp, 183-4.

attempt is made to convey the idea of God to man, Islam has by far the largest such array. The concepts of God, the Eternal Non-Being (or "Esse est Deus" or Meister Echart and "The Everlasting Yes-the Everlasting Nay" of Jacob Bohme), lies more in the domain of theology—that is, in the elaboration of the basic concept—than religion. The basic first essential is the concept of God as the First Principle. Neither in the New Testament nor in the Quran has the negative concept of God been emphasized; in the New Testament He is the God of Love, in the Quran the God of Compassion (rehmat). Secondly, Stace departs from his own analogy in attributing anthropomorphism to Islam, since in his view Islam presents the positive aspect of God. Man's dimensional and conception-based mind, attuned to a universe of flux, to anabolosm and catabolism interlocked in repetitive cycles, cannot seize the understanding of a Being that is dismensionless, immutable, ineffable omnipresent, and omnipotent, since the dimensions are entirely different: and, if the vaguest of understandings are seized by man through intuition, it cannot be translated into an expression that would be understandable by him. The clossest such understanding has been provided by the Quran alone.

It is true that the Gospel of St. John (Chapter 1,1-3) carries the concept of God far beyond that of Isaiah insofar as it describes the world as the creation of the mind of God through the word (Logos) that was with Him. Nevertheless, the ineffable majesty of God, the supplication of man (without any reservations whatever) before Him and His Will, and His transcendental

attributes scale their apogee in the Quran only. Here for the first and the only time has the concept of God been blended within the framework of the narrative, Gibb distinguishes between two kinds of animistic symbols: those that have patent and unconcealed animistic associations and those that have assumed a sublimer, higher significance. As an instance of the latter, he cites Hijr-i-Asvad or the Block Stone and the Christian Eucharist, which has transposed 'the temple sacrifices and pagan sacrificial meals."[317] In the Muslim theology Hijr-e-Asvad carries a very deep significance because of its association with the sunnat of Prophet Abraham, of which Islam is the culmination. In all of the three Semitic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, all animistic associations have been discarded, so that the Spenglerian thesis from this angle regarding the existence of important deities could also be definitely refuted.

In Islam the doctrine of Ressurection is fundamental to the religion; it derives from the Quran. Judaism presents no clear cut picture as has been mentioned above. In Christianity, on the other hand, the place of this doctrine is peculiar. It owes its origin to St. Paul (Acts 17: 32), Jacques Choron's remarks in this context are rather apposite:

"But is it not more realistic to assume that the doctrine of resurrection was propounded by St. Paul because he believed it to be true, and because it is a more satisfying one?...It was a time when in Rome the commerce in pills of immortality was thriving,

[317] Jacques Choron, Death in Western Thought, pp. 84-5.

and mystery rites to cleanse the body and prepare it for transfiguration and elevation were a daily occurrence. It is into this troubled and horror-filled world that the news burst that resurrection was actually witnessed. Death, this great terror, was after all not what it appeared to be—the invincible power, the inescapable faith. It had been conquered—the dead will rise again."[318]

It is rather plausible to assume that St. Paul, being one of the most clear-sighted of men, had clearly visualized resurrection independently and as a logical corollary to the teachings of Christ. As a matter of fact, the concept of after life in Christianity and Zoroastrianism held entirely different significance.

Another concept which Spengler claims to be specifically Magian is that of Ijma (consensus):

"...in Magian there is no individual ego but a single Pneuma present simultaneously in each and all of the elect, which is likewise Truth...In the Magian world, consequently, the separation of politics and religion is impossible, whereas in the Faustian culture the battle of the Church and State is inherent in the very conceptions, logical, necessary, unending. In the Magian civil and ecclesiastical, laws are simply identical. Side by side with the Emperor of Constantinople stood the Patriarch, by the Shah was the Zarathrustatema, by the Exilarch the Geon, by the Caliph the Sheikh-ul-Islam, at once superiors. and subjects. In the

[318] D.W., II, 242-5.

constitution of Diocletian this Magian embedding of the state in the community of the faithful was for the first time actualized, and by Constantine was carried into full effect."[319]

In its ultimate analysis, the statement would seem to imply that there was general areement in the M Magian cultural units on the theocratic structure of the State, whatever their other differences, and that this was facilitated by a single Pneuma or soul uniting the religious community. Daring the early Muslim polity there was no Sheikh-al-Islam by the side of the early Caliph;, and especially during the days of the Pious Caliphs, who, as the Companions of the Holy Propet (peace be on him) were absolutely independent to give their own judgments and dispensations. Nonetheless Islam definitely postulates a theocratic state, and Ijma constitutes, besides the Quran, hadith (sayings of the Prophet), and qiyas (analogy), the basic juristic principles of conduct for the Muslim. It is also equally true that consensus operated in Israel, the Byzantinian Empire, and the Sassanid Iran. The first Oecumenical Council at Nicea is certainly an example of consensus in the context implied by Spengler insofar as it brought to an end the antagonism between Church and State, and made Constentine Isapostalos, the Thirteenth Apostle.

The fact, however, is that secularism, the separation of Church from State, is a phenomenon that owes its sharply defined origin from the Renaissance period in Europe. (In its vaguely defined and nebulous state, it has been latent in the history of

mankind from the very beginnings in the art of governance.) It was then that Henry VIII became the Defender of the Faith in England, and Germany sank in prosperity and culture during the century dating from the outbreak of the Schmalkaldic War to the end of the Thirty Years' War.

But, in one form or the other—whatever its external trappings might have been—the conflict between secularism and theocracy has been a recurrent feature of the Muslim history also. Islamic theocracy ceased to be an instrument of government and enforcement of sunna after the decline of the Umayyids.

Spengler's contention, however, is that secularism is endemic to Europe. The history of the post-Renaissance Europe would however show that it is a sort of compromise between two sections—the one insisting on the enforcement of dogma in the administration of the State, the other insisting on aligning itself with the exigencies of the situation. Germany (i.e., the area constituting Germany till the beginning of World War I) which is slightly more than half Protestant now, could not afford to be non-secular, because of the compromise that secularism generated between the infallibility of the Pope and the Papal decree on the one hand and opposition to the suzerainty of a supranational authority, on the other. Such conflicts however arose in lands in the very heart of Catholicism also. An example of such a conflict is the issue of a Bull of Excommunication by Pope Sixtus against Lorenzo dei Medici, not on heretical grounds but simply because the latter was acting counter to the interests of his nephews. Only

it so happened that this break asserted itself more expressly during the Reniassance period. It is rather for bringing about an adequate adjustment—according to the exponents of secularism—that secularism has now become an accepted principle in Europe and America. The same thing is more or less true of the clericism of France and the appointment of the soverign of Britain as the Head of the Church of England.