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SŪFĪSM, FATALISM AND EVIL IN THE MATHNAWĪ OF JALAL AL-DĪN RŪMĪ

A.L. Herman

In this brief paper I want to explore the implications of two philosophic problems as they relate to the doctrines of Ṣūfīsm, i.e., Muslim mysticism. To be more exact, what I want to do is to look at two philosophic puzzles, the problem of fatalism (or the problem of free will, as it is sometimes called), and the theological problem of evil, in the writings of a particular Ṣūfī poet, the great Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (672-738 A.H.). There are not a few genuine difficulties that faith must raise for reason to contend with that cannot help but exercise both faculties well and truly.

Muslim mysticism is most admirably exemplified in the poetical works of Rūmī. This greatest of the Persian mystical poets after an exhaustive study of Sūfīsm dedicated his life to this deeply religious way of life. He was probably the originator of the mystical, devotional love dances, which were dances of adoration to a central object of adoration. These dances represent the beginning of the mystical order of the Brethren of Love and the sect of the Dancing Dervishes. Rūmī poured out his love and dedication to God in his poetry and in doing so he

reflected the tradition of the Ṣūfīs admirably; at the same time he raised a number of puzzling issues which led him into philosophic difficulty:

I want to begin my discussion of Rūmī's puzzles in part I by first saying something very briefly about Ṣūfīsm, and then locating Rūmī in this tradition, not so much historically as doctrinally. In part II, I will go on to show how Rūmī's treatment of free will and evil led him into the difficulties I believe he is in, difficulties which Rūmī not only shares with other mystics in the Ṣūfī tradition, but difficulties which, I believe, he shares with mystics in general who impute too much or perhaps too little to the nature of the Divine. In Part III, I will close with some observations regarding the difficulties which we have met, which may or may not please rationally minded mystics. The study herein projected does not pretend to be skeptical, orthodox, agnostic or heterodox. It simply makes, I hope, an observation about what happens to man, *qua* philosopher, mystic or ordinary human being, when he attempts to do things with language that language will not allow him to do. Perhaps describing the majesty of God, even pointing to it, however perfectly or imperfectly, however symbolically or literally, is not something language, or any symbol system was ever meant to do.

But now let me turn to Şūfism and its philosophical assumptions.

I. SUFISM AND RUMI

Şūfism, Muslim mysticism or what has been called the perennial philosophy as expressed through Islām, can be summarized in a number of very brief statements. Individual Şūfīs may disagree over interpretations of these summary statements but I believe that all of them are bound more or less to the spirit of each of these presuppositions. In particular, Rūmī himself can be seen quite clearly as an exponent of each of these assumptive statements.

1. *On Metaphysics:*

Only one real Being exists, and this ultimate One is God. All else, including man, the world and the various relations between man and the world are consequently derivative. The realization that only God is ultimately real is, of course, the driving force behind all the activities of the mystic. Metaphysically, then, a mystical monism lies at the foundation of Şūfism.

2. *On Man:*

Man possesses a dual nature, part Divine and part human. Here Şūfism betrays the influence of early Neo-Platonism, a philosophy which probably lies at the root

and heart of all mystical philosophies outside the Hindu-Buddhist fold. The indwelling Light in man is God's Spirit in-born in man. This Logos, or Rational Principle, is God. If it were not identical with God then there would be two or more ultimately Real entities in the universe, and this would violate the metaphysical monism presumed in 1.

3. *On Ethics:*

Moral rules are given or revealed to man to enable him to guide and control the human part of his nature mentioned in 2. Only when that nature has been properly guided or instructed can the Light shine out and seek its Source, God. Ethics is given short shrift by most mystics; for, ethics is, after all, generally nothing more nor less than a set of rules for getting on well in the world. But for the mystic the world is simply an emanation from God, and not essentially God, and therefore not significant and not important. The mystic's refusal to comply with the world's rules, or to run his life by the world's rules, whether those rules be moral, intellectual, religious, social or what-have-you, has led him repeatedly into trouble with the world and the world's laws. The mystic, and therefore the Şafî, of course, seems to be a law unto himself. In reality he is a law unto God and God alone, as defined by his Logos, his Light, his Rational Indwelling Guardian.

4. *On God in Revelation:*

God has made Himself known to man through the *Qur'ān*. His attributes, properties and other predicates attributable to God, are revealed through His words to the Prophet and to the mystics who are able to listen to that Reality or the Spirit of Muhammad in the tradition. For our purposes here, God is revealed as omniscient (all-knowing) in that past events, present events and future events are all actually present to Him; God is just and merciful and good; and God is omnipresent in the creation, ever aware and immanent in the phenomenal forms of the creation, as well as transcendent to the world of space and time; and, finally, God is omnipotent, all powerful in act and in potentiality in His immanent as well as His transcendent form. These properties of God are revealed in scripture, and they are, as a set of predicates, the source for the puzzles and problems that we shall be examining below. These problems can be generated only if one takes the language fairly literally, and most mystics seem quite willing to do just that, and most religious men seem equally willing to do just that. Once they interpret scriptural talk about God in this anthropomorphic manner their pronouncements naturally fall within the purview of the theologian and the philosopher. In part II below, I hope to demonstrate this philosophic concern with the predicates of God,

5. On Free Will:

By certain acts freely chosen, man is able to participate in the Divine nature wholly and completely. By certain acts freely chosen and not compelled, man is able to overcome and conquer his human self, his lower nature, in conformity with certain moral or behavioral rules of conduct. The goal of the mystic, however, is to have his will conformed to that of the Divine Will. When this occurs the human will and the Divine will become united, and then the human will is said to be truly free. Our concern in part II below will be, however, with the freedom of the human will quite apart from considerations of the Divine Will.

6. On Man's Final End:

The goal of the Sūfī is a mystical union with God, in which all trace of personality or human nature has been conquered and lost. Man becomes immersed in the Divine Nature, attains to ultimate reality, and rests forever in God. Put in terms of the perennial philosophy of mysticism the assumption is that there is an identity between the Divine Ground and man's true or real Self. The path to salvation consists in the gradual or even sudden realization of this basic, underlying identity of that Self and the Divine Ground. And the final assumption of the perennial philosophy is that salvation or the goal attained, consists in the true

knowledge of that identity between Self and Divine Ground.

These six assumptions, then, exemplify the basic philosophy of Şūfīsm: There is only one ultimate Reality or God; part of man's nature is identical with that Reality; man can know this or experience this mystical identity through control of his human and lower self by following certain ethical or moral rules; that God's nature, and therefore man's goal, have been defined in sacred Revelation, notably in the Qur'ān and the Qur'ānic tradition of prophets and saints; that man by an act of free choice is able to overcome the world and his phenomenal self and thereby, finally, achieve salvation through union with the One, the Ultimate or God.

Rūmī's poetic pronouncements give magnificent voice to all of the six assumptions of Şufism. Very briefly I would like to concentrate on only three of the assumptions mentioned above and then show how Rūmī speaks to each. For it is in what he says with regard to man, God and free will that the puzzles arise for Rūmī, and *pari passu* the same puzzles arise for the Sūfis in general as well as for all those mystical traditions which make the same kinds of assumptions.

Rūmī's masterful *Mathnawī* is a collection of about 25,000 rhyming couplets. In the six books of the *Mathnawī*

he sets forth his mystical philosophy in a loosely organized but always illuminating, always moving series of anecdotes, essays, preachments and interpretations. About this work the author himself has said,

The *Mathnawī* is the shop for unity (*wahdat*); anything that you see there except the One (God) is an idol.¹

Around this central theme, the Poet has woven a delightful series of themes, all relating in one way or another to the six central assumptions of Ṣūfism mentioned above, and all leading more or less to the one singular passion of Rūmī's own mind and thought: The love of God and the Self's union with God. It is to the peculiar nature of God then that we first turn. Rūmī says of God's omnipotence:

God hath established a rule and causes and means for the sake of all who seek Him under this blue canopy.

Most things come to pass according to the rule, but sometimes His power breaks the rule.²

¹ 1 R.A. Nicholson, *Rūmī: Poet and Mystic* (1207-1273) (London: George

Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1956), pp. 22-23.

² *Ibid.*, p. 114 (*Mathnawī*, V, 1543). All quotations from the *Mathnawī* are from the Nicholson translation (6 books; Cambridge: the University

God can, through His omnipotence, make as well as break the rules that are established in the universe. Primarily it is through miracles that such legalistic lapses are said to occur:

He established a goodly rule and custom: He made the evidentiary miracle a breach of the custom.³

And the ground and reason for such changes in law and custom in the universe is God's will:

The Causer brings into existence whatsoever He will, His Omnipotence can destroy all causes...⁴

It is God as universal Causer, of all things good or bad, and as a Causer who can by His will alone change or alter any event in the future, that allows us to call Him Omnipotent.

But not only is God all-powerful in what He can do, He is also all-powerful in what He knows, i.e., He is omniscient or all-knowing. Rūmī says of the clairvoyant who, like God, knows all:

And again, casting his eye forward, he beholds all that shall come to pass till the Day of Judgement.⁵

Press, 1926-1934). I place the source of the translation in parentheses following the page number in Nicholson.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

God, on whom no action past, present or future is lost, sees "according to the measure of illumination", and since His illumination is perfect, His omniscience would also be perfect.

Further, Rūmi holds that God in virtue of His omniscience and omnipotence assigns life-stations to man, and yet, strangely enough, man remains free:

Yet God's assignment of a particular lot to any one does not hinder him from exercising will and choice.⁶

And, finally Rūmi defends Muslim orthodoxy when he argues that all actions are caused by God and yet man remains a free creature:

... the creature does not create his actions, and is not forced: God creates these actions together with the creatures having a free choice (*ikhtiyār*) in them.⁷

From Rūmī's discussion of these three assumptions about God, man and free will, we can now go to traditional philosophical problems about free will and evil. In part II which follows, I will take up in section A the problem of fatalism (or free will), and in section B I will treat the problem of evil.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p.113 (*Math.* IV, 2881).

⁶ *Ibid*

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 155, n. 1(*Math.* I, 616).

II. TWO PHILOSOPHIC PUZZLES

A. *The Problem of Fatalism*

At this juncture, I would like to suggest that we can construct three *prima facie* arguments for contending that man has no free will, even though Rūmi has a single interesting argument to meet all three of them. The three constructed *prima facie* arguments for denying free will to man are drawn, in order, from the three previous quotations. Giving a rather ordinary definition to free will, the arguments would go somewhat as follows:

1. The God-Is-Omniscient Argument: Any man, A is free to do X (where X is any action) if and only if A had wanted to he could have chosen and done non-X. But God knows in advance that A will choose and do X. But then A could not choose non-X, nor could he do non-X; for, that would make God wrong about what He knows. Therefore since A could not choose or do other than what God knows he will choose and do, A is not free. Therefore man is not free.

2. The God-Assigns-Lots Argument: Any man, A, is free to do X (where X is an action of some sort) if and only if A had wanted to he could have chosen and done non-X. But God has assigned A the lot (the portion of goods, happiness, character, etc., of life) he has in this life. But then A is not free to choose to have a different lot than the one God assigned to him. Therefore there is a sense in which A is not free to choose his lot in life. Therefore man is not free.

3. The God-Alone-Acts Argument: Any man, A, is free to do X if and only if A had wanted to he could have chosen and done non-X. But God alone is the cause of all actions, actions of choosing as well as objective actions. But then God as the Causer performs the action through A, and A cannot make God do differently than He will do through A. Therefore A could not choose and do non-X when the Causer has chosen and done X. Therefore A is not free. Therefore man is not free.

These three constructed arguments then, the God-is-omniscient argument, the God-assigns-lots argument, and the God-alone-acts argument all lead to the same conclusion, viz., that man is not free, that all his actions are in some sense Divinely compelled.

Rūmī, of course, does not accept the conclusions we have drawn from these quotations. He does not indicate in the preceding contexts what "free will" consists of, and hence it may be moot whether he would accept even the way the three arguments have been setup. Further, he does not, save in one instance, argue to any extent in defense of his free will conclusions in the context of the above quoted passages regarding God as omniscient, lot-Assigner or sole Causer. That one defense of his conclusion that man is free in the face of these properties of God comes out in his discussion of the God-alone-acts argument. The defense that he gives, curiously enough, has had a long history in Western philosophy whenever the same puzzle about free

will within a theological context has appeared. The defense Rūmī gives is familiar to readers of C.A. Campbell and Williams James,⁸ and Rūmi, some six hundred years earlier, stated it as follows. He opens with the God-alone-acts doctrine:

If we let fly an arrow, the action is not ours: we are only the bow, the shooter of the arrow is God.

This is not compulsion (*jabr*): it is Almightyness (*jabbārī*) proclaimed for the purpose of making us humble.⁹

And then comes Rūmī's argument to show that despite the fact that God is the Compeller (al-Jabbār) and that we are His slaves and entirely subject to His Will, man is nonetheless free:

Our humbleness is evidence of Necessity, but our sense of guilt is evidence of Free-will.

If we are not free, why this shame? Why this sorrow and guilty confusion and abashment?¹⁰

⁸ This fact was pointed out to me by Professor Joseph L. Schuler.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 115 (*Math.* I, 616).

¹⁰ *Ibid.* Rūmi gives a similar defense of free will later in the same passage when he says:

If you are conscious of God's compulsion, why are you not heartbroken? Where is the sign of your feeling the chains with which you are loaded?

Rūmī's defense, short as it is, compels attention nonetheless. He attempts to show that there is a necessary connection between the sense of guilt or shame and free will. In other words, if a man did not have free will, he would suffer no pangs of conscience over what he had done, simply because pangs of conscience are a sign of the existence of free will: The guilt I feel, the sorrow I feel, is a sign that I am responsible for what I do. And I could not be responsible unless I was truly free in what I did. Thus guilt is evidence of responsibility and responsibility is evidence for free will; each entails the other and we can conclude, Rūmī must feel, that man is therefore free.

Let me make two brief comments on Rūmī's defense: First, Rūmī makes a logical leap from the feeling of guilt to the fact of responsibility when he, in effect, argues that the guilt I feel is a sign that I am responsible; in other words, Rūmī begins with a feeling and ends with a fact inferred from that feeling: This is logically illegitimate. All that he is strictly

How should one make merry who is bound in chains? Does the prisoner behave like the man who is free?

Whatever you feel inclined to do, you know very well that you can do ...
(*Ibid.*)

The argument seems to be that if we were not free we would feel heartbroken or sad. But we do not feel heart-broken or sad. Therefore we must be free. This argument can be attacked, of course, but I would rather focus attention on the sense-of-shame argument above.

allowed to say on the basis of his feeling or guilt is, not that responsibility exists, but merely that a *feeling* of responsibility exists. And the existence of the feeling of responsibility may or may not entail the *feeling* of free will, but it certainly cannot entail the fact of free will. In other words Rūmī may argue legitimately only that the feeling of guilt entails the feeling of responsibility which in turn may entail the feeling of free will, but he cannot argue legitimately from the feeling of guilt, to the fact of responsibility, to the fact of free will. When the argument is put entirely in terms of feelings, Rūmī's defense of free will collapses, and for the simple reason that the feeling of something does not in any sense prove or guarantee the objective existence of anything beyond, perhaps. other psychological feelings: Rūmī's defense of free will won't work.

Second, one can always use a counter example to show that Rūmī's defense will not show what he intends it to show. Psychologists tell us that the compulsive desire to steal, kleptomania, is accompanied frequently and most often by feelings of remorse, guilt and shame. The kleptomaniac is not free either in the choosing or in the action resulting from that choice. Hence, to conclude that the feeling of guilt entails free will is just plain wrong: Rūmī's defense of free will again will not work.

Rūmī's attempt to solve what we called the problem of fatalism comes to grief for the reasons mentioned above: He

cannot leap from feelings to facts in his defense of free will, nor can he fly in the face of a perfectly good counter example that shows that some feelings of guilt are accompanied by compulsive, non-free, actions.

Let me turn next to the second of the traditional philosophical puzzles that Rūmi grapples with, whether consciously or not, in the *Mathnawi*.

B. The Theological Problem of Evil

A second philosophical puzzle appears in Rūmi's writings, and while it can be connected to the first problem dealt with above in A, I will treat it separately here. The puzzle I speak of is an old puzzle in the West, having its roots in the Platonic corpus, but receiving its most vociferous form among the Christian theologians of the early church, notably in St. Augustine. The puzzle was probably first formulated by Epicurus (341-270 B.C.E.) and quoted by Lactantius (260-340 A.C.E.):

God either wishes to take away evils and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing, and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God,

from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them ?¹¹

Lactantius' lengthy statement of the problem of evil can easily be reduced to four premises and a question:

1. God is omnipotent.
2. God is all-good.
3. God is omniscient.
4. Evil exists.
5. But if God could prevent evil (He is omnipotent) and does not, then He is malevolent. And if God would want to prevent evil (He is all-good) but cannot, then He is not omnipotent. Then where does evil come from? Thus the problem of evil.

Rūmī more or less accepts all of the first three premises of the above argument, and there is sufficient evidence among his writings that he even accepts the reality of evil premise as well; for, Rūmī argues, God created all the good things as well as all the evil things. Thus he avoids the need for an all-evil Ahriman, such as the Magians employed, to account for the existence of evil.

¹¹ Lactantius, *On the Anger of God*, Ch. XIII, quoted in A. L. Herman, *The Problem of Evil and Indian Thought* (New Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, forthcoming). In this book I have tried to show the origins of the problem of evil in the Western and Indian contexts, and to demonstrate that of the twenty-three or so solutions that have been proposed to it, all save one, the solution entailing *samsara*, fall on hard times. Rūmī's attempts to answer the problem of evil also, it seems to me, come to naught.

E.H. Whinfield has summarized Rūmī's various attempted solutions to the problem of evil, and before looking closely at two of these solutions, let me mention, following Whinfield, these attempted solutions:

...what we call evil has in reality no real existence of its own, being merely, as St. Augustine said, a "negation", or not-being — a departure from the Only Self-existent Being.¹²

Let me call this attempted solution to the problem of evil "the evil-is-unreal solution". Whinfield continues:

In the next place, the poet points out that much of what we call evil is only relative— what is evil for one being good for another; — nay more, that evil itself is often turned into good for the good.¹³

The notion that evil is really good in disguise, the last phrase above, is actually a species of the evil-is-unreal solution to the problem of evil. But the relativity of evil doctrine, the first part of the quotation above, takes evil as real and is no solution at all, as a little reflection will show; for, it admits evil but does not explain or justify it. Whinfield continues his list:

Further, he insists on the probationary design of much so-called evil. As Bishop Butler says, life is a state of

¹² *Masnawī-i Ma'nawī: The Spiritual Couplets of Moulana Jalal-al-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī!*, abridged trans. by E. H. Whinfield (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd., 1898), p. XXX.

¹³ *Ibid.*

probation, and probation involves the existence of evil lusts and pains to prove us.¹⁴

This justification for evil entails the premise that evil functions to test us, to discipline us, and to build our character. Let me denominate this attempted solution to the problem of evil "the discipline solution." Whinfield continues with the discipline solution,

How, the poet asks, could there be self-control without evil passions to be controlled, or patience without the pressure of afflictions to be born? Much evil, again, is medicinal....¹⁵

Thus the discipline solution to the problem of evil.

A final solution dealt with by Rūmi, or at least found and discussed in the Poet's work, is used to explain evil simply as retribution or punishment for sins that man commits:

Lastly, much evil has a punitive purpose. "He who grieves the *Logos* must look for tribulation in the world."¹⁶

Thus God in His goodness is not only merciful but just. And in His justice He will repay evil doers according to their crimes. This attempted solution, like the others before

¹⁴ ¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. XXX-XXXI.

it, seeks to take the properties of God, His omnipotence, His goodness and His omniscience, and make them consistent with the presence of real evil in the world. Let me call this last attempted solution to the problem of evil "the justice solution" to indicate that evil can be explained and justified as God's punishment of man for human wickedness.

Let me comment now very briefly on Whinfield's catalogue of Rūmī's solutions. We have three attempted solutions: The evil-is-unreal solution, the discipline solution, and, finally, the justice solution. The first, the evil-is-unreal solution, is plainly inconsistent with the other two; for, both of the latter admit to the existence and the necessity of evil for building character or for punishing sinful man. Rūmī gives expression to the evil-is-unreal doctrine occasionally in his writings and this view is plainly consistent with his metaphysical mystical monism as described in part I. But it plainly affronts common sense to argue that there is no evil or no real evil in the world, and, since it runs counter to the other two solutions, I am not going to deal with it in the remainder of the paper. Furthermore, as some reflection will show, the evil-is-unreal solution, when taken in its most literal interpretation, cannot be used as a solution to the problem of evil; for, one simply cannot generate that problem unless one begins by assuming that the evil-is-unreal

doctrine is false. That is to say, without the existence of evil, however real or partially real it might be, there can be no problem of evil at all. I will concentrate then on the other two solutions.

The two remaining attempted solutions have difficulty in explaining what I shall call 'hard evil'. Hard evil is not simply ordinary pain and suffering, toothache pain, sore throat pain, and ordinary physical and psychological suffering. Soft evil, if I can call ordinary pain by that name, has a purpose and function in the world. Soft evil helps us to grow, to learn, to become men and women of mature reason and sensibility. Soft evil warns us that hot pans should not be picked up, that teeth need repairing, that our bodies need attention, that death comes with old age. Soft evil does discipline us and it does build our character for goodness, manliness and Godlikeness. But hard evil, extraordinary or dysteleological evil, does just the opposite. It destroys our hearts and souls and minds. It kills the spirit of the weak, and it makes the strong cynical and cruel. It drives the weak insane, and it renders the strong impotent and enervated. Hard evil exists when babies and children die horribly and mangled, suffering untold misery. Such unfortunates are not having their characters disciplined (thus the discipline solution), nor are they being punished for any apparent wickedness (thus the justice solution). To argue that such hard evil either builds

character or is a just punishment for sin is to be singularly callous, cruel and sadistic to the highest degree. Neither of the solutions proposed above can solve the problem of hard evil, and to believe they can would simply display an insensitivity to the human condition that must affront the plain man.

There is one other solution that occurs in Rūmī's writings that I would like to conclude with. It serves to extend the catalogue of attempted solutions, and Rūmī does take it seriously enough to warrant our including it here. I believe it also breaks on the wrack of hard evil as its predecessors have done, but perhaps the reader will find in this new solution, a certain distinguished merit anyway.

The fourth attempted solution that Rūmī considers is stated in this way:

Note, then, this principle, O seeker: pain and suffering make one aware of God; and the more aware one is, the greater his passion.¹⁷

Call this fourth and final solution "the awareness-of-God solution". The justification for evil under this attempted solution is simply that it leads the soul to God, that

¹⁷ Nicholson, *Rūnmī: Poet and Mystic*, pp. 155-156 (*Math.* 1, 616).

suffering, tribulation and pain turn one to God. There is a certain amount of truth no doubt in this assertion. The awareness-of-God solution to this extent is not unlike the discipline solution noted earlier. When one suffers, or when one notes extraordinary suffering in others one does legitimately ask, Why do I suffer?, Why does he suffer? One answer, and a respectable answer to the Ṣūfīs and to Rūmī, would be that you suffer for God's sake, so turn to God for your answer. But just as the discipline solution failed in the face of hard evil, I fear that the awareness-of-God solution must similarly succumb. The suffering of infants and children, the utterly ruthless, relentless, absolutely incorrigible suffering of the young and immature does not turn them to God. To argue that it does would be to fly in that face of the evidence. To argue that it should would seem at the very least callous and immoral. The conclusion must be then that given the attributes of God noted earlier, and given the presence of hard evil, the awareness-of-God solution will not solve the problem of evil.

In part III which follows I want to offer some rather minor observations on Rūmī's attempts to solve the problem of fatalism and the problem of evil.

III. CONCLUSIONS

In this brief excursion through the mystical poetry of Rūmī we have attempted to treat his work in the most literal

and philosophical sense. Perhaps poets, seers, sages and mystics should not be handled in this rough rational way. Perhaps their function as poets and mystics places them automatically beyond the pale of philosophic confrontation, perhaps their function is simply one of inspiring and challenging the reader, of goading the listener and reader, through the use of prescriptive and commendatory sentences rather than through descriptive sentences and assertions, to see God, to consider his life, or to change his ways. But Rūmī and the other Ṣūfīs can be seen as both poets as well as philosophers, as inspired visionaries as well as rational pedagogues. And it was to this second way of viewing Rūmī and the Ṣūfīs that I have been speaking here in this paper.

If my conclusions are correct, Rūmī and with him, perhaps, the other Sūfīs he represents, do not have sound rational answers to the puzzles that confronted us, the problem of fatalism and the problem of evil. But more important than their failure, I believe, is their attempt to seek out a sound theodicy, justifying the ways of God's omniscience and His omnipotence in the face of human freedom and human suffering. Their attempt and in particular Rūmī's magnificent attempts to discover rational solutions to these mysteries is what is after all most important here. His failure at finding a rational solution, if indeed it is a failure, counts as little when compared with those efforts.

REFORMS IN ISLAMIC LAW IN IRAN

J.N.D. Anderson

A great deal has been written in recent years about the cataclysmic changes which have come about in the law, both substantive and procedural, throughout the vastly greater part of what may be termed the Muslim world. In almost all the countries concerned the Shari'ah, or canon law of Islām, virtually reigned supreme up till the middle of the nineteenth century. True, this was seldom, if ever, the only law, just as those courts which were specifically committed to its enforcement were never, in practice, the only courts; for throughout the history of Islām there have almost always been courts other than those of the *qāḍīs* —courts presided over, for example, by local governors, by police, by inspectors of markets, or by the Ruler himself (or his deputy) in the Court of Complaints; and these special courts have never been as strictly bound as have the *qāḍīs* by the minutiae of the Shari'ah, but have in fact administered a law which represented a sort of amalgam of the Shari'ah, of customary law, of administrative practice and of the will (or whim) of the executive. But, however this may be, it can be said that up till about 1850 the Shari'ah was the only law fully acknowledged as such the law to which reference was almost invariably made; just as the *qāḍīs'* courts represented the basic courts and the courts of residual jurisdiction.

But from the middle of the last century a radical change began to take place throughout most of the Muslim world, whether in the Ottoman Empire, British India or elsewhere. First, the scope of the Shari'ah was extensively curtailed in favour of statute law of largely alien inspiration, and a whole system of 'secular' courts was established to administer the new legislation. The motive for this was basically twofold: to reform the administration of justice in a way which would harmonise with the ethos and meet the needs of a modern, bureaucratic government, and also, in part, to silence the criticisms and satisfy the requirements of foreign opinion. In the Ottoman Empire the resultant legislation was chiefly derived from the Code Napoleon, while in British India it was quarried from the Common Law; but in both cases the family law of Islām was left virtually intact, uncodified and unchanged — to be administered, in most of the countries concerned, by the Shari'ah courts in precisely the way which had prevailed for centuries, but in India to be administered by courts of general jurisdiction (advised, initially, by Muslim experts). There was, however, one major exception to this generalisation, in so far as the Ottoman Empire was concerned; for when the Ottoman reformers came to codify the law of 'obligations', they eventually — after considerable hesitation — based their code (which is commonly known as the Majalla) not on French legislation but on principles and precepts derived from the Shari'ah.

It is important to emphasise what a radical departure from the orthodox theory of Islāmic jurisprudence these reforms represent. All down the centuries the Shari'ah had been regarded as a law which was firmly based on divine revelation, which could not be changed by any human authority — and which was equally binding on both Ruler and subject -- an authoritative blueprint to which Muslim Peoples were always required to conform, rather than a law which could be adapted to the changing needs of a developing society. It was, indeed, its sacrosanct character which explains, in part at least, why it was quietly put on one side — as the ideal law which had, it was believed, once held exclusive sway throughout the Muslim world and which would no doubt prevail once more in the Golden Age which was to come -- in favour of a quite different law forced upon Muslim governments by the exiguous demands of modern life; for this was at first regarded as preferable to any profane meddling with its immutable provisions. It is in this context that the Majalla assumes such significance; for it represents the first example in history of the promulgation of precepts derived from the Sharī'ah in the form of legislation enacted by authority of the State — and based, indeed, not only on the dominant opinion in the Ḥanafī (or State-recognised) school, but rather on a selection of those opinions which seemed most suited to modern life (all of which had, I think, received some recognition by Hanafī jurists, although a few of them had in fact originated in some other school).

Such was the first stage in the modernisation of the law, and it prevailed from about 1850 until after the turn of the century. But in 1915 a further step was taken in the Ottoman Empire; for the miserable position of certain Muslim wives under the dominant doctrine in the Hanafī school made it essential that changes should be introduced even in the family law as administered by the Shari'ah courts — and in such relationships which represent an integral part of the very web and woof of Muslim life, the reformers felt precluded from any abandonment of the Shari'ah in favour of some law of alien inspiration, for they were convinced that the family law must necessarily remain distinctively Islāmic. So they were forced to resort to the expedient of actually introducing changes and adaptations in this law, as it was administered by the courts, to meet the needs of contemporary society.

But how could a law which was regarded as firmly based on divine revelation be adapted by any human authority? This was the problem: a problem which was largely resolved by what was, in effect, a recognition that the Shari'ah represents not only a divine law but also a lawyers' law; for although it was regarded as firmly based on divine revelation, it had certainly not dropped down from heaven in its developed form, but had been built up by the deductions and reasoning of generations of lawyers. So the reforms which have been introduced in recent years in so many Muslim countries have, for the most part, been based on an eclectic choice between the different deductions and reasonings of the different

schools and a multitude of individual jurists — a choice, indeed, which has sometimes gone so far as to represent a combination of two different opinions (both of impeccable ancestry, but based, in some cases, on wholly contradictory premises) in a provision of law which would not have been acceptable to either of the schools or jurists to which it is attributed. But sometimes even this device would not suffice, and the reformers were compelled to resort to a new interpretation of the ancient texts for which no traditional authority could be claimed.

Such, in brief, has been the pattern of law reform in the Muslim world as a whole— and it has been duplicated, in the main, in Irān. But it is significant that the Persian Civil Code was much more closely based on the Shari'ah (in the form of that law which prevails among the Ithnā 'Asharī sect of Shi'ah than was the legislation in the Ottoman Empire or in British India, and also that it included in its scope a number of sections covering family law and the law of succession. This important departure from the two-stage approach which we have described above can, I think, best be explained by the comparatively late date at which this code was promulgated. But the sections devoted to family law and succession were, in fact far from radical in their character, and represent little more than a codified version of the law which was already in force, with a few salutary, but not very revolutionary, reforms (to some of which reference will be made below).

More recently, however, the reformers in Irān have broken new ground by the enactment of the Family Protection Act of 1967. It would be superfluous in this context to examine this Act clause by clause; so I will confine my attention to points of particular interest.

The first and most important of these that the Irānian reformers have restricted a Muslim husband's right to divorce his wife to a degree to which there is no parallel in any other Muslim country except Turkey (where the Shari'ah has been completely abandoned, in so far as the courts are concerned, since 1926) and among the followers of the Aghā Khān in East Africa.¹⁸

It is not that nothing has been done to restrict the incidence of unilateral repudiation of Muslim wives in other parts of the Islāmic world, for legislation has in fact been introduced elsewhere which provides that formulae of divorce pronounced under duress or in a state of intoxication, or even uncontrollable anger,¹⁹ or intended as an oath or threat,²⁰ will no longer be legally binding; that the threefold formula of repudiation pronounced on one and the same occasion will be regarded as only a single, and therefore revocable, divorce; ²¹that a husband who

¹⁸ Cf. my article "The Isma'īlī Khojas of East Africa", *Middle Eastern Studies* (October 1964), pp. 21 ff.

¹⁹ E.g. in the Ottoman Empire, Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Syria, Morocco and Iraq.

²⁰ E.g. in Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Syria, Morocco and Iraq.

²¹ E.g. in Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, Syria, Morocco and Iraq.

repudiates his wife without adequate cause, or in a way which inflicts hardship upon her may be ordered to pay her a sum of money by way of compensation;²² and even that no divorce will be of any legal effect unless it is effected in a court of law,²³ or after a period of time during which attempts will be made to reconcile the parties.²⁴ But the fact remains that in all these countries a Muslim husband who is sufficiently set on divorcing his wife can always achieve his purpose, provided only that he takes the necessary steps and, in some cases, pays the appropriate sum by way of compensation.

In the Irānian reform, on the other hand, this has been radically altered, for the Family Protection Act not only categorically precludes any divorce until after attempts have been made to reconcile the parties,²⁵ but also, and in *all* cases, unless or until a 'certificate of impossibility of reconciliation' has been issued.²⁶ Nor is the court given any wide discretion as to when such a certificate may be granted; for the grounds on which this may be done are incorporated in the Act. Thus such a certificate can be obtained where both parties declare their agreement;²⁷ in any of the circumstances in which cancellation of marriage is permitted

²² E.g. in Syria, Tunisia and Morocco.

²³ E.g. in Tunisia — and, in a tentative way only in Iraq.

²⁴ E.g. in Pakistan.

²⁵ Article 9.

²⁶ Article 11..

²⁷ Article 9.

under the Civil Code of 1937²⁸ (to which further reference will be made below); where either husband or wife has been sentenced by a final judgment to imprisonment for five years or more,²⁹ or is suffering from 'any addiction which according to the finding of the court is prejudicial to the foundation of family life and makes the continuance of married life impossible';³⁰ where the husband marries another wife without the consent of his existing partner;³¹ where either party 'deserts family life';³² and where either of them has been convicted by final judgment of 'an offence repugnant to the family honour and prestige' of the other.³³ Here the 'addiction prejudicial to family life' has been further defined³⁴ as addiction to drugs, alcohol, gambling or the like; but no attempt has been made to define by legislative enactment what is meant by the phrase 'abandons family life' so here there is considerable scope for judicial discretion, as is also true of offences repugnant to family honour (except that, in this case, the Act expressly states that the court must have regard 'to the position and social status of the parties' and must take into account 'custom and other relevant factors').

²⁸ Article 11.

²⁹ Article 11 (i).

³⁰ Article 11 (ii).

³¹ Article 11 (iii).

³² Article 11 (iv).

³³ Article 11 (V).

³⁴ Article 11 of the Regulations issued together with the Act.

When we turn to the sections on this subject in the Civil Code we find that provision is made for the cancellation or dissolution of marriage where either party is afflicted with insanity, whether permanent or recurrent;³⁵ where either party is incapable of having normal sexual intercourse;³⁶ where the existence of some special qualification in one or other of the parties has been specified as a condition of the marriage, and then found to be absent;³⁷ where the husband refuses, or is unable, to support his wife and it is impossible to enforce a judgment ordering him to do so;³⁸ and where the husband 'does not provide for the other indispensable dues of the wife and it is impossible to induce him to do so' (a clause which is interpreted as covering sexual intercourse), ill-treats his wife to such a degree that continued married life becomes insupportable, or is afflicted with some contagious disease, curable only with difficulty, which makes the continuation of married life dangerous for his partner.³⁹ It is also provided that a husband may cancel the marriage if his bride proves to be afflicted with leprosy, is crippled, or is blind in both eyes.⁴⁰

³⁵ Article 1121.

³⁶ With certain detailed provisos: see Articles 1122, 1123 (i), (ii) and (iv), and 1124-6.

³⁷ Article 1128.

³⁸ Article 1129.

³⁹ Article 1130.

⁴⁰ Article 1123 (ii), (iii), (v) and (vi).

Most of these provisions in the Code reflect normal Ithnā 'Asharī doctrine, while a few of them represent minor — but beneficial — reforms. It is noteworthy, however, that they go into considerably more detail retarding the circumstances in which a wife may either cancel her marriage or apply to the court for a divorce than they do in the case of the husband. The reason for this is not far to seek, for article 1133 states explicitly that 'A man may divorce his wife whenever he wishes to do so'. But this clearly gives rise to a question of principle in regard to the Family Protection Act, the general tenor of which seems to imply reciprocity of rights between the spouses. On this basis it would seem eminently arguable that a husband ought to be able to obtain a certificate of impossibility of reconciliation should his wife treat him in a way which makes the continuation of life with her 'insupportable' or should she refuse sexual intercourse — on the ground that these circumstances were not mentioned in the Code because they were amply covered by the husband's unfettered discretion' and were presumably omitted from the Family Protection Act by inadvertence. It would seem, however, that the courts consider themselves bound by the express provisions of the relevant enactments and do not feel free to read into them any such inference. It remains to be seen, however, whether the courts will interpret the clause in the Family Protection Act about 'deserting family life' as covering the case where a wife continues to live in the matrimonial home but refuses

relations. If not it would seem probable that husbands whose wives submit them to any form of 'insupportable' treatment may be provoked to respond in such a way as to induce their wives to agree to a divorce or even to take the initiative in seeking a dissolution of marriage.

The second point of outstanding significance in this Act has already been covered in outline: namely, the numerous circumstances in which it is open to Muslim wives to demand a certificate of impossibility of reconciliation and then to obtain a divorce. This represents a much less radical reform than the somewhat similar provisions regarding husbands (which impose a unique restriction, as we have seen, on a previously unfettered discretion), while wives have now been given the right to seek a judicial divorce in a number of different countries on *most* of the grounds now specified in Irān- This should not, however, obscure the fact that it is easier to adopt principles derived from, say the Mālik' law in a country in which the Ḥanafī law previously prevailed than it is to introduce the same principles in a Shī'ī country. But, however this may be, two aspects of these Irānian reforms in favour of a wife demand particular notice: the way in which a wife's right to obtain a divorce in all the specified circumstances has been brought superficially at least — under the aegis of recognised Muslim doctrine, and the implications of this law in regard to polygamy (even in the form of those

temporary marriages which are explicitly recognised in the Civil Code).⁴¹

The first of these points is covered in Article 17 of the Family Protection Act, which reads: 'The provisions of Article 11 shall be inserted in the marriage document in the form of a condition of the contract of marriage, and an irrevocable power of attorney for the wife to execute a divorce will be explicitly provided.' This means, in effect, that it is statutory requirement that every contract of marriage should include a delegation by husband to wife of authority to exercise on his behalf, in any of the circumstances specified above, his right of repudiation; so in theory it is not she who divorces him, but he who, by delegation, divorces her. This is a most ingenious expedient which might well be adopted in other Muslim countries. It should, however, be recognised that, in the Iranian legislation, it represents little more than a device, however justifiable; for I took the opportunity, on a visit to Tehrān in 1968, to ask a number of judges and lawyers whether they would, in fact, make any distinction between marriages concluded after the Act was promulgated (and in which this power of attorney was, or should have been expressly included) and those contracted previously (and without any such clause); and they replied that they would not. This reply was somewhat surprising in view of the rigidity with which they apparently adhere to the

⁴¹ Articles 1075 ff.

letter of the enactment in other respects (as has been noted above). The conclusion is inescapable, therefore, that the intention of the Act is to set out those circumstances in which both husbands and wives may apply for a certificate of impossibility of reconciliation and then, where attempts at conciliation have failed, may obtain a divorce, and that Article 17 is primarily designed to placate orthodox Muslim opinion and satisfy the constitutional requirement that no legislation may be enacted which is 'contrary to the Shari'ah'.

A wife's right to obtain a divorce should her husband marry a second wife without her consent is, of course, also covered by this provision. This corresponds to somewhat similar legislation in certain other countries:⁴² but it is particularly significant in Iran because of the full legal recognition accorded by the Civil Code to those temporary (or *mut'ab*) marriages which only the Ithnā 'Asharī law now allows — and which are still quite common in that country. These may take the form of a contract concluded for a period of 99 years or more, and so represent a union just as long-lived as any 'permanent' marriage, although inferior in social status and in the legal rights which it confers. It seems that today these *mut'ab* unions are chiefly contracted for a period of a few days on the occasion of a man's pilgrimage to Qumm or Mashhad. Since, therefore, these marriages represent little more than an exceedingly brief liaison in

⁴² E.g. in the Ottoman Empire, Morocco and Pakistan.

which the wife receives a sum of money but is not entitled to maintenance or inheritance from her 'husband', it might well be thought that they would not give a man's permanent wife any more right to a divorce than would her husband's involvement in an illicit union with another women; but I was assured that this was not the case, and that a wife who had not consented to her husband's conclusion of a *mut'ab* marriage, and who wished to press for a divorce, would be entitled to obtain it on exactly the same basis as would obtain if he had concluded a second 'permanent' marriage.

Thirdly, there is another provision about polygamy in Article 14. This provides that a husband who wishes to marry a second wife must first obtain permission from the court, which will grant such permission only when it is 'satisfied, by taking any necessary measures and, if possible, by examining the present wife', that he 'has the necessary financial ability and sense of justice and capacity to accord equal treatment to the two wives.' To both of these requirements parallels might be cited from other Muslim countries;⁴³ and it is noteworthy that a second marriage contracted without such permission is legally valid in Irān, although the husband who concludes it is liable to penal sanctions.⁴⁴ But the clause in this Article about equal treatment must, presumably, be construed to mean that two

⁴³ E.g. in Syria, Morocco and Iraq.

⁴⁴ Compare, in this context, the position in Syria, Tunisia, Morocco and Iraq, where there are interesting contrasts in this respect.

'permanent' wives must be accorded equal treatment, not that a *mut'ab* wife must be treated on an equality with a permanent wife. Even so, the provision is not wholly without difficulty in a Shī'ī country; for the Ithnā 'Asharī law provides that a wife's maintenance should be reckoned exclusively by reference to her own social and financial status, not that of the husband; so a man who marries one wife from an aristocratic and wealthy family, and another from a humble and impoverished home, would normally be required to maintain the first in quite a different style from that appropriate to the second. It is also noteworthy that this article has been cited in Irān as virtually making any future *mut'ab* marriages, if polygamous, subject to penal sanctions, since the courts are exceedingly unlikely to give permission for such an union. But it must be remembered that this does not mean that such a marriage, if contracted, would be legally invalid.

Fourthly, this Act also makes explicit provision for the court to issue a decree about the custody of children, provision for their support, and access to them by both the parties to the marriage (or, in their absence, by their close relatives)⁴⁵ Here the significant point is that the welfare of the children is given an absolute priority over the detailed rules of Islāmic law, for it is expressly provided that the maintenance of the children 'shall be payable from the

⁴⁵ Articles 9, 12, 13, 16 and 18.

income and property of the husband or the wife or both ... and even from the pensions of the husband or wife' and that them, yrotcentus tra euthe custody of the children to any person whom it deems fit'. This is not only salutary but almost revolutionary in its implications.

It is also noteworthy that there is reason to believe that these reforms will, in general, be interpreted and applied by the courts in the way which was intended by the legislature (by contrast, it must be observed, with what has happened — in some cases, at least — in Irāq). The reason for this difference is that litigation on such subjects in Irāq still falls within the competence of the Shari'ah courts, where the *qāḍīs* are often either unable or unwilling to rid them selves of their preconceived ideas and the influence of their training and experience, whereas the jurisdiction of *qaḍī's* courts in Irān has been progressively restricted since as early as 1927, and it seems clear that their competence under the present law would be confined to such questions as whether a marriage had, or had not, been validly concluded.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ For this whole subject, see Doreen Hinchcliffe, "Legal Reforms in Shi'i World — Recent Legislation in Iran and Iraq", *Malaya Law Review* (1968), pp. 292 ff.

THE TRADITION OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY IN PERSIA AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR THE MODERN WORLD'

Seyyed Hossein Nasr

The subject of the present paper is one which, it would seem, involves all men, for men, being a thinking being, cannot avoid thought. In whatever society he lives he is forced to think and meditate upon the nature of things. It is possible to put a false way of thinking in place of a true one, but, in any case, it is not possible to be against thought itself, especially since this point of view, when analyzed and dissected, is found to be itself a certain way of thinking. Man cannot, therefore, escape from thought and reflection, and this is true today in the Islāmic world in particular as well as in the East in general, where men live in a special situation resulting from the encounter with Western civilization as a result of which a new awareness and evaluation of their own intellectual tradition has become an urgent call and, in fact, probably very much a matter of life and death. In Persia the best proof of this fact is that during the last decade, despite all that has been done in many modernized circles to turn away from purely intellectual matters and to become concerned solely with the practical and the pragmatic, there still can be seen a new kind of

awareness of the Islāmic philosophical tradition, even among some of the members of the younger generation.⁴⁷

In this discussion the expression "philosophical tradition" (*sunnat-i falsafī*) has been employed for the reason that the use of the term "tradition" itself, which has become current in Persian recently, is an indication of the present intellectual situation in the Islāmic world. There are two factors to consider. First, the word tradition (*sunnat*) in its present sense in Persian does not have an antecedent in classical Arabic or Persian usage. The concept which the word evokes today has not existed in the same way within the Islāmic intellectual heritage where the word *dīn* has always meant tradition in its universal sense; but in fact this particular word, *sunnat*, has not been employed here without a definite reason. Its usage today in Persian, even in such expressions as "traditional decoration", "traditional food", or "traditional music", etc. points up a two-sided reality. It shows that to a degree the modernized generation in Persia as elsewhere in the Islāmic world has to a certain extent fallen out of its own intellectual and cultural tradition and thus is able to reflect upon it from the "outside". In the same way, in a recent Cultural Seminar held in Tehrān it was suggested that the very fact that the word culture (*farhang*) has come into use in Persian today as a result of European influence shows

⁴⁷ Translated from the Persian by William Chittick. Since this paper was written originally for a Persian-speaking audience, most of its references are to that particular world.

that the unity of culture that existed traditionally in Persia is disappearing. Today usually one begins to speak about "culture" only when one no longer possesses its real substance.

In reality, man can look at himself as a pure object only when he has come out of his own mould. Thus the very fact that today people concern themselves with the "philosophical tradition" of Persia shows that, as a result of contact with Western civilization and in general the transformations which have taken place in the world during the past fifty years, certain modernized Persians at the present time look upon their own past "objectively" as a past "tradition" outside of themselves.

The second factor involved in the use of *sunnat*, which is one of vital importance and concern, is that the development of the West during the past fifty years, after 400 years of revolt against tradition by European civilization, has made obvious, at least to the intellectual élite, the paramount importance and absolute necessity of tradition. This intellectual movement first began in France with a remarkable figure named René Guénon, but now talk of tradition is much more widespread, and some Persians are aware of this development. The very fact that the foundations themselves of a given civilization are crumbling and civilization faces dissolution makes the necessity of keeping up the tradition and of living according to it ever more obvious in the eyes of the

elite. Although the general spiritual decadence of the modern world has gone on with ever greater speed during the past century, the need for tradition and interest in its presentation have become much more keenly felt than during the past century, although genuine interest in this matter has remained of necessity confined to a few. Hence the recent use of the word tradition (as *sunnat*) in the Persian language, which has probably multiplied ten times over the last twenty years, is, indirectly at least, the result of a transformation which has appeared within Western civilization and has forced some people to turn their attention toward and respect intellectual tradition, whether or not they have been connected with tradition themselves. For example, in the nineteenth century Western art critics considered the anonymity of artists, writers or creative personalities in the East as a weakness, while today no one would be able to deny the value of Eastern art merely because the name of the artist and creator of a work of art is unknown. If anything, the bitter experience of this century has demonstrated to men of perspicacity that the respect for genuine tradition, tradition in its universal meaning as a reality that unites man with his divine origin and source and not custom or convention, is absolutely necessary even for the modernists touched by the spirit of the West. The Persians and other peoples of the East are not an exception to this rule. Only the preservation of tradition can help them preserve the coherence and meaningfulness of their lives.

They can no longer appeal to the West an excuse to destroy their own tradition if they are at all aware of what is going on in the modern world.

Tradition in the present context does not mean something which passes or dies, for only that is dead which has no value for man at a given moment. As long as a society's past has value and meaning for it, the society is alive, and this "life" and "death" itself fluctuate over the ages. For example, from the appearance of Mithraism in the third century B.C. until the nineteenth century twenty-three centuries went by, and until the twentieth century, twenty-four centuries. Thus Mithraism should be more forgotten and "dead" in Irān now than during the last century, while in fact this is by no means the case. Today because of the rise of nationalism coming from the West, the modernized Persians pay a great deal more attention to Mithraism than they did in the past century. That is why when we speak about tradition in culture and more particularly in metaphysics and philosophy, we are not speaking only of a temporal relationship. Plato is just as alive today as he was in the fourth century B. C., while Renouvier, whose works were probably being read more than those of any other French philosopher in the year 1890, has now faded into the shadows of history. It can thus be said that an intellectual and metaphysical tradition is always alive in a world that lies above time and space. As long as a nation is alive and the roots of its culture continue to be nourished from the spring of its own traditional cultural life, tradition is like a

storehouse from which nourishment is drawn according to the nation's needs at different moments of its history.

In consequence to speak of the intellectual tradition in Persia linked organically with its past is to speak of a living intellectual school, whether the doctrines concerned be that of an individual like Suhrawardī, who lived seven centuries ago, or Ibn Sīnā, who lived ten centuries ago. The time span involved makes no difference. These and other Muslim philosophers and sages are alive and belong to the present moment of the life of Persians and other Muslims in general, for whom the Islāmic intellectual tradition is alive.

But what is the essential nature of this philosophical tradition? Is it limited to Irān? And if so, what are its characteristics?

Here we meet with the extremely important problem of the continuity or lack of it between two chapters in the history of Persia, that is, the pre-Islāmic and the Islāmic periods. The former of these is itself worthy of a profound discussion, although we cannot concern ourselves with it at the present moment, for here our purpose is not to deal with historical roots, but rather with the analysis and evaluation of doctrines and ideas.

Without doubt a certain kind of profound intellectual tradition of a "philosophical" or rather theosophical type did exist in pre-Islāmic Persia, but within the total world view of

the religious traditions, such as Manicheanism, Mithraism and above all Zoroastrianism, themselves. This combination of wisdom and the religious world view is itself the outstanding characteristic of all the traditional civilizations of Asia, or those civilizations which have taken a set of divine principles as the source for all of their activity, modes of thought and way of life.

After the rise of Islām this "philosophical" tradition of the pre-Islāmic period became integrated into Islāmic intellectual life along with other intellectual legacies. As a result a kind of stage of world-wide dimensions was prepared by Islām, in which the Persians could play an active role. Other ideas and schools of thought, especially Greek philosophy— which itself probably has a profound connection in its origin with the ancient Persian and Indo-European traditions —, concepts which originated in Mesopotamia and India and certain other elements, played their own significant role, in the rise of Islāmic philosophy. But more important than all else was the religion of Islām, which provided the background against which and the principles by which all of these intellectual currents and ideas were brought together, resulting in the formation of Islāmic philosophy.

Many Europeans, unfortunately, because of their strongly prejudiced views concerning ancient Greece, have never admitted that other civilizations also possessed an

intellectual tradition of value and originality, as can be seen in most of their appraisals of pre-Islāmic Persia. This prejudice, combined with a large number of other factors, has prevented the importance of the wisdom of ancient Persia and even to a greater extent the significance of Islāmic philosophy from becoming clear. As a result the West has neglected to study the tradition of Islāmic philosophy in its entirety and because of the great influence that Western writings exercise upon modern Muslims, this has harmed the Muslims and particularly the Persians themselves, for in reality Irān has always been the principal homeland of Islāmic philosophy and it was mostly here that the tradition of Islāmic philosophy continued after the 6th/12th century. If one reflects upon the fact that so many Muslim philosophers hailed from Irān and then considers Irān's geographical area and population as compared to those of the whole Islāmic world, the significance of Irān as the center of Islāmic philosophy becomes clear.

Another important point to be considered is that in the modern period Persians have occupied themselves less with writing works on "philosophy" in the modern European sense than the contemporary scholars of other Islāmic countries, who have written works in Arabic, Urdu, Turkish and English (especially in India and Pakistan). This apparently negative fact has a very positive reason, which is the profundity and deep-rootedness of traditional

philosophy in Irān. The mere fact of the existence of an authentic and original intellectual school has made the presentation of unfounded and insubstantial "philosophies" and ideas which ape the West more difficult. Nowadays, because of the prejudice which exists in certain circles, resulting in lack of attention to the philosophy of Islāmic Persia—and a great deal of this prejudice is the fault of the Muslims themselves — a truncated and in fact ludicrous concept of Islāmic philosophy has taken form in the minds of the modern educated classes of Muslim countries. This fact has placed them at a crossroads which, from the point of view of the future development of Islāmic society in general and Persian society in particular and their future intellectual life, is of extreme importance.

In order to remain a healthy being man has basically no choice but to have a certain direct awareness of himself, and if he also observes other beings he always views their personality in the light of his own existence. In fact from the metaphysical point of view all beings in the cosmos display man's existence. Ordinary men see their fallen nature in other beings, while the man who has reached that degree of spiritual development and transcendence which frees him from the chains of his own ego and the limitations of his own soul sees his spiritual essence reflected in the world about him. In any case seeing others in oneself and oneself in others is reached by way of the knowledge of self. This also holds true for cultures, in the sense that a culture must

have direct knowledge of its own past.. It is true that historical and social developments, contact with other civilizations etc., bring about a certain kind of new understanding of the past, but a culture can never remain healthy and strong by the sole means of seeing its own reflection in the mirror of other cultures.

It is now becoming ever more clear that the problem of the necessity of direct self-knowledge is of serious proportions for all Asian societies and especially the Muslim world. For in so many Muslim lands modernized people now seek to look at themselves from the point of view of the West. Of course, this type of perspective is not prevalent among the common people; rather, it is to be seen especially among the so-called "intelligentsia."

The best proof of this assertion is in the field of art, which as a concrete phenomenon can better serve as an example. It is well known that during the last century, before Europeans began to recognize the value of the Persian miniature, the Persians themselves did not have much interest in maintaining this artistic heritage or preserving the precious results it had produced. In the same way until a few years ago there was no interest in Irān in Qajar style paintings, and most of these paintings were to be found hanging on the walls of coffee-houses. But recently, when the real value of these works was recognized by certain European art critics and the Qajar style was designated as an important school of art,

those same apparently lowly paintings found their way from humble coffee-houses to exhibition halls and were bought and sold at tremendous prices. Such a revival in the appreciation of any nation's art as the result of the application of purely foreign standards shows that in a certain sense the culture of that nation has become unstable in the eyes of those who have fallen under foreign influences and that this class lacks confidence in its own cultural identity. If this continues and spreads, the nation will become afflicted by severe disorder within its social structure and the society, like a mentally ill person who experiences a double personality, will become schizophrenic. Within Muslim society, on the one hand, there will exist people on the lower levels who will not yet feel strange and alien within their own society, while on the other hand there will be individuals on the higher levels who will feel alien to, and completely cut off from, the rest of society, thus causing a kind of disharmony and breach to appear within the community. This is a disorder which has already afflicted to a greater or lesser degree all Asian societies and is making more difficult for them the possibility of correctly evaluating and judging what comes from the outside, that is, foreign cultures and in particular the civilization of the West.

That is why one can say that for the East in general and for the Muslim world in particular a new awareness and understanding of the nature of their own philosophical and intellectual traditions is not just an academic question.

Rather, it is one which involves their future existence, in the sense that for a nation to know where it wants to go it must first know where it is, and this is tied to a complete awareness of its own intellectual past.

However this may be, today in the Islāmic world, in most university circles and among those people who are acquainted with modern Western culture, dependence upon the research and even propaganda of some Westerners concerning Islāmic thought and philosophy determines the views held by most students of the philosophical tradition of Islām. Moreover, the fact that most members of the intelligentsia of the East are acquainted with the world and with themselves from the point of view of the West has resulted in their feeling a certain insecurity concerning their own intellectual past. This does not mean that all of the studies of the orientalists have been carried out because of ulterior motives or on the basis of ill intentions; on the contrary, one can be certain that a considerable number of these studies have been free of any such stains. But in any case, the researches of the orientalists have been made at best with an eye on the requirements of Western civilization which, of course, are not those of the Oriental civilizations.

It must further be pointed out that, as any careful study will show, the shadow of the nineteenth century, when orientalism

became established as a university discipline, is still upon us today. If Western thought at that time had accepted the originality and value of a civilization other than its own, it essentially would have destroyed its image of itself and ceased to be what it was during that period. This vital point bears repetition: today in the Persian language it is said that a particular nation is "civilized", or possesses no "civilization". The word which is employed, *tamaddun*, is a literal translation of the French term used by the Encyclopaedists of the eighteenth century. In the nineteenth century Western thought finally led to the "fall" of the absolute into time". In fact, Hegel, who finally brought this about, and philosophers like him considered nineteenth century Western civilization to be the final and ultimate goal of man's history, and indeed, to be "civilization" as such. It is true that this view has now been rejected, but in the last century it was to a large degree prevalent and it still has supporters in certain schools.

This type of outlook could not accept that other cultures were truly original and "civilized", unless they were so far from the course of Western civilization and so "exotic" that a certain appreciation of their worth would in no way harm the West — as was the case, for example, with the civilizations of Tibet and Japan, whose recognition in no way prejudiced the deeper motives underlying the researches of the majority of orientalists. But when there was talk of the civilization of Islām and in particular when the problem of thought and

intellectual activity was put forward, the subject become much more delicate. The heart of the matter is here: if the orientalists were to accept that a civilization other than the Western had come into being and been of value independently of the culture and civilization of the West, all the bases upon which European philosophy stood at that time would have assumed a relative character. For, in fact, at that time there was no other "absolute" for the countries of Europe to rely upon than what had come to be known as Civilization with a capital C. Christianity had lost its absolute character in the seventeenth century, so that without this pseudo-"absolute" the foundations of Western civilization would have been destroyed. That is why in their studies and analyses of Islāmic civilization most Western scholars have until recently cut off their discussions with the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries. In most general cultural studies and those dealing with intellectual history all the later phases of Islāmic philosophy, Sūfism and theology as well as astronomy, mathematics and medicine are neglected almost systematically.

The problems outlined above have been complicated by a number of political movements in the East in the form of nationalism. For example, there is the case of Arab nationalism in its intense form, where, in order to show that Islāmic civilization declined when the Persians and Turks were dominant, some Arab nationalists have discussed and confirmed in their writings the thesis of the

sudden curtailment of Islāmic intellectual activity which Western authors had advanced, and in this way they have made use of this idea for political purposes. The result of all of these factors has been to make the knowledge of their own culture difficult for modern Muslims, and all of them suffer because of this ignorance. Even in an area like Persian literature, for example, a careful investigation will show that the greater part of the aversion and lack of interest displayed by modernized scholars in Irān today with respect to the literature of the Safavid period and the Persian literature of the sub-continent is a result of the relatively incorrect evaluation and appraisal of this literature by the first Western scholars who wrote on Persian literary history. This evaluation has brought about a change in the taste of a large number of Persians concerning even their own literature, despite the internal and national character of this subject.

A similar situation exists to a greater or lesser degree in a large number of other fields. Within Islām is civilization this is particularly harmful in every way, for one of two things is true. Either we must accept that during a period of seven or eight hundred years Muslims did not think or possess any form of intellectual activity — and if so, then how would it be possible for such activity to return to life after seven centuries? Or, on the contrary, we must accept that we have had an intellectual tradition — and in this case we must recover the resources of

our own tradition and base ourselves on the foundation provided by them.

A country like Irān, which possesses a rich and ancient civilization and culture, faces much more complicated situation *vis-a-vis* its own intellectual traditions than a country which intellectually and geographically has just recently come into existence. Whatever the meaning of such a shallow statement might be, 'entering the twentieth century' in the sense of accepting Western civilization, is quite an easy matter for such a newly established nation and can probably be accomplished, at least from an economic point of view, by bringing together a few of the necessities and luxuries and the external manifestations of contemporary life. But movement and change in a civilization which is solidly buttressed by the heritage of the past is something else. Unlike a country built upon a completely new foundation such a civilization cannot remain oblivious to its own culture. It must bear its weighty legacy wherever it goes or else remain an incomplete being. Moreover, nations of this type are themselves charged with a mission, which in reality is the guidance and leadership of all men in the twentieth century in the light of their living intellectual and spiritual tradition. They cannot simply follow the dangerous course of Western civilization with their hands folded especially considering the fact that the present century is one of a thousand imperfections and deficiencies, and that, if it continues upon

its present course, it is hopeless to expect that civilization in its present form will even enter a new century.

The historical mission of societies in which tradition still survives *vis-a-vis* the modern world is to take seriously their own intellectual and spiritual tradition, and this in fact is something which thoughtful men throughout the world expect of them. European civilization, which in the nineteenth century, because of its absolutist view of Western thought, did not want to accept that the civilizations of the East possessed any originality or foundation of their own, has today put relativity in place of that "absolute". European thought has become relative for Westerners themselves and for the same reason we meet with contradictory value-systems within Western civilization. Whether they want to or not, the more thoughtful elements of this civilization are now forced to accept that the civilizations of the East do possess a certain value and originality in themselves.

Thus it is that the "intelligentsia" of the Eastern traditions finds itself at an extremely difficult crossroads. In Irān, for example, being "Westernized" (*farangī-ma'āb*) at the time of Akhundov was different from what it became at the time of Taqīzādah, and today it is different from what it was then, these three aspects of the same phenomenon displaying tremendous divergences among themselves. Taqīzādah's name is mentioned on purpose, for the life which he lived is a perfect illustration of the developments and changes which

have taken place within the intellectual currents of a single nation over a period of almost a century, during which he himself expressed several different views concerning the civilization of the West, thus showing how the mental climate among the "intelligentsia" of Irān and most other Muslim lands has changed.

Today an individual Muslim — especially since, as has been pointed out, Islāmic civilization is one of the three or four Oriental civilizations which from this point of view possess an intellectual mission for the modern world — cannot erase from his mind his own civilization and culture as easily as he did in the past decades; for the mere mention of the fact that traditional philosophical thought exists in Islām and more particularly in Persia places him face to face with the question of what other intellectual premisses he wishes to base himself upon in order to forget his own authentic and original mode of thought, when Western modes of thought are themselves crumbling.

Here it must be hoped that the light that has come from study and research in East and West concerning the thought and philosophical tradition of Irān — and which will certainly grow brighter in the coming years — will to a degree illuminate the way for the future intellectual development of Irān and the Islāmic world in general. In other words, when young Muslim intellectuals observe, for example, that *the Sharḥ-i Manzāmah* of Ḥajj Mullā Hādī

Sabzawārī has recently been translated into English,⁴⁸ they will not be able to maintain the same attitude toward the Islāmic intellectual tradition as did the "intelligentsia" of the past generation. Thus, the awareness which is just beginning to appear around the world concerning the Islāmic philosophical tradition in Irān is itself one of the basic elements which will help determine the future intellectual development of the Islāmic world.

It must now be asked what this intellectual tradition is in itself. First of all, as has been indicated, the intellectual tradition of Islām with its widespread and extensive roots is in many ways unique in the world: among classical civilizations it is only the Islāmic that truly possesses an international and world-wide foundation, for this foundation came into being from the encounter of Chinese, Persian and Indian, Greek and Alexandrian elements as well as the intellectual heritages of most of the other ancient civilizations of the world along with, of course, the Qur'ānic sciences and branches of knowledge themselves. The mode of thought which appeared as a result reached its first stage of perfection with Ibn Sīnā; afterwards great theologians, such as Imām Muhammad Ghazzālī and Imām Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī, opened up a new direction, and a further stage was reached with the appearance of the School of Illumination

⁴⁸ By T. Izutsu and M. Muḥaqqiq; Part one of the translation has been published in the Islamic series of McGill University Press. The Arabic text of this work was published by these two scholars in Tehran in 1969.

(Ishrāq) founded by one of the greatest intellectual figures of Islām, Shaykh al-Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī. Later stages in the development of this tradition were brought about by the synthesis of gnosis (*Wan*), philosophy and theology leading to the flowering of these intellectual movements in the Safavid period with Mir Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā, whose school has continued to the present day. These are some of the developments which appeared within Islāmic thought over the centuries, and it is precisely this chain of thought which we have in mind when we speak of the "Islamic philosophical tradition."

Unfortunately, because of lack of extensive research, the particularities of much of this tradition are unknown to us, for at the very least most of the thousands of books written in this field must first have been studied. But a few of the basic principles which can be seen throughout the various stages of the intellectuallife of Islām and in particular in Irān are manifestly clear. Here it is hoped to compare and contrast these principles with the prevalent thought-patterns of the modern world and the problems which modern science and philosophy have placed before man.

The first and most important message of the Islāmic philosophical tradition, which more than all others has drawn the attention of the most penetrating of modern scholars, is that this "philosophy" cannot be learned but must be "realized". Philosophy in the East is not just a school of

thought and an academic discipline; it is also something that must be combined with a "wayfaring", and an inner transformation of man's being. In other words, as first taught, most of all by Suhrawardī, in Islām becoming a philosopher (*faylasūf*) or traditional theosopher (*hakīm*) is joined to the attainment of spiritual and moral perfection.

It is well enough known that one of the elements that have caused the tragedy of modern man is the complete separation between knowledge and ethical principles, in the sense that at the present time there is no relationship whatsoever between moral and spiritual perfection and scientific progress. This itself is the source of immediate danger, even causing one of UNESCO's experts to remark a few years ago, "I wish we were back in the age of the alchemists when science was only in the hands of the elite, and they kept it secret"; for disseminating science in man's present situation is like putting a sword in the hand of a drunken sailor.

Today every "forward" step which man takes in reality widens the gulf between what he is and what he thinks. That is why we are regrettably faced with a severe crisis resulting from the application of the practical aspects of modern science, as is observed, for example, in certain negative and harmful consequences of modern medicine and biology. Thus a complex problem is placed before us: why does the application of science, which apparently is based upon

experiment and the observation of nature, cause man to fall into violent conflict with that same nature, so that it has even become possible that in the end man or nature will be destroyed? Again, this difficult and perhaps insoluble dilemma of modern man derives basically from the split between science and wisdom in general on the one hand and science and spiritual and moral perfection on the other.

To understand why the situation has come to this crisis it is necessary to cast a glance at the history of Western thought and to search for the cause of the separation of Western science and metaphysics. It is true that this separation produced certain positive results and led to the appearance of new branches of science, but its negative aspect is much greater and has resulted in the disappearance of any satisfactory universal point of view. Thus, in the words of one of the greatest physicists of this century, we have a physics, but no natural philosophy which can integrate it into a more universal form of knowledge. Then again, further difficulties are caused by the sort of caricature of natural science which has come into being in the humanities and social sciences in the form of the ludicrous imitation of seventeenth century physics, that is, the constant reduction of quality to quantity and the drawing of a few curves to explain psychological and social phenomena.

Today, then, man is faced with an exceedingly dangerous situation and a chasm which has destroyed the unity of his

existence. Today in a Western university, as well as those of the East which imitate Western models, a student is obliged to study the humanities, natural sciences and mathematics together. In other words, he comes out of his physics class and enters one on literature, and from there he goes to classes on art, and from there to classes on the doctrines and history of religion, without there being any significant relationship between his studies in these fields. This has brought about a kind of "hardening of the arteries", which we in the East must never be negligent of or try to imitate. If we do not take preventive measures and do not attempt to find an immediate solution, within one or two generations we shall be afflicted by the same disorder that has now overtaken the societies of the West and which cannot by any means be taken lightly: separation between wisdom and science, between morals and science and between complete disarray and discontinuity within science itself and more particularly separation between the humanities and the natural sciences, and most of all aversion toward traditional philosophy and metaphysics (leaving aside the few traditionalists alluded to above) which arose out of European history when after Leibniz genuine metaphysics was forgotten. What is called metaphysics today in the West is not true metaphysics except for what is found in the writings of traditional authors like R. Guénon and F. Schuon. Metaphysics in its true sense must always be connected with a way of union with the Truth, whereas the

so-called metaphysics in Western philosophy is made up for the most part, of expenditure of breath and, ultimately, simply mental noises; as Western philosophy itself has been referred to by a contemporary sage.

Moreover, true metaphysics, as it has existed in Islāmic civilization, in the bosom of traditional theosophy (*ḥikmat*) and gnosis (*Wan*), has produced significant scientific results and has been the mother of the traditional sciences. For this reason also the intellectual tradition of Islam is extremely valuable as a guide for today's world. Islāmic civilization is the only one which has been able to produce a mathematician of the highest calibre, who was also a competent poet. It is true that one or two of the symbolist poets of France knew mathematics, but they were never great mathematicians and only knew mathematics as an academic discipline, while, as far as we know, throughout the whole history of science only Khayyām was both a great poet and an eminent mathematician. In addition, probably half of the great scientists of

Islām followed gnostic doctrines, such men, as Ibn al-Bannā' al-Marrakushī, the last great mathematician of the Western lands

of Islām, who was himself the spiritual master (*shaykh*) of a Ṣūfī order; or Qutb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, or even people like Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī and Ibn Sīnā, both of whom had strong inclinations towards Sūfīsm and gnosis.

Here it might be asked what sort of intellectual life was able to bring together in the mind of one person logic and gnosis, or allow a person to write a book like *The Theosophy of the Orient of Light* (*Hikmat al-Isbrāq*, by Suhrawardī), the first part of which is among the most accurate criticisms ever made of Aristotle's formal logic, and the second part one of the most entrancing discussions of gnosis in Islām. How is it possible for these two modes of thought to be integrated together without any feeling of contradiction? It is here that the uniqueness of the philosophical tradition of Islāmic Persia shows itself quite clearly. The other civilizations of Asia, like the Buddhist and the Hindu, gave birth to a pure gnosis of the highest order which in many respects is comparable to that of Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Ibn 'Arabī and Hāfiẓ but expositions of the exact sciences and mathematics in the framework of gnosis are to be found most of all in the Islāmic philosophical and scientific tradition.

Here it is possible to object that the Islāmic natural sciences were not like modern science. in a certain respect this is a valid objection, seeing that modern science is transitory and the traditional sciences have a permanent value. But even if we take the point of view of the historical development of science, the scientific activity of each period must be judged according to the culture and civilization that prevailed during it. Today's science also will be rejected tomorrow. Aristotle was the greatest biologist of the fourth century B.C. and Harvey was the greatest physician of the

seventeenth century A.D. just as today a particular person is, for example, the greatest contemporary biologist. In the same manner, Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī was just as much a great mathematician and astronomer in his time as LaPlace in his and Einstein and Poincaré in our own. Thus the value of scientific thought in itself is not related to the simplicity or complexity of a given period's science. Moreover, when a civilization has been able to place scientific thought within a perspective which includes traditional theosophy and gnosis, this possesses the highest significance for to-day's world and especially for us who are Muslims, for it is precisely the separation of science from theosophy and true metaphysics which has brought the world face to face with today's alarming crisis.

Probably the attention which is beginning to be paid to this aspect of Islāmic philosophy in the West derives from the same reason, that is, that on its highest levels this tradition has synthesized reason (*istidlāl*), with all of its most precise requirements and conditions, and illumination (*isbrāq*) and intuition (*dhawq*). Moreover, its expression has never been separated from beauty. A point of basic importance for modern man, with which many scientists have concerned themselves, is that although theoretically modern science does possess an aspect of beauty — to the extent that scientists, especially physicists themselves, are usually attracted to it by the beauty of its theories and speak more of "beauty" than of "truth", presenting a new scientific theory

as "beautiful" — when this science is applied, the result is ugliness. In other words, one of the characteristics of industrial and machine-age civilization is ugliness, and for the same reason beauty has come to be considered a luxury and as something more or less superfluous. In nonindustrial civilizations, on the other hand, beauty has always existed in every aspect of life.

Over the past few years, as a result of the increase in mental illness and the discord brought about by industrial society, a certain number of people have gradually realized that beauty is not a luxury or something extraneous to life, but one of the necessities for existence. This is a fact which Islāmic philosophy and civilization have always confirmed. For example, in the Islāmic world various disciplines have been studied by making use of poetry, not merely because it is easier to memorize difficult and complicated subjects with the help of poetical rhythm and harmony: the *Alfiyyah* of Ibn Mālik, the *Manzūmah* of Sabzawārī, the *Nisāb* and many other works all illustrate the taste and discernment of a people in appreciating beauty by moulding scientific concepts into poetical form. The attempt to achieve beauty by combining science and scientific explanations with poetry does not derive from the wish to simply demonstrate virtuosity. It is rather one of the most important heritages of the intellectual and philosophical tradition of Islām, impossible to accomplish without, recourse to traditional theosophy and gnosis. It is

only the gnostic (*'ārif*) who can both produce mathematics and compose poetry. In other words gnosis is the frontier and only common ground between the two. Until now, without turning to gnosis and achieving, in fact, the spiritual maturity it provides, no one has been able to be the source of original intellectual creations combining both reason and intuition.

The last important characteristic of the Islāmic intellectual tradition which we wish to mention here is its universality. It has never been limited to a particular subject, people or location, but has always been concerned with the highest truths of an unlimited nature as well as with mankind and the world as a whole. In fact, one of the characteristics of Islām, which fortified a characteristic which had existed in Persian civilization from ancient times, has been precisely its international and universal perspective. It is well known that Cyrus the Great was the first person to have granted different nations under his rule the right to follow their own way of life and that the Persians were the first people who did not limit the world to their own borders. This aspect of Persian civilization was fortified by the universal perspective of Islām, so that the character of universalism is a strong feature of all Islāmic philosophy, especially as it developed in Persia.

A great many people now realize that man's future will probably depend more than all else upon his ability to

preserve completely his own religious opinions and beliefs and at the same time to accept the value of those of others. Of course, this is not an easy matter, as is shown, for example, by the fact that the most important barrier standing in the way of Christian thought today is the existence of other religions. This is because Christianity can no longer consider all other religions and faiths to be heathen and astray, as it did in the nineteenth century, when comparative religion first appeared as a field of study. Today as soon as believing Christians see that there are people belonging to other religions and characterized by sincerity and spiritual perfection, they will stand in danger of losing their own faith if they try to ignore the factors which are the cause of that perfection.

Today in the West there is a great deal *of* interest in the study of the history and comparison of religions. It is hard to believe, but apparently the number of students studying comparative religion in American universities is greater than that in most other fields, and is increasing every day. This extraordinary interest is due to the fact that, as Western civilization spreads and cultural barriers are broken down by the external aspects or modernism, Western man's need for immediate standards by which to judge the values of other cultures increases, and without a universal perspective from which to understand the truths of other religions the danger of losing his own faith always threatens him. In the Islāmic world and in most of the other countries of the East this

problem is still hardly perceptible, except in the case of a very small number of people who have had an extremely close acquaintance with the West and have passed through the stages of anguish, hope and despair of the Western intelligentsia. Nevertheless, this is undoubtedly the most important spiritual problem of today's world and in the future will be even more perceptible in the East. Its solution is far more difficult than sending two or three men to the moon, for it involves the faith of billions of human beings.

Let the problem be expressed quite clearly. How is it possible, for example, for a person to remain a Christian and truly accept, with complete sincerity, the truth of Islām? Or how is it possible for a person to be a Muslim and yet accept the verities of Buddhism and Christianity? In the future this problem will be felt everywhere with the same seriousness as it is felt today by a few young people in the best universities of the West. American youth do not, for example, study text on Buddhism without motivation, but rather as the result of a deep need of which many people in the East are probably not aware. That every day in the West new centers are opened at the universities for the study of comparative religion, or Islām or Hinduism, is not for the most part because, in the manner of the nineteenth century, people want to find out about the nations of the East in order to be able to rule them better; rather, it is because of a spiritual

and "existential" need on the part of an important section of the Western intelligensia.

The very life and existence of a reflective and thoughtful student today in the West demands that he become acquainted with the cultural, religious and philosophical values of others. He must either accept their validity and see his own standards become relative, or reject them; he must either live in confusion and without orientation, or try to find another solution. In any case he is forced to undergo a crisis which is probably the most pressing and urgent intellectual problem which man will face in the future, along with the battle between tradition and anti-traditional or secularist tendencies.

In this situation Islāmic philosophy again possesses a message of the utmost importance. Persians in particular are all familiar with the poetry of the Muslim gnostics and Ṣūfīs, especially Rūmī, who turned their attention to the unity of religions and held that God's message has been sent to all. The verse of the Holy *Qur'ān*, "Every nation has its Messenger" (10: 48, Arberry's translation), is likewise a reference to this subject, and no holy book has proclaimed the universality of revelation as much as *Qur'ān*. The doctrine of the inward unity of religions became particularly developed and refined in Irān, located geographically as it was between the Mediterranean world and India. That is why today the Muslims of Persia possess

without their even knowing it consciously not only a philosophy of religions but a "theology" of religions in the Western sense. The possibility of understanding a variety of intellectual, gnostic, philosophical and religious systems and modes of thought exists within their own philosophical tradition.

In one way the above point can be observed in the works of Suhrawardī, who combined the philosophies of ancient Persia and ancient Greece within the framework of Islāmīc gnosis and brought into being such works as *Alwāḥ-i 'Imādī* and *'Aql-i Surkh* which in a certain way sublimate and transform the epic narratives of pre-Islāmīc Persia into mystical recitals. In another way we see this perspective, as indicated above, in the works of Rūmi, in particular in his *Mathnawī*, and in the poetry and writings of many other Sūfī masters. Modern Persians read and enjoy these works as poetry, and often they unfortunately "profit" from them in a sort of inverse manner by deriving from them a kind of relativity in the face of all sharī'ite injunctions. But the worth of this heritage is much greater than shallow people would understand, for it can be a guide for Muslims in the future to "be themselves" without negating the tradition of others. More particularly it can be of special service to a number of countries besides Persia, whether to the East, where the two religions of Hinduism and Islām face each other, or to the West, where friction exists between Islām and Christianity and even more between Islām and Judaism.

This also, then, is one of the great characteristics of the Islāmic philosophical tradition of Irān, which in the future can be a great intellectual aid for the Islāmic world in general if not for the world as a whole.

To summarize, the purpose of the present paper has not been to analyze in detail difficult philosophical and gnostic concepts, but rather to point out the general lines of the philosophical tradition of Islāmic Persia. The most notable feature of this tradition is that philosophy in its true sense belongs to those possessing a spiritual quality, that is, philosophy in the sense of the ancient Pahlavi wisdom (*kehrad*) and the traditional theosophy (*bikmat*) of Islām, or that philosophy which attaches man to spiritual reality and to truth. All men must think, whether they be physicians, engineers or mathematicians. All must first be human beings, then be experts in their own fields. Thus it is that on the general level which we have been considering the traditional philosophy of Iran belongs to all the intellectual classes of society. Therefore, and if we are to have in Irān and in the Islāmic world in general a university which has a truly intellectual character, we must make use of our own intellectual traditions as background for all fields of study. This applies *mutatis mutandis* to all aspects of the life of the Islāmic world.

Today in the East we are sleeping on hidden treasures. We must first awaken and evaluate them, and only

afterwards go on to acquire new knowledge and sciences. Otherwise the modern sciences which we import from the West, even the natural sciences and mathematics, will never be anything but superficial activities without roots, and even if they do take root their roots will dry up and dessicate the existing culture and civilization. New branches must be grafted onto a living tree, but if the tree itself is not alive and strong no new grafts will ever be possible.

Many of those in the East who speak today of science and knowledge and who as a service to science want to eliminate their own culture with its gnostic, philosophical and religious dimension are either unaware of what is happening or are in fact labouring under a greater illusion about the modern world than the Westerners themselves. Islāmic culture and more generally the traditions of the East will only be able to respond positively to the impact of the West if they are themselves a living entity. It does happen that they are fortunate enough to still have the possibility of remaining alive as themselves, especially wherever there continues to survive a very original and valuable intellectual tradition. God willing, the coming generation of Muslims, by taking their own spiritual and intellectual heritage seriously, will be able to preserve the Islāmic tradition and also cast a light which will illuminate the otherwise dark skies that modern man has brought

into being through forgetfulness of the truth which lies in the nature of things.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ The ideas set forth in this essay have been developed more extensively in several of my books including *Islamic Studies* (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1966); *The Encounter of Man and Nature* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1968); *Science and Civilization in Islam* (Cambridge [U.S.A.]: Harvard University Press, 1968); and *Ṣūfī Essays* (London: Allen & Unwin, forthcoming).

ABŪ YAZĪD AL-BIṢṬĀMĪ'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUFĪSM

— *Muḥammad Abdur Rabb*

Şufîsm, as we know it today, has passed through various stages of development. It started with ascetical practices, such as continuous fasting and withdrawal from public life, and finally developed into theosophico-philosophical systems, each with its own special terms, images and metaphors for explaining Şūfî ideas, on the one hand, and well-organized *tarīqāt* (sing. *tarīqah*, Şūfî order) with hierarchical structures and elaborate ceremonies, on the other. In this paper, we shall try to assess how Abu Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī (also Bostāmī and Baṣṭāmī), an early mystic of Irān, helped the development of the Şūfî tradition.⁵⁰

Grandson of a Magian who was later converted to Islām, Abū Yazīd Ṭayfūr b. ʿĪsā b. Sharūshān al-Biṣṭāmī was born about the year 161 A.H. (777 A.D.)⁵¹ in the town of Biṣṭām on

⁵⁰ This paper is based on the concluding chapter of my unpublished doctoral dissertation *Abū Yazīd*. (Abbreviations of frequently used sources are given at the end of the paper). A revised version of this dissertation under the title *The Life, Thought and Historical Importance of Abū Yazīd al-Biṣṭāmī* will come out shortly.

⁵¹ *Abū Yazīd*, p. 47.

the highway to Naysābūr three miles and a half north-east of Shāhrūd. At about the age of ten,⁵² he left Bistām and wandered from place to place for thirty years, disciplining himself with ascetical practices. We are told that during this period he served three hundred Sufī masters.⁵³ About the year 201/816, when he was forty, he came back to Bistām and, after that, spent most of the time there, devoting himself to mystical practices and to the teaching of disciples. He died in 234/848 at the age of seventy-three.⁵⁴

In our attempt to assess Abū Yazīd's role in the development of Sufism, we are faced with several problems. It is difficult to trace the history of Sūfī ideas with reference to the terms which have been employed to express them; for, sometimes different terms have been used by different Ṣūfīs, and sometimes a particular Saḥfī has used more than one term to express a specific idea. Abū Yazīd, for example, sometimes used the terms 'Um (exoteric knowledge) to mean *ma'rifah* (esoteric knowledge).⁵⁵ Our problem becomes the more complicated in view of the fact that most Ṣūfī terms, e.g., *mi'rāj*

We are using Lt. Col. Sir W. Haig's *Comparative Tables of Muḥammadan (sic) and Christian Dates* (Lahore: Sh. Muḥammad Ashraf, n.d.) for the conversion of Islamic dates into the Christian.

⁵² *Abū Yazīd*, p. 95, n. 3.

⁵³ *Nūr*, p.47.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

For a discussion on the dates of AbuYazīd's birth and death, see *AbuYazīd*, pp. 47-49.

⁵⁵ *Nūr*, p. 87.

(spiritual ascension) and *tawhīd* (unification), may also be used as they are in general and common usage. Moreover, a specific Sūfī term does not always convey an identical meaning for every Sūfī. This is especially true of the early history of Ṣufism, when the use of technical terms had not yet been stabilized. The chapters on *maʿrifah* in Kalābādhī's *Ta'arruf*,⁵⁶ for example, show that early Ṣufīs used the term *maʿrifah* with various meanings in mind. We also recognize that similarity of the ideas of two Ṣufīs does not necessarily prove the historical influence of one on the other. Human minds may act in similar ways in similar circumstances. Hence, similarity of ideas may very well be the result of analogous causes affecting the minds. Last of all, our knowledge of Ṣūfīsm, especially in its early stages of development, is extremely limited. "Too many gaps remain in our knowledge; too many Ṣūfī writings are unexplored, and too many mystics of enormous influence are all but unknown."⁵⁷ In the present state of our knowledge, therefore, it is difficult to draw comparisons between the ideas of one Ṣūfī and those of another. In view of all this, we cannot arrive at definite conclusions about Abū Yazīd's contribution to the development of Ṣūfīsm. The conclusions which we present here, should, therefore, be regarded only as tentative.

⁵⁶ *Ta'arruf*, pp. 63-67.

⁵⁷ C. J. Adams in his Foreword to my work *Al-Junayd*, p. ii. This work will be published by December, 1971.

The teachings of Abut Yazīd have two distinct features. The first of these is his mystical extremism; he had a tendency to go to extremes. For example, he had an unusually sharp sense of what is and what is not permissible. Once when, on inquiry, his mother informed him that during his childhood she had taken a little oil and kohl (*kuhl*) from neighbours without their permission and used these on his head and eyes respectively, he located the neighbours, sought forgiveness from them and thus freed himself and his mother from the burden.⁵⁸ He had an extreme sense of devotion to his mother. One cold night she asked him to bring her a drink of water. On his return with a mug of water he found the mother asleep and waited with the mug in his hand until she awoke, although due to the excessively low temperature, a piece skin from one of his fingers was frozen to the edge of the mug.⁵⁹ Abu Yazīd was extraordinarily humble before God and in his relations with His creatures. In spite of performing a great deal of worship, he said, "If one utterance by me of the formula 'There is no god but God' were pure, I would not have cared for anything after that."⁶⁰ According to Abu Yazīd, a true worshipper considers himself the worst of all creatures. As long as a man thinks that there is anyone in this world more evil than himself, he is boastful

⁵⁸ *Nūr*, pp. 108-109.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 71; *Tadhkirah*, I, 138; *Kawakib*, p. 249.

⁶⁰ *Nūr*, p. 82; *Hilyah*, X, 40; *Kawākib*, p. 247; *Tadhkirah*, I, 171.

(*mutakabbir*).⁶¹ The tendency in the direction of extremism also manifested itself in his mystical teachings. He carried, by what we may call the *Bisṭāmī* manner of exaggeration,⁶² some of the *Ṣūfī* concepts to their logical conclusions. Along these lines *Abū Yazīd* was certainly influential in contributing to the development of the *Ṣūfī* tradition.

The second distinct feature of *Abu Yazīd*'s teachings is that he introduced into *Ṣūfism* some conceptual forms, images and metaphors, which proved meaningful in the expression of mystical experience. His contributions to the expression of mystical experience served and continue to serve those within the tradition of *Ṣūfism*.

We shall now discuss some of *Abū Yazīd*'s teachings in the light of the two features mentioned above.⁶³

Asceticism (*zuhd*), the elements of which were present in the teachings of the *Qur'ān* and in the lives of *Muḥammad* and his immediate companions, was adopted as part and parcel of the *Sūfī* movement. *Ḥasan al-Baṣrī* (d. 110/728), *Ibrāhīm b. Adham* (d. 160/776) and *Rābi'ah al-'Adawīyyah* (d. 185/801) all practised and insisted on the renunciation of the world. Some of these *Ṣūfīs* even spoke of the necessity of renouncing

⁶¹ *Nūr*, p. 123; *Hilyah*, IX, 36. Variant *Kawākib*, p. 247.

⁶² By this, we are referring to the extremism of *Abū Yazīd*'s thoughts and deeds.

⁶³ In doing this, we shall, in most cases, follow the order in which his teachings have been discussed in my dissertation *Abū Yazīd*.

the hereafter, i.e., the fear of Hell-fire and the hope for Paradise as motivating factors of the worship of God. According to Ibrāhīm b. Adham, the true saint of God covets nothing of this world, nor of the hereafter; he devotes himself completely to God.⁶⁴ Ibrāhīm once said that he had left the world and the hereafter and had chosen for himself the remembrance of God in this world and the vision of God in the hereafter.⁶⁵ Abū Yazīd expressed a similar idea when he said, "I looked and saw the people enjoying food, drink and marriage in this world. (I saw them doing) the same in the next world. Then I made God's remembrance (*dhikr*) my enjoyment of the next world."⁶⁶ Rābi'ah was once found running with water in one hand and fire in the other. When asked why she was doing so, she replied that she was going to extinguish the fire of Hell with the water and burn Paradise with the fire so that thereafter no one would be able to worship God either for fear of Hell-fire or for hope of Paradise.⁶⁷

Abū Yazīd also practiced and preached the necessity of a rigorous asceticism concerning this world and the next. We can say that, upto this point, he was walking on the trodden path except that, perhaps, no Ṣūfī before him had used strong terms to describe his or her renunciation as he did in such utterances

⁶⁴ *Kashf*, p. 274.

⁶⁵ M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1963-1966), I, 336.

⁶⁶ *Mīr'at*, p. 166.

⁶⁷ *Manāqib*, I, 397.

as these: "I uttered the triple formula of divorce, never to return to it (the world),"⁶⁸ "I pronounced over them (the creatures) the formula of funeral prayer"⁶⁹ and "I was a blacksmith of my Self for twelve years."⁷⁰ What is new in Abū Yazīd's teachings is that he carried the idea of renunciation to its farthest limit. He renounced, in addition to the world and the hereafter, *dhikr* (remembrance of God), *maḥabbah* (love), *ma'rifah* and the gifts of God such as the Protected Tablet and the Throne.⁷¹ While speaking of renunciation of all other than God, he also insisted on abstinence from abstinence itself.⁷² It would seem that this last idea, i.e., the idea of abstinence from abstinence, was taken up by later Ṣufīs as the highest stage of asceticism⁷³ and the resultant psychological state, *fanā' an al-fanā'*, as the highest state of *fanā'* (annihilation).

⁶⁸ *Nūr*, p. 95.

Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 67 and 99; *Mir'āt*, p. 165; *Hilyah*, X, 36; *Tadhkirah*, I, 170; *Kawākib*, p. 247.

⁶⁹ *Risālah* p. 52; *Nūr*, p. 74; *Mir'āt*, p. 166.

⁷⁰ Same as n. 2.

Cf. *Tadhkirah*, I, 139, and also *Nūr*, p. 105.

⁷¹ *Hilyah*, X, 36 and 38 ; *Nūr*, pp. 80 and 133; *Tabaqāt* (Sulamī), p. 63; *Kashf*, p. 132 ; *Tadhkirah*, I, 159.

⁷² *Nūr*, p. 54.

⁷³ Abū Bak r al-Shiblī (d. 334/945), for example, says that asceticism is

heedlessness (*Luma*, p. 47).

Although Sufīs before Abū Yazīd had emphasised the necessity of and also practised asceticism, no one, as far as we know, had expressed the psychological state resulting from asceticism in the conceptual form of *fanā'*, and its corresponding positive state in the conceptual form of *baqā'* (permanence). Probably, it was Abu Yazīd who introduced these two concepts into Sufism.

According to Jāmī (d. 898/1492), it was Abu Sa'īd al-Kharrāj who first spoke of the theory of *fanā'* and *baqā'*⁷⁴. We cannot accept Jāmī's view as correct. Al-Kharrāj died in 277/890-91 and thus belonged to a generation which followed Aba Yazīd (d. 234/848). The view that Aba Yazīd introduced the concept of *fanā'* into Sufism has additional support if it is true that his master Abū 'Alī al-Sindī, who taught his disciple *fanā' fī al-tawhīd*,⁷⁵ was a non-Muslim.⁷⁶ One may argue, however, that probably Jāmī had the correlation of the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* in mind when he said that al-Kharrāj was the first to speak of the two concepts. Our answer is that the idea of this correlation also existed in Abū Yazīd's teachings.

⁷⁴ *Nafahāt* p. 73.

Cf. *Essai*, p. 301; R.A. Nicholson, "A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sūfism", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1906), p. 325.

⁷⁵ *Nafahāt*, p. 47.

⁷⁶ On the question of Abū Yazīd's relationship with al-Sindī, see *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 334-345.

According to him, the Ṣufī, having been completely self-annihilated and creatureless, subsists (*bāqī*) on the carpet of God; the self-annihilated becomes self-subsistent, the dead alive, and the veiled unveiled.⁷⁷

On the basis of the available information, then, we conclude that Abū Yazīd was the first Ṣufī to speak of the concepts of *fanā'* and *baqā'* and of their correlation. From this time on, *fanā'* and *baqā'* became two pivotal concepts in Ṣufī thought and literature. Soon afterwards, Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd (d. ca. 298/910) wrote a treatise on *fanā'* (*Kitāb al-Fanā'*)⁷⁸ and developed the doctrine of *fang'* into a well coordinated Sūfī theosophy.⁷⁹ He understood Abū Yazīd's *subḥānī* (Glory be to me!)⁸⁰ to represent Abū Yazīd's experience of the state of *fanā'*. Referring to this famous *shath* (mystical paradox) of Abū Yazīd, al-Junayd said, "The one who is annihilated in the vision of (God's) Glory expresses himself according to what annihilates him. When he is withdrawn from the perception of himself so that he sees nothing other than God, he describes Him."⁸¹ Al-Junayd's idea of *fanā'*, which has

⁷⁷ *Tadhkirah*, I, 169.

Cf. *ibid.*, p. 154; Nūr, p. 109.

⁷⁸ Abū al-Qāsim al-Junayd, *Rasā'il*, ed. A. H. 'Abd al-Qādir in *al-Junayd*, pp. 31-39.

⁷⁹ For al-Junayd's doctrine of *fana'*, see *al-Junayds* ('Abd al-Rabb), pp. 49-69.

⁸⁰ *Infra*, p.

⁸¹ Nūr, p. 68.

been well expressed in the following prayer for one of his friends, is particularly reminiscent of Abrū Yazīd's idea of *fanā'*:

Then may He (God) perpetuate for you the life which is extracted from the eternity of life as He is everlasting, and may He isolate you from what is yours on His behalf and from what is His on your behalf, so that you are alone through Him for all eternity. Then there shall remain neither you nor yours, nor your knowledge of Him, but God will be alone.⁸²

Al-Shiblī, al-Junayd's disciple, expressed the state of *fang'* in the following words:

I am lost to myself and unconscious,

And my attributes are annihilated.

Today I am lost to all things:

*Naught remains but a forced expression.*⁸³

One can add numerous examples to show how the concepts of *fang'* and *baqā'* were understood, developed, and made key

Massign on seems to be prejudiced against Abū Yazīd when he says that this comment of al-Junayd applies more properly to Ḥusayn b. Manṣūr al-Hallāj's (d. 309/922) utterances (*Essai*, p. 280).

⁸²*Luma'*, p. 243.

⁸³*Kashf*, p.244; slightly abridged trans. R. A. Nicholson (Leyden: E. J.

Brill, 1911), p. 195.

concepts of Sūfism by Ṣūfīs after Abū. Yazīd. Even a casual glance at the standard handbooks of Sūfism such as *Risālah*, *Ta'aaruf* and *Kashf* shows that considerable space is devoted to the doctrine of *fanā'* and *baqā'*. But, as we have said, probably the credit for introducing these concepts into Sūfism goes to Abū Yazīd.

Another pivotal concept of Sūfism is that of *tawhīd*. The earliest definitions of this term are associated with Abū Yazīd and with Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. 245/860).

According to Abū Yazīd, *tawhīd* consists in the realization that all "movement and rest of creatures are the work of God, may He be exalted and glorified, and that there is no partner in His actions. When you have known your Lord (in this way) and He has settled in you, you have found Him."⁸⁴ Dhū al-Nūn has defined *tawhīd* in a similar way.⁸⁵ Abū Yazīd and Dhū al-Nūn were contemporaries and friends. Hence, if we assume that one of them learned the definition from the other, it is difficult to say who learned it from whom. However, most of the traditions which refer to their relationship indicate that Dhū al-Nan was indebted to Abū Yazīd. Dhū al-Nūn would send a disciple from Egypt to Abū Yazīd in Bisṭām to ask a question and not *vice versa*. On one occasion, having heard Abū Yazīd's answer to one of his questions, Dhū al-Nūn remarked about Abū Yazīd, "May he be blessed! This is a

⁸⁴ *Nūr*, p. 129. Var. *Kawākib*, p. 249.

⁸⁵ *Risālah*, p.4.

speech which our states (*ahwāl*) have not reached.”⁸⁶ On the basis of this evidence, it is possible for us to speculate that the Wī conception of *tawhīd* originated in Bistām and not in Egypt.

Whether or not Abū Yazīd was the first to define the Ṣūfī conception of *tawhīd*, he clarified and elaborated it, and the Baghdād school of Sufism, which deserves the credit for the fullest development of this doctrine, may have received inspiration from him. His ideas that in the state of *tawhīd* man loses all volition and choice, that the experience of *tawhīd* is something to be tasted and not described, that this experience is the result of God’s grace and that there are different groups of worshippers,⁸⁷ are found in a much more developed form in al-Junayd,⁸⁸ the most prominent representative of the Baghdād school. We know it for certain that al-Junayd, as well as other important members of his school, knew Abū Yazīd’s teachings.⁸⁹ Hence we can perhaps say more or less definitely that the Baghdād school of Ṣufism was influenced by Abu Yazīd’s doctrine of *tawhīd*.

Still another pivotal concept of Ṣūfism is that of *ma’rifah*. Dhū al Nūn is generally credited with the introduction of the

⁸⁶ *Risālah*, pp. 102-103. Var. *Nūr*, pp. 79-80; *Mir’āt*, p. 167; *Tadhkirah*, I, 137.

⁸⁷ *Kashf*, p. 502; *Nūr*, pp.109, 119 and 131; *Tadhkirah*, I, 177; *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 221-225.

⁸⁸ See *al-Junayd* ('Abd al-Rabb), pp. 9-48.

⁸⁹ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 3-10.

idea of *ma'rifah* into Ṣūfīsm. But this view does not seem to be correct. It is true that *ma'rifah* does not carry the same meaning for all early Ṣūfīs; hut there were Ṣūfīs before Dhū al-Nūn — Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī (d. 215/830-831), for example — who spoke of *ma'rifah*.⁹⁰ Dhū al-Nūn's contribution seems to consist in his development of the idea of *ma'rifah* and his clear presentation of it. But in Abū Yazīd too we find a developed idea of *ma'rifah* very clearly presented. In fact, many of Abū Yazīd's teachings on *ma'rifah* resemble very closely those of Dhū Dhū al-Nūndistinguished three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the common man, of the elite and of the Ṣūfīs.⁹¹ We find a similar distinction in Abū Yazīd's teachings.⁹² Dhū al-Nūn's ideas that when *ma'rifah* comes God becomes the disposer of the ārif⁹³ and that one reaches *ma'rifah* through God⁹⁴ are also present in Abū Yazīd's teachings.⁹⁵ In fact, perhaps Abū Yazīd has further clarified the concept of *ma'rifah* through his distinction between exoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-zāhir*) and esoteric knowledge (*'ilm al-bātin*), his explication of the existence of knowledge in prophets and others, and his idea of the sources of these two kinds of knowledge.⁹⁶ Here again, if one of the two Ṣūfīs

⁹⁰ *Tadhkirah*, I, 235.

⁹¹ *Tadhkirah*, I, 127.

⁹² Abū Yazīd, pp. 211-213.

⁹³ *Tadhkirah*, I, 127.

⁹⁴ *Risālah*, p. 156.

⁹⁵ Abū Yazīd, pp. 208-210.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201.

influenced the other, it is difficult to say who influenced whom. But what we have said of their relationship in respect of the concept of *tawhīd* can also be applied in respect of the concept of *ma'rifah*.

Many ideas of Abū, Yazīd and Dhū al-Nūn with regard to *ma'rifah* were developed by the Baghdad school of Sufism.⁹⁷

Abū Yazīd introduced into Ṣūfīsm the imagery of *mi'rāj*⁹⁸ as a means of expressing the mystical experience. The audacity in this lies not only in his re-enacting the process of the Prophet's journey to the court of God, step by step, in his own experience, but also in his claiming to have gone beyond all limits reached by anyone else before and to have become one with God.⁹⁹

The *mi'rāj* experience of Abū Yazīd played an important role in the history of Ṣūfī thought and literature. Many Ṣūfīs and Sūfī authors, al-Junayd, al-Shiblī, al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), al-Hujwārī (d. ca. 469/1076), 'Aṭṭār (d.606/1209) and Rūmī (d. 672/1273) to name only a few, have discussed and interpreted Abū Yazīd's *mi'rāj*. In fact, *mi'rāj* became a persistent theme in many later Ṣūfī works. Najm al-Dīn al-Kubra's *Fawā'ih*¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ See *al-Junayd C Abd al-Rabb*), pp. 83-108.

⁹⁸ *Abu Yazīd*, pp. 191-193.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 269-274.

¹⁰⁰ Najm al-Din al-Kubra, *Fawā'ih al-Jamāl wa Fawātih al-Jalāl*, ed. E. Meier in *Die Fawā'i al-Jamāl wa fawātih al Jalāl des Najm al-Kubra*(Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag GMBH, 1957).

and Lāhijī's commentary on Shabistarī's *Gulshan-i Rāz*,¹⁰¹ for example, are full of expressions of the *mi'rāj* experience.

As for the influence of Abū Yazīd's use of the *mi'rāj* imagery on later Ṣūfī thought, many Ṣūfīs took Abū Yazīd as their ideal and tried to express their mystical experiences in the pattern of his *mi'rāj*. Al-Junayd's experience of *tawḥīd* as a return of the soul to the primordial State in which it was before it entered the human body¹⁰² was a kind of *mi'rāj* experience. Al-Kharaqānī's 0.425/1033

description of his mystical experience is particularly reminiscent of Abū Yazīd's *mi'rāj*. He said,

I ascended at noon to the Throne, to circle it, and I encircled it a thousand times; I saw round about it people who were still and serene, and they marvelled at the speed of my circling. Their circling had little value in my eyes. I said: "Who are you, and what is this laggardliness in your circling?" They said: "We are angels created of light and this is our nature beyond which we cannot pass." Then they said: "Who are you and what is this

¹⁰¹ Muhammad Ja'far Lāhijī, *Mafatīh) al-I'jāz fī Sharh-i Gulshan-i Rāz* ([Tehrān] Kitābfurushi Maḥniddī, 1958).

¹⁰² This is al-Junayd's famous doctrine of *mithāk* (covenant) (see *al-Junayd*, [ʿAbd al-Rabb], pp. 70-82; *al-Junayd* [ʿAbd al-Qādid], pp. 76-80).

speed in your circling?" I said: "I am a man compact of light and fire and this speed comes from the light of longing."¹⁰³

A woman Sūfī¹⁰⁴ also expressed her experience of *mi'rāj* through different stages in a fascinating way. She said,

I was recalling Abū Yazīd's signs of grace, and I asked the Lord that He would show me him in the hidden world; and while I asked Him, in the same night I was taken up into heaven, in an ascent of perception, until I passed beyond the seventh sphere and came to the Throne. I was summoned, "Draw near ... draw near!" I came finally to the Throne, and penetrated the veils; there I was called: "Approach me!" Then I rent the veils; came to a place where my sight left me, and I saw God purely through His own deed, regarding His creation, and I said to him who was with me, "Where is Abū Yazīd?" He said, "Abū Yazīd is before you"; and he gave me wings with which I might fly. My state of annihilation, accompanying me, was replaced by the emergence of godhead, until He took me through

¹⁰³ Translated and quoted by Qāsim al-Samarrā'i (*The Theme of Ascension in Mystical Writings*"Baghdād: The National Printing and Publishing Co., 1968], p. 193) from al-Kafawī's *A'lām al-Akhyār*.

For another account of al-Kharaqānī's *mirāj* experience, see *Abu Yazīd*, p. 333.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Sahlagī tells us that she was a pious woman of royal descent from

Khurāsān and that she belonged to Abū Yazīd's tradition of Sūfism (*Nūr*, p. 123).

Him, that is to say not Him through me, until He achieved a Union which is, without a hint of aught else, that Union which gives no sign of any created work when such oblivion is met with. Afterwards [I walked] on the carpet of the Essence of the Truth, hence I was asked: "At what are you aiming, while this is Abū Yazīd?" I was then taken to a green garden ... I said, "O! that is Abū Yazīd!" He said, "This place is Abū Yazīd's; but Abū Yazīd is searching for his self but will not find it."¹⁰⁵

Since both al-Kharaqānī and the woman Sūfī belonged to Abū Yazīd's tradition of Ṣūfīsm, we are certain of his influence on them.

Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī (d. ca. 365/976) and Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) wrote books on their experience of *mi'rāj*.¹⁰⁶

Aside from the *mi'rāj* imagery, Abū Yazīd introduced into Sūfīsm the symbolism of the 'mirror' of 'drink' and of the 'cup', the metaphor of the 'Magian girdle',¹⁰⁷ etc. These were used extensively by later Sūfīs and Ṣūfī authors, especially by the Ṣūfī poets.

¹⁰⁵ *Nūr*, p. 123; trans. al-Sāmarrā'i, *Theme*, pp. 194-195.

¹⁰⁶ Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Jabbār al-Niffarī, *Kitāb al-Mawāqif wa Kitāb al-Mukhātabāt*, ed. and trans. A. J. Arberry (London: Luzac & Co., 1953); Ibn al-'Arabī, *Kitāb al-Isrā' ilá Makām al-Asrā'* (Haydarābad, 1948).

¹⁰⁷ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 105, 151, 152, 159, n. 1, etc.

The most important aspect of Abū Yazīd's thought is that of *shataḥāt*³ (sing. *shath*).¹⁰⁸ The phenomenon of *shath* existed before Abū Yazīd. Ibrāhīm b. Adham, for example, had said, "O God! You know that Paradise does not weigh with me so much as the wing of a gnat. If You bring me near Your recollection, sustain me with Your love and make it easy for me to obey You; then give Paradise to whomsoever You will."¹⁰⁹ Rābi'ah, Ibrāhīm's contemporary, once addressed God, saying, "O Lord! Do You not have any kind of punishment and discipline (*adab*) except Hell-fire?"¹¹⁰ Another time, having heard someone reciting the Qur'ānic verse, "Verily the companions of Paradise on that Day shall enjoy everything that they do,"¹¹¹ she said, "Poor people of Paradise! They are busy with their wives."¹¹² Referring to the Ka'bah, she said, "This is an idol worshipped on earth; God does not enter it, nor is it independent of Him."¹¹³

We notice that these *shataḥāt* relate either to the interiorization of religious rites or to the hereafter. From our point of view, they fall into the lowest two categories of Abū

¹⁰⁸ For a discussion on *shataḥāt*, see *ibid*, pp. 226-298.

¹⁰⁹ *Hilyah*, VIII, 35.

¹¹⁰ Quoted by Badawī (*Shataḥāt*, p. 19) from al-Munāwī's *Tabaqāt al-Awliyā'*.

¹¹¹ *Qur'an*, 36:55.

¹¹² Quoted by Badawī (*Shataḥāt*, p. 19) from al-Munāwī's *Tabaqāt al-Awliyā'*.

¹¹³ *Ibid*.

Yazīd's *shatahat*¹¹⁴ But even in this respect, Abū Yazīd carried the *shatanāt* to their extreme limits in the Bistāmī manner of exaggeration. His claim that his banner was greater than Muḥammad's¹¹⁵ and his excusing the Jews,¹¹⁶

for example, are much more paradoxical than the statements of Ibrāhīm and Rābi'ah.

One aspect of Abū Yazīd's *shatahāt* concerning the hereafter is his emphasis on intercession.¹¹⁷ This is unique to Abū Yazīd. We do not know of any Ṣūfī before Abū Yazīd who claimed to have the power of interceding for men on the Day of Judgment. Later Sūfīs, al-Junayd, for example, spoke of a *shāfi'* as one who helps people to achieve the mystical aim in this world.¹¹⁸ Abū Yazīd also believed in intercession in this sense. We know that he received guidance from several Sūfī masters, and he insisted that others do likewise. But Abū Yazīd was the first Ṣūfī to have applied the term *shāfi'* to a Ṣūfī in the sense of an intercessor on the Day of Judgment.

In his typical fashion, Abū Yazīd made extreme claims for himself. Whereas Muhammad's intercessory powers would be of assistance to Muhammad's community alone, Abū Yazīd

¹¹⁴ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 253-266.

¹¹⁵ *Nūr*, p. 111; *Shathīyat* p. 132; *Tadhkirah*, II, 186.

¹¹⁶ *Luma'*, p. 391; *Shathīyat* p. 88; *Kawākib*, p. 245.

¹¹⁷ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 260-264.

¹¹⁸ *Al-Junayd* ('Abd al-Rabb), p. 111.

claimed for himself the ability to intercede for all mankind.¹¹⁹ There are, however, statements which suggest that the function was considered beneath him.¹²⁰ Intercession for all mankind would be easier than interceding for a piece of clay,¹²¹ and he would not want to approach God for such a small favour. Besides, intercession is more in keeping with the appropriate functions of the prophets — men of *Shari'ah*¹²² Abū Yazīd belonged to the men of *ḥaqīqah*.

The *shataḥāt* which have attracted the most attention are those statements which have been uttered in the moment of intense ecstasy, when the Sūfī experiences being one with God. In such moments the intoxicated Sūfī breaks forth in statements such as -Glory be to me!” The Sūfī no longer speaks as though God were other than he; he experiences that he is none other than God and that God is speaking through him. Abū Yazīd is particularly famous for *shataḥāt* of this extreme kind. Of special historical significance is the fact that Abū Yazīd was the first to express the experience of the overpowering presence of God in this manner. Subsequently *shath* has come to mean especially an utterance of this kind. It took a Khurāsānī rebel¹²³

¹¹⁹ Nūr, p. 111; *Shathīyat*, p. 132; *Tadhkirah*, II, 186.

¹²⁰ *Tadhkirah*, I, 156.

¹²¹ Nūr, pp. 79 and 80.

¹²² *Tadhkirah*, I, 156,

¹²³ That is, Abū Yazīd. On the rebellious nature of the Khurāsānīs, see *Abu Yazīd*, p. 276, n. I.

to break all the limitations set by orthodox Islām and to cry out, "Glory be to me! How great is my majesty",¹²⁴ "There is no god but I. So worship me!"¹²⁵

The formulation of *shataḥāt* in which the Sūfī speaks as though he were God was a most radical innovation. It shocked "orthodox" minds and the response was tremendous. The immediate consequence was Abū Yazīd's exile from Bistām. What is more important is the fact that *shataḥāt* became a subject of heated discussion among both the orthodox Muslims¹²⁶ and Sūfīs. After Abū Yazīd's death, we find al-Junayd writing treatises on Abū Yazīd's *shataḥāt* and al-Shiblī and al-Hallāj criticizing Abū Yazīd for having uttered the *shataḥāt*. Ibn Sālim (d. 360/970) discussed them in a debate with al-Sarrāj, and al-Sarrāj devoted chapters of his *Limo* to explain and defend the *shataḥāt* of Abū Yazīd as well as of

¹²⁴ *Kashf*, p. 327; *Tadhkirah*, I, 140. Var. Nūr, pp. 78 and 111; *Luma'*, p. 390; *Shathīyat*, p. 89.

¹²⁵ *Luma'*, p. 391; *Mir*, p. 122; *Tadhkirah*, I, 37; *Kawākib*, p.251.

¹²⁶ Orthodoxy means a common voice. To speak with a common voice necessitates the existence of an authority, e.g., the Pope of Catholic Christianity. But since there is no such authority in Islām, strictly speaking we cannot speak of Islamic orthodoxy. Nevertheless, in the absence of a better terminology, we shall refer to Sunni Muslims as orthodox, although the Shi'ah are perhaps more orthodox than the Sunni in the sense we have defined orthodoxy.

others. In fact, there is hardly any Sūfī author after Abū Yazīd who has not discussed Abū Yazīd's *shataḥāt*.¹²⁷

Not only did 'Šūfīs and sūfī authors discuss the *shataḥāt* of Abū Yazīd, but they were also influenced, either positively or negatively, by them. Let us take a few cases of positive influence first.

The most immediate and positive influence of Abū Yazīd's *shataḥāt* was on al-Hallāj and al-Shiblī. It is true that both of them criticized Abū Yazīd; but they made their own *shataḥāt*, which closely resemble some of the utterances of Abū Yazīd. One can see a very close similarity between Abū Yazīd's "There is no Truth (*ḥaw*) except that I am He"¹²⁸ and "I am the Truth" (*anā al-ḥaqq*) attributed to al-Hallāj. Some of al-Shiblī's *shataḥāt* are very similar to those of Abū Yazīd. Among al-Shiblī's *shataḥāt*, we would call attention to these: "If the thought of Gabriel and Michael has occurred to you, you have committed *shirk*"¹²⁹; "By God! Muhammad will not be happy if there will be a single man from his community in Hell. If Muhammad intercedes for his community, I shall intercede after his intercession until none will remain in Hell."¹³⁰ In fact,

¹²⁷ *AM Yazīd*, pp. 275-298.

¹²⁸ *Nūr*, p. 108.

¹²⁹ *Luma'*, p. 398.

¹³⁰ Quoted by L. Massignon (Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islām [Paris: Paul Gauthier, 1929] p. 78) from al-Namūs of Ibn

it would be no exaggeration to say that there would have been no *shatahāt* of al-Hallāj and of al-Shiblī if there had been no *shatahāt* of Abū Yazīd. They were not to enjoy the freedom to express themselves that Abū Yazīd enjoyed. This fact can be explained, partially at least, by the kind of political and religious atmosphere which prevailed in their day.¹³¹

Later, the phenomenon of *shatahāt* became a very important aspect of Sūfism. Many important Sūfīs pronounced *shatahāt* in the form in which Abū Yazīd first introduced them. The famous Sūfī-poet of Egypt, ‘Umar Ibn(d. 632/1235), for example

said,

... but for me, no existence would have come
into being, nor would there have been a
contemplation (of God), nor would any secure
covenants have been known.

None lives but his life is from mine, and every
willing soul is obedient to my will;

And there is no speaker but tells his tale with my
words, nor any seer but sees with the sight of mine eye;

And no silent (listener) but hears with my hearing,

¹³¹ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 276-282,

nor any one that grasps [*batish*] but with my
strength and might (*shiddah*);
And in the whole creation there is none save me
that speaks or sees or hears.¹³²

Ibn al-Fārid's contemporary Ibn al-'Arabī, said,

He (God) praises me and I praise Him;

He worships me and I worship Him.¹³³

Elsewhere, he said,

Whenever I say, "Oh Master!",

He (God) says, "You are My owner (*mālik*)

By God! The existence

of My servant has blocked all My ways.

Nothing prevents Us from

serving him in any way.

I do not share his essence,

¹³² Michael Farid Gharib, *Umar Ibn* (Zaḥlah: Zaḥlat at Fattāh, 1955), p. 69; trans. R.A. Nicholson, *Studies in Islāmic Mysticism* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1921), p. 255.

¹³³ Muḥi al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-Ḥikain*, ed. Abu' al-'Alaa 'Afīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabi, 1946), p. 83.

nor his action with him.

....

And I am the Servant who
looks after the kingdoms.»¹³⁴

Baqlī devoted a whole monograph (*Shathīyāt*) to the elucidation and interpretation of *shataḥāt*. According to a statement of Rūmī, each of the verses composed by Ṣūfī masters in his day contained one thousand *anā al-ḥaqq*s and *subḥānīs*.¹³⁵

There are two points here that should be mentioned. First, in the early period, *shataḥāt* were criticized and the Ṣūfīs who pronounced them were persecuted and were killed in some cases; but in the late medieval period Ṣūfism became a very important force in the Muslim societies, and few uttered a word against them. Rūmī expressed his satisfaction over the fact that no one had the audacity to say a word against the *shataḥāt* of the Sufīs of his time.¹³⁶ The second point we wish to make is that Abū Yazīd's *shataḥāt* were extreme to the degree that, as far as we know, no one after him could utter a more radical statement. Most of the *shataḥāt* of later Ṣūfīs are moderate in comparison with those of Abū Yazīd.

¹³⁴ Ibn al-'Arabi, *Al-Fūtūḥāt al-Makkiyyah* (Cairo, 1876), IV, 459.

¹³⁵ *Manāqib*, I, 467.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

On the negative side, most of the so-called sober Ṣūfis and Ṣūfī authors learnt a lesson from Abū Yazīd's *shatahāt*. Al-Junayd was perhaps the first man to have fully realized the evil consequences of the unbridled expressions of the mystical

experience in the form of *shatahāt*. Therefore, he placed an emphasis on controlling the mystical expression and used obscure language to express the mystical experience.¹³⁷ He favoured sobriety and was joined by a number of apologetic writers who were directly or indirectly associated with the Junaydian school—al-Sarrāj, al-Qushayrī (d.465/1072), al-Hujwārī and al-Kalābādhī (d. 385/995). Some might contend that their attitudes were more significantly influenced by the experience of al-Ḥallāj's than by the reactions to Abū Yazīd's statements. We would say that the unfavourable consequences of *shataḥat* were already in evidence at the time of Abū Yazīd. He was the first to utter extreme statements which exceeded all limits. Al-Ḥallāj's *shataḥāt* were only more of the same kind although somewhat milder. For a number of reasons,¹³⁸ the treatment he received was more severe than that of Abū Yazīd. In short, then, we can say that the relatively more sober Sūfism

¹³⁷ *Al-Junayd* ('Abd al-Rabb), pp. 6-8.

¹³⁸ See *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 276-282.

that came into being with the Junaydian school was in a sense the result of Abū Yazīd's provocative utterances.¹³⁹

Abū Yazīd's teachings also contained, in an embryonic form, some concepts which, in the later history of Sūfism, were developed into important Sūfī doctrines. Al-Junayd, for example, developed the doctrine of sobriety (*saḥw*). According to this doctrine, the Sūfī, after having reached the experience of *tawhīd*, must come back to the world for the guidance of his fellow-men.¹⁴⁰ Later, many Sūfīs and Ṣūfī authors, e.g., al-

¹³⁹ The importance of Abū Yazīd's *Shatahāt* in the history of Sūfism has been summed up very beautifully by Massignon. He says that Abū Yazīd

left a fulgurating memory ever alive in Islām. Having become a Semite spiritually, and praying in Arabic liturgy, he undertook a dialogue with God in the form of short invocations in Persian of a sharpness and violence which went beyond prayer, if I may say so. For, it is a vehement attack *vis-a-vis* Divine Omnipotence, which a pure Semite would perhaps not have dared to formulate, because he would have had to consider himself superior to a prophet in order to do it. Besides, there is in it something very Irānian: this psychological orchestration, this kind of frontal attack. Actually still, the whole vocabulary of Islāmic mysticism depends on this starting point, the attempt of the Irānians to seize the divine language throughout the *Qur'ān*. While the reverential fear of the Semite considers God as completely inaccessible, the Irānian temperament, which has a more supple language and a more daring "sylogistique", endeavours to penetrate to the nudity—if I may say so -- of the Divine Semitic word in Arabic, the liturgical language of Islām [L. Massignon, *Opera minora; textes recueillis, classes et presentes* ([Beirut]: Dar Ma'ārif, 1963), 1, 542].

¹⁴⁰ See *Al-Junayd* ('Abd al-Rabb), pp. 109-125; *al-Junayd* ('Abd al-Qādir), pp. 88-95.

Sarrāj, al-Qushayrī, al-Hujwārī, ‘Attā’r and al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111), adopted and elaborated on this doctrine. But the idea of a return to the world existed, in a latent form, in Abū Yazīd’s thought. He said,

When he (the Ṣūfī) is united (with God) through his separation (*fag*), he is given knowledge (*ilm*) of the unseen of His eternity. *When he is perfectly established, separation returns to separation without the removal of union and negation of separation.*¹⁴¹

Al-Junayd also developed the doctrine of covenant (*mīthāq*). On the basis of the Qur’ānic verse, "When your Lord took from the children of Adam — from their loins — their posterity and made them testify as to themselves: ‘Am I not your Lord?’ they replied, ‘Yes’”¹⁴², al-Junayd concluded that the soul of man, before its entrance into the human body, existed in a state of unification with God, and that, in the experience of unification in this world, it (the soul) returns to the state in which it was originally.¹⁴³

It seems that the idea of the pre-existence of the soul, on which al-Junayd’s doctrine of *mīll** is based, was also present in Abū Yazīd’s thought in a latent form. Some sayings of Abu

¹⁴¹ *Nūr*, p. 78. Var. *ibid.*, p. 82.

For more on this, see *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 246-247.

¹⁴² *Qur’ān*, 7:172.

¹⁴³ For al-Junayd’s doctrine of *mīthāq*, see *al-Junayd* (‘Abd al-Rabb), pp. 70-82; *al-Junayd* (VOA al-Qādir), pp. 76-80.

Yazīd, especially, God's address to him, "I was yours when you were not",¹⁴⁴ are suggestive of the same idea.

One very important concept developed by later mystics, e.g., Abū Saīd Abī al-Khayr (d. 441/1049), 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428) and Ibn al-'Arabī is that of "the Perfect Man" (*al-insān al-kāmil*). According to this conception, God chooses man, endows him with His own mysteries and makes him His vicegerent on earth. Hence "the Perfect Man" alone manifests God's Essence together with His "names" and "attributes". He is the pole (*qutb*) of the universe and the medium through which the universe is preserved; he is the final cause of everything and the connecting link between God and His creation.¹⁴⁵

Many traditions indicate the existence of the idea of "the Perfect Man" in a rudimentary form in the teachings of Abū Yazīd. According to him, the real 3 nfi does not travel from the East to the West, but the East and the West come to him.¹⁴⁶ Abū Yazīd was omnipotent and omnipresent; he had neither beginning nor end;¹⁴⁷ angels came to ask him questions concerning ilm;¹⁴⁸ "present in the unseen (*ghayb*) and existent in the seen",¹⁴⁹ he informed other people of their presence with

¹⁴⁴ Nūr, p. 140.

¹⁴⁵ On the idea of the Perfect Man. see E. I., II-I, 510-511; Nicholson, *Studies*, etc.

¹⁴⁶ *Nūr*, p. 75.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 75 and 99; *Tadhkirah*, I, 165 and 171.

¹⁴⁸ *Nūr*, 112.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

God;¹⁵⁰ if the people had seen his hidden attributes, they would die of wonder.¹⁵¹ These are characteristics of "the Perfect Man". What is even more important is that Abū Yazīd used the expression *al-kamāl al-tāmm* (the perfect and complete man) to describe the perfect Sūfī.¹⁵² Our evidence strongly suggests that the history of the developed concept of "the Perfect Man" goes back to a significant aspect of Abu Yazīd's teachings.

We turn now to the question of Abū Yazid's influence on the development of the social structure of Sūfism. One important aspect of medieval Muslim societies in general and of Sūfism in particular was the Sūfī *tarīqah*. In the fifth/eleventh century, the *tarīqāt* began to take the form of definite organized orders with hierarchical structures and elaborate functions and ceremonies. In the later medieval period, these orders played a dominant role in Muslim societies. Even today, the influence of Sūfī orders on Muslim minds is very strong in many parts of the Islāmic world. An example is the belief of most East Pakistani Muslims that salvation is dependent on the acceptance of the guidance of a *pīr*. (spiritual master).

Abū Yazīd may be credited with having made a significant contribution to the formation of the *tarīqah*. Earlier we referred

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

¹⁵² See A. J. Arberry, *Revelation and Reason in Islam* (London: The

Forward Lectures for 1956 delivered in the University of Liverpool, 1957), p. 107, and Nicholson, *Studies*, p. 77, D. 2.

to a female mystic who claimed to have the *mi'rāj* experience in the pattern of Abū Yazīd's *mi'rāj*¹⁵³. Al-Sahlagī (d. ca. 486/1093) says that she belonged to Abū Yazīd's *tarīqah*¹⁵⁴. We do not wish to leave the impression that Abū Yazīd had an order in the sense of the well-organized *tarīqāt* of later times. Nevertheless, the fact remains that many aspects of the later *tarīqāt* were in one form or another present in Abū Yazīd's teachings.

We know that, before and during Abū Yazīd's time, there was the tradition of receiving instructions from Sūfī masters. For example, Ibrāhīm b. Adham is said to have received instructions from a Christian monk;¹⁵⁵ Ibrāhīm also associated with Sufiyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and Fudayl b. 'Iyad (d. 187/803); Shaqīq

al-Balkhī (d. 194/810) was taught by Ibrāhīm b. Adham. But no one before Abū Yazīd ever expressed the necessity of the guidance of a spiritual teacher so clearly and strongly. His statement, "If a man has no master (*ustād*), then Satan is his guide (*imām*)"¹⁵⁶ almost became a maxim of the Sūfī orders of medieval times.

¹⁵³ *Supra*, pp. 59-60.

¹⁵⁴ *Nūr*, p. 123.

¹⁵⁵ Ḥsilyah, VIII, 29.

¹⁵⁶ *Risālah*, p. 199.

To our knowledge, Abū Yazīd was also the first Sūfī who declared that it is necessary for the disciple to be in absolute submission to his master. He said:

If the master orders the disciple to do something worldly and sends him for his (own) good (*fī iṣlāḥihi*), and on his way the *mu'adhdhin* of a mosque recites the call to prayer and he says (to himself): shall first go to the mosque to perform prayer and then go what the master has sent me for', then he has fallen into a well the bottom of which he will never discover...¹⁵⁷

We know that a sizable group gathered around Abū Yazīd and that he used to live a community life, as is shown by the fact that one hundred or more people ate at his place everyday,¹⁵⁸ and that he used to sit in the *majlis* (assembly) to discuss with and advise disciples in mystical matters.¹⁵⁹ On the basis of this evidence, we can say that Abū Yazīd deserves the credit for introducing a more or less definite Ṣūfī *tarīqah*, which in later history developed into a powerful and cohesive force in Islāmic societies.

The above discussion shows that Abu Yazīd introduced into Ṣūfism some important concepts, images and metaphors, elaborated and made clear some of the existing Ṣūfī ideas,

¹⁵⁷ *Nūr*, p. 144.

¹⁵⁸ *Nūr*, p. 61.

¹⁵⁹ *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 109-110.

On the problem of master-disciple relationship, see F. Meier, "Qushayrī's *Tarīb al-Sulūk*", *Oriens*, XVI (1963), 1-39.

began the practice of expressing the mystical experience in *shataḥāt* of the most extreme kind, anticipated some important doctrines developed by later Ṣūfīs and, as far as we know, was the first to have established

the rudimentary structure of a Ṣūfī order. All this greatly contributed to the development of the Ṣūfī tradition. The Baghdād school of Ṣūfīsm in particular was influenced by Abu Yazīd. But it would not be an exaggeration to say that nearly every Ṣūfī after Abu Yazīd was influenced either positively or negatively by his life and teachings. For lack of evidence, we cannot accept many of Zaehner's arguments in favour of his theory that Abū Yazīd was directly influenced by Indian thought,¹⁶⁰ but we agree with Zaehner's conclusion that Abu Yazīd constituted a turning point in the history of Ṣufism.¹⁶¹ Al-Junayd remarked, "Abū Yazīd among us is like Gabriel among the angels",¹⁶² and as a tribute to his greatness, he received the title *sultān al-'ārifīn*, "the king of 'knowers'".¹⁶³ We have not found these estimates inappropriate. Abū Yazīd was one of the most important Ṣūfīs of the early period; and, in view of his influence on future developments in the Ṣūfī tradition, he was probably the greatest Ṣūfī upto his time.

¹⁶⁰ See *Abū Yazīd*, pp. 305-351.

¹⁶¹ R. C. Zaehner "Abū Yazīd of Bistām: A Turning Point in Islāmic Mysticism", *Indo-Irāniam Journal*, 1 (1957).

¹⁶² *Tadhkirah*, I, 135.

¹⁶³ *Nūr*, p. 147; *Tadhkirah*, I, 134 and 156; *Manāqib*, I, 256.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abū Yazīd: Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rabb [Muhammad ‘Abdur Rabb]. *Abu Yazīd al-Bistāmī: His Life and Doctrine*. Unpublished Doctoral dissertation. Montreal: The Institute of Islāmic Studies, McGill University, 1970.

Hilyah: Abū Nu’aym Ahmad *Tilyat al-Awliya wa Tabaqāt al-Asfiyā’*. 10 vols. Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānājī wa Matba’at al-Sa’ādah, 1932-1938.

Al-Junayd (‘Abd al-Rabb): Muhammad ‘Abd al-Rabb [Muhammad ‘Abdur Rabb]. *Al-Junayd’s Doctrine of Tawhīd.. An Analysis of His Understanding of Islāmic Monotheism*. Unpublished Master’s dissertation. Montreal: The Institute of Islāmic Studies, McGill University, 1967.

Al-Junayd (‘Abd al-Qādir): A.H. al-Qādir. *The Life, Personality and Writings of al-Junayd*. London: Luzac Co. Ltd., 1962.

Kashf: Abū al-Ḥasan al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī. *Kashf al-Mahjāb*. Edited by V. Zuhkofski. Tehran: Mu’assasat-i Matbūlt-i Amīr Kabīr, 1957.

Kawākib: ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Munāwī. *Al-Kawākib al-Durriyyah fī Tarājīm al-^Sūfiyyah*. Cairo: Dawrsat Tajlīd al-Anwār, 1938.

Luma’: Abū Naṣr ‘Abd Allāh al-Sarrāj. *Kitāb al-Luma’ fal-Tasawwuf*. Edited by R.A. Nicholson. Leyden: E.J. Brill, 1914.

Manaqib: Shams al-Dīn Muhammad al-Aflakī. *Mamaqib al-‘Arifīn*. 2 vols. Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu Basimavi, 1959.

Mir'āt: Sibṭ Ibn al-Jawzī. *Mira'āt al-Zamān*. In 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī's *Shataḥāt al-Sūfiyyah* (see below under *Nūr*).

Nafahāt: 'Abd al-Rahmān jāmī. *Nafahāt al-Uns min Haḍar & al-Quds*. Edited by Mahdī 'Tawhīdī Pūr. Tehrān: Ketāb Furūshī Sa'dī, 1958.

Nūr: Abū al-Fadl Muhammad al-Sahlagī. *Kitāb al-Nūr min Kalimāt Abī Tayfūr*. Edited by 'Abd al-Rahmān Badawī in *Shataḥāt al-Sūfiyyah*. Cairo: Maktabat al-Nandat al-Miṣriyyah, 1949.

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SABZAWĀRĪ, A NINETEENTH CENTURY PERSIAN PHILOSOPHER

M. Muḥaqqiq

Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, the greatest of Persian philosophers and mystics of the nineteenth century, was born in the year 1797 in Sabzawār. This city, situated between Tehrān and Mashhad in the province of Khurāsān, was famous as a centre of learning and scholarship for centuries. Sabzawārī began his studies when only seven years old and completed his education in Persian, Arabic grammar and rhetoric at a very early age. In order to pursue his studies in theology and jurisprudence he went to the city of Mashhad, where he remained for five years. From there, hearing of the fame of *Mullā* 'Alī Nūrī as a master of philosophy, he went to Isfahān to study under him. Isfahān, it should be noted, was at that period a major centre of Islāmic studies, especially philosophy and logic. Sabzawārī remained for eight years in Isfahān, where he completed the rational part of Islāmic studies. Then he returned to Sabzawār and began to teach in a *madrasah*.

After a few years his fame became so great that disciples from all over Irān, as well as from India and the Arab world, came to the small city of Sabzawār to benefit from his vast knowledge and also to benefit from his personal conduct as a Ṣūfī guide. Sabzawārī's life was extremely simple; he lived in a

small and humble dwelling, and his food and clothing were kept at the level of mere subsistence. When the Qajar king Naṣīr al-Dīn Shāh visited the philosopher, he was surprised by this great simplicity. Sabzawārī understood the king's surprise and recited this verse:

If the house is humble and dark

I shall give you a place to sit in my bright eyes.¹⁶⁴

As a master of theoretical philosophy and an exemplar of its practice, Sabzawārī continued to teach and to direct students for forty years. His death occurred in 1872.

Sabzawārī was a prolific and industrious scholar; he wrote many books, both in Arabic and in Persian, on logic, philosophy, theology and mysticism. Besides these, he wrote a volume of Persian poetry and a commentary on the *Mathnawī* of the great Persian mystic-poet, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī.

The most famous of Sabzawārī's writings is the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*. This work, written in Arabic, consists of a series of poems on the essential questions of philosophy with the author's own commentary. In a remarkable way Sabzawārī has been able to gather and analyse in this work the ideas of many different schools of Islāmic philosophy. The *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* has gained great popularity among students of both religion and

¹⁶⁴ M. M. Chahardehi, *Life and Philosophy of Mullā Hadī Sabzawārī* (Tehrān: Tahūrī Bookshop, 1955), p. 49.

philosophy in Irān where it is still used as a text-book. It is noteworthy that during the past 100 years at least five important commentaries have been written on this book and several lithographed editions of it have come out.

The *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* is divided into seven books, each of which is divided into several chapters and each chapter into several sections. Books one and two are the most basic parts of the whole work; they deal with the problems of existence, essence, substance and accident. The rest of the book is devoted to theology and natural philosophy.

In view of the important contribution of Sabzawārī to philosophical thought, Prof. T. Izutsu of the Institute of Islāmic Studies at McGill (Montreal, Canada) and myself decided to prepare an English translation of books one and two of the *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah* in order to introduce a yet relatively unknown thinker to Western scholarship. Part one of the translation has been published in the Islāmic series of McGill University Press.¹⁶⁵ We also published a critical edition of the Arabic text, which is the first volume of a series called Persian Wisdom (Dānish-i Iranī). It was also published by the Institute of Islāmic Studies at its Tehrān Branch in 1969.

It is not possible to deal with all aspects or even a substantial part of this work in the present paper, but in accordance with the Persian proverb:

¹⁶⁵ *Supra*, p. 39, n. 1.

"Since you cannot pour out the water of the river,
drink at least enough to satisfy your thirst,"

I shall try to present a brief survey of Sabzawārī's position regarding the problem of existence and essence as contained in the first part of book one.

He says, "Existence is self-evident and there is no definition for it, because a definition must always be more immediately known and clearer than the object defined; but nothing is more immediately known and clearer than existence. So all definitions of existence are nothing but explanations of the word,"¹⁶⁶ He asserts that, although the notion of existence is self-evident, its reality lies in the inmost depths of hiddenness. The concept of existence, he says, is shared by all things and all things are "degrees" of one single reality. This idea was in opposition to that of Ash'arite theologians, because it necessitates resemblance and cognation between the cause and the caused, or, in other words, between the Creator and the creatures. Sabzawārī defends his position by asserting that the cognation of a thing and its shadow are one of the conditions of causal relationship. In support of this assertion he cites the verse of the *Qur'ān* in which God says: "We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their souls, so that it may

¹⁶⁶ Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ-i Manẓūmah* (Arabic text), Part I, ed. M. Muḥaqqiq and T. Izutsu (Wisdom of Persia Series, No. I; Tehrān: McGill's Institute of Islāmic Studies, Tehrān Branch, 1969), p. 39.

become clear to them that it is the truth.¹⁶⁷ Sabzawārī says, "If the universe and human beings are signs of God, how is it possible that they should be completely different from Him? How can darkness ever be a sign of sunshine and shadow a sign of heat."¹⁶⁸ He accuses the Ash'arite theologians of agnosticism by asserting that when we say that God is existent we understand thereby that the same existence is shared by all the creatures. If, on the contrary, we do not accept the word existence in the above sense, we have to take the opposite of that sense, which is non-existence, so that the world becomes devoid of an existent origin. Further, if we understood nothing of existence, we would be depriving our intellect of all knowledge of God; and this is the state of agnosticism. Finally, he relates the position of ancient Irānian philosophers, whom he calls *al-Fahlawīyyūn*, and shows his agreement with them. They believed that existence is only a single reality having different stages and degrees like the stages or degrees of richness and poverty, intensity and weakness, priority and posteriority, just as light is of various degrees — strong, moderate, and weak. The difference in degree of intensity between various lights is not a difference of species; rather, it is a difference of strength and weakness, for it is the basic characteristic of light that it is self-apparent and that it makes other things apparent. This characteristic is present in every degree of light. Thus, a weak light is light just as much as a

¹⁶⁷ *Qur'ān*, 41: 53.

¹⁶⁸ Sabzawārī, *Sharḥ-i Manzūmah*, Part I, p. 48,

moderate one or even a strong one is. Similar to the case of "sensible" light is that of "real" light, which is existence.

Sabzawārī then raises the question: Since existence is only a single reality, what is the source of the multiplicity of existent things? For instance, one thing is abstract and another material, one thing is heaven and another is earth, one thing is man and another horse. He answers the question by saying that it is the essences which are the cause of difference and multiplicity. The essences are different from each other by their nature and they spread "the dust of difference" throughout existence. As light is a good example to cite of existence, so colour is a suitable example of essence. If existence is like sunlight, the essences are like coloured window glasses which limit the sunlight according as they are clear or dark, and change the one sunlight into different degrees of light. By means of the above example, Sabzawārī expresses his mystical views. According to him, man must purify himself by removing the dust from the mirror of the soul in order to get away from the world of multiplicity and join the world of unity and peacefulness. This mystical view is very clearly expressed in the following saying of his:

Love is universal peace; all else is war and struggle; lovers are united, but sects are scattered groups. The word of love was originally only one; groups of ignorant people invented all these different words.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹Sabzawārī, *Diwān* (Tehran: Mīrkamāli, 1338 A. H. [solar]), p. 60.

THE GHĀZĪ BACKGROUNDS OF THE SAFAVID STATE

Michel M. Mazzaoui

I

The rise of the Šafavid state in Irān around the year 1500 is the outcome of a variety of factors that should be sought in the preceding historical periods. It is only after a thorough study and investigation of the period before the *khurūj* of Shāh Isma'īl that the rise of the new state can be satisfactorily explained.

Some of these factors may be traced as far back as the Mongol invasion; and the fall of Baghdād to Hūlāgū in 1258, or better still, the destruction of the Isma'īlī (Assassin) fortresses at Alamūt two years before, may be taken as a convenient and not altogether arbitrary starting point.¹⁷⁰ Between the Mongols and Shah Isma'īl, the history of Irān roughly divides itself into: the fairly stable period of the Īl-khans; the highly confused period of the post-Mongol successor states; the attempted settlement

¹⁷⁰ The fall of Baghdād to the Mongols was essentially a political event, and the so-called Il-khānid state established by Hūlāgū and his successors was in many ways a "continuation" of the 'Abbāsīd empire. However, the crushing blow which the Mongol armies dealt to the Isma'īlī (Assassin) fortresses at Alamūt and elsewhere was a major religious-social event, and was perhaps even more significant for Irānian history during the later Middle Ages. The question of "continuity" deserves a special investigation.

of the Near East question" by Timūr; and finally the fifteenth century with the Timūrids in Māvarā'annahr trying to keep a semblance of control over Western Irān where two federations of Turkmān tribes (the Qarā-Qoyūnlū and the Aq-Qoyūnlū) led more or less an independent existence until the rise of the Ṣafavids.

Geographically, a triangle of territory with Tabrīz, Qonya, and Baghdād forming its three geometrical apexes, will serve best the purposes of such an investigation. It is in this area, which comprises Āzerbāyjān, Irāqi 'Arab, and eastern Anatolia, where most of the action took place.

The factors to be considered for such a study are many:

- a) The *Sūfi-Shī'ī* backgrounds — i. e., the religious factor;
- b) The Turkmān domination of this area during the fifteenth century — i.e., the internal political factor;
- c) The "centralizing" policy of the Ottomans in the west and their ever-increasing encroachments against eastern Anatolia especially under Mehmed II — i.e., the Ottoman factor;
- d) The "decentralizing" policies of the Timūrids in the East — i.e., the Timūrīd factor;
- e) The age of the great discoveries (especially the discovery of the all-sea route to India and the FarEast) which coincided with the rise of the Safavid state — i.e., the international factor.

And there are other factors — political, social, or economic related in part or as a whole to the factors just mentioned. The

list could be extended further. Needless to say, most of these factors are interrelated.

Much groundwork has been done on these various aspects of the rise of the Şafavids.¹⁷¹ Other work is still in progress.¹⁷² But the picture is far from clear, and more research is needed in order to understand and explain this phenomenon which some contemporary Muslim chroniclers considered as being among the most unusual events that occurred at the beginning of the tenth Hijrah century.¹⁷³

One factor which has not yet been given full consideration in attempting to explain the rise of this dynasty is the subject of

¹⁷¹ See for example Jean Aubin, "Etudes Safavides I" in *JESHO*, 2 (1959), 37-81; V. Minorsky's articles in *BSOAS* (partially listed in *BSOAS*, 16 [1954], 271) and in the foreword to his *Persia in A.D. 1478-1490* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland, 1957); Ghulam Sarvar, *History of Shah Ismā'īl Şafavī* (Aligarh, 1939); H.R. Roemer, "Die Şafawīden" in *Saeculum*, 4 (1953); and R.M. Savory, "The Struggle for Supremacy in Persia after the Death of Timūr", *Der Islām*, 40 (1964), 35-65. For a thorough description of the manuscript sources of the Şafavid period, see M.B. Dickson, *Shāh T ahmāsb amd the U zbeks* (Princeton University Ph.D thesis, May 1958), Appendix II, "Sources and Bibliography", pp. xlv-lxiii.

¹⁷² Michel M. Mazzaoui, *The Origims of the Şafavids: Sh'ism,,Şaf'ism, amd the Gulāt, ca. 1250-1500*, Freiburger Islamstudien series, No. 3 (scheduled to appear in late 1971 or early 1972).

¹⁷³ Hasan-i Rūmlū, *Aḥsan al-Tavārīkh*, edited by Storey (Baroda: Gaykhad Oriental Series, 1931-34), I, 61.

the present paper, namely the *ghāzī* backgrounds of the Şafavid state.

II

Students of Ottoman history are familiar with the Paul Wittek lectures on the rise of the Ottoman empire.¹⁷⁴ Professor Wittek's examination of the history of Anatolia during the period before the rise of the Ottomans led him to the conclusion that the rise of the state of Osmān should be sought in its *ghāzī* origins. Bands of warriors of the faith were fighting the unbelievers along the frontiers of Islām and carving out states for themselves and their followers. Byzantium crumbled and the Ottoman empire rose. Wittek's findings have been challenged but have not yet been seriously questioned.

It appears that a similar "experiment" was taking place at a later date along another frontier of Dār — this time against the Christians of the Caucasus region. It is here where the Şafavids began their *ghāzī* activity, and it was in the general direction of Bāb al-Abwāb or Darband that they lost and won their first battles.

With the Ottomans it was a gradual and continuous process extending along the westward-moving frontiers of Anatolia and across the Straits into the Balkans. With the Şafavids, on the

¹⁷⁴ Paul Wittek, *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire* (London: Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain, 1938).

other hand, it appears to have been a sudden and spontaneous effort which began only half a century before Shāh Isma'īl.

III

A very quick review of the earlier history of the Ṣafavid *dadmān* will bring this problem to a sharper focus.

The *Sūfī* order at Ardabīl in Āzarbayjān, founded during the Mongol period by Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn (1252-1334), the eponymous leader of the dynasty, was a peaceful and contemplative order similar to countless other *Sūfī* orders which sprang up almost in every corner of the Muslim world. The life and *karāmāt* of Shaykh Safī al-Dīn, as related by his biographer Ibn Bazzāz in *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafa*¹⁷⁵ show him as a holy man who was honoured and sought out for his saintly deeds and miraculous powers. The Mongol rulers and their ministers placed the order and its leaders under generous protection. Followers of the order are described in the sources as having

¹⁷⁵ Ibn Bazzāz (Tavakkulī ibn Isma'īl ibn Hājī al-Ardabīlī), *Ṣafvat al-Ṣafa* (Bombay, lith. 1329/1911). This edition, written by Ahmad ibn Karīm Tabrīzī, ignores the serious problem of authorship of this work (which exists in two redactions: an original pre-Safavid, and a post-Safavid redaction with *Shī'ī* overtones). The present writer has been working on a definitive critical edition of this important work based on the twenty odd manuscripts now extant in several libraries and private collections.

been very numerous, and Ardabīl was soon becoming an important center of religious pilgrimage.¹⁷⁶

Shaykh Ṣadr al-Dīn (1334-1393), the son and successor of the founder of the order, lived for a very long period and managed the affairs of the order during the extremely troubled and confused time between the passing of the Mongol Īl-khāns and the arrival of Timūr upon the Irānian scene. He expanded the activities of the order into the Timūrid territories of Māvarā'annahr. The religious propaganda carried out by Shāh Qāsim al-Anvār, the famous Ṣūfī poet, in that area is one example of this activity.¹⁷⁷

Khwājah Alī (1392-1429), the third leader of the order, appears to have spread the message of the order into Syria where a tradition records his death in Jerusalem upon returning from the Pilgrimage.¹⁷⁸ He is also said to have obtained the

¹⁷⁶ 2 Hamd Allāh Mustawfī, *Tārīkh-i Guzīdah* (Tehrān, 1336/1958), p. 675; and Ḥusayn ibn Abdāl Zāhidī, *Silsilat al-Nasab*, (Berlin, 1343/1924), p. 38. See also the correspondence in *Mukātabai-i Rashīd'* by the Il-Khānid Minister Rashīd al-Dīn Faql Allāh, edited by Muḥammad Shaft' (Lahore, 1376/ 1947).

¹⁷⁷ On Shaykh Sadr al-Dīn see Khwāndamīr, Ḥabīb *al-Siyar* (Tehrān: Kitābkhāneh Khayām, 1333/1954-55), IV, 420-23. On Qāsim•i Anvār, see his *Kullīyāt*, edited by sā'id Nafīsī (Tehrān, 1337/1959), the long introduction.

¹⁷⁸ The story of the death of Khwājah 'Alī in Jerusalem is best preserved in Mujīr al-Dīn al-'Ulaymī, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Tārīkh al-Quds wa al-Khalīl*

freedom of some Turkish prisoners from Timūr (upon his return from the battle of Ankara) and sent them back to their people" to preach the word" in Shām and Rūm (i.e., in Syria and Anatolia).¹⁷⁹

Very little is recorded about his son and successor Shaykh Ibrāhīm (1429-1447), sometimes known as Shaykh Shāh.¹⁸⁰ His period of leadership of the order, which lasted for some two decades, gives one the decided impression of having been the lull before the storm.

For all of a sudden, the *murīds* of the order became the *ghuzāt-i sūfiyeh*,¹⁸¹ and under the next two leaders Junayd (1447-1460) and Ḥaydar (1460-1488), we see them fighting in large numbers against the remaining Christian enclave at Trebizund or the Georgians of the Caucasus. It is no more the heart of the Muslim world which attracts them; it is no more Rūm, Shām, or Māvarā'-annahr; it is no more the Dār al-Islām but the Dār al-Ḥarb. Overnight they have become *ghāzis* fighting the unbelievers along the Muslim frontiers of the north.

IV

(ahistorical and biographical work completed in 900/1494-95) (Cairo, 1283/186667), II, 510.

¹⁷⁹ V. Minorsky, *Tadhkirat al-Mulūk* (London: Luzac & Co., 1943), p. 190 and n. 1.

¹⁸⁰ **Zāhidi**, *Silsilat al-Nasab*, pp. 65.66.

¹⁸¹ Iskandar Munshi, *Tārīkh-i Ālam Ārā-yi 'Abbāsī* (Tehrān, 1334-35/1956-57), 1, 18.

The frontiers along the Caucasus have always been a region of border fighting since the spread of Islām into that direction. For example, the author of *Hudūd al-'Alam* (composed in 372/982), in describing the area of Azarbāyjān, Armenia, and Arrān, says that this region "is the abode of merchants, fighters of the faith (*ghāzīyān*), and strangers coming from all parts;" and adds a little further down that "Tiflis is a frontier post (*thaghr*) against the infidels (*bar rū-ye kāfirān*)".¹⁸² The border fighting was two-sided, and other sources tell how at one time the Georgians pursued the Muslim *ghāzīs* as far south as Ardabīl itself, and Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn's grandfather (Shaykh Quṭb al-Dīn) received a severe wound in the neck during the fighting, which Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn remembered as a young boy.¹⁸³

The region was also the scene of large-scale military activity in the form of campaigns conducted by the conquerors (Mongols, Timūrids, etc.) and by locally established rulers. Uzūn Ḥasan, the leading figure among the Aq-Qoyūnlū Turkmāns, conducted no less than five such campaigns against the Georgians,¹⁸⁴ and his son and successor Sultān Ya'qūb

¹⁸² *Hūdūd al- 'Ālam*, edited by V. Minorsky (London: Luzac & Co., 1937),

p. 142.

¹⁸³ Ibn Bazzāz, *Safyat al-Safā*, India Office Ms. No. 1842, pp. 9a-9b; and Khwāndamīr, *Habīb al-Siyar*, IV, 411-12.

¹⁸⁴ E.G. Browne, *Literary History of Persia* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1902-1924), III, 409 ff.

invaded the area on more than one occasion.¹⁸⁵ These organized military campaigns, however, should be differentiated from the unorganized activity of the *ghāzī* warriors under Junayd and Haydar.

V

Before concentrating his efforts against the Caucasus region, Shaykh Junayd conducted his *ghāzī* activity against the Byzantine enclave of Trebizund. The Byzantine sources, as well as the Ottoman sources, testify to a large-scale *ghazāh* in 861/1456 during the last years of Milo Joannes.¹⁸⁶ After winning initial victories against one of Joannes' leading men, Junayd encamped before the walls of the city which, however, remained impregnable.

This short-lived *ghazāh* against Trebizund came to an end when Mehmed II, as he was rounding off the Ottoman boundaries in the east, ultimately conquered the city in 1461. Shaykh Junayd had already directed his attention somewhere

¹⁸⁵ V. Minorsky, *Persia* (see index). This work is a comprehensive summary translation of Fadp Allāh ibn Rūzbehān Khunji's *Tārīkh-I 'Ālam Arā-yi Amīnī*. The original text is being prepared for publication by John E. Woods.

¹⁸⁶ . Miller, *Trebizond, the Last Greek Empire* (London, 1926), quoting from Cholcocondyles (d. 1464), pp. 83 ff.; and Ashiq-pāshā-zāde (1400-1484), *Tavārīkh-i Al-i Osmān*, edited by 'Alī Bey (Istanbul, 1332/1911-14), pp. 264 ff.

else, and later Safavid *ghāzī* activity was conducted against the ideally situated region of the Caucasus with its river valleys and mountainous terrain.

In 864/1459-60 Shaykh Junayd was already engaged in large scale operations against the Georgian Cherkes.¹⁸⁷ A year before, Uzūn Ḥasan had given his own sister in marriage to Junayd (and later on, Junayd's son Haydar married this same Turkmān Sultān's daughter, the future mother of Shāh Ismā'īl) and this made the Ṣafavid leaders "princes of the land". A contemporary authority (Fazl Allāh ibn Rūzbehān Khunji) remarks very pointedly:

Junayd's marriage became known even in the farthest corners of Rūm and Syria and, in view of this honor, the *khalifahs* of the earlier Shaykhs wanted to wait on him.

His followers (continues Khunji):

openly called him God (*ilāh*), and his son Son of God (Ibn Allāh)... In his praise they said: he is the Living One, there is no God but he.

And Khunjī adds:

¹⁸⁷ Khwāndamīr, *Ḥabib al-Siyar*, IV, 425-26; and Khunjī/Minorsky, *Persia*, p. 64.

When the boon of succession reached Junayd, he altered the way of life of his ancestors.... Every moment he strove to conquer a land or a region.¹⁸⁸

Shaykh Junayd, according to the chroniclers, combined in his person the formal sultanate (*saltanat-i suyarī*) with the spiritual sultanate (*saltanat-i ma'navī*); and on this basis he urged his *Safī* followers to carry on *ghazāh* and *jihad* against the unbelievers (*kuffār*), and called himself Sulṭān Junayd.¹⁸⁹ Shortly afterwards, with ten thousand, *Ṣūfīs*, he crossed the Aras river on a *jihād* against the Cherkes.¹⁹⁰

VI

About Shaykh Haydar and his role in the *ghāzī* activity of this period the sources are slightly more informative. We are told that he spent all his time making preparations for *ghazāh*. Rūzbehān Khunjī has left to us descriptions of these large-scale preparations that were going on in Ardabīl at this time. He must

¹⁸⁸ Khunji/Minorsky, *Persia*, pp. 64-65.

¹⁸⁹ The change from religious to temporal power was noted, rather cryptically, by several contemporary and later writers: Yaḥyā Qazvīni, *Lubb al-Tavārikh* (Tehran, 1314/1932), p. 238; Iskandar Munshi, *Tārīkh*, 1, 19; Qaḍī Aḥmad Ghaffārī, *Tārīkh-i Jahān-ārā* (Tehrān: Kitābfurūshī Hāfiz, 1343/1964), p. 261; Khwāndamīr, *Habib al—Siyar*, IV, 427; Qutb al-Din Nahrawālī, *Kitāb al-'Ilām*, (Cairo: Matba'at al-'Āmirah, 1303 A.H.), p. 223-24; and Aḥmad b. Yūsuf ibn Aḥmad Qaramānī, *Akhbār* p.:44 (based on Munajjim Bāshī's still unedited work, *Jāmi' al-Duwal*).

¹⁹⁰ See above footnote 4, p. 84, and Midi, *Silsilat al-Nasab*, 67; and Nasr Allāh Falsafī, *Zandagāni-yi Shāh 'Abbās Avval* (Tehrān: Dānishgāhi Tehrān, 1332/1953), I, 180.

have picked up the information from eyewitnesses."When the royal train reached Ardabīl, the author heard from trustworthy persons stories of the miserable ways of Haydar... I have heard that he (i.e., Shaykh Haydar) made several thousand pikes, coats of mail, swords, and shields... because he wished to teach his adepts (*murīds*) as their leader (*murshid*)."¹⁹¹ When the preparations were ready"he issued to them arms from his arsenal, and they were obedient to him — youths, robust and warlike, sword slashers in clever fighting."

Haydar had to clear his expeditions with the central authority in this case Suḷṭān Ya'qūb Āq-Qoyfinlū, son of Uzūn Ḥasan. His men, he wrote to the Suḷṭān from Ardabīl,"having exerted themselves (*ijtihād*) in various religious exercises and duly completed the great *jihād*, which is the assault of one's own soul, they now... claimed the right to distinguish themselves in the lesser *jihād*", which is to fight the infidels."Should the sovereign permit, they would begin the holy war against Cherkes..." Letters were despatched to the emīr of the border principality of Shirvdn to give Haydar and his men safe conduct in their march to the north.

This clearance was obtained in every one of Haydar's three expeditions. (For the third one he sent his own mother all the way to Qum, where the Sultān happened to be at the time, to

¹⁹¹ Khunjī/Minorsky, *Persia*, pp. 67-71 (for this reference and the next few quotations which all come from this work).

obtain the royal permission). After the permission was obtained, we are told that

the Shaykh with devilish haste, and together with the detachment that was in readiness, set forth from Ardabīl to Sharvān, ... and innumerable troops joined him.

These expeditions were not taken seriously at first by the central authority. Sultān Ya'qūb in fact is said to have remarked at one time, "What can happen from the campaigning of a shaykh, and what can a dervish do?"

These raids, however, were quite large. The well-informed Khunjī describes them as follows:

With some 10,000 men, the Shaykh passed through Darband on his way to the country of the infidel Cherkes.... Having wrought havoc and taken captives, he triumphantly returned to Ardabīl.... The kings of the outlying regions were astonished at his success (first expedition).... The Shaykh returned from his (second) raid... and brought with him some 6,000 captives.

These figures might have been slightly exaggerated in the sources, but they do give some idea of the extent of this *ghāzī* activity of Junayd and Haydar. Unfortunately, this activity did not materialize in the establishment of a state (both Junayd and Haydar having fallen martyrs in the fighting), and it was left for Shāh Ismail, Haydar's son, to achieve that a decade or so afterwards.

VII

Compared to the Ottomans, the Şafavid *ghāzīs* under Junayd and Ḥaydar were working against greater odds: a) To begin with, their field of operation lacked an established and permanent base located right on the frontier marshlands. For Ardabīl was far away, and the Şafavid leaders had to guide their men and carry whatever equipment they had across long stretches of land until they could come face to face with the Christian infidels and begin their *ghazāh*. Ardabīl was several hundred miles to the south from where the *ghāzīs* fought. Further, it should be remembered that the nature of the terrain was extremely hostile in the sense that this is a mountainous area — the confluence of the Zagros and Albarz ranges meeting in the Armenian knot. This was not the relatively open country which the Ottoman *ghāzīs* had at their disposal in their westward drive against Byzantium. b) Secondly, the Şafavid *ghāzīs* did not have a free movement of action. On the one hand they had to contend with a central authority that was still strong, namely the Āq-Qoyūnlū Turkmāns under Sultān Ya'qūb; and on the other, the Shirvān-Shāhs who controlled the area immediately bordering on Christian territory. And while the Safavids, as we have seen, could neutralize one of these two fronts — the Āq- Qoyūnlū, to whom they were related through strong marriage ties — they could at no time placate the suspicion of the rulers of Shirvān. The latter, were always wary of this *ghāzī* activity. Their country, as Rūzbehān Khunjī tells

us, was "a perpetual abode of peace".¹⁹² They allowed the *ghāzīs* to pass through to the north only after specific instructions were issued by and received from the central authority of the Aq-Qoyūnlū in Tabrīz. The Shirvān-Shāhs actually had all the reason to be afraid, for on both occasions (i.e., during Junayd and Ḥaydar) the Ṣafavid *ghāzīs* turned against Shirvān and were making preparations to conquer it. On the first occasion, the emīrs of Shirvān took care of the exigency on their own and were able to defeat Junayd and have him killed. On the second, the Shirvān-Shāh had to ask the assistance of Sultān Ya'qūb, when he (the ruler of Shirvān) was forced to evacuate his capital city of Shamākhī in order to escape the ruthless onslaught of the Ṣafavid *ghāzīs*. Ya'qūb himself, of course, finally realized that the free hand he had originally given to Ḥaydar was overreaching itself, and so he had to act to stop it and ultimately save his own crown. He, therefore, marched towards the north sending one of his generals ahead on a large contingent of imperial troops. Ḥaydar had to fight on both fronts; and as "the *Sufīs*... formed a circle round him and tried to repel and impede (the attackers)",¹⁹³ he died as a martyr on the slopes of Mt. Elburz.

It was natural for the *ghāzīs* to turn against Shirvān, because only by removing this impediment could they have the whole field free to themselves. And this was the first step taken by

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 72.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

Shāh Ismāīl twelve years later. But by that time the central government of the Āq-Qoyūnlū was torn to pieces by internal succession struggles, and Ismāīl did not fear action from that side. Furthermore, he could claim that he was only trying to take revenge from the rulers of Shirvān for the death of his father and grandfather — both a good Mediaeval pretext and a convenient expedient. c) A third difference between the Ottoman and Safavid experiments was the fact that while Osmān, Orkhān, and the others were only the leaders of the *ghāzī* warriors in the battlefields, Junayd and Ḥaydar were both military commanders and religious heads of the *Sop* Order at Ardabīl. This dual capacity concentrated too much power into the hands of the Ṣafavid chiefs; and, tending to the religious needs of their followers, no doubt, detracted from the efficient execution of the *ghazāh* itself. And so, assuming divine powers in order to rally their followers behind them (as was described above) may have been actually a hindrance rather than a help to the success of the *ghāzī* operations themselves. (But this point involves us with the religious factor mentioned earlier, and carries us beyond the terms of reference of this paper).

VIII

Two points remain to be explained: one, why is it that this *ghāzī* activity took place at this time? And secondly, how did it assist in the establishment of the new state?

A tentative answer to the first of the two questions is perhaps to blame it all on the Turks! Mehmed II, as was mentioned above, had just rounded off the eastern boundaries of his empire. The centralizing might of the Ottomans was too much to be accepted by the "freedom-loving" Turkmāns (who, it must not be forgotten, were the devoted followers of the order at Ardabīl). These Turk-māns flocked towards the east, and Junayd and Ḥaydar simply gathered them together and led them against the infidel Georgians. *Ghazāh* was always an attractive pastime!

If this is true, then we have the interesting and rather curious situation whereby the Anatolian Turks who under Osmān and Orkhān were conducting *ghazāh* in the west against Byzantium, are now the Turkmāns who were engaging in similar *ghāzī* activity under Junayd and Ḥaydar against the Georgians in the Caucasus. But who were the Turks? and who the Turkmāns? Are we to assume that they are all accounted for so neatly by Zeki Velidi Togan's "two millions" who were pushed westwards by the invading Mongols two or three centuries earlier?¹⁹⁴

The second question, as to how this *ghāzi* activity helped in the ultimate foundation of the Ṣafavid state, need not pose such difficult problems. The Turkmān *ghāzīs* under Junayd and

¹⁹⁴ Z. V. Togan, "Rise of the Turkish Empire" in *Background of the Middle East*, edited by E. Jackh (New York: Cornell University Press, 1952) pp. 112113.

Ḥaydar received their "basic training", so to speak, during the few decades before Ismā'īl, so that when his *khurūj* occurred around 1500, they were the seasoned fighters of previous expeditions. The consummation of the act needed only good scouts to lead the way to the north. In true *ghāzī* fashion, Ismail conquered Bāku before turning to Tabrīz.

SOME NOTES ON THE EARLY HISTORIOGRAPHY OF THE SALJŪQID PERIOD IN IRĀN

Dr. 'Affān Saljūq

An attempt is made in these notes, which are the result of my research¹⁹⁵ on the subject at Tehrān University, to introduce and analyse the works of Anūshīrvān b. Khālid and Abū Ṭāhir Khātūnī, two remarkable historians, men of letters and active politicians of the Saljūqid period. These works are among the most important lost sources of Saljūq history in Irān.

The earliest of these works is the memoirs of Anūshīrvān b. Khālid (d. 532/1138)¹⁹⁶, entitled *Nafsat al-Mašdūr fī Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr wa Futūr Zamān al-Ṣudūr*. 'Imād al-Dīn Kātib al-Iṣfahānī translated the memoirs into Arabic,¹⁹⁷ and they are also available in an abridged edition by Abū al-Fataḥ al-

¹⁹⁵ Affān Saljūq, *Naqd wa Barras'i Manabi'i Tārīkh-i Saljūqiyān Arabī wa Fars!* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Tehrān University, Tehrān, 1970).

¹⁹⁶ For a detailed study of Anūshīrvān's life and times, see 'Abbās Iqbal, *Wizārat dar Ahd-i-Salāṭīn-i Buzurg-i Saljūqī* (Tehrān: University of Tehrān Publication No. 560, 1338 A.H.S.), pp. 183-85. Cf. also A.K.S. Lambton, *E.I.*, II, 522-23.

¹⁹⁷ 'Imād al-Dīn's Arabic translation entitled *Nuṣrat al-Fatraḥ* is not yet published. It is preserved in Bibl. Nat. Paris Mas. Arabe 2145.

Bundārī under the title *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah*.¹⁹⁸ A careful examination of the material compiled in this work, as transmitted to us through the Arabic translation of 'Imād al-Dīn, reveals the significant role it has played in influencing contemporary and later historiography. It has been used by later Persian and Arab historians alike, as the following corresponding passages will show. We shall first narrate an incident and then quote the relevant passages from *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* and works of other contemporary and later historians.

I

On the day of 'Īd, Chagribeg wanted to plunder the city of Nīshāpūr. Tugrilbeg stopped him from doing that. Chagribeg got annoyed, pulled out a knife and said, "If you do not allow me to plunder, I shall commit suicide." Tugrilbeg pacified him, by paying him an amount of forty thousand *dīnārs*.

Zubdat al-Nuṣrah (p. 7)

ولما كان يوم العيد اجتمعوا من القريب والبعيد وهم بالنهب فركب طغلبك
لنعهم وجد في ردعهم و قال الان قد جائ كتاب الخليفة المفترض الطاعة على الخليفة و
قد خضنا من توليته ايانا بالحق والحقيقة فلع عليه اخوه جغرى بك داود و اخرج سكينه و

¹⁹⁸ Abū al-Fatah al-Bundārī, *Zubdat al-Nus'rah wa Nakhbat al-Usrah*, ed. M. Th. Houstsma in his series *Recueil de texts relatifs a l'histoire des Seldjoucides* (Leyden: E. J. Brill, 1889, Vol. II).

قالان ترکتنی ولاقتلت نفس بیدی فرق له و نکته و اراه ان منکنه و ارضاه بمبلغ اربعون
الف دینار قسطه

Saljūq Namā (p. 18)¹⁹⁹

روز عید قصد غارت نیشا پور کردند طغرل بک گفت روز عید است مسلمانان را
نشانید رنجانیدن جغریک تیرگی نمود و کاردبکشید که اگر نگذاری که بغارتیم کارد
بخود زخم و خود بکشتم طغل بک تواضع و موصلت نمود و بیچهل هزار دینار قسط او را
راضی کرد.

II

He said: "The condition of a sick person is like that of a goat. When her legs are tied up to obtain wool, she thinks that she is going to be slaughtered. After some time, she gets habituated to this procedure. At last, one day when her legs are tied up, she thinks that it is for the wool, but gets slaughtered. Whenever a person gets ill, he thinks that he will be cured. At last, he falls ill and hopes to recover, but dies."

Zubdat al-Nuṣrah (p. 27)

قال انما مثلی فی مرض شاة تشد قوائمها لجز الصوف فتظن انها تذبح فتضطرب حتی
اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد قوائمها للذبح انها لجز الصوف و تسکن و تذبح.

Saljūq Nāma (p. 22)

¹⁹⁹ Zahir al-Dīn Nīshāpūri, *Saljūq Nāma*, ed. Isma'il Khān Afshār (Tehran: Kalaleh Khāwar, 1332 A. H. S.).

مثل مردم بیمار مثال هم چون گوسفند است که ستهای و پاهای وی می بندند
تایشم اورا ببرند گوسفند ندارد اورا خواهند کشتن اضطراب نماید چون بگشایند
شاد شود تا چند کورت ابن معنی اورا عادت شود تا ناگاه می بندند و می کشند
Akhhār al-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah (p. 23)²⁰⁰

انما مثلی فی مرض مثل شاة تشد قوائمهالجز الصوف فتظن انها تدبج فتضطرب
حتى اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد للدبج فتظن انهاالجز الصوف و تسكن و تدبج
Al-Muntazim fi Tārīkh āi-Mulūk wa al-Imam (vol. 8, p. 189)²⁰¹

ولما حضرته الوفاه قال انما مثلی مثل شاة تشد قوائمهالجز الصوف فتظن انها
تدبج فتضطرب حتى اذا طلقت تفرح ثم تشد للدبج فتظن انهاالجز الصوف فتسكن
لتدبج.

III

Tugrilbeg said that during the beginning of his reign, he dreamt that he had been taken to the skies and there asked about his wishes. Tugril wished for a long life. He was informed that he would

live for seventy years.

Zubdat al-Nusrah (p. 28)

²⁰⁰ Ṣadr al-Dīn Abū al-Ḥassawn al-Ḥusaynī, *Akhhār al-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah*, ed. M. Iqbāl (Lahore: Punjab University Press, 1933).

²⁰¹ *Ibn al-Jawzī al-Muntazim fi Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa al-Umam* (Hyderabad, Deccan: Da'irat al-Mu'arif, Osmania University, 1938).

قال وحكى عميد الملك ان طغرلبك قال له رايت في منامي مبتداء امرى بخراسان
كانى رفعت الى السماء و قيل لى سل حاجتك لتقض فقلت ما شئى. احب الى من طول
العمر فقتيل عمرک سبعون

Saljūq Nāma (p. 22)

طغرلبک بخواب دیده بود که او را باآسمان برده بودند و پرسیدند که چه میخواهی
گفت عمر دراز گفتند ترا هفتاد سال عمر است

Akhbār ul-Dawlat al-Saljūqiyyah (p. 22)

و نقل من القاضى ابى بكر النشيبورى (قال) قالى لبس عميد الملك الكندرى (قال)
قال لى السلطان الب ارسلان فى ابتداء مر مبخراسان كانى رفعت السماء.... و كانى
انادى سل حاجتك لتقض فقلت ماشى احوالى من طول العمر فقتيل لى عمرک سبعون
سنه.

Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh (vol. 8, p. 19)²⁰²

حكى عنه الكندرى انه قال رايت وانا بخراسان فى المنام كانى رفعت الى السماء ...
فاسال حاجته لتقض فقلت فى نفسى اسال طول العمر فقتيل لك سبعون سنه..

Wafayāt al-AWin (vol. 4, p. 158)²⁰³

وحكى و زيره محمد ابن منصور الكندرى المقدم ذكره انه قال رايت وانا بخراسان
فى المنام كانى رفعت الى السماء ... فاسال حاجتك لتقض فقلت فى نفسى اسال طول

²⁰² Ibn al-Athīr, *Al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* (Cairo: Matba'at al-Istiḳāmah, 1348 A. H.).

²⁰³ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A'yān* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Miṣriyah, 1949).

IV

Sultān Tugril came to Bāb al-Nawbī and sat in the place of the Hājib. When the Caliph came, Tugril got up from his seat, caught the reins of his (Tugril's) horse and conducted him to the Bāb al-Hujrah.

Zubdat al-Nuṣrah (p. 17)

فلما اصبح السلطان الى باب النوبى و جلس بمكان الحاجب قلما قرب خليفة قام
واخذ لجام بغلته ومش في خدمته الى باب الحجره

Saljūq Nāma (p. 20)

و سلطان بقدمه بيامد و بياب النوئى بجائى حاجب بنشست چون خليفه رسيد
سلطان لگام اسب او گرفته تادر حجره برد.

Al-Kāmil fī al-Thrīkh (vol. 8, p. 86)

و تقدم السلطان فى المسيره و صل الى بغداد و جلس فى باب ال نوبى مكان
الحاجب و وصل الخليفة فقام طغرلبك و اخذ بلجام بغلته حتى صار على باب الحجره.

A comparative study of the above passages suggests that it is the *ṢudūrZamān al-Futūr* which is the source of the similarity in the Persian and Arabic texts. In support of this hypothesis, the following points merit consideration:

- 1) A comparative study of the relevant passages from the

Saljūq Nāma and the *Zubdat al Nuṣrah* clearly indicates the presence of one single source. The original text of *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr* not being available today, we cannot compare the text of the *Saljūq Nāma* with Anūshīrvān's work, but the Arabic translation by 'Imād al-Dīn can be used in place of the original Persian text. We can see that not only are the accounts the same, but even the language and the way of presentation are common to the Persian and Arabic texts. Since the *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* is a translations of the *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr*, it is reasonable to presume that the passages cited in both the sources originated from Anūshīrvān's work.

2) It seems that in the group of Persian histories, only Zāhīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī has used Anūshīrvān's work, because the other important history, the *Rāḥ at al-Ṣudūr*, whose author, Rāwandī, lived during the reign of the Saljūqs, does not contain any of the accounts cited above. From this we can draw the conclusion that Zāhīr al-Dīn has used the *Sudūr Zamān al-Futūr* directly, whereas the Arab historians had access to it through 'Imād al-Dīn's Arabic translation.

3) The order of the accounts in the *Zubdāt al-Nuṣrah* is followed by the *Saljūq Nāma* and the Arabic sources mentioned. This also supports our claim.

As a matter of fact, the *Ṣudūr Zamān al-Futūr* serves as a bridge between the Arabic and the Persian historians. Professor Claude Cahen, however, does not seem to believe this to be the case. He says, "As far as Saljūq history is concerned, we have the impression that Zāhīr al-Dīn and his epiques knew nothing of the Arabic group of sources, even the Irānian ones, and that, in short, there are two families of historians, each ignorant of

the other, separated by a cleavage of language."²⁰⁴ The passages cited above do not bear out Professor Cahen's point of view. The fact is that there has been a very close contact between Arab and Persian historians. Had this not been the case, the harmony of subject and presentation in these passages would never have been possible. There are scores of other parallel passages, suggestive, though not so trenchantly, of a common source.

While discussing this point, we should not forget that the scholars and men of letters of that time were bilingual; they had both the Persian and the Arabic sources at their disposal, no matter which of the two languages they chose as their medium of expression. For example, the author of *Akhbār* has mentioned the name of Abū al-Faḍl Bayhaqī in connection with his recording of the events which occurred during the consolidation of the Saljūq power.²⁰⁵

The other book with which we are concerned is the *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* by Abū Tāhir Khātūnī. Zahīr al-Dīn Nīshāpūrī and Rāwandī, authors of the *Saljūq Māma* and the *Raḥ at al-Sudūr* respectively, have given an account of Sultān Malik Shāh's

²⁰⁴ Claude Cahen, *Historiography of the Saljūqid Period in Historians of the Middle East*, ed. Bernard Lewis and P. M. Holt (London: London University Press, 1962), p. 75.

²⁰⁵ Al-Husayni, *Akhbār*, p. 29,

hunting on the authority of Khātūnī.²⁰⁶ On the same page, Rāwandī informs us about a book, the *Shikār Nāma*, by him. No reference is made to Khātūnī's history of the Saljūqs in the works mentioned above. It is only Dawlat Shāh who has quoted Khātūnī's history of the Saljūqs and has noted down a number of short accounts and anecdotes from him.²⁰⁷

We are not sufficiently informed about the life and activities of Khātūnī. He was born in the middle of the fifth century A.H., probably at Sāvah in Irān. The only reference we find to his career is that he was the custodian of the estates of Gawhar Khātūm, the beloved wife of Sulṭān Muhammad (498/1104-511/1117).²⁰⁸

It seems that Khātūnī was a well-known personality of his time, especially in literary circles. His couplets are cited in

²⁰⁶ *Saljūq Nāma*. p. 32: Mohammad b. 'Alī b. Sulaymān al-Rawāndī, *Rāhat Sitar fī Ayāt al-Surūr*, ed. M. Iqbāl (London: Gibb Memorial Series, 1921), p. 131.

²⁰⁷ Dawlat Shāh Samarqandī, *Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā*, ed. Mohammad 'Abbāsī (Tehrān: Intishārat-i Ketāb Furūshī-e Barānī, 1337 A. H. S.), pp. 73, 74, 86, 93.

²⁰⁸ *Zubdat al-Nusrah*, p. 106.

*Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr*²⁰⁹ and are repeated in *Jami' al-Tawārikh*.²¹⁰ Anūshīrvān notes a number of couplets from him.²¹¹

The author of the *Saljūq Nāma* and the *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr* have not mentioned Khātūnī's history, but a comparative study of corresponding passages from these two books with the *Tadhkīrah* of Dawlat Shāh Samarqandī, which has been taken from Khātūnī's lost history, clearly indicates that the *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* has furnished the *Saljūq Nāma* and the *Rāḥat al-Ṣudūr* with valuable historical information; but, unlike *Dawlat Shāh*, *Nīshāpūrī* and *Rāwandī* have made no reference to Khātūnī's history. The fact that Khātūnī's history was preserved as late as Dawlat Shāh's period makes it reasonable to assume that this work was available during the time of the two earlier authors. A comparative study of some relevant passages is made here to illustrate this point.

Tadhkirat al-Shu'arā

در عهد او جامه ابریشمی بهای تمام

Saljūq Nāma

لباسهای فاخر و کسوت‌های متلون و زر

²⁰⁹ p. 136.

²¹⁰ Rashid al-Dīn Fazlullāh. *Jāmi' al-Tawārikh*, ed. Ahmed Ates (Ankara, 1960).

²¹¹ The couplets of Khātūnī which have appeared on p. 105 & 106 of the *Zubdat al-Nuṣrah* are an Arabic translation of the original Persian verses by 'Imad al-Dīn. Bundārī states (p. 105):

و عبث ابوا طاهر الخاتونی فی البیات فرسیه قل الامام عماد الدین و عربت بعضها و

قلت

کشید های مغول و ختای در عهد	یافت p.93
اوقیمت گرفت p.74	
آورده اند چهار صد شکاری باقلا بدم	گوید چهار صد بوز داشته مجموعی
زر مرضع ولبر های ابریشمی وجلهای	باقلا ده زر وجل سقرلاط p. 93
زر بفت داشت p.53	

Professor Claude Cahen is of the view that Khātūnī's work was based on popular anecdotes and folktales relating to the Saljūq Sulṭāns ²¹²It seems that he does not concede any historical significance to it. A careful examination of the nature of the information compiled in Khātūnī's work and transmitted to us through the courtesy of Dawlat Shāh convinces us that this work was not wholly based on anecdotes and folk-tales. The references to the reign of Sulṭāns Sanjar (511/1117-552/1157) and Arsalān made by Khātūnī which have been quoted in the *Tadhkirah* prove the personal presence of the author during that time.

Dawlat Shāh mentions that Abū Ṭāhir Khātūnī has said in his *Tārīkh-i Al-i Saljūq* that he had been in the service of Sulṭān Sanjar in Rādḡān. There he saw that a bird had made her nest and had laid eggs on the roof of the royal tent. When the Sulṭān wanted to leave the place he appointed one of his servants to look after the bird and to wait till the young ones grew up and

²¹² Cahen, *The Historiography*, p. 67.

learnt how to fly. The tent was kept as it was so that its removal might not hurt the young ones.²¹³

Another account is related to the reign of Sultān Arsalān b. Tughril (555/1160-571/1175). Khātūnī says that on the day of ʿĪd he was present in Hamadān and saw the procession of Sultān Arsalān going to offer his Id prayers. According to him, seven thousand slaves clad in satin and brocade uniforms were present in that procession.²¹⁴

The references made to the two Saljūqid Sultāns by Khātūnī indicate that he was an eye-witness to these events. Attributing the material compiled in his book to a collection of unimportant anecdotes and folk tales does not seem to be correct. As already mentioned, Khātūnī was a well-known literary figure of his time. Anūshīrvān b. Khālīd has paid most glowing tributes to him and a number of his couplets are quoted in his work. Keeping these points in mind and going through the material found in Dawlat Shāh's work, one finds it difficult to accept Professor Cahen's view.

From this brief survey it must be clear that the two works in question are very important for Saljūqid historiography. Anūshīrvān's memoirs not only provided valuable and interesting material for his contemporaries, but connected Arab historiography with the Persian. The Persian and Arab

²¹³ Samarqandi, *Tadhkīrah*, p. 74.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

historians were never by any means ignorant of one another. Unfortunately, while we have a version of the *Şudūr Zamān al-Futūr*, we do not have one of Khātūni's history. We only have the four accounts quoted by Dawlat Shāh.

METAPHYSICS OF PERSIA AND IQBĀL

Manzoor Ahmad

Islāmic philosophy or, as it is sometimes called, Arabic philosophy can as well be called Persian philosophy. Except for the fact that most of it is written in the Arabic language there is nothing Arabic about it. Many of the philosophers who excelled in scholastic thought in the metaphysics of mysticism and in using Greek philosophy for interpreting Islām were Persians. So large is their number that, over half a century ago, the development of metaphysics in Persia, which is but a paradigm of Muslim philosophy, served Iqbāl as the subject of a Ph. D. thesis. This thesis was subsequently published in Pakistan several times. It may be interesting to note the indigenous Persian traits in Islāmic thought in the face of the claim made by Western scholars that all Muslim philosophy is merely a footnote on Greek thought. We are not, however, at the moment concerned with this aspect of Muslim philosophy. The subject of our inquiry is the development of Iqbāl's thought from his earlier to his later period with a view, especially, to finding out whether there was any substantial change in it, as has been claimed by some Iqbāl scholars. For the purposes of that inquiry we will concentrate on his two main philosophical

works, i.e., *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām*.²¹⁵

While giving permission for the translation of *Metaphysics* to Mīr Ḥasan al-Dīn, Iqbāl has been reported to have told the translator that the book had been written eighteen years earlier. "Since then", he is reported to have added, "many new things have come to light and there has been a change in my own views. There are books written in the German language separately on al-Ghazzālī, Tūsi, etc., which were not available at the time of my writing this book. I should think that there is but little in this book which would now escape criticism."²¹⁶

The statement that IOM's ideas underwent a change was accepted on its face value without much deliberation. A remark to this effect appears in the foreword of a reprint of *Metaphysics* by Prof. M. M. Sharīf: "It [*Metaphysics*] was written at a time when he [Iqbāl] was an admirer of pantheism — a world view which he completely repudiated a few years later."²¹⁷ This remark, which was presumably based on the fact that Iqbāl mentions Ibn al-'Arabī, the great exponent of

²¹⁵ S. M. Iqbāl, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, ed. M. M. Sharīf (3rd impression; Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbāl, 1964); and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islām* (Reprint; Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968). Hereafter these works will be referred to as *Metaphysics* and *Reconstruction* respectively.

²¹⁶ Mīr Ḥasan al-Dīn, *Falsafa-i 'Azam* [trans. of *Metaphysics*] (Ḥaydarābād: Aḥmadiya Press, n.d.), p. iii.

²¹⁷ Foreword to *Metaphysics*.

pantheism, in glowing terms in *Metaphysics*, while he does not mention Rūmī at all, is borne out by a number of statements made by Iqbāl himself.

In a letter to Muhammad Niyāz al-Dīn Khan, he writes:

This Neo-Platonism which I have mentioned in my article is a distorted form of the philosophy of Plato, which was made into a creed by one of his followers, Plotinus. Amongst the Muslims, this creed was spread through the translations by the Christians of Ḥarrān and it gradually became a part of the religion of Islām. To me it is completely un-Islāmic and has no relevance to the philosophy of the *Qur'ān*. The structure of mysticism has been built on this Greek impertinence.²¹⁸

He writes in another letter: "As far as I know, *Fuṣūṣ* contains nothing but atheism and heresy."²¹⁹

Explaining his disgust with mysticism, he writes "When mysticism tries to become a philosophy and, with hair-splitting arguments about cosmology and the essence of God, presents a theory of direct personal experience of God, then my soul revolts against it".²²⁰ In an article published in *Vakil* under the

²¹⁸ *Makātīb-i Iqbāl*, ed. S.A. Rahmān (Lahore: Bazm-i Iqbāl, p. I.

²¹⁹ *Iqbāl Nāma*, ed. Shaykh 'Atā Allāh (Lahore: Shaykh Muhammad Ashraf, 1951), vol. I, 44.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

title "Mysteries of Self and Ṣūfīsm",²²¹ he expresses his opinion in more detailed and candid terms:

I do not feel shy to admit that I have entertained, for a long time, the ideas which are specially entertained by some *Sūfīs* and which, on later reflection, I found to be completely un-Islāmic. For instance, Ibn al-'Arabī's concept of the eternity of perfect souls, or pantheism, or the concept of six graded emanation, or certain other beliefs mentioned by 'Abd al-Karīm Al-Jīlī in his book *Al-Insān al-Kāmil*.²²²

NW thinks that such beliefs are alien to Islām and have been wrongly, though with good intentions, grafted into the apologetics of Islām. The concept of the eternity of souls can be, according to him, traced back to Plotinus, and was later adopted by Ibn Sīnā and Farābī, because of which they were declared heretics *by* al-Ghazzālī. The theory of emanation originates from the same source and was later adopted by Suhrawardī Maqtūl for justifying certain elements in the Zoroastrian religion. Once such alien concepts find credence into Muslim thinkers, pantheism becomes the logical end-stage of their ontology.

One can find many other references to the same effect in letters and articles which Iqbāl wrote from time to time and

²²¹ Reprinted in *Maqālat-i Iqbāl*, ed. S. A. Vāhid [Wāhid] (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1963), pp. 160-170. Henceforth this work will be referred to as *Maqālāt*.

²²² *Maqālāt*, p. 161.

which provoked a strong reaction from certain religious circles in the sub-continent. It seems that Iqbāl in these writings is totally rejecting the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, which is normally accepted by the Ṣūfīs. In response to criticism against his views he later tries to make a distinction between Persian Ṣūfīsm and Islamic Ṣūfīsm and explains his motivation for doing so. Thus, in reply to one such criticism by Ḥasan Nizāmī, he declares that his aim is not to destroy the Ṣūfī movement. What, he says, he is opposed to is Persian mysticism and which is a sort of asceticism and not a part of Islām.²²³

He further makes a reference to different philosophical positions (*waḥdat al-wujūd* being one of them) taken by certain philosophers in interpreting religious beliefs. He thinks that pantheism is not a religious problem, but a problem of philosophy."The discussions on unity and diversity have nothing to do with Islām. Oneness of God is the cardinal principle of Islām, the opposite of which is *shirk*, and not diversity."²²⁴

It seems to me that the *raison d'etre* of Iqbāl's rejection of what he calls Persian mysticism is its allegedly unwholesome effect on human personality, especially when it is accepted as a

²²³ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

²²⁴ Maḥmūd Nizāmī (ed.), *Malḥūzāt* (Lahore: Naryan Dutta Sahgal & Sons. n. d.), p.107.

way of life rather than a philosophical position.²²⁵ He says it in so many words and at one place quotes a Punjābī couplet:

تھے ہم پوت پٹھان کے دل کے دل دیں توڑ
شرن پڑے رگھناتھ کے سکیں نہ تنکا توڑ

(I was a *Pathān* and could defeat whole armies in battle;

but since I sat at the feet of *Ragnath* [who believed in the principle of the immanence of God] I cannot even break a piece of straw.)²²⁶

The consensus of opinion about Iqbāl's attitude towards mysticism can be summed up as follows:

- a) Iqbāl subscribed to or sympathised with a pantheistic point of view not only as a way of life, but as a philosophical system in his earlier writings, particularly in his *Metaphysics*.
- b) Later he changed from this position to a different one, which found its fullest and mature expression in *Reconstruction* about which we shall have more to say in the following pages.
- c) One of the major motivations for this change lies in the practical effects of a pantheistic outlook on the life and attitudes of a person and on his moral and social behaviour.

It appears that, at times, Iqbāl is at pains to explain that it is a particular type of mysticism to which he is opposed, i.e., of

²²⁵ Ibid.,

²²⁶ *Maqālāt*, p. 164,

the type of Ḥāfīz and Ibn al-'Arabī. This is a significant point, and a very pertinent question can be asked about the conceptual distinctions between the mysticism he is opposed to and his own later philosophy in *Reconstruction*. There are strong indications that, in spite of his categorical rejection of Ibn al-'Arabī's metaphysical mysticism, he has not been able completely to eliminate it from his later thought.²²⁷

There seems to be one thing in common in most of the writings on Islāmic mysticism: the writers, including Iqbāl himself, make a distinction between mysticism as a way of purifying the soul, on the one hand, and as a metaphysical theory, on the other. But, unfortunately, the two have been mixed up both by Iqbāl and by his commentators, in the treatment of the subject. This was to be expected, and is to a certain extent natural, as the two aspects, though distinct, are closely related to one another. The philosophy of *wajūd* is an intricate subject, the difficulties of which have been accentuated by the recondite style of Ibn al-'Arabī and others — a style which was purposely adopted for restricting their teachings to the elite and the initiated. These writers presumably

²²⁷ The word pantheism which is sometimes used for Ibn al-'Arabī's metaphysics of mysticism is inappropriate. It seems that a special effort has been made by Ṣūfīs, including Ibn al-'Arabī with an elaborate metaphysics, to keep Islāmic mysticism clean of the philosophy of *ḥulūl* or *hama ūst* which should be translated as pantheism. Thus an attack of Iqbāl on Ibn al-'Arabī as a representative of pantheism becomes tangential.

apprehended that their writings are liable to being misunderstood or misinterpreted by the common man. They themselves hardly advocate the type of inactivity or fatalism in everyday life that Iqbāl is so concerned about. Iqbāl himself, wittingly or unwittingly, seems to have followed the double path of warning the common man against a fatalistic approach to life and at the same time expounding an ontology not very dissimilar to that of Ibn al-'Arabī or Ḥāfīz. Let us see how he did this.

When Iqbāl talks against the metaphysics of mysticism, he sounds very much like an exponent of 'anti-system'. He himself was a philosopher and was well aware of how the problem of philosophy arises. His own anti-system approach has flowered in the form of a system known as the philosophy of self. It has a particular metaphysics, a theory of knowledge and a theory of truth. It deals with morality and the concept of good and evil, and ordains a destiny for man. As Prof. Sharīf puts it, it is a complete system of thought based on the reality of the self and has its affinities with the philosophical systems of Alexander, James Ward and McTaggart.²²⁸ The mystical flavour and the religious approach of this philosophy invite its comparison with the theory of *wahdat al-wujūd* for elucidating the point we are trying to make.

²²⁸ M. M. Sharīf, "Iqbāl's Conception of God" in *Iqbāl as a Thinker*, ed. M. M. Sharīf (4th impression; Lahore: Sh, Muḥammad Ashraf, 1956). pp. 123-126.

The theory of *wahdat al-wujūd* begins with the observation that this universe is contingent in itself and in time. In this general form this statement has been taken as true throughout Islāmic thought, except for some philosophers who believed in the eternity of matter; but even they, at the same time, tried to reconcile the idea of the eternity of matter with belief in the contingent nature of the created universe. As an immediate consequence of the above observation there arises a problem for *wahdat al-wujūd*, and that is about the process through which One reality could express itself in the diversity of the world. The solution to this problem can be briefly stated as follows: Before this universe came into existence there was only the being of God, and nothing else existed. The being of God has two aspects. In one of His aspects God is the necessarily existent being and possesses all the perfect attributes. The other aspect of His being is looked at from the point of view of His attributes. Knowledge being one of the most fundamental of these, He is termed as the Knower. It is believed that it would be vacuous to say that He is the Knower unless there are objects of knowledge, as it is vacuous to say that one hears or sees without there being objects of hearing or sight. These objects in the knowledge of God are those possibilities that have not yet been actualised or realised. They have not yet been subjected to the command 'Be' (كن), Before such a command is given, these attributes or, as they are technically known, *a'yān-i thābitah* (Divine essences or Divine ideas) are contained in the Knowledge of God; and since the being of God is also the

Knower from eternity, and Knowledge without objects of Knowledge is not possible, therefore these Divine essences are also eternally copresent with Him. They have neither been created in time nor occupy a place in space; hence they are eternal. The activity of creation is a name given to the act of externalization of these ideas eternally copresent in the Knowledge of God. Whatever we see in the world around us was pre-existent in the Knowledge of God in the form of essences. When He willed or desired to create, He only had to direct His attention to the *a'yān-i thābitah* and they immediately saw the light of day. The addressees of the word '*kum*' were these very *a'yān* in Divine Knowledge.²²⁹

The theory *a'yān-i thābitah* was an immediate consequence of 'another philosophical premise taken for granted by the adherents of *wahdat al-wujūd*. This was the famous postulate, directly lifted from Greek philosophy, that nothing can come into existence from absolute non-existence (*ex nihilo nihil fit*). The phenomenon was taken to be a logical impossibility, as non-existence is the negation of existence, pure and simple, and does not have any ontological consequences. The believers of *wahdat al-wujūd* wanted, further, to draw a distinction between the theory of total immanence [pantheism] and their own point of view. Hence they were keen to develop a metaphysics of

²²⁹ See for a precise account of the metaphysics of *wahdat al-wujūd*: Ashraf 'Alī Thanawī, *Zuhūr bi-Nūr al-Qidam* (Deoband: Ashraf al-'Ulūm, 1964), pp. 641-665.

their own for distinguishing themselves from pantheists, who establish an identity between the particular existents and the necessarily existent Being. They repudiate the idea that God Himself has adopted different shapes etc., nor, they say, has He divided Himself into multiple particulars. Both these views are strongly resented by Muslim Ṣūfīs, though at times language creates problems for a proper exposition of their point of view. Once pantheism or the theory of total immanence (*ḥulūl*) is rejected and the sanctity of the concept of unity is preserved as against multiplicity, the only course open for the *wujūdi* philosophers is to advance the theory of eternal essences in Divine Knowledge and a process of emanation as an explanation of the diversity in the universe. These eternal essences or Divine ideas have their own potentialities of expression and are activated by an act of God, which is comparable to the throwing of light on darkness. There are obvious parallelisms between this theory and that of form and matter in Greek philosophy, though in details the two are quite dissimilar.

This is a very sketchy account of the metaphysics of *wahdat al-wujūd*. Nevertheless it is sufficient to mark and identify the divergences, or similarities that exist between this philosophy, supposed to be running through *Metaphysics*, and the later philosophy of Iqbāl.

A glance over *Reconstruction* brings out the points of distinction between Iqbāl's earlier Persian or pantheistic approach and his later one. The main points are as follows:

1) The view of the universe presented in the philosophy of *waḥ dat al-wujūd* is complete, whereas in the later philosophy of Iqbāl it is still undergoing completion.

2) *Waḥdat al-wujūd*, as is evident from its nomenclature, is the philosophy of the unity of Being, whereas in IOW we find a pluralistic approach.

3) In the philosophy of *waḥdat al-wujūd* freedom of the human will has no reality, whereas one of the fundamental aspects of Iqbāl's philosophy is the concept of real freedom for the human ego or self, so much so that through this freedom the nature of ultimate reality is revealed. Freedom is a methodological as well as an ontological concept for Iqbāl.²³⁰

This is, by no means, an exhaustive description of the alleged points of difference between the earlier and the later thought of Iqbāl or between Persian mysticism and the philosophy of the ego. We have to delve a little deeper into these points for a clearer understanding of the issue under discussion.

Iqbāl's later philosophy envisages this universe not as a complete and finished product, but as covering the stages of completion. Nothing can, according to him, be finally and dogmatically asserted about it. Creation is a continuous process,

²³⁰ See chapters III & IV of *Reconstruction* for a detailed account of these points.

in which human beings are taking their due share and every moment creating new situations and products. This universe is a colony or collection of individuals or egos; the number of these egos is not determined. In every temporal unit new individuals are being added, who in their turn add to the activity of creation. Life is not something ready-made; new desires always create new changes init. There is nothing permanent in life except change. It is eternally in a state of becoming. Owing to its continuous activity it remains on an endless journey.²³¹

Life, which is the fundamental reality of the universe, was in the beginning a blind instinctive force completely devoid of a purpose. When it came into conflict with matter and contracted the power of resistance, it learned to climb the ladder of evolution. Lost in the wilderness of being for a long time, it acquired, at least, a power of discerning values and attaching to various actions. Value consciousness was a revolutionary change in the pattern of life and became its dearest possession. The process of creation was now conjoined with value consciousness. Life thus developed norms and purposes, and every act of change became a directed act suffused with values. Value consciousness provided the juxtaposition of the ideal and the actual, the actual being incomplete and deficient, yearning to complete and perfect itself through a continuous effort. This

²³¹ *Ibid.*. pp. 106 f.

is, in brief, the ontological position taken in the later works of Iqbāl.²³²

On the face of it there seem to be two different positions adopted in the earlier and the later thought of Iqbāl; and they also have their historical parallels. The concepts of being and becoming can easily be traced to Greek philosophy. Those who say that only change is permanent may be reminded of Heraclitus' famous maxim that one cannot step into the same river twice. From Bergson to William James this aspect of life and reality is asserted again and again. Iqbāl, no doubt, had these views in mind, and shows very clear strains of vitalistic philosophy as against the concept of the block universe of the absolutists. Nevertheless it would be a hasty generalisation to identify his philosophy with the vitalism of Bergson or the pluralism of James and to overlook the deeper strains in his metaphysics, which still come from religious sources and from his earlier so-called repudiated position based upon Persian mysticism. Much depends on finding a right clue for interpreting his assertions about this universe as not being a finished product, but in a process of continuous creation.

It would be a platitude to say that we constantly observe motion and change in this universe and that nothing seems to have permanence in this world. It is obvious that this platitude rests on the point of view of the observer looking at things

²³² Cf. Yūsuf Ḥusain Khān, *Riḥ-i Iqbāl* (2nd ed.; Haydarābād: Idāra-I Ishā'at-i Urdu, 1944), pp. 114 ff.

around him. This view point, as it is asserted both by Iqbāl and by mystic philosophers, is bound up by the limitations of space-time and other necessary conditions of perception like those of quality, quantity, modality,

- etc. It is a limited and particular point of view, which is contrasted with an unlimited and absolute view of a transcendent being. Then a question is asked: could there be a possibility of lifting these limitations, even for a certain amount of time, and having an inkling of what it would be like to have an absolute view of the facts. The mystics talk of lifting the veil of sensory perception by removing the limitations of space and time and of having a direct and immediate perception of the real. They envisage a gradual process, needing a special effort under expert guidance through which such an immediate experience could be obtained; but the immediate experience still remains localised in a particular individual, and hence no complete identity of the perception by the particular of the absolute could be obtained. The particularity goes on decreasing infinitely, but never crosses the limit completely, as, after every limit, there is yet another, *ad infinitum*.²³³ This may be a debatable point, as there are in it suggestions of the possibility of a complete identity when the individual loses his particularity altogether and becomes one with the universal; but this is a point where most of the adherents of *wujūd* would like to posit the rather subtle concept of the individual not him self becoming identical with the infinite and yet achieving a point of view of totality. We believe that at this point there is an

²³³ The concept of transcendence of God is never totally given up; it always remains as complementary to immanence.

agreement between Islāmic mysticism and Iqbāl's philosophy. Iqbal, reaching this position in a similar fashion, points out that when an individual, breaking the limitations of space and serial time, pays attention to his self, he finds in his immediate intuition an awareness of a pure mobility which is comparable to *la dure* of Bergson. From this station he gets a peep at the source of motion and change in the universe, and in this experience he discovers the highest category of reality. This methodology is common between *wahdat al-wujūd* and Iqbāl's philosophy. Both use the immediate and direct experience of the individual as indicative of the experience of God. In *wahdat al-wujūd*, the individual, through immediate experience of God,²³⁴ comes in contact with the Divine essences, but it does not preclude the possibility that the divine experience itself is not a continuous activity, notwithstanding the disputable point about the detailed knowledge of the consequences of God's activity, as against the contention that He knows the universals only. Whether God knows only Divine essences (universals) or has the knowledge of particulars (i.e., all the potentialities of the universals which could be actualized), it does not contradict Iqbāl's contention that the act of creation is continuous. The philosophy of *wah dat al-wujūd* regards the universality of direct and immediate experience as the most fundamental characteristic; so is the case with Iqbāl.²³⁵ The statements in the

²³⁴ 1 The only significant distinction between this experience and that to which Iqbāl refers as religious experience seems to be that the former is passive and gained by training the self to an inert state, whereas the latter is arrived at through activity of the self. This distinction, even if not verbal, is irrelevant for our purpose.

²³⁵ *Reconstruction*, pp. 127 and 181.

philosophy of Iqbāl to the effect that the universe is not a finished product do not mean to imply that in the universe new facts come into being without any determination whatsoever from pure nonexistence, which even God, the Omnipotent and the Omniscient, is unaware of. The same is true of *wahdat al-wujūd*. For IOW the chain of new facts coming into existence every moment represents the internal possibilities of Being, becoming actual. From our localized point of view the creation of the universe is a never-ending process, which would continue eternally because of the eternity of the will of God — one of His fundamental attributes. We cannot put a limit either to the knowledge or to the will of God. Though we are unable to read through the *preserved tablet* from beginning to end, the whole of the creation is preserved in it. Call it the inner possibilities of Being, as Iqbāl would like to call it, or give it the name of Divine essences, as the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd* visualizes; the consequences are the same, i.e., the resultant continuity of the process of creation or emanation.

Seen against this metaphysical background, the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd*, like that of Iqbāl, envisages no passive concept of God as is sometimes implied by particular mystical attitudes. Knowledge and will are the two fundamental attributes of God, and neither of them can be considered as logically prior to the other in the process of creation; they are rather co-existent and complementary to each other. Hence no mystic metaphysics in Islām can conceive of a static universe or a passive God Who is only the 'Knower' and not the 'Creator'. Mere consciousness of a completed universe without active participation in its creation is never implied in the metaphysics

of *wahdat al-wujūd*. Ash'arite atomistic philosophy, to which Iqbāl subscribes, dismisses the concept of mechanical causation and in its place advances the concept of Divine causation, which is not disfavoured by mystical metaphysics in spite of its disregarding atomism.

The divergence between Iqbāl's later thought and the metaphysics of mysticism is also sometimes emphasized with regard to the status of external objects, i.e., the created world. It is said that mystical metaphysics implies the ideational or mental nature of the objects, whereas Iqbāl conceives them to be real. This observation is based on a superficial view of the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd* and also on misapplication of the categories of mental and non-mental, in their ordinary sense, to the metaphysics of mysticism. The logic of mysticism is of a different order and these categories are not applicable to it. These categories assume two distinct modes of existence, one external and the other internal, implying that externality is a necessary property of the objects around us, which are independent of all mental relations. For all practical, everyday, purposes this may be so, and is not denied even by mysticism. Nevertheless the logic of *wahdat al-wujūd* grades reality into tiers, and mental and non-mental are not mutually exclusive, but only juxtaposed concepts. Being is graded, and mental is not a predicate of existence. To say that an object is mental, in this sense, is uninformative and merely analytical. Within this all-inclusive concept of existence there are various tiers, which

possess a reality of their own, and each tier has its own logic. This is the distinction which Islāmic mysticism tries to maintain between itself and the philosophy of pure pantheism. The externality of objects is not a mere appearance; it has a reality of its own and is governed by its own laws, which are laws of a particular aspect. Looked at from the point of view of the absolute, it may not be termed as externality, but the absolute point of view is not the only point of view. There are other points of view about reality, which are as much a part and parcel of total reality as the absolute one. Hence the differentiation between mental and non-mental is either a verbal distinction or is a result of confounding two different categories.

The point at issue in the juxtaposition of the mental and the non-mental lies in the concept of a 'block universe', which is an alleged implication of the philosophy of *wahdat al-wujūd*. This impression is created when *wahdat al-wujūd* is wrongly compared with the idealistic philosophy of the West. In spite of certain parallelisms between the two, they are not identical modes of thought. As we have said above, in the Being of God the two fundamental attributes of Knowledge and Will are eternally complementary and, therefore, there is no warrant for the conclusion that the activity of either of them could be exhausted in time. Hence it would be wrong to conclude that creative activity is not continuously at work in this universe. The Will of God continuously reflects the Knowledge of God, a

process which the calculus of formal logic fails to comprehend. The two universes of Knowledge and Will do not fit into the same framework, namely, that of the law of contradiction. The same has often been expressed by pointing to the two domains of comprehension, one partial and the other total. Looked at from the former angle, reality seems to be incomplete and hence imperfect; it is engaged in an eternal process of evolution for its perfection, thus moving towards a fixed goal. But, seen from the other angle, it is a complete system, perfectly individuated, which is both the traveller and the destiny. From this latter angle it is neither static nor moving, because both these concepts are applicable to the former category only. In this perspective Iqbāl's remarks become significant when he says that the perfection of the creative ego does not lie in its unchanging nature, but in its continuous activity.²³⁶ The being of God is self-sufficient; hence it does not move for attaining a goal external to itself. It moves to manifest the infinite possibilities inherent in itself. The paradoxes in the understanding of this movement in the Being of God arise, because, according to Iqbāl, we apply a wrong logic to it. We try to measure the Divine motion with the numerical concept of time and end up in the antinomies of reason. We can only use this concept on the resultant activity of Being, and not on Being itself, where it would be as meaningless as it is to ask 'what o'clock is it on the sun now?'

²³⁶ See *Reconstruction*, pp. 59 ff.

The second point of dispute we mentioned above between Iqbāl's later thought and the so-called Persian mysticism is that of monism and pluralism. For Iqbāl the chief character of the ego is its individuality. A diffused reality in which individuals could not be identified is characterless. The universe is a colony of individuals and God Himself is an individual, though a perfect one. Iqbāl's philosophy is reminiscent of Leibnizian monadology, though he does not say that his monads are windowless. The spiritual nature of these individuals and of reality as a whole is retained and so is it by *waḥdat al-wujūd*. The only difference between the two is that Iqbāl lays more emphasis on one aspect of the diffused spirituality, i.e., the pluralistic, whereas, *waḥdat al-wujūd* stresses its monistic aspect. The Being of God in *waḥdat al-wujūd*, though immanent in the nature of things, yet, at the same time, transcendent, is necessarily existent. Although this philosophy sometimes talks in terms of appearances, nevertheless, the appearances have a status of their own. They are appearances only when they are compared with reality. They are called 'non-existent' only when the predicate of *existence* is conceived of as applied to God. Otherwise, in so far as the laws of nature and the world of common sense are concerned, these appearances are real in their own right. Events are explained in terms of laws of causation, and social obligations are carried out *as if* this world was a real world. The distinction between 'phenomena' and 'noumena' is meant for two types of individuals, i.e., the common man and the initiated; yet to say categorically about

mysticism that it takes the world around us as a mere illusion would be misleading in the Islāmic context. This is the reason why the distinction between Iqbāl's later and earlier thought becomes more or less verbal. NW never talks about plurality in the sense that this world is completely independent of Divine Consciousness. Though it is a colony of individuals, there is the same creative spirit which keeps every individual active. Again it is through this creative spirit that these individuals form themselves into a well-knit system gradually moving towards perfection. The only concepts that seem to be pulling apart in the two points of view are those which prescribe the means for an end towards which these individuals are striving. *Waḥdat al-wujūd* speaks about losing oneself totally or a complete annihilation of one's self, whereas Iqbāl talks of perfecting one's self. But if we look still closer we will find that this difference is only in the methodology and not in the end-stage of this process. The end-stage concept of Islāmic mysticism is that of a complete identification of the will of the individual with the Will of God. In one case this identification is achieved by self-annihilation, and in the other by developing a consciousness through free creative activity and by realizing that the creative activity of the self is the Divine activity. That is why Iqbāl makes a distinction between the prophetic consciousness and the mystic consciousness, considering the former to be far superior to the latter. The aim of the mystic consciousness is to keep the individual consciousness extinct when the union with God is achieved. On the other hand, the prophetic

consciousness stages a come-back to this world of 'reality' and asserts itself in making and ordering this universe.

Notwithstanding these differences in emphasis between Iqbāl and *wah dat al-wujūd*, those points which have a significance for human conduct are the same in both the philosophies. If we look at the points of dispute between them in the light of what we have said above in connection with the creative activity of Being, we would find that their much-publicised difference is a difference between two languages rather than between two sets of facts.

The third point referred to above is that of determinism or fatalism and freedom of will, Iqbāl is said to have adhered to the former in his earlier philosophy, which he gave up later. This problem arises as a direct implication of a pluralistic ontology and the concept of continuous creation. As a matter of fact, it was to safeguard the concept of freedom that Iqbāl had to have recourse to the Ash'arite philosophy of continuous creation. The concept of freedom, thus, is logically prior to the metaphysics of creation and Iqbāl's reaction against *wah dat al-wujūd* is wholly based on the consciousness of a free ego.²³⁷

In so far as the ethical implications of *wah dat al-wujūd* and Iqbāl's philosophy are concerned, the choice does not lie between fatalism and freedom, as has been wrongly supposed. Absolute freedom has the same moral consequences as fatalism.

²³⁷ See *Reconstruction*, pp. 106 ff.

Iqbāl wants to reject explanations of human action in terms of mechanical causality, on the one hand, and esoteric spiritual causality, on the other. He speaks of a 'free personal causality', which is 'the essential feature of a purposive act'. The causal chain wherein we try to find a place for the ego is itself an artificial construction of the ego for its own purposes. For Iqbāl the destiny of a thing is not an unrelenting fate working from without. It is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities, which lie within the depth of its nature. The same idea has been expressed by the metaphysics of *wah dat al-wujūd*, though in a different language. Since the world around us has a status of its own in reality, the moral principles *vis-a-vis* this world have the same status; neither is the logic of this sphere of reality applicable to another, nor *vice-versa*. The 'realizable possibilities' of which Iqbāl speaks are for *wah dat al-wujūd* manifestations arising out of the interplay of Divine attention and Divine essences.

Ibn al-'Arabī expresses the same by saying, "God bestows on a thing that which its essential nature demands"²³⁸, or, at another place, "Whatever has been definitely determined about us is in conformity with our nature; further, we ourselves are determining it according to our aptitude."²³⁹ "It is not possible for an '*ayn*' (Divine idea) to be manifested externally as far as

²³⁸ Quoted by M. Valiuddin [Walī al-Dīn], *The Qur'ānic Mysticism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarasi Dass, 1959), pp. 127 ff.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*

its essence or attribute or action is concerned, except in accordance with its aptitude".²⁴⁰ This is the open possibility, named as freedom by Iqbāl.

We have tried to expose the platitude underlying the assertion that Iqbāl's later philosophy is opposed to his former ideas. The platitude, when analysed, breaks down to a difference between two languages and not between two ontologies. The reason for this confusion is not far to seek. It consists, first, in mixing together the pragmatic expediencies of the moral life and the metaphysical necessities of a spiritual system with God as the unifying force. Had it been realized that moral necessities could be safeguarded without necessarily linking them to a spiritualistic metaphysics, much of the confusion could have been averted. The second reason for not seeing the identity between the so-called Persian mysticism and Iqbālian thought is that we have been misled by the structure of the two languages that these systems speak. Since the facts these languages are referring to when they present a metaphysics are not verifiable in the same way in which common everyday language statements are verified, delineation of the meaning of the two is a difficult task and cannot be achieved unless a bigger perspective of the Islāmic religion is kept in view, about which Iqbāl is concerned in both his former and his later philosophy.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

