A History of Muslim Philosophy Volume 2, Book 6

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A Compendium Of Articles On The History Of Muslim Philosophy. In This Book: Influence Of Muslim Thought On The West And East.

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Chapter 68: Influence of Muslim Thought on the West

Western Thinkers On Islam In General

Muslim philosophy influenced Western thought in several ways. It

(1) initiated in the West the humanistic movement;

(2) introduced the historical sciences and

(3) the scientific method;

(4) helped the Western scholastics in harmonizing philosophy with faith;

(5) stimulated Western mysticism;

(6) laid the foundations of Italian Renaissance and, to a degree, molded the modem European thought down to the time of Immanuel Kant, in certain directions even later.[1]

1. The Muslims were the first humanists and they gave a humanist bend to the Western mind. They were the first to reveal to the West that outside the prevailing Catholic Church it was not all darkness and barbarism but untold wealth of knowledge. They captured and further developed all the intellectual achievements of Greece and transmitted them to the West before any direct contact between the Greek

intellect and the Western mind was established.

It was through their influence that ancient and contemporary men outside the Christian West also began to be looked upon as human and even possessed of higher civilizations.[2]

Nothing can prove their own humanism better than the fact that within eight years of the establishment of Baghdad they were in possession of the greater parts of the works of Aristotle (including the spurious Mineralogy, Mechanics, and Theology, the last of which was actually an abridged paraphrases of the last three books of Plotinus' Enneads), some of the works of Plato and the Neo-Platonists, the important works of Hippocrates, Galen, Euclid, Ptolemy, and subsequent writers and commentators, and several Persian and Indian writings on mathematics, astronomy, and ethics.

All this was taking place in the Muslim world when Greek thought was almost unknown in the West. While in the East "al-Rashid and al-Maman were delving into Greek and Persian philosophy their contemporaries in the West, Charlemagne and his lords, were reportedly dabbling in the art of writing their names."[3]

Humanism spread to Western Europe through contact between the Muslims and the non-Muslims in Spain; to Italy by a similar contact in Sicily; and throughout Europe by the impress of a higher culture received by the Crusaders in Syria and Asia Minor.

Since Islam originated from monotheism, it conceived idolatry as its real enemy and acted with the purpose of subduing it first in the Arab lands and then throughout the world. The Qur'an accepts Christianity and the Jewish religion as divine religions; therefore, it did not instigate any struggle against them. However, Christianity first conceived of Islam as a competitor and, therefore, attacked it directly.

The Arian and Nestorian sects of Christianity had a positive outlook on Islam since they were monotheistic in outlook. As compared to Islam the doctrine of the Trinity and the Monophysite mode of thinking retained the residues of idolatry. The places of ancient Jupiter, Apollo, Venus were given to God, Jesus, and Mary. Since iconoclasticism of Islam was against their frame of mind, the Christians started a religious struggle against Islam.

The following verses from the Qur'an indicate that in Islam there is no obligatory doctrination but religious tolerance: Lakum din-u-kum wa li-ya din (you have your religion and I have mine); la ikra'ha fi al-din (religion is not to be forced on anyone). On the other hand, the idea of proselytism is dominant in Christianity. Christianity indoctrinates that it is the only way to spread and spreading is its main duty.

In spite of this principle in Christianity, the spread of Islam in all domains from the first Hijrah on not by wars but sporadically was much more rapid. Barthold sees the reason for this in the capacity of the Arabic language and in the Islamic custom of not collecting taxes and duties from defeated nations if they accepted Islam.[4]

Although these sociological factors play a significant role, the ease in accepting a natural and rational religion and its consistency with human idealism are additional reasons for the spread of Islam.

The Christian reaction to Islam in the East and West took different forms. Those who criticized the new religion vehemently and did not wish to accept it as a religion at all come first. John of Damascus in his book De Haeresibus, considered Islam to be heresy. The first Byzantine writer who referred to the Prophet was Theophanes the Confessor (202/817). He also attacked Islam as severely as John. Guilbert de Nogent's (518/1124) criticism was based on the fact that wine and pork were tabooed in Islam.

As an exception, Hilderbert de Lemans for the first time, in the Middle Ages in the West, stated that Muhammad was a real Prophet and he did produce miracles. Guillaume de Tripolis' work on Islam was written with extreme hate and was most offensive. Its descriptions were far from reality, being a mixture of mythical elements with history. 5

Peter de Cluny (d. 551/1156) translated the Qur'an into Latin for the first time. His work set the foundation for St. Thomas' attacks on Islam. Two helpers named Peter de Toledo and Peter Poitier participated in Peter Cluny's attempt at translating the Qur'an. The Latin translation of an epistle on the discussion over the principles of Christianity and Islam between 'Abd al-Masill al-Kindi who was the Caliph Mamun's secretary and Yahya al-Dimashgi was added at the end of this version of the Qur'an.

This epistle indicates how tolerant the 'Abbasid Caliph was about religious discussions even in the third/ninth century. When this work was translated into Latin in the West in the sixth/twelfth century, very bitter and offensive expressions were used for Islam in the preface to the Latin translation. Casanova and Muir critically investigated whether or not this epistle really belonged to the third/ninth century.6

Massignon has looked for a relationship between the epistle of this al-Kindi-who has no relation to the philosopher al-Kindi-and that of Yahya ibn 'Adi in which the Trinity is defended.7 The problem has not yet been solved.

St. Thomas referred to Islam and to its theologians. He is the first to give his criticisms a philosophical orientation. Raymond Lull (633-716/ 1235-1316) studied Arabic at Majorca and Muslim philosophy in Bugia near Tunisia. It was he who suggested to the then Pope to start the moral crusade against Islam.

This suggestion which was met at first with complete disinterestedness was later accepted by the Popes after Raymond's long endeavor to that effect; it became indeed the foundation of the Missionary movement. Raymond translated Asma' al-Husna (The Beautiful Names of God) of Muhyi al-Din ibn 'Arabi. He adapted several passages from Futahat al-Makkiyyah (The Revelations of Mecca).

He wrote an epistle relating to the discussions of a Christian, a Muslim, and a Jew. Although he wrote many epistles and books about Sufistic theology and philosophy, yet he essentially preserved his enmity against Islam.

At the same time Constantine Porphyrogenitus was referring to the Prophet with respect and politeness in a passage of his work on history. Ibn Sab'in, an adherent of tasawwu/, in qa book entitled al-Ajwibah 'an al-As'ila al-Saaliyyah (Answers to Sicilian Questions) answered the questions asked on Aristotle's philosophy by the King of Naples and Emperor of Germany.

Yet the moral tension between the two worlds did not ease. Dante in the section on "Inferno" of the Divine Comedy describes the Prophet in the eighth sphere of the underworld in a most atrocious manner, although, as Asin Palacios in his studies of his Divine Comedy demonstrates, he owed to ibn 'Arabi his entire topic, his manner of synthesis, and his idea of moral ascension. Since all the publications in the West against Islam for centuries after the Middle Ages had continuously been written by adaptations, translations, imitations, copying without any mention of source, they were no more than expressions of a complex against Islam as a faith.

It was at first rather difficult for the Western philosophers to get rid of religious, imperialistic, and racial prejudices and look at Islam and the East with understanding. In spite of the fact that Renaissance became possible only through profiting by Muslim works on philosophy, and science and their trans-lations and interpretations thereof for centuries, the attitude of some Western people who were hostile to the very civilization that created these works indicates how deep-rooted the religious, political, and racial prejudices were.

From the eleventh/seventeenth century on, Western philosophers gradually got rid of their prejudices against Islam. Cultural and intellectual influences from the Muslim East for centuries were instrumental in bringing about that change.

From the twelfth/eighteenth century on, the attitude of Western free thinkers took a truly humanistic turn. The libre penseurs took a stand against negative and malicious publications. Edward Sale, in the preface he wrote for his translation of the Qur'an in 1147/1734, likens the Prophet to Thesee and Pompillus.

He praises his philosophy, his political views, and his realism. Boulainvilliers in his book, The Life of the Prophet, going one step further tried to prove that Islam is superior to Christianity in rationalism, realism, and its consistency with the nature of man. Savory in the preface he wrote for his translation of the Qur'an completed in 1198/1783, describes Muhammad as "one of the marvelous persons who appear in the world from time to time." Due to its importance, Savory's translation was again published ten years ago.[8]

This sympathetic attitude towards Islam evoked a strong reaction in Voltaire. He made extremely offensive and insolent statements about Islam and the Prophet of Islam. Kant praised Islam in his La Religion dans les limites de la simple raison. "Islam," he said, "distinguishes itself with pride and courage, for it propagates faith not by miracles but by conquests, and it is founded on courageous asceti-cism.

This important phenomenon is due to the founder who propagated the conception of the unity of God. The nobility of a people who were freed from idolatry has been an important factor in bringing about this result. The spirit of Islam is indicated not in conformity without will but in voluntary adherence to the will of God, and this, above all, is a noble quality of a high order."[9]

In his Mahomet, Goethe, with great sympathy and enthusiasm, describes the power of the new faith exalted against idolatry, and the sincere adherence of its believers to it. This work of Goethe is in the nature of an answer to Voltaire's work bearing the same name.[10] Goethe read the Qur'an in 1184/ 1770 and annotated certain verses which were later referred to in Megerlin's German version of the Qur'an.

By this time the Prophet of Islam was well known in Germany as the founder of a "Natural Religion," and a protagonist of intellectual advance. Megerlin's translation of the Qur'an (1186/1772) and that of Boysen's (1187/1773) were published in Germany in addition to Turpin's work, The Life of Muhammad, in which Muhammad is described as a "great Prophet," "powerful mind," "true believer," and "the founder of natural religion."

Auguste Comte, in his "Law of Three Stages of Social Development," considers Islam to be the most advanced phase in his so–called theological stage and regards it even as preparatory to the metaphysical stage[11] Oswald Spengler compares Islam with the Protestant faith. In Muhammad he sees the puritan personality of a Luther or a Calvin. According to him, Islam calls for the same kind and quantity of "Illumination" and "Intellect" as was insisted on by Confucius, Buddha, Lessing, and Voltaire.[12]

Although Nietzsche severely attacks Christianity in all his works, particularly in his Antichrist[13] he did not include Islam in his adverse judgment. On the other hand, he mentioned it with praise. Eduard von Hartmann, in his book entitled The Religion of the Future, remarks that, although Hebrew religion is an advance over paganism, the conception of monopolistic and rationalist God rather hinders its progress; and he concludes that monotheism finds it's most powerful way of expression in Islam.[14]

Carlyle designates Islam as a very superior faith and thinks that Muhammad is the hero of the prophets.[15] He refutes the false accusation made against the Prophet and states that "this kind of opinion is shame on us."

Thus, Orientalism, interest in which began during the seventh/thirteenth century merely through religious fanaticism and with the aim at establishing missionary organization, gradually became a subject of methodical research. [16]

After the twelfth/eighteenth century those who possessed intensive knowledge of Arabic began to occupy themselves with the study of Islamic sciences, principles of Islam, and the history of Muslim nations. The number of those who got rid of their prejudices and subjective views and who knew how to take truth seriously increased as scientific research became more extensive.

Dieterici, Sebillot, Quartermere, de Slane, Pococke, Sylvestre de Sacy, Fleisher, Wustenfeld, Horten, de Boer, Masson Oursel, Goichon, L. Gardet, Massignon, Rene Guenon, M. Asin Palacios, E. G. Browne, Nicholson, Sir Hamilton Gibb are among them. We may add that Orientalism today is oriented towards understanding Islam and other Eastern religions by serious scholarship, although there still are some who carry on their studies for imperial or missionary purposes.[17]

In the above account an attempt has been made to show how, starting with thorough antagonism to Islam, the West gradually moved towards a humanistic approach to Islamic culture. But this humanistic attitude was directed not only towards Islam but also to other Eastern religions.

August Wilhelm Schlegel, from 1234/1818 to the time of his death, occupied himself with Oriental studies. From 1239/1823 to 1246/1830 he published the journal I ndische Bibliothek in three volumes and also edited the Bhagvad Gita and the Ramayana. These efforts mark the beginning of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany.

How the Jews and Christians in the West followed in the footsteps of Muslim thinkers in their recapture of Greek learning, and how they captured Muslim thought itself will be shown later.

2. A large part of the Qur'an refers to the past and takes the mind of the reader to the rise and fall of nations in the days gone by. In fact, it lays special emphasis on history as well as on nature as sources of knowledge. This Qur'anic attitude to history developed a true historical sense amongst the Muslims who in due course produced next to Herodotus world's first great historians like al-Tabari, al-Mas`udi, ibn Hayyan, ibn Khaldiin, and others.

One of them, al-Biruni, laid down for the first time in history the principles of historical criticism. The Muslims were, thus, the first after Herodotus to develop the historical sense and to lay open the various historical sciences before the West.

3. The greatest boon that the Muslim East bestowed upon the West was the scientific or inductive method of inquiry. Although most of the Muslim thinkers used the inductive method in their scientific investigation in different fields, the two of them who particularly expounded this method were Muhammad bin Zakariya al-Razi and ibn Haitham. Ibn Hazm, writing on the scope of logic, emphasized sense-perception as a source of knowledge. Later ibn Taimiyyah in his refutation of Aristotelian logic showed that induction was the only form of reliable inference. Suhrawardi Maqtul too offered a systematic refutation of Greek logic.

It was the method of observation and experiment which led al-Birimi to the discovery of reaction time, al-Kindi to the formula that sensation is a response of the organism proportionate to the stimulus, and ibn Haitham to his findings in optics.[18]

The influence of Muslim method of observation and experiment on the West has been recognized by Briffault in the following terms. “Numerous Jews followed William of Normandy to England and enjoyed

his protection ... establishing a school of science at Oxford; it was under their successors at that Oxford school that Roger Bacon learned Arabic and Arabic science.

Neither Roger Bacon nor his later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. Roger Bacon was no more than one of the apostles of Muslim science and method to Christian Europe; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic science was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge.

Discussions as to who was the originator of the experimental method…are part of the colossal misrepresentation of the origins of European civilization. The experimental method of the Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe; it had been proclaimed by Adelhard of Bath, by Alexander of Neckam, by Vincent of Beauvais, by Arnold of Villeneuve, by Bernard Silvestris, who entitles his manual Experimentarius, by Thomas of Cantimpre, by Albertus Magnus."[19]

Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world, but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after Moorish culture had sunk back into darkness did the giant to which it had given birth rose in its might. It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influences from the civilization of Islam communicated its original glow to European life.[20]

"Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic culture is not traceable, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the paramount distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory natural science and the scientific spirit.[21]

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries of revolutionary theories; science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence. The ancient world was, as we saw, pre–scientific. The astronomy and mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized, and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute methods of science, detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament.

Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of a new spirit of inquiry, of new methods of investigation, of the methods of experiment, observation, and measurement, of the development of mathematics in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.[22]

4. In the West, even up to the ninth/fifteenth century, philosophy and science were regarded as antagonistic to religion. Hence the teachings of Aristotelianism and Averroism were banned, Bruno was burnt, Kepler was persecuted, and Galileo was forced to retract. Muslim thinkers, following Plato, Aristotle, and Plotinus, harmonized faith with reason and made possible, for themselves and for Europe,

unhampered development of both.

5. European mysticism was also much influenced by the mysticism of Islam. Arthur J4 Arberry observes in The History of Sufism that “it is impossible, for example, to read the poems of the Spanish mystic St. John of the Cross without concluding that his entire process of thinking and imaginative apparatus owed much to those Muslim mystics who had also been natives of Spain.” In the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth century, Raymond Lull wrote on mysticism.

He was an accomplished scholar and founder of school of Oriental languages at Rome. His mystical writings are “beyond question” influenced by Sufi speculation. These are only a few examples of what Arberry regards as “unquestionably a general process.” In later times the influence of Persian mystical poetry on so great a genius as Goethe is too well known to be mentioned.

Miguel Asin Palacios, in his study of the influence of the Muslim conception of the next world on the Divine Comedy, investigated ibn 'Arabi's influence on Dante. The relationship between ascension to heaven in Dante's book and the Ascension (mi'raj) in Islam bad already caught the attention of some scholars. Ozanam, a thirteenth/nineteenth–century French scholar, in his great study of Dante, mocked at those who thought that the work of the poet from Toscana was “a lonely monument of the Middle Ages” and he considered the poet an erudite who was considerably well informed and who made use of all past experiences.

According to him, “two roads, one going north and the other south, lead Dante to the old Eastern sources. He maintained that the relationship between the Saracens and Europe was very close at that time.” Dante had read the Latin versions of the works of many Muslim philosophers and adherents of tasawwuf, at least those of ibn Sina and all–Ghazali.

Following Ozanam and d'Ancona, Charles Labitte, in the preface he wrote for Brizeux's translation of the Divine Comedy into French, maintained that the theme must have been borrowed from the world of Islam. At that time, Modi de Goeje and some other authors held similar views. More recently Edgard Blochet published two studies on this problem: Etudes sur l'mistoire Religieuse d' l'islam, 1307/1889, and Les Sources de la Divine Comedie, 1319/ 1901.

In these studies he defended the view that the idea of ascending to heaven came directly from Islam. According to Blochet, in a verse in the Qur'an, there is a reference to mi'raj (ascension to heaven) though no details are given. Many of these details are the products of public imagination in Islam and they must have been due to more ancient sources. He finds the roots especially in Mazdaism.

He relates the mi'rdj description in the Mazdakite poet Artay Viraf's literary work based on Zend–Avesta. Barthelemy translated Artay Viriif's Namak and in his foreword demonstrated similarities between the Divine Comedy and the Mazdakite book. Blocbet claimed that the idea of ascending to heaven in Dante was transmitted both from the Persian and Islamized sources.

Asin Palacios' conclusions are more precise. Not being satisfied with mere comparison between the texts, he studied the sources of Dante and thereby demonstrated how these depended on Islamic works, i. e., on their translations. By emphasizing the special significance of ibn 'Arabi's “Revelations”, he solved the problem with great success. Ibn Masarrah al–Jibali from Mercier and Cordova who specialized in ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of tasawwuf, demonstrated the influence of this doctrine on Western scholastics, in general, on the priests of the Franciscan denomination, and on Dante who was till then known as a follower of Aristotle and of St. Thomas in particular.

Palacios' book is composed of four parts: (1) comparison of the Divine Comedy with lailat al–isra and mi'rdj; (2) comparison of the Divine Comedy with Muslim descriptions of the next world ('uqba); (3) Islamic elements in the Christian legends before Dante; (4) studies and determination of the transmission of Islamic works to Christian Europe in general. In the first part, Asin studies the development of the idea of mi'raj in Islam. He traces this with reference to different texts and footnotes and compares each separately with the Divine Comedy. Many phantasies were created in the public imagination about a verse in the Qur'an on mi'raj.[23]

All these got incorporated in the descriptions of descent to hell at night (isra) and the Ascension to heaven (mi'raj). The theme of mi'raj, which public imagination worked on, is used as a mystic symbol by ibn 'Arabi. Several adherents of tasawwuf, e.g., Junaid Baghdadi, Bayazid Bistami, etc. had used the moral symbol before. In ibn 'Arabi's work it received a more significant place. Later, in the books entitled Mi'raj Nameh and in Nizami Ganjeh's Makbzan al–Asrar the event of Ascension to heaven is related in great detail. Muslim miniature artists illustrated these works with many drawings about this spiritual journey.

The construction of Dante's hell is the same as that of ibn 'Arabi's hell. Both are large funnel–shaped edifices composed of several storeys. Spiral staircases lead down to these storeys, in each of which a different class of sinners is housed. The weight of the sinners increases as they descend further down. Each floor is sub–divided into various parts. The first floor in ibn 'Arabi's hell is an ocean of fire and corresponds to what Dante called Dite, on the shores of which there are various fire tombs.

Thieves, murderers, plunderers, despots, and the gluttons are tortured in the same chambers. The punishment of thirst given to the makers of false money in the Divine Comedy is given to drunkards in the Mi'raj Nameh.

The Prophet meets the angel placed at his service by God at the gate of heaven. He takes the Prophet to a group of nymphs in heaven surrounding the sweetheart of the poet Im u' al–Qais. In the same way, when Dante enters heaven, he meets a fair maiden Matilda who politely and elegantly answers his questions. The construction of heaven is the same in both images and is inspired by Ptolemy's Alma jest.

In accordance with the degree of their virtues, the happy souls are located in one of the nine heavens.

Each of the nine heavens corresponds to a sign of the zodiac. Both works have a moral structure, assigning virtues to each storey or to each sphere in heaven. Islamic books entitled Mi'raj Nameh give the same amount of details and demonstrate the same kind of skill in the description of the heavenly world as is to be found in the Divine Comedy.

The eyes of both travelers are dazzled by getting near God as they enter a new phase of the mi'raj. When their respective guide Gabriel or Beatrice informs them of His grace, their eyes open. Gabriel and Beatrice not only serve them as guides, but also pray for them at each post. As finally Beatrice leaves her place to St. Bernard when Dante enters heaven, so does Gabriel leave the Prophet when he advances to the presence of God guided by a ray of light.

In studying Dante's Muslim sources, one has to compare the Divine Comedy with the Arab poet abu al–'Ala' al–Ma'arri's Risalat al–Ghufran. There is a close relationship between the religious ecstasy, charitable pity, and irony, orienting the feelings of the author of this book and the religious ecstasy, criticism, satire, and irony of Dante.

Since the topic of mi'raj is basic to the Arab poet's book too, in the absence of any historical documents to supplement a comparison of this kind, its study is still useful. In heaven, Dante meets his contemporaries Piccardo from Florence and Gunizza from Padua. According to abu al–'Ala', the Prophet meets Hamdum from Aleppo and Taufiq from Baghdad. Both have similar endings. As the Prophet in one case and Dante in the other enter the presence of God, they see Him as a strong ocean of Light.

The Muslim adherents of tasawwuf, with the exception of ibn Masarrah of Spain (270–319/883–931) and ibn 'Arabi, were not as well known in Europe as were the “philosophers.” Ibn Masarrah was the founder of the illuministic or Ishraqi School. From Spain the ideas of this school were transmitted to the Augustinian scholastics such as Duns Scotus, Roger Bacon, and Raymond Lull.[24]

Yet Goethe wrote the Der west–ostliches Diwdn (Compendium of Poems on the East) during his mature years after reading Hafiz. Fitzgerald translated Kh–ayyam's Rubd'iyat into English and it was received with great interest. Nicholson published in several volumes English translation of Rumi's Mathnawi in addition to the selections from his Diwan and also from the Mathnawi.

Massignon has devoted his entire life to the study of Halaj Mansflr. The number of studies on the works of Harith Mulaasibi has increased recently. Aldous Huxley makes frequent references to Riimi in his Perennial Philosophy, and thinkers like Rene Guenon have been directly inspired by tasawwuf.[25]

In our own times Corbin, by publishing the greater part of Suhrawardi Magtul's books in two volumes with their Arabic and Persian originals at Istanbul and Teheran entitled Opera Metaphysica et Mystica,[26] has brought the great martyr to the attention of existentialists and philosophical anthropologists. [27]

6. The process by which Muslim thought laid the foundations of the Italian Renaissance and influenced subsequent thought was a long one. It will be briefly described in the sections that follow.

Theological Influence

The influence of Muslim theologians on the West was only secondary. Tension between the two religions, Islam and Christianity, was the reason for this. Nevertheless, Muslim theologians were known to the West even though indirectly through the works of the “philosophers”; only al-Ghazali`, theology was known to the Western scholars directly. St. Thomas refer to the theologians in his Contra Oenetiles as loquentes.[28]

However, fm long knowledge of Muslim theology remained meagre and that for two reasons:

(i) the information about the Mu'tazilah and the first theologian was second-hand, nothing was taken from their own works; and

(ii) the masters of the philosophico-theological movements after al-Ghazali long remained unknown. Up to the thirteenth/nineteenth century hardly ani scholar in the West was acquainted with the works of Fakhr al-Din Razi

Saif al-Din 'Amidi, ibn Taimiyyah, Siraj &I-Din Urmawi, Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani, Sa'd al-Din Taftazani, and others. No complete account can, therefore, be given of the influence of Muslim theology on the West.[29]

However, important works on the philosophy of religion have been translated since the beginning of the present century. Among these the Irshad of abu alMa'ali (Imam al-Haramain) and several books by ibn Taimiyyah have been translated into French. In addition to these, Max Horten has published a big volume on Muslim theologians.[30] Recently, Louis Gardet together with Anawati has released Introduction a la Theologie Musulmane. Albert Nader has written Le systeme Philosophique des Mu'tazila (first published in Arabic and then translated into French by the same author). [31]

Al-Ghazali had a unique position. He was a theologian as well as a philosopher. Therefore, his influence in the West was theological as well as philosophical. Miguel Asin Palacios studied al-Ghazali's theological influence on Western thought in several of his writings.[32] As it was previously assumed, this influence cannot be confined to the Tahafut only, the Latin version of which was made during the sixth/twelfth century. Al-Qhazali's influence was also effected through his other works.

The Magdsid was translated into Latin under the heading Logika et philosophea Algazelis Arabic by Gundisalvus; it was published in Venice in 912/1506. His al-Nafs al-Insdni was also translated under the title De Anima Humana. AI-Gazali's influence which Asin Palacios elaborately discussed in his book, La espiritualidad de Algazel su sentido cristiano, has several phases. The influence on Raymond Martini, a Dominican monk who profited by al-Ghazali's works on theology and philosophy, comes first.

According to Palacios, the influence of the early Christian sources, for instance of St. Augustine, on al-Ghazali himself should first be taken into consideration. Although it is not possible to indicate how and by

what means Augustine's ideas were transmitted to al-Ghazali, it is quite possible that his influence was widespread in the intellectual circles where al-Ghazali was brought up.[33]

Palacios, however, fails to refer to any evidence to prove his assertion, though he has much documentary evidence about the transmission of al-Ghazali's thought to the West. Take the case of historian-philosopher Bar Hebraeus known in the Muslim world as abu al-Faraj. He was a minister at a Syriac Jacobite church and was famous during the seventh/thirteenth century. He wrote in Arabic and Syriac and copied many chapters from al-Ghazali's Ihyd' (Revivification of Religious Sciences) and adapted them in his books entitled Ethicon and The Book of the Dove. This marks the beginning of al-Ghazali's influence on Christian spirituality.

If an author like Bar Hebraeus, who was rather influential in the Christian church, profits by al-Ghazali's ideas in writing his own books considered fundamental in monastery instruction, the reason for this, according to Palacios, was that he regarded these ideas totally consistent with his own doctrine.

In his study of al-Ghazali, Wensinck shows that the two books by Bar Hebraeus are not only written in accordance with the organization of the chapters taken from al-Ghazali's Ihya' (e.g., virtues, vices, the degrees of moral perfection) but also al-Ghazali's ideas and even his examples, analogies, and at times phrases, and the kind of evidence Ihya' brings from poetry and literature, are employed in them in exactly the same way.[34]

According to Palaeios, Bar Hebraeus did so because in reality these were fully consistent with the Christian spirit even though he wanted to keep secret the apparent source of the ideas transmitted to him. However, there was no need for Palacios at this point to go into making interpretations which would contradict his own straight arguments.[35]

Palacios traces the development of al-Ghazali s ideas in the West as follows. The Spanish Dominican monk Raymond Martini, who was Bar Hebraeus' contemporary, borrowed the same ideas from him and from al-Ghazali. Instead of profiting only by the books of Muslim “philosophers,” he, unlike the scholastics, directly profited by al-S;hazali's texts in his books entitled Pugio Fidei and Explanatio Symboli, written in the field of religion. These texts were taken from Ta/ed/ut, Magasid, al-Mungidh, Mizdn, Magsad, Mishkat al-Anwdr and Ihyd'. According to Palacios, the benefit derived here is more substantial than Bar Hebraeus' adaptations which he had made without mentioning any source, for the arguments have been taken exactly as they were in the original.

Furthermore, St. Thomas used some texts of al- 'hazali's in Contra Gentiles either directly or through the mediation of Raymond Martini. Al-Ghazali's arguments in favour of the creatio ex nihilo, his proof that God's knowledge comprises particulars, and his justification of the resurrection of the dead were adopted by many scholastics including St. Thomas. St. Thomas, who had received his education from the Dominican order in the University of Naples, had known al-Ghazali's philosophy well, and used his arguments in attacks on Aristotelianism.

St. Thomas' Summa Theologica and al-Ghazali's treatise on the place of reason as applied to revelation and theology run parallel in many places in their arguments and conclusions. Both of them claimed to have found happiness in the beatific vision and both stated the case of their opponents fairly before pronouncing their own judgments on it. The questions on which St. Thomas seems to have been deeply influenced by al-Ghazali are the ideas of contingency and necessity as proving the existence of God, divine knowledge, divine simplicity, divine names, and divine attributes, God's speech a iverbum mentis, the miracles as a testimony to the truth of prophecies, and resurrection of the dead.36

Al-Ghazali's influence was very significant towards the end of the Middle Ages. During the eighth/fourteenth century, three sceptic philosophers were influenced by al-Ash'ari's arguments on the problem of causality through the mediation of al-Ghazali. Their names are (1) Peter of Ailly, (2) Nicholas of Autrecourt, and (3) Gillaume of Occam. Occam, the scholar most influenced by al-Ash`ari's nominalism in the West, arrived at the conception of intuitive divine knowledge via his own criticisms of the theory of causality and his occasionalism (by which he tried to explode St. Thomas' rationalistic philo-sophy) under al-Ghazali's influence.37

A relation was established for the first time between Christian and Muslim philosophies with Gundisalvus' translations from al-Ghazali. C. Baumker was the first to call public attention to these translations. From the works of this great scholar (as later from those of E. Gilson) it has become clear that ibn Sina had an influence on the West in two ways: (1) directly through his own works and (2) indirectly through al-Ghazali's works translated by Gundisalvus.

Al-Ghazali was in a way ibn Sind's disciple even though he later opposed him. First he elaborated the ideas inspired by him, and later he criticized them. For instance, he followed the philosopher's point of view in the classification of souls. Ibn Sins, divided the soul into three faculties named in Latin: vegetabilis, sensibilis, rationalis. In al-Ghzali's translations, the terms used are: anima vegetative, anima animalis, anima humana (al-nafs al-nabdti, al-nafs al-hayawdni, al-nafs al-insdni). As to nafs al-ndtigah (the soul endowed with the gift of speech) Gundisalvus uses slightly different terminology. Above the hierarchy of the intellects there is al-'aql al- f a”dl (intellectus agens) which al-Ghazali designates as Substantia existens per se quae non est corpussubstance existing in its own right without the need of body-a definition which we do not find in ibn Sina and which proved valuable for the Western scholastics. Al-Ghazali calls the active intellect dator formarum.38

Al-Ghazali's influence on the West was not confined to Raymond Martini. In his book Huellas des Islam, Palacios carries this influence down to Pascal. According to him, there is a conformity between al-Ghazali's and Pascal's ideas about the next world which is not due to coincidence. The sort of argument concerning the defence of religion extensively employed by al-Ghazali, known in the West as “betting” (pari), is elaborated again and again by Pascal in his Pensdes. In addition to Lachelier's well-known study on this topic, the same theme has also been studied by E. Degas in his Pari de Pascal.

Statement of the argument aims at making the non-believers see that there is no inconsistency in

performing religious duties and believing in the possibility that the next world may not exist at all. This argument may be summarized in one sentence: If you win you shall win all; if you lose you will loose nothing (Si vows gagnez zoos gagnez tout, so vows perdez, vans ne perdez rien). Those investigating the roots of this argument give us information about a short text by Arnobiu who, after Bayle, was the first to use it. Another text in Sohund's Theologie Naturelle concerned itself with those roots. Finally, two French theologians, who were contemporaries of Pascal, formulated the betting argument in a way similar to his.

One of them was Silhon, the author of Immortalite de l'Ame. Blanchet and Lachelier studied in what ways these authors were like Pascal and how they differed. Following a penetrating analysis of the text, Blanchet demonstrates that they were Pascal's sources both in ideas and literary form. The result of these investigations is as follows. Pascal's betting idea was held by many authors in embryonic form since Arnobiu.

The idea took a long journey from al-Ghazali to Raymond Martini and then to Pascal. Let us see only the comparisons Palacios draws between Pascal and al-Ghazali basing them on well-founded studies of the texts. Pascal, like al-Ghazali, is of the opinion that our senses may deceive us. Here, Palacios compares the text of al-Mungidh with that of PensEce and indicates the similarities. Pascal as much as al-Ghazali strongly suspects that our dreams are the reality, our life is nothing but a dream when we are awake, and that we wake up from that dream when we die.

The resemblance to the effect that life is a dream and death waking up from that dream is significant. Both philosophers find the way to get rid of the state of doubt in mysticism. Both of them look for it in divine inspiration as a product of moral virtues and love of religion free from all logical judgments. This power of inspiration bestowed by God on the believers is the most dependable source for knowledge of the supernatural world, both in al-Ghazali and Pascal.

It is evident that the foundation of Pascal's theory about the “logic of the heart”[39] was laid in al-Ghazali's idea about the “eye of the heart.” Both assigned deductive intellect to the lowest category, for it has practically no influence on our emotional life and beliefs; the mental attitudes determined by it vary; its field of activity is confined to a limited number of elite; and most people remain outside its influence. On the other hand, the functioning field of practical life which is based on habits, familiarity, imitation, and the emotions of the heart is very broad and can be considered to be the common and normal foundation of religious life.

Palacios compares the ideas of al-Ghazali and Pascal on faith and human certitude, and also the anecdote on p. 68 in al- Ghazali's Faisal al-Tafriqah with that on p. 350 in Pascal's Pennies. In terms of ideas, both say the same thing, viz., “God is felt not in the intellect but in the heart” (Dieu est sensible au c.xur, non- a la raison). Then, Palacios notes the following points in Pascal about “betting” which remind us of al-Ghazali.

(i) The indifference of non-believers and free-thinkers towards the problem of the next world and eternity is stupid. It shows a weak intellect, an evil heart, and faulty perception. The Spanish author compares Pascal's work with al-Ghazali's Mizdn al-'Amal (Criterion of Action) and Ihya' in this respect. '

(ii) In order to remedy the indifference of this group of non-believers it is not sufficient to depend on objective arguments, intellect, and faith, for, the state of doubt they are in originates from the doubtfulness of the causes of existence and the non-existence of the next world. Therefore, one should begin with the hypothesis which would affirm the impossibility of definite arguments concerning the eternity of the soul. Here, Palacios compares Pascal's Pennies with certain chapters and passages in al-Srhazali's works, e.g., Ih,d', Mizan, and Arba`in, and shows how the arguments in them are repeated by Silhon and Pascal with very little change.

(iii) If one begins with the above hypothesis, in case of the insufficiency of convincing arguments by direct proof, one should look for such an argument as would recommend the idea of the existence of the next world where rewards and punishments should be calculated after death, depending upon personal interest, egotism, and the rules of most elementary caution and thereby convince non-believers of it. Here again Palacios compares passages from alghazali's works, e.g., Ihya', Mizan, Arba'in, Mustazhiri, with the texts of Silhon, Sirmond, and Pascal.

(iv) Above all this argument consists in putting the problem of next life in the same way as the possibility of success in present life in terms of the game of chance and fate. The game of fate consists of actions and events dependent on chance, like hunting, taking a sea-trip, wars, surgical operations, drugs for therapy, commercial transactions, professional education, new industrial enterprises, etc. The person who takes measures in all these activities calculates that the gain which is expected to be obtained in the future would be more beneficial than the one that is risked. Here Palacios points out that in his Ihya' and Mizan, al-Ghazali used the examples of hunting, commerce, political occupation, taking a sea-trip, drugs, and industry, and that as a matter of fact Pascal repeated many of them.

(v) The bulk of the argument is like the process of weighing as in a pair of scales. The values of the gains risked by betting as to whether the next world existed or not were put on one tray of this pair of scales and the values of the gains and losses, in either world, were put on the other. Here, Palacios gives examples from al-Ghazali's books, e.g., Ihya', Mizdn, and Musta.Ihiri, and compares them with those in the works of Silhon, Sirmond, and Pascal. Pascal says, Lequel prenez vows voyonn; pesons le gain et la perte.

(vi) The first point to be taken into consideration in order to complete this comparison is that the pleasures and properties of this world should be weighed and then their uselessness and total quality stressed. The limited use that can be made of one's worldly possessions, during the lifespan lasting for about seventy years, should be emphasized. Texts from al-Ghazali's Ihya', Mizdn, and Muatazhiri are compared here with those of Sirmond's and Pascal's.

(vii) The eternity of next life (the loss or gain of which is the case in point), i.e., its infinity, limitlessness, unique timelessness which cannot be compared with millions of years and centuries, is weighed. For this too Palacios makes detailed comparisons between al-Qhazali's and Pascal's texts.

(viii) It is understood that there is no comparison between that which has an end and is limited and that which is unlimited and is endless, in terms of the worth and quality of values. The party that wins is of those who choose the road of virtue and accept the existence of the next world, thus getting rid of the sinful pleasures of this life. Here, Palacios compares parts of Mizan, Ihyd', and Arba'in with the like parts in the works of Pascal. “The one who does not believe is the loser.”

(ix) This argument may leave the possibility to the infidels of raising the objection that it is based on doubt about the things to be gained or lost in the next world. We have no definite idea about a thing to be gained or lost in the next world, whereas in this world we can determine with absolute certainty the things we are going to gain or lose. There is doubt about the matters of the next world but definiteness about those of this world.

(x) This difficulty is solved by pointing out that a limited thing which is definitely risked is negligible as compared with the infinity of expected gains even though doubtful. Here too Palacios makes comparisons between the texts of Mizdn al-'Amal and Ihya' and those of the works of Sirmond and Pascal, and indicates striking similarities between them.

(xi) Finally, assuming that the next world does not exist, if the laique person who is not under religious discipline acts virtuously in this world, he shall lose nothing. For the real happiness that man can find on this earth is not merely the satisfaction of his passions. Just the opposite; it comes from controlling the passions, putting them under the control of the intellect. Only in that way can man rise above the level of animals.

This state saves man from becoming a slave to sensuality and helps him gain his true freedom which gives him nobility. It enables him to get rid of anxiety, sorrow, mental weakness, and leaves him with infinite peacefulness of the soul, which is purer and more lasting than the sensuous pleasures. Here also Palacios quotes from Mizdn al-'Amal, Arba'in, Mustazhiri and shows how many of Pascal's statements resemble those of al- Ghaziili.

According to Palacios, it should be granted that there are some differences between the two# philosophers besides their similarities. First of all, like Sirmond, Pascal did not present the problem openly but mentioned it in an indirect way. Al-Ghazali, however, made a careful and detailed study of it. The point mentioned in paragraph (xi) illustrates this. According to Palacios, neither Sirmond nor Pascal stated the problem as thoroughly and analytically as al-Ghhazali did.

Thus, if the irreligious people and free-thinkers act virtuously, as if the next world really did exist, they will strengthen their position when a world which is doubtful for -them materializes in the future. Besides, they would be acting in a way which is consistent with their interests in this world. The direct source for

the betting problem lies in self–interest and the principle of expediency.

This kind of reasoning directed against the irreligious and the free–thinkers who disregard all metaphysics and altruism is consistent with the rule of argument ad hominem which consists of using the arguments of the opponent against himself leaving him no way of escape. “If you win, you win all; if you lose, you lose nothing” principle will constitute the strongest proof for them. However, so long as they are convinced that as they bet in favor of the existence of the next world, which establishes control over their appetites, not only is earthly happiness which is very dear to them not sacrificed, but is, on the other hand, realized positively and fully.

Al–Ghazali explains the critical aspect of the betting idea better than Sirmond and Pascal. For neither of the two thinkers debates with the irreligious who directly refute the next world and consider the religious dogma a mere fake and absolute nonsense. Sirmond and Pascal argue only with those who are in a state of hesitation because of the lack of positive arguments to reach a decision. Al–Ghazali begins debating with the irreligious in Ihya' 'Uliem al–Din because of their ruthless actions and in Mizdn al–'Amal and Arba'In he faces them and meets them on their own ground.

In doing so, al–Ghazali's aim is to make them believe that they will find the positive happiness of the only life they believe in and wish to lead, not in loose life but in knowledge and virtue. According to Palacios, al–Ehseems more open and thorough than Pascal on betting. Pascal's Pensdes does not seem to be a completed work as al–Ghazali's books are. It is in the nature of an outline which the philosopher intended to develop in a complete work. His death, however, hindered that plan. But the mathematical clarity of Pascal and the results of his calculations of probability cannot be found in al–Ghazali. Palacios finds the reason for this in the Muslim philosopher's Islamic view of regarding all chance games as illegitimate.[40]

Philosophical Influence Before Descartes

Interest in Muslim philosophy developed in Europe towards the end of the fifth/eleventh century. The Muslim rule in Spain, the Crusades, the seminaries in Sicily, the inadequacy of the old Western scholastic and scientific systems, and the density of population and internal congestion necessitated relations of the West with the world of Islam. In Toledo Muslims and Christians lived side by side. It was here that Raymond I, Archbishop of the provincial capital (525/1130–545/1150), established a translation bureau to render Arabic masterpieces into Latin.

In France and especially in Normandy, scientific trend appeared first among the monks. Robert, the King of France of the Capetian dynasty, at one time a disciple of Gilbert's, was friendly towards the Muslim scientific endeavor. At the time he invaded southern Italy, Calabria, and Sicily, he observed the Italian seminaries and borrowed many things from them. In that way, the seminaries of Sicily and Naples acted as transmission media of Islamic science to the West.

The transmission of Muslim thought to the medieval West passed through the following phases.

1. In the first phase, a band of scholars went to Muslim countries and made personal studies. Constantine of Africa and Adelhard made studies of this sort for the first time. Constantine, who was born in Carthage near the end of the fifth/eleventh century, travelled all through the East. He made translations into Latin from the Arabic translations of Hippocrates' and Galen's books in addition to those of the original works of Muslim scholars on medical science.

Later on, many students from Italy, Spain, and southern France attended Muslim seminaries in order to study mathematics, philosophy, medicine, cosmography, and other subjects, and in due course became candidates for professorship in the first Western universities to be established after the pattern of the Muslim seminaries.

2. The second phase starts with the founding of the first Western universities. The style of architecture of these universities, their curricula, and their method of instruction were exactly like those in the seminaries. First, the Salerno seminary was founded in the kingdom of Naples. Courses were offered in grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and cosmography. Books of Aristotle and those on the interpretation of his philosophy were brought to Italy by way of Salerno.

Emperor Frederick of Sicily was known as a patron of Muslim science. He founded the seminary at Naples. Aristotle's books were translated from Arabic into Latin by his order. He corresponded with ibn Sab'in on philosophical matters.41 Alphonso X, King of Castile and Leon (650/1252–683/1284), ordered that astronomical tables be made following a study of Arabic works. At that time, important seminaries were also established at Padua, Toulouse, and later at Leon.

3. At last, the science of the Musalmans was transmitted to France and to other Western countries via Italy. Bologna and Montpellier seminaries were founded at the beginning of the seventh/thirteenth century. The University of Paris opened its doors for instruction somewhat later. At that time Oxford and Koln Universities were established after the same pattern and thus the new science was transmitted to England and Germany.

During the seventh/thirteenth century, the Oxford school became a centre of the activities of translation and interpretation. Here for the first time Alexander Neckam translated from Arabic Aristotle's books “On Heaven” and “On Soul.” In the same School Michael Scot translated into Latin a book by al-Bitraji (Albatragius) on cosmography and several books by ibn Sina and ibn Rushd. Robert Grosseteste was another member of the Oxford Group (651/1253).

His efforts were noted in the translations of Greek and Muslim philosophical works. Roger Bacon (611/1214–692/1292) was the most important member of this group. This great scholar who made researches in language, mathematics, and biology became known as a magician and occultist during the Middle Ages and was, therefore, convicted; in fact he was one of the founders of empiricism. The influence of Muslim philosophers on Roger Bacon, particularly that of ibn Sina, was very great.

The word “experiment” (experimentum) is closely associated with his scientific and extra-scientific studies. While the trends initiated by ibn Sina and ibn Rushd constituted the roots of Western rationalism, Muslim naturalists like al-Razi and ibn Haitham influenced the empirical thought of England.

The best known Polish author during the translation period was St. Thomas' friend Wittelo (b. 628/1230). Wittelo went from Poland to Italy. He compiled an important work about Greek and Muslim scholars. In his book entitled Perspective, there were important selections from Euclid, Appolonius, Ptolemy's Optica, and ibn Haitham's Kitab al Manazir. Wittelo and Roger Bacon carried further ibn Haitham's work in physical research.

In the University of Paris, from the day it was established in 612/1215, much importance was given to Aristotle's texts and their interpretations in Arabic. From 629/1231 on, the Pope Gregory IX renewed the decree against the instruction of Aristotle and his texts. In the following years the Pope's actions against the universities became increasingly severe. Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Nicholas of Autrecourt were convicted. Investigations were made about the Averroists; they were convicted and circulation of their books was prohibited. These severe actions continued until the end of the eighth/fourteenth century.

These severe measures which had originated from fanaticism had ideological roots too. In general, they embodied a reaction against Aristotelianism. The tendency of Platonism and dialecticism against Aristotelianism and experimentationism was again aroused. Muslim philosophy was unable to meet the needs of the West when it came to Plato's Dialogues. For, many of them were not known to the Muslims. Those that were known were incomplete.

At the end of the ninth/fifteenth century extensive publication of books translated into Latin from Arabic rendered the decrees by the priests partially ineffective and these books rapidly spread everywhere, even outside the university curricula; while the mental orientation towards experimentation was now struggling against reaction in the fields of ideology and research, the ground was being laid for the Renaissance.

The translation into Latin of the works of abu Bakr Zakariya al-Razi, founder of the philosophy of nature in Islam, was an important step in the transmission of Muslim philosophy to the West.[42] Constantine the African translated into Latin two philosophical works of al-Rfzi, Kitab al-'Ilal and Sirr al-Asrdr, and Gerard of Cremona translated al-Mansuri, another work of his, under the title Liber Albubatri Basis qui dicitur Almansoriua. Al-Razi's greatest work Kitab al-Hawi (Liber de Continens) was translated into Latin and the Latin translation was published several times.

It was translated by Faraj ben Salim known as Faragut, a Jew educated at Salerno, in twentyfive volumes, under the orders of the King of Naples. It was first published in 892/1486 in Brecia, then in Venice in 906/1500, 91211506, 915/1509, and 949/ 1542. Al-Razi's influence was not confined to the Latin translation of his works only; it led further to the translations of other Muslim philosophers who referred to him in their works.[43]

The famous Jabir bin Hayyan is known among the naturalists as an alchemist, chemist and philosopher.44 He is known in the Latin world better than in Islam, not as a philosopher and chemist but as a magician and alchemist. Summa pert ectionis magisteri is a translation of his collected works.

E. Gilson, in a number of detailed studies, investigated how Aristotle's psychology reached al-Farabi and al-Kindi, how it developed in their hands, and how it was transmitted to the Latin world.45 Many of al-Kindi's books were translated into Latin. Plato of Tivoli translated his book on the problems of geometry; Arnold of Villanova, his books on degrees under the title De Gradibus; Robert the Englishman, his book on astronomy entitled "On the Dragon"; and de Azogont, his book on physics and meteorology.

This last book was first printed in Venice in 913/1507 and then in Paris in 947/1540.46 One of al-Kindi's important books, Kitab al-'Aql (Book of the Intellect), was translated into Latin perhaps by John of Seville under the title De Intellectu. Gerard of Cremona also translated some books by the philosopher. According to Quadri, Giordano Bruno, the great philosopher of the Renaissance, refers to al-Kindi thus: "Al-Kindi is an Arab philosopher. Among the first scholars he is the best. Ibn Rushd profited by his books. Does this not signify his power?"

In the West, al-Kindi was known as one of Aristotle's faithful disciples and, therefore, for a long time, was considered to be a heretic. However, with his works and those of his successors, empiricism penetrated into the West from the Arab world and helped the rise of modern thought. Quadri notes that besides al-Kindi's book "On the Intellect," the Latin translation of two other works of his, namely, Liber de quinque essentiis and Liber introctorius in artem logica demonstrationis, were also known in the West.

The latter was compiled by his disciple Mubammad ibn Taiyib al-Sarak-hsi; its authenticity, however, is doubtful. The former marks progress in the classification of the intellects and is a very important work. According to Latin texts, al-Kindi's philosophy is inclined towards Neo-Platonism.47

Coming to al-Farabi, not all but some of his works were known in the West during the Latin medieval period.48 Translations were made into Latin from his psychology, metaphysics, and logic. Through these translations he had a penetrating influence on Latin philosophers of the medieval West.

One of the most important figures in the translation activity during the Western Middle Ages was Gundisalvus (d. 546/1151). He was the spiritual leader at Segovia; in addition to numerous translations, he wrote a book, De Division Philosophiae, which imitated al-Fhrabi almost step by step.49 In this book he substituted al-Farhbi's encyclopedic classification for the system of seven types of knowledge (trivium et quadrivium) which was traditional in the East during the medieval period,50 and this classification which was very new and original for the Western world was followed for long in the then recently established universities.

Gundisalvus' translations had an influence on Christian scholastic philosophy, newly awakened during the seventh/thirteenth century, and especially on St. Thomas and Albert the Great. Al-Fiirabi and,

following him, ibn Sina added the third form of the famous cosmological proof of God based on the conceptions of possibility and necessity, the first two being based on the ideas of motion and potentiality as formulated by Aristotle.

It was taken up from ibn Sina by the Jewish philosopher, Maimonides, and from him by St. Thomas Aquinas, and then it passed on to Spinoza and Leibniz. It was this proof that Kant criticized as the model cosmological proof. Al-Farabi's idealistic logic, according to B. Carra de Vaux, produced a permanent effect on the logical thought of Latin scholars.[51] Robert Hammond, comparing the arguments of St. Thomas about the existence of God with al-Fhrabi's, has recently shown his influence on the Christian philosopher. [52]

By placing some other ideas of these two thinkers in opposite columns as follows, Hammond reinforces his views regarding this influence:

The proof of movement: Due to our sense it is evident that in this world there are things that move. Each being is moved by something else. *Summa*	**The proof of movement:** In this world there are moving beings. Each being is moved by aninstigator.*'Uyutn al-Masa'il*
Active cause: In this world we evidence an order of active cause. *Summa*	**Al-'illat al-fa'ilah:** Every being has a cause in this changing world and this is the cause of another being. *Fusus al-Hikam*
Divine attributes: God is an absolutely eternal Being. *Summa*	**Divine attributes:** God is an eternal Being without cause. *Al-Siyasat al-Madaniyyah*

Al-Farabi synthesizes Aristotelianism and Neo-Platonism but supports the trends towards Neo-Platonism in the medieval West. As E. Gilson has shown, al-Farabi's translations were long used as arguments by those Western philosophers who wished to reinstate the Augustinian era.

With al-Farabi originated the idea of definite determinism based on a metaphysical foundation. As a result this conception led to the distinction between psychological necessity and physical necessity. God is the Necessary Being according to al-Farabi (Wajib al-Wujud) and takes necessity from Himself. All other beings take their necessity from God. The conception of God understood as Universal and Necessary Being is substituted in this way for the conception of God as the “efficient autonom”[53] of the theologians.

The world which takes its necessity from God and is as necessary as God Himself depends no longer, as in Aristotle, on the subtle laws of beauty and habit. It is not dependent on the autonomous will of God either. Thus, physics found a stronger and more unshakable foundation in al-Farabi than in the Greeks. This foundation is the metaphysical conception of necessity.

During the era of translations into Latin, the following were the main translations from al-Farabi:

John of Seville and Gundisalvus,

Liber Alpharabii de Ortu Scientiarium.

Gerard of Cremona,
Liber Alfarabii de sillogismi, De Divisions, de Scientiis,
Distinctio super librum Aristotelis de naturali auditu
Liber Alf arabii de Scientiis.

Hermann the German,
Declaratio compendi viam divisions Alf arabii super libri rhetoricum Aristotelis ed f ormam clariorom et totale reducta.

To this list may be added E. Gilson's edition of De Intellectu et intellects with a French translation.54

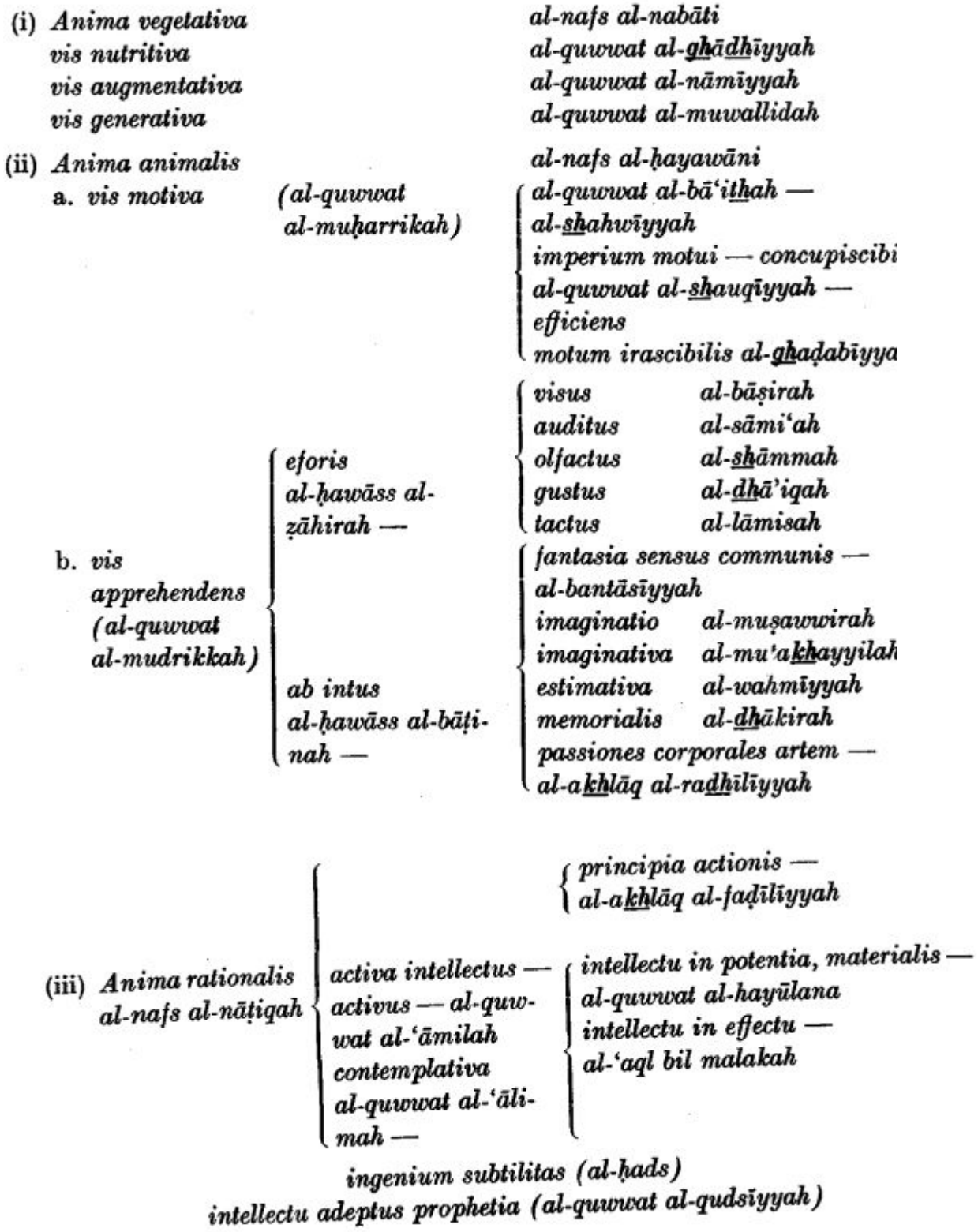
The philosophical development of the great Arab physicist ibn Haitham (Alhazen) proceeded from skepticism to a kind of criticism. The evolution from scepticism to his own ideological synthesis, he owed to al-Farabi. The Latin translations of some of ibn Haitham's books written during his empiricist and skeptical periods were instrumental to the development of Roger Bacon's ideas.

In addition to this, Western science profited by ibn Haitham's detailed research on optics. He really marks the beginning of physics as well as that of the movement of empiricism in the West. In the origination of empiricism, his role is even greater than that of al-Razi. Ibn Haiiham explained the role of induction in syllogism. He criticized Aristotle for the meagreness of his contribution to the method of induction which he regarded as superior to syllogism. He considered it to be the basic requirement for true scientific research.55

Besides his analysis of light, ibn Haitham devoted the major part of hi book to a detailed discussion of the problem of perception. He studied the perception of darkness, distance, position, body, size, and then in the menta field, the perception of proportion, appearances, and beauty. He saw the relation between perception and reflection and showed great acuteness i explaining how true knowledge is founded on these two processes. He held that knowledge combines the substance of the intellect with the content o experience and, thus, reconciled rationalism with empiricism.

The influence of ibn Sina on the West was very significant. During the period of translations into Latin, many of his books became known in the West. His greatest work al-Shifa' was first transmitted to the West in th fifth/eleventh century through Yanbu'al-Hayat,a philosophical work by the Jewish philosopher, Solomon b. Gabriel (known to the Latins as Avencebrol o Aviceborn).

Many adaptations of ibn Sina's philosophy were made by the Latin philosophers. B. Haneberg has given an elaborate account of this influence (Zu Erkenntnislehre von ibn Sina and Albert us Magnus, 1866). In his article published in Arch. d'hist. et lit. du Moyen Age, Gilson shows this influence still more full) By comparing the Latin translations of ibn 8-ma's works with the origin, Arabic texts we have prepared the following table of parallel terminology.



The translation movement received new impetus during the beginning of the sixth/twelfth century. By his work Daldat al–Ha'irin (The Guide for the Perplexed) Maimonides introduced Muslim philosophers and especially ibn Sina (Avicenna), to the West in great detail.[56] During the same century arguments started between Abelard and St. Thomas in the Latin world. Numerous translations from Arabic into Latin, especially of al–Farabi and ibn Sina, during that era suddenly widened the horizons of thought in the West.[57]

During the sixth/twelfth and seventh/thirteenth centuries the main centres where translations were made

from Arabic into Latin were Toledo, Durgos, Sicily, and Naples. Translations made by John of Seville and Gundisalvus were of primary importance. The first translated Arabic texts into the Roman language and the second, from Roman into Latin. Ibn Sina's al-Shifa was also partly rendered into Latin and entitled Suffacientia. Kitab al-Qanuln fi at-Tibb (Canons of Medicine) was also translated during the same period. The Latin rendering of the works of these as well as of other Muslim philosophers continued during the seventh/thirteenth century.58

The influence of these translations has to be classified in two groups.

i) The influence beginning with ibn Sina and al-Farabi and leading to the development of the trend of Avicennism.

ii) The continued influence exercised by al-Ghazali's summaries of al-Farabi's and ibn Sina's views.

The translations from al-Farabi and ibn Sina helped in the establishment of Augustinian philosophy. It supplied it with affirmative arguments. Hippone, in his book Doctrine Sacra, succeeded in making that synthesis. Ibn Sine's influence on medieval Christian thinkers was of primary importance sincethey profited by his ideas directly and also since he was useful in interpreting St. Augustine. However, the Augustinians, who were adherents of ibn Sina and had accepted the major ideas of the Muslim philosopher, severely attacked some of his doctrines.

This trend originated from De Anima the authorship of which had been attributed to Gundisalvus for a long time though later on the probability of its belonging to John of Seville increased. This is a work fully inspired by ibn Sina. It was published in 914/1508 in Venice as a preface of Shifa'.59

In the seventh/thirteenth century an effort was made at the reconciliation of St. Augustine's ideas with those of Aristotle-a reconciliation for which ibn Sina's system served as an appropriate basis. This led to the movement called Augustinian-Avicennism. William of Auvergne was the most important witness of Latin Avicennism.

His mentioning ibn Sina in different sections of his books forty times indicates how full he was of his ideas. William benefited from ibn Sina's definitions, his classification of the sciences, and many of his ideas on theology; used the examples he borrowed from him; and took over with some modifications his idea that “the celestial sphere is a living being”.

Carra de Vaux states that William's idea of the immortality of the soul-immortalitate anime-was inspired by ibn Sina. However, William attacked ibn Sina for such ideas as the eternity of the universe, the necessity of creation, and the separate active intellect taken as the efficient and final cause of all souls, etc.

It was for this reason that, according to the decrees issued in 607/ 1210 and 612/1215, the teaching of Aristotle's interpretations and, among them, ibn Sink's books were prohibited by the Church. While

William was criticizing Aristotle and ibn Sina, there were other Western thinkers of his time who were benefiting from the great Muslim philosopher. In de Vaux's terms, they were not Avicennists reconciling ibn Sina, as William did, with Christianity, but Avicennists who followed him in all respects.

Many Christian philosophers during that era accepted ibn Sine's theory of knowledge instead of Aristotle's. We observe the highest development of this trend in favour of ibn Sina, especially in Roger Bacon's illuminism. According to de Vaux, he was an Avicennist. Among the renowned scholars of the seventh/thirteenth century, he was the one best informed about ibn Sine's life and works. He did not only know all of ibn Sine's works translated into Latin, but also knew that apart from these he had other books in Arabic. With ibn Sine's treatise “Oriental Philosophy,” now lost, he was well acquainted.

He not only knew his works on philosophy, but also those on astronomy, medicine, and alchemy, and since he was an empiricist, he benefited to a great extent from ibn Sina's researches and did not stick to the limited view of the scholastics concerning him. He even claimed to have found in him the doctrine of the Holy Ghost and that of the origination of the universe in time. According to Gilson, his thesis on illumination is connected with ibn Sina's idea of the separate active intellect.

Roger Bacon followed ibn Sina in social ethics, conception of the CityState, and also in philosophy of religion. He argued that God is eternal, and His being eternal signifies infinite power. Infinite power necessitates infinite quality and, therefore, infinite goodness and sagacity. If the power of the First Cause is infinite, then the universe can be created by it.

Goodness of the First Cause necessitates its creation by It and its sagacity necessitates its creation according to purpose. Ibn Sina had arrived at the same conclusions through the same kind of thinking (E. Gilson, “Les Sources, etc.,” Archives, 1930).Alfred of Sareshel also studied ibn Sina and, like Roger Bacon, was an Avicennist in a broad sense.

The book entitled De Causis Primis et Secundis was attributed to ibn Sina for some time, because the anonymous author of this work was throughout inspired by him. Without mentioning the name, he refers to ibn Sina's Metaphysics three times and to his De Anima once. In another place, without mentioning hiss name, he quotes passages from him. Many times he summarizes him or makes free adaptations from him. The plan of the book as well as the dominant topics belong to ibn Sina altogether.

In the book entitled De Division Naturae the author of which is also unknown, ibn S–ma's views are partially Christianized and St. Augustine's ideas are partially laicized in an attempt at reconciliation. Gilson regards this book as the limit of Augustinian–Avicennism. De Vaux sees an apparent Avicennism in it. The most daring passages from ibn Sina have been adopted in it without modifications. Ibn Sina dominates the book.

On the other hand, Erigena and St. Augustine are included in it with many modifications and further interpretations. In fact, texts from Erigene and Denys together with ibn Sina's cosmism are put into a Christian composition.

Eventually, the influence of Avicennism got stronger than Augustinianism. For instance, the classification of intellects by al-Farabi and ibn Sina dominated Albert the Great. St. Thomas was still under the influence of these philosophers even when he criticized them just as al-Chazali was under their influence on many points even when he offered a criticism of them.

Ibn Sina, was getting known in the Western world also through the efforts of John of Seville who is named Hispanensis in some of his translations. David, his father, was of Jewish origin after whom he is also called ibn Dawud. Some of ibn Sina's books on metaphysics were translated by him. John compiled these under the title Opera (Majmu'ah = Collections), and it was twice published in Venice, in 901/1495 and in 906/1500.

The following books have been included in this Opera:
1. Logika;
2. Suf ficientia;
3. De Coelo et Mundo;
4. De Anima;
5. De Animatibus;
6. Intelligentia (Kitab al-'Aql);
7. Philosophia Prima (Falsafat al-fla).60

Ibn Sing's classification of the philosophical sciences was widely accepted in Europe in the Middle Ages and was preferred by the scholastics of the seventh/thirteenth century to that of any other. By his reading of ibn Bajjah's books, the Latin translations of most of which have now been lost, Albert the Great was led to the study of ibn Sing's works as also of al-Ghazali's.

Both he and his disciple Ulrich of Strassburg were influenced by him. The former followed ibn Bajjah's method and regarded him as the greatest commentator of Aristotle. One of the many new ideas that ibn Sina handed down to the West was that of intentio or the intelligible. His classification of the soul was also accepted by Albert the Great and through him by many medieval Western philosophers. One also sees ibn Sina's influence on St. Bonaventure and St. Thomas.

St. Thomas criticized ibn Sina indirectly while making a penetrating study of ibn Rushd (Averroes). In his book entitled Contra Averroistas, he examined all the interpretations of Aristotle made by ibn Rushd, and he profited by the ideas of Albert the Great who was his master. That way he got up to ibn Sina. St. Thomas developed his own philosophy by giving new meaning and direction to Aristotle while explaining and criticizing ibn S-ma's and ibn Ruahd's theories on the problem of the intelligible as separate from the material (al-mufariqat).

According to St. Thomas' explanations in this book, for ibn Sina all knowledge of the universal depends upon the knowledge of the particular, that is, the universal can be comprehended only with the help of the lower faculties, like perception, memory, and imagination. A totally naturalistic philosophy appears

here, although the philosopher is altogether in the field of metaphysics.

According to ibn Sina, the deeper our soul gets in the field of sensations, the nearer does it get to the intelligibles. According to St. Thomas, however, the farther the soul gets from sensations, the closer does it get to the intelligibles. According to him, ibn Sina's doctrine is a form of Platonism without being faithful to it in its results.61

It is certain that the translations of the majority of ibn Sing's books into Latin led to a considerable change in Western thinking. E. Gilson studied his influence on Duns Scotus in the article: “Avicenne et le point de depart de Duns Scotus,” Arch., 1927. Ibn Sina's views about the definition and classification of the soul had a wide influence. Ibn Sina defines the soul both as maturity of the body, entelechy, or form, as Aristotle had done, and as substance which is independent of matter.

This second definition marks the beginning of the conception of the soul as a substance independent of mattera conception which took its complete form in Descartes. The Muslim philosopher goes deep into the second category of the classification of the soul and, in order to prove that the soul is independent of the body, advances many arguments some of which, like the argument of identity and that of unity, were used by the Western philosophers following him.

The example of the flying man as cited by ibn Sina, in order to prove the substantiveness of the soul, given no doubt by the philosophers preceding him, was used in the West by St. Bonaventure and by others after him. Lastly, it may be noticed that ibn Sina's philosophy of illumination, developed under Neo-Platonic influence, paved the way for the development of several religiophilosophical trends in the West during the medieval period.

However, the failure to make complete translations of ibn Sina's works and to fill in the incomplete parts of Aristotle's texts found at a later date hindered the accurate appreciation of the Muslim philosopher and led even to the spread of certain vague ideas about him for centuries to come.62

For ibn Sina as for al-Ghazali after him and for Kant in the modern age, the categories are subjective. Indeed, the Kantian position that the categories are subjective and the knowledge of objects is due to a synthesis of sense perception and logical intelligence, was a common place of Muslim philosophy in the sixth/twelfth century.

It was expounded not only by ibn Sina and al-G,hazali, but also by the latter's contemporaries: ibn Haitham, famous for his optics, and al-Birfini (d. 440/1048), well known for his studies in mathematics, astronomy, geography, and ethnology.63

By the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century, almost all the works of ibn Rushd, known as Averro6s in the Latin world, had been translated into Latin. This translation work Was executed in various institutions by several scholars. At the college founded by Raymond, Archbishop of Toledo, some of the most important works of Muslim writers on philosophy and science, including Arabic versions of Aristotle and

commentaries and abridgments by al-Farabi, ibn Sina, and ibn Rushd were translated into Latin.

One of the well-known translators working at Toledo was a German, Hermann by name, but his renderings of the Arabic translations of Aristotle's works were regarded by Roger Bacon as barbarous and unintelligible. Orientalists like Cassiri, Rossi, Jourdain erroneously regard ibn Rushd as Aristotle's first Arab translator.

In fact, ibn Rushd knew neither Greek nor Syriac, let alone his being the first translator of Aristotle. Aristotle's work had, in fact, been translated into Arabic and interpreted by many persons before him and ibn Rushd read him through these translations.

The following of ibn Rushd's works were translated into Latin and/or Hebrew: Tahafut at-Taha/ut (Destruction of Destruction) into Latin and Hebrew;64 so was his Manahij al-Adilah, a work on philosophy and theology;65 his Fasl al-Maqal which discusses the relationship between faith and philosophy was translated into Hebrew; the Latin version of his three volumes on Lav is entitled Vigilia super erroris reportas in textibus civilis.

There was also the Hebrew translation of ibn Rushd's summary of al-Majisti (Almagest) on astronomy, but only its Latin version is extant under the title De Motu sphearr celestis. His writings on medicine were compiled in a volume entitled Kulliyd (Compendium). These were translated into Latin and published in sever volumes entitled De Colliget.
Volumes 2, 4 and 7 were compiled by Jean Bruyerii Champier and entitled Collectanea de Remedica. He also wrote an interpretation of ibn Sina's poem on medicine entitled Urjuzah fi al-Tibb which was one of ibn Rushd's best known books. An epistle by ibn Rushd entitled Theriaque (Tirydq) too was translated into Latin and Hebrew.

Ibn Rushd's commentaries on Aristotle's works were translated into Latin by Michael Scot, Hermann the German, and others. Ernest Renan in his book entitled Averroi et l'averroisme gives full account of the Latin texts.

Ibn Rushd is considered to be the greatest interpreter of Aristotle in the Muslim world. He composed three kinds of works on the interpretation o' Aristotle, one in a summary form, another in medium size, and yet another in detail. But he was not an interpreter only; he was also an original thinker of no mean stature.

The trend he started in the West caller Averroism continued for centuries. Siger de Barbante was its last representative. Ibn Rushd considered all former interpretations of Aristotle t be deviations from the thought of the master. He tried to interpret his thought as it originally was, freed from all kinds of Neo-Platonic influences. It was through ibn Rushd's works that Aristotle became widely known in Europe. Those who were looking in the medieval period for the real Aristotle, and bad a glimpse of him from those preceding ibn Rushd, became enthusiastic Averroists.66

No Muslim thinker influenced the medieval West more than ibn Rushd The main ideas for which he was vehemently opposed by the scholastics o the East and of the West and most enthusiastically welcomed by the radicals in thought from the sixth/twelfth to the eighth/fourteenth century an, which opened the door to the European Renaissance were : (1) allegories interpretation of the Scriptures, (2) the theory of two truths, which, in th, words of Macdonald, “ran like wild-fire through the schools of Europe,” (3) pan-psychism which implied immortality of the universal soul of humanity and mortality of the individual soul, (4) eternity and potentiality of matter, and (5) emancipation of women.

Ibn Rushd's theory of two truths, combined with the doctrine that matter is eternal and potent to produce all forms from within itself, was a godsend for the scientifically-minded people in the West who were, as a rule, condemned and persecuted by the orthodox Church and the State. They found in the above theses, which passed as Averroism, their best support. For this reason de Wulf calls ibn Rusted Doctor of the Anti-Scholastics.

In transmitting Muslim thought to the non-Muslim West, the Jews of Spain took the lead. During the short fanatical rule of the Berbers of Morocco, the Muwahbids, one of whom, abu Yusuf Ya`qub al-Mansnr (r.580/1184596/1199) banished even ibn Rushd from Morocco for a time to appease the orthodox, the Jews were persecuted and forced to migrate to the neighboring countries, viz., to Leon and Castile (the Christian part of Spain), to France across the Pyrehees, and to Sicily.

They were welcomed by Alfonso VI who had himself been educated among the Arabs and had done the work of initiating the Christians into Muslim thought. His successors Ferdinand II and Alfonso the Wise maintained the tradition and engaged Jewish scholars for translation work. Later, many of the Jewish scholars who were living in the country adjacent to the Pyrenees, having been turned out from there because of their Averroism, fled to other parts of Europe taking with them the learning of the Muslims.

Wherever they settled down they translated the works of Muslim thinkers, especially those of ibn Rushd whom they universally admired, from Arabic into Hebrew and from Hebrew into Latin. The family of Tibbonids established at Lunel undertook the translation almost exclusively of ibn Ruth--'s original works and his commentaries.

Such were Samuel ibn Tibbon's “The Opinions of the Philosophers,” Juda ben Solomon Cohen's “The Search for Wisdom,” and Gershon ben Solomon's “Gate of Heaven.” Among Jewish philosophers, while Ha-Levi followed al-Ghazali, and Maimonides ibn Sina, Gersonides was a disciple of ibn Rushd. Besides Jewish scholars, Jewish statesmen and travelers were instrumental in spreading Averroism in France, Italy, and Central Europe. The Friars also took a lead in accelerating the spread of Averroism; under their influence were translated Aristotle's works from the original Greek as well as ibn Rushd's commentaries on these works.

By the end of the sixth/twelfth century Averroism, i. e., the philosophy of ibn Rushd, had become so popular, particularly among the whole school of philosophers represented first by the Faculty of Arts at

Paris, and had become such a menace to Orthodox Christianity that in 607/1210 the Council of Paris forbade all teachings of Aristotle's Natural History and ibn Rushd's commentaries on it.

This prohibition was confirmed by the Legate Robert of Courcon, Cardinal of Paris, in 612/1215, and renewed by the Popes in 629/1231 and 643/ 1245. The Physics and Metaphysics of Aristotle were forbidden at the University of Toulouse by Urban IV in 662/1263. In 668/1269 the Bishop of Paris condemned thirteen of ibn Rushd's basic doctrines, and in 676/1277 he condemned the prominent Averroist, Siger of Brabant. Yet the strength o Averroism was irresistible.

No force could suppress it. In 612/1215, Frederick II became the Emperor of Rome. Having bee] educated at Palermo under Arab teachers and having come into close contac with the Muslims of Sicily and during the Crusades also with those of Syria, h. had become a great admirer of Muslim thought in general, and of ibn Rush(in particular. In 621/1224 he established a university at Naples chiefly wit) the object of introducing Muslim philosophy and science to the people of the West.

St. Thomas received his education at this university. Here both Christian and Jewish translators were engaged for rendering Arabic works int. Latin and Hebrew. The works of Aristotle and ibn Rushd in their Latin translation were used not only in the curriculum of this university, but wer sent also to the Universities of Paris and Bologna.

Nowhere did Averroism strike deeper roots than in the Universities of Bologna and Padua. Of thess two centers of learning Padua became the “hot–bed of Averroism.”

Averroism became rapidly the ruling mode of thought in the West. Scholars of medieval Europe were agitated by ibn Rushd's Aristotle as by no other author. From the end of the sixth/twelfth to the end of the tenth/sixteenth century Averroism remained the dominant school of thought, and that inspite of the orthodox reaction it created first among the Muslims in Spar then among the Talmudists and, finally, among the Christian clergy. “His writings... after being purged of objectionable matter by ecclesiastic authorties became prescribed studies in the University of Paris and other institution of higher learning.”

Ibn Rushd became more famous in the Latin world than in the Mush world, because very few copies of his books had been made and circulated Muslim countries. Besides, the disgrace be had to face towards the end of 1 life was instrumental to his being forgotten. Another important reason f it was the destruction of his books in Spain by Ximenez's order. In pursuant of this order, 80,000 manuscripts in Arabic were burnt in the squares Granada.67 In about 1009/1600, Scaliger, while searching for new manuscril in Spain, could find not even a single copy of ibn Rushd's works.

Philosophical Influence From Descartes To Kant

Although Pascal was a contemporary of Descartes, he cannot be said to have been a pioneer of modern philosophy in the West. Modern philosophical thought really began with the speculation of Descartes.

Muslim philosophers had penetrated deep into the West much before Descartes' time, and most of the works of al-Ghazali had been translated into Latin before the middle of the sixth/twelfth century, and since then had exercised a considerable influence on Jewish and Christian scholasticism.

Much before Descartes, his skepticism had been taken up by Jehuda Ha-Levi (d. 540/1145) in his work Chosari and it had also shown its mark on Crescas (d. 813/1410). The Dominican Raymond Martin had freely used the Hebrew translation of Tahd/ut al-Falasifah, another of al-Qhazali's works, and incorporated a great deal of it in his Pugio Fidei. Pascal too had been deeply affected by his thoughts.

The influence that al- hhazali had on modern European thought has not so far been fully appreciated. There is no acknowledgment by Descartes of his indebtedness (direct or indirect) to any Muslim thinker, and yet it is difficult to believe that he did not know al-Ghazali's general position and was not influenced by it through the Latin scholastics, whom beyond question he must have read. This conclusion forces itself upon the mind all the more strongly when one realizes that he was not only a scholar of Latin, but had himself written two of his most important works, Meditationes de prima philosophia and Principia philosophiae, in Latin.

We notice that, exactly like al-Ghazali, Descartes came to his conclusions by a study of his own self, al-Ghazali's starting formula being “I will, therefore, I am,” and Descartes' being, “I think, therefore, I am.” He followed al-Ghazali's derivation of the negative and positive attributes of God from the concept of necessary existence.

The distinction made by him, and by Galileo before him, between the infinite (that the parts of which cannot be expressed by any number or measurement) and the indefinite (that which has no limit) was exactly the same as given by al-Ghazali and ibn Sina, and, following them, by Crescas and Bruno. Exactly like al-Ghazali he begins with describing how in vain he interrogated in his mind every school and every creed for an answer to the problems that disturbed him and finally resolved to discard all authority.

If the Muslim world had possessed the original of any mode of thought or movement, particularly in matters of detail, which was developed by the West later, when most of the classics of Muslim thought in the spheres of philosophy, medicine, and science had been translated into Latin, then, even in the absence of direct evidence, one would be justified in presuming that that mode of thought or movement was stimulated by influence from the Muslim East.

Although all other masterpieces of al-Ghazali had been translated into Latin before 545/1150, and had admittedly exerted great influence on the Western scholastic thought, there is no evidence that al-Ghazali's al-Munqidh min al-Dalal had been translated into Latin before Descarte's time.

It is for the scholars of Latin to discover that. But there is so much internal evidence in the most remarkable parallel of that work with Descartes' Discours de la methode, printed in 1047/1637, that it becomes impossible to deny its influence on the father of modern philosophy in the West.

Both of these works, al-Ghazali's al-Mungidh and Descartes' Discours de Influence of Muslim Thought on the West la methode, are autobiographical. Both al-Ghazali and Descartes began the stories of their lives from their youth (M. 4, D. 8).68 Both realized how, despite having the same reasoning faculty, the children of Muslim or Christian parents, thanks to custom and example, had different beliefs from the beliefs held by those brought up by Jewish parents, and how those brought up among Frenchmen were different from those brought up among the Germans (M. 6, D. 19).

Both, therefore, decided that they would not believe anything that was based on tradition, custom, or example (M. 5–6, D. 13), and both walked into every dark spot to discover the truth (M. 4, D. 19). Both held, for exactly the same reasons, that the senses cannot yield certain knowledge (M. 8–9, D. 36).

The language and the examples of the defects of sense-experience given by both of them were almost identical (M. 8–9, D. 36, 37). Both studied all the literature that came into their hands, and in the accounts of their studies both mentioned the same subjects: philosophy, mathematics, logic, theology, and physical sciences. After examining all these subjects and all creeds one by one both concluded that they all fell short of certain knowledge and so resolved to discard all authority (M. 17–62, D. 8–14); and, thus, both became extremely skeptical about all that had passed as knowledge up to their times and boldly rejected the opinions they had so far held (M. 12, D. 17). Both of them, considering that the very same experiences as they had in waking life might occur also while they slept without there being at that time any truth in them, decided to feign that everything that had entered their minds till then was no more than illusion of dreams (M. 10, D. 31).

Both withdrew from their places of work, wandered in search of truth for several years from place to place (M. 3, D. 28), and finally went to lands quieter and more congenial for their search after truth (Tus and finally Nishapur in the case of one and Holland in the case of the other) (M. 3, D. 30). Both devised a new method of discovering the truth and this method was exactly the same for both. It consisted in taking only that as true which was conceived very clearly and very distinctly without any possibility of doubt (M. 5, 20, D. 20).

Both thought that the clarity and distinction they demanded of every truth must be at least that found in mathematics, that which we see, for example, in apprehending that 10 is greater than 3 or that the sum of the three angles of a triangle is equal to two right angles (M. 7, D. 35). Both modestly declared that the purpose of their discourses was not that everybody should follow their example, but only to relate the story of their own method of finding the truth; others may find the truth in some other ways (M. 19, D. 36f).

This most amazing resemblance between the two works makes George Henry Lewis say in his Biographical History of Philosophy that “had any translation of it existed in the days of Descartes, everyone would have cried out against the plagiarism.”

If it were only a few facts of their autobiographies, their going, for example, to quieter places for

contemplation, and a few other things common to these works of al-Ghazali and Descartes, they might be considered to have been due to mere coincidence, but when the entire plan of their respective works, the whole treatment of the subjects discussed, and the whole content of these subjects down to detailed arguments, examples, and relatively unimportant matters, culminating in skepticism and in ultimate discovery of the method of finding the truth, run parallel to each other, it becomes impossible to attribute all that to coincidence.

It might be that along with other masterpieces of al-Ghazali, al-Munqidh too had been translated into Latin and read by Descartes. Nowhere has the existence of a translation of this work been mentioned, but nowhere has it been expressly denied. Alfred Guillaume in his article in The Legacy of Islam states, "His books on Logic, Metaphysics and Physics became known through the translators of Toledo in the sixth/twelfth century."

He mentions no exception. It might have been one of the eighty-seven Arabic works translated by Gerard of Cremona or one of the works rendered into Latin by John of Seville and Dominic Gundisalvus. Or else it might have been the case that the text of al-Ghazali was orally translated for Descartes by some scholar of Arabic. Descartes himself refers to "the example of many fine intellects that had previously had this plan" (D. 29), but does not mention any by name. This may be a veiled reference to al-Ghazali who alone among his predecessors had followed exactly the same plan. In any- case, whatever the facts, in our opinion the influence of a1-Ghazali on Descartes' Discours de la mkthode is indubitable.

The next great luminary of modern philosophy was Spinoza. As shown by Dunnin Borkowski, he was deeply influenced by al-Farabi, whose ideas had reached him through Jewish scholars like Maimonides. "Any one who reads Spinoza's De Emendatione Intellectus would be struck by the great similarity between this book and al-Farabi's book What Should Precede the Study of Philosophy.

The succession of ideas in the two books is the same ... Even the final aim of the two books is the same, namely, the knowledge of God, `in order to follow His example as much as lies in human capacity.'"[69]

Ibn Sina's influence on Spinoza through Maimonides is noticeable in his (Spinoza's) view that in God intelligence, intelligent, and intelligible are identical, and so are essence and existence, while in created beings existence is an accident super-added to essence.

As mentioned before, the cosmological proof for the existence of God given by al-Farabi and ibn Sins, was accepted by Spinoza, as by Maimonides and St. Thomas before him, and al-Ghazali's distinction between the infinite and the indefinite was followed by him as it was done by Crescas, Bruno, Galileo, and Descartes. Besides, his idea of substance was the same as al-Ghazali's idea of God-simple, having no accidental qualities, no distinction of genus and species and no separation of essence from existence.

His idea of freedom was also identical with al-Ghazali's idea of necessity (non-dependence upon anything else) and that of necessity was identical with the latter's idea of possibility (dependence upon a cause). Again, Spinoza's definition of the forms of imagination more or less conformed to the distinction between retentive memory and composite memory made by Maimonides following al-Ghazali In all these cases there is merely a difference of terminology.

The greatest name in modern philosophy after Spinoza is that of Leibniz But before we show his relation to Muslim thought, we should like to make a few remarks about the philosophy of another great thinker of the modern age, Kant, who claimed to be the Copernicus of philosophy.

Like al-Ghazali, Kant distinguished between phenomena and noumena and regarded the physical world of which alone the scientific knowledge is true as the world of phenomena, to which alone the categories, which to him are equally subjective, are applicable, causality, substance, and attribute bein; excepted by al-Ghazali. Like him, he demonstrates that theoretical reason cal analyse only what the senses yield, and that it cannot solve the basic and more important questions of philosophy and religion, such as the existence of God the nature of His attributes, the immortality of the soul, and the eternity c the universe. Kant found the key to the solution of these questions in the practical reason of man, while al-Ghazali discovered it in the religious experience of the Prophet and the mystic, which in its turn is to be tested by the moral certitude and moral influence which it exercises upon the soul. This comparison should make it clear as to who the Copernicus of philosophy was, al-Ghazali or Kant.

How are we to explain this close resemblance between the philosophic] ideas of al-Ghazali and Kant? We believe that this explanation can be foun in the philosophy of Leibniz, for, as T. H. Green observed, the doctrines Leibniz formed a permanent atmosphere of Kant's mind, despite the insp ration he received from Hume in his youth.[70]The minds of both worked o the same lines.[71] Kant was only a corrected and developed form of Leibniz, whereas Leibniz was an incorrect and undeveloped form of al-'Ghazali combine with the Asharite atomism.[72]

Leibniz, like al-Ghazali and Kant, regarded the world as phenomenal. For him, as for these others, human knowledge does not consist solely in the perception of universal truths, nor does it entirely depend upon the sense Like both of them, he made a distinction between concepts and percept though he used different terms (relatively clear and confused perceptions) express this distinction.

Time and space for him, as for them, are not real characteristics of the real, though, like al-Ghazali and unlike Kant, he regards them not as intuitions but as ideas of relations. As for them, so for him, the categories-being, substance, unity, causality, identity, etc.-are supplied to experience not by the senses but by the mind.[73] Only their lists of these categories are in some details different.

Leibniz was a younger contemporary of Spinoza whose indebtedness to Muslim thought is undoubted. He could read Latin with the help of pictures at the age of eight; he wrote poetry in that language at the age of fourteen and read the scholastics during his youth. Therefore, he cannot be supposed to have

been ignorant of al-Ghazali's views through Latin translations. In fact, the influence of Muslim thought on him is evident in some other respects as well.

Al-Farabi's proof of the existence of God from the concepts of necessity and contingency came down to him through ibn Sina, Maimonides, and St. Thomas, and his view that man's perfection comes from God and imperfection from his own nature is also traceable to Muslim scholastics. The same is true of his view of Goo as simple. Ibn Sina's influence on him can hardly be doubted for there is a curious parallelism in al-Shifa' and the Monadology of Leibniz in describing association and memory. The similarity is remarkable not only in the treatment of the subject but also in the example of the dog and the stick with which they illustrate their theory.74

Without intensive research in the education that Locke and Berkeley received and the studies they pursued it is difficult to say whether al-Ghazali had any influence on their philosophy or not, but what we can say with certainty is that he anticipated much of their speculation. Like the empiricists from Locke to Hume, he bases knowledge on experience rather than on intellectual concepts, though he does not confine the meaning of the term “experience” to sensuous experience only, but extends it so as to include within it the intuitive experience of the Prophet, the mystic, and the saint, and thus escapes skepticism to which the European empirical thought inevitably led. This latter kind of experience is, according to him, far more important than sense-experience, since this alone yields the knowledge of Ultimate Reality.

Like Hume, al-Ghazali proclaims that we can have no knowledge of cause and effect in the realm of phenomena. All we know is that one event succeeds another. His description of induction is the same as Mill's. We perceive by the senses that the same thing repeatedly passes the same way (e.g., fire burns); we conclude that it will always pass the same way (fire will always burn); or we notice that certain things pass for the most part the same way (e.g., taking scammony is followed by diarrhoea or wine by intoxication); we judge that the one will probably follow the other in future cases as well.

But this explanation of induction is not based on the fallacy of petitio principii as Mill's. According to him, it is reason which judges that this sequence of events must come to pass by necessity, for if it came by mere chance could not have occurred always or in most cases in the past. It is, he sa3 by this argument alone that induction of empirical laws can be rational justified.

Al-Ghazali anticipates Schopenhauer and other voluntarists in holding that not thought but will is the fundamental reality, but he steers clear Schopenhatter's pessimism. God, according to him, is Will and the words flows from Him like a river. Like Bergson, even more like Jacobi and Schleik macher, he makes intuition or immediate consciousness the source of knowledge.

Al-Ghazali exerted great influence over the East and the West. It w the Protestant revolt that freed the West from the grip of this great mar intellect, and in the East, having conquered all rival thought; it has even this day a hold too tight to allow any fresh movement.75

Philosophical Influence in the Post Kantian Period

In the sixth/twelfth century some stir was created by another Musl thinker ibn Tufail (Chapter XXVII) known in the Latin world for long Abentofal or Abubacer. Most of his writings were lost probably during the destruction by Ximenez. But his fame is due to his Hayy Ibn Yagzan, a philosophical romance, in which he shows that even without the help of tradition and revelation man can attain to the knowledge of nature and through that the knowledge of God.

This remarkable work was first translated into Hebre and Moses of Narbonne wrote an excellent interpretation of it. It was translat from Arabic into Latin by Edward Pococke Junior under the title Philo phus autodidactus sive Epistola Abi Jaafar ebn Tophail de Hai ebn Yokdh and published together with the Arabic text at Oxford in 1082/1671, and then its translations appeared in most of the European languages.

It was first translated into English by George Keith in 1085/1674, then by Geot Ashwell in 1098/1686. Simon Ockley published its translation into Engli from the original Arabic in 1120/1708. Its Dutch version was first publish in Amsterdam in 1083/1672 and again in 1113/1701. It was translated in German twice. Finally, Gauthier published the French version of the be with an analytic summary in 1318/1900. In Paul Bromilc's words, “in comparatively short time it caught the fancy of the public––in fact it to the world by storm and for a long time it remained in vogue.” The work interest in it has not yet ceased, for it was translated into Russian in 13. 1920, and into Spanish in 1353/1934.

The large number of these translations is indicative of the influence this philosophical novel on Western thought. After the appearance of translations, many books written in the West were inspired by this work. Among them may be Bacon's philosophical novel, Atlantis, and other Utopian novels, the last of which was Robinson Crusoe produced by Daniel Defoe in 1132/1719, eleven years after the publication of Simon Ockley's translation. It has, therefore, been justly concluded that, among others, Daniel Defoe was indebted to the great Muslim philosopher for the conception of his work.

In discussing the influence of Muslim philosophy on Western thought we cannot omit the reference to ibn Khald0n. He has been recognized by many to be the father of sociology and the first philosopher of history. He was the first to oppose Greek and early Muslim philosophers explicitly by asserting that human societies should not be studied from an idealist–rationalist point of view, but ought to be taken as natural phenomena.

This view is fully expounded in his Muqaddimah (Introduction) to his historical work entitled Kilab al–'Ibar. The Introduction was first printed in Paris by Quatremere and then by Mustafa Fehmi at Bfilaq. Its first translation was made in Turkey by Pirizade Sahib Molla and Ahmet Jevdet Pasha.

Western people were not aware of this philosopher until the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century. At the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century, d'Hiberbelot merely referred to him in Bibliotheca

Orientalis; Sylvestre de Sacy emphasized his importance at the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century.

At the end of that century, Hammer Prugstall wrote articles about him and referred to him as the “Montesquieu of the Arabs.” Some years later, Garcin de Quatremere published the original version of the “Introduction” under the title Prolegomenes d'Ebn Khaldoun and attempted a summarized translation of it but could not finish it. Baron de Slane succeeded in making a complete translation between 1279/1862 and 1285/1868. In 1351/1938 this translation was reproduced in photoprints.

This translation made it possible for philosophers and sociologists to study the text. In the West since then, ibn Khaldun has been often referred to by Western thinkers and some have considered him the founder of a new science. Some consider him a philosopher of history. Others think he pioneered sociology. For instance, Rappoport, R. Flint, N. Schmidt think he is a philosopher of history. Gumplowitz, R. Maunier, Findikoglu, Sati'u Bey al–Husri, and Schmidt consider him the pioneer of sociology.

According to Gaston Bouthoul, he had both these qualities. He regards him as the leader of the biological conception of society–a conception later worked out in their own way by Vico, Montesquieu, and Marx. F. Schulz wrote many articles on ibn Khaldun in the Journal Asiatique (Paris, 1303/1885). Graberg of Hemso, Franz Rosenthal, von Kremer, Lewine, G. Bouthoul, Gabrieli, Stefano Colosio, Ferreiro, Carra de Vaux, T. J. de Boer, G. Richter, Gauthier, A. Bombaci, Charles Issawi, W. Fischel, D. B. MacDonald, Breisig, H. A. R. Gibb, R. Altemira, etc., have referred to him since the end of the last century. As a result of this strong interest shown by the Orientalists in him, his conceptions of history and society have had an influence on some contemporary philosophers of history such as Spengler and Breisig.

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Chapter 69: Influence of Muslim thought on the East

Introduction

Gibbon describes the rise and expansion of Islam as one of the most memorable revolutions which has impressed a new and lasting character on the nations of the world. Beginning with a small following, ill–equipped financially and militarily, Islam turned out eventually a mighty force, wielding its scepter of authority over a world greater than that of Alexander the Great, greater than that of Rome, and that too acquired in a very much shorter period.

Hardly fifty years had passed since Prophet Muhammad was commissioned by God to spread His gospel of truth when the Muslims planted the banner of Islam on the confines of India on the one side, and on the shores of the Atlantic on the other. Islam began to spread after the migration (hijrah) of the Prophet from Mecca to Medina. Conversions took place on an unprecedented scale. The new ideology inspired the Arabs as no other ideology had done before; it filled their hearts with longings both mundane and supramundane and enabled them to accomplish in an incredibly short time what would have otherwise required centuries of well–planned and well–calculated strategy.

The amazing success of the Arab nation was due not only to their organization, zeal, and aspiration, but also and in a large measure to the unifying action of Islam and the inspiring and revolutionary nature of its social programme and its ability to lead the masses out of the hopeless situation created by the decay of the antique civilizations of Greece, Rome, Persia, China, and India,1 and to the all–powerful influence of the Qur'an. None can deny the inherent faith of the early Muslims in the ultimate triumph of their cause, actuated as that faith was, not by the baser motives of power, but by the idea of establishing the Kingdom of God on earth.

In the opinion of Georges Rivoire2 the objective of the Muslim conquests was the construction of a universal State which “recognized no distinctions of race, nor of social conditions, the only rule it insisted upon was equal justice and fraternity.” Naturally, the physically suffering and morally disjointed masses found in Islam a promise of liberation and salvation.

To the places they conquered the Muslims carried not only the flag of Islam but also culture, philosophy, and the study of nature all of which had their source in the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

In what follows, an attempt will be made to trace the course of intellectual revolution which Muslim thought brought about in Persia, Turkey, China, India, and Indonesia.

Persia

Islam was introduced to the land of Persia in 7/628 by the Prophet Muhammad himself, when through an epistle addressed to Khusrau Parviz, the then Persian monarch, he extended an invitation to him and his subjects to embrace Islam: to affirm the unity of God and the apostleship of Muhammad, to do good and to refrain from evil. In olden times no king, much less a Persian potentate, would receive a direct communication from an unknown person without getting flared up, the act being regarded as an instance of insolence and sacrilege.

Accordingly, the Prophet's letter was torn to pieces and his emissary expelled with ignominy and disgrace. On hearing this, the Prophet felt sad and prophesied an early downfall of Khusrau's Empire. It was during the rule of the first Caliph that, as a response to this insult, the Muslim forces, under the leadership of General Sa'd, invaded Persia and inflicted a terrible defeat on the Persian army in the battle of Qadisiyyah.

This battle served as a prelude to a series of defeats which the Persians suffered at the hands of the Arabs and which sealed their fate in a short period of ten years after the delivery of the Prophet's letter. King Yazdigird, a lad of eighteen, was probably the last ruler to make a futile attempt against the Muslims. His Chinese and Turkish mercenaries deserted him on the first onslaught of the Arabs, while he was himself plundered and assassinated by a villager in whose hut he had taken refuge after fleeing from the battlefield.

In the first/seventh century the Persian Empire like the Byzantine Empire was tottering under the crushing weight of despotism. Persecutions born of religious dissensions were the order of the day. Zoroastrianism was the State religion and its priests, not content with the spiritual authority they enjoyed by virtue of their office, also held positions of trust and responsibility in the administration of the State. A campaign of vilification followed by persecutions started against the adherents of the older forms of religion in Persia, among which ranked Jews, Christians, Buddhists, Sabaeans, Gnostics, and Manichaeans.

All the older faiths and creeds longed to breathe freely and freshly in an atmosphere of toleration and comradeship which they eventually found in the teachings of Islam. Not only was it enjoined by Islam that the Christians and Jews must be treated with fairness and consideration because of their being the “People of the Book,” but according to the clear directions of the Prophet the Zoroastrians were also to be treated at par with them, and hence entitled to the same privileges and concessions as enjoyed by

the Muslims.

All that was required of the non-Muslims was payment of a nominal poll-tax for the security they enjoyed under the Muslim rule. In return they were exempted not only from the payment of zakat, the State tax which every Muslim had to pay, but also from military service. Those non-Muslims who entered the military service had not to pay the poll-tax.

The conquest of Persia by the Arabs brought relief to the Christians. Earlier, the Sassanid kings had fomented bitter struggles between the Jacobites and the Nestorians; they had also been persecuting the Christian sects within their domains because of the Christian aggression from abroad. King Khusrau II ordered a general persecution of the Christians as he had suffered a defeat at the hands of Heraclius, a Christian monarch. The masses also welcomed the new creed. The Zoroastrian priests held in contempt the working classesartisans, mechanics, laborers, agriculturists-who defiled fire, earth, and water in pursuance of their trades and professions.

The laboring classes in the Zoroastrian society had the same miserable lot as the Sudras in the caste - ridden Hindu society. In the new faith of the conquerors, the common man found a panacea to most of the social ills from which he had so terribly suffered. Islam recognizes no distinctions of caste and occupation; it gives no preference to one class of individuals over another save on the basis of merit; and advocates a theory of human brotherhood which transcends geographical and political limits.

With the downfall of the Sassanid dynasty, Zoroastrianism lost its powerful support. In the altered circumstances it found it extremely difficult to hold its own against the contending forces competing for supremacy. To its spiritual bankruptcy may be added the social confusion for which its priests were chiefly responsible. The Zoroastrian masses welcomed the new faith because of its liberalism, dynamism, and absence of parochialism.

They were also drawn towards it because of the many similarities between their faith and the new one. Instead of Ahura Mazdah and Ahriman, they found Allah and Iblis; they also got their angels and demons, their stories about the creation of man and his resurrection, about heaven and hell and about sundry things similar to those they found in their own religion. Besides all this, they discovered that the ethics of Islam was not very different from theirs. Under the Muslim rule they began to enjoy a remarkable degree of toleration; their religious practices were respected and their fire-temples safeguarded.[3]

Besides the causes enumerated above for the spread of Islam in Persia mention may also be made of the marriage of Shahrbanu, a daughter of Yazdigird-the last monarch of the Sassanid dynasty-with Husain, the son of 'Ali. Consequently, in the descendants of Husain and Shahrbanu,the Persians could see the heirs to their ancient kings. This also accounts to some extent for the rise of Shi'ism as a separate sect in Persia and the devotion of the Persians to the 'Alids. Islam lost its alien character and appealed to the patriotic feelings of the average Persian, as he felt that, in addition to other advantages,

he gained through the aforesaid marriage alliance a reassertion of his native values and traditions.

Persia had a remarkable culture and a highly developed civilization many centuries before the advent of Islam. In olden times, she was the cradle of thoughts and beliefs which supplied religion and philosophy to Persians and non-Persians. She was also the centre of a mighty political organization, and her theories of statecraft and administration became a model to the Turks.

The intellectual aspect of the pre-Muslim Persian culture was determined by the philosophies of Zoroaster, Mani, and Mazdak-more or less dualistic despite a tinge of monotheism. The pre-Sassanian thought indicated a tendency towards monotheism, especially in Zoroaster, but the tendency became a dominant feature of Persian thought, almost an indubitable truth, only after the Muslim conquest. The dualism of Good and Evil yielded place to the dualism of God and matter.

The 'Abbasid Caliphate provided the most congenial atmosphere to the development of philosophy. As a result of Muslim influence, the Persians became the leaders of thought. Among the names of the foremost Persian thinkers may be mentioned those of ibn Miskawaih, ibn Sina, al-grhazali, Fakhr alDin Razi, Nasir al-Din Tasi, Mulla Sadra.

The encyclopedists, Ikhwan al-Safa, though not original in their contributions, are also worthy of mention. They had among them some good scholars like Zaid, son of Rifa'a, abu SulAiman Muhammad of Bust, 'Ali of Zanjan, abu Ahmad Mihrajani and 'Aufi.[4] Persian Sufism also contains some very great names such as abu Said ibn abi al-Khair, 'Attar, Jalal al-Din Rilmi, Sa'di, Hafiz, al-Jili, and Jami.

From Persia, Islam spread to China, Turkey. Afghanistan, India, and Indonesia.

China, Turkey and Afghanistan

Islam was carried over to China by Muslim merchants. It was firmly planted there by Arab troops who fought for Su Tsung (139/756) and settled in China after the successful conclusion of the war.

Arnold thinks that there is no direct evidence of any proselytizing activity on the part of the Muslims in China. The entire Muslim population of the land consists of the descendants of the immigrants from Arabia, Persia, Turkey, and other Muslim territories as a result of Mongol conquests.[5] The number of Muslims in China is estimated at about thirty million.[6] The Chinese Muslims have, however, identified themselves with the rest of their countrymen, in spite of their religious differences.

The Afghans believe that they were invited to Islam by Khalid bin Walid in the first/seventh century. But the earliest record of their conversion to Islam dates from the reign of al-Mamdn (198-218/813-833) when a king of Kabul was converted to Islam. His successors, however, reverted to Buddhism. Afghanistan was won for Islam in 258/871 by Ya'qub bin Laith, but Islamic ideas did not catch the imagination of the masses until after the conquest of the country by Subuktigin and Mahmfd of Chaznah.

The invasion of Chingiz Khan on Muslim Asia is regarded as the greatest calamity that has ever fallen on the human race. Like the huge waves of a mighty cyclone, it swept over the lands of Bukhara, Khiva, Khurasan, Iraq, and Russia. Not only did Chingiz Khan plunder whatever he laid his hands on, but he also destroyed seats of learning and the precincts of Islamic civilization.

After his death, his Empire was divided among his sons. Persia fell to the lot of Tuli, one of whose descendants, Hulagu, was destined to found a dynasty which lasted for about a century and a half. The official religion of the Mongols was Shamanism, which, being a primitive type of religion could not hold its own against the organized religions prevalent in the lands over which the Mongols ruled.

Islam had the least chance of success as the Mongols had established their kingdom on the ruins of the Muslim Empire. But it is one of the surprises of human history that the conquered became the con–querors. The Mongols eventually accepted Islam–a religion the annihilation of which they had planned. With the conversion of the Mongol king to Islam this religion got a chance of spreading to Turkestan, Siberia, and Russia.

The Turks originally inhabited certain parts of Central Asia, particularly Mongolia, Siberia, and Turkestan. They did not profess any of the Semitic or non–Semitic faiths. They worshipped, like most primitive tribes of Asia, the sky, the earth, and water. Their religion lay in deifying the forces of nature and propitiating them by offerings, magic, and incantations. Before their acceptance of Islam they had come under the influence of Buddhism, Manichaeism, Judaism, and Christianity.

But none of these creeds could win them over permanently to its side. It was Islam which they accepted finally in the fourth/tenth century. Several reasons have been advanced for the triumph of Islam, but the most cogent one out of these, according to G. L. Lewis, “was the fact that acceptance of Islam automatically conferred citizen rights in a vast and flourishing civilization.”[7]

It was towards the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century that a small band of nomad Turks migrated from Khurasan under Sulaiman Shah. Driven by Mongols they hoped to find shelter in Asia Minor. In the rulers of this area they found people of a kindred race, the Saljuqian Turks, whose kingdom was disintegrating due to disputes of succession and invasions from Central Asia. Taking advantage of the decadent conditions, Ertoghrul and Dundar, two sons of Sulaiman, established themselves in a territory ceded by the Saljuqs in recognition of their military assistance. To `Uthman, the son of Ertoghrul, however, goes the credit of laying a secure foundation for the Turkish Empire.

Though the Saljugs were nomad tribesmen, they evinced keen interest in the civilizations of the Persians and the Greeks with whom they came in contact. During the sixth/twelfth century, Anatolia, Quniyah, and Erzerum became covered with architectural designs inspired by the Persian and the Greek art, They also “encouraged religious thinkers and philosophers. The famous Jalal al–Din Riimi flourished under their auspices in Quniyah, and so did others of the Sufi school.” [8]

The Ottoman Turks who replaced the Saljugs were no less ardent in furthering the cause of learning and

literature. It is said about `Ut-hman that as he lay on his death-bed, he advised his sons to “promote the learned to honour ... and whatsoever place thou hearest of a learned man, let honour, magnificence, and clemency attend him.”9

Ottoman literature is very extensive, comprising every species of letters then current. Among the earlier poets may be mentioned Ghazi Fadil, Shaikhi, Mir 'Ali Shir Nawa'i, Abmad Pasha, Najati, Dhati, Zainab, Mihri, and ibn Kamal. They wrote lyrics, and also thoughtful poems explaining the knotty problems of life through allegories and stories of animals and birds. Among the later poets who give evidence of greater poise and balance may be mentioned Fudiili, Bagi, Nefi, Nabi, and Nadim. They introduced new strains and new modes of thinking in poetry. Among the prosewriters, the names of 'Ali Chalabi, Avliya Efendi, Katib Chalabi may be mentioned. They wrote on history, chronology, geography, travels, and other subjects. 10

All this shows that, like other Muslim countries, Turkey espoused the cause of learning and literature. The incentive was, however, provided by the religion of Islam, which the Turks had finally accepted.

India

The impact of Islam on Hinduism is a phenomenon of remarkable significance. It is regretted that the Western writers as well as those of India (with the sole exception of Dr. Tara Chand) have in their works either ignored this fact altogether or assigned to it an insignificant place in the history of Indian thought. In this section, it is intended to bring out the extent and significance of those ideas and beliefs which had their source in Muslim philosophy and religion and which in course of time, through personal contacts, religious disputations, discussions, and exchange of views, colored and changed to a very substantial degree the complexion of Hindu thought and gave it a new orientation and direction.

There is no denying the fact that the Muslims were also influenced by Hinduism in some very important respects. They borrowed from the Hindus some aspects of mysticism and some mores, especially their caste-system, funeral and birth rites, marriage customs, untouchability which they practised against sweepers, and a host of other things-good and bad-which it is needless to enumerate. But the main tenets of the Hindu creed had no influence on Muslim ideology and code of life. No Muslim thinker of any importance has ever accepted the doctrines of transmigration, incarnation, karma, and polytheism in any shape or form, and these doctrines constitute the very soul and spirit of Hinduism.

On the contrary, monotheistic ideas of the Muslims together with their belief in the universal brotherhood of mankind were adopted by the Hindus which they bandied about as of Hindu origin. Indian philosophy after the first/seventh century has evinced keener interest in monotheism and tasteless society; it has also laid less emphasis on ritualism and negativism in life. This change may be due to several sociological and technological forces among which the advent of Islam in India must be ranked as a major factor of great cultural and philosophical importance.

In the event of two cultures meeting together the dominant one pushes the weaker one to the periphery and occupies the centre itself. Something of the same sort happened in the case of Hindu culture and beliefs. In the ideological struggle which ensued Muslim infiltration into India, the native culture, finding itself unequal to the incoming one, had to relinquish the central position.

In what follows an attempt will be made to explain very briefly this remarkable phenomenon. After a short historical survey of the cultural contact, Muslim influence will be traced first up to Sankara, then from Sankara to Ramanuja, and lastly from Ramanuja down to the present times.

Cultural Contacts

The impact of Islam on Indian culture, thought, and religion was felt as early as the second/eighth century if not earlier. The writings of Muslim historians and travellers show that it was in South India, on the Malabar Coast, that the Muslims who were often preachers of their faith first settled as traders. Akbar Shah Khan11 reports of the tomb of a Companion of the Prophet, named Tamim Ansari at Mylapur, twelve miles south of Madras. Islam also penetrated Ceylon, Ibn Battutah found the tombs of several preachers and saints in Ceylon during his travels. He mentions the names of Shaikh 'Abd Allah Hanif, Shaikh 'Uthman, and Baba Tahir among others.

Historical evidence proves unmistakably that the first Arab fleet appeared on Indian waters in 15/636 and was repulsed. But about the end of the first/ seventh century, says Rawlinson, the Muslim Arabs settled on the Malabar Coast, and this fact is corroborated by Francis Day in his Land o/ the Permals, and by Sturrock in his South Kanara and Madras Districts Manuals. Humayun Kabir writes, “Innes, in his Malabar and Anjangode District Gazetteer, quotes an inscription of a tomb from Kollam of one 'Ali who died there in 166/788.

Further circumstantial evidence is offered by the revolt in 141/ 758 of a colony of Muslims established at Canton in China. It is obvious that this colony could not have been founded without intermediate stations, of which the Malabar Coast was likely to be one. Caldwell picked up near Kayalapattan in Tinnevelly, near the mouth of the Tamraparni, a number of Arab coins bearing dates from 71/690.”12

Mubammad bin Qasim invaded Sind in 94/712. The expedition was despatched by I,Iajjaj, the viceroy of Iraq and Iran of the Umayyad dynasty. As a result of the conquest of Sind, Islam came to exercise a potent influence on Indian thought and culture. This part of India remained the Far Eastern territory of the Caliphate till 267/880 when the Caliphate began to decline.

The kingdom of Ghhaznah founded by Subuktigin who conquered Peshawar in 380/990 was a direct result of the weakening of the Caliphate. The aggressive policy of Subuktigin was followed by his ambitious and energetic son Mahmud and by a series of Mughul, Tartar, Khurasani, and Afghan leaders. It was never the intention of the Muslim invaders to spread or work for their religion. A large number of the natives were converted to Islam not because of the political domination of the Muslims but for other

reasons, among which may be ranked the missionary activities of the Sufi thinkers and the intolerable economic condition of the masses coupled with the ignorance of their own religion.

The most important cause of the conversion was, however, the simplicity of the Islamic doctrine: the brotherhood it proclaims, and the equal status it accords to Sudras and non-Sudras alike. Even at the early stages the influence was so great that Dr. Titus mentions eleven out of the several Hindu sects in which a definite mixture of Hindu and Muslim notions and practices prevailed[13] K. A. Nilkanta admits monotheism and democratic spirit of Islam as potent factors in the evolution of religio-philosophic culture in India and traces in the strictly monotheistic doctrines of Nanak the influence of Islam.[14]

It has been observed that Sind formed an outlying province of the Caliphate till 267/880. During this period and particularly during the reigns of al-Mansnr, al-Harun, and al-Mamiin attempts were made to understand Indian thought. From Sind, Hindu pundits came to the Court of al-Mansur and presented to him Brahmasiddhanta and Khandakhadyaka, famous astronomical works of Brahmagupta. Both of these were translated into Arabic. A great impetus to this cultural understanding was afforded by the ministerial family of the Barmakids, who were patrons of Hindu learning in the Court of Harun al-Rashid.

According to al-Biruni, this family came from Balkh where an ancestor of theirs was an official in a Buddhist temple. Arab scholars were sent by this family to India to study Indian thought, while Indian scholars were invited to the Court of Baghdad to explain Hindu learning. In the fifth/eleventh century al-Muwaffiq and al-Birdni visited India with the object of understanding Indian medicine, astronomy, and philosophy. Al-Biruni was the first to translate Sattkhya of Kapila into Arabic. He also translated Yoga Sutra by Patanjali and introduced Bhagvad-Gita to the Muslims.

The Hindus also evinced eagerness for understanding Muslim religion and thought. Baladhuri writes in the Futuh al-Buldan that during the reign of Harun al-Rashid, a Hindu rajah requested the Caliph to send a scholar to him to expound and discuss the fundamentals of Islam. Mas'udi, a historian, reports that when he arrived in India in 302/914 he found a Brahmani ruler supremely interested in religious discussions. Whenever this ruler heard of a Muslim arriving in his territory he would invite him and entered into religious discussion with him. [15]

From the First/Seventh Century to Sarikara

Inter-communication of such an active nature could not but influence the thoughts and beliefs of both the communities. Indian philosophy would have been substantially different from what it is today, had Islam with its “militant democracy,” “liberal rationalism,” and “uncompromising monotheism” not entered the arena of Indian thought.

There would have been, in all probability, no proofs for the existence of God such as we find in Udavana's Kusumdnjli written in the fourth/tenth century, nor would there have been Sankara about whom Humayun Kabir observes, “Historical factors do not exclude the possibility Sankara's

acquaintance with the elements of Islamic thought."[16] "It is necessary to repeat that most of the elements in the southern school of devotion and philosophy taken singly were derived from ancient systems, but the elements in their totality and in their peculiar emphasis betray a singular approximation to Muslim faith and therefore make the argument for Islamic influence probable."[17] Even today there is a group of Sainkara's followers who do not cremate but bury their dead in the Islamic way.

All the Mu'tazilites, with the solitary exception of al-Jabiz, had discussed philosophy and propounded their theories, before Sahkara was born in the last quarter of the second/eighth century. Even al-Jabiz would have died before Sankara, had he not lived up to the age of ninety. The Mu'tazilites were Unitarians par excellence. They would not admit the attribution of eternal qualities to God, for that would mean the existence of other eternals besides the eternal God. 8ahkara too was an uncompromising monist, believing God to be one and the only reality, all else being illusion.

In the writings of Sahkara one finds an increasing emphasis on the unity of God which some people have regarded as an extension of the ancient monotheism of the Upanisads. But this explanation has failed to satisfy a good many Orientalists who find in Sankara's works "something pertaining to the semitic religions especially."[18] Abu al-Hudhail, a prominent Mu'tazilite, appears to be a precursor of those Hindu monists who maintained that God could be described only in negatives.

Abu al-Hudhail, however, admitted, quite contrary to his fundamental position, that God is knowing, loving, and powerful. The other Mu'tazilites were quick to discover the inconsistency and denied, therefore all positive attributes to the Supreme Reality. In their hands God became unpredictable as well as unknowable, more of an abstract, impersonal, and absolute principle at the back of the universe than a God conceived as a person with whom any contact could be established. They did believe in the possibility of the beatific vision but strongly repudiated all forms of anthropomorphism.

The majority of the Mu'tazilites were atomists. The universe, they thought, was composed of atoms which were indivisible entities. They divided the physical world into substance and accidents or atoms and bodies. Strict determinism, according to them, governed physical phenomena, while freedom of action characterized human beings.

As we have shown in previous chapters, the Mu'tazilites believed in the cult of reason and endeavoured to reconcile the doctrines of Islam with rationalistic views then prevalent. Quite a good many of them enjoyed State patronage. Bishr, the son of Mu'ammar, was a favorite of the Caliph al-Mamun during whose reign efforts were made to understand Hindu thought and culture through discussions and translations of religious literature. In theological and philosophical discussions, the protagonists of different views had complete freedom to express themselves.

It is not unlikely that in this free exchange of ideas the Hindu participants returned to their homeland with quite a number of rationalistic doctrines having their origin in the Mu'tazilite mode of thought. Communication is rarely one-sided; in free and frank exchange of ideas the traffic is more often than not

two-sided.

The Mu'tazilites could not satisfy the masses because of their exclusive concern with reason and their seemingly unorthodox views. The Ash'arites protested against the religious rationalism of the Mu'tazilites and advocated a middle path between philosophy and orthodoxy. They refuted the Mu'tazilite views, even while they modified the orthodox doctrine. They rejected the Greek and Oriental philosophies, proved Islamic doctrines by the dialectical method, and refuted non-Islamic religions as well as some sects of Islam.

Al-Ash'ari, al-Bagillani, alJuwaini, al-Ghazali. Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, and ibn Taimiyyah wrote in defence of Islamic theology and in refutation of Greek and particularly Aristotelian thought. Al-Ash'ari was born in c. 260/873, while al-Ghazali, in whose hands the Ash'arite theology reached its final triumph; was born in 450/1058. Al-Ghazali was convinced that the philosophical theory could not form the basis of religious thought and that it was by revelation alone that the essentials of religion could be known. Al-Ghazali asserted that revelation was quite enough and that its ultimate truth could be ascertained only by the experience of the individual. Through ecstasy one could become a knower and receive, so to say, direct communication from God.

In addition to the Mu'tazilites, Ash'arites, and al-Ghazali who touched almost on all problems of philosophical and religious interest and whose theories found a way to the Indian soil through various channels some of which we have mentioned above, there was a long, unbroken line of Sufis, beginning with the early Companions of the Prophet who, like the Prophet himself, set a model for the Sufis by their intense zeal and enthusiasm for the cause of Islam, by their piety, and by the austere life they led.

The Sufis, among whom may be counted Ibrahim bin Adham (d. 160/783), Fad[bin 'Iyad (d. 185/901), Rabi'ah al-Adwiyyah (d. 1851802), were orthodox Muslims with no pantheistic bias; they revelled, however, in self-abandonment, fervent piety, and quietism, carried to the extreme. Rabi'ah conceived of prayer as a free and intimate intercourse with God. Her prayers indicate spontaneous outpouring of her heart to God. Says she, in one of her prayers, “O my Lord, if I worship Thee from fear of hell, burn me in hell, and if I worship Thee from hope of paradise, exclude me thence, but if I worship Thee for Thine own sake, then withhold not from me Thine Eternal Beauty.”

From Sanikara to Ramanuja.-By the time of Ramanuja, who was born in 407/1016, a host of Muslim thinkers and Sufis-some of the best philosophers that Islam has ever produced-had expounded and elaborated their thoughts in fine systems. It is very unlikely that their thoughts and theories should have failed to influence Indian thought through religious discussions and philosophical disputations which, as we have seen, took place on a wide scale both on the Indian soil and in the Courts of the Caliphs.

Evidence is not wanting to show that some of the controversies which figured so prominently in Indian philosophy, after Islam had firmly entrenched itself on the Indian soil, were nothing more than echoes of Muslim thought, in some cases well in others more blatantly expressed.

Sufism now entered a new phase of its development. Asceticism still remained important but it was subordinated to theosophical and gnostic speculations. This position is discernible in the sayings of Ma'riif al-Karkhi (d. 200/815), abu Sulaiman al-Darani (d. 236/850), and Dhu al-Nun Misri. According to Nicholson, Dhu al-Nun is the source of Neo-Platonic elements in Islamic thought. Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 260/874) was the first Sufi to propound the doctrine of /and', and in his teaching Sufism became practically identified with pantheism.

Husain bin Mansur, commonly known as al-Hallaj (b. 244/857), famous for his saying, "I am the Truth," had travelled in East Iran, Gujerat (India), and Central Asia. He maintained that the soul which is immaterial and immortal suffers from its alignment with the body, that the Supreme Being is incomprehensible by the human intellect and imagination, and that union with the Ultimate Reality is possible through suffering. Mansur was not appreciated by his contemporaries owing to some of his unorthodox utterances as a result of which he was executed. It was a1-'Dhazali, however, who won recognition for Sufism in Islam.

Apart from the fact that Sufi doctrines and practices must have found their way to India along with other ideas of Muslim origin, there is irrefutable historical evidence to show that Muslim Sufis came in the wake of Muslim conquerors and traders and attracted the people of India by the purity and sublimity of their lives. They transmitted, by their personal contacts and discussions, their whole ideology and the way of life as understood by them and their counterparts in other parts of the Muslim world. Ibn Hajar 'Asgalani mentions in his al-Isabah ft Tamyiz al-Sahdbah a certain Baba Rattan who accepted Islam and visited Mecca twice. He was perhaps the earliest Indian Sufi.

A little later came 'Abd Allah known as Baba Khaki, who died in 101/ 719 and was buried in Pakdaman cemetery in Lahore. Another saint was Sayyid Salar Mas'ud~,hazi Mian who, in 425/1033, met a martyr's death at the age of nineteen and was buried in Bharaich in the United Provinces. In the same century there came to India another saint of very great eminence and of far greater historical significance than any of his predecessors. He was 'Ali al-Hujwiri, popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh, the writer of the wellknown work, Katb/ al-Mahjitb.

Amongst the Muslim thinkers who flourished between the second/eighth and fifth/eleventh centuries may be mentioned al-Kindi (c. 185/830-260/873), the first philosopher of the Arabs, more renowned as a mathematician and astrologer; al-Farabi (258/870-339/950), who adopted the Neo-Platonic doctrine of emanation; al-Razi (251/865-313/925), the celebrated Muslim physician, physicist, chemist, and philosopher; Miskawaih (d. 421/1030), a Persian moralist, philosopher, and physicist; and ibn Sina (370/980-428/1037), the representative of purer Aristotelianism.

The philosophical thought that had developed from al-Kindi to ibn Sina, that is, before Ramanuja's time, was transplanted in India by the early Muslims, who, in the opinion of Tara Chand, "were men of high rank ... who lived and labored in India, and through their personal contact and influence spread the ideas of Islamic philosophy and mysticism through the length and breadth of India."[19] As a result of this

impact, theism became pronounced in Indian philosophy; one comes across proofs for the existence of God for the first time in Udayana's Kusmaiijali.

The Kusumanjali or the Hindu proof of the existence of God was written in the fourth/tenth century.[20] Keith says, “To Udayana doubtless belongs the credit of making theism a principal tenet of the school, though we have no reason to suppose him the inventor of the doctrine.”[21] The same is true of the Vaisesika. Radhakrishnan observes, “The Vaisesika has been regarded as non-theistic. Kanada... the author of the Vaisesika Sutras ... does not mention God, but later commentators felt that the immutable atoms could not by themselves produce an ordered universe unless a presiding God regulated their activities.

The authorship of the Vedas and the convention of the meaning of words require us to postulate a prime mover. The world cannot be explained by the activities of the atoms alone or by the operation of karma. The system, therefore, adopts the view of God which is found in Nyaya.”[22]

In Indian philosophy the Nyaya and the Vaisesika are generally treated together, but these systems in fact never formed a single unitary doctrine before the middle of the third/ninth century. Keith puts the date of the syncretism of these two systems in the year 285/898 when Vaeaspati composed his Nyayasucini-bandhu.[23] A clear exposition of the combined doctrine is, however, to be found in Udayana “whose date, after many vicissitudes of opinion, is definitely fixed at 374/984 by his own statement in the Laksanavli.... Much more famous is his Kusumdnjali which is the classic exposition of the proof of God.”[24]

It is worth remembering that the Nyaya and the Vaisieska were combined together to form a single system, after Islam had penetrated deep into the Indian sub-continent. Both the systems were atheistic and atomistic to begin with, but later they took a theistic turn as a result of Muslim influence.

From Ramanuja up to Date.-Ramanuja (b. 407/1016), a Hindu reformer of southern India, advocated the worship of God with devotion and faith. He recognized love as the guiding principle for the relation not only between man and God but also between man and man. Consequently, all man-made barriers including those of caste were to be discarded and the doors of religion thrown open to all, irrespective of social position arising from caste or color.

Ramanuja admitted Sudras to temples, emphasized self-surrender (prapatti), and adoration of the guru (guru bhakti). His emphasis on self surrender and love of the guru can be traced to Buddhism and Upanisadism but his acceptance of monotheism and the stress he laid upon it was entirely due to the inspiration he received from the new faith which was then being preached to the people by Muslim saints like Nathad Wali, for the erection of whose mosques land was granted by the Hindu king Kun-Pandya [25]

While not denying the influence of Buddhism and Upanisadism on the philosophy of Ramanuja, it can be maintained that Islam could have supplied to the Bhakti leader both the idea of submission to the will of God and that of adoration of the spiritual guide. As for adoration of the guru, Ramanuja could have got

the clue from the writings of the Sufis and also from his personal contacts with them.

The objective of bhakti, according to Ramanuja, is not the realization of nirvana, but eternal blessedness in the presence of God–a Sufistic belief and not a Buddhistic view. His recommendation of a tasteless society in which Sudras should suffer no indignity because of their birth and his throwing the doors of temples open to the low–caste are a clear evidence of profiting by Muslim religion and Muslim practices.

In the sixth/twelfth century there arose two sects in the South which clearly revealed the influence of Islam. They were the Lingayats and the Siddharis. The Lingayats worshipped one God, who, according to them, reveals Himself, as the world–teacher (`Allamah Prabhu). The leader of the movement, Basava, was regarded as an incarnation of Shiva, an `Altdmah Prabhu, whose divinity passed on to his successors and representatives. As

love was considered to be the first creation of God, bhakti or devotion was taken to be the ideal of life. This ideal was attainable through treading a path of austerity, resignation, and concentration on God. The Lingayats made no sacrifices, kept no fasts, did not go on pilgrimages, and discarded purification ceremonies. There was no caste and no differences based on birth or sex. Marriage was voluntary, widows were permitted to remarry, the dead were buried, and the doctrine of transmigration of the soul was not believed in.

Siddharis, a group of philosophical rhymists, were more uncompromising in their monotheistic beliefs than the Lingayats. They rejected the authority of the Vedas and Ssastras and also the theory of metempsychosis. Like the Sufis, they described the Ultimate Reality as Light and conceived of the end of life to be an absorption in God. The Siddharis were also alchemists, and followed Phu al–Nun Misri in this respect.[26]

The religious reform movement started in the South spread to the North from the eighth/fourteenth century onward. The Muslim conquest of Northern India by the end of seventh/thirteenth century ushered in an era of unprecedented revolution in traditional Hindu thought, from the eighth/fourteenth century onward, we find the religious leaders of the North rejecting certain elements of the ancient creed and exhibiting a strong tendency to imbibe new ideas and theories.
Indian architectural designs show a borrowing of certain features from the Arab and Persian styles of architecture; Indian paintings are influenced by the Central Asian and Persian techniques; in Indian literature a common medium arises in the form of Urdu, while Indian technical and scientific disciplines give evidence of a considerable use of terminology and information contained in Muslim works.

In the realm of thought the same phenomenon is evident. Ramananda, who flourished in the first half of the ninth/fifteenth century, is by many regarded as a bridge between the Bhakti movement of the South and that of the North. He travelled far and wide in search of knowledge and had teachers from the various sects of Hinduism, but his soul remained discontented till he came in contact with Muslims in Benares.[27] Followers of all religions were welcome to his creed. He admitted to his sect disciples from

both sexes.

From the teachings of Ramananda arose two schools, one represented by Tulsidasa and the other by Kabir, the former being conservative and the latter radical, but each was concerned in its own way with the evolution of a religion acceptable to the Hindus and Muslims alike. Both lay stress upon devotion; condemned externalia of religion, rituals, and ceremonies; protested against dogma and authority; and maintained that “the divine disclosed itself in the human race as a whole.[28]

Kabir was introduced to Hindu philosophy and religion by Ramananda, but he spent a considerable part of his time in the company of the Sufis. Kabir hated caste distinctions, rejected the authority of the six schools of the Indian philosophy, pooh–poohed the theory of the transmigration of souls, and repudiated the doctrine of reincarnation.

In his teachings Kabir was indebted to the Sufis. His central theme was that God cannot be comprehended through intellect but that He can be approached only through bhakti, i. e. to say, through devotion and ecstatic trance. He held that the essence of God is light and thus came close to the fundamental position of the Sufis. Nicholson finds many points of resemblance between his views about the universe expounded in his first Ramaini and the notions of al–Jili and Badr al–Din hid.[29]

According to Tara Chand, Kabir made an attempt to reproduce, as in Muslim philosophy, the scheme of nine spheres through which the whole creation develops.[30] The goal of human life is the realization of union with God for which purpose the services of a guru are absolutely essential. Consequently, utmost care is to be exercised in the selection of a guru. The guru directs the soul of the disciple along the right path, disciplines his self, and brings him in the living presence of God.

Kabir never recommended renunciation, in spite of his concern with God, and remained till the end of his life a weaver. No doubt, he prescribed a rigorous path of self–discipline, even prophesied disappointments and frustration for the pilgrims, but nowhere did he teach complete withdrawal from the world.

In the latter half of the ninth/fifteenth century was born a redoubtable champion of monotheism in a small village of the Punjab. His parents gave him the name of Nanak and the subsequent generations remember him as Guru Nanak for his piety, cosmopolitanism, and spiritual leadership. He laid the foundation of Sikhism on principles which show clearly and unmistakably the influence of Islamic ideology, beliefs, and practices.

Guru Nanak felt that he was commissioned by the Almighty to launch a campaign for monotheism and a life of righteousness. He condemned polytheistic beliefs and practices, preached non–sectarianism, and admitted no caste distinctions. His ethics, unlike that of the Hindus, was life–affirming, practical, and to some extent puritanical. He recommended righteous living, fear of God, and the obedience of a guru–all Muslim principles–in order to attain salvation which to him was the blending of the light of the soul with that of God.

Nanak realized like the Sufis that God, being incomprehensible through the intellect, can be approached through humility and through understanding one's worthlessness and inadequacies. Despite his love for God, he would allow no anthropomorphic characterization of the Deity, though he remembered Him lovingly sometimes as a husband and sometimes as a bride to relate Him intimately to his own soul.31 Guru Nanak did believe in the transmigration of souls and also in hell. Not satisfied with the punishment which the sinners were destined to suffer through repeated births in lower forms, he threatened them with dire punishments as described in the Qur'an in the parable of hell.

Guru Nanak's debt to Islam was so great and his teachings so well steeped in Sufi lore that, according to Tara Chand, “the fact of the matter is that it is much harder to find how much exactly he drew from the Hindu scriptures.

His rare references to them lead one to imagine that Nanak was only superficially acquainted with the Vedic and the Purdnic literature.”32 In his insistence on the unity and brotherhood of mankind and in his condemnation of idol-worship, caste distinctions, and ritualism, Guru Nanak was as good a Muslim as any other Muslim. It is a pity that the later Gurus were drawn into a whirlpool of politics as a result of which a peace-loving Church was converted into a militant society.

Kabir, Tulsidasa, and Guru Nanak were followed by a host of Hindu thinkers and reformers in the tenth/sixteenth and eleventh/seventeenth centuries who promoted and furthered what in essence were the fundamental principles of Islam. Tuka Ram, a Maratha saint, conceived of God on lines identical with those of Kabir, rejected Vedic sacrifices, idol-worship, and caste,33 while Chaitanya, a Brahman by caste, loved the Muslims so much that he had several Muslim disciples. Caitanya preached the unity of God, insisted on love and devotion, song and dance and ecstatic trance for union with God.33It can be easily seen that Chaitanya's teachings bore a close resemblance to those of the Sufis.

Coming to modern times, we notice two important movements of the Arya Samaj and the Brahmo Samaj. The former, despite its opposition to Islam, preaches what in reality is the essence of Islam. Swami Dayanand (vide his Satydrath Parkash), the founder of the Arya Samaj movement, denounced idol-worship and ritualism as a corruption of the pure Hindu religion. He also condemned hereditary caste-system and instead favored functional castes.

What is remarkable about him is that he indefatigably preached the doctrine of monotheism which in his opinion could be derived from the Vedas and other sacred books of the Hindus. That monotheism is deducible from the Vedas, may be true. It does not, however, contradict Islam; rather, it ratifies the basic standpoint of Islam that God has been revealing Himself to different nations. Hence if monotheism is found in the Vedas, it would not be surprising to a Muslim. What is, however, surprising is Swami Dayanand's emphasis on this doctrine which is lacking in the pre-Islamic literature of India.

The Brahmo-Samajists have discarded the theory of rebirths. They are also opposed to ritualism, image-worship, and caste-system.

In addition to these two movements in modern Hinduism, there is the Rama-Krishna religious reconstruction movement and the Theosophical Society following a religious and social programme; each of these bears close resemblance to Muslim faith and practice. From India Islam goes to Indonesia.

Indonesia

Before the advent of Islam, the Indonesian Archipelago, the biggest country after China in the Far East and the seventh among the great countries of the world, was ruled over for about a thousand years by the Hindus, who went there as traders in the first or second century A.D. and eventually became rulers through their effective diplomacy and practical common sense. According to Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru,[34] the first Hindu immigrants to Indonesia belonged to Southern India.

Being traders they settled on coasts and traded with different lands in sundry articles of daily use. They also brought with them their religion which, because of its superiority, could not fail to influence the natives. There is, however, no historical evidence to show whether it was Buddhism or Hinduism that first came to Indonesia. The Hindus never cultivated the art of history in the early centuries, nor did they devise canons for sifting recorded or oral evidence, with the result that their early history is nothing but a mass of fairy tales founded upon imagination, make believe, or hearsay with no solid rock of facts to stand upon.

The early Hindu settlers in Indonesia have left no record of theirs; consequently, it is difficult to determine the chronological order of Hindu cults and beliefs as they found their way into this new land. It is, however, conjectured that the form of Buddhism first to enter the Archipelago was Hinayana and that after a considerable period of time the other form of Buddhism, Mahayana, was also introduced.

In the Majaphit period when Hindu culture and Hindu domination were at their highest a new religion arose, which was the result of the fusion of Brahmanism and Buddhism, incorporating in itself some strands of indigenous thoughts and feelings.

In spite of the political and commercial domination of the Hindus, the country as a whole was never converted to Hinduism. In Java, Hinduism had its strongest centre, while Buddhism had the greatest number of its adherents in Sumatra, Malaya, and a few other adjoining and adjacent islands. A large part of the Archipelago, however, remained untouched by Hinduism and continued to revel in idolatry and nature-worship.

In a large majority of the islands, life went on as usual-the same round of festivals, customary observances, and rituals, showing no sign of foreign influence or changed socio-political conditions. Life in these areas was hemmed in by countless superstitions and irrational fears-the products of ignorance and idol-worship. Multiplicity of superstitions led to the creation of innumerable deities, each deity being held responsible for a particular phase of human life or nature. Homage was paid to gods and

goddesses out of fear, for their displeasure could bring about disaster, infertility, epidemics, floods, death, and what not.

Consequently, an elaborate ritual, performed meticulously, was required to keep the deities on the right side. Often the ritual was so complicated that a specially trained agency was called for to perform it strictly in accordance with set practices and established laws. There arose thus a priestly class whose function it was to help invoke the sympathy of gods and goddesses through incantations, charms, sacrifices, and offerings–all of these practiced and performed in a characteristic manner and style.

Wherever Hinduism was in ascendancy the Brahmans assumed the functions of priests and arrogated to themselves the power which none else but a person endowed with supernatural powers could have. The priestly class came to wield, in course of time, not only spiritual but also temporal power through their association with Courts and princes, for the kings needed divine help as much as ordinary mortals.

Anxious to keep their power intact, the priests transmitted their knowledge only to their kith and kin. Very often the recipient of the information was the son of the priest who was initiated into the art of performing ceremonies and trained in them with the utmost exactitude and care, for a slight error or omission would bring about the wrath of a god instead of pleasing him. Thus, the priestly class became hereditary, enjoying special privileges and prerogatives.

The society was split up into two classes, with the priestly class at the top, dominating and exploiting the other by its cleverness, sophistry, and chicanery. Because of his colossal ignorance, political servitude, and economic insufficiency, the common man contented himself with the life and fortunes of a serf or an underling.

Hinduism accentuated the prejudice of class distinction; it gave a fillip to idol worship; it augmented rather than diminished the number of deities; and above all it introduced ahirisa, a life–negating ethics and a life–renouncing philosophy. The natural outcome of this attitude was extension in the field of super–stition, an acute sense of individual and collective insecurity together with moral and spiritual bankruptcy on a wide scale.

Islam entered the arena when Hinduism was at the zenith of its glory. The latter was armed with the might of political domination; it had its missionaries all over the Archipelago, who had converted thousands of the natives to their faith; and it had firmly entrenched itself on the soil by its cultural superiority, commercial leadership, and marital relationships. Islam had to fight against heavy odds.

There was no political power to launch a campaign against the Indonesian Hindu rulers. In the middle of the seventh/ thirteenth century when Islam got a foothold in Sumatra, the Muslims all over the world had fallen on evil days. The Fatimids who ruled over the Arab countries, Egypt, and Africa were in a process of disintegration; the `Abbasids were on their last legs; Persia was the vantage ground for self interested upstarts; while Spain, once the pride of Muslim culture and philosophy, had forgotten its traditions and was in the throes of death, surrounded as it was by the Christian hordes who were bent upon giving it a

short shrift.

In India the Slave dynasty was replaced by the Khaljis, who were busy at that time setting their own house in order and had little time to look to other peoples' affairs. It is evident that under these circumstances no Muslim power was in a position to lend a helping band to any campaign, much less to one which had no connection with territorial aggrandizement or imperialistic expansionist program.

On the Indonesian soil no gun was fired, nor any sword drawn for the propagation of Islam. Arnold says, “The history of the Malay Archipelago during the last six hundred years furnishes us with one of the most interesting chapters in the story of the spread of Islam by missionary efforts.... In every instance, in the beginning, their work had to be carried on without any patronage or assistance from the rulers of the country, but solely by the force of persuasion, and in many cases in the face of severe opposition, especially on the part of the Spaniards..”35

Several causes have been listed by historians for the slow and spontaneous spread of Islam throughout Indonesia, but it must be admitted that there is yet no established theory to account for this remarkable phenomenon–unique in the annals of history for its methodology and success.

A common explanation for the religious conquest of Indonesia by Islam is offered in terms of the commercial relations which the Muslim merchants from India established in the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century with the Indonesians. These merchants, it is said, married Indonesian women and secured thereby a respectable position for themselves. In course of time the Indonesian wives together with the slaves of their household furnished a nucleus for the acceptance and spread of Islam.

A little reflection will, however, show that this explanation is no better than a myth and needs to be exploded in the interest of truth. Before exhibiting the hollowness of the explanation, it is interesting to note that even so great an authority as Arnold36 seems to subscribe to it. He quotes approvingly from Padre Gainza who says, “The better to introduce their religion into the country, the Muhammadans adopted the language and many of the customs of the natives, married their women, purchased slaves in order to increase their personal importance, and succeeded finally in incorporating themselves among the chiefs who held the foremost rank in the state.

Since they worked together with greater ability and harmony than the natives, they gradually increased their power more and more, as having numbers of slaves in their possession, they formed a kind of confederacy among themselves and established a sort of monarchy, which they made hereditary in one family.

Though such a confederacy gave them great power, yet they felt the necessity of keeping on friendly terms with the old aristocracy, and of ensuring their freedom to those classes whose support they could not afford to dispense with.” To this quotation Arnold adds, “It must have been in some such way as this that the different Muhammadan settlements in the Malay Archipelago laid a firm political and social basis for their proselytizing efforts.

They did not come as conquerors, like the Spanish in the sixteenth century, or use the sword as an instrument of conversion; nor did they arrogate to themselves the privileges of a superior and dominant race so as to degrade and oppress the original inhabitants, but coming simply in the guise of traders they employed all their superior intelligence and civilization in the service of their religion. ..."[37]

This explanation along social lines founded on respect and prosperity is invalidated, according to C. A. O. van Nieuwenhuijze, by the fact "that the type of trade which the foreign Muslims conducted was by no means alien or new to the Indonesian society."[38] The same point of view is presented with much rigour and empirical data by Comp. J. C. van Lour[39] to whom the inquisitive reader may turn for further elucidation and clarification.

The object of the refutation is not to deny the role of the early Muslim traders in the dissemination of Islamic beliefs and practices; it is rather to assign to them a proper place in the situation which was extremely complex and comprised far more potent factors than trade and marital relationships. The traders were no better than carriers of a culture or a world-view which could not have gained ground in spite of their zeal and fervor, had it not the strength to stand on its own legs.

Another explanation for the peaceful penetration of Islam into Indonesia is to be found in the socio-political conditions of the urban society which was powerfully influenced by the caste-system that had been introduced by Hinduism. Priesthood had divided the society into two watertight compartments. This and like differences were supported and in a way accentuated by the caste-system which the Hindus had brought with them and introduced.

Hinduism not only ratified bifurcation in the Indonesian society, it also multiplied the then existing divisions, for Hinduism admits of four classes and not only two in society. These divisions based originally on professions became hereditary so that no person, howsoever talented he might be, could change his caste.

A person born Sudra home could by no means shed the social stigma attached to him for having been born in a low-caste home. Intelligence, integrity, talent, and hard work were of no avail in face of the inflexibility of the caste-system. The worst to suffer in this system were those who stood at the lowest rung; they were the most oppressed and the most exploited, but the others too with the exception of the priestly and the Brahmanical class had to suffer different kinds of social indignities and disabilities.

The non-priestly classes, particularly the lower ones, found in Islam a panacea to the ills which like a miasma were eating up the very fabric of the society. Since Islam recognizes no distinctions which divide man from man and recommends a classless and tasteless society, it captured the imagination of the Indonesians, who embraced the new religion to reassert their dignity as human beings and to re-acquire democratic rights to live as free individuals unhampered by artificial man-made restrictions.

The conception of the universal brotherhood of mankind together with the basic equality of all human beings, which Islam advocates so vehemently, proved a dynamite for the foundations of the social

structure of Hinduism. Accordingly, Hinduism crumbled like a house of cards and the Indonesian masses, particularly those living in the urban areas, accepted the new faith in large numbers. From the harbor towns and coastal areas, where the grip of the caste-system was the strongest and the most pinching, Islam spread inland.

Another reason for the success of Islam is to be discovered in the simplicity of the creed that it preaches. It makes no metaphysical presuppositions as is done, for instance, by Buddhism, nor does it demand credence in too many transcendental beings as is the case with Hinduism. Islam is unencumbered by theological subtleties. It simply asserts the godhead of one God and the prophethood of Muhammad and that of others.

The fundamental tenets of Islam are, thus, the fundamental demands of the human intellect. Professor Montet says, "Islam is a religion that is essentially rationalistic in the widest sense of this term considered etymologically and historically.... This fidelity to the fundamental dogma of the religion, the elemental simplicity of the formula in which it is enunciated ... are so many causes to explain the success of Muhammadan missionary efforts. A creed so precise, so stripped of all theological complexities and consequently so accessible to the ordinary understanding, might be expected to possess and does indeed possess a marvelous power of winning its way into the consciences of men." 40

Hinduism never accorded with the genius of the Indonesians in spite of the Hindus' long cultural contact with them and their equally long political domination. The average Hindu Indonesian wore his creed like a veneer which left his soul as well as his body almost naked. He yearned for a creed more in line with his natural cravings and intellectual demands. When Islam presented itself as a rival to Hinduism and heathenism, it quickly acquired victory by the force of its logic and the rationality of its demands.

Another factor which may have contributed to the success of Islam is its theory of human society which releases man from his narrow geographical grooves and makes him a member of the community (ummale) of Islam. National loyalties and political affiliations are subordinated to the larger interests of the Muslim community as a whole.

Not only does this conception emancipate an individual from the prison of self-interest and parochialism, it also provides an anchor-sheet for the forlorn and the neglected. A convert, after having lost his kinship with his clan, can save himself from the pangs of loneliness by conjuring up his association with a bigger whole which recognizes neither territorial limits nor clannish bonds. A thing of this kind is not to be found in other religions, much less in Hinduism, torn as it is by its caste-system, family distinctions, and the practice of untouchability.

Islam has not only the idea of ummah to put an individual in a wider perspective, it has still another idea nobler and richer in content for the rehabilitation and re-establishment of the lonely and the forsaken. This idea is to be found in mysticism which promises to place man in the lap of Infinity. It is said that in

the beginning the Indonesians were attracted by the mysticism of Islam rather than by any of its other aspects.

In addition to the reasons enumerated above, one very potent reason for the propagation and success of Islam in foreign lands, particularly in Indonesia, Malay, Indo-China, and the Philippine Islands, was the enthusiasm and sincerity with which Islam was presented by the early Muslim mystics who migrated to these islands of their own accord and settled there temporarily or permanently. Generally, they accompanied the Muslim traders or came in their wake. The first thing they did was to acquaint themselves with the local dialect; this was necessary for transmission and exchange of ideas.

After acquiring proficiency in the native language, the Sufis started propagating Islam among the influential and the rich, believing that reform of these would rid the society of most of the ills from which it suffered, and that their conversion would be followed by those of the masses. The unlettered and the unsophisticated people which formed the bulk of the society looked up to their chiefs and nobles for guidance and inspiration. Not able to make a decision themselves, they imitated the high-ups in all matters. Hence the success of a religious ideology among the upper classes, the Sufis thought, would work for the spiritual regeneration.

The Sufis built mosques which often had schools attached to them. From these centers of learning were delivered courses of lectures on Muslim theology, culture, philosophy, and history. Mysticism has a philosophy of a very high order. It replaces the cold formalism of the Shari'ah by an intense and passionate longing for the all-loving God and ensures the purification of the heart by treading a well-regulated Path.

The Subs regarded prayers, fasting, and pilgrimage as means and not ends to be cultivated and pursued for their own sake. But they knew that the means were as much necessary for the spiritual uplift of a person as the attainment of the end. And, therefore, the early mystics who took upon themselves the burden of carrying the message of God to the four corners of the world stressed the performance of religious duties, such as offering prayers, fasting, going on a pilgrimage, etc., along with acts of supererogation for winning the pleasure of God.

A brief historical sketch of the growth and development of mysticism in Islam has been provided in an earlier chapter and, therefore, need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that by the end of the seventh/thirteenth century when Islam was imported to Indonesia and other adjacent islands, the theory of mysticism had received its final touches at the hands of the leading Muslim thinkers and divines. According to a number of Orientalists, the best of Muslim religion is to be found in its mysticism.

Maulana Burhan al-Din is said to have been the first Muslim to preach his faith to the islanders. He belonged to the Qadiriyyah order of Sufism which is named after 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani (470/1077-561/1166), a saint whose writings, generally orthodox in content, have a tendency to mystical interpretation of the Qur'an.

The Maulana also belonged to the Shafi'iyyah sectone of the four legal schools of Muslim theology named after Imam al-Shafi'i who effected a synthesis of the strict adherence to Tradition of the Malikii with the Hanafl method of giyds, that is to say, with the analogical deduction. Abu Hanifah, the founder of the Hanafi legal school, made free use of his own judgment in deciding between traditions, while Malik ibn Anas maintained the exclusive validity of the accepted traditions. Al-Shafi'i carved a via media between these two modes of approach and attempted a synthesis.

Maulana Burhan al-Din was, thus, steeped in the best traditions of Islam. He followed the Shari'ah and was affiliated to the most tolerant and progressive school of Sufism, a school which was neither too liberal nor yet too conservative. The Muslims of the Archipelago at present belong predominantly to the Shafi'iyyah sect and this is due to the teachings of the Maulana.

It is interesting to note that the Shafi'iyyah sect was predominant on the Coromandel and the Malabar Coasts of India when the Muslim traders from these areas first landed in Sumatra and introduced their culture and religion. It may be conjectured in the absence of any historical record that the Maulana belonged to India and travelled with or came in the wake of the Indian Muslim traders who also belonged mostly to the Shafi'iyyah sect as well as to the Qadiriyyah school of mysticism.

Among the Muslim rulers of Sumatra, Sultan Alimad worked ceaselessly for the glory of Islam. During his reign as well as during that of his descendants Muslim missionaries were sent far and wide. Wherever they went, they built mosques and schools to provide permanent centres of devotion and learning. The schools also served as community centres where matters of common interest were discussed.

The King al-Malik al-Zahir, a descendant of Sultan Ahmad, was fond of holding discussions with theologians, and his Court was thronged with men of learning and letters. We have it on the authority of ibn Battutah that the king had summoned two jurisconsults from Persia for discussion and clarification of some religio-legal issues.

Next to come under the influence of Islam was the Molucca. There is no knowing of the fact how the new religion was introduced, but this much can be inferred from the present cultural condition of the islands that there existed strong traces of Indian and Arabian influence in the life and literature of the inhabitants. Their religion is predominantly Shaf'iyyah, but their culture is steeped in Arabian lore and learning.

The Muslim kings of the Moluccas rendered yeoman's service to the cause of Islam by instituting centres of Muslim culture, literature, history, and philosophy. During the reign of Mansur, the Malayan language adopted the Arabic script. Ancient Indian Muslim literature was transliterated into Malayan Arabic script. Mansur also introduced Islamic constitution in the country, though not completely, for he kept intact the old system of taxation, general administration, and fishing; yet in all other matters he made an attempt to follow the Shafi'iyyah jurisprudence, social polity, and details of administration.

Islam spread to Java through the efforts of the trading mystics of Malay, particularly of Maulana Malik

Ibrahim, an Indian national of Gujerat district. The Maulana was not only a Sufi of high order but also a scholar of the first rank and a Hakim of no mean repute. He cured a Hindu dignitary who subsequently embraced Islam and is counted among the nine saints of Java. He is known as Raden Rahmat. The other saints belonged either to the rich Hindu families or to the defunct Majaphit dynasty.

All of them without exception led a life of simplicity, piety, and high religious fervor. They converted thousands to Islam by their example and teaching. A mosque was built where the nine saints met occasionally to discuss matters of common interest. The converts also congregated there to discuss their problems and difficulties. Deputations from foreign lands were also received in this mosque. This shows that the mosque was not only a centre of devotion but also a community centre dedicated to multipurpose activities. So great was the religious ardor that the Muslim converts of Java entertained a keen desire to visit the holy places of Islam; one of them, Sunan Gunang by name, went for pilgrimage to Mecca where he learnt the principles of Islam from Arab teachers, and came back to Java full of enthusiasm for the new faith.

It will take several pages to recount the story of the spread of Islam in other islands of Indonesia. Suffice it to say that its propagation was nothing but a peaceful penetration through the efforts of traders, mystics, and preachers–both native and foreign.41

Before the advent of Islam, Java had been ruled by Majaphit, a Hindu dynasty, which had fallen on evil days; as a result, the country had become divided into a number of principalities, each owing allegiance to its own chieftain. The people followed either Hinduism or Buddhism, but very often their religion was an admixture of both with a strong overtone of animism and belief in magic and sorcery.

The condition of other islands was no better. The Hindus whose early contacts with the Archipelago were of purely commercial nature42 soon developed colonial and imperialistic designs in the land43 and started a process of “Hinduization,” which gave birth to a caste–system as rigid as that in India and provided in addition an appeal to the deification of kings and the ruling class.44

After the downfall of the Majaphit dynasty in the ninth/fifteenth century the Muslim rule was firmly established in Java and other islands till the conquest of the Archipelago by the Dutch towards the end of the tenth/ sixteenth century. For about two hundred years the Muslims remained at the helm of affairs and contributed substantially to the cultural development of the country.

They tried to rid literature of absurd and obscene stories about gods and goddesses; they worked for the amelioration of the society, and introduced, through translation of Arabic and Persian books, a system of philosophy, mysticism, jurisprudence, and ethics, which had its roots in Muslim thought and religion. That the Indonesian literature of the pre–Muslim period was utterly nonsensical, superstitious, and obscene, has been testified by Crawford45 and also by Dr. Richards.46 The latter maintains that the purpose of such literature was simply to humor the princely class by its esoteric and fictitious nature.

The Muslim rulers replaced it by healthy literature. Sultan Agung, a ruler of Mataram

(1022/1613–1055/1645), wrote a treatise on philosophy, morals, and statecraft; the eldest son of an Egyptian scholar, 'Allamah ibn Hajar al–Hutami, wrote a monumental book on mysticism entitled Sirat al–Mushlaqin; 47 `Allamah Nur al–Din compiled a historical work called Bustan al–Salatin,48 while Tan Muhammad, a premier of Malaya during the reign of Sultan 'Abd al–Jalil, wrote a historical account of the rulers of Malaya and Sumatra.

Besides original publications, a host of Persian and Arabic works were translated. Al–Gbazali's al–Israr was translated by 'Abd al–Samad. Sikandar Nanaeh and Mathnatoi of Maulana Rum and Tuhtat al–Ahrar of Jami were also rendered into the Malayan language.49

The impact of translations and original works on theology, morals, philosophy, and culture of the Indonesians was tremendous. It paved the way to a new type of literature which attempted to deduce morals from stories in which the principal actors and characters were birds, animals, and trees. These anecdotes were written on the pattern of the aforesaid Malhnawi of Maulana Rum and Mantiq al–Tair of `Attar, and helped to inculcate a healthy attitude towards world and its affairs.

Instead of ahimsa and life–negating ethics, emphasis was now laid upon effort, struggle, and achievement. Renunciation was eschewed in favor of community living, and a tasteless society was preached for in place of a caste–ridden one. Spiritual values were extolled as against the commercial ones. All this led to a great awakening among the masses. The Indonesians realized as never before that they were connected with one another by ties which transcend caste, creed, and color.

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India

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