

Introduction

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A

Histories of philosophy have been invariably written in the light of the philosophies of history presupposed by their authors. The result of this has been that errors vitiating their philosophies of history have crept into and marred their histories of philosophy. In the present work our effort has been to steer clear of these errors.

Instead of reading history in the mirrors of presupposed philosophies which may give distorted images, it is the study of history itself through which the dynamics of history can be clearly seen and its laws discovered. We hope this study of Muslim philosophy and the empirical survey of its course will spotlight at least some of the misconceptions current among philosophers and historians about the nature of history and the laws governing it.

It will perhaps be generally agreed that human nature is fundamentally the same the world over. All human beings and the cultures they develop have the same fundamental needs, customs, impulses, and desires which, organizer as personalities, determine their march towards their personal and social goals.

The fundamental nature of men being the same, the basic laws of cultural development and decay always remain the same. But owing to different environmental conditions, cultural groups evolve differently in different parts of the world and thousands of years of indigenous experience give those groups their own social and psychological character; and their character in response to environmental stimuli creates all the differences that appear in their respective life-histories.

Muslim society forms a single cultural group. It has been subject to the same laws of growth and decay as any other cultural group, but it has also developed some peculiar features of its own.

B

Philosophers of social history individually differ in their views about the universal laws of history. There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history who believe that social history is like a wave, it has a rise and then it falls never to rise again, and view a society or a culture as an organism which has only one cycle of life.

Like the life of any individual organism, the life of a culture has its childhood, maturity, old age, and death, its spring, summer, winter, and autumn. Just as a living organism cannot be revived after its death, even so a culture or a society can see no revival once it is dead. Biological, geographical, and racial causes can to a limited extent influence its life-course but cannot change its inevitable cycle.

To this group belong Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee. Our study of Muslim culture and thought supports their view that in certain respects the dynamism of society is like the dynamism of a wave; but are the two other doctrines expounded by these philosophers equally true? First, is it true that a given society is a living organism? And, second, is it true that it has only one unrepeated life-course?

Let us first take the first. Is a society or a culture an organism? Long ago Plato took a State to be an individual writ large. Not the same, but a similar mistake is being made now. All analogies are true only up to a point and not beyond that point. To view a society on the analogy of an individual organism is definitely wrong.

As Sorokin has brilliantly shown, no society is so completely unified into an organic whole that it should be viewed as an organism. An individual organism is born, it grows and dies, and its species is perpetuated by reproduction, but a culture cannot repeat itself in species by reproduction. Revival of individual organism is impossible, but the revival of a culture is possible.

It is achieved by the activation of its dormant vitality, by responses aroused by fresh challenges, and by the infusion of new elements. The first revival of Muslim culture—its revival after the Mongol onslaughts which began when hardly half a century had passed and reached its full fruition in two centuries and a half—was partly due to its inherent vitality which could not be sapped completely even by these unprecedented events.

They seemed to affect total devastation of Muslim lands, but in fact could produce only a depression. Soon rain-bearing clouds gathered and these lands were again green and teeming with life. Though the challenge itself was the strongest the world has ever seen, it was, nevertheless, not strong enough to destroy all response.

This revival of the Muslim culture was partly due to the infusion into it earlier of the fresh blood of the Turkish slaves and mercenaries and later that of the Mongol conquerors, for they themselves came into the fold of Islam bringing with them the vigour and vitality of their nomadic ancestors.

Each individual organism is a completely integrated whole or a complete Gestalt, but though such an integration is an ideal of each culture it has never been fully achieved by any culture. Each culture is a supersystem consisting of some large systems such as religion, language, law, philosophy, science, fine arts, ethics, economics, technology, politics, territorial sway, associations, customs, and mores.

Each of these consists of smaller systems as science includes physics, chemistry, biology, zoology, etc., and each of these smaller systems is comprised of yet smaller systems as mathematics is comprised of geometry, algebra, arithmetic, and so on. Besides these systems there are partly connected or wholly isolated heaps within these systems and super-systems.

Thus, a total culture of any organized group consists not of one cultural system but of a multitude of vast and small cultural systems that are partly in harmony, partly out of harmony, with one another, and in addition many congeries of various kinds.

No past empire was as well-knit as the Umayyad Caliphate of Damascus and yet groups like the Kharijites and the Shiites fell apart from its total structure.

After the fall of the Umayyads in the religious field there appeared some isolated groups like the Qarmatians and the Isma'ilites, and in the political sphere Muslim Spain became not only independent of but also hostile to the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad under which Muslim culture and thought may be said to have reached their golden prime.

So much about the organismic side of the theory of Danilevsky, Spengler, and Toynbee when examined in the light of the history of Muslim culture and thought. What about its cyclical side? Is the life of a people like a meteor, beginning, rising, falling, and then disappearing for ever? Does the history of a society or a culture see only one spring, one summer, and one autumn and then, in its winter, completely close?

The philosophers of history mentioned above, except Spengler, concede that the length of each period may be different with different peoples and cultures, but, according to them, the cycle is just one moving curve or one wave that rises and falls only once.

This position also seems to be wrong. As the researches of Kroeber and Sorokin have conclusively shown, "many great cultural or social systems or civilizations have many cycles, many social, intellectual, and political ups and downs in their virtually indefinitely long span of life, instead of just one life-cycle, one period of blossoming, and one of decline."

In the dynamics of intellectual and aesthetic creativity, Egyptian civilization rose and fell at least four times and Graeco-Roman-Byzantine culture, several times.

Similarly, China and India had two big creative impulses and the third has now surely begun. The Muslim civilization rose from the first/seventh to the fifth/eleventh century. Then it gradually declined till it

received a deadly blow in the form of the Mongol onslaughts. Its chief monuments of political and cultural greatness were almost completely destroyed. And yet it did not die.

It rose again and saw its second rise from the last decade of the seventh/thirteenth century to the end of the eleventh/seventeenth century during which period its domain covered three of the biggest empires of the world—Turkish, Persian, and Indian—only to fall again from the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth to the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century; and as this study will clearly indicate there are now signs of a third rise in almost all Muslim lands (Book Eight).

This shows that there is "no universal law decreeing that every culture having once flowered must wither without any chance of flowering again." A culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, and, thus, as a whole see many rises and falls.

In both periods of its rise Muslim culture was marked by its religio—political and architectural ascendancy; but while in the first period its glory lay also in its commercial, industrial, scientific, and philosophical fields, in the second it distinguished itself chiefly in the fields of poetry, painting, secular history, travels, mysticism, and minor arts.

If by the birth of a civilization these writers mean a sudden appearance of a total unit like that of an organism, and by death a total disintegration, then a total culture is never born nor does it ever die.

At its so—called birth each culture takes over living systems or parts of a preceding culture and integrates them with newly—born items. As the reader of this work will find, Muslim culture integrated within itself what it regarded as the intrinsically or pragmatically valuable parts of Arab Paganism, Hellenism, Judaism, Christianity, Hindu mathematics and medicine, and Chinese mysticism and alchemy with its own contributions to human life and thought.

Again, to talk about the death or disappearance of a culture or civilization is meaningless.

A part of a total culture, its art or its religion, may disappear, but a considerable part of it is always taken over by other groups by whom it is often developed further and expanded. The Muslims did not only annex certain areas of other cultures but they expanded their horizons much further before annexing them as integral parts of their own culture. Here it is important to remove a misconception.

If some thought of earlier speculation runs through the fabric of Muslim thought even as a golden thread, it does not mean that, like many Western Orientalists, we should take the thread for the fabric. No culture, as no individual thinker, makes an absolutely new start. New structures are raised with the material already produced. The past always rolls into the present of every culture and supplies some elements for its emergent edifice.

States are born and they die, but cultures like the mingled waters of different waves are never born as organisms nor die as organisms. Ancient Greece as a State died, but after its death a great deal of

Greek culture spread far and wide and is still living as an important element in the cultures of Europe.

Jewish States ceased to exist, but much of Jewish culture was taken over by Christianity and Islam. No culture dies in toto, though all die in parts. In respect of those parts of culture which live, each culture is immortal.

Each culture or civilization emerges gradually from pre-existing cultures. As a whole it may have several peaks, may see many ups and downs and thus flourish for millennia, decline into a latent existence, re-emerge and again become dominant for a certain period and then decline once more to appear again. Even when dominated by other cultures a considerable part of it may live as an element fully or partly integrated in those cultures.

Again, the cycle of birth, maturity, decline, and death can be determined only by the prior determination of the life-span of a civilization, but there is no agreement among these writers on this point. What according to Danilevsky is one civilization, say, the ancient Semitic civilization, is treated by Toynbee as three civilizations, the Babylonian, Hittite and Sumeric, and by Spengler as two, the Magian and Babylonian.

In the life-history of a people one notices one birth-and-death sequence, the other two, and the third three. The births and deaths of cultures observed by one writer are not noticed at all by the others. When the beginning and end of a culture cannot be determined, it is extravagant to talk about its birth and death and its unrepeatable cycle.

A civilization can see many ups and downs and there is nothing against the possibility of its regeneration. No culture dies completely. Some elements of each die out and others merge as living factors into other cultures.

There is a group of fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history who confine themselves to the study of art phenomena and draw conclusions about the dynamics of culture in general. Peter Paul Ligeti, Frank Chambers, and Charles Lalo belong to this group.

We may not quarrel with them about some of their conclusions; but should like to make an observation about one of their hypotheses—a hypothesis on which the study of Muslim thought throws considerable light.

According to most of them, it is always the same art and the same type or style of art which rises at one stage in the life-history of each culture: one art or art form at its dawn, another at its maturity, and yet another at its decline, and then gradually both art and the corresponding culture die. We do not accept this conclusion. The life-history of Greek art is not identical with that of European art or Hindu or Muslim art.

In some cultures, like the Egyptian, Chinese, Hindu, and Muslim, literature; in some others such as the

French, German, and English architecture; and in the culture of the Greeks, music blossomed before any other art.

The art of the Paleolithic people reached the maturity and artistic perfection which did not correspond to their stage of culture. In some cultures, as the Egyptian, art shows several waves, several ups and downs, rather than one cycle of birth, maturity, and decline.

Unlike most other cultures, Muslim culture has given no place to sculpture and its music has risen simultaneously with its architecture. Its painting is not an art that developed before all other arts. It was in fact the last of all its artistic developments. Thus, it is not true that the sequence of the rise of different arts is the same in all cultures.

Nor is it true that the same sequence appears in the style of each art in every culture. Facts do not support this thesis, for the earliest style of art in some cultures is symbolic, in others naturalistic, formal, impressionistic, or expressionistic.

Another group of the fourteenth/twentieth-century philosophers of history avoid these pitfalls and give an integral interpretation of history. To this group belong Northrop, Kroeber, Shubart, Berdyaev, Schweitzer, and Sorokin. Northrop, however, weakens his position by basing cultural systems on philosophies and philosophies on science.

He ignores the fact that many cultural beliefs are based on revelations or intuitive apprehensions. Jewish, Muslim, and Hindu cultures have philosophies based on revelation as much as on reason. The source of some social beliefs may even be irrational and non-rational, often contradicting scientific theories.

Kroeber's weakness consists in making the number of geniuses rather than the number of achievements the criterion of cultural maturity. Schweitzer rightly contends that each flourishing civilization has a minimum of ethical values vigorously functioning, and that the decay of ethical values is the decay of civilizations.

Neither the collapse of the Caliphate of Baghdad was caused entirely by the Mongol invasions nor was the ruin of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain affected by the attacks of Christian monarchs of the north; nor indeed was the second decline of the Muslim world due merely to the imperialistic designs of Western powers.

These were only contributory factors to these downfalls. The basic conditions of the rise and fall of nations invariably arise from within.

In each case the real cause was the lowering of moral standards brought about by centuries of luxury and overindulgence in worldly pleasures, resulting in disunity, social injustice, jealousies, rivalries, intrigues, indolence, and sloth—all the progeny of fabulous wealth and in the case of the second decline

from about 1111/1700 to 1266/1850, all round moral degeneration combined with conformism of the worst type deadening all original thought.

Without this moral downfall there would have been no cultural decline in Islam.

As it has been said before a culture may rise in one field at one time, in another field at another, but while it may be rising in one field it may yet be declining on the whole. The politico-social rise or fall of a culture necessarily goes with its moral rise or fall. But the case seems to be different with intellectual development.

A people may decline in the politico-social sphere and yet its decline may itself under suitable circumstances become a stimulus for its intellectual advance.

The political and moral decline of the `Abbasid Caliphate of Baghdad began in about the middle of the third/ninth century, and the collapse of the Umayyad Caliphate of Spain and decadence of the Fatimid Caliphate of Egypt in the beginning of the fifth/eleventh century. Yet the deep-rooted tradition of the patronage of learning in the Muslim world kept its intellectual achievements rising from peak to peak right up to the time of the Mongol devastation.

Thus, despite its downfall in other fields, in the field of learning Muslim culture saw its ascendancy right up to the middle of the seventh/thirteenth century. In fact this period of political and moral fall—the period during which Muslims everywhere lost their solidarity and the three Caliphates broke into petty States or sundry dynasties—was exactly the period when the Muslim intellect reached its full flowering.

It was during this period of political and moral decline that flourished such illustrious philosophers as al-Farabi, ibn Sina, Miskawaih, ibn Hazm, al-Ghazali, ibn Bajjah, ibn Tufail, ibn Rushd, and Fakhr al-Din Razi; the famous mystic Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi; great political philosophers like al-Mawardi and Nizam al-Mulk Tusi; renowned scientists and mathematicians like al-Majriti, ibn Yunus, ibn Haitham, ibn al-Nafis, al-Biruni, al-Bakri, al-Zarqah, `Umar Khayyam, ibn Zuhr, and al-Idrisi; and such celebrated literary figures as al-Tabari, al-Masudi, al-Mutanabbi, Firdausi, Baqillani, Sana'i, al-Ma'arri, Nasir Khusrau, al-Zamakhshari, Kashani, Niyami, `Attar, and ibn al-Athir.

Though three celebrities, Rumi, Sa'di, and Nasir al-Din Tusi, died long after the sack of Baghdad, they were actually the products of this very period and much of their works had been produced within it.¹ When moral degeneration sets in, a culture's intellectual achievements may stray but cannot avert the evil day.

In this example there is a lesson for those who are using their high intellectual attainments for the conquest even of the moon, Venus, and Mars, for they may yet be culturally on the decline, if superabundance of wealth leads them to luxury, licence, and moral degradation on the whole.

In the Introduction to the *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, it is complained that histories written since the beginning of the thirteenth/nineteenth century suffer from the defect that they ignore all developments in philosophy before the time of the Greeks.

This complaint, or rather indictment, is perfectly justified, not only in the case of the historians of the thirteenth/nineteenth century but also of those of the twelfth/eighteenth century. Every thinker of these two centuries understood history as if it were identical with Western history.

They viewed history as one straight line of events moving across the Western world; divided this line into three periods, ancient, medieval, and modern; and lumped together the Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, and Babylonian civilizations, each of which had passed through several stages of development, in the briefest possible prelude (in some cases covering not even a page) to the Graeco-Roman period designated as "ancient."

Histories of other civilizations and people did not count, except for those events which could be easily linked with the chain of events in the history of the West. Toynbee justly describes this conception of history as an egocentric illusion, and his view is shared by all recent philosophers of history.

Whatever their differences in other matters, in one thing the twentieth-century philosophers of history are unanimous, and that is their denunciation of the linear conception of progress.

We associate ourselves with them in this. Just as in biology progress has been explained by a trend from lower to higher, or from less perfect to more perfect, or from less differentiated and integrated to more differentiated and integrated, similarly Herder, Fichte, Rant, and Hegel and almost all the philosophers of the twelfth/eighteenth and thirteenth/nineteenth centuries explained the evolution of human society by one principle, one social trend, and their theories were thus stamped with the linear law of progress.

The present-day writers criticism of them is perfectly justified in respect of their view of progress as a line, ascending straight or spirally, whether it is Fichte's line advancing as a sequence of certain values, or Herder's and Kant's from violence and war to Justice and peace, or Hegel's to ever-increasing freedom of the Idea, or Spencer's to greater and greater differentiation and integration, or Tonnie's advancing from *Gemeinschaft* to *Gesellschaft*, or Durkheim's from a state of society based on mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity, or Buckle's from diminishing influence of physical laws to an increasing influence of mental laws, or Navicow's from physiological determination to purely intellectual competition, or any other line of a single principle explaining the evolution of human society as a whole.

Every civilization has a history of its own and each has its own ancient, medieval, and modern periods. In most cases these periods are not identical with the ancient, medieval, and modern periods of Western

culture starting from the Greek. Several cultures preceded the Western culture and some starting earlier are still contemporaneous with it.

They cannot be thrown into oblivion because they cannot be placed in the three periods of the cultures of the West, ancient, medieval, and modern. Western culture is not the measure of all humanity and its achievements. You cannot measure other cultures and civilizations or the whole of human history by the three-knotted yardstick of progress in the West.

Mankind consists of a number of great and small countries each having its own drama, its own language, its own ideas, its own passions, its own customs and habits, its own possibilities, its own goals, and its own life-course. If it must be represented lineally, it would not be by one line but several lines or rather bands of variegated and constantly changing colours, reflecting one another and merging into one another.

While the learned editors of the *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, have endeavoured to remove one flaw in the treatment of ancient history, they have failed to remove similar flaws in the treatment of what the Western writers designate as the "medieval" period of history.

A very large part of this period is covered by the phenomenal rise and development of Muslim thought which carried human achievement in the intellectual field, as in many other fields, to one of its highest peaks.

For this the most glorious part of medieval history not more than four out of forty-eight chapters have been assigned in the *history of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*.

Nor, indeed, has even a word-been said about the well-recognized role of Muslim philosophy in transmitting Greek thought to the West, in advancing human knowledge, in supplying a mould for the shaping of Western scholasticism, in developing empirical sciences, in bringing about the Italian-Renaissance, and in providing stimulus to the speculation of Western thinkers from Descartes to Kant.

More-over, in the account given of the "modern" period of history, the philosophical achievements of the East, except those in India, have been completely omitted. The reader of this historical work gets the impression that from the time of Descartes to that of Sartre, i.e., the present day, the East, outside India, intellectually ceased to exist.

It is true that the *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, is not alone characterized by these omissions. The same gaps, even more yawning, are found in the histories of philosophy written by Western scholars; but while in the works of the Westerners they are understandable, in those of the eastern scholars they are unpardonable.

Nevertheless, in this particular case they became unavoidable for the able editors did intend to have some more chapters on Muslim philosophy, but the writer to whom these chapters were assigned—was also a minister of the State holding an important portfolio and his heavy official duties left him no time to write them.

D

The history of Muslim thought throws a flood of light on the logic of history. A controversy has gone on for a long time about the laws that govern historical sequences. Vico in the twelfth/eighteenth century contended, under the deep impression of the lawfulness prevailing in natural sciences, that historical events also follow one another according to the unswerving laws of nature. The law of mechanical causality is universal in its sway.

The same view was held by Saint Simon, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marx and in recent times by Mandelbaum and Wiener. On the other hand, idealists like Max Weber, Windelband, and Rickert are of the view that the objects of history are not units with universal qualities; they are unique, unrepeatable events in a particular space and a specific time.

Therefore, no physical laws can be formed about them. Historical events are undoubtedly exposed to influences from biological, geological, geographical, and racial forces; yet they are always carried by human beings who use and surmount these forces. Mechanical laws relate to facts but historical events relate to values.

Therefore the historical order of laws is different from the physical laws of mechanical causation. To us it seems that both the groups go to extremes. The empiricists take no account of the freedom of the will and the resolves, choices, and goals of human beings and the idealists forget that even human beings are not minds, but body—minds; and though they initiate events from their own inner resources, they place them in the chain of mechanical causality.

It is true that historical events and the lives of civilizations and cultures follow one another according to the inner laws of their own nature, yet history consists in the moral, intellectual, and aesthetic achievements of individuals and groups based on resolves and choices, using causation—a divine gift—as a tool, now obeying, now revolting against divine will working within them aid in the world around them, now co—operating and now fighting with one another, now falling, now rising, and thus carving their own destinies.

E

The thought of Hegel and of Marx is having a great influence on the development of the philosophy of history. As is well known, Hegel is a dialectical idealist.

The whole world for him is the development of the Idea, a rational entity, which advances by posing itself as a thesis; develops from itself its own opposite, antithesis; and the two ideas, instead of constantly remaining at war, get united in an idea which is the synthesis of both; and this synthesis becomes the thesis for another triad and thus triad after triad takes the world to higher and yet higher reaches of progress.

Thus, the historical process is a Process of antagonisms and their reconciliations. The Idea divides itself into the "Idea_in_itself" (the world of history) and the "Idea_in_its_otherness" (the world as nature). Hegel's division of the world into two watertight compartments has vitiated the thought of several of his successors, Rickert, Windleband, and Spengler, and even of Bergson.

If electrons, amoebas, fleas, fishes, and apes were to speak, they could reasonably ask why, born of the same cosmic energy, determined by the same laws, having the same limited freedom, they should be supposed to be mere nature having no history.

To divide the world-stuff into nature and history is unwarranted. History consists of sequences of groups of events, and we have learnt since Einstein that objects in nature are also groups of events.

There is no essential difference between the two. The only difference is that up to a certain stage there is no learning by experience; beyond that there is. According to Hegel, the linear progress of the Idea or Intelligence, in winning rational freedom, culminates in the State, the best example of which is the German State. Such a line of thought justifies internal tyranny, external aggression, and wars between States.

It finds no place in the historical process for world organizations like the United Nations or the World Bank and is falsified by the factual existence of such institutions in the present stage of world history. Intelligence is really only one aspect of the human mind, and there seems to be no ground for regarding this one aspect, the knowing aspect, of only one kind of the world-stuff, i.e., mankind as the essence of the world-stuff.

The mind of one who rejects Hegel's idealism at once turns to Marx. Marxian dialectic is exactly the same as Hegel's. But, according to Marx, the world-stuff is not the Idea, but matter. He uses this word, matter, in the sense in which it was used by the thirteenth/nineteenth-century French materialists.

But the idea of matter as inert mass has been discarded even by present-day physics. World-stuff is now regarded as energy which can take the form of mass. Dialectical materialism, however, is not disproved by this change of meaning of the word "matter." It can still be held in terms of a realistic dialectic—the terms in which the present-day Marxists hold it.

With the new terminology, then, the Marxist dialectic takes this form: Something real (a thesis) creates from within itself its opposite, another real (antithesis), which both, instead of warring perpetually with each other, get united into a synthesis (a third real) which becomes the thesis of another triad, and thus

from triad to triad till, in the social sphere, this dialectic of reals leads to the actualization of a classless society.

Our objection to Hegel's position that he does not find any place for international organizations in the historical process does not apply to Marx, but the objection that Hegel considers war a necessary part of the historical process applies equally to him.

Hegel's system encourages wars between nations; Marx's between classes. Besides, Marxism is self-contradictory, for while it recognizes the inevitability or necessity of the causal law, it also recognizes initiative and free creativity of classes in changing the world.

Both Marx and Hegel make history completely determined, and completely ignore the most universal law of human nature, the law that people, becoming dissatisfied with their situation at all moments of their lives except when they are in sound sleep, are in the pursuit of ideals and values (which before their realization are mere ideas); and thus if efficient causes push them on (which both Hegel and Marx recognize), final causes are constantly exercising their pull (which both of them ignore).

Our recognition of final causes as determinants of the course of history leads us to the formulation of a new hypothesis. According to this hypothesis, human beings and their ideals are logical contraries or discrepant in so far as the former are real and the latter ideal, and real and ideal cannot be attributed to the same subject in the same context. Nor can a person and his ideal be thought of in the relation of subject and predicate.

For, an ideal of a person is what the person is not. There is no *essential* opposition between two ideals or between two reals, but there is a genuine incompatibility between a real and an ideal. What is real is not ideal and whatever is ideal is not real.

Both are opposed in their essence. Hegelian ideas and Marxist reals are not of opposite *nature*. They are in conflict in their *function*. They are mutually warring ideas or warring reals and are separated by hostility and hatred.

The incompatibles of our hypothesis are so in their nature, but not in their function, and are bound by love and affection and, though rational discrepant, are volitionally and emotionally in harmony. In the movement of history real selves are attracted by ideals, and then, in realizing them, are synthesized with them.

This movement is dialectical, but it is totally different from the Hegelian or Marxist dialectic. Their thesis and antithesis are struggling against each other. Here, one is struggling not "against" but "for" the other. The formula of the dynamic of history, according to this conception, will be:

A real (thesis) creates from within itself an ideal (antithesis) which both by mutual harmony get united into another real (synthesis) that becomes the thesis of another triad and thus from triad to triad. The

dialectic of human society, according to this formula, is not a struggle of warring classes or warring nations, but a struggle against limitations to realize goals and ideals, which goals and ideals are willed and loved rather than fought against.

This is a dialectic of love rather than of hatred. It leads individuals, masses, classes, nations, and civilizations from lower to higher and from higher to yet higher reaches of achievement. It is a dialectic which recognizes an over-all necessity of a transcendently determined process (a divine order), takes notice of the partial freedom of social entities and of the place of mechanical determination as a tool in divine and human hands.

This hypothesis is not linear because it envisages society as a vast number of interacting individuals and intermingling, interacting classes, societies, cultures, and humanity as a whole, moving towards infinite ideals, now rising, now falling, but on the whole developing by their realization, like the clouds constantly rising from the foot-hills of a mountain range, now mingling, now separating, now flying over the peaks, now sinking into the valleys, and yet ascending from hill to hill in search of the highest peak.

This hypothesis avoids the Spencerian idea of steady progress, because it recognizes ups and downs in human affairs and rises and falls of different civilizations and their thought at different stages of world history.

It avoids measuring the dynamics of history by the three-knotted rod of Western culture and does not shelve the question of change in human society as a whole. It leaves the door of future achievement open to all and does not condemn certain living cultures to death.

Briefly stated, the hypothesis to which the study of Muslim thought, as the study of Muslim culture as a whole, lends support has a negative as well as a positive aspect.

Negatively, it is non-organismic, non-cyclic, and non-linear; and, positively, it involves belief in social dynamics, in progress in human society through the ages by rises and falls, in the importance of the role of ethical values in social advance, in the possibility of cultural regeneration, in the environmental obstacles as stimuli to human action, in freedom and purpose as the ultimate sources of change, and in mechanical determinism as an instrument in divine and human hands.

F

The chief aim of this work is to give an account not of Muslim culture as a whole, nor of Muslim thought in general, but only of one aspect of Muslim thought, i.e., Muslim philosophy. But since this philosophy had its beginning in a religion based on philosophical fundamentals and it developed in close association with other spheres of thought, sciences, humanities, and arts, we have thought it desirable to give brief accounts of these other disciplines as well (Book Five).

Book Five has become necessary because in many cases the same thinkers were at once philosophers, scientists, and writers on the Humanities and Fine Arts.

Besides writing on philosophy al-Kindi wrote, to number only the main subjects, also on astrology, chemistry, optics, and music; al-Farabi on music, psychology, politics, economics, and mathematics; ibn Sina on medicine, chemistry, geometry, astronomy, theology, poetry, and music; Zakriya al-Razi on medicine and alchemy; al-Ghazali on theology, law, physics, and music; and the Ikhwan al-Safa on mathematics, astronomy, geography, music, and ethics.

Likewise ibn Haitham left works not only on philosophy but also on optics, music, mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, and Nasir al-Din Tusi on mathematics, astronomy, physics, medicine, mineralogy, music, history, and ethics. In Muslim Spain, ibn Bajjah wrote on philosophy, medicine, music, and astronomy; ibn Tufail on philosophy and medicine; and ibn Rushd on philosophy, theology, medicine, and astronomy. And what is true of these thinkers is true of a host of others.

In the Introduction to the *History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western*, to which reference has already been made it has been rightly observed that the histories of philosophy written before the nineteenth century might be aptly described as the histories of philosophers rather than the histories of philosophy.

But it seems to us that when a history aims at giving an account of theories and movements, it cannot do without dealing with philosophers, for the relation between them and the movements they start or the theories they propound is too intimate to allow their complete severance.

Therefore, in our endeavour to give a historical account of the movements, systems, and disciplines in Muslim thought we have made no effort to eliminate the treatment of individual philosophers where it has been called for. In this procedure we have followed the excellent example of T. J. de Boer who can be justly regarded as a pioneer in this most neglected field.

We have begun our treatment of the subject by giving in Book One a brief account of the whole field of philosophy in the pre-Islamic world in general and Arabia in particular. We have devoted Book Two to philosophical teachings of the Qur'an. This we have done with the express hope that these two books together will give the reader a correct idea of the real source of Muslim philosophy and enable him to view this philosophy in its true perspective.

Muslim philosophy like Muslim history in general has passed through five different stages. The first stage covers the period from the first/seventh century to the fall of Baghdad. We have dealt with this period under the heading "Early Centuries." This is followed by a shock-absorbing period of about half a century. Its third stage is that of its second flowering treated under the heading "Later Centuries."

It covers the period from the beginning of the eighth/fourteenth to the beginning of the twelfth/eighteenth century. The fourth stage is that of the most deplorable decline covering a century and a half. This is in

the truest sense the Dark Age of Islam. With the middle of the thirteenth/nineteenth century begins its fifth stage covering the period of the modern renaissance.

Thus, in the curve of its history, Muslim philosophy has had two rises and two falls and is now showing clear signs of a third rise.

We have said very little about the periods of decline, for these have little to do with philosophical developments. During the first period of its greatness Muslim philosophy shows four distinct lines of thought. The first is the theologico-philosophical line, the second is mystical, the third philosophical and scientific, and the fourth is that taken by those whom we have called the “middle-roads.”

These have been treated respectively in Book Three, Parts 1, 2, 3, and 4. In Book Four we have traced the same lines of thought running through the second rise of Islam in order to bring it in clear contrast with the first.

During both of these periods of Islamic rise, considerable activity is noticeable in other disciplines. We have dealt with all these in Book Five.

The period of modern renaissance in Islam, a brief account of which is given in Book Eight, is marked by political struggle for emancipation from foreign domination and freedom from conformism in both life and thought.

The philosophers of this period are not mere philosophers. They are more political leaders, social reformers, and men of action. Therefore, although chapters 72, 73, 74, 77, 80, and 83 contribute little to academic philosophy, yet they throw a flood of light on the philosophies of life and history, and for that reason have been considered indispensable for our work.

So much about the past. But what about the present and how about the future? The position of philosophy amongst the Muslim peoples today is no worse than it is in the rest of the world. What type of philosophical thought the future has in store for them we shall try to forecast in our concluding remarks.

¹. As Rumi's most important work, the Mathnawi, was written between 659/1261 and 670/1272, we have included him among writers of the centuries following the sack of Baghdad.

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