

IBN TUFAYL ON IBN SINA AND AL-GHAZZALI'S VIEWS

(AN EVALUATION OF SOME ASPECTS OF
IBN TUFAYL'S THOUGHT)

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In my previous studies of Ibn Tufayl's *Philosopher Autodidactus* (Hayy Bin Yaqzan),¹⁰⁷ I have shown by argument and by evidence garnered from this work why it must be considered a systematic treatise devoted to serious poignant philosophical discourse. Such a characterization is more appropriate to the work and justifies a philosophical analysis of its themes.¹⁰⁸ Apart from G.F. Hourani's excellent article showing that the main theme of Hayy Bin Yaqzan is philosophical,¹⁰⁹ previous writers have either ascribed the work to Avicenna or considered it a passive reproduction of Avicenna's philosophy.¹¹⁰ For instance, Leon Gauthier, one of the most influential writers on Ibn Tufayl does not consider the work original, and in fact contends that the substance of the views expressed by Ibn Tufayl are Avicennian commonplaces.¹¹¹ In my opinion, it is this popular but mistaken view of Gauthier's which precluded previous writers on the subject from either interpreting or assessing Ibn Tufayl's views philosophically. Such writers have dubbed the entire work a 'philosophical romance',¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*, ed. trans. into French by Leon Gauthier (Beirut, 1936). Henceforth all references to the Arabic text will be to this edition of Gauthier by the term *Hayy*. Dr. Michael E. Marmura's comments on an earlier draft of this paper were helpful to me. However, it is not suggested that he would agree with the views expressed in the article.

¹⁰⁸ For a justification of this contention see S.S. Hawi, "Ibn Tufayl: His Motives for the Use of Narrative Form and His Method of Concealment in *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*", *The Muslim World* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1974), vol. L, xiv, pp. 322-23.

¹⁰⁹ George F. Hourani, "The Principal Subject of Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*," *The Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (Chicago, 1956), vol. xv, No. 1.

¹¹⁰ Gauthier, op. cit., pp. v-vi. Also Leon Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail sa vie ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1909), p. 69; Ibn Khaldun, *Prolegomenes*, trans. M. de Slane (1868), vol. II, p. 385; Youhanna Qumayr, *Ibn Tufayl* (Beirut, 1956), p. 59.

¹¹¹ Gauthier, op. cit.

undermining its formal and methodical approach, the seriousness of its contents and philosophical sincerity.

In this paper I shall: a) evaluate Gauthier's position and demonstrate that in the treatise Ibn Tufayl is not unfolding the Avicennian scheme of things. and that in Hayy Bin Yaqzan our author is presenting his own independent views, b) explain the author's assessment of Avicenna's thought in relation to Aristotle, c) show that the tremendous influence on Ibn Tufayl is not so much from Avicenna as it is from al-Ghazzali's writings on the specific issues of mystical elevation and the relationship of God, man and the universe, d) show that most of Ibn Tufayl's criticisms of al-Ghazzali's thought are untenable. Furthermore, I shall intentionally not deal with al-Farabi and Ibn Bajja, two thinkers discussed by Ibn Tufayl in his Introduction, since their influence is not as immense as al-Ghazzali's and since I have dealt with them elsewhere.¹¹³

Preliminary Remarks:

In preparing for the presentation of his views, Ibn Tufayl writes an Introduction to his work which includes a rigorous criticism of the philosophies of his predecessors. This Introduction imbues the treatise with philosophical seriousness and systematic value, and reveals the author's metaphysical presuppositions and basic motives for writing Hayy Bin Yaqzan. He also draws a fundamental distinction between naturalistic knowledge¹¹⁴ and mystical gnosis, two methods of cognition that are not, in his opinion, mutually exclusive, and the rigorous training in the first necessarily leads to the attainment of the latter.¹¹⁵ Such a distinction determines the entire philosophic plan of the treatise which commences with Hayy's early scientific and conceptual development and culminates in his inevitable union with the Necessary Being. Had Ibn Tufayl not written this Introduction, a great amount of scholarly work and historical investigation would have been required to trace the historical and intellectual threads with which Hayy Bin Yaqzan was uniquely woven.

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In strict sense, the Introduction must be considered a compact and critical study of the highlights of the history of Islamic philosophy preceding Ibn Tufayl. He seems to have undertaken this study in order to provide a springboard and an apology for his whole work. By pointing out certain serious deficiencies in the thought of the previous philosophers, he provided a justification for expressing his own views on the same issues.

In fact, he mentions explicitly in the Introduction the kind of philosophical doctrine he advocates and the failure of his predecessors to elaborate such doctrine.¹¹⁶

Thus, it seems that a thorough discussion and evaluation of the ideas presented in the Introduction is an indispensable step for attaining a clearer understanding of the essential themes of his whole work. The omission or the partial reproduction of the Introduction by some writers led to an inadequate comprehension of his thought, from the point of view both of historical sources of this thought and of his basic philosophical intentions. For instance, in the Introduction he states that in his work he used the names of characters from tales by Avicenna,¹¹⁷ and that he intends to express the secrets of “illuminative philosophy”¹¹⁸ mentioned by Avicenna.¹¹⁹

These and similar statements led some writers to believe that Ibn Tufayl’s treatise was no more than an elucidation and elaborate exposition of Avicenna’s scheme of things with minor additions from the thought of his time. In fact, the treatise was more than once mistakenly attributed to Avicenna,¹²⁰ thus undermining the creative mind of the Andalusian philosopher.

Before advancing his own views concerning the perennial issues of philosophy, he, examines, with the detached and objective spirit characteristic of great philosophic minds, the validity and tenability of earlier philosophers’ views. He first mentions his objective, and the sort of

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philosophical truth he is after, and then attempts to find in their views facts' relevant and instrumental to his aims.

His method here is critical and systematic, like that of the Greek master; Aristotle, before presenting his ideas on specific problems, turned to the thought of his predecessors, adopting what he deemed valid and rejecting what he considered false. In the same way Ibn Tufayl examines critically the writings of his predecessors and uncompromisingly condemns them for what seems to him erroneous and compliments them for their .valid insights.¹²¹ In so doing, Ibn Tufayl is declaring two things: that he benefited from the results of their speculation on the one hand, and that he found them insufficient for his own purposes on the other.

In order to better understand his criticisms and evaluations, one should bear in mind that in so far as these philosophers approached the truth he is unfolding in his treatise, he judged them successful; and in so far as they veered from this truth he considered them incorrect. But what is this truth? Ibn Tufayl clearly says in his Introduction that this truth is Naturalistic-Mysticism.¹²² Naturalism leads to the knowledge and comprehension of God's attributes. Mysticism, which begins where naturalism ends, intensifies this knowledge and helps the enlightened few discover that there is a deeper truth to things: that of pantheism and the sameness and oneness of all Being. This truth Ibn Tufayl does not set forth in a dogmatic manner, but vindicates it by a series of observations, deductions and the continuous presentation of evidence.

Apart from al-Ghazzali, the philosophers, he considers, attained a certain amount of the truth through their naturalistic method, which is that of the experimental and theoretical sciences. The truth they reached is not only insufficient but also remote from the immediate intimacy of the mystical experience.¹²³ Had they pushed the conclusions of their naturalistic method to their logical consequences, and had they then transcended these consequences to the realm of intuitive apprehension and the vision of the Divine, they would have obtained truth the way Ibn Tufayl conceived it.

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In brief, the general criticism that Ibn Tufayl levels against al-Farabi, Avicenna, al-Ghazzali, Ibn Bajja and Aristotle is that their thought falls short of conquering the highest peaks, of penetrating the unfathomed depths of what is, and of achieving what Hayy, in his solitary search, had experienced, acquired and seen.

The Question of the originality of Hayy Bin Yaqzan - An Evaluation of Gauthier's Position Ibn Tufayl's ideas, like the ideas of most thinkers, are historically conditioned by the cultural and philosophic categories of his age; but if these ideas distinctly show elements of the thought of this predecessors, it does not necessarily follow that he is not philosophically creative. The fact that he adopts, mentions and quotes sympathetically from the works of other Muslim philosophers does not properly permit one to construe such a work as Hayy Bin Yaqzan merely as amplification, elucidation and elaborate exposition of the enough of his time.

For instance, Leon Gauthier does not seem to consider Ibn Tufayl's works original. This may explain why, despite his outstanding scholarship, he did not carry out a serious philosophical analysis of Hayy Bin Yaqzan: "Ibn Thofail n'a Jamais vise une veritable originalite philosophique."¹²⁴ Gauthier supports his point by noting that Ibn Tufayl indicates at the end of his Introduction that he borrowed his doctrines from al-Ghazzali, Avicenna, and his contemporaries: "...Qu'il emprunte le fond de ses a El-

One who reads the Introduction finds that of all the philosophers Ibn Tufayl admired Avicenna themost. Yet, he did not regard Avicenna as one who had reached the truth Hayy had reached, nor was he a pantheistic mystic like Hayy. To be sure, Avicenna in his *Isharat* gave a good description of the psychological state (hal) of the mystic.¹²⁵ But he himself belonged to the category of the people of theoretical knowledge (ahl al-nazar), and not to those of immediate knowledge (dhawq). Avicenna, according to Ibn Tufayl, in his reference to and description of mystical states, was not an 'Arif¹²⁶ (One who experienced intimacy). His superior intellect permitted him to depict and discuss mystical gnosis as an "imitator," not as one who

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experienced it or belonged to the order. These points are strengthened by what one can infer from the whole treatise. Hayy, after achieving union with God, found it incumbent upon himself to chart a programme of life whose basis was asceticism, and to attend to the purity of his soul. Avicenna did not manifest these qualities in his way of life, nor was his behaviour governed by the rituals characteristic of Hayy and other mystics. The difference between the two is like the difference between dynamic existential involvement and conceptual apprehension. These remarks are implicit in the treatise.¹²⁷

Ibn Tufayl's sympathetic expressions, and his employment of a few statements and terminology from Avicenna in the Introduction, led many writers to conclude wrongly that all he was attempting in his treatise was an exposition and elucidation of Avicenna's philosophy in a dramatic medium. The following are his statements:

You have asked me my noble brother...to present to you as much as I can of the secrets of Illuminative philosophy that were mentioned by the Sheikh Master Avicenna. Know then that if one wants the truth without ambiguity he must seek it and strive for its attainment.²⁷

I shall describe to you the story of Hayy Bin Yaqzan, Absal and Salaman named thus by Avicenna.²⁸

Before dismissing the notion that the treatise is an exposition of Avicenna's philosophy one must note the following:

a) Apart from the passage which he quotes from the *Isharat*; 29 Ibn Tufayl nowhere reproduces, relates or interprets Avicenna. My examination of the *Isharat* and *al-Shifa*, (Healing), shows that he drew on some of the sheikh's ideas, but not enough to justify the claim that what he advances in the treatise are Avicenna's ideas on illuminative philosophy or on mysticism as such. In fact, the themes imbedded in the major part of the treatise 30 do not betray Avicenna's influence so much as al-Junayd's, al-Bistami's, al-Hallaj's, Ibn Bajja's and especially al-Ghazzali's. However, in other parts of the treatise certain ideas can be traced to Avicenna, but they can also be traced to al-Farabi and even to Aristotle and Plotinus; particularly Ibn

Tufayl's proofs of the existence of God, His attributes, the eternity of the world, and the divisions of the human soul.³¹

b) In the first quotation Ibn Tufayl in promising to provide the reader

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with the secrets of illuminative philosophy that Avicenna mentioned. Form the phrase "that Avicenna mentioned" we cannot and should not infer that he intoned to give an exposition of Avicenna's thought, or to present exactly what Avicenna said on specific issues. Here Ibn Tufayl seems to be referring to a philosophic tendency shared by him, Avicenna, al-Farabi, and Suhrawardi. Had he used the term (kama), "just as," instead of al-lati, then it would have been just to infer that he is presenting and explaining Avicenna's thought. For the sentence would then read: "You have asked me to present to you.... illuminative philosophy "just as" mentioned by Avicenna." Ibn Tufayl, in my opinion, did not use "just as" in order to have freedom and room for his own ideas. He believed in "illuminative philosophy" as he understood it and not as others did;³² that is why he urges the reader to follow the truth of such a philosophy.

c) Since Ibn Tufayl evaluated the thought of the philosophers in order to find the truth for himself, one would expect him to say that Avicenna was a mystic had he found him to be so. He does say this about al-Ghazzali, but expresses nothing to this effect about Avicenna; In addition, he seems to have been influenced by al-Ghazzali more than by Avicenna on the specific issue of mystical elevation and the relationship of God to man and the universe ³³

d) What Ibn Tufayl insists upon is that Avicenna drew our attention (nabbaha)³⁴ to the quality, stages and degrees of mystical experience in theory, but not in practice; for the most intimate part of this experience is achieved by thought put to training and action. Here also Ibn Tufayl displays Ghazzalian traits. The naturalistic elements of Avicenna's philosophy are necessary to the achievement of gnostic heights, a phase that is neither the culmination nor the perfection of the long and laborious process of the quest for truth. Avicenna's works do not satisfy this quest.³⁵

e) Ibn Tufayl says that he studied critically the works of Avicenna and others and compared the results of their labours, and that he was then able to extract the truth for himself and to form his own opinions on philosophic problems.³⁶

f) Concerning the second quotation, a careful examination of Avicenna's tales by the present writer revealed that at the most Ibn Tufayl seems to have adopted the names of his characters from Avicenna.³⁷ The stories of Avicenna bear no resemblance to Ibn Tufayl's works and any attempt to find a further similarity between the two authors is an overplay of scholarship.

In possession of these points a), b), c), e), and f), we can dismiss once and for all the hoary misunderstanding of Ibn Tufayl's subjection to the arresting shadow of Avicenna. Ibn Tufayl, in the Introduction, is not therefore telling us that in his treatise he is merely reporting or interpreting the Avicennian scheme of things.

Concerning Aristotle's works Ibn Tufayl says that Avicenna "undertook an exposition of their contents in accordance with Aristotle's

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doctrines, and followed Aristotle's philosophical approach in his al-Shifa'." ³⁸ However, although the Sheikh claimed to have written this book in the manner of the Peripatetics, one discovers that he did not exactly do so, but added facts and information that are not found in the Aristotelian corpus and cannot be traced to Aristotle's thought. Regarding this charge Ibn Tufayl is correct. For in the al-Shifa', apart from his Aristotelian analysis and synthesis, Avicenna displays abundant Neo-platonic elements, Farabian ideas, and others of his own creation. For instance, he differentiates between three grades of prophecy. Prophecy relative to the imagination, prophecy relative to motive faculties, and the Holy Intellect.

' To each aspect of prophecy Avicenna devotes a chapter in al-Shifa'.³⁹ Such topics, it goes without saying, are not and could not have been discussed by Aristotle. In order to make such a valid assessment of the al-Shifa', Ibn Tufayl must have read Aristotle.

According to Ibn Tufayl, Avicenna declared at the beginning that the truth for him was something quite different from what he embodied in the *al-Shifa*. The indisputable truth as he conceived it, is to be found in his other book, *Oriental Philosophy*. Further more, if one takes everything written by Aristotle along with the outward meaning of the *al-Shifa*, grasping its subtle inner meaning, one cannot achieve perfection.⁴⁰ This does not mean that one will achieve truth once he comprehends the hidden meanings of Aristotle's works and Avicenna's *al-Shifa*. Comprehension, Ibn Tufayl says, may guide the reader to perfection only in theoretical knowledge. This is substantiated by Ibn Tufayl's own words: "Do not suppose the philosophy which has reached us in the books of Aristotle... and in Avicenna's *Healing* is sufficient for the goal you wanted, or that any Andalusian has written anything adequate on this subject."⁴¹

It is clear, therefore, that Aristotle and Avicenna's *al-Shifa* do not supply the truth Ibn Tufayl wanted to advance in the treatise. But what is not perfectly clear is whether the ideas in other books by Avicenna such as *Oriental Philosophy* along with *al-Shifa*, include the truth he was after: Most probably they did not, or he would have said so. Since Avicenna's *Oriental Philosophy* cannot be consulted — for it is lost or not yet discovered — one cannot present a final view on this matter. In any case, Ibn Tufayl does not seem to have read the *Oriental Philosophy*, for if he had he would have referred to its contents, or at least would have mentioned that the truth as he viewed it was expressed in this book or in others by Avicenna. What strengthens this point is that he had to study not only Avicenna, as he says, but also al-Ghazzali's works and other contemporary writings⁴² in order to formulate his own conception of truth. One cannot conceive why he would have said this had he found Avicenna's *Oriental Philosophy* satisfactory. In fact, as I have said before, in the treatise where events converge towards Hayy's attainment of his goal,⁴³ Ibn Tufayl betrays a strong Ghazzalian influence as well as mystical influences of the extreme type. Thus we should now turn to Ibn Tufayl's criticism of al-Ghazzali.

Al-Ghazzali's Errors

It is not as a champion of religious revival, but as a master of immediate experience and spiritual vision and as a mystic who lifted himself to the sublime that al-Ghazzali merits Ibn Tufayl's interest and esteem. The

emphasis on this point is significant since the effects of al-Ghazzali's influence on Ibn Tufayl's mind are disseminated throughout the treatise.⁴⁴ But far from being satisfied with his writing, Ibn Tufayl levels three main charges against him:

1. Al-Ghazzali often contradicts himself and frequently denies in one passage or book what he affirms in another ⁴⁵

2. He advocated a multiplicity (ta 'addud) of methods of teaching and expression. Thus, instead of enhancing the truth, he generated doubt and confusion ⁴⁶

3. His teachings are very difficult to understand: most of them are hints and symbols (isharat wa-rumuz; sing. ishara wa-ramz)⁷

I will consider each point separately: on the first charge, Ibn Tufayl enumerates some of al-Ghazzali's books and tries to show the different opinions he held in them on one and the same issue. Al-Ghazzali at one point stamped philosophers as infidels for their denial of the resurrection of bodies, and later he adopted their views. Here is what Ibn Tufayl says:

Regarding the books of Sheikh Abi Hamid al-Ghazzali, because he preached to the masses, they bind in one place and loose in another. He deems a thing irreligious, then he says it is permissible. One ground on which he charges the philosophers with unbelief in *The Incoherence [of the Philosophers]* [*Kitab al-Tahafut*] is their denial of the resurrection of bodies and their assertion that only souls are rewarded and punished. But in the beginning of his book *Scale [of Action]* [*Mizan al-'Amal*] he definitely attributes this belief to the Sufi masters, while in *The Rescuer from Error and Revelation of Ecstasy* [*al-Munqidh Mina al-dalal*] he says that his own belief is like that of the Sufi's although he came to it only after long searching. Much of this sort [of inconsistency] will be found in his books by anyone who examines them meticulously." ⁴⁸

In the second charge he advances the following comments: "He [al-Ghazzali] offers some apology for this practice at the end of the *Scale of Action* in his tripartite division of opinions into those held by him in common with the masses and what they believe, those opinions expressed to

all persons who ask questions and enquire in order to be enlightened, and those a man keeps to himself and divulges only to people who share his beliefs. Finally he writes: 'If my words have done no more than to shake you in the faith of your fathers that would have been reason enough to write them. For he who does not doubt does not inquire and he

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who does not inquire does not see and will remain in blindness and confusion' 49

Concerning the third charge the following is presented:

Such then is the quality of his teachings; most of them were expressed in the form of symbols and allusions, of value only to those who hear them after they have found the truth by their own insight or to someone innately gifted and primed to understand. Such men need only the subtlest hints. He said.... that he had written certain esoteric books which contained the unvarnished truth. So far as we know no such books have reached Spain, although some claim that certain books we have received are in fact this hidden corpus. Nothing could be further from the truth. The books in question are Rational Knowledge [al Ma'arif al-'Aqliyyah], The Breath of Adjustment [al-Nafkh wa-l-Taswiyat], and Collection of Treatises [Masai/ majmu'at] and others. Granted that these books contain many hints, they still add little to what is disclosed in his better known works...some of our contemporaries basing themselves on his statements at the end of The Niche [for Light] [Mishkat al-Anwar/ imagined that they had fallen into a grave error and an inescapable pit; he goes on to speak of those who achieved communion with the Divine; that they know this Being as characterised by an attribute, which would tend to negate His utter unity. This successor wished to impart that al-Ghazzali believed [God]... has some plurality in His self... we have no doubt that our master al-Ghazzali was one of those persons who reached the highest degree of happiness.'50

Untenability of Ibn Tufayl's Criticisms of Al-Ghazzali

The first passage is clear and does not require interpretation. It demands, instead, an evaluation of the veracity of Ibn Tufayl's statements

about al-Ghazzali's own opinions. Without examination this passage seems to deal a stunning blow to the very method and basic issues that al-Ghazzali believed. Had all the facts quoted been true, one might say Ibn Tufayl admired al-Ghazzali but estimated truth more. Unquestionably Ibn Tufayl's primary aim was truth, but his remarks were mistaken and his comparative analysis erroneous. In order to justify this judgment, one must examine al-Ghazzali's views by consulting his works.

From the *Tahafah*, the *Mizan* and the *Munqidh*, one cannot infer the inconsistencies mentioned by Ibn Tufayl. In the *Tahafah*, as well as in the *Munqidh*, al-Ghazzali is consistent in his attacks on the philosophers. In the former, he presents a detailed and well-argued polemic to refute their beliefs; in the latter he presents the same disagreement on the same issues but does not in the least change his stand. In both books al-Ghazzali contends that all philosophers preceding him, including Aristotle, committed in their doctrines twenty mistakes regarding twenty issues. He pronounces them innovators on seventeen of these and dubs them infidels

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on the remaining three. These three issues are their belief in the eternity of the world, God's knowledge of universals, and denial of the resurrection of the body.⁵¹

In both books he rejects their claims, especially those of al-Farabi and Avicenna, that only the soul can survive death and that the body is doomed to absolute disintegration. the *Munqidh* was composed after the *Tahafah*; an examination of the former does not show that he altered his views on the subject:

They say that for bodies there is no resurrection; it is pure spirits that are rewarded or punished; and the rewards and punishments are spiritual, not bodily. They are correct in affirming the spiritual ones, because these do also exist; but they speak falsely in denying the bodily ones and in their statements disbelieve the Divine Law.”⁵²

It is clear, therefore, that al-Ghazzali, contrary to what Ibn Tufayl says, does not hold in the *Munqidh* the view of the Sufi masters or that of the philosophers concerning resurrection of the body.

Ibn Tufayl's criticisms are based on wrong inferences. Extracting statements from their context, as Ibn Tufayl does, may give the impression of a contradiction. In the *Scale of Action*, al-Ghazzali definitely points out that the Sufis shared the philosophers' view of denying the resurrection of the body.⁵³ But what Ibn Tufayl overlooks is al-Ghazzali's disputation of their position on this very matter as well as on others. He never accepted a belief without scrutiny, and his commendation of the Sufis for their spiritual attainments, and his statement in the *Munqidh* that he finally adopted Sufism after a long and arduous search,⁵⁴ do not permit one to infer that he agreed with all their beliefs. He, too, was critical of the Sufis' and rejected as incorrect and imaginary some of their essential doctrines. For clearly, if it can be said that Hume was an empiricist one cannot properly infer from this that he agreed with all that John Locke believed. Likewise, in saying he discovered that the way of the mystics led toward his goal does not mean that al-Ghazzali was completely endorsing their views. In fact, he repudiated their belief in incarnationism, (hulul), unificationism' (ittihad) and 'the Arrivel' (wusul) 55

By purifying it from such extreme views as these, al-Ghazzali rendered mysticism in harmony with the precepts of Islamic Law. This shows that his was a moderate mysticism that did not imply denial of the resurrection of bodies and did not go as far as al-Hallaj in claiming absolute unity with, and consumption in, God. Ibn Tufayl's charge should be dismissed as irrelevant and wrong.

The second quotation is a continuation of Ibn Tufayl's displeasure with al-Ghazzali's method of composition and communication. The three divisions of opinion mentioned are supposed to account for the contradictions abounding in al-Ghazzali's works. To be sure, one may find contradictions and inconsistencies, but not on the particular issues Ibn Tufayl refers to. Al-Ghazzali does mention in the *Scale of Action* the triple

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division that our author has rightly observed.⁵⁶ But this is not surprising. It should be expected from a thinker like al-Ghazzali, who in his distressing search for truth has come to realise that people's Minds vary by nature (*fitra*) in terms of intellectual power. Such an understanding lends suppleness and piquant interest to his writings, and need not evoke confusion and doubt in his readers.

Ibn Tufayl is perhaps correctly hinting at the logical outcome of such a division. In sharing some of his opinions with the masses, others with his 'students or enquirers after knowledge, and others with people who have /the same beliefs as he, al-Ghazzali is apt to contradict himself and to assert something in one place and deny it in another.

This may be granted, but at the same time such a procedure seems incumbent upon those who are unfolding their ideas with the view to educating others. One has to provide each seeker with the right amount of truth in a form he can handle at his level. This brings forth the notion of multiplicity and levels of truth which most thinkers have had to reckon with, beginning with Plato, Aristotle, al-Farabi, and coming to such moderns as Kierkegaard, Sartre, and Piaget. For instance, Kierkegaard wrote different books under different pseudonyms, with different methods, in order to teach and stimulate different readers. In fact Ibn Tufayl, by exercising his method of concealment in his treatise, shows he was equally aware of this fact. He even employs the same phrases and terminology and ideas at the very end of his work that al-Ghazzali used in the *Mishkat*.⁵⁷ And although Ibn Tufayl was aware of the drawbacks of the method of division of opinion, he later seems to have admitted its importance in the educative process by implicitly agreeing with al-Ghazzali that perplexity and doubt are necessary and greatly favoured as basic springboards for learning.⁵⁸

This brings us to the problem of al-Ghazzali's esoteric writings to which Ibn Tufayl refers in his third charge against his predecessor.

On this point one will at once notice that Ibn Tufayl's verdict is negative: Al-Ghazzali's works are not explicit enough to assist one out of his ignorance. From an educational point of view they are of a very little value and indeed seem to defeat their purpose. By obscuring his ideas with hints and symbols, al-Ghazzali barred honest beginners and seekers of truth from

finding them. Al-Ghazzali, Ibn Tufayl would say, might as well not have written these books, since only those who already have attained the highest degree of felicity can understand them. Ibn Tufayl is perhaps implying that the dramatic method he employed in his treatise is far more efficacious than al-Ghazzali's.

Be that as it may, he did not seem to believe that in any book he had read, al-Ghazzali had an esoteric doctrine withheld (*madnun Bihi*). If this doctrine was ever committed to writing, the books in which it was expressed had never reached Andalusia. According to Ibn Tufayl, al-Ghazzali had openly mentioned in the *Jawahir* 59 that he had written

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esoteric books containing his direct and frank opinion as to truth.⁶⁰ Certain persons considered some of the books Ibn Tufayl had read to be the ones, al-Ghazzali referred to, but Ibn Tufayl rightly rejected this opinion for the reasons mentioned in the foregoing passage. Yet upon examining the *Jawahir*, one finds that Ibn Tufayl was not careful enough in reading this book, and failed to observe al-Ghazzali's open statement that he entrusted all his esoteric teaching to one book and not many.

Regarding this one book al-Ghazzali says: "It is sinful for whoever has fallen upon it to disclose its secrets."⁶¹ Whether or not he had read all of al-Ghazzali's works, Ibn Tufayl's remark concerning the difficulty of deciding which of the doctrines al-Ghazzali set forth he actually believed, remains true. This difficulty is similar to that with Kierkegaard. Al-Ghazzali concealed his real teachings by means of symbols and allusions and by denying that he was presenting the truth as he really conceived it; whereas Kierkegaard published his books under pseudonyms and denied that any of them were genuinely his. It is hard to reach definite conclusions regarding the innermost thoughts of either of these authors.

One cannot formulate an exact idea of how many of his innermost beliefs al-Ghazzali did commit to writing. In this respect one cannot but agree with Ibn Tufayl, Al-Ghazzali's method of "economising" (*iqtisad*) truth does seem relatively suspicious to the modern mind. In the *Mishkat* as well as in the *al-Iqtisad* he frequently cuts off his exposition of a particular problem

and somewhat indirectly suggests to the reader that he could express so much more than he has done 62

In the last part of the third passage Ibn Tufayl simultaneously criticises and defends al-Ghazzali. One of the implications of this passage is that al-Ghazzali's

“economised” expression of truth renders his writings susceptible to grave misinterpretation. That this did take place, Ibn Tufayl is certain. Had al-Ghazzali expressed his opinion in the *Mishkat* more clearly on this particular issue, namely the unity of God's nature, later critics would not have inferred the plurality of God's nature from this passage.

In this Ibn Tufayl is correct and -my examination of al-Ghazzali's statement in the *Mishkat* corroborates it. But Ibn Tufayl did not quote the complete passage; he restricted himself to the first part. Here is the whole passage: “God is characterised by an attribute which negates His utter unity and ultimate perfection; this is due to secret reasons that this book cannot bear to divulge.” 63

It is clear that Ibn Tufayl's remark would have been more strongly founded had he provided us with the entire sentence. The reader is definitely driven to speculate about the “secret reasons” on whose ground God acquires a plurality of attributes, and thus is tempted to infer a series of false propositions about God. On the other hand, Ibn Tufayl rejects the dubious interpretations by some “later writers” of this passage. He emphatically believed that neither in this passage nor elsewhere did al-

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Ghazzali ever pen such a scandalous and horrid opinion. Al-Ghazzali he says, did not intend his works to lead to, nor did he believe in, the multiplicity of the Godhead.

It is worth noting that Ibn Tufayl himself adopts al-Ghazzali's method of economising on more than one issue. The very last passage of the treatise along with others 64 suggests that, like al-Ghazzali, he knew more than he was willing to disclose. Furthermore, he seems to borrow freely from al-Ghazzali's elucidations of mysticism without any acknowledgment. For

instance, in the Introduction,, when discussing the values of mystical experience, he repeats without modification the same sayings of the Sufi masters that al-Ghazzali cites, in describing psychic states of the mystic gnostics (al-'Arifun), in the Mishkat. In such states the Sufis said: "praise be to me, great I am,"⁶⁵ "there is nothing within this robe but God," and "I am the Truth;"⁶⁶ "these and similar utterances are included in both the Mishkat and Hayy Bin Yaqzan.⁶⁷ The benefit Ibn Tufayl derived from al-Ghazzali does not end at this point. His delineation of Hayy's beatific vision and the complete dissolution of the self in God are unquestionably drawn from the Mishkat. In Hayy Bin Yaqzan this vision is explicated with almost the same terminology as in the Mishkat, and corroborated by the same Qur'anic verses. The mystic-gnostic, in the moment of fana, as described by al-Ghazzali loses all consciousness save that of the Al-Mighty telling him, "Whose is the Kingdom on this day? God's alone, One and Triumphant."⁶⁸ Similarly, in this state, Ibn Tufayl tells us that Hayy's consciousness, mind and memory all scattered and disappeared but the One, the true Being who uttered the words: "Whose is the kingdom on this Day? God's alone, One and Triumphant."⁶⁹

This resemblance is not a matter of association but of deliberate utilisation of al-Ghazzali's views by Ibn Tufayl to suit his own purpose. The examination of the Mishkat reveals more than one resemblance between the ideas and explorations of Hayy and those of al-Ghazzali. Any shadow of doubt concerning this causal resemblance is dispelled by Ibn Tufayl's own statement that he studied and made use of al-Ghazzali's thought.^o

Thus, it is clear that despite his criticisms Ibn Tufayl incorporated vital aspects of al-Ghazzali's thought. Also the beliefs that al-Ghazzali hints at and warns against in the Mishkat, such as unification with God and pantheism, Ibn Tufayl later adopts and infuses into his system.

Although these cannot be genuinely called influences, the important thing is that Ibn Tufayl found them in al-Ghazzali's Mishkat and made use of them. All the preceding Ghazzalian influences on his thought impel the careful examiner to free Ibn Tufayl, at least partially, from the encompassing shadow of Avicenna for which, as we have seen, he was partly responsible.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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6. Ibid. See Ahmad Foad El-Ehwani, *Islamic Philosophy* (Cairo; 1957), pp. 121-23; Angel Gonzalez Palencia, *El-Filasafo Autodidacto* (Madrid, 1948); Simon Ochley, *The History of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* (New York, 1969); E. de Lacy O'Leary, *Arabic Thought and Its Place in History*, (London, 1963).

7. See S. Hawi, *Islamic Naturalism and Mysticism* (Leiden, 1973), pp. 51-74.

8. I mean science-oriented.

9. Hayy, pp. 4-20.

10: Hayy, pp. 4-11, 12-20. -

:1. Ibid., p. 20..

12. Ibn Tufayl uses the phrase *al-hikmat al-mashriqiyya*, which literally means the "wisdom of the East" and not *mushriqiyya*, "illuminative," as Gauthier held. There is a dispute among such scholars as Gauthier, Corbin and Nallino concerning this point. Some hold that *al-hikmat al-mashriqiyya* means oriental wisdom, which is different from *hikmat al-ishraq*, "illuminative philosophy." In my opinion, this dispute is unwarranted because in the final analysis both phrases refer to the same thing, namely, illuminative philosophy. This doctrine was introduced to Islamic thought by al-Farabi and later adopted by Avicenna and Suhrawardi. Some scholars confine it to Suhrawardi who elaborated it and came to be known as one of its chief exponents. See S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Saga*

S. S. HAWI: *Ibn Tufayl on Ibn Sina and al-Ghazzali* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1964), pp. 54-74.

13. Hayy, p. 4.

14. See Gauthier, *op. cit.*, pp. v-vi; also Leon Gauthier, *Ibn Thofail sa vie ses oeuvres* (Paris, 1909), p. 69; Ibn Khaldun, *Prolegomenes*, tras. M. de Slane (1868), vol. II, p.385, Youhanna Qumayr, *Ibn Tufayl* (Beirut, 1956), p. 59.

15. Hayy, pp. 3-20.

16. I mean that Ibn Tufayl's mysticism is science-based.

17. Hayy, pp. 55-588, 89-90, 120, 122, 129.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 5-8.

19. Gauthier, Leon. *Hayy Bin Yaqzan*, *op. cit.*, p. v. A more positive appreciation philosophical analysis may be found in L.E. Goodnam's English translation and notes of *Hay ibn Yaqzan*. (ed.)

20. *Ibid.*, p. vi.

21. *Ibid.*, p.18.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 12-20.

24. Hayy, pp. 6-7.

25. One can infer from the Introduction that Ibn Tufayl did not consider Avicenna as a mystic, but rather, as one who studied and analysed the teachings of the mystics. Also Ibn Tufayl mentions that al-Ghazzali attained the heights of mystical gnosis, and that' Ibn Bajja achieved intellectual contact but does not express any such ideas about Avicenna. Had Ibn Tufayl found Avicenna a mystic there is no reason for him not to tell us so. Avicenna seems to have commanded Ibn Tufayl's respect for his

contributions in the empirical and theoretical sciences including philosophy. See Louix Cardet, *La pensee religious d'Avicenne* (Paris, 1951).

26. Hayy, pp. 6-9, 90-135.

27. Hayy, pp. 3-4.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

29. See Hayy, pp. 6-7 and Sina, *al-Isharat wa-l-tanbihat*, (*Allusions and Intimations*), with Tusi's commentary, ed., S. Dunya, vol. 3-4 (Cairo, 1958) pp. 828-30.

30. Hayy, pp. 90-135.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 31-32, 51-52, 66-69, 72-90.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

33. My subsequent discussion of Ibn Tufayl's evaluation of al-Ghazzali's work justifies the above statement.

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34. Hayy, p. 6.

35. *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

37. For Avicenna's story of Salaman and Absal see *Isharat* pp. 796-97. See also Avicenna's "Hayy Bin Yaqzan" in *Hayy Bin Yaqzan li Ibn Sina, Ibn Tufayl wa-l-Suhrawardi*, ed. Ahmad Amin (Cairo, 1952), pp. 43-54.

38. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

39. Avicenna, *Al-Shifa' (De Anima)*, ed., F. Rahman (London, 1959), pp. 194-201, 239-50. See also *Al-Shifa' (Metaphysics)* vol. II, ed. S. Dunya, M. Musa, S. Zayid (Cairo, 1960), pp. 435-46.

40. Hayy, p. 15.

41. Ibid., pp. 11-12.

42. Ibid., p. 18.

43. Ibid., pp. 90-135.

44. Ibid., pp. 3-135.

45. Ibid., p. 15.

46. Ibid., p. 16.

47. Ibid., pp. 16-17..

48. Ibid., pp. 15-16.

49. Ibid., p. 16.

50. Ibid., pp. 16-18.

51. Cf., al-Ghazzali: *Al-Munqidh min-al-dalal* ('The Rescuer from Error), ed. A. Mahmoud (Cairo, 1967), pp. 101-104. See also, al-Ghazzali, *Tahafah al-Falasifa* (Incoherence of the Philosophers), ed. M. Buaij (Beirut, 1962), pp. 46-47, 48-81, 164-74, 235-54 and *Mishkat al-Anwar* (The Niche of Lights), ed. A. Afifi (Cairo, 1964), p. 57. W. Montgomery the claims

works in al-Ghazzali's

authentic spurious. However, I believe that 52. *Al-Munqidh*, pp. 101-104.

53. Al-Ghazzali, *Mizan al-'Amal* (Scale of Action), ed. S. Dunya (Cairo, 1964), pp. 184-85.

54. *Al-Munqidh*, op. cit., pp. 122-29.

55. Ibid., p. 129.

56. *Mizan al-'Amal*, op. cit., pp. 406-09. In these pages the author holds the triple division of beliefs that Ibn .Tufayl mentions and this seems to be in harmony with his views in the *Munqidh*.

57. Hayy, p.:156, and Mishkat, p. 93.

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58. Hayy, pp. 132-55.

59. The full title of this book is: Jawahir al-Qur'an (Gems of the Qur'an) Cairo, 1910.

60. Hayy, p. 17.

61. Jawahir, op. cit., p. 30. Al-Ghazzali says that in his esoteric book he discusses Acts of God, His Attributes, His Essence, and the afterlife. Ibid., p. 30. Al- Ghazzali is probably referring to his book: al-Madnun bihi 'ala Ghairi ahlihi, in which he discusses these subjects. This book apparently did not reach Ibn Tufayl.

62. Mishkat, pp. 44, 56, 58, 91-93. See also al-Iqtisad fi-l-'Itiqad (Economizing in Belief), ed. M. Qabbani (Cairo, 1908).

63. Mishkat, p. 91. The italicized part was not quoted by Ibn Tufayl.

64. Hayy, pp. 121, 122, 124, 156.

65. These are Abu Yazid al-Bistami's words.

66. Al- Hallaj is known to have made these two statements.

67. Hayy, p. 4. and Mishkat, p. 57. A comparison of these two pages shows that Ibn Tufayl had borrowed these utterances from al-Ghazzali.

68. Mishkat, p. 56.

69. Hayy, pp. 120-21.

70. Ibid., p. 18.