



# ISLĀMIC THOUGHT AND CULTURE

Papers presented to the  
Islamic Studies Group of  
American Academy of Religion

Edited By  
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī

International Institute of Islamic Thought  
1402/1982



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Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 82-84506

Printed by:  
International Graphics Printing Service  
4411 41st Street  
Brentwood, Maryland 20722

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

To all scholars, members of the American Academy of Religion, who read papers at the annual meetings of the Islāmic Studies Group;

To those scholars, especially, who submitted reworked written versions of their papers for consideration for publication in this volume;

To Br. 'Abd al Raḥman bin 'Aqīl, Br. Wā'il Shawkat al Khayrī and Dr. Lois Lamyā'al Fārūqi without whose material, academic and moral assistance this publication would not have been possible,

The editor's deepest gratitude is acknowledged.

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE ISLĀMIC STUDIES GROUP

### AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION

#### I. HISTORY

Following the AAR annual meeting of 1972, Dr. Franklin Littell, then Chairman of the History of Christianity Section and my colleague at Temple University, Department of Religion, suggested that there is a possibility for setting up a sub-section on Muslim-Christian Encounter under the aegis of the History of Christianity Section. This sub-section would offer panels and lectures in the annual program. I welcomed the suggestion and arranged a program for the 1973 annual meeting in Chicago. The same invitation was renewed for the 1974 (Washington) meeting. Dr. Littell also advised that we must seek independent status as a program unit since his chairmanship of the section on the History of Christianity was to expire soon. At the 1974 meeting a unanimous vote was taken by the scholars present at the Islāmic sessions to apply for status as an independent program unit. An application was lodged with the AAR Executive Director for presentation to the AAR Program Committee.

The application was turned down, and we participated in the 1975 program under the aegis of "History of Christianity." At the 1975 meeting, another unanimous vote was taken and a committee elected to apply for independent status. Again, this was turned down. Although we were granted a "Consultation" status, yet our participation appeared in the program under the History of Christianity. At the 1976 meeting, a third unanimous vote was taken and the same committee reelected to apply once more for independent status. This was granted in December, 1976, and we began to operate as such. Since then, the Islāmic Studies Group participated in five annual meetings. At the request of the AAR Executive Director, the Group's participation was extended to cover the 1981 meeting at San Francisco.

In all, we have been responsible for holding

9 sessions of 1½ hours each

17 sessions of 3 hours each

2 plenary sessions of 2½ hours each.

The above-mentioned sessions involved 127 speakers and 24 sessions

chairpersons. This is exclusive of the current session, (our tenth) to be held in New York in December, 1982.

We have also held an exhibit of Islāmic Art, shown numerous films, and raised \$15,000.00 which we plan to spend on publishing three volumes of papers presented to the AAR under our auspices, to be entitled "Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths"; Islāmic Thought and Culture" and "Essays in Islāmic and Comparative Studies."

## **II. CONSTITUENCY**

Since we began with no constituency among the members of the AAR, we worked very hard to promote Islāmic Studies among them. We advertised the AAR Islāmic Studies programs throughout the U.S. and Canada, and we sent out bulk mailings of 1000 or more pieces for two years. We solicited papers from our friends and acquaintances. Gradually, the responses came and they were encouraging. At any one of our meetings, we could count 40 participants, and some sessions were attended by more than 100 persons. Today, we estimate that "Islāmic Studies" is a live entity in the consciousness of at least 200 members of the AAR though not all of them attend every session.

## **III. METHOD AND PHILOSOPHY**

Most of the papers presented under Muslim-Christian Encounter or Islāmic Studies were by special invitation. We also received a number of papers which were unsolicited. In every case, we tried to fit the offered papers into the program without jeopardizing the planned themes for sessions. However, the desire of the Steering Committee was to focus each session around a chosen topic so that speakers and audience could interact on a particular issue.

As much as possible, we tried to make the Islāmic Studies Group a mixed one, involving Muslims, Christians, Jews and others as speakers and audience. We sought to sensitize every participant that our business is scholarly and must meet the most exacting standards of scholarship; but that our discipline deals with the values, attitudes, hopes and aspirations of millions of living humans. We endeavored to make our meetings lively by looking into problems of Muslims as a living community. In our criticisms and suggestions, we sought a phenomenological approach wherever possible. Over the years, our meetings have become richer than those of the American Oriental Society where the approach is basically linguistic and/or textual, and of the Middle East Studies Association where the approach is basically strategist. We have succeeded in drawing to the AAR a number of new members from both associations as well as a number of Muslim scholars.



Over the entire period of ten years of activity (nine annual meetings) there was perfect accord between the Steering Committee and the audience. Members of the audience repeatedly expressed their approval of, and gratitude for, the programs we had prepared. Their suggestions were acted upon, and they were happy to return to the AAR meeting year after year.

#### **IV. A NOTE ABOUT THE FUTURE**

The Islāmic Studies Group has built up a small but growing and vigorous constituency. Though small by comparison to total AAR membership, this constituency is largely made of scholars who teach Islām either in one undergraduate course, or as a smaller part of an undergraduate survey course in the religions of the world. Already, a number of specialized Islāmicists have been pulled toward the AAR because of our distinctive approach to comparative study. Moreover, the papers so far presented in the field of Islāmic Studies have been of very high quality, and they are bound to improve in quality and quantity in the future. It is our considered judgment — and hence, our recommendation — that the Islāmic Studies Group be upgraded to “section” and that it be given a chance to realize this fuller development in the coming decade.

Normally, a “Group” Program unit would sit for an election of a new steering committee every five years, assuming a decision on the part of the AAR to continue same. However, the AAR Executive Director has asked the present Steering Committee to continue for one additional year. Elections will therefore be planned for the annual meeting, 1982.

Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
Chairman  
Islāmic Studies Group  
American Academy of Religion  
Temple University

## ABSTRACT OF PROGRAMS FOR NINE YEARS

### 1973 (Chicago)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Theme: "Muslim-Christian Encounter"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Four, namely,  
Ḥasan Ḥanafī  
Jaroslav Stetkewycz  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
W.C. Smith

### 1974 (Washington)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Theme: "Muslim-Christian Encounter in the Age of the  
Crusades"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Five, namely,  
M. Khalīfah Aḥmad  
Don M. Randel  
Jaroslav Folda  
Edward A. Synan  
Victor Makkari

### 1975 (Chicago)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Themes: "Islām and Modernism"; "Islām, the University and the  
AAR"  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Sessions: One 3-hour session, one 1½-hour session  
Speakers: Eight, namely,  
Charles J. Adams  
Sāmī Hamārnah  
James Waltz  
Anīs Aḥmad  
John L. Esposito  
Willem Bijlefeld  
I.R. al Fārūqī  
Roderick Hindery

### 1976 (St. Louis)

- Status: History of Christianity: Islāmic Studies Group  
Theme: "Teaching Islām to Undergraduates"; "Issues in Islāmic Thought"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions and one 3-hour session  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Fourteen, namely,  
William Sheppard  
Jane Smith  
Riffat Burki  
John Esposito  
Merlin Swartz  
Spencer Lavan  
Gary de Angelis  
J.M. Pessagno  
Harold Kasimow  
S. Kirmānī  
Anīs Aḥmad  
M. Zahniser  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
Harry Partin

### 1977 (San Francisco)

- Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Themes: "Sufism"; "Faith and Reason in Islām"; "Teaching of Islām: Methods and Problems"; "Changing Status of Women"  
Sessions: Two 3-hour sessions, two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: Harold Kasimow, J. Meric Pessagno, Anīs Aḥmad, John L. Esposito  
Speakers: Twenty, namely,  
Richard Martin  
isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
J.M. Pessagno  
Frederic M. Denny  
S.A. Nigosian  
Joseph Epes Brown  
Ḥāmid Algar  
'Umar Fārūq 'Abdullah  
John L. Esposito  
Elizabeth Fernea  
Houston Smith  
Alan Lazaroff  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
'Abdul Qādir Baig  
'Ābidullah Ghāzī  
Tamar Frank  
Mary J. Good  
Najāt Ṣanābary  
Lois Beck  
Midḥat Abraham

### 1978 (New Orleans)

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Theme: "Islām in North America"; "Interpretation of Scripture in Islām"; "Islām and Political Liberation"; "Worship in Islām"

Sessions: Four 3-hour sessions; one Plenary Session

Presiding: Anīs Aḥmad, J. Meric Pessagno, John L. Esposito, Harold Kasimow

Speakers: Twenty-eight, namely,

Yvonne Ḥaddād	Frederic M. Denny
Gordon Newby	Anīs Aḥmad
Earl H. Waugh	Richard Martin
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī	J.M. Pessagno
'Uthmān Llewellyn	'Aẓīm Nānjī
Rashīd Ḥāmid	Jane I. Smith
John Sullivan	Frank Gorman
Alford T. Welch	Newell S. Booth
John L. Esposito	Akbar Muḥammad
Muḥammad Ḥamdūn	Fred R. von der Mehden
John A. Williams	H.M. Federspiel
Muzzammil Ṣiddīqī	Ilyās Bā-Yūnus
Harold Kasimow	Victor Danner
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī	Wadī' Ḥaddād

Plus: Plenary Session  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī

Theme: "World Community of Islām in the West"

Speaker: Wallace D. Muḥammad, Chief Imām, World Community of Islām in the West

### 1979 (New York)

In cooperation with the Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium (The Muslim-Jewish-Christian Conference)

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Themes: "Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths"; "Sufism"; "Islāmic Thought"

Sessions: Five 3-hour sessions; one Plenary Session; one Luncheon

Presiding: Jane I. Smith; John L. Esposito; Harold Kasimow, J.M. Pessagno, Msgr. Joseph Gremillion

Speakers: Twenty-two, namely,

Michael Wyschogrod	Victor Danner
Krister Stendahl	Marilyn Waldman
Muḥammad 'Abd al Raūf	Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr

Seymour Siegel	Howard Burkle
John Raines	Wilfred C. Smith
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī	Frederic M. Denny
William Hickman	J.M. Pessagno
Howard M. Federspiel	'Aẓīm Nānjī
Tamar Frank	Henry Siegman
Dimitri Gutas	James Finn
Herbert Mason	Maḥmūd Awān

**Plus:** Plenary Session  
**Presiding:** Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
**Theme:** "Dialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths"  
**Speaker:** Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli, The Vatican  
**Plus:** Luncheon in honor of Cardinal Pignedoli

### 1980 (Dallas)

**Status:** AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
**Theme:** "The Fourteenth Centennial of Islām: Contributions Through the Centuries to the Moral, Intellectual and Beautiful Life"  
**Sessions:** Two 3-hour sessions  
**Presiding:** Frederic M. Denny; Jane I. Smith  
**Speakers:** Thirteen, namely,

Yvonne Ḥaddād	J.M. Pessagno
'Alāuddīn Kharrūfah	Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī
Kristina Nelson	S. Ḥusayn Naṣr
Jafran Jones	Michel Mazzaoui
Anthony Welch	Mark Woodward
Khālīdah Salām	Noel Q. King
	Elizabeth Fernea

**Plus:** Exhibit of Islāmic Art comprising:  
400 mounted pictures of Islāmic art works in  
Architecture  
Ceramics  
Painting  
Calligraphy  
Metal, wood and cloth works  
300 art objects, comprising  
Textiles  
Jewelry  
Leather, ceramics and metal works  
Calligraphic Manuscripts and decorations

## Carpets

3 films on Islāmic Art

(In cooperation with the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada and the National Committee for the Fourteenth Centennial of Islām)

### 1981 (San Francisco)

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group

Themes: "Interaction between Islām and Christianity";  
"Interaction between Islām and Judaism"

Sessions: Two 3-hour sessions

Presiding: Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī, Harold Kasimow

Speakers: Twelve, namely,

J.M. Pessagno

S. Ḥusayn Naṣr

Richard B. Rose

Victor Danner

Aḥmad 'Isā

T. Patrick Burke

Helen Goldstein

William Brinner

Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī

Norman Stillman

David Ariel

Norbert Samuelson

## THE SHAHĀDAH

*Muzzammil H. Siddiqi*  
Muslim World League, New York

When discussing the first pillar (*rukn*) of Islām, scholars usually tend to pay all their attention to the concept of monotheism or *tawhīd*. *Tawhīd* is, no doubt, a very important principle of 'slām and the most supreme value in its religious structure. In this paper, however, we would like to discuss the notion of Shahādah or "bearing witness" as an element of faith in Islāmic life.

A famous Ḥadīth narrated in this connection by al Bukhārī says:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :  
« بني الاسلام على خمس : شهادة أن لا اله الا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله ، وإقام الصلاة ،  
وأيتاء الزكاة ، والحج ، وصوم رمضان » (البخاري كتاب الايمان ١)

*"Ibn 'Umar said, the Messenger of Allah — peace and blessings of Allah be upon him — said, 'Islām is built on five things, the bearing of witness that there is no God but Allah and that, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, and the keeping up of prayer and the payment of zakāt and the pilgrimage and fasting in Ramaḍān.'"*

(Al Bukhārī, Kitāb al Imān, 1)

It is on the basis of this and many other similar ḥadīths that the first statement of *tawhīd* is known as *Kalimat al Shahādah* (the statement of witness) and thus a Muslim declares:

« أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمداً رسول الله »

*"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah."*

In order to understand the full significance of the word "shahādah" we must turn to the Qur'ān, the source and inspiration of all Islāmic

knowledge, where the word "shahādah" occurred in its various forms no less than 160 times. Its basic meaning is "to see with one's own eyes," or "to be present when something happens or takes place." Thus for example, in the Qur'ān, we read:

(١٨٥:٢) « فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه »

"So whosoever of you see the month (of Ramaḍān) let him fast." (2:185).

(٢:٢٤) « فليشهد عذابهما طائفة من المؤمنين »

"Let a group of believers see their (adulterers') punishment." (24:2)

(٧:٨٥) « وهم على ما يفعلون بالمؤمنين شهود »

"And they were watching whatever they were doing to the believers." (85:7)

(١٣٣:٢) « أم كنتم شهداء إذ حضر يعقوب الموت »

"Were you present when Jacob was visited by death." (2: 133)

Shahādah in its further active forms means to attest and to testify what one has seen. Hence it does not mean only personal knowledge and conviction but also denotes strength of one's conviction in declaring what one knows. Thus we read:

(٨١:٢٢) « وما شهدنا إلا بما علمنا »

"And we did not testify except what we knew." (22:81)

It is because of His supreme knowledge and omniscience that God is also called *Shahīd* in the Qur'ān. (see 3:98; 5:117; 6:19; 10:46; 22:17; 34:47; 41:53; 58:6; 85:9 etc.).

(١٨:٣) « شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو »

God attests to His own Oneness (3:18)

(١٦٦:٤) « لكن الله يشهد بما أنزل إليك أنزله بعلمه »

God attests to whatever He has revealed to His Prophet because He has revealed it with full knowledge (4:166).

« قل الله شهيد بيني وبينكم »

God attests that He has sent Muḥammad as His Messenger (6:19; 4:72; 48:28).



« وأرسلناك للناس رسولا وكفى بالله شهيدا »

« هو الذي أرسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله وكفى بالله شهيدا »

On the Day of Judgement, the Qur'ān says, your ears, your eyes, your hands, your feet and your skin will bear witness against you because of whatever wrong or sinful deeds that you have committed deliberately and consciously (see 41:20; 6:130; 36:65). One who personifies in himself what he attests and calls others to this testimony is called *shahīd* and *shahīd* in the Qur'ān. Thus the role of the Prophet is that of the *shahīd*.

(٤٥:٣٣) « يا أيها النبي إنا أرسلناك شاهداً ومبشراً ونذيراً »

“O Prophet! verily We have sent thee as a witness, a bringer of glad tidings and a warner.”

(33:45; see also 48:8 and 73:15).

The Prophet is also a *shahīd* i.e. a continuous witness and so are also the believers charged to be witnesses.

« هو سماكم المسلمين من قبل وفي هذا ليكون الرسول شهيداً عليكم وتكونوا شهداء على الناس » (٧٨:٢٢)

« وجئنا بك على هؤلاء شهيداً » (٤١:٤)

In its various usages in the Qur'ān, the *Shahādah* stands for:

1. Knowledge and conviction
2. Commitment
3. Declaration

Like Christianity, Islām does not lack detailed creeds. These detailed creeds were formulated by theologians after to combat heresies. *Kalimat al Shahādah* is, however, the shortest creed of Islām and also the simplest and the earliest. Wensinck, in vain, tried to prove that during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad this formula of faith did not exist in its present form. According to him, early Muslims only used لا إله إلا الله and « محمداً رسول الله » was added when Muslims later started preaching to Christians and Jews.<sup>1</sup>

Wensinck's arguments are based primarily upon the assumption that the hadith material is unreliable. According to him, hadith at most can be taken to reflect the time in which it was composed and written and not the time of Muḥammad. We shall not discuss this claim in this paper. Much has already been written to expose the falsity of such Orientalistic generalization about hadith. Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al

<sup>1</sup>A.J. Wensinck, *Muslim Creed*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1932. Second impression, p. 17-35.

A'zamī gave a thorough refutation of them in his *Studies in Early Hadīth Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978). Wensinck, perhaps forgot to consider the call for prayer (adhān) where both phrases of shahadah occur side by side in their complete form. No one, to my knowledge, has questioned the historicity of Adhān which was called by Bilāl and many other Companions of the Prophet, five times a day in his mosque in Madīnah.

The two phrases of the shahādah convey fully the basic principles of Islām. It is, however, significant that they do not begin with *credo* or I believe, rather they start with *ashhadu* (I bear witness) which means not only that I have faith in God and I believe in Him but also that I see His presence before and around me, I am convinced about His unique existence and this is not my private conviction but I want to declare it to the world. Similarly, I do not only believe in the prophethood of Muḥammad but I *know* him as Prophet and I declare this conviction to the world.

Shahādah is one of the important religious experiences of a Muslim. It begins the day he is born and these words are whispered in both of his ears by father, grandfather or some other pious Muslim. And it continued through his growth in Muslim society where he hears the Adhān five times a day. It becomes his ultimate experience if he has the opportunity to give his life for his faith as a shahīd or martyr.

## ISLĀM AND LAW

*'Alā' al Dīn Kharrūfah*  
Muslim World League, New York

Islām is the chosen religion of God. It is therefore, a complete way and a comprehensive system of life; and it is so, not in theory alone. Islām is comprehensive in its practicality. By the third century after the Hijrah, the Islāmic system of law was complete. The *sharī'ah* covered all the areas usually treated by civil law, criminal law, family law, commercial law, international law, etc. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss in detail the contribution of Islām in all these fields. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the main landmarks of the contribution of the *sharī'ah* in these fields.

In civil law, Islām made a significant contribution when it commanded the Muslims to write down their business agreement and to record their business transactions. We read in verse 282 of the second *sūrah* of the Holy Qur'ān:

*"O ye who believe, when you deal with one another, in transactions involving future obligations, in fixed periods of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties."*

This divine dictate is in the interests of the parties involved. If they abide by it, they would save themselves from much unnecessary trouble that could arise later between them. However, Islām did not make this law rigid but sufficiently flexible, so that in certain cases the merchants might be exempted from observing it. The law permitted them to conclude their business transactions by word of mouth or telephone where expedient provided that they abide by their words. But it warned them of God's greater wrath if they failed or cheated one another. Thus, trustworthiness of the parties played a significant role in business. Islām gave this privilege to the merchants 1400 years ago. A Muslim merchant

must honor his commitment made by word of mouth. He must uphold his pledge at all costs whether he made it in writing or he did it verbally. And no Muslim merchant or businessman may abuse or misuse this privilege which God has given him. In the event of dispute or disagreement between two parties, the *sharī'ah*, following a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS), prescribed that "The burden of proof (evidence) devolves upon the plaintiff."

In the field of family law, the contribution of Islām is most significant. No other system of law in the world has done so much to improve and to elevate the status of women as Islām has done. It gave woman rights which she did not have before: the right to choose her husband, to inherit property, and to divorce her husband through a court. This was truly revolutionary. Before Islām, the condition of women was simply unspeakable: she had no status, no position, and no rights. She was treated as something less than a human being, a mere chattel, sometimes pleasing but more often a source of anguish. Many Arabs buried female infants alive, for fear of inviting ridicule or social disapproval in later life.

When Islām announced that a woman was the equal of a man; that she was an individual, and had her own personality, her own rights, the rest of the world was shocked and surprised. But Islām compelled its adherents to acknowledge women's rights.

Before Islām, one could marry any number of women. But Islām took this "privilege" away and restricted the number of women a man could marry to four, and that too, under special conditions. Men are not allowed to abuse this privilege. Islām also gave woman the right to inherit and to keep her wealth, and thus to be free from economic dependence upon her husband. She is free to sell her property without permission of her husband—a right which women did not have in Europe until the end of the 19th century. Indeed, Islām gave rights to women which have been denied in the Western society even today. It gave her the right to keep her maiden name after marriage. She does not have to use the name of her husband. This is a right which is still being sought in many parts of the world. Islām was thus the first emancipator of women.

In the field of administrative law, Islām gave people the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly within the framework of law. A man may not abuse these freedoms and trespass on the rights of others. Islām takes very serious notice of libel, especially against women, and makes it a serious offence punishable by public flogging. The person found guilty of libel suffers loss of legal capacity to give witness during the rest of his life.

Islāmic law also introduced the right of "mutual consultation" or

*shūrā*. This was its way of banishing tyranny, whimsey and arbitrariness from Muslim life, whether at home, in business, or in government. All affairs, above all the highest affairs of state, are in Islām to be conducted by consultation between all parties concerned. The importance of consultation in Islam demanded that a whole *sūrah* of the Qur'ān be devoted to it.

*"The believers' affairs are settled in consultation with one another ... Forgive the believers, O Muḥammad, pray for them, and consult with them on all matters"* (Qur'ān 42:38; 3:159).

Moreover, we find our Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) himself seeking to consult with his companions. "O people, give me your opinion," he used to say on so many occasions." Islām did not omit to stress the importance of consulting, not the ignorant, but those who have knowledge. Allah says:

*"Consult or ask the people who have knowledge if you do not know."* (Qur'ān 16:43).

Al Māwardī took care to elaborate the conditions under which people may give consultation or render advice when asked. They should satisfy three conditions, viz., justice, knowledge and wisdom. Without these three qualifications, the person giving consultation is not only devoid of credit in the eye of God, but deserves punishment in hellfire.

In the field of criminal law, Islām introduced the most important concept of "equal compensation." In the Qur'ān Allah (SWT) says:

*"O ye who believe! The Law of Equality is prescribed for you in cases of murder; the free for the free, the slave for the slave; the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty"* (Qur'ān 2:178).

*"In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) life to you, O ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves"* (Qur'ān 2:179).

*"No bearer of burden can bear the burden of another"* (Qur'ān 6:164).

The first two quotations are called the "Law of Punishment." Islām stands for absolute justice. If a man has been wronged, he must receive what is due. And the man who has wronged another person without reason must pay for his crime. Justice is a lesson to all members of the community. No one stands above or beyond the law; and no one may escape the consequences of his crime. The third quotation stresses the principle of personal responsibility. Every man will answer for his own

deeds, and no one will be held answerable for the deeds of another.

Islāmic law prescribes capital punishment for voluntary manslaughter, unless the heirs of the slain forgive the criminal. If the killing was not voluntary, the criminal must compensate the survivors of the slain, or the heirs, according to the traditions and customs of the country. The law of capital punishment is based on divine wisdom, and is in the best interests of the society. The alarming crime situation in our present time finds murders becoming ever more frequent and murderers being allowed unwarranted leniency. There is a need for Qur'ānic law today; it constitutes the only answer to our contemporary problem. It is intolerable that our society must live in constant fear of murderers, robbers and other criminals. The secular penal codes and courts of the present day seem to be more concerned for and sympathetic to the murderer than to the victim, his relatives or to society.

For the crime of theft, Islāmic law prescribes the punishment of severing the thief's hand. On the face of it, this looks very severe. However, such punishment is enforced only if the society is not suffering from deprivation. Where the conditions are abnormal and people commit theft due to extreme poverty and suffering, such a punishment will not be enforced on the grounds that the government has failed to provide the basic necessities to its people, and has therefore lost the right to enforce the punishment. The punishment of theft was once suspended by Caliph 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (RAA) in the year of general drought and near famine.

It is not out of place to mention here the average annual rate of crimes in the United States of America. The frequency of crime is as follows:

murder	one every 27 minutes
larceny	one every 5 seconds
motor vehicle theft	one every 33 seconds
violent crime	one every 31 seconds
forcible rape	one every 8 minutes
robbery	one every 78 seconds
aggravated assault	one every 5 minutes
burglary	one every 10 minutes

In international law, Islām gave us a totally new perspective of world order. Time permits us but a bare mention of two of its highlights. First of these is the duty to maintain peace with every other state or group which has not perpetrated aggression against the Muslims. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān:

*"Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for Allah loveth those who are just."* (Qur'ān 40:8).

Second among highlights is that, wherever and whenever it is given the choice, the Islamic state must choose peace and not war. In this connection Allah (SWT) says:

*"If your enemy prefers peace, you have to prefer peace, and put your trust in Allah"* (Qur'ān 8:60).

Third is the obligation of the Islāmic state to seek a world order wherein every other state is Muslim by free choice or a covenant with the Islāmic state to co-exist with it in peace. The purpose is to enable everyone to hear the word of God and to accept or reject it freely.

The fourth is the recognition by Islamic law of non-citizen individuals and groups as legal persons entitled to covenant with the Islāmic state on all matters concerning them. Islāmic law grants non-resident non-citizens to take their complaints against citizens as well as the state to the nearest *sharī'ah* court.

The fifth is the absolutely equal status Islāmic law grants to the transient non-citizen in the Islāmic state. If he is a Muslim, his life is governed by the *sharī'ah* like any other Muslim citizen; if non-Muslim, by the law of his co-religionists if there are any, or by the law of his own religion if there are none.

The sixth point is the ideological basis Islām has given to man's definition of man and his relation with other men. The *sharī'ah* recognizes human beings by their religion, i.e., by the highest ultimate truths and values they hold, not by the real estate they occupy, or the race to which they belong.

The seventh is that the Islāmic law of nations envisages a united world-order in which the peoples of the world live in peace, a world in which there are neither customs, frontiers nor immigration laws, where humans and wealth are free to move, where humans are free to convince and be convinced of the truth, where every human is at once student and teacher, guarded and guardian, agent and patient of the command of the good and the prohibition of evil. This is not a utopian dream; nor the wishful thinking of an idle, speculative thinker. It is law, with courts, executive machinery and the better conscience of over a billion souls to support it.

## THE PILGRIMAGE TO MAKKAH

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Islām considers itself to be the very last religion to be revealed to mankind before the Day of Judgment, and the Prophet Muḥammad to be the very last of the long line of Prophets and Messengers beginning with Ādam. Hence, in many ways, Islām sums up in itself and in its Prophet many of the qualities and attitudes of previous revelations, just as the Prophet is a kind of synthesis of the long line of prophets stretching back in time to Ādam. The pure monotheistic message of Islām — the Oneness of the Divinity — is but the last reaffirmation of what previous divine messages had said before they had been clouded over by forgetfulness and worldliness. Within the Semitic cycle of monotheism, Islām pictures itself as reaffirming the Abrahamic message, which had been delimited, in Judaism, through the concept of the Chosen People and, in Christianity, through the teachings in Trinitarianism. The resulting ethnocentrism of Judaism impeded the expansion of the monotheistic ideas on the Divinity from reaching those who were outside the pale of the Chosen People. The Christocentrism of Christianity, in clouding over the absoluteness of God by emphasizing the divinity of the Christ, comprised the transcendent nature of the Absolute, and through its Trinitarian teachings, made the Oneness of ultimate reality suspect. By insisting on the pure monotheism of Abraham as in itself a message of salvation, without regard to any Chosen People or to any divine incarnation, Islām intended to reaffirm the primordial religion of mankind and to restore to the Divinity its character of salvific absoluteness in itself.

Nowhere is this Abrahamic connection of Islām more evident than in the Pilgrimage (*al ḥajj*), the fifth and final pillar of the Religion, which is binding on those adults who can perform it toward the end of their lives.



The Pilgrimage to Makkah celebrates in its multiple rituals a whole series of events connected with the mission of Abraham, his wife Hájár (or Hagar), and their offspring Ishmael (Isma'íl). If we stop to examine the different elements in the Pilgrimage that have to do with Abraham and his family, we realize, more and more, that the claim of Islām to be a reaffirmation of the Abrahamic way is based, not merely on the sacred words of the Qur'ān, which count for much already, but also on an ancient, sacred oral tradition that the memories of the nomadic Arabs kept alive in pre-Islāmic times along with their own observance of the rituals surrounding the Ka'bah and the Pilgrimage to that ancient sanctuary. Let us remember, in passing, that Judaism and Christianity are connected to Abraham through Isaac, while Islām is connected to him through Ishmael. Indeed, the northern Arabs consider him their progenitor, and the Prophet, like the other Arabs in his day, had an ancestral line that took him back to Ishmael. That lineage was accompanied by a mass of traditions and stories surrounding the Ka'bah that the pre-Islāmic Arabs, the so-called pagan Arabs, transmitted as part of their historical and religious connections to that ancient edifice.

The Islāmic tradition would have it that the prototype of the Ka'bah is not earthly but celestial in nature. As a matter of fact, there are a number of otherworldly Ka'bahs, each one the center of its place of existence, just as the Ka'bah at Makkah is the center of the earth. The ultimate prototype of the Ka'bah, as Ibn al 'Arabī and other Muslim sages put it, is the Divine Throne (*al 'Arsh*), around which the angelic hosts revolve with a circumambulation that is in itself the model of the circumambulation of the earthly Ka'bah by the believers in Makkah. The Ka'bah in Makkah is accordingly a symbol of the Divine Throne, which is both the Origin and Center of the universe. Now, the Ka'bah in certain cosmogonic myths of some Muslims is the origin of earthly existence in time, being a kind of first crystallization of matter; and it is the center of the earth, its navel, since it is situated on the axis connecting it to the Divine Throne.

According to certain ancient traditions, Ādam was the first to raise the foundations of the Ka'bah, which then fell into disrepair after the Deluge. But in his time, the sacred sanctuary was in the form of a tent made out of a brilliant jewel-like substance, and the Black Stone, which was then a seat for him, was a white jewel-like substance, turning black only later on, when the sins of those touching it began to leave their imprint on its color. This myth, as we can discern, seeks to convey something of the freshness of primordial mankind in its approach to the spiritual life: the luminosity of the ancient sanctuary and its famous stone both bespeak a time when passion and ignorance had not yet transformed mankind and its temples into opaque and darker

substances. Later on, the hearts of men would be like stones, and so would their temples, like the Ka'bah.

That is one ancient story on the origins of the Ka'bah. Another one tells us that Abraham and his son Ishmael either repaired the Ka'bah or else constructed it for the first time.\* You will recall that Abraham took his spouse Hagar and their son Ishmael to Arabia and left them there. Hagar's racing seven times between the hills of Šafā and Marwah is commemorated as one of the elements of the Pilgrimage, the *Sa'y* ("the running"), when the pilgrims reduplicate her efforts in search of water for her young son Ishmael. The well of Zamzam, the water of which still flows for the use of all pilgrims, was the celestial response to Hagar. One account has it that Gabriel's heel uncovered the well just in time to save Ishmael. Both Ishmael and his mother Hagar lie buried only some feet away from one of the corners of the Ka'bah. Within the sanctuary are a number of buildings and spots that tradition points to as being places where Abraham himself stood during the building of the Ka'bah, his footprints still visible in the soft stone, or where he and Ishmael mixed the mortar for the building.

The actual institution of the Pilgrimage goes back to Abraham's time, the only things introduced by the pre-Islāmic Arab pagans being the idols, which were to be found in the Ka'bah itself. Apart from destroying the idols — all 360 of them — and prohibiting the circumambulation of the Ka'bah naked, the Prophet merely purified the Pilgrimage rituals of their paganistic veneer and restored them to their Abrahamic state. There is no adequate reason why one should doubt the antiquity of the rituals connected with the Pilgrimage nor their relations to Abraham and Ishmael. When the Arabs appeared on the world scene in the seventh century, their language was the newest of the Semitic tongues, as far as historical events relating to Islām were concerned, but it was also the most archaic of all the Semitic languages, closer to the mother-Semitic than the rest. They could not have preserved intact their archaic language over the centuries while forgetting their attachments to the Ka'bah. The memory of the Arabs, which served them as the repository of their oral literature and tribal histories, was not about to forget such decisive figures as Abraham and Ishmael, who play cyclical roles in the existence of the Arab nomads. If this is so, the the Ka'bah is the most ancient sanctuary still in use at the present day, and the Pilgrimage to Makkah the most ancient ritual still in operation. The Qur'ān says: Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Makkah, a blessed place, a guidance to the

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\* This is not just "another ancient story" on a par with the first. It is a report by the Qur'ān (2: 125-28) — Ed.

peoples; wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither" (3:96-97).

In the symbolism of the Pilgrimage, there is a kind of meeting with the Divinity that is an anticipation of the Day of Judgement, and the fact that pilgrims tend to go on the Pilgrimage towards the end of their lives and even consider dying in Makkah as a benediction — all this points to a kind of judgmental nature to this pillar of Islām. The unsewn pilgrim's dress, consisting of two plain pieces of white cloth, and the ascetical restrictions imposed upon all those who enter the sacred precincts indicate a state of confrontation with the Divine Presence that obliterates all the social hierarchies of the profane world: external distinctions disappear, the equality of all immortal souls face-to-face with their Creator is what now appears. And since, in that Divine Presence, the taking of lives, through hunting or uprooting of plants that have also a life of their own, and engaging in sensual pleasures would be out of the question, the Law prohibits all of that by way of keeping the believers within a framework of receptivity towards celestial graces.

The Ka'bah itself, as the center of the Islāmic world and the converging point for all the daily ritual prayers, is really the heart of Islām. Ibn al-'Arabī compares the Ka'bah to the heart of the believer and the circumambulating pilgrims to his thoughts: just as there are good and bad pilgrims who circumambulate the Ka'bah, there are good and bad thoughts that circumambulate the heart. While the Ka'bah may be nothing but stone, it does act as a kind of sacred enclosure for the divine Presence: the pilgrim who sees it for the first time covered with the black cloth is invariably moved to his depths. It is a visible symbol of the Origin of all things, the Center of the universe. The circumambulation of the Ka'bah, both upon beginning the Pilgrimage and departing from Makkah, is a dual confrontation with that Presence but under different mental conditions: in the beginning, there are the hopes that the pilgrim's attitudes will be found acceptable; in the end, the pious Muslim goes away at peace with himself.

The sacred nature of the Ka'bah is clearly indicated by the attitudes prescribed by the Law towards the Black Stone imbedded in the eastern corner of the edifice. While making his circumambulations around the Ancient House, the pilgrim should kiss or at least touch the Black Stone. This would have no meaning if the stone were devoid of symbolism. Traditionally, it is looked upon as "the right hand of Allah in the world," so that the pilgrim, in kissing or touching the stone, renews his pact with the Lord of the Ka'bah more or less in the same fashion as a man renews a pact with his fellowman through a handclasp.

But there is also the Multazam, which is that part of the wall between the Ka'bah and the door leading into the inner part: here, against this wall, the pilgrims press their breasts while praying, which they would not do if the wall were simply a mass of stones with no ultimate signification.

The rituals of the Pilgrimage proper last for only some five days, beginning on the eighth day of the month of Dhū al Ḥijjah and ending on the thirteenth, though some pilgrims leave before then. The main rituals have to do with the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the running to and fro between Ṣafā and Marwah, the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt, the lapidation of the emblems of Satan, the sacrifice of animals

all of this taking place between Makkah and 'Arafāt, with the intervening places of Muzdalifah and Minā having their own importance also.

Of those rituals, one of the most impressive is the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt from shortly after midday to sunset. This is clearly like the assembly of all mankind on the day of Judgment, the solar orb in the clear sky above the Makkan region representing the Divine Presence in the midst of all creatures.\* Also of interest, in this connection, is that, after leaving 'Arafāt on the month of Dhū al Ḥijjah and staying overnight at Muzdalifah, the movement to Minā on the tenth must take place before the sun rises. That the sun sets over 'Arafāt and that the pilgrims must move on to Minā before it rises again shows that Islām blocks all attempts to divinize the solar orb, while recognizing its relative importance as a means for determining the time wherein to perform the prescribed rituals.

The ritual slaughtering of animals is of course in commemoration of Abraham's substitution of an animal for his son Isaac, though some Islāmic traditions insist that it was Ishmael who was originally meant to be sacrificed and not Isaac.\*\* That sacrifice, which takes place on the tenth of Dhū al Ḥijjah, is simultaneously celebrated all over the Islāmic world, as we know. That it should come after the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt seems only logical: it is that standing that restores to man his quality of Khalīfah, or vice-gerent of God on earth. In his capacity as Khalīfah, he is the central or axial being in this world, the animus having only a peripheral and subordinate nature. Their sacrifices at the hands of man is a liberation; the ritual slaughter gives to the sacrifice, we should not forget the associated ritual, namely the lapidation of the

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\* It must be remembered that for Muslims absolutely nothing in creation "represents" God. Ed.

\*\* No Muslim accepts the sacrifice as being that of Isaac (Ishaq). The Semitic tradition ascribed to Abraham concerns the eldest, first or unique son. Ed.

Devil, represented by the three stone pillars at Minā. Tradition would have it that the Devil appeared here to Abraham, who drove him away by throwing stones at him; and in some accounts his lapidation of the Devil is in conjunction with his sacrifice of Ishmael. It is in commemoration of that Abrahamic stoning that the pilgrims, armed with stones to be thrown in groups of seven, perform the lapidation of the pillars before and after the sacrifice. The sacrifice, the stoning, the clipping of the hair and nails all take place on the tenth of Dh ū al Ḥijjah. The three following days, which include additional lapidations, are really days of rejoicing. There then follows the farewell circumambulation of the Ka'bah and the Pilgrimage ends.

It goes without saying that the different steps of the Pilgrimage have their inner spiritual signification; and no doubt the Muslim sages, such as al Ghazzālī and Ibn al 'Arabī, and many others, in pondering the hidden meaning in the external acts have revealed the profound nature of the Pilgrimage as a whole. Certainly, the egalitarianism of Islām and the unity of the Muslim World, not to say the levelling influence of its message on all races and ethnic groups, are all manifested in the Pilgrimage. But these are all purely external matters. Nor did the Prophet institute the Pilgrimage as merely a commemoration of the events surrounding Abraham, Ishmael, and Hagar. The Pilgrimage must be seen in the light of the whole question of salvation (*najāt*) at the hour of death and entry into Paradise: either the Pilgrimage has some relationship to the salvific message of Islām or else it is merely a series of external acts. That it does have such a relationship is shown by the ritual character of its various parts: blessings or benedictions accrue to the person whose intention and attitudes on the Pilgrimage have been right. How far one goes in this direction depends on his inner purification. Abū Yazīd al Bisṭāmī, speaking of this inner progression, said: "On my first pilgrimage I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the Temple; and the third time I saw the Lord only." It is obvious that an awareness of the Divine Presence during the Pilgrimage is a prerequisite for its successful completion, whereas the forgetfulness of it makes for a mere physical performance without grace. Al Hujwīrī says that "Anyone who is absent from God at Makkah is in the same position as if he were absent from God in his own house, and anyone who is present with God in his own house is in the same position as if he were present with God at Makkah." Behind those statements is a truth that could be expressed in this fashion: the Pilgrimage to Makkah is but the external reflection of the inner Pilgrimage to one's own heart, which is the Ka'bah of one's being. One can be prevented from performing the external Pilgrimage, but the Pilgrimage to the inner Ka'bah is always possible and is indeed the true

Pilgrimage, when all is said and done. That is why one of the Ṣūfīs put things this way: “I wonder at those who seek His temple in this world: why do they not seek contemplation of Him in their hearts? The temple they sometimes attain and sometimes miss, but contemplation they might enjoy always.”

**INTRODUCTION**  
**THE ISLĀMIC STUDIES GROUP**  
**AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION**

**I. HISTORY**

Following the AAR annual meeting of 1972, Dr. Franklin Littell, then Chairman of the History of Christianity Section and my colleague at Temple University, Department of Religion, suggested that there is a possibility for setting up a sub-section on Muslim-Christian Encounter under the aegis of the History of Christianity Section. This sub-section would offer panels and lectures in the annual program. I welcomed the suggestion and arranged a program for the 1973 annual meeting in Chicago. The same invitation was renewed for the 1974 (Washington) meeting. Dr. Littell also advised that we must seek independent status as a program unit since his chairmanship of the section on the History of Christianity was to expire soon. At the 1974 meeting a unanimous vote was taken by the scholars present at the Islāmic sessions to apply for status as an independent program unit. An application was lodged with the AAR Executive Director for presentation to the AAR Program Committee.

The application was turned down, and we participated in the 1975 program under the aegis of "History of Christianity." At the 1975 meeting, another unanimous vote was taken and a committee elected to apply for independent status. Again, this was turned down. Although we were granted a "Consultation" status, yet our participation appeared in the program under the History of Christianity. At the 1976 meeting, a third unanimous vote was taken and the same committee reelected to apply once more for independent status. This was granted in December, 1976, and we began to operate as such. Since then, the Islāmic Studies Group participated in five annual meetings. At the request of the AAR Executive Director, the Group's participation was extended to cover the 1981 meeting at San Francisco.

In all, we have been responsible for holding

9 sessions of 1½ hours each

17 sessions of 3 hours each

2 plenary sessions of 2½ hours each.

The above-mentioned sessions involved 127 speakers and 24 sessions

chairpersons. This is exclusive of the current session, (our tenth) to be held in New York in December, 1982.

We have also held an exhibit of Islāmic Art, shown numerous films, and raised \$15,000.00 which we plan to spend on publishing three volumes of papers presented to the AAR under our auspices, to be entitled "Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths"; Islāmic Thought and Culture" and "Essays in Islāmic and Comparative Studies."

## **II. CONSTITUENCY**

Since we began with no constituency among the members of the AAR, we worked very hard to promote Islāmic Studies among them. We advertised the AAR Islāmic Studies programs throughout the U.S. and Canada, and we sent out bulk mailings of 1000 or more pieces for two years. We solicited papers from our friends and acquaintances. Gradually, the responses came and they were encouraging. At any one of our meeting, we could count 40 participants, and some sessions were attended by more than 100 persons. Today, we estimate that "Islāmic Studies" is a live entity in the consciousness of at least 200 members of the AAR though not all of them attend every session.

## **III. METHOD AND PHILOSOPHY**

Most of the papers presented under Muslim-Christian Encounter or Islāmic Studies were by special invitation. We also received a number of papers which were unsolicited. In every case, we tried to fit the offered papers into the program without jeopardizing the planned themes for sessions. However, the desire of the Steering Committee was to focus each session around a chosen topic so that speakers and audience could interact on a particular issue.

As much as possible, we tried to make the Islāmic Studies Group a mixed one, involving Muslims, Christians, Jews and others as speakers and audience. We sought to sensitize every participant that our business is scholarly and must meet the most exacting standards of scholarship; but that our discipline deals with the values, attitudes, hopes and aspirations of millions of living humans. We endeavored to make our meetings lively by looking into problems of Muslims as a living community. In our criticisms and suggestions, we sought a phenomenological approach wherever possible. Over the years, our meetings have become richer than those of the American Oriental Society where the approach is basically linguistic and/or textual, and of the Middle East Studies Association where the approach is basically strategist. We have succeeded in drawing to the AAR a number of new members from both associations as well as a number of Muslim scholars.



Over the entire period of ten years of activity (nine annual meetings) there was perfect accord between the Steering Committee and the audience. Members of the audience repeatedly expressed their approval of, and gratitude for, the programs we had prepared. Their suggestions were acted upon, and they were happy to return to the AAR meeting year after year.

#### **IV. A NOTE ABOUT THE FUTURE**

The Islāmic Studies Group has built up a small but growing and vigorous constituency. Though small by comparison to total AAR membership, this constituency is largely made of scholars who teach Islām either in one undergraduate course, or as a smaller part of an undergraduate survey course in the religions of the world. Already, a number of specialized Islāmicists have been pulled toward the AAR because of our distinctive approach to comparative study. Moreover, the papers so far presented in the field of Islāmic Studies have been of very high quality, and they are bound to improve in quality and quantity in the future. It is our considered judgment — and hence, our recommendation — that the Islāmic Studies Group be upgraded to “section” and that it be given a chance to realize this fuller development in the coming decade.

Normally, a “Group” Program unit would sit for an election of a new steering committee every five years, assuming a decision on the part of the AAR to continue same. However, the AAR Executive Director has asked the present Steering Committee to continue for one additional year. Elections will therefore be planned for the annual meeting, 1982.

Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
Chairman  
Islāmic Studies Group  
American Academy of Religion  
Temple University

## ABSTRACT OF PROGRAMS FOR NINE YEARS

### 1973 (Chicago)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Theme: "Muslim-Christian Encounter"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Four, namely,  
Ḥasan Ḥanafī  
Jaroslav Stetkewycz  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
W.C. Smith

### 1974 (Washington)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Theme: "Muslim-Christian Encounter in the Age of the  
Crusades"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Five, namely,  
M. Khalīfah Aḥmad  
Don M. Randel  
Jaroslav Folda  
Edward A. Synan  
Victor Makkari

### 1975 (Chicago)

Status: History of Christianity: Muslim-Christian Encounter  
Themes: "Islām and Modernism"; "Islām, the University and the  
AAR"  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Sessions: One 3-hour session, one 1½-hour session  
Speakers: Eight, namely,  
Charles J. Adams  
Sāmī Hamārnah  
James Waltz  
Anīs Aḥmad  
John L. Esposito  
Willem Bijlefeld  
I.R. al Fārūqī  
Roderick Hindery

**1976 (St. Louis)**

Status: History of Christianity: Islāmic Studies Group  
Theme: "Teaching Islām to Undergraduates"; "Issues in Islāmic Thought"  
Sessions: Two 1½-hour sessions and one 3-hour session  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Speakers: Fourteen, namely,  
William Sheppard  
Jane Smith  
Riffat Burki  
John Esposito  
Merlin Swartz  
Spencer Lavan  
Gary de Angelis  
J.M. Pessagno  
Harold Kasimow  
S. Kirmānī  
Anīs Aḥmad  
M. Zahniser  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
Harry Partin

**1977 (San Francisco)**

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Themes: "Sufism"; "Faith and Reason in Islām"; "Teaching of Islām: Methods and Problems"; "Changing Status of Women"  
Sessions: Two 3-hour sessions, two 1½-hour sessions  
Presiding: Harold Kasimow, J. Meric Pessagno, Anīs Aḥmad, John L. Esposito  
Speakers: Twenty, namely,  
Richard Martin  
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
J.M. Pessagno  
Frederic M. Denny  
S.A. Nigosian  
Joseph Epes Brown  
Ḥāmid Algar  
'Umar Fārūq 'Abdullah  
John L. Esposito  
Elizabeth Fernea  
Houston Smith  
Alan Lazaroff  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī  
'Abdul Qādir Baig  
'Ābidullah Ghāzī  
Tamar Frank  
Mary J. Good  
Najāt Ṣanābary  
Lois Beck  
Midḥat Abraham

**1978 (New Orleans)**

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Theme: "Islām in North America"; "Interpretation of Scripture in Islām"; "Islām and Political Liberation"; "Worship in Islām"  
Sessions: Four 3-hour sessions; one Plenary Session  
Presiding: Anīs Aḥmad, J. Meric Pessagno, John L. Esposito, Harold Kasimow  
Speakers: Twenty-eight, namely,  
Yvonne Ḥaddād                      Frederic M. Denny  
Gordon Newby                      Anīs Aḥmad  
Earl H. Waugh                      Richard Martin  
Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī              J.M. Pessagno  
'Uthmān Llewellyn                'Aẓīm Nānjī  
Rashīd Ḥāmid                      Jane I. Smith  
John Sullivan                      Frank Gorman  
Alford T. Welch                    Newell S. Booth  
John L. Esposito                    Akbar Muḥammad  
Muḥammad Ḥamdūn                Fred R. von der Mehden  
John A. Williams                   H.M. Federspiel  
Muzzammil Ṣiddīqī                Ilyās Bā-Yūnus  
Harold Kasimow                    Victor Danner  
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī                Wadī' Ḥaddād

**Plus:** Plenary Session  
Presiding: I.R. al Fārūqī  
Theme: "World Community of Islām in the West"  
Speaker: Wallace D. Muḥammad, Chief Imām, World Community of Islām in the West

**1979 (New York)**

In cooperation with the Inter-Religious Peace Colloquium (The Muslim-Jewish-Christian Conference)  
Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
Themes: "Trialogue of the Abrahamic Faiths"; "Sufism"; "Islāmic Thought"  
Sessions: Five 3-hour sessions; one Plenary Session; one Luncheon  
Presiding: Jane I. Smith; John L. Esposito; Harold Kasimow, J.M. Pessagno, Msgr. Joseph Gremillion  
Speakers: Twenty-two, namely,  
Michael Wyschogrod                Victor Danner  
Krister Stendahl                    Marilyn Waldman  
Muḥammad 'Abd al Raūf            Sayyid Ḥusayn Naṣr

Seymour Siegel	Howard Burkle
John Raines	Wilfred C. Smith
Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī	Frederic M. Denny
William Hickman	J.M. Pessagno
Howard M. Federspiel	'Azīm Nānjī
Tamar Frank	Henry Siegman
Dimitri Gutas	James Finn
Herbert Mason	Maḥmūd Awān

**Plus:** Plenary Session  
**Presiding:** Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī  
**Theme:** "Triologue of the Abrahamic Faiths"  
**Speaker:** Cardinal Sergio Pignedoli, The Vatican  
**Plus:** Luncheon in honor of Cardinal Pignedoli

**1980 (Dallas)**

**Status:** AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group  
**Theme:** "The Fourteenth Centennial of Islām: Contributions Through the Centuries to the Moral, Intellectual and Beautiful Life"  
**Sessions:** Two 3-hour sessions  
**Presiding:** Frederic M. Denny; Jane I. Smith  
**Speakers:** Thirteen, namely,

Yvonne Ḥaddād	J.M. Pessagno
'Alāuddīn Kharrūfah	Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī
Kristina Nelson	S. Ḥusayn Naṣr
Jafran Jones	Michel Mazzaoui
Anthony Welch	Mark Woodward
Khālidah Salām	Noel Q. King
	Elizabeth Fernea

**Plus:** Exhibit of Islāmic Art comprising:  
 400 mounted pictures of Islāmic art works in  
 Architecture  
 Ceramics  
 Painting  
 Calligraphy  
 Metal, wood and cloth works  
 300 art objects, comprising  
 Textiles  
 Jewelry  
 Leather, ceramics and metal works  
 Calligraphic Manuscripts and decorations

Carpets

3 films on Islāmic Art

(In cooperation with the Muslim Students' Association of the United States and Canada and the National Committee for the Fourteenth Centennial of Islām)

**1981 (San Francisco)**

Status: AAR Program Unit: Islāmic Studies Group

Themes: "Interaction between Islām and Christianity";  
"Interaction between Islām and Judaism"

Sessions: Two 3-hour sessions

Presiding: Isma'īl R. al Fārūqī, Harold Kasimow

Speakers: Twelve, namely,

J.M. Pessagno

S. Ḥusayn Naṣr

Richard B. Rose

Victor Danner

Aḥmad 'Isā

T. Patrick Burke

Helen Goldstein

William Brinner

Lois Lamyā' al Fārūqī

Norman Stillman

David Ariel

Norbert Samuelson

## THE SHAHĀDAH

*Muzzammil H. Siddiqi*  
Muslim World League, New York

When discussing the first pillar (*rukn*) of Islām, scholars usually tend to pay all their attention to the concept of monotheism or *tawhīd*. Tawhīd is, no doubt, a very important principle of 'slām and the most supreme value in its religious structure. In this paper, however, we would like to discuss the notion of Shahādah or "bearing witness" as an element of faith in Islāmic life.

A famous Ḥadīth narrated in this connection by al Bukhārī says:

عن ابن عمر رضي الله عنه قال : قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم :  
« بني الاسلام على خمس : شهادة أن لا اله الا الله وأن محمداً رسول الله ، وإقام الصلاة ،  
وأيتاء الزكاة ، والحج ، وصوم رمضان » (البخاري كتاب الايمان ١)

*"Ibn 'Umar said, the Messenger of Allah — peace and blessings of Allah be upon him — said, 'Islām is built on five things, the bearing of witness that there is no God but Allah and that, Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, and the keeping up of prayer and the payment of zakāt and the pilgrimage and fasting in Ramaḍān.'"*  
(Al Bukhārī, Kitāb al Imān, 1)

It is on the basis of this and many other similar ḥadīths that the first statement of tawhīd is known as *Kalimat al Shahādah* (the statement of witness) and thus a Muslim declares:

« أشهد أن لا إله إلا الله وأشهد أن محمداً رسول الله »

*"I bear witness that there is no God but Allah and I bear witness that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah."*

In order to understand the full significance of the word "shahādah" we must turn to the Qur'ān, the source and inspiration of all Islāmic

knowledge, where the word “shahādah” occurred in its various forms no less than 160 times. Its basic meaning is “to see with one’s own eyes,” or “to be present when something happens or takes place.” Thus for example, in the Qur’ān, we read:

« فمن شهد منكم الشهر فليصمه » (١٨٥:٢)

“So whosoever of you see the month (of Ramaḍān) let him fast.” (2:185).

« فليشهد عذابهما طائفة من المؤمنين » (٢:٢٤)

“Let a group of believers see their (adulterers’) punishment.” (24:2)

« وهم على ما يفعلون بالمؤمنين شهود » (٧:٨٥)

“And they were watching whatever they were doing to the believers.” (85:7)

« أم كنتم شهداء إذ حضر يعقوب الموت » (١٢٢:٢)

“Were you present when Jacob was visited by death.” (2: 133)

Shahādah in its further active forms means to attest and to testify what one has seen. Hence it does not mean only personal knowledge and conviction but also denotes strength of one’s conviction in declaring what one knows. Thus we read:

« وما شهدنا إلا بما علمنا » (٨١:٢٢)

“And we did not testify except what we knew.” (22:81)

It is because of His supreme knowledge and omniscience that God is also called *Shahīd* in the Qur’ān. (see 3:98; 5:117; 6:19; 10:46; 22:17; 34:47; 41:53; 58:6; 85:9 etc.).

« شهد الله أنه لا إله إلا هو » (١٨:٢)

God attests to His own Oneness (3:18)

« لكن الله يشهد بما أنزل إليك أنزله بعلمه » (١٦٦:٤)

God attests to whatever He has revealed to His Prophet because He has revealed it with full knowledge (4:166).

« قل الله شهيد بيني وبينكم »

God attests that He has sent Muḥammad as His Messenger (6:19; 4:72; 48:28).



« وأرسلناك للناس رسولا وكفى بالله شهيدا »

« هو الذي أرسل رسوله بالهدى ودين الحق ليظهره على الدين كله وكفى بالله شهيدا »

On the Day of Judgement, the Qur'ān says, your ears, your eyes, your hands, your feet and your skin will bear witness against you because of whatever wrong or sinful deeds that you have committed deliberately and consciously (see 41:20; 6:130; 36:65). One who personifies in himself what he attests and calls others to this testimony is called *shahīd* and *shahīd* in the Qur'ān. Thus the role of the Prophet is that of the *shahīd*.

« يا أيها النبي إنا أرسلناك شاهداً ومبشراً ونذيراً » (٤٥:٣٣)

“O Prophet! verily We have sent thee as a witness, a bringer of glad tidings and a warner.”

(33:45; see also 48:8 and 73:15).

The Prophet is also a *shahīd* i.e. a continuous witness and so are also the believers charged to be witnesses.

« هو سماكم المسلمين من قبل وفي هذا ليكون الرسول شهيداً عليكم وتكونوا شهداء على

الناس » (٧٨:٢٢)

« وجئناك على هؤلاء شهيداً » (٤١:٤)

In its various usages in the Qur'ān, the *Shahādah* stands for:

1. Knowledge and conviction
2. Commitment
3. Declaration

Like Christianity, Islām does not lack detailed creeds. These detailed creeds were formulated by theologians often to combat heresies. *Kalimat al Shahādah* is, however, the shortest creed of Islām and also the simplest and the earliest. Wensinek, in vain, tried to prove that during the life of the Prophet Muḥammad this formula of faith did not exist in its present form. According to him, early Muslims only used « لا إله إلا الله » and « محمداً رسول الله » was added when Muslims later started preaching to Christians and Jews.<sup>2</sup>

Wensinek's arguments are based primarily upon the assumption that the hadith material is unreliable. According to him, hadith at most can be taken to reflect the time in which it was composed and written and not the time of Muḥammad. We shall not discuss this claim in this paper. Much has already been written to expose the falsity of such Orientalistic generalization about hadīth. Dr. Muḥammad Muṣṭafā al

<sup>2</sup> A.J. Wensinek, *Muslim Creed*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1932. Second impression, p. 17-35.

A'zamī gave a thorough refutation of them in his *Studies in Early Ḥadīth Literature* (Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, 1978). Wensinck, perhaps forgot to consider the call for prayer (adhān) where both phrases of shahadah occur side by side in their complete form. No one, to my knowledge, has questioned the historicity of Adhān which was called by Bilāl and many other Companions of the Prophet, five times a day in his mosque in Madīnah.

The two phrases of the shahādah convey fully the basic principles of Islām. It is, however, significant that they do not begin with *credo* or I believe, rather they start with *ashhadu* (I bear witness) which means not only that I have faith in God and I believe in Him but also that I see His presence before and around me, I am convinced about His unique existence and this is not my private conviction but I want to declare it to the world. Similarly, I do not only believe in the prophethood of Muḥammad but I *know* him as Prophet and I declare this conviction to the world.

Shahādah is one of the important religious experiences of a Muslim. It begins the day he is born and these words are whispered in both of his ears by father, grandfather or some other pious Muslim. And it continued through his growth in Muslim society where he hears the Adhān five times a day. It becomes his ultimate experience if he has the opportunity to give his life for his faith as a shahīd or martyr.

## ISLĀM AND LAW

*'Alā' al Dīn Kharrūfah*  
Muslim World League, New York

Islām is the chosen religion of God. It is therefore, a complete way and a comprehensive system of life; and it is so, not in theory alone. Islām is comprehensive in its practicality. By the third century after the Hijrah, the Islāmic system of law was complete. The *sharī'ah* covered all the areas usually treated by civil law, criminal law, family law, commercial law, international law, etc. It will be difficult, if not impossible, to discuss in detail the contribution of Islām in all these fields. I shall, therefore, confine myself to the main landmarks of the contribution of the *sharī'ah* in these fields.

In civil law, Islām made a significant contribution when it commanded the Muslims to write down their business agreement and to record their business transactions. We read in verse 282 of the second *sūrah* of the Holy Qur'ān:

*"O ye who believe, when you deal with one another, in transactions involving future obligations, in fixed periods of time, reduce them to writing. Let a scribe write down faithfully as between the parties."*

This divine dictate is in the interests of the parties involved. If they abide by it, they would save themselves from much unnecessary trouble that could arise later between them. However, Islām did not make this law rigid but sufficiently flexible, so that in certain cases the merchants might be exempted from observing it. The law permitted them to conclude their business transactions by word of mouth or telephone where expedient provided that they abide by their words. But it warned them of God's greater wrath if they failed or cheated one another. Thus, trustworthiness of the parties played a significant role in business. Islām gave this privilege to the merchants 1400 years ago. A Muslim merchant

must honor his commitment made by word of mouth. He must uphold his pledge at all costs whether he made it in writing or he did it verbally. And no Muslim merchant or businessman may abuse or misuse this privilege which God has given him. In the event of dispute or disagreement between two parties, the *sharī'ah*, following a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS), prescribed that "The burden of proof (evidence) devolves upon the plaintiff."

In the field of family law, the contribution of Islām is most significant. No other system of law in the world has done so much to improve and to elevate the status of women as Islām has done. It gave woman rights which she did not have before: the right to choose her husband, to inherit property, and to divorce her husband through a court. This was truly revolutionary. Before Islām, the condition of women was simply unspeakable: she had no status, no position, and no rights. She was treated as something less than a human being, a mere chattel, sometimes pleasing but more often a source of anguish. Many Arabs buried female infants alive, for fear of inviting ridicule or social disapproval in later life.

When Islām announced that a woman was the equal of a man; that she was an individual, and had her own personality, her own rights, the rest of the world was shocked and surprised. But Islām compelled its adherents to acknowledge women's rights.

Before Islām, one could marry any number of women. But Islām took this "privilege" away and restricted the number of women a man could marry to four, and that too, under special conditions. Men are not allowed to abuse this privilege. Islām also gave woman the right to inherit and to keep her wealth, and thus to be free from economic dependence upon her husband. She is free to sell her property without permission of her husband — a right which women did not have in Europe until the end of the 19th century. Indeed, Islām gave rights to women which have been denied in the Western society even today. It gave her the right to keep her maiden name after marriage. She does not have to use the name of her husband. This is a right which is still being sought in many parts of the world. Islām was thus the first emancipator of women.

In the field of administrative law, Islām gave people the freedom of expression and the freedom of assembly within the framework of law. A man may not abuse these freedoms and trespass on the rights of others. Islām takes very serious notice of libel, especially against women, and makes it a serious offence punishable by public flogging. The person found guilty of libel suffers loss of legal capacity to give witness during the rest of his life.

Islāmic law also introduced the right of "mutual consultation" or

*shūrā*. This was its way of banishing tyranny, whimsey and arbitrariness from Muslim life, whether at home, in business, or in government. All affairs, above all the highest affairs of state, are in Islām to be conducted by consultation between all parties concerned. The importance of consultation in Islam demanded that a whole *sūrah* of the Qurʾān be devoted to it.

*"The believers' affairs are settled in consultation with one another ... Forgive the believers, O Muḥammad, pray for them, and consult with them on all matters"* (Qurʾān 42:38; 3:159).

Moreover, we find our Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) himself seeking to consult with his companions. "O people, give me your opinion," he used to say on so many occasions." Islām did not omit to stress the importance of consulting, not the ignorant, but those who have knowledge. Allah says:

*"Consult or ask the people who have knowledge if you do not know."* (Qurʾān 16:43).

Al Māwardī took care to elaborate the conditions under which people may give consultation or render advice when asked. They should satisfy three conditions, viz., justice, knowledge and wisdom. Without these three qualifications, the person giving consultation is not only devoid of credit in the eye of God, but deserves punishment in hellfire.

In the field of criminal law, Islām introduced the most important concept of "equal compensation." In the Qurʾān Allah (SWT) says:

*"O ye who believe! The Law of Equality is prescribed for you in cases of murder; the free for the free, the slave for the slave; the woman for the woman. But if any remission is made by the brother of the slain, then grant any reasonable demand, and compensate him with handsome gratitude. This is a concession and a mercy from your Lord. After this whoever exceeds the limits shall be in grave penalty"* (Qurʾān 2:178).

*"In the Law of Equality there is (saving of) life to you, O ye men of understanding; that ye may restrain yourselves"* (Qurʾān 2:179).

*"No bearer of burden can bear the burden of another"* (Qurʾān 6:164).

The first two quotations are called the "Law of Punishment." Islām stands for absolute justice. If a man has been wronged, he must receive what is due. And the man who has wronged another person without reason must pay for his crime. Justice is a lesson to all members of the community. No one stands above or beyond the law; and no one may escape the consequences of his crime. The third quotation stresses the principle of personal responsibility. Every man will answer for his own

deeds, and no one will be held answerable for the deeds of another.

Islāmic law prescribes capital punishment for voluntary manslaughter, unless the heirs of the slain forgive the criminal. If the killing was not voluntary, the criminal must compensate the survivors of the slain, or the heirs, according to the traditions and customs of the country. The law of capital punishment is based on divine wisdom, and is in the best interests of the society. The alarming crime situation in our present time finds murders becoming ever more frequent and murderers being allowed unwarranted leniency. There is a need for Qur'ānic law today; it constitutes the only answer to our contemporary problem. It is intolerable that our society must live in constant fear of murderers, robbers and other criminals. The secular penal codes and courts of the present day seem to be more concerned for and sympathetic to the murderer than to the victim, his relatives or to society.

For the crime of theft, Islāmic law prescribes the punishment of severing the thief's hand. On the face of it, this looks very severe. However, such punishment is enforced only if the society is not suffering from deprivation. Where the conditions are abnormal and people commit theft due to extreme poverty and suffering, such a punishment will not be enforced on the grounds that the government has failed to provide the basic necessities to its people, and has therefore lost the right to enforce the punishment. The punishment of theft was once suspended by Caliph 'Umar ibn al Khaṭṭāb (RAA) in the year of general drought and near famine.

It is not out of place to mention here the average annual rate of crimes in the United States of America. The frequency of crime is as follows:

murder	one every 27 minutes
larceny	one every 5 seconds
motor vehicle theft	one every 33 seconds
violent crime	one every 31 seconds
forcible rape	one every 8 minutes
robbery	one every 78 seconds
aggravated assault	one every 5 minutes
burglary	one every 10 minutes

In international law, Islām gave us a totally new perspective of world order. Time permits us but a bare mention of two of its highlights. First of these is the duty to maintain peace with every other state or group which has not perpetrated aggression against the Muslims. Allah (SWT) says in the Qur'ān:

*"Allah forbids you not with regard to those who fight you not for (your) Faith nor drive you out of your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them; for Allah loveth those who are just." (Qur'ān 40:8).*

Second among highlights is that, wherever and whenever it is given the choice, the Islamic state must choose peace and not war. In this connection Allah (SWT) says:

*"If your enemy prefers peace, you have to prefer peace, and put your trust in Allah" (Qur'ān 8:60).*

Third is the obligation of the Islāmic state to seek a world order wherein every other state is Muslim by free choice or a covenant with the Islāmic state to co-exist with it in peace. The purpose is to enable everyone to hear the word of God and to accept or reject it freely.

The fourth is the recognition by Islamic law of non-citizen individuals and groups as legal persons entitled to covenant with the Islāmic state on all matters concerning them. Islāmic law grants non-resident non-citizens to take their complaints against citizens as well as the state to the nearest *sharī'ah* court.

The fifth is the absolutely equal status Islāmic law grants to the transient non-citizen in the Islāmic state. If he is a Muslim, his life is governed by the *sharī'ah* like any other Muslim citizen; if non-Muslim, by the law of his co-religionists if there are any, or by the law of his own religion if there are none.

The sixth point is the ideological basis Islām has given to man's definition of man and his relation with other men. The *sharī'ah* recognizes human beings by their religion, i.e., by the highest ultimate truths and values they hold, not by the real estate they occupy, or the race to which they belong.

The seventh is that the Islāmic law of nations envisages a united world-order in which the peoples of the world live in peace, a world in which there are neither customs, frontiers nor immigration laws, where humans and wealth are free to move, where humans are free to convince and be convinced of the truth, where every human is at once student and teacher, guarded and guardian, agent and patient of the command of the good and the prohibition of evil. This is not a utopian dream; nor the wishful thinking of an idle, speculative thinker. It is law, with courts, executive machinery and the better conscience of over a billion souls to support it.

## THE PILGRIMAGE TO MAKKAH

Victor Danner

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Indiana University

Islām considers itself to be the very last religion to be revealed to mankind before the Day of Judgment, and the Prophet Muḥammad to be the very last of the long line of Prophets and Messengers beginning with Ādam. Hence, in many ways, Islām sums up in itself and in its Prophet many of the qualities and attitudes of previous revelations, just as the Prophet is a kind of synthesis of the long line of prophets stretching back in time to Ādam. The pure monotheistic message of Islām — the Oneness of the Divinity — is but the last reaffirmation of what previous divine messages had said before they had been clouded over by forgetfulness and worldliness. Within the Semitic cycle of monotheism, Islām pictures itself as reaffirming the Abrahamic message, which had been delimited, in Judaism, through the concept of the Chosen People and, in Christianity, through the teachings in Trinitarianism. The resulting ethnocentrism of Judaism impeded the expansion of the monotheistic ideas on the Divinity from reaching those who were outside the pale of the Chosen People. The Christocentrism of Christianity, in clouding over the absoluteness of God by emphasizing the divinity of the Christ, comprised the transcendent nature of the Absolute, and through its Trinitarian teachings, made the Oneness of ultimate reality suspect. By insisting on the pure monotheism of Abraham as in itself a message of salvation, without regard to any Chosen People or to any divine incarnation, Islām intended to reaffirm the primordial religion of mankind and to restore to the Divinity its character of salvific absoluteness in itself.

Nowhere is this Abrahamic connection of Islām more evident than in the Pilgrimage (*al ḥajj*), the fifth and final pillar of the Religion, which is binding on those adults who can perform it toward the end of their lives.



The Pilgrimage to Makkah celebrates in its multiple rituals a whole series of events connected with the mission of Abraham, his wife Hājar (or Hagar), and their offspring Ishmael (Isma'īl). If we stop to examine the different elements in the Pilgrimage that have to do with Abraham and his family, we realize, more and more, that the claim of Islām to be a reaffirmation of the Abrahamic way is based, not merely on the sacred words of the Qur'ān, which count for much already, but also on an ancient, sacred oral tradition that the memories of the nomadic Arabs kept alive in pre-Islāmic times along with their own observance of the rituals surrounding the Ka'bah and the Pilgrimage to that ancient sanctuary. Let us remember, in passing, that Judaism and Christianity are connected to Abraham through Isaac, while Islām is connected to him through Ishmael. Indeed, the northern Arabs consider him their progenitor, and the Prophet, like the other Arabs in his day, had an ancestral line that took him back to Ishmael. That lineage was accompanied by a mass of traditions and stories surrounding the Ka'bah that the pre-Islāmic Arabs, the so-called pagan Arabs, transmitted as part of their historical and religious connections to that ancient edifice.

The Islāmic tradition would have it that the prototype of the Ka'bah is not earthly but celestial in nature. As a matter of fact, there are a number of otherworldly Ka'bahs, each one the center of its place of existence, just as the Ka'bah at Makkah is the center of the earth. The ultimate prototype of the Ka'bah, as Ibn al 'Arabī and other Muslim sages put it, is the Divine Throne (*al 'Arsh*), around which the angelic hosts revolve with a circumambulation that is in itself the model of the circumambulation of the earthly Ka'bah by the believers in Makkah. The Ka'bah in Makkah is accordingly a symbol of the Divine Throne, which is both the Origin and Center of the universe. Now, the Ka'bah in certain cosmogonic myths of some Muslims is the origin of earthly existence in time, being a kind of first crystallization of matter; and it is the center of the earth, its navel, since it is situated on the axis connecting it to the Divine Throne.

According to certain ancient traditions, Ādam was the first to raise the foundations of the Ka'bah, which then fell into disrepair after the Deluge. But in his time, the sacred sanctuary was in the form of a tent made out of a brilliant jewel-like substance, and the Black Stone, which was then a seat for him, was a white jewel-like substance, turning black only later on, when the sins of those touching it began to leave their imprint on its color. This myth, as we can discern, seeks to convey something of the freshness of primordial mankind in its approach to the spiritual life: the luminosity of the ancient sanctuary and its famous stone both bespeak a time when passion and ignorance had not yet transformed mankind and its temples into opaque and darker

substances. Later on, the hearts of men would be like stones, and so would their temples, like the Ka'bah.

That is one ancient story on the origins of the Ka'bah. Another one tells us that Abraham and his son Ishmael either repaired the Ka'bah or else constructed it for the first time.\* You will recall that Abraham took his spouse Hagar and their son Ishmael to Arabia and left them there. Hagar's racing seven times between the hills of Şafā and Marwah is commemorated as one of the elements of the Pilgrimage, the *Sa'y* ("the running"), when the pilgrims reduplicate her efforts in search of water for her young son Ishmael. The well of Zamzam, the water of which still flows for the use of all pilgrims, was the celestial response to Hagar. One account has it that Gabriel's heel uncovered the well just in time to save Ishmael. Both Ishmael and his mother Hagar lie buried only some feet away from one of the corners of the Ka'bah. Within the sanctuary are a number of buildings and spots that tradition points to as being places where Abraham himself stood during the building of the Ka'bah, his footprints still visible in the soft stone, or where he and Ishmael mixed the mortar for the building.

The actual institution of the Pilgrimage goes back to Abraham's time, the only things introduced by the pre-Islāmic Arab pagans being the idols, which were to be found in the Ka'bah itself. Apart from destroying the idols — all 360 of them — and prohibiting the circumambulation of the Ka'bah naked, the Prophet merely purified the Pilgrimage rituals of their paganistic veneer and restored them to their Abrahamic state. There is no adequate reason why one should doubt the antiquity of the rituals connected with the Pilgrimage nor their relations to Abraham and Ishmael. When the Arabs appeared on the world scene in the seventh century, their language was the newest of the Semitic tongues, as far as historical events relating to Islām were concerned, but it was also the most archaic of all the Semitic languages, closer to the mother-Semitic than the rest. They could not have preserved intact their archaic language over the centuries while forgetting their attachments to the Ka'bah. The memory of the Arabs, which served them as the repository of their oral literature and tribal histories, was not about to forget such decisive figures as Abraham and Ishmael, who play cyclical roles in the existence of the Arab nomads. If this is so, the the Ka'bah is the most ancient sanctuary still in use at the present day, and the Pilgrimage to Makkah the most ancient ritual still in operation. The Qur'ān says: Lo! the first Sanctuary appointed for mankind was that at Makkah, a blessed place, a guidance to the

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\* This is not just "another ancient story" on a par with the first. It is a report by the Qur'ān (2: 125-28) — Ed.

peoples; wherein are plain memorials (of Allah's guidance); the place where Abraham stood up to pray; and whosoever entereth it is safe. And pilgrimage to the House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way thither" (3:96-97).

In the symbolism of the Pilgrimage, there is a kind of meeting with the Divinity that is an anticipation of the Day of Judgement, and the fact that pilgrims tend to go on the Pilgrimage towards the end of their lives and even consider dying in Makkah as a benediction — all this points to a kind of judgmental nature to this pillar of Islām. The unsewn pilgrim's dress, consisting of two plain pieces of white cloth, and the ascetical restrictions imposed upon all those who enter the sacred precincts indicate a state of confrontation with the Divine Presence that obliterates all the social hierarchies of the profane world: external distinctions disappear, the equality of all immortal souls face-to-face with their Creator is what now appears. And since, in that Divine Presence, the taking of lives, through hunting or uprooting of plants that have also a life of their own, and engaging in sensual pleasures would be out of the question, the Law prohibits all of that by way of keeping the believers within a framework of receptivity towards celestial graces.

The Ka'bah itself, as the center of the Islāmic world and the converging point for all the daily ritual prayers, is really the heart of Islām. Ibn al-'Arabī compares the Ka'bah to the heart of the believer and the circumambulating pilgrims to his thoughts: just as there are good and bad pilgrims who circumambulate the Ka'bah, there are good and bad thoughts that circumambulate the heart. While the Ka'bah may be nothing but stone, it does act as a kind of sacred enclosure for the divine Presence: the pilgrim who sees it for the first time covered with the black cloth is invariably moved to his depths. It is a visible symbol of the Origin of all things, the Center of the universe. The circumambulation of the Ka'bah, both upon beginning the Pilgrimage and departing from Makkah, is a dual confrontation with that Presence but under different mental conditions: in the beginning, there are the hopes that the pilgrim's attitudes will be found acceptable; in the end, the pious Muslim goes away at peace with himself.

The sacred nature of the Ka'bah is clearly indicated by the attitudes prescribed by the Law towards the Black Stone imbedded in the eastern corner of the edifice. While making his circumambulations around the Ancient House, the pilgrim should kiss or at least touch the Black Stone. This would have no meaning if the stone were devoid of symbolism. Traditionally, it is looked upon as "the right hand of Allah in the world," so that the pilgrim, in kissing or touching the stone, renews his pact with the Lord of the Ka'bah more or less in the same fashion as a man renews a pact with his fellowman through a handclasp.

But there is also the Multazam, which is that part of the wall between the Ka'bah and the door leading into the inner part: here, against this wall, the pilgrims press their breasts while praying, which they would not do if the wall were simply a mass of stones with no ultimate signification.

The rituals of the Pilgrimage proper last for only some five days, beginning on the eighth day of the month of Dhū al Ḥijjah and ending on the thirteenth, though some pilgrims leave before then. The main rituals have to do with the circumambulation of the Ka'bah, the running to and fro between Ṣafā and Marwah, the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt, the lapidation of the emblems of Satan, the sacrifice of animals — all of this taking place between Makkah and 'Arafāt, with the intervening places of Muzdalifah and Minā having their own importance also.

Of those rituals, one of the most impressive is the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt from shortly after midday to sunset. This is clearly like the assembly of all mankind on the day of Judgment, the solar orb in the clear sky above the Makkan region representing the Divine Presence in the midst of all creatures.\* Also of interest, in this connection, is that, after leaving 'Arafāt on the month of Dhū al Ḥijjah and staying overnight at Muzdalifah, the movement to Minā on the tenth must take place before the sun rises. That the sun sets over 'Arafāt and that the pilgrims must move on to Minā before it rises again shows that Islām blocks all attempts to divinize the solar orb, while recognizing its relative importance as a means for determining the time wherein to perform the prescribed rituals.

The ritual slaughtering of animals is of course in commemoration of Abraham's substitution of an animal for his son Isaac, though some Islāmic traditions insist that it was Ishmael who was originally meant to be sacrificed and not Isaac.\*\* That sacrifice, which takes place on the tenth of Dhū al Ḥijjah, is simultaneously celebrated all over the Islāmic world, as we know. That it should come after the standing on the plain of 'Arafāt seems only logical: it is that standing that restores to man his quality of Khalīfah, or vice-gerent of God on earth. In his capacity as Khalīfah, he is the central or axial being in this world, the animus having only a peripheral and subordinate nature. Their sacrifices at the hands of man is a liberation; the ritual slaughter gives to the sacrifice, we should not forget the associated ritual, namely the lapidation of the

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\* It must be remembered that for Muslims absolutely nothing in creation "represents" God. — Ed.

\*\* No Muslim accepts the sacrifice as being that of Isaac (Ishāq). The Semitic tradition ascribed to Abraham concerns the eldest, first or unique son. — Ed.

Devil, represented by the three stone pillars at Minā. Tradition would have it that the Devil appeared here to Abraham, who drove him away by throwing stones at him; and in some accounts his lapidation of the Devil is in conjunction with his sacrifice of Ishmael. It is in commemoration of that Abrahamic stoning that the pilgrims, armed with stones to be thrown in groups of seven, perform the lapidation of the pillars before and after the sacrifice. The sacrifice, the stoning, the clipping of the hair and nails all take place on the tenth of Dh ū al Ḥijjah. The three following days, which include additional lapidations, are really days of rejoicing. There then follows the farewell circumambulation of the Ka'bah and the Pilgrimage ends.

It goes without saying that the different steps of the Pilgrimage have their inner spiritual signification; and no doubt the Muslim sages, such as al Ghazzālī and Ibn al 'Arabī, and many others, in pondering the hidden meaning in the external acts have revealed the profound nature of the Pilgrimage as a whole. Certainly, the egalitarianism of Islām and the unity of the Muslim World, not to say the levelling influence of its message on all races and ethnic groups, are all manifested in the Pilgrimage. But these are all purely external matters. Nor did the Prophet institute the Pilgrimage as merely a commemoration of the events surrounding Abraham, Ishmael, and Hagar. The Pilgrimage must be seen in the light of the whole question of salvation (*najāt*) at the hour of death and entry into Paradise: either the Pilgrimage has some relationship to the salvific message of Islām or else it is merely a series of external acts. That it does have such a relationship is shown by the ritual character of its various parts: blessings or benedictions accrue to the person whose intention and attitudes on the Pilgrimage have been right. How far one goes in this direction depends on his inner purification. Abū Yazīd al Bisṭāmī, speaking of this inner progression, said: "On my first pilgrimage I saw only the temple; the second time, I saw both the temple and the Lord of the Temple; and the third time I saw the Lord only." It is obvious that an awareness of the Divine Presence during the Pilgrimage is a prerequisite for its successful completion, whereas the forgetfulness of it makes for a mere physical performance without grace. Al Hujwīrī says that "Anyone who is absent from God at Makkah is in the same position as if he were absent from God in his own house, and anyone who is present with God in his own house is in the same position as if he were present with God at Makkah." Behind those statements is a truth that could be expressed in this fashion: the Pilgrimage to Makkah is but the external reflection of the inner Pilgrimage to one's own heart, which is the Ka'bah of one's being. One can be prevented from performing the external Pilgrimage, but the Pilgrimage to the inner Ka'bah is always possible and is indeed the true

Pilgrimage, when all is said and done. That is why one of the Ṣūfīs put things this way: “I wonder at those who seek His temple in this world: why do they not seek contemplation of Him in their hearts? The temple they sometimes attain and sometimes miss, but contemplation they might enjoy always.”

## THE SHARĪAH ON MUSIC AND MUSICIANS

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### **METHODOLOGY**

Any study of music and music related issues in Muslim society has a double task. It should contribute a body of ideas and data that would satisfy scholars in the fields of ethnomusicology and Islāmic studies; and in addition, it should speak meaningfully to members of Muslim society around the world. In order to satisfy both these needs, it seems crucial that we avoid a number of problems that have handicapped many previous studies. These problems of methodology may be categorized under three headings: 1) those pertaining to SOURCES; 2) those pertaining to ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MUSICAL AND NON-MUSICAL ACTIVITIES; and 3) those pertaining to TERMINOLOGY. Each of these three categories contains two subdivisions.

1) SOURCES. The first question that must be asked if we are to avoid misunderstanding the attitude of Islām toward musicians is: Who or what shall be regarded as speaking for Islām the religion? We are all well aware of the multitudinous collection of often contradictory statements, both oral and written, on music which have come from various regions and periods of Islāmic history. Are all of these sources to be regarded as equally qualified to speak for Islām? Are we to content ourselves with examining only one person's or one group's opinion on the matter? Or must we, in order to be true to our data, investigate as many as possible of those materials which a consensus of the Muslims themselves would consider to be authoritative in these matters? If we choose this latter road of extension, and at the same time limitation, to sources of wide acceptance, which seems to be the only logical as well as culturally and intellectually honest method, we should recognize that it

is the verbatim word of God in the Qur'ān and the word of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS), as evidenced in the *ḥadīth*<sup>1</sup> that should form the periphery for an investigation of what Islām itself has said on these issues.

This material cannot provide an exhaustively satisfying answer to our preliminary question; for although the veracity and normative stature of the Qur'ān is above question for both Muslim and non-Muslim,<sup>2</sup> there are many collections of *ḥadīth*, which are used for documentation. Yet all of these are not equally qualified to gain either Muslim or scholarly respect for accuracy. Even if we were to limit ourselves to those *aḥādīth* which are found in both of the most authoritative and widely accepted collections, those of al-Bukhārī<sup>3</sup> and Muslim<sup>4</sup>, we find that there are certain of these *aḥādīth* which take precedence in the minds of Muslims over others. This priority is based on their connection to an undisputed and widely-known event in the life of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) which was marked by his specific judgment on the matter in question. Such a *ḥadīth* is known as *ḥadīth ḥukmī*.

Recognized by Muslims as of even greater authority than the *ḥadīth ḥukmī* are those "Bukh-Mus" *aḥādīth* (i.e., those found in both the al-Bukhārī and Muslim collections) which are given the title *ḥadīth mutawātir* because of the "ongoing" reportage of them by every generation from the time of the Prophet to the period of their recording. To use a *ḥadīth* for reference or documentation of an idea which lacks the authority of such guarantees of authenticity is a pitfall into which numerous scholars, both Muslim and non-Muslim, have fallen in the past. We should not let it hinder us in the future.

If only the Qur'ān and the verified and carefully screened *aḥādīth* are to be called upon to speak for Islām the religion on matters musical, what can we recognize as the wider range of sources which are capable of speaking on this subject for the Muslims of history? Here also we should screen our sources carefully in order to take our information from only those which have gained consensus approval from Muslim society itself. These include the founders of the four schools of Islāmic law, Abū Ḥanīfah (d. 767), Mālik ibn Anas (d. 795-6), al-Shāfi'ī (d. 820) and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 855), the great jurists of the legal tradition; and such leaders of the theological or philosophical movements as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī and Ibn Taymiyyah, who have been regarded as authorities by a wide spectrum of Muslim society. To base conclusions on the writings of figures who have not enjoyed wide relevance, or on the practice of limited and isolated groups within the Muslim World, would doom any study to statistical and empirical error as well as to rejection for irrelevancy by the Muslims themselves.



## 2) ASSOCIATIONS BETWEEN MUSICAL AND NON-MUSICAL ACTIVITIES.

The second pair of methodological problems deals with the attribution to musical activities of the characteristics of non-musical activities. The first one of this pair involves the fallacy that a condemnation of those specifically condemned practices with which music has sometimes been associated necessitates or implies a condemnation of music itself. The truth is that those legitimate sources speaking for Islām the religion which we have indicated above, as well as those which can rightfully be considered to speak for the Muslims, have been consistently careful to condemn those associated activities rather than to make a sweeping condemnation of music *per se*. Secondly, we should be aware that there have been many overhasty critics, both Muslims and non-Muslims, who have overlooked the associative causes for the qualified disapproval of musical activities and presented the writings of their predecessors in isolation from the original context in which they were given. By so doing, these writers have grossly distorted the original intent of the authoritative source.

3) TERMINOLOGY. The third pair of problems to beware of in a study of music and musicians in Muslim society relates to terminology. First, there is the question of the term "forbidden", widely used in the literature dealing with this subject. We should note that the Arabic equivalent, *ḥarām*, is properly used in a technical, legal sense for only the act or activity which is specifically "forbidden" in the Qur'ān or established *ḥadīth*, and for only the act or activity which is punishable by a prescribed and specific punishment (*ḥadd*). This is not applicable to any type of musical performance in any part of the Muslim World in any period of time. The term "prohibited" (or *ḥarām*), used in the legal sense, should therefore be thrown out from the discussion altogether. Instead, we should realize that we are discussing, for the most part, ethical rather than legal judgments. Where the great thinkers of Islāmic law have addressed themselves to the restriction and guidance of musical activities, it has never judged them *ḥarām* without reference to their association with certain disapproved behavior and without qualification by that behavior. The preferable term to be used therefore is "unfavored" (*makrūh*), as opposed to "permissible" (*ḥalāl*). In a more colloquial sense, the term *ḥarām* may have a much wider meaning. For example, it is sometimes used for "pity," "shame," "disapproved," "unfortunate," etc. But it should not be used to imply the technical, legal sense defined above. Readers should be aware of this distinction of meanings when surveying the Islāmic materials on music.

The second problem of terminology deals with the question of what *is* and what *is not* "music" in Islāmic culture.

## I. MUSIC

For most musicologists and ethnomusicologists the term “music” means the art and science of combining vocal and/or instrumental sounds or tones so as to form a wide variety of structurally, aesthetically and emotionally satisfying expressions of a culture’s underlying belief system. Under such a definition, music generally includes all types of such aural aesthetic expression, regardless of their function or the context of their performance. *Mūsīqā* (or *mūsīqī*) is the Arabic term often equated with this concept by Western ethnomusicologists, by Islāmicists and even, in some cases, by Muslim scholars and laymen. Borrowed from the Greek language by the Muslims of the 8th-10th centuries, the term *mūsīqā* has had various connotations in Islāmic history;<sup>5</sup> but only when used in the loosest sense has it been regarded by members of Muslim society as synonymous with the term “music” as defined above. Instead, in most instances, it applies only to certain secular musical genres of the culture.<sup>6</sup>

Nor is there another recognized Arabic expression which could be equated with the very inclusive English term, “music.” For example, the Arabic word *ghinā’* means “singing,” and therefore is generally exclusive of all forms of purely instrumental music. The same term has sometimes been used to mean all “secular music,” whether performed by vocalists, instrumentalists or a combination of these. In this sense, it excludes all religious genres. *Samā’* (literally, “listening”) has designated the vocal and instrumental music used in the context of the *dhikr* (“remembrance [of God]”) rituals of the Ṣūfī or mystical brotherhoods, but it often does not include music, even the same type of music, performed in other secular or religious contexts. *Taqrīb* is a term which has the literal meaning of “the act of delighting or enrapturing through sound.” This expression denoting both recited poetic and performed musical expression has sometimes been used as a loose equivalent for “music,” but it too is not inclusive of all types of pitched-sound art in the Muslim World. Its connotation of, and association with, sensual enjoyment make it Islāmically unsuitable for labeling most religious genres. *Lahw* (“entertainment”), another word which has sometimes been used to translate “music,” actually applies to a much wider category including all types of amusement. When used in a narrower, musical sense, it pertains only to secular music.

This unfruitful search for a culturally acceptable term which is inclusive of all types of musical production in Islāmic culture is not done in order to expose a deficiency in Muslim culture or in the Arabic language which, as language of the Holy Qur’ān, has played such an important role in the history of all regions of the Islāmic World. On the contrary, results of the search are presented in order to expose a unique characteristic of the culture’s understanding of musical art, an

understanding which has played a key role in determining the characteristics of that art. It is clear that all types of what we would consider to be music have not been considered so by Muslim society. In fact, Islāmic culture provided an inexplicit, but nevertheless powerfully implied, hierarchy of sound-art expression, or *handasah al ṣawt* ("artistic engineering of sound"), as I shall call it here. This hierarchization had the effect of separating the more appreciated and encouraged genres in a class apart, and of categorizing certain of the less appreciated forms and occasions for music as controversial or disapproved. See Figure 1, *infra*. Ibn Taymiyyah (1966: II, 318) writes that there are various kinds of *samā'* ("listening"), "some of which are *muḥarram* ("forbidden"), [while others are] *Makrūh* ("unfavored"). *Mubāḥ* ("indifferent"), *wājib* ("recommended"), and *mustahabb* ("commendable").

Much has been written in the literature of Islāmic culture about the so-called legitimacy or illegitimacy of music. Throughout the centuries, writers of religious works, legal documents, and even works dealing with secular topics, have debated the benefits or dangers of music, and line up for or against certain categories or uses of it. It was certainly not every kind of *handasah al ṣawt* that was the subject of the debate, but one cannot fail to recognize in the Islāmic writings an apprehension of the effects that music could have on Muslim society, on its members and even on the performance of Islāmic religious duties (Ibn Taymiyyah 1966: II, 306ff). While no age or region of the Islāmic World was without its devotees and practitioners of a wide range of musical expression, Islām and the Muslims put restrictions on the use of certain types of musical art, and supported and cultivated others. This differentiation reached such an extent that many of the encouraged genres were not even designated as music, lest they be confused or associated with unsanctioned types of pitched-sound art.

At the peak of importance and acceptability in the Muslim hierarchy of musical or *handasah al ṣawt* expression is the pitched recitation of the Holy Qur'ān. This solo, vocal improvisational genre has carried, over the centuries, the full and unequivocal acceptance and support of both the religion and the society. Qur'ānic cantillation, or *qirā'ah* ("reading"), has been performed with some variance of individual and regional style for fourteen centuries; but exemplifications have rarely transgressed the boundaries of acceptable style which have been strictly monitored by concerned Muslims in every century of Islāmic presence. Numerous works have been written to condemn and forestall aberrations of the pristine qualities of Qur'ānic chant and to guard against the assimilation of characteristics from the indigenous musical cultures of the various ethnic groups which make up the Muslim

*ummah* ("community") (see Talbi 1958; al Sa'īd 1967: 344-348; al Fārūqī 1974: 275-281). A very sensitive and determined aesthetic-religious "conscience" has guarded against the intrusion of such changes in the substance and performance of this chant which would reduce its conformance to the aesthetic and religious demands which determined its development. *Qirā'ah*, however, despite its correspondence with all the specifications of the definition cited earlier, has never been considered by Muslims to be a form of music. Every Muslim, however, would agree that it is the most sublime example of *handasah al ṣawt*, our newly coined expression for all categories of pitched sound art.

There are other genres of sound art which have also been regarded as unquestionably legitimate forms of *handasah al ṣawt* expression in Islāmic culture; yet they were never regarded as *mūsīqā*. At only a slightly lower level on the hierarchy than Qur'ānic chant, for example, is the *adhān* or "call to prayer," which is chanted five times daily from the minaret of every mosque and which has many stylistic characteristics in common with Qur'ānic cantillation. Other examples which the Muslims have considered to be unquestionably legitimate *handasah al ṣawt* expressions are the Pilgrimage (*talbiyah*) and Eulogy Chants. *Tahmid*, *tahlīl na'ī* and *madiḥ* are terms which have designated various exemplifications of the widely used, chanted poetry eulogising God, the Prophet (Muḥammad (ṢAAS) or certain religiously exemplary persons from Islāmic history. Even *shī'r* ("chanted poetry") with noble themes falls within this acceptable non-*mūsīqā* grouping. The best examples of chanted poetry have remained so close to the culture's prototype, Qur'ānic cantillation, in substance and performance that they have suffered a minimum of cultural suppression and have been given the legitimizing support and appreciation, even esteem, of the vast majority of the community throughout the centuries. Only rarely has their desirability been questioned.

Three more levels are included among the *ḥalāl* forms of musical expression, i.e., the ones consistently regarded as legitimate. The first of these includes various types of Family and Celebration Music such as lullabies, women's songs, and music for weddings, family and religious celebrations. Some of the religious genres of the higher levels of the hierarchy are used for family gatherings and celebrations, as well as secular music similar to that of lower levels of the hierarchy. The more this music is determined by aesthetic and moral ideals of the society, the more favored it is as representative of this category of musical expression. The next level of the hierarchy, which includes caravan chants (*ḥidā'*, *rajaz*, *rukbān*), shepherds' tunes and work songs, is labeled "Occupational" Music. The last level within the consistently

legitimate group comprises the *ṭabl khānah* or Military Band Music which was used for rallying in battle as well as for public celebrations.<sup>7</sup>

These three lowest levels of primarily secular categories within the *ḥalāl* section of our hierarchy have been bracketed with others below them as examples of *mūsīqā*, in contrast to the non-*mūsīqā* categories higher in the hierarchy. Yet they have not suffered the condemnation of the religion or the people. Although the Muslims did not regard these lower echelon genres of legitimate types as being of the same calibre or worth as Qur'anic chant, it has been generally conceded that they are *ḥalāl* sound art expressions. Evidence for this can be found in the *ḥadīth* literature, in the writings of the founders of the four law schools, as well as in the widely recognized Muslim scholars.<sup>8</sup>

All other forms of musical expression which have arisen in the Muslim World can also be fitted into the hierarchy of *handasah al-ṣawt* examples of Figure 1, but they are separated from the ones we have so

HIERARCHY OF *HANDASAḤ AL-ṢAWT* GENRES  
(The Status of Music in the Islāmic World)

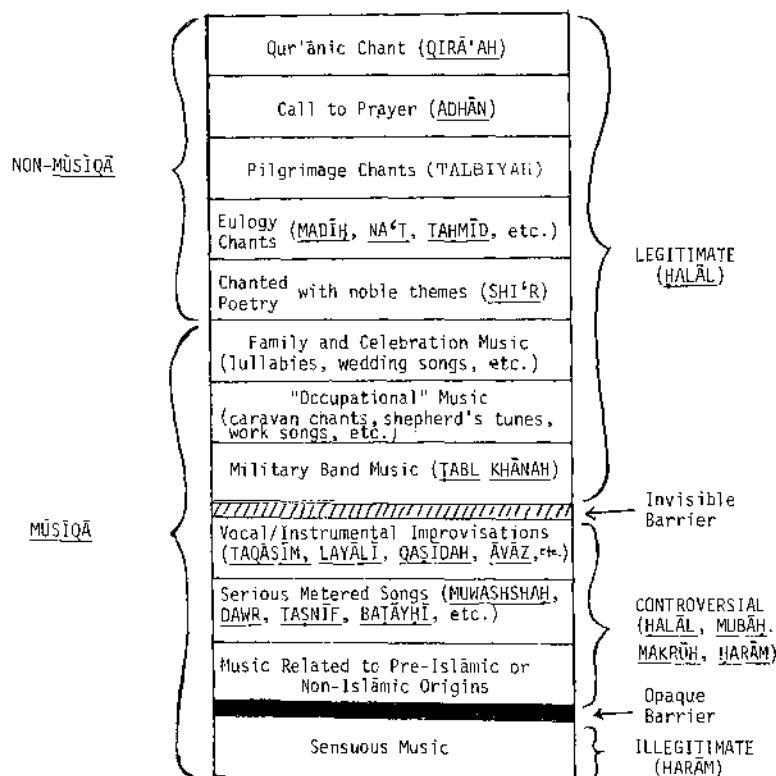


Figure 1

far enumerated by an “invisible barrier.” I call it an “invisible” barrier, for it is one which has sometimes been heeded, sometimes ignored or transcended by particular individuals, groups, and/or communities within the Muslim World. This barrier separates those forms of sound art which have consistently been viewed as *ḥalāl* aesthetic expressions from those which have been considered questionable, dangerous or even disapproved.

At the top of this second composite section of the hierarchy we find the free rhythmmed Vocal and Instrumental Improvisations, e.g., *layālī*, *āvāz*, *taqāsīm* and *istikhbār*. These genres have also been favored by a large percentage of the population, though they were not universally approved, as were the forms above the invisible barrier. Below the level of improvisations are the Serious Metered Songs – e.g., *muwashshahah*, *dawr* and some forms of *taṣnīf*, which also have been enjoyed and considered harmless by a sizeable, though slightly smaller percentage of the society. Below them is the level of Music Related to Pre-Islāmic or Non-Islāmic Origins. It includes music which religious leaders have generally disapproved because of its relationship to pagan or pre-Islāmic religious traditions, ideas and practices. Islāmic society has customarily shown great tolerance for the music of newly converted peoples, while its religious leaders have endeavored to progressively deepen and widen the influence of Islām on all aspects of the converts’ lives.

The examples of these three categories of music labeled “controversial” have no doubt been popular with many Muslims in various parts of the Islāmic World. They vary greatly in substance and performance context. For some, therefore, they were considered *ḥalāl* or “legitimate,” for others *mubāḥ*, or legally “indifferent”; and for some, *makrūh* or “disapproved.” But under all circumstances, their performance and enjoyment did not engender the sense of complete innocence that accompanied the involvement with genres above the invisible barrier.

Finally, the lowest level of the hierarchy is given to that sensuous music which is performed in association with condemned activities, or which is thought to incite to such prohibited practices as consumption of drugs and alcohol, lust, prostitution, etc. This last level is separated from the others above it on our representation of the hierarchy by a solid black line, for it is below this barrier that Muslims have been consistently unwilling to accord their approval.

Thus the hierarchy of “musical” art or *handasah al-ṣawt*, as drawn up here, reveals eleven categories or levels of musical expression organized in three sections. One section comprises all those genres of musical art which Islāmic culture refused to designate as “music” lest they be

equated with or influenced by the less favored genres as well as three categories of *mūsīqā* sanctioned by the Prophet and Muslims generally. Another section, the lowest of the hierarchy, includes that music which has consistently been considered to be outside the pale of approval for Muslims because of its associations with illegitimate practices and non-conformance to Islāmic aesthetic and ethical norms. A third, the median section, includes the various types of music which have been at issue in the centuries-long controversy waged by the protagonists and antagonists of music in Islāmic culture. It is the genres of this third section — and these genres alone — that have been the crux of the controversy. There has been no opposition to the pitched-sound rendition of the Qurʾān, for Allah taʿālā Himself, in the Holy Book commands such reading (Qurʾān 73:4). The *adhān*, pilgrimage and eulogy chants, chanted poetry, family and celebration music, “occupational” music, as well as the brass and percussion music of the military bands, have been so consistently supported by incidents from the life of the Prophet Muḥammad and his followers, that little time or energy has been spent on countering their acceptance and use. Likewise, that level of sensuous music at the bottom of the hierarchy which incited to lust and abandon of social and religious duties was never a matter for indecision; it was consistently regarded with suspicion and disapproval by protagonists of other forms of music as well as by the more conservative antagonists. It was only the middle categories of the hierarchy of *handasah al ṣawt*, therefore, which have constituted the “grey” area of controversy.

A number of interrelated aspects seem to have been involved in determining this implicit hierarchy of sound art which is concretized in this presentation. The *first* of these aspects is the conformance or divergence of each genre to the archetypal Qurʾānic chant. The more a certain genre or type of musical expression draws for its musical, poetic and religious inspiration from Qurʾānic chant, the more it has been appreciated and “legitimized.” The more it strays from that model, the more susceptible it is to correction by an alert community aesthetic conscience or to assignment to a lower level of approval and appreciation. For example, the *adhān*, pilgrimage and eulogy chants, as well as chanted poetry have almost identical musical characteristics to those of the Qurʾānic chant. Even much of the family/celebration music and “occupational” music is governed by similar characteristics. Only the military music of this accepted section deviates markedly from these characteristics. In this instance, function has taken precedence over form in the designation of the status of that music. Even the solo vocal and instrumental improvisations on the lower side of the invisible barrier have shown such clear resemblance to the chanting of the Qurʾān

and the other unquestionably approved forms of *handasah al sawt* higher in the hierarchy that they have won a considerable ratio of approval and acceptance. It has been discovered that the rhythmized songs of the next lower level also conform to certain — though not all — characteristics of the musical genres on the higher levels of the hierarchy, and even to those of the Qur'anic musical prototype (see al Fārūqī 1975). Each descent to another level of the hierarchy, however, reveals a successive lessening of correspondence to the model, a fact which helps account for the reduced acceptability and appreciation of the genres of those levels.

A *second* aspect determining a genre's location in the hierarchy seems to be the degree of its conformance to the aesthetic demands of the culture. As I have attempted to illustrate elsewhere (see al Fārūqī 1974; Chap. I; 1975; 1978), there are recognizable characteristics of content and form common to examples of Islāmic art of any medium. These characteristics are at their highest peak in the Qur'ān which, in both written and recited forms, has provided the archetype and norm for aesthetic production in Islāmic culture.<sup>9</sup> The hierarchy reveals the importance of these aesthetic characteristics in the cultural judgment of examples of musical art or *handasah al sawt*. As we descend from level to level, the conformance to those characteristics of poetic and musical content and form become progressively weaker. In that music at the base of the hierarchy, one may still discover certain characteristics binding it to the overall aesthetic norms of the culture, but they are certainly at their weakest in this music. It is here also that laxity in adherence to the cultural norms allows for substantial borrowings from alien musical traditions. The night club offerings in any Middle Eastern, Asian or African country provide a ready example of such dilution of cultural norms by a wide variety of musical influences from the outside world.

*Third*, the hierarchy is also a ranking of genres according to statistical community acceptance and esteem. Those genres on the highest levels of the hierarchy, those which are labeled "Non-*Mūsīqā*," have enjoyed the universal acceptance as well as respect of the Muslim peoples. As for the three levels below them, but still above the invisible barrier, these categories have also been accepted by most Muslims. Each descent from level to level, however, is accompanied by a decrease in the number of people who would consider involvement with this music completely conscionable. At the lower end of the hierarchy, only a small minority would accord approval to the sensuous music beyond the opaque barrier, and all would consider its performance or enjoyment as in some degree problematic.

A *fourth* aspect which has determined positioning in this hierarchy,



and is therefore revealed by it, is a correlative to the third aspect. It pertains to what the Muslim community has considered to be musical conformance to the moral demands of Islām. Those items on the upper levels have been regarded as capable of directing the hearers' minds and attention to God and to the God-commanded duties and ethical desiderata of life, whereas those examples in each level of the descent were felt to be successively less capable of producing that desired effect. At the bottom of the ladder, the sensuous music, which was consistently associated with drugs, alcohol, sexual promiscuity and the dissolute life, was widely rejected for its corruptive influence on the individual and the society. The importance of this moral factor in Muslim World attitudes toward music is clearly documented in many writings (e.g., see al Shāfi'ī 1906: VI, 214-215; *Al Fatāwā al Hindiyyah* 1892: V, 351).

It is granted that particular genres or customs in certain parts of the Muslim World may evidence exceptional instances of non-conformance to the hierarchization presented here, to those four aspects which have been seen to have a determining influence on this taxonomy, as well as to the effects it has had on the status of musicians. With a geographic and ethnic complex as vast as Muslim society represents, it would be difficult, and perhaps even impossible, to present a hierarchy of musical expression which is universally valid. This does not negate the benefit of producing such a classification which might cause us to think in a way which is more compatible with the greater reality than many past studies were able to do because of the confusions that have applied to the field.

## II. MUSICIANS

If we were to move through the legitimate-disapproved hierarchy and turn our minds to the performers of *handasah al ṣawt* instead of to the sound art itself, we would find that the "musicians" of the Muslim World have been ranked on a similar hierarchy of variable approval and disapproval, of acceptance and rejection. Those who perform the *qirā'ah*, the *adhān* and other forms of pitched-sound art on those levels of the hierarchy above the "invisible barrier" have been accorded unquestioned acceptance in the society. The capable ones have even been praised and acclaimed for their abilities and "art". Rather than delineating a separate class of musicians for these approved genres of sound art, however, we might say that Islāmic culture has regarded every member of the society as, in fact, an amateur practitioner of these genres. Every Muslim, for example, is a potential *qāri'* or "reciter" of the Qur'ān. Since no one simply "reads" the Qur'ān without trying to render it beautifully, all Muslims make some attempt at reciting it with variant pitches and durations. A graduate of Al Azhar University<sup>19</sup> maintained that the language of the Qur'ān is such that it "forces cantillation upon

the reader.” “It cannot be just read,” he insisted. Some *qāri*’s, of course have better voices, are more proficient at the task, than others; but anyone in the community may — and does — take part in this much admired and appreciated activity.<sup>11</sup>

Any and every practicing Muslim may also be called upon, at some time in his/her life, to perform the *adhān*. Assuredly, this would not be done by most Muslims from the minaret of a mosque, but it is a common duty in more private situations where the prayer is announced for the group of persons present. No joint prayer is made without this audible call to attention. In the case of the individual prayer, the call is made silently by the worshipper if he does not hear it from the minaret. The *talbiyah* or pilgrimage chants are also within the performance domain of every Muslim rather than of a special segment of society known as “musicians.” Although the performers of the other forms of non-music *handasah al sawt* (e.g., eulogy chants, *shi’r*, family/celebration music, “occupational music” and military band music) may be somewhat less universally distributed in Islāmic society, we find many Muslims of other professions participating, without reprobation, in these forms of community art on various occasions.

Amateurs who perform the genres of the controversial levels of the hierarchy, i.e., the genres of *mūsīqā* which fall between the invisible and opaque barriers of our hierarchy, are also immune to social criticism and discrimination. Those, however, who are professional performers or who are involved with the disapproved sensual music at the bottom of the hierarchy, have, no doubt, been regarded with suspicion and disdain. This results not because of the actual act of musical performance but because of the moral associations involved with the commercial pursuit of that profession. We shall speak more of this below (pp. 17-20) in the materials explaining the factor of context as a determinant of the status of musicians. It should be noted that the performer of music has generally been accorded no better or no worse treatment than those who listened to his/her music. Both socially and legally, there has been little differentiation between the attitude toward actual musicians, on the one hand, and the listeners or patrons of that music, on the other. Those who were in any way involved with *handasah al sawt* of the “wrong” kinds and in the “wrong” contexts have felt constraints, while those involved with the culturally sanctioned types and contexts, have not.

Like the attitudes toward the music itself, attitudes toward musicians vary according to a number of circumstances in which they differ from one another. First of all, these attitudes differ in accordance with the differing performance material. No musician is suspect if the repertoire he/she performs is drawn from those genres that claim a universal or wide acceptance within the society because of their deep influence by

Qur'ānic chant and their conformance to aesthetic and moral requirements of Muslim society. Such a "musician" has never been subject to treatment different from that accorded his non-musician neighbor.

The context of performance is a second major determinant in approval or disapproval of musicians. Three factors determining context were given a rhymed summarization by the philosopher and theologian al Ghazālī (d. 1111) as *zamān*, *makān* and *ikhwān* (al Ghazālī n.d.: II, 301; 1902: 1-2); i.e. the "time," the "place," and the "associates" of the musical activity.<sup>12</sup>

When al Ghazālī cited *zamān* or "time" as an important element is the legitimacy or proscription of music and musicians, he was presenting a double-pronged argument. First of all, "time" is important for the obvious reason that if the performance or enjoyment of musical expression interferes with the time for actualizing a higher Islāmic goal (e.g., prayer, care of family, etc), it is certainly detrimental and should be avoided (*Ibid.*). In addition, his reasoning took into account that consensus within Muslim society that life is a serious matter which allows little time for frivolous entertainment. Therefore, al Ghazālī argued that if a musician (or listener) devoted too much of his time to entertainment in music, these activities become a detriment rather than an innocent pastime (al Ghazālī n.d.: II, 283, 301; 1901: 240-241, 251). Other writers have been equally insistent on the importance of limited involvement.

Another factor related to the matter of "time," which had had a marked effect on the status of musicians in the Muslim World, is the degree of their professional involvement. The professional has consistently been the object of suspicion or even disdain in Islāmic society, whereas the non-professional was tolerated or even admired for his ability.<sup>13</sup> Because of this attitude toward professionalism in music, devoting oneself exclusively to music has rarely been the practice of any but the extremes of society — either the most virtuoso and successful of musicians who seem to exist outside the normal restrictions and boundaries of the social structure, or the lowliest of persons who had little to lose by being labeled a professional. Not only has the amateur in all parts of the Muslim World drawn respectability from his other occupation(s), but he has avoided the over-exposure and over-commitment to pleasure-seeking activities which have been condemned by the society.<sup>14</sup>

*Makān* or "place" refers to another often expressed Muslim belief that musicians are judged by the specific context of their performance (Roychoudhury 1957:80; al Ghazālī n.d.: II, 281-283; 1901: 235-241). As has been discussed elsewhere (al Fārūqī 1981b), there is a surprising overlap in the performance situations for various genres of musical

performance in the Islāmic World. *Qirā'ah*, for example, is not only heard at the mosque for the prayer; it is also performed at the public meeting, the holiday celebration, the school program, the *dhikr* ceremony and the private party. As we have seen, the *adhān* can be recited at the time of prayer wherever Muslims are gathered. It need not be only the "call" of the professional from the minaret of the mosque. Eulogies and chanted poetry with noble themes can be part of a religious gathering such as the *dhikr* session of the Ṣūfīs as well as aesthetic entertainment and spiritual uplift for other more secular occasions. Vocal and instrumental improvisations bridge the gap between the religious and secular context in Islāmic culture, being used in the *dhikr*, in radio or television programs, as well as in live concerts, in private social gatherings and family celebrations. Such improvisations are sometimes even an important element of the cabaret musical environment. Given this high level of "unity" in performance context for different genres, it is clear that the music *per se* is not the only element to be considered in an evaluation of the approval of the musician's occupation. The acceptability of the place and the occasion for musical performance have been of equal importance in judging the performing artists as well as anyone who listens to them.

The last factor stated in al Ghazālī's rhymed determinants for proper judgment of musical performance, and thus a guide for approval or condemnation of the musician, was *ikhwān* or "associates" (literally, "brothers"). If performing or listening to otherwise acceptable musical expression put one in the company of just and honorable companions, it was not to be considered a harmful activity. On the other hand, if performance or enjoyment of music caused the participant to interact with those who might lead him/her to neglect of religious and social responsibilities or to moral degradation, it was a disapproved activity, regardless of the musical products involved.

Because of the powerful effect of these factors of "time," "place," and "associates" on meeting or denying the demands of the religious and moral life, Muslim society used them as gauges to determine its approval or rejection of the activity, the art product, the performer, and even the participating listener. In fact, in Islāmic culture, these factors which pertain to the function and the context of the music have perhaps played a more important role in determining the approval or not of any performance than the characteristics of the music itself. We find some writers condemning a type of music in one context or under certain circumstances, while approving of it in another performance situation. Playing of the *daff* (tambourine) was regarded permissible (*ḥalāl*) by the early jurists, for example, when done by women in the wedding or other joyous celebration, but condemned if used by men or in some other contexts which provided an association with homosexuality (Ibn

‘Ābidīn 1882: IV, 530; al Nawawī 1884: III, 401; Ibn Taymiyyah 1966: II, 301; Robson 1938:3; al Ghazālī 1901:211, 237; n.d.: II, 271, 282; *Al Fatāwá al Hindiyyah* c. 1892:V, 352). Playing the drum or tambourine was acceptable for military music or the march but was often rejected in other contexts.

It is this importance of the context of the performance, in addition to the characteristics of the art product itself, which account for the varying statements regarding music which are to be found in the *ḥadīth* literature. Those sayings and acts, which have been judged, after careful scrutiny and investigation, to be those of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS), provide clear evidence to support the arguments of both the antagonist and protagonist of musical expression (al Ghazālī n.d.: II, 274, 277-278, 284ff; 1901:217, 224-227, 244ff; Roychoudhury 1957:66-70). No rational person who knows that literature can honestly cite only those *aḥādīth* that bolster his case and ignore the others which seem to work against it. The apparent contradiction has caused no small amount of difficulty, for both the Muslim and non-Muslim scholar, not to speak of the confusion it has aroused in the Muslim *ummah* over the centuries (Shaltūt 1960:355).

For the Muslim, of course, it is impossible to disregard the *ḥadīth* literature since it is the next most important source of the law, after the Qur’ān. Even the non-Muslim scholar cannot fail to take this material into serious consideration, for any student of the culture will notice the penetrating and far-reaching influences it has had, not only on Muslims themselves, but on all their practices, their thinking and their institutions. In the course of trying to determine the reasons for the acceptance of some forms of musical expression and the rejection of others, the *ḥadīth* literature provides a key which can serve the Muslim and non-Muslim alike; a key which may have much wider significance than merely the light it sheds on the musical problem under consideration.

It is immaterial to our discussion whether one argues with the Muslim that these materials represent actual events in the Prophet’s life or, with the non-Muslim, that they are consensus statements of Muslim thinking in the early centuries of the Islāmic period, which were projected onto the life of the Prophet to give them validity and perpetuity. All known information regarding the circumstances in which these anecdotes and sayings occurred have been carefully sifted and guarded by the early Muslims to be handed down to future generations. Nevertheless, it is sometimes difficult for us to know the precise details of the context of statements and events dealing with music. It is quite reasonable, given the importance of the musical context in Islāmic society, that the Prophet, like his followers the Muslims, judged each instance of musical performance as a unique event. It could not be appraised except as a

complex of all characteristics of the art product and all aspects of its performance. Given that complexity, it is understandable that a great variety of responses be made by the Prophet to specific instances of *handasah al sawt* performance. In fact, any other solution would have been un-Islāmic. This is precisely what the Prophet's actions and statements reveal, and what Muslims have done and said in imitation of him for fourteen centuries. The inclusion of these contradictory *ahādīth* had the effect of providing an invitation — even a demand — for the studied and complex, even perplexing response to musical art which Muslims have given over the centuries. It points to another instance of that Islāmic religious and cultural insistence on subsuming all activities of life under a dominance by the basic religious ideology. It accounts as well as for those apparent contradictions between what some of the jurists have stated and the information we have of the personal involvement with certain types of music by the originators of the four law schools (*madhāhib*, s. *madhhab*). Such supposed contradictions should be attributed neither to false evidence nor insincerity on the part of the four *imāms*. Instead it is evidence of the qualified judgment of every kind of music and musical activity.

### III. MUSLIM LAW

Given the hierarchical status of various forms of *handasah al sawt* genres — both those designated as *mūsīqā* as well as those not defined as such — and given the hierarchy of performers for this art, we now turn our attention to the laws involving the practitioners of music in Islāmic culture. It is clear that as far as the performers of the non-music categories at the top of the *handasah al sawt* hierarchy are concerned, there are no legal restrictions on the practice of their art. In fact, the performers of these genres have consistently been encouraged by the laws, and by the society, to improve and proliferate their “musical art.” In the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* and the four schools of law (*madhāhib*), the reader of the Qur'ān and the *mu'adhdhin* (the person who calls to prayer) are admonished to purify themselves before participating in these activities; but there are no discriminatory measures against them as performers. They operate as full participants in society and experience only those restrictions that are placed upon all members of the *ummah*.

Even for those persons who involve themselves with the other forms of sound art in the controversial or disapproved sections of the hierarchy, there are no unqualified prohibitions and no stated or *ḥadd*<sup>15</sup> punishment for violators. This applies both to the “producer” and the “consumer” of *mūsīqā*. No evidence could be found in the Qur'ān, in the *ḥadīth* or in any of the legal documents investigated, for the prescription of physical punishment, incarceration or fines for those who involve

themselves with musical activities. Neither is there evidence for discretionary chastisements (*ta'zīr*)<sup>16</sup> which are sometimes recommended by Islāmic law. Legal prohibition of musical activities, even of the controversial or disapproved types, therefore is not documentable. However, there are a variety of prescriptions which can be classified as restrictive of the musician even though they may not be judged actually punitive. It should be remembered that these injunctions apply only to the professional, full-time musician who takes money for his performance or to the patron of music who makes a business of the musical performance of others. These restrictive measures fall into four categories dealing with:

- 1) the acceptance or rejection of evidence — i.e., testimony;
- 2) the securing of wages for performances;
- 3) singing girl slaves; and
- 4) musical instruments

**1) Acceptance or Rejection of Evidence — Testimony**

For the professional, full-time musicians who perform those genres of *mūsīqā* which are below the so-called “invisible barrier” in the hierarchy of sound art, the most prominent restriction found in Muslim law is that pertaining to the acceptance or rejection of testimony. The jurists of all four Sunnī schools of Islāmic law have maintained that the testimony of the public mourner or singer, for example, is not admissible evidence in any legal case tried in a court.<sup>17</sup> It should be noted, however, that these authorities of the various *madhāhib* have drawn a clear distinction between those persons who are involved in music under the permitted circumstances which have been outlined earlier and those who participate under religiously and socially disapproved circumstances. For the former, no denial of testimonial rights is prescribed, while the professional, the person addicted to this occupation, the one who takes money for it or who is involved commercially in this activity is considered untrustworthy. The testimony of the amateur, therefore, is accepted; for we read that it is only for those that “have a reputation for that” (al Shāfi’ī 1906: VI, 214-215) that the denial is operative. The musician therefore becomes suspect not because he performs music but because he takes on such a profession with all its negative social and moral associations in the culture. Such a choice reveals in him a lack of concern for his position in the community and unconcern for guarding of his integrity. These are characteristics which could cause him to involve himself in other activities rejected by the society and the religion (al Shāfi’ī 1906: VI, 215). Likewise, the man who sponsors or hires a musician is not categorically denied the right of testimony. Suspicion of his character results only if he makes a commercial or public event of the performance.

## 2) Wages

A second legal restriction on those musicians who perform the *mūsīqā* forms of *handasah al ṣawī* pertains to the securing of wages. Since their activity as professionals is considered by most jurists to be undesirable, they are denied legal recourse to salary procurement. Some jurists have declared the wages for singing or lamentation as illegal. In *Al Hidāyah* we read that it is not lawful to give a pledge for the wages either of a professional mourner or singer (Hamilton 1975:499, 638). If the patron wishes to pay them, the musicians are not denied recompense; but they cannot pursue that payment through legal channels in case the patron refuses to honor his agreement with them or pays them less than what they feel is proper.

There is another legal matter pertaining to wages which should be mentioned. We are told that one who chants or teaches the Qurʾān is no less subject to this denial of the right to wages as the performer of other types of musical expression. His denial results not, however, from the unacceptable nature of his work, but because it is not considered proper to receive payment for those activities which can be considered one's religious duty (*Al Hidāyah* in Hamilton 1975:499). Often religious teachers and *qāri*'s have alleviated the effect of such laws by accepting non-money payments. The circumvention of this rule is well known and widely practiced with little apparent indignation from religious or societal sources. Some jurists have even officially condoned it as a way of fostering religious practices and necessities of the culture (*Ibid.*).

## 3) Singing Girls

A third type of legal restriction pertains to the practice or enjoyment of music involving the *qaynāt*, those musically talented and trained slave girls of the pre-Islāmic and early Islāmic period. Here my evidence is less clear, for I have not been able to verify in the primary sources the claims made in the secondary sources. For example, according to Roychoudhury, drawing on the Macdonald translation of al Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al Dīn*, Mālik has said that if a man buys a slave girl and discovers that she is a professional, it is his duty to return her to the former owner (Roychoudhury 1957:78; al Ghazālī 1901:201). The Arabic of al Ghazālī is far less specific. There we find that "the purchase may return her if he wishes" (*kāna lahu radduhā*) (al Ghazālī n.d.: II, 269). The translation of Macdonald from which Roychoudhury took his information is certainly misleading. In fact, the importance and insistence in Mālik ibn Anas's *Al Muwaṭṭa'* (Mālik 1971:422ff) on providing remedies for a problem of "defect" (*ayb*) in the newly purchased slaves, rather than resorting to their return, puts into question the possibility of such a restriction in the writings of Mālik. In addition, the whole question might be considered irrelevant to the discussion of music and musicians. Rather than an argument to be used



by the music antagonists, it is instead a matter of proper identification of the seller's goods.

Roychoudhury (1957:79) cites another quotation drawn from the Macdonald translation of al Ghazālī's *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al Dīn* which is misquoted to read just the opposite of its meaning in the original and in Macdonald's accurate translation (al Ghazālī n.d.:II, 269; 1901:201). This quotation is taken by al Ghazālī from Abū Ṭayyib al Ṭabarī, the 10th century Shāfi'ī jurist, as evidence of the latter's argument that the Shāfi'īs prohibit listening to singing girls. Yet other Shāfi'ī sources are explicit in maintaining that the rejection of testimony for listening to singing girls applies only to the person who makes a commercial enterprise of such performances.<sup>18</sup>

#### 4) The Use of Instruments

Given the importance of the unaccompanied vocal chant as prototype and most accepted form of Islāmic musical expression, it is not surprising to find instruments and instrumental music somewhat less appreciated than the singing voice and vocal music among the Muslims. Instruments have never been allowed to play a role in the Islāmic prayer ritual, either as accompaniment to the chant or alone. Their distinctness from the archetypical *qirā'ah* both in aspects of musical style and in performance context, seems to have kept them from playing a major role in the performance of those genres of non-*mūsīqā* at the top of the *handasah al ṣawī* hierarchy, though they were generally approved by Muslims for use in the military bands and in other secular performances. Here too, however, context and the associative factors were the guiding principle in their approval or rejection. As al Ghazālī has argued, some instruments which have nice sounds should not be forbidden any more than the voice of the nightingale. But he excepts from this judgment those instruments of music that are associated with wine, homosexuals and other prohibited things (al Ghazālī n.d.:II, 271-272; 1901:210-215).

A legal reference revealing an adverse effect on the use of musical instruments specified that the hands of the thief should not be cut off stealing a musical instrument because those are sinful tools (al Qayrawānī in *Bākūrah al Sa'd*, translated in Russell 1906:92). According to the report of Robson (1938:3), a 13th century Shāfi'ī jurist, claimed that the breaking of instruments was lawful and incurred no liability. In Roychoudhury, on the contrary, we find the author quoting from *Al Hidāyah* as follows: "If a person breaks a lute ... or pipe, or cymbal belonging to a Muslim, he is responsible, because the sale of such article is lawful" (Roychoudhury 1957:79). Although this could not be verified by the primary source, it is well established that certain instruments were designated as suitable for certain performance circumstances, while disapproved for others. The evidence about legislation and legal

opinion concerning musical instruments is highly controversial.

#### A CONTEMPORARY OPINION

The most recent authoritative Muslim statement on the question of Music, Musicians and Muslim Law comes from Maḥmūd Shaltūt, the late Shaykh al Azhar. As rector of Al Azhar University, probably the most prestigious academic religious institution in the contemporary Muslim World, and a jurist by profession, Shaltūt offers a contemporary response to the complicated questions which the position of music provokes. His statement is an indicator of what seems to be the prevailing attitude toward music within Islāmic culture, despite more extreme responses on both ends of the acceptance-rejection spectrum.

His *fatwá* ("formal ruling or opinion") was written as a response to a letter of inquiry about the very subject of this paper. The *fatwá* appeared in a collection of legal rulings by Shaltūt on various religious, economic, political and social questions. After lamenting the lack of consensus on this issue through the centuries, the author repeats the oft-stated conditional approval of music, basing his approval on the following four arguments. First, he maintains that listening to or performing music, like tasting delicious foods, feeling soft cloths, smelling pleasant odors, seeing beautiful sights, or achieving knowledge of the unknown, are all instinctive pleasures with which God has endowed man. They all have the effect of calming when one is disturbed, of relaxing when one is tired, of refreshment in mental or physical exhaustion and of rekindling the participant with energy.<sup>19</sup> God, Shaltūt argues, has created these instincts in human beings for a good purpose, and therefore it may even be impossible for them to perform their duties in this life without the aid of such instincts and pleasures which help them reach their goals. He concludes that it is therefore impossible that the law (*sharī'ah*) be against these instincts and pleasures. Instead the law has for purpose the disciplining of the instincts for pleasure and the channeling of their use so that they can work constructively together to achieve the higher moral ends.

His second argument is that the law, as well as the Qur'ān on which it is based, seeks the Golden Mean, thus preventing from exaggeration either on the side of no-use, or over-use of music.

Thirdly, he turns to the arguments of his predecessors, the jurists who have given opinions on *samā'* or "listening." He summarizes that they permitted music whenever it had a suitable context, as it does when used as accompaniment for war, the *ḥajj*, weddings and 'Īd celebrations. He follows this with references to a work by Shaykh 'Abd al Ghanī al Nābulusī (1641-1731). In a work by that 17th century jurist of the Hanafī *madhhab*, its author argues that almost every prohibition (*tahrīm*) of *mūsīqā* in the *ḥadīth* literature is coupled with or conditioned by the

mention of alcohol, singing girls, dissoluteness (*fusūq*) or adultery. Both Shaltūt and al Nābulusī therefore feel that the prohibition is based on the context and associations, and is not a reaction against the music itself. The Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) and many of the respected Muslims of the early period of Islāmic history have indeed listened to music and attended sessions of innocent performance. Therefore, he concludes, as did many of his predecessors, that the prohibition does not result from the condemnation of music *per se*, but from its use under the wrong circumstances or with morally debilitating associations.

The fourth and closing point made in Shaltūt's *fatwā* on music repeats a Qur'ānic argument also used by earlier protagonists of the use of *mūsīqā* (al Ghazālī n.d.:II, 272; 1901:214-215). Here the jurist cautions against the reckless forbidding of what God did not forbid. Such false attributions to God, which he condemns as slander and falsehood (*iftirā*'), are countered by Sūrah 7, Āyāt 32-33.<sup>20</sup> Shaltūt thus concludes that the general rule is that *mūsīqā* is permissible; its prohibition is the accident or exception caused by improper usage (Shaltūt 1960:359).

## CONCLUSION

What were the overall effects on Muslim art and society of the hierarchization of musical forms and the on-going controversy regarding *mūsīqā*? These cultural movements and manipulations certainly did not wipe out all sound art in the Muslim World — nor, I am convinced, were they ever meant to do so. While the first concern of Ayatollah Khomeini, or of his counterparts in earlier centuries, may have been the ethical and moral effects of their directives regarding music, it seems that the effects are much more sweeping and profound. The following points illustrate this:

1) The implicit hierarchization of musical expression, with Qur'ānic chant at the apex of that hierarchy serving as archetype and norm, has produced a marked unity in the characteristics of content and form to be found in the musical performances of the core countries of the Islāmic World, and significant correspondences in more distant regions.

2) This hierarchy and the religious concern for prescribed types of musical involvement have been instrumental in subsuming all aspects of musical life under a determination by religious and ethical goals. Musical expression thus became another item making up what the Muslim considers to be a total Islāmic pattern of life which deals not only with the specifically religious matters of prayer and pilgrimage, but has its effect on every other aspect of Muslim existence as well.

3) The hierarchization also insured that this aspect of culture — the art of pitched sounds — was included in the culture's Islāmization

process. This furthered that unity of style within the culture which is the hallmark of any civilization worthy of the name.

4) This control of musical expression, and its direction of interest and participation toward Qur'ānic chant, had tremendous homogenization benefits for a culture with a vast geographic area to span and probably the most diverse ethnic composition of any culture the world has ever known. This "program," which seems to have been achieved with surprisingly little conscious planning, produced a significant measure of overall unity without brutally destroying the native musical heritages of its converts. These heritages could continue — and *did* continue — on the lower levels of the *handasah al sawi* hierarchy. Meanwhile the musical Islāmization process was being carried out through the continued direction of attention toward Qur'ānic chant and those types of musical expression which could further the Islāmization process.

These effects not doubt extracted a price. You may ask whether the results were worth the price, but all must agree that only the Muslim is qualified to answer that question.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>Arabic pl. *aḥādīth*, i.e., the sayings and actions attributed to the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) which were painstakingly verified and scrupulously guarded by the *muhaddithūn* ("scholars of *ḥadīth*") and the Muslims.

<sup>2</sup>"We hold the Kor'an to be as surely Muḥammad's word, as the Muḥammadans hold it to be the word of God" (Muir 1923:xxviii).

<sup>3</sup>Muḥammad ibn Isma'īl al Bukhārī (810-870).

<sup>4</sup>Muslim ibn al Ḥajjāj (d. 875).

<sup>5</sup>See entry entitled MŪSIQĀ or MŪSIQĪ in al Fārūqī 1981a.

<sup>6</sup>Mark Slobin writes of the narrow definition of the word for music (*sāz*) in Northern Afghanistan, another region of the Muslim World. "this narrow definition of music excludes most of the 'innocent' manifestations, ... and tends to focus on the sphere in which music plays a potentially dangerous role ..." (Slobin 1976:26).

<sup>7</sup>See Farmer 1913-1934, "Ṭabl Khāna," pp. 232-237.

<sup>8</sup>In *Kitāb al Umm*, al Shāfi'ī (d. 820), founder of one of the four *madhāhib* (s. *madhhab*) or schools of law of Sunnī Islām, writes that the Prophet Muḥammad listened to and encouraged the singing of the *ḥidā'* or caravan song of the Arabs, the *nashūd al a'rāb* ("hymn of the Arabs") and the chanting of poetry (al Shāfi'ī 1906:VI, 215). He based his assertion of the *ḥadīth* literature. See Roy Choudhury (1957:66-70); al Ghazālī (1901-1902); Robson (1938) for compilations of the materials on *mūsīqā*, *ghinā'* or *samā'* drawn from the *ḥadīth* literature.

<sup>9</sup>See I.R. al Fārūqī (1976:95ff) for a discussion of the aesthetic role of the Qur'ān in Muslim culture. The author describes the Qur'ān as "the first work of art in Islām."

<sup>10</sup>Al Azhar is an Islāmic educational institution of Cairo, Egypt, dating back to the 10th century. It has been influential as a training school at all levels for students from all parts of the Muslim World.

<sup>11</sup>In 1976, a survey among North American Muslims by this author revealed a high rate of interest in this form of pitched-sound art among immigrants as well as the American born converts. *Qirā'ah* was the most prevalent aesthetic activity among adults from all ethnic

and regional backgrounds, and the activity most frequently named as one which the respondent wished to learn to perform. The survey was sponsored by the Association of Muslim Social Scientists.

<sup>12</sup>This statement is also found and expounded in the defense of *samāʿ* written by Majd al Dīn al Ghazālī, the brother of the famous Abū Ḥāmid al Ghazālī (Robson 1938:72-74). It is thought to have originated with al Junayd (d. 910).

<sup>13</sup>Hamilton 1975:361; al Shāfiʿī 1906:VI, 214-215; Roychoudhury 1957:78-79, provide evidence of this fact of history.

<sup>14</sup>See Slobin 1976:29-53; Sakata 1976; Nettl 1975:75 for information on contemporary reluctance of musicians in Muslim environments to be classified as professionals.

<sup>15</sup>See a definition and explanation of this term in *Al Hidāyah* ("The Guide"), an important compilation of Islāmic law (Ḥanafī *madhhab*), which was produced in the 12th century by ʿAlī Ibn Abū Bakr al Marghinānī and translated to English by Charles Hamilton in the 18th century (Hamilton 1975:175-176).

<sup>16</sup>*Taʿzīr* is occasioned, according to Islāmic law, in any offense for which *ḥadd* (or "stated punishment") has not been designated. It is meant to provide a correction of a minor problem rather than a punishment. It may therefore involve only a reprimand in some instances and for some individuals. It can be instituted by a judge (*qāḍī*) or by any individual in the society, whereas actual punishment can only be inflicted by a *qāḍī* (*Al Hidāyah* in Hamilton 1975:203).

<sup>17</sup>Evidence from Ḥanafī law for this can be found in *Al Hidāyah* (Hamilton 1975:361-362); marginal notes of *Al Fatawā al Hindīyah* (c. 1892:V, 269); Ibn ʿAbidīn (1882:IV, 530); ʿAlā al Dīn Afāndī (1966:VII, 106). For Shāfiʿī law, see al Shāfiʿī (1906:VI, 214-215); al Nawawī (1884:III, 400). For Mālikī law, see Mālik ibn Anas (1905:V, 153). For Ḥanbalī law, see Ibn al Qayyim al Jawziyyah (1972:245-246). Ibn al Qayyim (1292-1350) was a disciple of Ibn Taymiyyah, the noted Ḥanbalī reformer from whom the Wahhābī movement in the 18th century Arabian Peninsula drew inspiration.

<sup>18</sup>"If he does not collect or bring others to listen to them [the slave girl or boy who is trained to sing] I would wish that he didn't do it, but his testimony cannot thereby be repudiated ... Also the man who visits the houses of singing or is visited by the singers — if this is a chronic habit of his, and if he proclaims it and if the society knows and testifies that he is of that kind, then it is tantamount to lowliness (*safah*) which vitiates his testimony. But if he does this infrequently, then his testimony cannot be rejected because it is not a clearly prohibited thing (*ḥarām bayyin*)" (al Shāfiʿī 1906:VI, 215).

<sup>19</sup>See also al Ghazālī 1901:208-209, where a similar statement is recorded.

<sup>20</sup>Say: Who hath forbidden

The beautiful (gifts) of God,  
Which He hath produced  
For His servants,  
And the things, clean and pure,  
(Which He hath provided)  
For sustenance?

Say: They are, in the life  
Of this world, for those  
Who believe, (and) purely  
For them on the Day  
of Judgment. Thus do We  
Explain the Signs in detail

For those who understand.

Say: The things that my Lord  
Hath indeed forbidden are:  
Shameful deeds, whether open  
Or secret: sins and trespasses  
Against truth or reason; assigning  
Of partners of God, for which  
He hath given no authority;  
And saying things about God  
Of which ye have no knowledge.

(Qurʾān 7:32-33)

Dr. ʿAlāʾuddīn Kharrūfah (*Qāḍī* of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*), Mark Slobin and Ismaʿīl R. al Fārūqī have read early drafts of this paper and contributed to its improvement. I am sincerely grateful to them for their helpful suggestions and ideas. They are in no way responsible for any shortcomings that the present article may have.

The sources consulted for this paper are designated below as representing the four *madhāhib* of their authors. Unfortunately, the Jaʿfari *madhāhib* of the Shīʿah was not investigated for this study. It is hoped that a review of its writings on music can be made in the future. Dates in the following list apply to publication dates of references used rather than to an author's life or productive period.

#### HANAFI MADHHAB

ʿAlāʾ al Dīn Afandī (1966)  
 Al Fatawā al Hindīyah (1892)  
 al Ghazālī (n.d.: 1901-2)  
 Ibn ʿAbidīn (1882)  
 al Marghinānī in Hamilton (1975)

#### SHĀFIʿI MADHHAB

Al Nawawī (1884) and in  
 Robson (1938)  
 al Shāfiʿī (1906)  
 Shaltūt (1960)

#### MĀLIKĪ MADHHAB

Mālik ibn Anas (1905; 1971)  
 al Qayrawānī in Russell (1906)

#### HANBALI MADHHAB

Ibn al Qayyim al Jawziyyah  
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## IBN TAYMIYYAH AND THE CRUSADES: AN INQUIRY

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Upon preliminary research, it becomes apparent that the involvement of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1325 A.D.) with the Crusades was indirect. For, while he was a contemporary of the Eighth Crusade (on Tunisia), his career at that time was largely in jurisprudence. Geographically, too, he was at that time a resident of Damascus and of Cairo, and thus was remotely interested in the actual military activity against the Crusaders.

That being the case, it is understandable that a conclusion such as that of Emmanuel Sivan could be reached, namely, "*Les grands recueils du XIVe siècle (celles d'Ibn Taymiyyah et d'al Subkī) ne contiennent pas de fatāwā ayant trait aux guerres contre les Croisades.*" Literally, it is true that Ibn Taymiyyah's *fatāwā* contain no pronouncements which authorize war against the Crusaders, for the very reasons of distance of time from the major Crusades, and space from the contemporary minor one. But, it could not be inferred, however, that Ibn Taymiyyah's thought was entirely unconcerned with the causes or the effects of the Crusades. In what way, then, was Ibn Taymiyyah to be related to the Crusades? My thesis is that he participated to a noticeable extent in an Islāmic ideological reaction to the Crusades, which came to be called by the historiographers of the era as "Counter-Crusade."

The historian has aptly given us a perspective of the impact of the Crusades on Islām and of the veritable Islāmic reaction. We recognize from that perspective that by the time of Taqiyy al Dīn Ibn Taymiyyah, the Ḥanbalī jurisconsult of the 13th-14th Century, the Crusades had passed their peak, much of their damage had been extensively wrought as well as impressively countered, and that Islām had arrived at a point where its thinkers could reflect meaningfully, in ideological terms, on

what stance should be considered appropriate for the development of a world-view which could maintain the principles of its counter-crusade attitude, but more positively, a stance expressive of Islāmic ideological durability. Such an ideological durability is often inseparable from, if not indeed the direct result of, a military power for which, admittedly, Islām did not always show its preparedness in the face of the Crusades; nevertheless, in spite of the inconstancy of military preparedness, and with the assistance of the reigning Mamlūks of Egypt, Islām not only proved unconquerable but showed a decided capability in countering both the military and ideological attacks of the Crusading West. It is in this latter context that the thought of Ibn Taymiyyah may be related. In order to do this with any semblance of adequacy, however, a cursory historical review may be pertinent.

Taqiyy al Dīn Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyyah was primarily a jurist, although he played an active role in the military defense against the Tatar invasion of Syria. He was not directly involved militarily in the Crusades, having just missed the excitement of the Sixth Crusade against Mesopotamia which was vanquished by the Mamlūk Baybars. Yet he was a historical contemporary, though geographically removed, of the seventh and eighth Crusades of Louis IX.

In spite of the *geographical* indirectness of the relation between Ibn Taymiyyah and the Crusades, it is important to note two historical facts which may be considered significant: one, the impact of and the reaction against the preceding Crusades were already present in Ibn Taymiyyah's formative processes; and, two, the Mongols' (or Tatars') devastation was an existential reality for Ibn Taymiyyah, a reality which may not be overlooked as unrelated to the Crusades.

The Crusades, the historians tell us, had begun in the middle of the eleventh century; and it is said by some that the historical occasion for their coming to the East was in response to a summoning by the Shi'ī Fātimīs of Egypt who had feared a potential invasion by the already mighty Saljūq Empire, which had taken over Syria and was moving west toward Egypt. A century and a half later, the Barbarians of the East, under the fearless leadership of Hulagu, moved in on Syria, causing unprecedented destruction and immeasurable bloodshed. It was no accident that it was also the Shī'ah of Syria, as well as the Christians, who had been spared the terrors of the Crusaders, that facilitated the entrance of the Tatar into Mesopotamia.

Ibn Taymiyyah's theory of *Jihād*, or "Holy War," is clearly a reaction against both those who reject the preaching of Islām, and those who cause its internal division. For him, the entire goal of *Jihād* is that "genuine and whole religion be God's religion, that is Islām; and that the Word of God be uppermost."

« أن يكون الدين كله لله وأن تكون كلمة الله هي العليا »

Whosoever was to interfere with the accomplishment of this objective was to be fought, according to the consensus of Islām.

Ibn Taymiyyah sought to mobilize the then divided and frightened Muslims into the recognition that the Holy War was indeed a divine imperative for them. Furthermore, he asserted, its virtues were more than could be enumerated. Therefore, it was by consensus, he said, the highest "voluntary obligation" for the Muslim. By the testimony of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, he said, it was more worthy than the pilgrimage and than prayer, and more honorable than fasting.

Who was to be the object of the Jihād? According to Ibn Taymiyyah, he whose evil ravages the land. « *المفسد في الارض* », i.e., the ungodly « *الكافر* », the enemy of God and His Prophet. He who has heard the preaching of the Prophet, and the call to the religion of Allah who had sent him, but responded not was to be fought "in order that there may be no disunity, and that religion be wholly God's." The implication of this theory of Holy War arose with Ibn Taymiyyah out of a concrete theology of unity that shows itself in his conception of the Islāmic Community.

Against the background of Islāmic fragmentation, Ibn Taymiyyah called for a Community, or an *ummah* whose principal characteristic is solidarity. No doubt he was aware of the achievements of Nūr Al Dīn and Ṣalāḥ al Dīn, who capitalized entirely on an idea of unity without which the earlier Crusades could not have been successfully encountered. Here, building not only on the examples of history, but more importantly and fundamentally on Qur'ānic directives, Ibn Taymiyyah summoned the Muslims to stand up together in the firmness of their faith against their enemies.

The Muslim Community (*al ummah al Islāmiyyah*, or *jamā'at al Islām*) is defined in terms of an all-inclusive commonwealth, so to speak, which is held together by its faith in God and conformity to the words and the example of his Prophet Muḥammad. Though, ideally, this Community is one, in actuality it had become subject to division due to regional particularisms and to the non-Arab factions of Islām as represented by *al shu'ūbiyyah* as early as the third century after the Hijrah. By the time of Ibn Taymiyyah, not only was the Muslim Commonwealth divided into a multitude of independent Islāmic states, but also internal religious and racial conflict was abundantly evident in the Syro-Egyptian alliance, except insofar as the advent of the Crusades and the invasions of the Tatar had necessitated a unity of forces against common dangers. This need for such union, discipline, and mutual understanding served to accentuate the originality of Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of the Muslim Community.

One important element in understanding Ibn Taymiyyah's concept of

the Community is the meaning of solidarity (*ta'āwun*) of the Muslims. He exposed a prevalent form of "solidarity" that was inconsistent with the Islāmic idea: namely, a partisan kind of "solidarity of action" which, in the name of promoting a united front, served to underscore multiplicity over against unity, and to advance the part over the whole. Ibn Taymiyyah's chief criticism of that sort of solidarity which was advanced either for ethnic or for ritual reasons, was precisely that it tended to militate against the greater unity of Islām; indeed it impeded the exercise of good social and political life. He pointed to the debilitating influences of such a notion upon the functions of the state; the partiality with which governors and agents were appointed by the Sultān, the injustice with which the wealth of the communities was distributed, the complacency with which interceded requests (*shafā'āt*) were granted by those in authority to win the favor of their political, ethnic, or sectarian constituents. Ibn Taymiyyah likened the rigidity of doctrinal particularism to the exclusivism of the Rawāfiq who placed an excessive importance (*ghuluww*) on one component of a totality, and who put within the Community an element of dissension that was capable of handicapping the expansive force of Islām. Such was the "solidarity" exhibited by tribal groups who, when they were Islāmized, continued to show dogmatic arrogance, notably through their esoteric views, and often placed themselves above the law of the state.

Ibn Taymiyyah, on the other hand, explained *ta'āwun* on the contrary in terms of the solidarity that binds together all Muslim believers from Muḥammad to the Final Judgment, in a spirit of unity and brotherhood, in the same ideal and for the same ends. It is by this solidarity that the Community formed is, therefore, a grand entity, where each part is strengthened by the whole, where each generation, in the continuous tradition of strict narrow morality, owes a debt of regard to that which preceded it, and has an obligation of trust to transmit to that which follows; and where each group, ethnic or racial, is legitimately tolerated for what it contributes to the total entity.

Thus the concept of solidarity appears to have two distinct forms in Ibn Taymiyyah's thought, although he himself does not designate them by two special terms. It is constituted by the recognition of the one God, the same Prophet, and an adherence to a common body of doctrine. Such a solidarity he calls a solidarity "of righteousness and of piety" (*birr* and *taqwā*). For Ibn Taymiyyah, one of the worthy principles of the (early) Muslim Community (*Ahl al Sunnah wa al Jamā'ah*) lies in the unity of their doctrine, which principle he puts forward in his refutation of the contradictions of the philosophers, logicians, and scientific positivists. Even the problematic of the existence of four major schools of *fiqh* interpretation is explained as possessing a basic,

underlying unity as did the interpretations of the Companions who were themselves divided on certain points of doctrine. The actual divergences of the *madhāhib*, to which Ibn Taymiyyah devoted an entire treatise under the title *Ikhtilāf al Ummah fi al 'Ibādāt* is explained by the fragmentary knowledge of the texts on the part of the *ulamā*, by their tendency to attach excessive importance to certain elements (ghulūww), and, in a more general way, by their errors in *ijtihād*, which in themselves are not reprehensible except as they become, and they do become, imposed upon the community as truths. Moreover, these errors are less weighty, at least theoretically, if one is to succeed in rediscovering for oneself the verse or the hadīth which would correct the error. Ibn Taymiyyah further contends that such errors are not ultimately of great significance since the interpretations never concern themselves with the requirements and prohibitions (*wājibāt* and *makrūhāt*) of religion, nor are they uniquely such prescriptions that may be recommended alone. And it is for these very reasons that Ibn Taymiyyah urges mutual sympathy and reciprocal tolerance among the followers of the *madhāhib* for the sake of the great unity which ought not to be compromised.

In this regard, Ibn Taymiyyah's conclusion is the same: the very existence of the Islāmic Community depends on a kind of solidarity that is larger than the solidarity of its segments against one another. He reminds all Muslims of the Qur'ānic exhortation, "Hold ye all to the bond of God and be not divided," « *واعتصموا بحبل الله جميعا ولا تفرقوا* » and places before them the Prophet's model for the unity of *Ummah*: "The believers' mutual friendship, kindness, and caring is like unto that of the members of one body, wherein if one complained, the others suffer with fever, and rush in with attentive watching." The Prophet's commandment is therewith reiterated, "Do not separate yourselves (from one another); do not conspire (against one another); do not harbor mutual hatred; do not nurture mutual envy (or jealousy); (but) be God's servants and (one another's) brothers, as God has commanded you." Ibn Taymiyyah's notion of "solidarity," however, goes beyond a geographic, ethnic, doctrinal or linguistic solidarity. For him, it is an organic unity that supposes a common goal (*maqṣūd*), and the participation of every member of the community in the realization and fulfillment of that goal, within his limitations and without the distinction external responsibility. It is that goal of this Community which will distinguish it as the greatest of all communities and nations, for it is a community of justice which commands the good and denounces evil (*al amr bi al ma'rūf wa al nahy 'an al munkar*). It is the duty of each member of the community, as an expression of this solidarity, to uphold his fellow when he does good, and, insofar as he

has the influence, to correct him when he violates the law of the Community through verbal admonition and, in the event that he is not able, through the firm intentions of his heart. Each member of the Community is held responsible, as he sees the need, to offer good counsel (*naṣīḥah*), fraternal corrective direction (*wa'z*), and an invitation to the right (*da'wah*). This latter duty, namely the mission of every Muslim in which is seen by Ibn Taymiyyah the element of "prophetic calling" (*nubuwwah*), is of utter necessity to the life of the Community, if it is to achieve cohesion. This moral solidarity which is required of the faithful is the element capable of making this Community God's witnesses on earth (*shuhadā' Allah fī al arḍ*). This for Ibn Taymiyyah, is the meaning of the Prophet's analogy of the "one body" wherein each member shows care for the other. It is the same idea inherent also in the analogy of an edifice, wherein the elements reinforce one another, and all adhere together by the Prophet, as the fingers are connected to and through the hand. Mutual expectations of Muslims are listed, not by way of enumeration, but for the demonstration of inclusiveness, in the Prophet's saying, "Five obligations are owed by the Muslims to his fellow Muslim: To greet him if he meets him, to visit him if he falls ill, to wish him victorious joy over his enemies if he sneezes, to answer him if he calls, and to escort him (to his final resting place) when he dies." Again and again, the Prophet is quoted as supporting the seriousness of this point. He said, "By Him in whose hand is my soul, no one of you is a believer until he desires for his fellow what he desires for himself," and he said, "The Muslim is the brother of the Muslim: he shall neither abandon him nor oppress him." This bond commands mutual service and mutual support. The exhortation is repeated,

« وإعتصموا بحبل الله جميعا ولا تفرقوا »

and the Prophet declares his innocence of those who are divisive in the Community of faith, thus excluding themselves from it,

« إن الذين فرقوا دينهم وكانوا شيعا لست منهم في شيء . إنما أمرهم إلى الله . »

The entire doctrine of the *ummah*, or the Community, therefore, is set within the context of moral solidarity which is to be in clear contradistinction from the division which existed in the face of the Crusaders and Tatars. This moral solidarity is founded on the unity of God's purpose to advance the good and to refrain from evil. When some men depart from any portion of God's commandment, division and hostility set in among them, Ibn Taymiyyah says. And when men are divided, they become corrupt and perish; but if they band together for a common end, they are reconciled and prosper. In solidarity there is salvation (*rahmah*), in division destruction (*adhāb*).

To do good and to refrain from doing evil, to exhort others to do

good and to admonish them against doing evil, is the task before which all members of the Community of faith and justice stand equally responsible and are mutually accountable. Before this divinely-assigned task, all distinctions are rendered of little consequence.

This definition of the Muslim Community is but one example of Ibn Taymiyyah's ideological reaction to the effects of the two terrors from the East and from the West. Time would not allow a detailed treatment of all his other ideas that appear to be elaborated in either direct or indirect opposition to the values and doctrines of the foreign invaders, especially those which are perhaps easier to identify — such as the construction of his doctrine regarding the visitation of the graves of saints, or the other customs and rituals of the Crusaders.

Suffice it to say that Ibn Taymiyyah's theological principle of unity, as applied to God as well as to doctrine and to the Islāmic Community, was uncompromising, and it must have been the chief influence in his resistance against the infiltration of un-Islāmic elements into the fabric of ideals of his Community, and in his insistence that if such foreign ideas prevail, nothing less than the sword may be acceptable in defending the unity of community and its doctrine.

## ON AL MĀTURĪDĪ'S NOTION OF HUMAN ACTS

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This paper is for me a new venture. I ordinarily eschew, if not abhor, comparative papers, particularly in Islāmics. This conservation is not based on any feeling that the comparative approach is illegitimate, but solely on the feeling that in Islāmics it is basically premature. What is really needed in Islāmics is intelligible translation from the Arabic sources and intelligent commentary thereon. Yet, at a meeting of the American Academy of Religion, I cast this feeling at least partially aside. As some of you know I have been at work for the last three years on a translation of and commentary of the *Kitāb al Tawhīd* of Abū Maṣū'ir al Māturīdī, died 944 C.E., his major work in speculative theology. Almost from the start, I have been struck by interesting parallels between his concerns and approach and that of Thomas Aquinas as seen in his major and minor writings. I propose to set forth in reportorial fashion, al Māturīdī's doctrine on human acts and then, at the paper's close, to suggest points of Thomistic teaching that may offer ancillary reading, for they seem, on the face of it, to emanate from a similar concern and approach.

Why "human acts"? I have chosen this area because it is on this question that Māturīdī's thought is most clearly marked off from presentations of the Mu'tazilah and of al Ash'arī and his school. The same, too, may be said for the Thomistic analysis of human acts which marks it off emphatically from that of the Franciscan and Jesuit schools of thought on the same issue. It must be noted, of course, that in adducing this or any comparison there is no suggestion of either causal connection or even occasionalism. It is rather a suggestive approach by which one tradition may illumine another, though each retains its own peculiar perspective.



Al Māturīdī's discussion of human acts covers one fourth of the text of the *Kitāb al Tawhīd* as we have it. This sheer bulk indicates the importance that this topic has for him. It will be useful for our purposes to present in outline form the principal points that constitute his doctrine and to comment briefly on each of them. The end of this exercise will present us with a reasonable clear general view of the thrust of al Māturīdī's position.

There are two principles which govern the entirety of Māturīdī's doctrine on the question of human acts. Both are Qur'ānic, the first directly so, the second inferentially.

First, God is the Creator of every thing (*khāliq kulli shay'in*). Insofar as any action (*al 'amal*) exists it is a thing (*shay'*), for that is the basic meaning of 'thing', which, al Māturīdī remarks, is why the term may be applied even to kind, though not, of course, in the sense of created entity. Thus it follows that, insofar as an act is, it is God's creation. To express this created nature of action al Māturīdī uses the term *kasb*, acquisition. He does not invoke this concept to "prove" anything, nor is it a species of theological obscurantism. It is rather a descriptive term used by him to delineate the created nature of the human act to speak of its relation to its Maker, not to its doer. Thus he concludes that any human act must fall under the creative power of God, precisely insofar as it is an action.

It is the second general principle, clearly inferable from the Qur'ānic text that presents the human intellect with difficulty in the reconciliation of it with the first principle of God's universal causality. I refer to al Māturīdī's contention that the freedom of the individual human act is something known *min nafsihī*, from one's own consciousness. It neither has nor needs a proof. It is simply the case. It is the tenacity with which he holds to this principle that leads him to reject any form of determinism and to affirm the reality of human acts (*ithbāt al a'māl*) and to condemn the notion that they are man's actions only metaphorically (*alā majāz*). This second principle, too, illumines the real intent of the concept of 'acquisition' and indicates that the Mu'tazilī and later criticism of the notion of *iktisāb*, "acquiring action" as a sort of cryptodeterminism, falls far short of an accurate presentation of their opponents' thoughts on this issue.

To the casual reader, the problem would seem to be, then, one of how can the human act be free if God creates it. This statement of the problem, though, is to read Islāmic theology with Greek eyes. The problem for al Māturīdī is not this. Indeed, for him, the act could not *be*, let alone be *free*, unless God had created it and created it so. Rather, the problem as he views it, is the examination of the existential dynamics of the human act, to use modern terminology. To understand his approach here, we must now briefly examine his thinking on four less general

points, namely, his analysis of 'power' (*al qudrah* or *al Istiṭā'ah*); his thought on the efficacy of the power to act to accomplish opposite actions; the question of responsibility for the impossible (*taklīf mā lā yutāq*), and finally his reflections on willing.

Al Māturīdī distinguishes two types of power or capacity. One is the integrity of means to act and the soundness of the instruments. This power must exist antecedently to any action. In short, the agent must possess aptness for action in his mental and physical makeup, and this aptness must be present before any act can take place. Indeed, 'aptness for action' would be a good translation for *al qudrah* in this context.

The second type of power is quite different. It is an accident (*ma'nān*) which exists specifically for the act and comes to be, then, simultaneously with it, and it is constitutive of the act of free choice (*fi'l al ikhtiyār*) to which alone can reward and punishment be attached and by means of which the action to be done is made light and easy for the agent.

While one may perhaps say that *al qudrah* in the first sense is somewhat comparable to the Aristotelian notion of *dynamics*, in the second sense it cannot be so interpreted. In another sense, it is more akin to the Aristotelian concept of *entelécheia*, the specifying perfection of a being; in this case, the production of the free act. Al Māturīdī's thought here becomes clearer if one reflects on his idea of 'willing', *al irādah*. For al Māturīdī, willing constitutes the elimination of force and constraint (*daf' al ghalabah wa al sahw*). This for him is its essential definition, and one should note its negative force. There are, of course, other senses, wishing, commanding, summoning, satisfaction, though, he is careful to say, God may not be described by all of these terms. The important thing to note is that in al Māturīdī's system willing is not a correlate of acting. It is rather closer to intellectual choice than external act. Hence, to his mind, the effective act requires the reception of a power given to man by which the act itself is created. Man's freedom lies, then, in his willing, as al Māturīdī understands it, and the reception of power in his second sense is what makes willing possible and differentiates it from the ineffectual wish.

It is, then, within this context that the last two of our sub-points should be considered. Al Māturīdī shares with Abū Ḥanīfah and his school the idea that the power to act is equally valid for either obedience or disobedience. That is, the reception of the power to act is in accord with one's choice and is not itself determinative of what is to be done, since, if it were valid for only one aspect, one would be acting necessarily, not by free choice. It is noteworthy that on this point regarding power as the actualizer of the act, al Māturīdī is in agreement with the Mu'tazilah, his normal opponents.

The idea of responsibility for the impossible is more difficult to

express, for it is mainly a creation of polemics. It is essentially the Mu'tazilah charge against their opponents that these opponents make a human being responsible for what he cannot do because of their view that only if the capacity to act is not present anterior to the act, i.e., in both senses, would man be capable of performing the act. Leaving aside the dialectical gyrations by which al Māturīdī turns the charge against them, the important fact for this review is that man is capable, by reason of his received power, of performing what he has been commanded, though he may decide not to do so.

From this cursory examination of al Māturīdī's evidence, it is possible then to give his definition of the human act by derivation from the points that have been made. A human act is an entity created by God for the individual which is brought to fruition by God's creation of antecedent and contemporaneous powers which guarantee the effective actualization of the human decision. Since this actualization effects what the human agent wishes to do, the action is then truly the agent's, truly free, and so the agent is truly responsible for his actions.

It must, of course, be noted that the logic of this line of thought still contains grave philosophical problems. For example, how can one escape positing an infinite series of created powers for the production of any one single act? There are other difficulties, too, but it is not the purpose of this paper to treat of such problems.

It should be noted that al Māturīdī's view is to be seen as the attempt on his part to reconcile the twin concepts of the uniqueness of God's creative power with the reality of human agency.

I would now direct your attention to aspects of Thomistic thought on human actions that could be fruitfully studied alongside al Māturīdī's approach. I have specific reference to Thomistic teaching on sufficient and efficacious grace in their relationship to the production of the human act. There seems to me to be an interesting functional comparison possible between these entities and the functions of the two capacities of which al Māturīdī speaks. Of course, I am well aware that one must also note the significant differences, but, in spite of these, it seems legitimate to point out similarities of concerns and solutions.

That Aquinas had some acquaintance with Islāmic philosophy, is well known. The degree of his possible knowledge of Islāmic theology has not, to my knowledge, been systematically studied, but it seems to me highly unlikely that he was ignorant of it, though, as the *Contra Gentiles* shows, this view may well have been colored.

It seems to me, then, that the two approaches of al Māturīdī and Thomas Aquinas on human actions in relationship to divine causality, would well bear careful comparative reading, not, as I have said, to prove the derivation of one from the other, but to see how two minds in two differing traditions have grappled with the paradox of an omnipotent God and a free man.

## WHAT IS "ISLĀMIC" IN ISLĀMIC LITERATURE?

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The problem with which this paper is concerned is the definition of the term "Islāmic" when applied to literature. It is at the same time the problem of unity of the literatures of the Muslim peoples across the ages and continents. For various motives, scholars have debated whether such a thing as "Islāmic literature" exists; and their debates undermined the unity of the literatures of the Muslim peoples in many minds. The fact, however, remained that literature is an integral constituent of Islāmic civilization, inseparable from the religion of Islām which is at its base and inspiration. In the introduction to his *Anthology of Islamic Literature*, James Kritzeck wrote:

*"A tremendous number of forms and styles are comprehended under so general a rubric as "Islamic Literature." At the same time, there is not only ample justification for, but a decided advantage in, approaching this immense body of literature as Islamic."*

"Islāmic" here should not be understood as referring to nationality; nor to a set of specific characteristics of a literary movement or genre. Nor does it refer to the literature composed in any single language. Islāmic literature contains a wide variety of all of these. From the pious Abū al 'Atāhiyah of 'Irāq (d. 827) or the skeptic Abū al 'Alā' al Ma'arri of Syria (d. 1057) to their widely different contemporaries such as the dissolute Abū Nuwās and the mystic al Ḥallāj, a great number of poets and men of letters prospered and produced their excellent writings under the aegis of Islām. Surely, there was plenty of diversity. Islāmic

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<sup>1</sup>A paper to be presented at the Regional Meeting of the American Academy of Religion, Drexel University, Philadelphia, May 6-7, 1978.

literature can hardly be represented by any fixed number of authors or works, no matter how great that number may be. And yet, in spite of this heterogeneity of works and ideas, of authors and languages, this literature presents us with unmistakable unity. This unity is the theme of this session, and the concern of this paper.

### I. Unity in Language

The compilation of the *Shanameh*,<sup>2</sup> a fiercely patriotic epic in Persian written by the Persian poet Firdawsī in 1010, marks a major change in the attitude of Muslim Persia. In this work, Firdawsī tried to revive and preserve the Persian native tongue. He deliberately avoided the use of Arabic vocabulary which had flooded the Persian language, and substituted Persian words for them whenever possible. With such an attitude, Firdawsī turned, or at least helped to turn, the balance away from an Arabic language dominance over Persian. During the three centuries of dominance which had preceded him, Arabic, in addition to flooding Persian with its vocabulary, had altered that language as a medium for all literary expression. Arabic became linked with all Qur'ānic studies, and hence, with "religiosity." Al Tha'ālibī, the great grammarian (d. 1039), said that "whoever loves God ... loves His Prophet Muḥammad ... And whoever loves Muḥammad ... loves the Arabs ... and whoever loves the Arabs loves Arabic."<sup>3</sup> This connection between Arabic and "Islāmicity" made by a non-Arab was and remained to a large extent a typical view held by those who tried to defend their use of Arabic against attack from any source.

The opponents of al Tha'ālibī may have contended that although it is legitimate and desirable for the non-Arabs to worship in Arabic, it should be equally legitimate for them to express themselves literarily in the vernacular tongue. Even if they did not know any Arabic at all, it was still illegitimate to question their Islāmicity or religiosity on the ground that they were unable to express themselves in Arabic alone. This view was unacceptable by the proponents of Arabic, because, they argued, mastery of the language of worship is at the same time the understanding of Islāmic ethics and culture. Without it, the Muslim can hardly be religious, or Islāmically successful. He can hardly participate constructively in the thought, culture and civilization of Islām.

Another view which was expressed around the same time may be more practical here. Al Bīrūnī (d. 1048), for instance, a distinguished Persian scholar and a contemporary of al Tha'ālibī who must have

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<sup>2</sup> *Anthology of Islamic Literature*, ed. James Kritzeck, New York: Holt and Rinehart, 1964, p. 4.

<sup>3</sup> *Shanameh*, begun by Dāgigi but always attributed to Firdawsī, who completed the text.

witnessed the birth of the *Shahnameh*, spoke of the capacity of Arabic to carry out translations of science from all over the world. Those translations, he said, “have been embellished, instituting themselves into our hearts. And beauties of this language have circulated with them in our arteries and in our veins.” Al Bīrūnī went further to affirm an absolutely favorable and prior status to Arabic when he said:

*“... If I compare Arabic and Persian, two languages with which I am familiar and in which I am exercised, I confess to preferring to be insulted in Arabic to being praised in Persian. And you will recognize the justice of my remark by examining what becomes of a scientific book once it is translated into Persian. It loses all éclat, its meaning is eclipsed, its features are obscured, its utility effaced.”<sup>4</sup>*

Here al Bīrūnī was talking about “capabilities,” “features” and “beauties” of the Arabic language rather than its religious significance. He was certainly different in this approach from al Tha’alibī, Arabic, according to him, and regardless of its connection with the Qur’ān, with the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS) and with Allah (SWT), is the “ideal” language in which a Muslim should hope and aspire to express himself. It follows from such an assumption that, through the *Shahnameh*, Persia not only succumbed to its local tongue, but to its ethnocentrism and parochialism — its *shu’ūbiyyah*. However, even if Turkish, Urdu, Malay, Bengali, Punjabi, Swahili and many other languages became media of literary expression for Muslims in various parts of the world, it remains true that the Arabic language is the prime unifier in the multiplicity of the world’s Muslims.

## II. Unity in Theme

“Unity” may be sought on another level of the literature of Muslims around the world, namely, in literary content or theme. Such unity may be difficult to find. Hardly any single literary theme, whether secular or religious, dominates the whole span of Muslim World Literature. Throughout history, Muslim writers engaged themselves in practically all subject matter. Nor can it be claimed that the Muslim writers were always committed to morals and the teachings of Islām. For instance, the Qur’ānic verses on poets<sup>5</sup> were understood by Muslim critics as commending all poets “who have faith in God and perform the good works” (Qur’ān 26:227). It condemned only those who “did otherwise than they professed” and prostituted their talents for their patrons’

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<sup>4</sup>Quoted from W. Bishai’s *Humanities in the Arabic Islamic World*, Dubuque, Iowa: WCB, 1973, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 66-76.

favor (26:224-26). This was interpreted as granting them permission to write what they wanted so long as they fulfilled the condition of being of those “who have faith in God and do the good works.”

In an earlier attempt to find “unity” in contemporary Arabic literature, it was possible to identify a number of common themes.

1) *Isrā’* and *Mīrāj*, the journey and ascension of the Prophet Muḥammad (ṢAAS), his birthday, Ramaḍān (the month of fasting and moral stocktaking), and the Hijrah are all themes which bring a certain amount of “occasional” thematic unity. Men of letters in various countries respond enthusiastically to these occasions, and elaborate the conventional and common ideas which reflect common appreciation.

2) Muḥammad’s life (the *sīrah*) and his message (the *sunnah*) are often interpreted in both poetical and narrative literature. Here the person of Muḥammad (ṢAAS) was — and still is — the archetype overarching the whole range of the Muslim’s life and thought. His is the “ideal” image to be followed by the contemporary rebel, the conservative reactionary, the man-of-the-world and the mystic, all at once.

3) Because the Muslim World has generally been in a state of revolution, most poetical, narrative and theatrical writings have projected the ideal as the “rebel” fighting wrong-doing and injustice. Nonetheless, the image is ubiquitously that of a hero who is fully aware of his creaturely limits vis-à-vis the transcendent ultimate reality of God. Al Sayyāb, for instance, pushes his rebellious hero to question God with the words:

*“Do you hear  
And hearing do you answer  
... O hunter of men ... torturer!”*<sup>6</sup>

Immediately after this, the poet withdraws to a position of humble repentance before God with the following verses:

*“I want to sleep in your holy shrine  
Beneath a blanket of sin and error  
I want to behold you ... Yet who may see you?  
I run to your great threshold.”*

Likewise, in *Ṭabliyah Min al Samā’*, (“A Banquet from Heaven”) by Yūsuf Idrīs,<sup>7</sup> Shaykh ‘Alī, the main character, demands satisfaction *here* and *now*, instead of the promised honey and milk rivers of Paradise. He threatens to commit blasphemy unless God causes a fully

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<sup>6</sup>Qur’ān 26:224-27.

<sup>7</sup>Story was analyzed in my doctoral dissertation presented to Temple University, Department of Religion, Philadelphia, 1976, under the chapter entitled “Image of the Contemporary Existentialists.”

laden table to descend upon him from heaven. In the play, he shakes his stick at heaven and says: "I will say it ... unless you send me right now a banquet like that which You sent down to Jesus and Mary." But he never fulfills his threat. And the spectator (or reader) is left with the impression that Shaykh 'Alī had second thoughts about carrying out his threat.

We may therefore conclude that:

- 1) All Muslim writers are consistently conscious of the distinction of heaven from earth, of the Creator from the created, and were always prone to avoiding to transcend the limits imposed by those distinctions.
- 2) They tend more to "societism" than to "individualism"; to world-and life-affirmation rather than to denial; to rationalism rather than to dogmatism.
- 3) They either stretch the concept of the "religious" to include the "secular" or justify the "secular" by basing it upon the "religious," thus rejecting any ultimate separation of the two.
- 4) Finally, they prefer *jihād* and militancy to escape in mysticism, despair in cynicism, or Promethan self-apotheosis in tragedy and death.

With all these features, one can justifiably say that there is certainly an "Islāmic awareness" on the thematic level of Muslim World literature. Alone, however, thematic and ideological unity may not fully support the quest for unity. More is needed; but this is not wanting.

### III. Unity in Aesthetic Philosophy

After all, the quality which on one hand distinguishes literature from all other verbal expressions and, on the other, links it with other expressions of artistic nature, is its aesthetic philosophy. Every work of literature embodies the aesthetic principles of the culture. There is hardly a philosophy of life or religion that has not determined the aesthetic stance of its adherents. Theories of ultimate reality, of the origin and purpose of life, of human destiny and meaning, affect the sense of beauty in deep ways. Aesthetics is integral to religion and is inseparable from it. It is here that the unity of Islāmic literature ultimately rests.

Islāmic aesthetics, whether it is applied in literature, or in the visual arts, or in the arts of sound, consists of the following principles:

- 1) The work of art consists of units which are autonomous, complete in themselves, and stylized to perfection. Beholding them through the senses is always a pleasurable experience.
- 2) These units consist of one or more structures; but they are always repeated — in most cases symmetrically — to form a pattern.
- 3) The order of repetition of the units in a pattern is never developmental so that its beginning is never known, and its ending is never expected or reached.



4) A pattern is a field of vision or perception, arbitrarily delineated for the purpose of presentation. The boundaries of the material object of art are never those of the aesthetic work of art; for the latter extend indefinitely beyond the former.

5) Perceiving any Islāmic work of art in any of the fine arts is to move through the pattern. Such movement generates a momentum which is as great or as small as the work of art is aesthetically. This momentum is an aesthetic élan which propels the imagination to soar beyond the material work of art in search of a continuation which non-development has made infinite, and hence impossible to attain.

6) The realization of this impossibility is the realization of beauty; indeed, of the sublime, the most beautiful, which is demanded by consciousness, almost-perceived but never reached by the imagination.

In the visual areas, the aesthetic work of art in Islām is called "arabesque." It is in the visual world that the term has become popular. Very little use has been made of the word in the art of sound, though some musical pieces have been called, or described as, "arabesques" because of their fulfillment of the foregoing six principles. Such pieces in the Muslim musical tradition are known as *taqāsīm* or "divisions," a name which betrays the unit-construction of the aesthetic pattern. The term has never been used in the literary art, though it describes its nature perfectly.

Whether we look into pre-Islāmic poetry, the Holy Qur'ān (which is the absolute prototype of all things Islāmic), in the tremendous corpus of poetry of the Muslim peoples, or in their prose compositions (*khuṭab* or orations, *rasā'il* or essays, *qiṣaṣ* or novels/narratives), we find everywhere the arabesque of the literary art. Certainly, the overwhelming majority of literary works produced by the Muslim peoples in any language are arabesques. Radically unlike the dramatic literature of ancient Greece and of the West, these works observe and fulfill the six principles. Of any *qaṣīdah* ("ode"), of the *One Thousand and One Nights*, or the *Maqāmat* of Ḥarirī and Hamadhānī, as of the Holy Qur'ān itself, it can be said without the slightest hesitation that:

1) It is composed of units which are as autonomous, complete and integral as they are beautiful.

2) Its units are of a certain number. But because of the non-developmental nature of the pattern, they do not arrive at anything that could be called a conclusion.

3) It begins nowhere and ends nowhere. If it has ended, it does so arbitrarily and not for any inherent necessity.

4) It creates aesthetic satisfaction in the beholder through the perception of its flow or rendering; its generation in him of an élan towards the Infinite.

We may therefore conclude that the literatures of the Muslim peoples do constitute a unity, an Islāmic unity; indeed, an aesthetic literary unity whose essence is the arabesque. And the reader needs no more from us now than the suggestion that by composing the literary work of art, the Muslim man-of-letters invites us to ride his composition as a vehicle, with which to take off in a flight of our imagination which is most pleasing, toward Allah (SWT), the only Transcendent, Ultimate Reality to which nothing is comparable and which is forever beyond all sensory intuition. Realization of aesthetic beauty in the sublime, is in Islām, never the perception of the Absolute which is God, but that of His infinity, i.e., of His imperceptibility.

## THE CRUSADER IN THE MEMOIRS OF USĀMAH IBN MUNQIDH

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Usāmah ibn Munqidh (1095-1188) was a member of the ruling family of Shayzār, north of Syria. His life and career is best described by Philip K. Hitti, the translator of his *Memoirs* in English, as “an epitome of Arab civilization as it flourished during the early crusading period on Syrian soil.”<sup>1</sup> A period of political exile in his life had given him a valuable opportunity to travel through the Arab world accompanying the Muslim armies or joining Muslim rulers in Damascus and Cairo, sharing and advising in the process of decision-making not only in warfare against the Franks but also in the political affairs of the Muslims. Besides his direct involvement in the political and military affairs of his days, Usāmah had a natural talent for a good number of social and intellectual activities, and thus added to his political and fighting abilities a deep concern for writing, composing poetry, horse riding and hunting among other interests.

These qualities made Usāmah the most interesting personality among the Syrian Arabs of his time, and his *Memoirs* a work of extraordinary value. It is a storehouse of information and valuable reflections on almost all aspects of life among the Franks and their Muslim antagonists. It is an autobiographical narration of Usāmah’s encounters with the Franks told in a style which offers a different way of treating historical events other than the monotonous information about warfare which characterizes most of the known professional histories of the Crusades written by Muslim and Western writers alike.

Among the various aspects of Usāmah’s *Memoirs*, this paper deals

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs of an Arab Syrian Gentleman, or An Arab Knight in the Crusades, Memoirs of Usāmah Ibn Munqidh* (Kitāb Al I’tibār). Trans. by Philip K. Hitti, Khayyāts, Beirut, 1964, p. 3.

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only with Usāmah's description, analysis and personal comments upon and impressions of the Crusader's personality. His characterization of this personality provides us with a vivid picture of Crusader character and of its vital impact upon the development and the future of the Crusade movement as seen through the eyes of one of its first witnesses. Reference will be made to sources which witness the authenticity and objectivity of Usāmah's analysis which, in more than one way, helped some of the historians of the Crusades to develop their theories.

### **The Knight, or The Crusader as a Warrior**

The Franks, Usāmah maintained, "possess none of the virtues of men except courage, consider no precedence or high rank except that of the Knights, and have nobody that counts except the Knights."<sup>1</sup> Thus fighting is the first category under which Usāmah analyzes the Crusader. The first quality which he discovered in the Crusader as warrior was his "overcautiousness." This "overcautiousness", for Usāmah, did not imply a sort of cowardice on the part of the Frankish fighter. On the contrary, he used it in many places in his *Memoirs* to praise and show his admiration for the extraordinary courage which the Crusader enjoyed. In fact, he regarded courage and fighting as the only two virtues which the Franks, as persons, possessed. Otherwise, they had nothing else, and in his own words "just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads."<sup>2</sup>

However, the term "overcautiousness" did not receive any satisfactory explanation from the historians of the Crusades, especially the military historian, despite the fact that they acknowledge this quality as a characteristic of the Franks' warfare. R.C. Smail who devoted a whole book to the crusading warfare in the period between 1097-1193 (the same period about which Usāmah wrote) failed partially in grasping the real implications behind Usāmah's use of the term "overcautiousness." He interpreted Usāmah's dictum as a necessary element adopted by the Franks in Syria "who encountered military problems, both strategic and tactical, which imposed caution and restraint."<sup>3</sup> For him, they fought for limited objectives, which were to "conquer certain territories which had for them unique religious associations," and after the first generation of conquest, started to pursue a kind of defensive warfare.<sup>4</sup>

No doubt, there is some truth in Smail's justification for the Franks' overcautiousness. But it is not the whole story. Cautiousness as an

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 93.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> R. C. Smail, *Crusading Warfare (1097-1193)*, Cambridge University Press, 1967, p. 138.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 138.

element in warfare is of utmost importance and we could easily witness it in the fighting armies of all nations. Even Muslim armies of the Crusade period had exercised some cautiousness in their warfare, but it was not for military difficulties which they faced. It was rather a necessary device adopted in order to secure safety and avoid the errors which might result from a hasty decision.

To understand the inner meaning of this term, one has to penetrate into the personal character of Usāmah and into his style of writing and the approach through which he gave his vivid analysis of human actions in particular situations. It is also necessary to watch the language and stresses which Usāmah used and emphasize their implications whatever they are. A deep look into his *Memoirs* and the stories he told will indicate Usāmah's keen observation, and his rare insight into human nature. He always tended to analyze the souls of his heroes and the personalities he discussed in his book. Whether Franks or Muslims, he spoke of their hopes and fears, their motives in war and in peace, their patterns of behavior whenever they were faced with a new challenge. He was always aware of the different natures of human beings and how their actions vary from one to the other and also how certain situations could produce contradictory and conflicting reactions. This not only applied to his study of human behavior, but also extended to cover animal behavior as he came to encounter it in his hunting experiences, in horse riding and other situations where animals were involved.

This is the characteristic mark of Usāmah's writings and for that he used language which was overloaded with psychological meanings and implications. He was very selective in choosing the terminologies which are to the point and which diagnosed perfectly the case at hand. Like a psychologist, he usually started with a description of the case which is fair and exact and then gave his analysis of the situation depending on the scientific knowledge known to him and on his vast personal experience and wisdom. He was always successful in cultivating the feeling which has always been the particular mark of the born historian, as of the analyst. He lived the life of his personalities and succeeded in translating their motives and feelings into words. And as a psychologist, he was able to stress the individuality and the unique quality of personal experience which is important for the historian as well. Gathering his conclusions from a keen observation of individuals, he then generalized it systematically as an indispensable way to understand and communicate. Thus, his explanation of motives runs from the single human being to others comparable to him. In that, he was able to bridge the gap between the individual person, whether Frank or Muslim, and his community at large.

It is in this light that the Crusader's "overcautiousness" is to be explained. And from a linguistic point of view, if Usāmah meant general

cautiousness, he could have used the Arabic linguistic construction which fits that description. The emphasis and the strong stress expressed in the use of the special word "overcautiousness" indicates the hidden psychological motive. But unfortunately Usāmah did not provide enough interpretation for that, leaving us to our own judgements and conclusions. Historically, "overcautiousness" was practiced by the Franks, and Usāmah reported numerous situations in battle and small encounters when the Frankish fighter or the army at large had to retreat and abandon fighting, or at least was satisfied by capturing or killing isolated individuals who went astray from the Muslim army. In most of these cases, the number of the Franks was larger than the Muslim number and an easy victory could have been gained by the Franks over the Muslims.

An example from Usāmah could illustrate this situation rather clearly. In a battle near the city of 'Asqalān. Usāmah reported: "A horseman from our men came to me galloping and said, 'The Franks are here!' So I hastened towards them as the vanguard of the Franks had come into contact with them. The Franks ... who of all men are the most cautious in warfare, climbed to the top of a small hill where they made their stand, and we climbed to the top of another hill, opposite to them. Between the two hills stretched an open place in which our isolated comrades and those leading the extra horses were passing right beneath the Franks, without having a horseman descend on them for fear of some ambush or stratagem of war, although if they had descended they would have succeeded in capturing them to the last man. Thus we stood facing them on that hill in spite of the inferior number of our force and the fact that the main part of our army had gone ahead of us in flight. The Franks kept their post on top of the hill until the passage of our comrades had ceased. They then marched towards us and we immediately retreated before them fighting the while. They made no effort to follow us; but any one of us who stopped his horse they slew, and any one whose horse fell they took as prisoner. Finally the Franks turned back. Thus, Allah (Worthy of admiration is He!) had decreed our safety through their overcautiousness. Had we been as numerous as they were and had won the victory over them as they had won over us, we would have exterminated them."<sup>1</sup>

In this example, Usāmah mentions the fear of the Franks of an ambush or a stratagem of war. But there was more to it than this fear of a stratagem which might have influenced them at the beginning of the battle, but surely not as the action proceeded. Thus the encounter ended without any attempt on the part of the Franks to attack, when it was

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<sup>1</sup>*Memoirs*, pp. 41-42.

completely in their hands to do so. Usāmah here grasped the phenomenon of "overcautiousness," but did not discover the roots of it, despite his knowledge that it was psychologically inherent in the Frankish spirit.

To explain this rather strange phenomenon, one has to search into the structure of the crusading army and the motives which pushed its men to enter into a conflict they were not prepared or even fit for and the psychological impact of this upon the military performance of the Frankish armies.

But before we do so, an important factor in the development of that psychological complex must be mentioned. This is the judicial status of the Crusader. To begin with, the fighter in the Crusades was a fighter in a holy war. This fact modified and influenced the canonistic concept of the Crusader. He was looked upon as a class by himself among military ranks and much more privileged than the fighter in a general army. Usāmah was aware of this fact and he showed frequently the remarkable status which the Crusading fighter enjoyed. James A. Brundage in his *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, explains how this came about by stating that the church made use of the two established institutions: the pilgrimage and the holy war. The Crusader was a representative of the two enterprises. As a pilgrim, he was bound by a vow to make a journey to Jerusalem and as a soldier in a holy war, he was bound to fight for its objectives and receive the spiritual reward of the remission of the punishment of his sinful past. Thus, from a juridical point of view, the Crusader was first a pilgrim who has pledged to fight in a holy war in the course of achieving his pilgrimage goal.<sup>1</sup>

This canonistic status resulted from the act of making a Crusade vow which was followed by the ceremony of taking the cross "which was an outward and visible sign of the new juridical status,"<sup>2</sup> thus making public this change in the status of the one who took the vow "which was in the form of a promise to God to perform two acts: to journey to and visit the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, and to do so in the ranks of a general expedition to the Holy Land."<sup>3</sup> The privileges bestowed upon the Crusader were remarkable and very encouraging, but the set of obligations which resulted were of serious and crucial consequences. They played strongly on the Crusader's nerves and no doubt limited his movements and weakened his fighting ability, thus laying the foundations for the psychological complex which hovered over the

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<sup>1</sup>James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, The University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1969, p. 30.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 116.

<sup>3</sup>Brundage, p. 116.



Crusader and controlled his thought and bothered his soul wherever he went.

Basic to the whole system of vows was "to carry out the action therein promised." A failure to do so had consequent serious judicial results. The vow could be discharged, but in case this was not achieved, the imposition of legal penalties was the resulting consequence. The penalties were essentially of a religious nature which imposed prevention of practicing all religious rites. The violator was also subject to civil penalties. According to Brundage, the violator of the vow "lost thereby his civil status and his legal personality; accordingly, he might risk death for his offense."<sup>1</sup>

The early victories of the Crusaders made it possible for most of them to discharge the vow to visit the Holy Sepulchre. Even those who were not with the armies which conquered Jerusalem felt obliged to travel there and fulfill the pilgrimage rite. The situation was completely different with the later expeditions, after the Muslims were able to absorb the first shocks of defeat and organize their armies for defense, and later for attack. Even then, in spite of the unbearable frustration of defeat, the (Frankish) survivors of battle still had to continue their journey to Jerusalem to discharge their vows. The battles of 1101 and 1108 are good examples among many. Thus, the visit to Jerusalem was an integral part of the Crusader's objective. It was for him the first objective and the war was his means to it. It provided him with the security and the joy of a safe return to his home country without fear of any legal or civil penalties taken against him. He was to take back with him palms, the symbol of the returned pilgrim. Starting from 1199 he had to produce a letter from the King of Jerusalem, or the Patriarch; a rule which was laid down by Innocent III.<sup>2</sup>

Adequate proof of the Crusader's death while he was fulfilling his vow was essential, otherwise his heirs "were forced to redeem his vow."<sup>3</sup> Methods were developed to discharge the vows of those who either died or were not able to fulfill their vows. Among these methods was release by "substitution," the "commutation of the obligation" into other forms of work or religious observance, "donations of money" for the Crusade army, or by "participating in a Crusade expedition" to other places.<sup>4</sup>

In this manner and through the institutionalization of the Crusades, the inner spirit of the individual Crusader was torn between his hopes to

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 122.

<sup>2</sup> Brundage, p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>4</sup> Brundage, pp. 132-133.

fulfill the visit to Jerusalem and his fears that this objective might not be achieved. In the latter case he would have to face the religious and civil penalties waiting for him. The status of a martyr was not enough to discharge his vow unless proven. Otherwise his family had to take responsibility for it. Adding to this mental and spiritual frustration of the Crusader, his inherent military weakness which the early victories helped to hide began to show up. The crusading pilgrim who took the vow was not a professional fighter. He did not have enough military training and was nearly devoid of discipline in warfare. Besides knights and mercenaries, these simple pilgrims constituted a third source of recruitment for the crusading armies and the cheapest one in terms of finance and privileges.<sup>1</sup> They outnumbered the other two sources and their being inexperienced in fighting had its effect on the performance of the whole army. They were the ones who imposed that spirit of overcautiousness on the crusading army as a whole, precisely because of the foregoing psychological and military reasons. Overcautiousness soon represented the whole philosophy of war for the Crusades, transformed as it were from a psychological crisis to a widespread doctrine and an overarching plan for the fighting armies.

From Usāmah's analysis, certain tactical features of this overcautiousness could be deduced:

- 1) Adoption of the concept of limited warfare, and fighting for limited objectives.
- 2) Resort to defensive tactics by refraining from taking any offensive actions or even trying to provoke any.
- 3) Retreat and refusal to join any battles where good results are in doubt.
- 4) Seeking victories by means other than fighting which might involve defeat.
- 5) Exercise of extreme caution in deciding whether to enter a battle or even complete one already started.
- 6) Battles are to be handled on an individual basis. An *ad hoc* policy was applied to fit each battle and common sense was a tactical device applied to known conditions.

In concluding this part, it is in the light of the above-mentioned circumstances that Usāmah's term "overcautiousness" is to be understood. And although Usāmah was aware of the dualistic job of the Crusader,<sup>2</sup> he apparently had no knowledge of the legalistic obligations and their consequences which were imposed on the fighting Crusader. Yet, Usāmah knew that the whole matter was psychologically rooted and could not be explained except through psychological devices. That

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<sup>1</sup>Smail, *loc. cit.*, p. 88.

<sup>2</sup>*Memoirs*, p. 98.

is why he states his reservation by implying that overcautiousness did not mean cowardice on the part of the Crusader. Unfortunately, his analysis had to stop at that stage.

### **The General Character of the Crusader: Remarks on His Customs and General Behavior**

The general impression which Usāmah expressed in his *Memoirs* about the Crusader's personality is his barbaric character and primitive nature. This is a very strong characterization of the Crusader's personality especially if it is seen from the Western point of view. However, Usāmah based his general impression upon his encounters and life experiences with the Frankish armies and communities including the aristocrats among them. It is noticeable that Usāmah made a distinction between the old Franks and the newcomers, whose manners he recognized as essentially different. His description might apply more to newcomers who were not familiar with the ways of the Muslims and behaved rather stubbornly and stupidly in his eyes. Generally, he was puzzled by the manners of the Franks and what he called their "curious mentality." In his piety, he attributed the whole thing to the power and mystery of God's works. He said in this regard:

"Mysterious are the works of the Creator, the author of all things! When one comes to recount cases regarding the Franks, he cannot but glorify Allah (exalted is He) and sanctify Him, for he sees them as animals possessing the virtues of courage and fighting, but nothing else; just as animals have only the virtues of strength and carrying loads. I shall now give some instances of their doings and their curious mentality."<sup>1</sup>

Usāmah's general judgement of the Frank was that he was a mysterious person whose ways of thinking were curious and whose action were irrational. Due to this lack of rational thinking, Usāmah maintained that one could play very easily upon the imagination of the Frank. In fighting situations, the Frank was a good fighter but not an intelligent one. There were cases in warfare which did not require much thinking in order to know what was going on in a certain battle and then act accordingly. Usāmah himself was involved in some of the mental tricks which he played on the Franks. One of the examples given by him is the following accident which happened to the camp of Usāmah which was caught between two Frankish cavalries of Kafartab and Afāmiyah. His uncle charged him with the defense against the first while he, the uncle, led the army against the second Frankish army. Usāmah reported the story as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 161.

"I took my post at the head of ten horsemen hidden among some olive trees. Of these I made three or four come out from time to time, to create an illusion in the minds of the Franks, and then return behind the olive trees. The Franks, imagining that we were numerous, would assemble, shout and rush their horses until they would get near us and then, finding us unshaken from our position, would turn back. We continued doing this until my uncle returned after the defeat of the Franks who had come from Afāmiyah."<sup>1</sup>

Commenting on this, Usāmah concluded that "Thus terrorizing the Franks and playing on their imagination was at that time more advantageous than fighting them, for we were few in number while they were a numerous detachment."<sup>2</sup> This lack of rational thinking in matters of warfare might explain the shortcomings of the Franks in matters of warfare intelligence and in spying and reconnaissance activities. Among the numerous cases which Usāmah reported of Muslim tactics in this regard, not a single case was attributed to the Franks.

Irrationality was a main feature of the Crusader's personality. It covered almost all aspects of his life. Other than in fighting situations, Usāmah reported legal cases and medical situations where this lack of rationality prevailed. Usāmah was not impressed at all by the dual system or the ordeal by water.<sup>3</sup> He regarded them as reflecting the poverty of the legal system of the Franks, their brutality and primitive characteristics. He also noticed that legal decisions were left in the hands of the knights who in his view were not professionally equipped for the job. Their judgements, however, could not be altered even by the King himself.<sup>4</sup>

In some cases, irrationality was explained by Usāmah as a product of ignorance and lack of intellectual and scientific knowledge. He gave examples from the medical practices of the Franks which leave us with the impression that the Frank as a physician was uneducated and brutal in his medications, and that his medical tools and remedies were elementary and primitive. In one of the medical cases which Usāmah knew about, he told the story of an Arab Christian physician who was summoned to treat some sick persons among the people of the lord of Munaytirah. The physician told Usāmah the following story:

"They brought before me a Knight in whose leg an abscess had grown; and a woman afflicted with imbecility. To the Knight I

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 181.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 167-168.

<sup>4</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 93-94.

applied a small poultice until the abscess opened and became well; and the woman I put on diet and made her humor wet. Then a Frankish physician came to them and said; "This man knows nothing about treating them." He then said to the Knight, "Which wouldst thou prefer, living with one leg or dying with two?" The latter replied "Living with one leg." The physician said, "Bring me a strong Knight and a sharp ax." A Knight came with the ax. And I was standing by. Then the physician laid the leg of the patient on a block of wood and bade the Knight strike his leg with the ax and chop it off at one blow. Accordingly he struck it — while I was looking on — one blow, but the leg was not severed. He dealt another blow, upon which the marrow of the leg flowed out and the patient died on the spot. He then examined the woman and said, "This is a woman in whose head there is a devil which has possessed her. Shave off her hair." Accordingly they shaved it off and the woman began to eat their ordinary diet — garlic and mustard. Her imbecility took a turn for the worse. The physician then said, "The devil has penetrated through her head." He therefore took a razor, made a deep cruciform incision on it, peeled off the skin at the middle of the incision until the bone of the skull was exposed and rubbed it with salt. The woman also expired instantly." The Arab physician completed his story: "Thereupon I asked them whether my services were needed any longer, and when they replied in the negative I returned home, having learned of their medicine what I knew not before."<sup>1</sup>

Usāmah also told of medical cases where death was considered the best medicine for the patient. A priest once was asked to see a patient. To handle the case he softened two pieces of wax and he stuck one in each nostril of the patient who died on the spot. When the priest was told about his death, he answered, "He was suffering great pain, so I closed up his nose that he might die and get relief."<sup>2</sup>

In these legal and medical cases Usāmah noticed that many of them were handled by non-professionals. Thus legal cases were judged by the Knights and medical ones were treated by priests. In both, a spirit of brutality prevailed due to a lack of scientific knowledge which was readily noticed by Usāmah. Some of their popular medications were successful and Usāmah applied them, but generally he was not impressed by their knowledge.<sup>3</sup>

This irrationality is even applied by Usāmah to the daily affairs of the

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 162.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 167.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

Franks. He accused them of a general lack of sense. An example is given of one Frankish Knight, a friend of Usāmah, who asked Usāmah to send his son with him to Europe and learn wisdom and chivalry. Usāmah was astonished at the request and regarded it as a lack of sense on the part of the Frankish Knight. He commented on this by saying to himself that if his son were to be taken captive, "his captivity could not bring him worse misfortune than carrying him into the lands of the Franks."<sup>1</sup> Trying to be sensible himself and avoid embarrassing the Frankish Knight, he fabricated an excuse by telling the Knight that the son's grandmother was very fond of him and she could not bear his absence. The Knight asked Usāmah if his mother was still alive and when Usāmah answered in the positive, the Frank told him in a sensible way which Usāmah did not notice, "Disobey her not."<sup>2</sup>

In this incident, Usāmah judged the whole story from his own point of view just neglecting the fact that what might have looked like a lack of sense for him was very sensible for the Frankish Knight who made his request, as it seems, as an offer of friendship and an attempt to strengthen ties with Usāmah. A visit by Usāmah's son to the land of the Franks did not constitute any oddity on the part of Frankish Knight. Usāmah failed to rationalize the Frank's request and missed the point behind it.

#### **On the Status of the Frankish Woman and the Relation between the Sexes**

In his encounter with Frankish men and women on the social level, Usāmah was somehow pleased with the strong character which the Frankish woman enjoyed, although he was not satisfied by the latitude and freedom allowed to her and he put the blame on the Frankish male for his shortcomings in this regard. He noticed her social openness in sharing in festivities, celebrations and social functions. He spoke of her courage and strong will, especially in the cases in which she had to fight against the Muslims. One of Usāmah's stories tells how a Frankish woman inflicted a wound on a Muslim with her jar in one of the Muslim raids against the Crusaders near to 'Asqalan. After her husband had been killed, she struck his killer, Badī' al Şulayhī, one of the amīrs of Egypt, with a wooden jar, inflicting two wounds which left their mark on his face.<sup>3</sup> Other sources validate Usāmah's observation of the Frankish woman's courage. Steven Runciman states that "for all their airs of delicacy and langour, they (the Frankish women) were as

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<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 161.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 161.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 158.

courageous as their husbands and brothers. Many a noblewoman was called upon to lead the defense of her castle in the absence of her lord.<sup>1</sup>

The Frankish woman was also described by Usāmah as of strong conviction and zealous in her belief. One of the Frankish women who was taken captive in one of the raids married the lord of the castle of Ja'bar and bore him a child who became the governor of the castle after his father's death; his mother being the real power. This woman, Usāmah tells, "entered into conspiracy with a band of men and let herself down from the castle by a rope. The band took her to Sarūj (southwest of Edessa) which belonged at that time to the Franks. There she married a Frankish shoemaker, while her son was the lord of the castle at Ja'bar."<sup>2</sup> Thus she preferred life with a shoemaker of her race and religion to living with a Muslim prince. This is an example of courage, adventure, religious and racial zeal on the part of this Frankish woman, who refused to assimilate but with her kind as Usāmah tried to show.

What disturbed Usāmah most was the open and free sex relations among the Franks. He was shocked to the roots by the Franks' lack of zeal and jealousy in sex affairs. Of this he said: "The Franks are void of all zeal and jealousy. One of them may be walking along with his wife. He meets another man who takes the wife by the hand and steps aside to converse with her while the husband is standing on one side waiting for his wife to conclude the conversation. If she lingers too long for him, he leaves her alone with the conversant and goes away."<sup>3</sup> With reference to free sexual relations and the Frankish male's attitude towards it he told the following story which he heard himself about a Frank who used to sell wine to the merchants. "One day this Frank went home and found a man with his wife in the same bed. He asked him 'What could have made thee enter into my wife's room?' The man replied 'I was tired, so I went in to rest.' 'But how,' asked he, 'didst thou get into my bed?' The other replied, 'I found a bed that was spread, so I slept in it.' 'But,' said he, 'my wife was sleeping together with thee!' The other replied, 'Well, the bed is hers. How could I therefore have prevented her from using her own bed?' 'By the truth of my religion,' said the husband, 'if thou should do it again, thou and I would have a quarrel!'"<sup>4</sup> Usāmah, in his astonishment, comments on the story by saying: "Such was for the Frank the entire expression of his disapproval and the limit of his

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<sup>1</sup> Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. II: *The Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Frankish East, 1100-1187*, Harper and Row, New York, 1965, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 164.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.

jealousy.”<sup>1</sup>

Among other accounts given by Usāmah about Frankish habits in relation to male-female relationships are ones which speak of women taking a bath with men in the same place and also of how Frankish men regarded the human body of males and females and how they allowed their wives to be seen even naked by strangers. The following story was told to Usāmah by a bath-keeper named Salīm, who had charge of the bath of Usāmah’s father at one time.

“I once opened a bath in Al Ma’arrāh in order to earn my living. To this bath there came a Frankish Knight. The Franks disapprove of girding a cover around one’s waist while in the bath. So this Frank stretched out his arm and pulled off my cover from my waist and threw it away. He looked and saw that I had recently shaved off my pubes (pubic hair). So he shouted, “Salīm!” As I drew near him he stretched his hand over my pubes and said, “Salīm, good! By the truth of my religion, do the same for me.” Saying this he lay on his back and I found that in that place the hair was like his beard. So I shaved it off. Then he passed his hand over the place, and finding it smooth, he said “Salīm, by the truth of my religion, do the same to madame...” referring to his lady. He then said to a servant of his, “Tell madame to come here.” Accordingly the servant went and brought her and made her enter the bath. She also lay on her back. The Knight repeated, “Do what thou hast done to me.” So I shaved all that hair while her husband was sitting looking at me. At last he thanked me and handed me the pay for my service.”<sup>2</sup>

In reporting most of these stories, Usāmah failed to regard their content as accepted normal behavior reflecting different patterns of values among the Franks. Misled by his own presuppositions, he judged them as representing lack of zeal and jealousy on the part of the Frankish male. He could not see these customs as the product of the Frankish understanding of the relation between the sexes which was completely different from his own Islāmic understanding. Instead, he took it as constituting a contradiction in the mental structure of the Frankish male. What confused him in that case was how to reconcile the fact that the Frank was a strong fighter and a man of extraordinary courage and at the same time was absolutely lacking in matters of jealousy and zeal towards women. His psychological insight convinced him that “courage is nothing but the product of zeal and of ambition to be above ill repute.”<sup>3</sup> And if the Frank lacks this zeal and

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 165.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 165-166.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 166.



ambition, how could he be courageous at all? However, this question could be answered in the following manner: The Frank's courage and enthusiasm in matters related to war might have derived its source from religious zeal or any other strong motive, while his relation to women was a question of social and cultural mores.

### **The Character of the Newly Arrived Franks**

It was mentioned before that Usāmah had classified the Franks into two categories: the old Franks who came with the early expeditions and the newcomers who followed later. Considered within the context of Usāmah's analysis of the Frankish character and in terms of the Franks' encounter with Muslim individuals and with the Muslim society at large, this classification attains a significant value. It provides us with two patterns of behavior in the Frankish milieu. Those among the Franks who "have become acclimatized and have associated long with the Muslims"<sup>1</sup> are described by Usāmah as "much better than the recent comers from the Frankish lands."<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, the newcomers were rough in their character and ruder in their behavior. According to Usāmah, "everyone who is a fresh emigrant from the Frankish lands is ruder in character than those who have become acclimatized and have held long association with the Muslims."<sup>3</sup> As an example of the roughness and rudeness of the new arrivals, Usāmah recently related the following story:

'Whenever I visited Jerusalem, I always entered the Aqṣā Mosque, beside which stood a small mosque which the Franks had converted into a church. When I used to enter the Aqṣā Mosque, which was occupied by the Templars who were my friends, they would evacuate the little adjoining mosque so that I might pray in it. One day I entered this mosque, repeated the first formula "Allah is great," and stood up in the act of praying, upon which one of the Franks rushed on me, got hold of me and turned my face eastward saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray." A group of Templars hastened to him, seized him and repelled him from me. I resumed my prayer. The same man, while the others were otherwise busy, rushed once more to me and turned my face eastward, saying, "This is the way thou shouldst pray!" The Templars again came in to him and expelled him. They apologized to me, saying "This is a stranger who has only recently arrived from the land of the Franks and he has never before seen anyone praying except eastward." Thereupon I said to myself, "I have had enough prayer." So I

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 169.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 163.

went out and have ever been surprised at the conduct of this devil of a man, at the change in the color of his face, his trembling and his sentiment at the sight of one praying towards the Qiblah.<sup>1</sup>

Another event which was interpreted by Usāmah as an act of rudeness was when he saw one of the Franks come to al Amīr Mu‘īn al Dīn in the Dome of the Rock, and ask the amīr “Dost thou want to see God as a child?”<sup>2</sup> And when the amīr said yes, the Frank, Usāmah related, “walked ahead of us until he showed us the picture of Mary with Christ (may peace be upon him!) as an infant in her lap. He then said, ‘This is God as a child.’ But Allah is exalted far above what the infidels say about Him.”<sup>3</sup>

With reference to the customs and habits of the “old category” of the Franks, one of Usāmah’s men whom he dispatched to Antioch on business was invited to visit a Frankish Knight “who had been by that time stricken off the register and exempted from service, and possessed in Antioch an estate on the income of which he lived.”<sup>4</sup> This Knight, Usāmah’s man said, “presented an excellent table, with food extraordinary clean and delicious. Seeing me abstaining from food, he said, ‘Eat, be of good cheer! I never eat Frankish dishes, but I have Egyptian women cooks and never eat except their cooking. Besides, pork never enters my home.’ I ate, but guardedly, and after that we departed.”<sup>5</sup>

Besides food habits, those early Franks adopted other Islāmic customs and values. Some of them dressed in Arab clothes. Others saluted their Muslim friends using Islāmic greetings and calling them by the title “brother.”<sup>6</sup> Other sources speak of Franks who lived in oriental Islāmic buildings, decorated according to Islāmic architectural style and furnished according to Arab ways.<sup>7</sup> Others had glass in their windows, mosaics on their floors, fountains in the courtyards of their houses, which were planned on the Syrian model. They had dancing girls at their entertainments; professional mourners at their funerals; took baths; used soap; ate sugar.<sup>8</sup>

Usāmah, however, considered this group among the Franks as constituting “the exception and cannot be treated as a rule.”<sup>9</sup> Their

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<sup>1</sup> *Memoirs*, pp. 163-164.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 164.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 161.

<sup>7</sup> Joshua Prawer, *The World of the Crusaders*, Quadrangle Books, New York, 1972, p. 84.

<sup>8</sup> Smail, *loc. cit.*, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 169.

norm must not be taken as a general pattern of behavior among the Franks. This dictum of Usāmah is of a great value for determining the question of the Franko-Syrian nation which was claimed by some scholars of the Crusades, as being established on Syrian soil. René Grousset and L. Madelin regarded the orientalizing of Frankish manners and the instances of friendly relations between Franks and Muslim individuals as an indication of the creation of a united nation composed of Franks and Syrians.<sup>1</sup> The two scholars built their theory on evidence taken mostly from Usāmah's narration of instances of encounters between Muslim individuals and Franks. However, both of them ignored Usāmah's reservation that this group was very small and constituted an exception among the majority of the Franks who kept their own manners and ways of life, and never assimilated with the native population.

### Conclusion

As a conclusion to Usāmah's description and analysis of the character of the Crusader, it is essential to indicate that among all the works concerned with the Crusades in general, Usāmah's *Memoirs* enjoy a unique place as a fine piece of Arabic literature. The work derives its uniqueness from the fact that it undertakes the study of an historical movement by means of literature. The narration of historical events make them more intelligible and interesting to us, especially if we consider how monotonous is most of the information which we obtain from most of the professional histories of the Crusades whether written by Muslim or Western writers. The historical events as told by Usāmah were given to us in the form of stories which spoke of social and cultural happenings more than what a professional work of history could have provided us. This characteristic makes the *Memoirs* the most quoted source on the Crusades despite the fact that it is not an historical document in the most strict sense. Speaking of its value, Hitti, in his introduction to the *Memoirs*, has the following to say: "The *Memoirs* of Usāmah are a unique piece of Arabic literature. They open before our eyes a wide and new vista into medieval times and constitute an invaluable contribution to our knowledge of Arabic culture, in itself as well as in its relation to Western thought and practice."<sup>2</sup>

Besides this literary aspect of the *Memoirs*, the work's value is deepened by the psychological insights of its author. As a man of letters

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<sup>1</sup> See R. Grousset, *Histoire des croisades et du royaume franc de Jérusalem*, Paris, 1934-6, and his *L'Empire du Levant*, Paris, 1946. See also L. Madelin, *L'Expansion française de la Syrie au Rhin*, Paris, 1918.

<sup>2</sup> *Memoirs*, p. 3.

and a psychologist, Usāmah was highly interested in the individual and his mental structure. From the study of individual characters, he proceeded to judge the whole movement of the Crusades, its development and future. Thus, with Usāmah in his *Memoirs*, literature, history and psychology united together to provide us with a satisfactory explanation for man's motives and actions. The work is a study of the existential crisis of the Crusader as seen in particular situations. The irrationality and absurdity which are characteristic of the Crusader's personality were explained by Usāmah, not as the creation of the individual Crusader, but rather as the work of these particular situations in which he was involved only because of reasons beyond his control — a theme which prevails in most modern works of literature concerning the existential situation of man.

In addition to this analytical study of the Crusader's personality and the historical judgement of the whole phenomenon of the Crusades movement, the *Memoirs* provide us with a critical judgement on the intellectual heritage of the period of the Crusades. Many sources have spoken frankly of the intellectual poverty of the movement as evident from the fact that the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem suffered from a "total absence of an intellectual elite."<sup>1</sup> The cultural level of the kingdom explains why the Frankish colonies "never became a cultural exchange centre."<sup>2</sup> According to Runciman, "it was the absence of these centres that made the cultural contribution of the Crusades to Western Europe so disappointingly small."<sup>3</sup> Along with these sources, the *Memoirs* have indicated to us that not much of intellectual contribution should be expected from the encounter that took place between the Muslims and the Crusaders who were of a lower level of culture and thus constituted the receiving party in that encounter. The Frankish society described by Usāmah was a society of soldiers and merchants, and not much of intellectual interests were to be expected from a society with such a structure.

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Joshua Prawer, *The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem, European Colonialism in the Middle Ages*. Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1972, p. 532.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 529.

<sup>3</sup>Steven Runciman, *A History of the Crusades*, Vol. III: *The Kingdom of Acre and the Later Crusades*, Harper and Row, New York, p. 492.

## ISLĀMIC CONTRIBUTIONS TO HISTORY

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It will be assumed that the word *tārīkh*, used in Arabic and other Islāmic languages for "history", is understood to signify in its wider connotation, both in the Western Christian and Eastern Moslem traditions, "A systematic written account of events, particularly of those affecting a nation, institution, science, or art, usually connected with a philosophical explanation of their causes." (Webster's *New Collegiate Dictionary*, G & C. Merriam Co., 1953).

The great North African Muslim Arab historian Ibn Khaldūn who died in the early fifteenth century (1332-1406) stated it in much the same way when he said in his celebrated *Muqaddimah*, or Introduction to his universal history:

"History is a science of fine principles, manifold uses, and noble purpose. It informs us about the people of the past — the characters of nations, the lives of prophets, the kingdoms and policies of kings — thus usefully providing example for the emulation of those who desire it in religious and worldly affairs. The writer of history requires many sources and varied knowledge; he also requires keen judgement and careful scrutiny to lead him to the truth and away from lapses and errors. If reliance is placed on simple narrative as transmitted, without studying the roots of custom, the foundation of politics, the nature of civilization, and the circumstances of human society, and without comparing far with near and past with present then there will often be danger of slipping and stumbling and straying from the right road."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibn Khaldun, *Muqaddimah*, Beirut, 1961, p. 12. The translation is reproduced from B. Lewis, *Islām* (from the Prophet Muḥammad to the Capture of Constantinople), Harper Torchbooks, volume I.

These two complementary concepts on the meaning of history — the one Western, and the other Islāmic — will be kept in mind throughout the present investigation on the Islāmic contributions to history.

### I. The Relation Between Religion And History

The decision by responsible early Muslim leaders to collect “the word of God” (as it was revealed to the Prophet) and preserve it in book-form for future generations is certainly the first, and in many ways the most crucial, step in Muslim historiography. For the *Qur’ān* is indeed the first history book in Islām. Accepting the collected record as definitive, and discarding all other variants became the cornerstone of all future writing on Islām. However, when the first attempts were made to understand the meaning of the revelation in the great Qur’ān commentaries, the text was subjected to historical investigation and scrutiny in order to determine the so-called “causes for the revelation” (*asbāb al nuzūl*). This special Qur’ānic science was nothing short than subjecting the contents of the Book to textual and historical criticism.

The word *tārīkh* (history) does not occur in the Qur’ān. Other words such as *asātir* (legends), with a curious etymological similarity to the Greek word *istoria*, and *qīṣaṣ* (stories)\* are often used with reference to past societies. But the religious and spiritual content of the Book is so pervasive that it set the tone for all future writing in Islām including history. Thus history and religion became inextricably intertwined. “In all fields of intellectual endeavour cultivated by the Sharī’ah-minded, a set of intellectual patterns arose which shared many techniques in common but also, more significantly, bore the impress of a common spirit: a spirit populist and factualistic, with a persistent sense of the moral importance of historical events” (emphasis added).<sup>2</sup> With such a powerful book as the Qur’ān ever present in their minds, therefore, Muslim historians almost invariably emphasized the moralistic approach in their writings, and sought to substantiate “God’s ways” in the life of past generations as well as their own.

Less religious in content (since it had no divine sanction) but infinitely more important as a model for later historical writing, is the material collected during the Second Muslim century on the life of the

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<sup>2</sup>Hodgson, M.G.S., *The Venture of Islam*, Chicago Un. Press, 1974, 1, 351.

\* واذ تتلى عليهم آياتنا قالوا قد سمعنا لو نشاء لقلنا مثل هذا إن هذا إلا أساطير الأولين \* وقالوا أساطير الأولين إكتتبها فهي تملى عليه بكرة وأصيلا \* لقد كان في قصصهم عبرة لأولي الألباب \* كذلك نقص عليك من أنباء ما قد سبق .

Prophet which came to be known as the Sunnah.\*\*

This religio-biographical work exercised a tremendous influence on all subsequent Muslim historians who committed to writing the oral traditions that were passed on from generation to generation, thus preserving for posterity the details of the life of the Prophet and early Muslim society. Here again, the narrators of these traditions were subjected to scrutiny and investigation with a view to establishing their trustworthiness and the veracity of their accounts, according to the system of *jarḥ* and *ta'dīl*, the entire corpus of *ḥadīth* literature was sifted and classified, and an auxiliary historical science of *Ṭabaqāt* (biographies) came into being.

Thus, with the *Qur'ān* as the supreme guide, and the life of Muḥammad as the worthiest of all examples, the relation between religion and history was firmly established. Let me paraphrase a few lines from Yāqūt's *Mu'jam al-Udabā'* as a rather curious example of this relation. After writing his 20-volume biographical masterpiece, he reflects on his achievement in a lengthy "Introduction":

"I am fully aware, he says, of the ignorant critic who may claim that working on religious matters is more important and more rewarding both in this world and in the hereafter.

Does he not know that individuals have different natures, and that if all persons work on one branch of knowledge the rest will be lost? God, in his wisdom, has ordained for every subject someone who would specialize in it and organize it; and man has to perform that for which he was created.

However, I do not deny that, if I had kept to my mosque and prayer, and worked in my life on that which would gain me rewards in the other world, it would have been better and more worthy for acquiring peace of mind in my afterlife. But seeking

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**\*\* Editor's Note:**

*The Sunnah of the Prophet may not be said to be "less religious in content" than the Qur'ān. The two make an indissoluble unity, complementing and buttressing each other. Nor is it true that the Sunnah "had no divine sanction." The Qur'ān explicitly commanded the Muslims to accept as true and normative what the Prophet gave them, to obey him, and equated obedience to him with obedience to God (59:7; 3:32, 132; 4:68, 80). The Qur'ān further described the life of the Prophet as the example-to-follow, and assigned to him the task of clarifying, concretizing and substantiating the divine imperatives (33:21; 5:16, 21; 14:4; 16:44). For Muslims, it is blasphemous to describe the ḥadīth as "infinitely more important than the Qur'ān" in any sense.*

that which is impossible to attain is not within my reach; and carrying out that which is preferable is beyond my capabilities. It is sufficient, therefore, that man should not engage in unlawful things (*maḥzūr*), and should not follow the path which would lead him astray.”<sup>3</sup>

This half-hearted, and in a way unconvincing, apologia by a leading figure of Muslim historiography (and of geographical writing if one includes his *Muʿjam al-Buldān*) does reflect on the approach which Muslim historians had to their subject. Although it comes from a later period (the early thirteenth century), and although earlier historians were not perhaps as cynical as Yāqūt (if indeed his words could be taken as a mild expression of cynicism), still this religio-historical approach should always be taken into consideration when interpreting and evaluating the entire corpus of Muslim historical writings.

## II. History and the State.

The Muslim historians were fully aware of the importance of the new political order established by Muḥammad as soon as he arrived in Madīnah, and of the Caliphate system established by the early Muslim leadership immediately upon the death of the Prophet. Next to Islām, the religion, the founding of a state to protect it and preserve it was the second major achievement of the early Muslim community.

The treatment of the state in Muslim historical writings varied with the change of circumstances from Madīnah to Damascus (and briefly Kūfah) to Baghdād and to other centers in the post-Baghdād periods all the way to the end of the eighteenth century. There was a radical but temporary change during the long dark night of the colonial period, but contemporary signs (if they are to be interpreted correctly) point to a new continuity.

The Muslim historians treated the settlement of the political question by Muḥammad upon his arrival in Madīnah, and the birth of the Caliphate system on the “porch” of Banū Sāʿidah, with reverence and respect. On the one hand, we may have here the beginnings of Islāmic political science judging by such terminology as the “constitution” of Madīnah which some modern writers have given to Muḥammad’s invention. On the other hand, the concept of the “golden age” of Madīnah, stressing the political acumen of the Prophet and the resourcefulness of the early Muslim leadership who developed the idea of consultation (*shūrā*) in the settlement of political issues, nostalgically grew up essentially to compensate for the later periods of dissension and

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<sup>3</sup>Yāqūt, *Muʿjam al-Udabāʾ*, Cairo, 1936, I, 52-53.



strife.\*\*\* Ibn Ishāq's version of what took place when Muḥammad assumed political (and religious) leadership in Madīnah, and Ṭabarī's accounts of the political convention on the "porch" of Banū Sā'idah (based, among others, on the authority of Abū Mikhnaf)<sup>4</sup> are only two of many specimens of Muslim historiography which point to the way Muslim historians handled the question of the rise of political authority during the early decades of Islām.

Lest I be accused of partiality, let me give another example which treats of historiography on the Shī'ī side and sheds light on the issue of the Imāmate which, together with the Caliphate, form the two sides of the coin of the political theory of the state in Islām.

As we all know, Ḥusayn son of 'Alī and the "darling" grandson of the Prophet, was "invited" to Kūfah to claim his rightful succession after the death of Mu'āwiyah. And now let us turn to Ibn Khaldūn:

"Ḥusayn believed that the rise against Yazīd was incumbent (*muta'ayyin*) upon him because of the latter's sinfulness or dissolute life (*fisq*). It is especially incumbent upon those who possess the power to do so. He thought that this applied to him because of his qualifications (sing. *ahliyyah*) and capability/power (*shawkah*). As for his qualifications, he was in fact more than qualified; but as for his capability, he was wrong — may God be merciful unto him.

For the tribal solidarity (*'aṣabiyyah*) of Muḍar was in Quraysh, and the *'aṣabiyyah* of Quraysh was in 'Abd Manāf, and the *'aṣabiyyah* of 'Abd Manāf was surely in Banū Umayyah — a fact recognized by Quraysh and everybody else. Nobody denied that. However, this situation was forgotten (or rather the people became oblivious of it) in early Islām because the Muslim community was dazzled by the unusual events that had occurred; by the phenomenon of prophetic inspiration, and by the coming of the angels to help the Muslims. Custom was thus cast aside, and the pre-Islāmic *'aṣabiyyah* and the disputes arising from it were temporarily forgotten. All that remained was the natural *'aṣabiyyah* of protection and defense which was made use of in

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**\*\*\* Editor's Note:**

*It is not true that "the idea of ... Shūrā" was "developed... by the early Muslim leadership." It is ordained by God in the Qur'ān (3:159; 42:38). The life of the Prophet is full of instances in which this Qur'ānic imperative was applied.*

<sup>4</sup>Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*. Leiden edition, i, pp. 1837-1844. For a translation see Lewis, *Islam*, I, 2-5.

establishing the (new) religion and the performance of holy war (*jihād*), against the infidels. In a case like this, religion becomes paramount and custom is set aside.

However, when the period of prophecy and the extraordinary events ended, rule (*ḥukm*) reverted somewhat to the (old) customs. *Aṣabiyyah* thus returned to the way it had been; and so Muḍar became more amenable to Banū Umayyah than to any other group on the basis on conditions that had been prevalent before.”<sup>5</sup>

Ibn Khaldūn, the social scientist, is sternly correct, and there is no room in his rigorously balanced argument for Ḥusayn or his cause. But the Shīʿī political concept of the Imāmate had developed long before Ibn Khaldūn; and at the religious-eschatological level, the Shīʿī scholars decided to “occult” the Twelfth Imām to the end of time thus instituting a new political theory that all secular authority does in fact usurp his power. The novel concept of “*rahbar*” (leader, guide) in the modern Islāmic constitution of Īrān marks a new and interesting departure.

Muslim historians, therefore, were fully conscious of the rise of the Islāmic state, of the factionalism attendant on the move to Damascus, and of the great synthesis that accompanied the Baghdād period. They understood the relations between the “independent” dynasties that rose in Khurāsān and Māwarāʾa al Nahr and the central government of the Caliphate. They also realized the temporary disruption caused by the Mongol conquests; and after the dust settled down, they continued to write universal histories, this time in Persian, such as those composed by Rashīd al Dīn, Faql Allah, Mīr Khwānd, and Khwānd Amīr—milestones in the continuity of the Islāmic system. And when the Ottoman Turks assumed the leadership of the central Muslim lands, their historians kept alive the enduring concepts of the early Muslim state with minor additions borrowed from their original home in Central Asia.

Muslim historians through the ages never lost sight of the great institution of the state that Islām created. To understand the historiographical development of Muslim political theory is to keep in mind this unity between the Church and State in Islām. It is totally different from the struggle between Church and State in contemporary Medieval Europe.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibn Khaldūn. *op. cit.*, 382-83. Cf. Franz Rosenthal's translation, I, 443-44.

### III. History and the Muslim Community.

Muslim historical writings have sometimes been criticized for being dry narratives of series of events with very little evaluation and interpretation, for dealing primarily with the rulers and their courts and their intrigues, and for paying little attention to the everyday life of ordinary people in the community. This of course is not true even if we limit our view to the core disciplines of history, biography, geography, and genealogy. There may be some justification for such statements in certain cases of official and dynastic chronicles. But there is no doubt, however, that when the scribal tradition was established during the second century of Islām (the first paper factory was set up in Baghdād in 178/794-95)<sup>6</sup> Muslim writers, fascinated by the great achievements of their civilization, became actively engaged in recording for their contemporaries and for future generations and for themselves, the tremendous accomplishment of the Islāmic community. As Ibn al Athīr says:

« شرعت في تاليف تاريخ جامع لأخبار ملوك الشرق والغرب وما بينهما ليكون لي تذكرة  
أراجعه خوف النسيان »  
بيروت ١٩٦٥ الكامل في التاريخ ، المجلد ١ ، المقدمة ، ص ٣ .

And as Dūri puts it, "A sense of their importance grew up among the Arabs when they realized that they were the possessors of an international message in Islām. This feeling is connected with the establishment of the Arab-Islāmic empire ... The idea of the *Ummah* began to influence their interest in accounts (*akhbār*) and stories (*qisās*) that went beyond the tribe and encompassed the society as a whole. The door was thus open for historical investigation and study."<sup>7</sup>

This interest in the affairs of the Muslim community can be seen even clearer if we move into such allied disciplines as travel literature or Ṣūfī compositions. A work like Ibn Baṭṭūṭah's *Riḥlah* is a mirror of Islāmic society from Tangier to Delhi during the fourteenth century. Less credit has been given to the social contents of works on Ṣūfī masters and their times.

One such work is Ibn al Bazzāz, *Ṣafwat al Ṣafā*, which deals with Shaykh Ṣafīyy al Dīn Ardabīlī, the most celebrated Ṣūfī master in Irān during the fourteenth century (whose descendants in the sixth generation established the Ṣafawī dynasty in Irān in the early sixteenth century). The political history of this post-Mongol period in Irān is richly recorded by such great historians as 'Aṭā' Malīk Juwaynī, Ḥamd Allāh Mustawfī Qazwīnī, Rashīd al Dīn Faḍl Allāh, and others. But

<sup>6</sup>H.A.R. Gibb, "Tārīkh" *E.I.*, *Supplement*, Leiden, 1938.

<sup>7</sup>'Abd al 'Azīz al Dūrī, *Baḥth fī Nash'at 'Ilm al tārīkh 'ind al 'Arab*, Beirut, 1960, 132.

the intimate everyday life of Iranians in Adharbayjān and the neighboring regions at this time can best be found described in detail in *Ṣafwat al Ṣafā*. A short section made up of two items (*ḥikāyāt*) that deals specifically with the childhood days of Shaykh Ṣafīyy al Dīn (indicating certain miraculous occurrences that point to his future greatness) incidentally describes such mundane things as the games children play and the sources of energy with which village people used to cook their food. This social historiography is a veritable mine of information on a topic long neglected by the modern researcher.<sup>8</sup>

But even historical writings that deal with dynastic reigns and rulers are full of insights into the life of these rulers who supposedly live above society in the dark recesses of their palaces and courts. A case in point is that of the Ṣafawī ruler Ismā'īl II and his story as told by Iskandar Munshī in his *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*. Modern historians who have dealt with this subject have drawn this ruler as a bloody tyrant. A closer look at Munshī's account shows him to be a very sensitive man whose mind is occupied with very serious thoughts about Sunnī-Shī'ī problems the resolution of which could (had he reigned more than one year) have changed the entire course of Persian history.<sup>9</sup>

Another minor historian of Tunisia, on his way to the pilgrimage, stopped to visit Ustādh 'Abd al Ghanī al Nābulusī, the great Muslim authority in Damascus during the eighteenth century. The 80-year old man was enjoying a smoke; and out of respect for his visitor he laid the apparatus (*al dawāh*) aside. "Go ahead and smoke, My Master," said the Tunisian; "I am not one who would deny you this..I then took the pipe and drew at it once or twice then handed it back to him. He was pleased and smiled, and began smoking again."<sup>10</sup>

Amongst all Muslim writers, the historian was closest to the society in which he lived. His writings are in many ways a true reflection of the anthropological and sociological conditions of his times. Through the annual pilgrimage, through the Ṣūfī brotherhoods, and through personal travel and curiosity, the Muslim historian kept in touch with a vibrant Muslim community which, despite the divisions in the post-Caliphal periods, remained united in its outlook and unified in its way of life.

This underlying unity of Islāmic life seemed to come to an abrupt end towards the end of the eighteenth century. Two years before the end of the century (in June of 1798 to be exact) warships carrying the French

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<sup>8</sup>Ibn-i-Bazzāz, *Ṣafwat al Ṣafā* (Un. of Leiden, MS. 465), folios 9b-10b.

<sup>9</sup>Iskandar Munshī, *Tārīkh-i 'Ālam-ārā-yi 'Abbāsī*, Tehran 1334/1956, I, 199-221; English translation by R.M. Savory, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, Boulder 1978, I, 294-330.

<sup>10</sup>Ḥusayn Khūjah, *Dhayl li-kitāb Bashā'ir ahl al Imān*, Tunis, 1326/1908, 244.

Revolution army under Napoleon was sighted off Alexandria harbor. The contemporary great Muslim historian, 'Abd al Rahman al Jabartī, records his reaction as he begins volume three of his *'Ajā'ib al Āthār* in the following heart-rending words:

(\*) وهي أول سني الملاحم العظيمة والحوادث الجسيمة والوقائع النازلة والنوازل الهائلة وتضاعف الشرور وترادف الأمور وتوالي المحن واختلال الزمن وانعكاس المطبوع وانقلاب الموضوع وتتابع الأهوال واختلاف الأحوال وفساد التدبير وحصول التدمير وعموم الخراب وتواتر الأسباب ... ..

“This is the first year of the great catastrophe, the monstrous events, the terrible happenings; Evils have multiplied; the affairs of state have become tragic, and misfortunes have descended upon us all. Time has become perverse, things have gone contrary to nature (*in'ikās al-maṭbū'*), and the situation is upside-down in confusion and disarray.”<sup>11</sup>

Already the British were carving up India, and Russian armies were pushing southwards against Irān and Central Asia. The Ottoman Turks were slowly but surely retreating from the European scene. For about two centuries, the Muslim peoples of the world were not allowed to manage their own affairs.

It is only recently, after the phasing out of colonial domination, that we are beginning to see the Muslim peoples looking again, more seriously than ever before, into their great cultural tradition. They will find it best preserved in the writings of their historians.

#### IV. Further Points To Study

Aside from the three points discussed in this paper (i.e., History and religion; History and the state; and History and the *Ummah*), it was originally intended to deal with three other points:

4. History and Islāmic civilization: The Muslim historians were aware of the achievements of Islāmic civilization and culture, especially in literature and the arts. There is always a sense of pride in their writings, coupled with contempt for non-Islāmic things.

5. History between past and present: In spite of the tremendous changes that occurred in Muslim societies during the 19th and 20th centuries (secularization, modernization, Westernization, etc.), Muslim historical writings in modern times reflect a strong sense of belonging to one of the great world traditions. The little “alienation” there is appears to have touched small groups here and there, and this is essentially superficial.

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<sup>11</sup> 'Abd al Rahman al Jabartī, *'Ajā'ib al Āthār*, Cairo, Būlāq, 1879, 111, 2.

6. History and the historian: The style and techniques of Muslim historical writings have of course undergone many changes from one period to another. The approach is more scientific, but the pervading spirit is Islāmic with powerful sense of continuity. At the very end of his *Muqaddimah* (Beirut, 1961 edition, p. 1169), Ibn Khaldūn puts it like this:

“We have discussed enough points to satisfy our purposes. Perhaps he who comes after us, guided by a good mind and a clear knowledge, will go deeper than we did in these matters. For the originator of a science cannot cover all its aspects; he merely indicates the line of argument and points out the various approaches. Later writers follow up after him, one leads after another, so that the science in time will become complete.”

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## THE PERFECT MAN IN AL JĪLĪ'S THOUGHT

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In the great religions of mankind, the Founders or the Avatars are seen as manifestations of the Logos: they are seen as forms of a universal, impersonal reality that each religion identified with its own Founder or its particular Avatars. From the Christian point of view, the Christ is the Logos; from the Buddhist, the Buddha is the Logos, or Shunyamurti, the Manifestation of the Void; from the Hindu, the Avatars are manifestations of the Logos; and so on. In esoteric Islām, or Ṣūfism, Muḥammad has both a historical and transhistorical nature. Traditional exoteric Islām knows the historical form of the Prophet and has developed dogmas around him that are in general silent about his inner, universal character as Logos. It is Ṣūfism alone that has a great deal to say about this transpersonal reality of the Prophet. For Ṣūfism, the Muḥammad of history is the manifestation of this universal Logos, and indeed all the Messengers and Prophets and saints are manifestations of this unique Logos, more or less like the rays of the sun are manifestations of the sun.

This Ṣūfī view of the Logos-nature of Muḥammad is based on Qur'ānic verses and on certain ḥadīths of the Prophet himself. When he said, for example, "I was a Prophet while Ādam was still between water and clay," he was of course referring to his transcendent reality as the Logos that pre-existed the series of Messengers and Prophets culminating in himself as the Seal of the Prophets. The Ṣūfī teachings, basing themselves on this type of ḥadīth and certain Qur'ānic verses, see in Muḥammad the luminous Spirit at the center of the entire Creation: this is the *Nūr Muḥammadī* that radiates from this solar center to the extreme periphery of the created cosmic sphere. As Logos, Muḥammad is both central solar Spirit as well as the totality of the

Creation seen as an unimaginably vast sphere, and which encloses other, less spheres.

In all teachings on the Logos, whether in Islām or Christianity, there is always a danger of confusing the different planes of existence: the human and the spiritual levels thus become confused. A result of this is the anthropomorphic interpretation of the Logos, so that its impersonal, transcendent nature is lost sight of in due time. The Christ is indeed the Word made flesh, but the Word itself, on its own plane of existence, is not the same as the flesh, and is indeed infinitely greater and more sublimely real.

Something of that kind of confusion occurs also in Ṣūfism. Its teachings on *al Insān al Kāmil*, or "The Perfect Man," are a highly symbolic and complex ensemble of doctrines that evolved out of the Qur'ānic texts and ḥadīths of Muḥammad which speak of his spiritual nature. To Ibn al 'Arabī, the thirteenth-century Andalusian Ṣūfī master, is attributed the first written exposition of the teachings on the Perfect Man, which we find scattered throughout his different works. 'Abd al Karīm al Jīlī, the fifteenth-century author of the celebrated work called *al Insān al Kāmil*, has followed Ibn al 'Arabī in many details on the nature of the Perfect Man, but in others he follows his own inspirations. The two see eye to eye on the essentials, however. Moreover, much of what is considered to be their contributions to the eventual doctrine can be traced back to earlier Ṣūfīs and, in the long run, to Qur'ānic texts and ḥadīths of the Prophet. What they did was to give the doctrine on the Perfect Man a more systematic elaboration. In Ṣūfism, the doctrine on the Perfect Man is quite simply the esoteric teaching on the dual nature of Muḥammad as both man and Logos.

Like the corresponding teachings in Christianity on the Christ as the unique Logos for the entire world, the Ṣūfī teachings on Muḥammad see him as the unique Logos for the entire world. But there is an extremely important difference: the Perfect Man in Islām never assumes the nature of an incarnation of God, as does the Christ in Christian teaching. Allah, in Islām, has no associates, no peers, no offspring; for all the cosmic grandeur that the role of the Perfect Man entails, no associationism is possible. The Perfect Man is indeed an intermediary between God and man, but he is not the Absolute in itself. The Perfect Man is the mirror that reflects the divine Reality, but he is not that divine Reality itself. He is the entire Creation (*al Khalq*) as a reflection of God (*al Haqq*), but he is not God. The doctrinal formulations on the nature of the Perfect Man are really mystical commentaries on the Second Shahādah, *Muḥammadun Rasūla-llah*: Muḥammad is the Messenger of God. Understood mystically, this sacred formula of Islām means that the entire Creation is the messenger or reflection of God.



For al Jīlī, the Perfect Man is Muḥammad. He is the axis or pole around which the spheres of existence revolve. He has always been and always will be the Perfect Man: he was the Perfect Man at the beginning of existence; he will be the Perfect Man at the end of time. There is only one Logos-Muḥammad in the entire cycle of creation. This Logos-Muḥammad is what the Ṣūfīs call *al Ḥaqīqah al Muḥammadiyah*, or “the Muḥammadian Reality.” Other terms and phrases are also used by the Ṣkūfīs to refer to Muḥammad in his capacity as Logos, and al Jīlī makes use of them. When referring to his function as the luminous center of the Cosmos, Muḥammad as Logos is called “the Intellect,” which is the first thing created by God, according to a certain ḥadīth; and when referring to the spiritual character of the Logos, Muḥammad is called *Rūḥ Muḥammadiyah*; and so on. In his impersonal nature, Muḥammad as Logos is a solar, paradisaic reality that is connected to all things in the universe by rays of light; kbut he is in particular connected to the Messengers, Prophets, and saints. This of course means that the Ṣūfī saints are directly connected, via their own spiritual rays, to the Muḥammadian Sun at the center of the Universe.

Indeed, one of the characteristics of the Logos-Muḥammad is its capacity to assume different human guises in different epochs. This sounds like the Hindu concept of reincarnation, at first glance; but al Jīlī warns us that this is not a reincarnationist concept. The Muḥammadian reality, as Logos, is like a unique essence manifesting itself in multiple forms — like the different Messengers, Prophets, and saints — in different temporal periods. According to al Jīlī, the Logos-Muḥammad manifested itself to him in the year 796 of the Hijrah, in Zabīd in al Yaman, taking on the form of his own master, al Shaykh al Jabartī. At first, al Jīlī did not know that Shaykh al Jabartī was Muḥammad, though he did know that he was indeed a master. Only afterwards, through intuition, he learned that al Jabartī was indeed Muḥammad. But this has to be understood correctly, for of course al Jīlī is not really saying that Shaykh al Jabartī was the historical Muḥammad come back to earth again — this is reincarnationism. Rather, what al Jīlī is saying is this: Shaykh al Jabartī, in his inner reality, was united with that solar Logos-Muḥammad. In his external, human form, however, Shaykh al Jabartī was merely one of the vicegerents of that Logos-Muḥammad, the latest ray of light falling on a human form in a long series stretching back to the initial creation of Ādam, for the Logos-Muḥammad pre-existed Ādam.

As the luminous Spirit at the center of the Universe, the Perfect Man is the origin of all existence from top to bottom. As both Center and Sphere, he receives within his mirror-like Intellect the divine commands of creation which are transmitted to the periphery of the Sphere. The Perfect Man is to God, therefore, like a mirror is to a person wanting to

see his own image, according to al Jīlī. It is because of his mirror-like, reflecting nature that the Perfect Man radiates in his center and throughout his universal cosmic spherical nature the Divine Names and Attributes. Just as God is the one who is Living, Knowing, Powerful, Loving, Hearing, Seeing, and Speaking, so likewise the Perfect Man reflects these Divine Attributes in himself, so that he also is Living, Knowing, Powerful, and so forth.

But that is not all: the Logos-Muḥammad contains within himself the prototypical ideas that later on will emerge from him as the angelic and archangelic domains, and indeed the entire universe, with its subtle and visible worlds, and in the visible world, the Mineral, Plant, and Animal Kingdoms. As the first thing created by God, the Logos-Muḥammad as cosmic Intellect transmits the divine creative orders and presides over the unfolding of the entire universe.

We must not forget that the perfect Man is not God. We cannot therefore attribute any divinity to him, even by reflection, for this would lead to associationism and take away the absoluteness that belongs exclusively to *Allah*, who is the One without a second or any associate. But if the Perfect Man is not God, in his innermost nature he is not other-than God. The reason for this lies in the teaching that all created perfections lose themselves in their infinite roots within the uncreated perfections of Allah. Therein lies also the ambiguous nature of Muḥammad: As the Perfect Man who mirrors the perfections of God, he is other-than God, and his perfections do not belong to him, for they are only reflections in his mirror. Nevertheless, those perfections in the Perfect Man owe their origins to their prototypes in God, and those prototypes are uncreated. The logos-Muḥammad is therefore both created in its manifestation and uncreated in its divine essence. While Christianity says of the Christ that he is “true man” and “true God,” Ṣūfism supplies a missing intermediate dimension by saying of Muḥammad that he is “true man,” “true intermediate Spirit,” and “true God,” so that the Perfect Man has an earthly, historical nature that can vary from epoch to epoch but that receives its definitive form in the person of Muḥammad; then, beyond that earthly nature, there is a vast intermediate realm wherein Muḥammad is the presiding Spirit; and finally, beyond the Creation, in his uncreated reality, there is the divine prototype of the Perfect Man. Al Jīlī, like other Ṣūfīs, can jump from one level within the creation to another when speaking of the Perfect Man; he can also jump from the created world to the uncreated reality of Allah. Just as there is a certain ambiguity between the historical and transhistorical Muḥammad in the imagery of al Jīlī and other Ṣūfīs, so likewise there is a certain ambiguity between the created Perfect Man as pure Logos and the uncreated Divine Origin of the Perfect Man.

What is the value, for Ṣūfīsm, of this theory on the Perfect Man?

Ultimately, the Ṣūfī concept of the Perfect Man offers to the would-be mystic an objective and subjective view of Muḥammad. Seen as an objective, cosmic manifestation, Muḥammad as Perfect Man is the origin, middle, and end of the universe. He is indeed the all-englobing Spirit at the center of the Cosmos and the Cosmos itself. His role is to manifest the commands of the Creator; and it is no doubt for this reason that Muḥammad means "the glorified," for the Perfect Man is glorified in manifesting the omnipotent creativity of the Lord.

The subjective view of Muḥammad has to do with the inner, contemplative voyage of the mystic looking within his innermost being. It is in this inner mystical life that the contemplative mystic meets the Logos-Muḥammad as a universal Spirit. According to a ḥadīth, no one can meet God who has not first of all met Muḥammad. This can mean, of course, meeting Muḥammad in his Sunnah and therefore abiding by its forms; but it also has an inner, mystical meaning. One must first of all meet the Logos-Muḥammad as the Spirit and expand into its universal perfections before one can meet Allah, that is to say, before one can unite with Allah. It is no doubt because of this esoteric interpretation of things that we find in the numerous Ṣūfī orders various litanies on the Prophet.

Finally, there is a pressing question which al Jili does not answer, or rather, did not have to answer: Is the Logos really Muḥammadian in nature and are the Christ and the other Messengers and Prophets lesser manifestations of the Perfect Man who is Muḥammad? The answer is Yes and No. Yes, because just as there are paradises that are special to the Islāmic world that extends upwards from the earth to the Throne of God, to use a scriptural image, so likewise there must be something in the universal Logos that is definitely Muḥammadian in nature. In other words, the Logos, whether created or uncreated, must have something Muḥammadian about it, otherwise the earthly Muḥammad would never have had any celestial roots and would have been merely a historical phenomenon without vertical connections with the Absolute. And from this point of view, the other Messengers and Prophets would naturally seem like emanations from the Logos-Muḥammad.

And No, the Logos is not exclusively Muḥammadian in nature, for it is also the same Logos that contains the Christ, Rama, Krishna, the Buddha, and so on. The Christ-Logos can also be seen, and with equal validity, as the unique Logos containing within itself all of the other Messengers and Prophets, who would then be seen as manifestations of the Christ, who said, "Before Abraham was, I am." That is indeed the way the Christian could see things, if he so wanted to. This is no refutation of the thesis of the Ṣūfīs that the Perfect Man is Muḥammad,

for the Logos is an impersonal reality, as Ibn al 'Arabī has said, as well as a historical personality called Muḥammad. All religions, in claiming for their Founders or Avatars the exclusive right to monopolize the Logos, are simply transferring to the impersonal nature of the Logos the personal characteristics of the human nature of these Founders and Avatars. They are all partially right, seen in the light of comparative mysticism; they are altogether and absolutely right, seen from within their own traditions, where the Logos-Muḥammad, the Logos-Christ, and Logos-Buddha, and the others, play fundamental and indispensable roles in the inner life of the mystics belonging to the different religions.

**DATOR FORMARUM: IBN RUSHD,  
LEVI BEN GERSON, AND MOSES BEN JOSHUA  
OF NARBONNE**

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So far as I know, the term *dator formarum* (*wāhib al-ṣuwar*) does not antedate Ibn Sīnā. But the set of problems which the concept of *dator formarum* is designed to solve was recognized very much earlier, and certain solutions to those problems, some of them close to Ibn Sīnā's, are also very much earlier.<sup>1</sup>

In Ibn Sīnā's writings, the *dator formarum* is identified with the Active Intellect, and its activity lies chiefly in the areas of epistemology and generation: i.e., giving form to generated plants and animals.<sup>2</sup> I shall confine myself to the latter area. I propose to look at some features of Ibn Rushd's discussion of what is responsible for the generation of animals, and the way in which two Jewish philosophers treat what he has to say.

The two Jewish philosophers are Levi ben Gerson (hereafter, Gersonides) and Moses ben Joshua of Narbonne (hereafter, Narboni). Both hailed from the Provence: Gersonides apparently never left. Narboni, however, was forced by political conditions to spend a good part of his life in Spain. It was there that he wrote the work to which I shall refer later, a work completed in 1349. That was just twenty years after Gersonides had completed his *Milhamot ha-Shem*,<sup>3</sup> that exhaustive philosophical and theological treatise on which I shall base my remarks.

It is a commonplace to say that the work of Gersonides depends on that of Ibn Rushd. This is true in a very basic sense. Ibn Rushd's works were the prime source of Gersonides' philosophic knowledge: e.g., with the possible exception of *Metaphysics*, he does not seem to have known a text of Aristotle independent of Ibn Rushd, and both Greek and Muslim sources, with rare exceptions, are cited from "what Ibn Rushd

says of them.<sup>14</sup> One would expect that, as an upholder of the theory of *dator formarum*, Gersonides would make frequent reference to Ibn Sīnā; he does not. All he knows of Ibn Sīnā is what Ibn Rushd says.

Such dependence, however, does not imply agreement with Ibn Rushd, nor does it imply a full knowledge of Ibn Rushd's works. Gersonides knows only what had been translated into Hebrew by his time.<sup>5</sup> Thus, he sometimes fails to do justice to Ibn Rushd's position and, in the specific case of the problem of *dator formarum*, he is even unaware of certain texts which might support his own position.<sup>6</sup>

It is well known that Gersonides rejected the method used by Aristotle, Ibn Rushd, and Maimonides to prove the existence of the Prime Mover/God. For Gersonides, the proof from the motion of the celestial bodies is subject to grave doubt; proofs from generation are far more valid.<sup>7</sup> This gives the problem of generation and, thus, the problem of the generative/formative agent far greater prominence in his system than in the systems of his predecessors.

When Gersonides begins his lengthy and systematic inquiry into generation at the beginning of the third section of Bk. V. of *Milhamot ha-Shem*,<sup>8</sup> the book in which he establishes the existence of incorporeal beings, he tells us that Ibn Rushd discussed the problem of generation in three places: the *Epitome of De Anima*,<sup>9</sup> the commentary on the *Book of Animals*,<sup>10</sup> and the seventh book of the *Long Commentary on Metaphysics*.<sup>11</sup> He also tells us that Ibn Rushd had something different to say about the formative principle for animals in each of these places.<sup>12</sup>

It is not surprising to the modern reader that Ibn Rushd should have expressed more than one opinion; Aristotle left him no definitive doctrine on the topic,<sup>13</sup> and Ibn Rushd wrote over a long period of time. While we cannot date the *Epitome of De Anima* or the Long Commentary on Metaphysics, it is generally agreed that the latter is one of the late works;<sup>14</sup> and it is known that the commentary on *Animalia* dates from 1169 — very early.<sup>15</sup>

Gersonides, however, is not interested in an 'historical' reconciliation of the differences, nor, indeed, in any kind of reconciliation. He simply outlines the various doctrines. He asserts, correctly, that in *Epitome de Anima*, Ibn Rushd holds that the Active Intellect is the agent of generation in animals, but that it is not the proximate form for them:<sup>16</sup> i.e., the Active Intellect gives something to the semen, and that something then generates or forms.<sup>17</sup>

Gersonides then turns to the commentary on *Animalia*, stating that there Ibn Rushd holds that the generator of the animal is not an intellect, but a psychic power in the semen; the generator of that power, however, is incorporeal. "This proves the existence of a certain incorporeal mover other than that demonstrated in the *Book of*

*Animals* [sic!], and that the first is naturally prior to the second."<sup>18</sup> Gersonides explains this to mean that when the matter is properly disposed and, thus, possesses the proper amount of heat through the agency of the celestial bodies, the psychic power in the semen is emanated from that [second] incorporeal power. But that power, which appears to be the Active Intellect, cannot act unless the celestial bodies have acted; thus, the [mover of the] latter must be prior in nature.<sup>19</sup> Here Gersonides may well be reporting accurately what the version of the commentary he knew stated.<sup>20</sup> There are, however, problems with this text, as we shall see in our discussion of Narboni.

Finally, Gersonides tells us that in the *Long Commentary on Metaphysics VI*<sup>21</sup> Ibn Rushd maintained that the generating power is in the semen, that it is begotten there by the father and the celestial bodies, and that this power is not incorporeal — let alone an intellect — because material form must come from material form. In the special case of man, however, intellect must come from an incorporeal form: man's intellect is not in any way mingled with matter and thus must have an incorporeal source.<sup>22</sup> It is against this text, which he has correctly reported, that most of Gersonides' polemic in what follows is directed.

The only self-contradiction in Ibn Rushd that really interests Gersonides is what he perceives to be the difference between these statements in the commentary on *Metaphysics VII* and certain statements in the commentary on *Metaphysics XII* (c. 18): one, Ibn Rushd's comparison of the power in semen which causes beings to have soul, and which itself is only potentially soul, to the form of the house in the soul of the builder, that form being potentially a house;<sup>23</sup> the other, Ibn Rushd's dictum that in the Prime Mover all the forms, in some way or other, are actual.<sup>24</sup> Gersonides finds these statements true, but in contradiction to what was said in the commentary on Book VII. He finds the reason for the view on the nature of the formative agent expressed in the commentary on Book VII to be Ibn Rushd's stubborn refusal to admit that incorporeal intelligence can have any action other than in (or through) itself.<sup>25</sup>

The discussion of this perceived self-contradiction in the commentary on *Metaphysics* is crucial to Gersonides' over-riding purpose in his treatment of Ibn Rushd. For while he takes up systematically, and at interminable length, each of Ibn Rushd's arguments against an incorporeal generator and each of Ibn Rushd's arguments in support of his own position — even proudly inventing a few arguments on Ibn Rushd's behalf —<sup>26</sup> his ultimate purpose is to show that Ibn Rushd, too, really did believe in an incorporeal formative agent.<sup>27</sup>

It seems to me that Gersonides' conclusion here rests on a fundamental misunderstanding of Ibn Rushd's doctrine. He, like some

modern scholars, did not take seriously enough Ibn Rushd's identification of final and formal cause.<sup>28</sup> At least in the later works, and at least in the areas of physics and metaphysics, form (and thus incorporeal intellect) *functions* as final cause, not as efficient cause.<sup>29</sup> The Prime Mover/God is the cause of the motion of the world, and the existence and life of the world consist in that motion, but the Prime Mover/God is the final cause, not the efficient cause, of that motion.<sup>30</sup> All the forms *do* exist actually, in some way or other, in the Prime Mover, but they do not function as efficient causes in generation any more than they do in locomotion, or any more than the form of the house in the soul of the builder is the efficient cause of the built house.

It is this conception of the role of form and intellect that Gersonides apparently can neither understand nor accept. He identified formal cause and intellect with efficient cause.<sup>31</sup> One testimony to this is his consistent use of the language of emanation which for him, as for Maimonides, is the way in indicating how the incorporeal *acts on* the corporeal.<sup>32</sup>

One of the works of Ibn Rushd that Gersonides did not know — and it does not appear to have been known to many — is a small, updated treatise on the procreative powers in semen and seeds. This work exists in a unique Arabic manuscript, and in a number of manuscripts in Hebrew translation. In Hebrew, it forms part of the *Sēfer ha'-Derūshīm ha-Ṭib'iyīm* and it is found in the nine-treatise recension of that work, always accompanied by the commentary of Narboni. The date of the translation is also unknown, as is the name of the translator, but the *terminus ad quem* is 1349, the date of completion of Narboni's commentary on the collection.<sup>33</sup>

This treatise is very narrowly focused. To my knowledge, this is the only work in which Ibn Rushd discusses generation without being sidetracked by polemic against *dator formarum* and similar theories held by his predecessors, or by problems associated with spontaneous generation.<sup>34</sup> That is not to say that he does not make his position on *dator formarum* clear here, but the term is never mentioned and there is no polemic on this issue. In general, what we find here agrees fairly well with the position taken in the *Long Commentary on Metaphysics VII*, the commentary on *Animalia* (as interpreted by Narboni), and in certain statements in *Tahāfut al Tahāfut*. The one very notable difference is that there is no mention here of the action of the celestial bodies. The underlying Aristotelian text is *De Generatione Animalium* I, 18-11, 4, especially 11,3. What we have is not simple repetition of Aristotle; the implications of his principles are also invoked.<sup>35</sup>

Proceeding by elimination, Ibn Rushd concludes that the agent responsible for generation/formation must be a procreative power in the semen, the semen itself resembling the father: i.e., agreeing in species



or genus. This power is only potentially the form of what is generated and, thus, requires an actualizer: something itself actual and like what is generated. In this case, the actualizer is the father (here called *ha-manīa' hari'shōn/al muḥarrik al awwal*),<sup>36</sup> and the semen is his instrument. This power in the semen acts only through heat which, *qua* heat can only impart a quality like itself; this power, however, imparts figure and form. In artificial things, the power that imparts figure and form is the form of the art, and thus this power in semen resembles the power of the art in artificial things and it also resembles the power of the soul in natural things. But this power is not itself a soul, for the soul is the entelechy of an organic body. To know the nature of this power,<sup>37</sup> one must investigate function. The first thing it does is to create and form the members of the body. Therefore, the physicians call it the formative power, and it resembles the nutritive faculty of the soul in its activity:

“The latter causes what is potentially a part of that which is nourished to become an actual besouled part of that which is nourished. For no member of that which is nourished becomes actual unless the nutritive faculty of the soul also exists in it actually, and the agent, as has been said elsewhere, is what bestows the entelechy of that which is acted upon: i.e., the form. All this indicates that *this power is what forms the members and gives them the nutritive soul*, but that it itself is not a nutritive soul, for the latter acts through organic instruments, while this power, with the exception of heat, has no instrument.”<sup>38</sup>

In the remainder of the treatise, Ibn Rushd goes on to consider in a general way whether the faculties of the soul are generated, and thus generated by this power, or if there are ungenerated faculties, which must then enter from without. The nature of the body in which the faculties of the soul inhere is also discussed. This is all straight paraphrase of *De Generatione Animalium* II, 3 – except that Aristotle is made to seem far less definite than he really is on the origin of intellect.<sup>39</sup>

At the outset of his commentary on this work, Narboni states that he will comment at more length than usual on this treatise because of the work's peculiar importance: it investigates the creation (*berī'ā*) of the animal, and especially that of the most distinguished animal, man; it is of the natural order that man should know his own creation first and thereafter perfect the remaining knowledge; and this treatise contains, in more depth, what was demonstrated in the commentary on *Animalia*. Later in his commentary, he will refer to this treatise as “this precious treatise”, and he will also say that to know how the agent of generation acts, and the substance of this agent, is the noblest thing that man can know.

So far as length goes, Narboni is as good as his word. He explicates,

and his favorite method is to explain Ibn Rushd by Ibn Rushd<sup>40</sup>—a method which implies that he sees a consistent system in Ibn Rushd's writings. He knows far more of the Averroean *corpus* than Gersonides, and he is certainly far more sympathetic to Ibn Rushd's point of view. As we shall see, Narboni is very sensitive to some types of (to his mind, apparent) inconsistencies in Ibn Rushd's writings, but (to the modern mind) quite insensitive to other problems.

Because of its length, I shall discuss only a small portion of the commentary. At that point in the treatise where Ibn Rushd says that the physicians call this power in semen the formative power, Narboni identifies the physicians with Galen<sup>41</sup> and then continues: "It is impossible for me to discuss this without explaining the opinion of the philosophers on the true nature of this power, as Ibn Rushd explained it in the commentary on *Animalia*." A lengthy excursus follows in which Narboni weaves back and forth between various Averroean texts — and not just texts from *Animalia* — in a truly artistic fashion. A number of them are passages in which Ibn Rushd discusses and refutes the views of others; but not all of them are of such a nature, and Narboni's purpose does not appear to be primarily informational. Two points in this excursus are of particular interest: a solution to one of the problems in the text of the commentary to *Animalia* (*ad De Generatione Animalium* II, 3), to which we referred in the discussion of Gersonides; and Narboni's discussion of what appears to be a contradiction between a passage in *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* and what Ibn Rushd says elsewhere, including other passages in that very book.

We have seen that Gersonides said that in the commentary on *Animalia* it is stated that the generator of the animal is a psychic power in semen, but that the generator of that power is something incorporeal (*nibdal*); and that this proves the existence of a certain incorporeal mover other than that demonstrated in *Animalia*. Gersonides' quotation agrees perfectly with the Latin text of the commentary<sup>42</sup> except for the reference to *Animalia*; the Latin (and Narboni) reads "*Physics*." But to read the text in this way involves Ibn Rushd in a serious self-contradiction, for earlier in the commentary it has been made quite clear that, in animals which reproduce sexually, it is the father that is responsible for the semen and the power it contains.<sup>43</sup>

In order to make Narboni's way of dealing with this problem more evident, let me quote the Latin text of the commentary:

hacc enim virtus animata est simili arti et continetur in genere naturae coelestis: [sic!] et id quod ipsam generat est de necessitate quid separatum (sive immateriale) cum videatur agere in aliud absque instrumento corporeo.....

Videtur tamen hic dari alius motor separatus praeter motorem qui habetur in Libri Physicorum isque illum praecedere natura.

What Narboni does is to change the punctuation of the first sentence. In his version it reads: *haec enim virtus animata est similis arti et continetur in genere naturae coelestis et id quod ipsam generat:44 est de...* In other words, the passage now maintains that it is the power, not its generator, that is incorporeal (*nibdal/separata*).

There is no way of knowing whether this punctuation of the text was Narboni's own bright idea, or whether he found it in the text of the commentary he had before him. Either way, the change does absolve Ibn Rushd of inconsistency on the origin of the psychic power. It also raises another problem.<sup>45</sup>

At 75 IK, Ibn Rushd states that there is in semen an active power which is the principle of life; that it is not fire, nor originated from fire; nor is it sufficient in itself, without the sun and other heavenly bodies, to effect something endowed with life.<sup>46</sup> But in addition, it cannot be an incorporeal (*separata*)<sup>47</sup> substance, because it acts through a vital instrument: i.e., heat. How then, at 76 C, can this power be described as incorporeal (*separata*) even though the text adds that it acts without a bodily (*corporeo*) instrument?

The question that interests me is not so much that of a possible inconsistency in Ibn Rushd;<sup>48</sup> rather, what interests me is Narboni's apparent indifference to this problem, and the fact that his own language seems to compound the problem.

It seems plain both in the commentary on *Animalia* and in the treatise on the powers in semen, that the psychic power can in no way be described as *separata*. In the treatise, it is explicitly said that the power, which is not a body, is in the semen, and that it acts through an instrument. In the commentary on *Animalia*, Ibn Rushd argues against the theory of Abū Bakr ibn al Ṣā'igh, which maintained that there was an *intellectus separatus* in the semen (75 K-M), and he also argues more generally against the theory of *dator formarum* (76 A). One premise of the arguments is that incorporeal substance accomplishes its work without an instrument, while the power in semen uses heat as its instrument. The Latin translator (or the Hebrew text from which he worked) was, perhaps, aware of a certain difficulty in 76 C. Ignoring for the moment the problem of punctuation, we note that after the words "*est necessitate quid separatum*" the words "*sive immateriale*" are added parenthetically, and are then followed by the explanation "*cum videatur agere in aliud absque instrumento corporeo*." This explanation is consistent with 75K: "*cum eius actio fiat cum instrumento vitali*."

In Narboni's paraphrase of the commentary, however, "*Instrumento vitali*" comes out as "through a corporeal (*gashmī*), vital instrument"; and when he gets around to paraphrasing 76 C (which he does twice), there is no "*sive immateriale*" to be found. The first time, Narboni says that the psychic power is an incorporeal (*nibdal*) power, necessarily,

because its action is without [any] instrument, adding that this psychic power in its proper subject, i.e., the airy, celestial part [of the semen]<sup>49</sup>, resembles the form of the bed in the soul of the artisan. He then repeats that this power is an incorporeal (*nibdal*) power, but this time his explanation is that it is incorporeal because its action is without bodily (*gūpanī*) instrument.

While one might attempt to account for the contradictory statements on the nature of the instrument by positing a “slip of the pen” or some error in the transmission of the text (e.g., the dropping of a negative term in the paraphrase of 75 K), one cannot account for Narboni’s consistent use of the term *nibdal* simply by assuming that he merely follows the usage of the text before him. Narboni consistently imports into his paraphrase of the commentary on *Animalia* material from other relevant writings of Ibn Rushd, especially from the commentary on *Metaphysics* VII (c. 31).<sup>50</sup> In that commentary, however, we have a definite and unmistakable statement: the formative power in semen is not an intellect, and it is in no way incorporeal (*mufāriq*).<sup>51</sup> It would appear that Narboni is simply not sensitive to the problem of Ibn Rushd’s (and his own) language in the commentary on *Animalia*. He is, however, sensitive to other types of problems.

In this excursus, Narboni goes on to paraphrase some of the polemic passages from the commentary on *Animalia*, those which argue against belief in the existence of forms, belief in *dator formarum*, and belief in the existence of an incorporeal intellect in semen.<sup>52</sup> Then he proceeds to paraphrase a portion of the *Long Commentary on Metaphysics* XII, c. 18. Here again, the polemic opposes belief in Forms, or in a soul emanated from the inclined sphere and the sun. But there is also polemic against the Mutakallimūn: specifically, against their denial of secondary causation and their denial of potentiality.\* This brings us to the second point of interest in Narboni’s excursus.

There is a well-known and difficult text in “On the Natural Sciences” III, at the end of *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*.<sup>53</sup> This passage was of special interest to Narboni: he also makes use of it in his commentary to *Mōreh Nebūkim*,<sup>54</sup> for an analogous purpose. According to Narboni’s paraphrase, which I shall abridge, Ibn Rushd states there that there is a celestial heat in the elements, and that in this heat are souls which create each and every species of animal.

“He goes so far as to say that there was not one of the ancient philosophers who did not acknowledge these wonderful things. Rather, they disputed only whether these creative souls were

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\* Interestingly enough, Ibn Taymiyyah, certainly one of the greatest Mutakallimūn, emphatically affirmed that there is nothing in Islāmic doctrine to prevent the notion of God’s action through and by means of secondary causes. -- Ed.

intermediaries between the celestial and the souls which are in bodies down here and, thus, had dominion over these souls and bodies... or whether these creative souls are themselves what are suspended in bodies and what generate the bodies because of the likeness between them, and when the compounds are corrupted, the souls return to their spiritual matter and their subtle bodies which cannot be perceived.”

Narboni recognizes that this apparently contradicts what Ibn Rushd says elsewhere, even in *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* itself. He asserts that the true meaning of the passage can only be determined by considering the context. First, within the context of *Tahāfut al Tahāfut*, we must remember that Ibn Rushd is disputing the contention that there are, according to the Scriptures (*Tōrōt*),<sup>55</sup> infinite upper causes from which issue infinite beings. We must also remember that this is the book in which Ibn Rushd made a covenant with the philosophers against the literal meaning of the religions (*datōt*), and so, in passing, Ibn Rushd alludes to this doctrine because it agrees with the doctrines of the [literal reading] of the Scriptures, even though he also manages to allude to the truth: i.e., psychic powers.

But the passage must also be understood in the context of the commentary on *Animalia*, where the generative power is said to be a form in the semen:<sup>56</sup>

“That is, through the celestial heat there is a principle which is the agent for animals. It is not fire nor produced from fire, and this power is not sufficient in itself, without the sun and spheres, to create the soul. For those causes which are accidentally infinite must come to an end at an eternal principle. We are also unable to say that this power is an incorporeal substance; for it acts through a corporeal [sic!], vital instrument, whereas the incorporeal acts through itself... Rather, it is a power related to the soul: i.e., a psychic power, and it is a potential, not actual, soul. This is what Aristotle meant when he said that a psychic power is interwoven in the elements... because this power is also in the elements, but only as a remote power.”

The psychic power is in the semen, while the elements are potentially semen; for the elements become plants, and the plants become animals:<sup>57</sup>

“Thus, the psychic power which generates is interwoven in the elements and is mixed in them with the power acquired from the heat of the sun and the other stars, for there is a celestial heat in the elements which is a subject for this power.”<sup>58</sup>

Finally, Narboni wishes to connect the passage from *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* with the aforementioned polemic passage from the commentary to *Metaphysics* XII (c. 18): On the latter, he writes:

“Here you see that Ibn Rushd explained that Plato thought that some of these proportions and psychic powers created in the elements were Forms, and that they were the principles and matrices for the forms of compounds. Thus, I quoted for you what I quoted of Ibn Rushd’s discourse at the end of *Tahāfut al Tahāfut*, about the souls which are the generators for the forms in compounds, or are themselves suspended in bodies which they generated according to the likeness which is between them; and [in the latter case] when the bodies are corrupted, they return to their spiritual matter and subtle, individual, celestial bodies which cannot be perceived. And the truth of Ibn Rushd’s discourse is when he said that all the ancient philosophers acknowledged these souls, for truly it is an ancient doctrine. And how very wonderfully it agrees with God’s words: “Is there any number of His troops?” (Job 25:3); and God spoke truly regarding the beings when He said: “Those who are with us are more than they who are with them... and the chariots of fire and horses of fire stood around Elisha” (II K 6:16-17). The biblical dictum is true: there are antels dwelling in the elements as there are angels dwelling in heaven.<sup>59</sup> and many arts are true which have perished today from our nations,<sup>60</sup> And I say, as Abū Naṣr said in his distress, when a difficulty occurred to him and there was no one who could save him from that difficulty: ‘My God, to You belongs the complaint, and from You comes the directing aright to the truth.’<sup>61</sup> I have been lengthy in bringing forward the words of Ibn Rushd to illuminate this question; and inasmuch as we have seen that He who directs our particular species to the human entelechy in this, our Exile, has transmitted<sup>62</sup> to us words that agree with his opinion, let us break off the discussion about this, and return to our commentary on the words of this treatise.”

The purpose of this paper was expository, and no far-reaching conclusions may be drawn from it. It may, however, offer ground on which to base a caution to scholars: in the study of mediaeval philosophers, the knowledge of their sources is not always sufficient to explain their positions.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup>Cf. H.A. Davidson, "Alfarabi and Avicenna on Active Intellect," *Viator* 3 (1972), p. 110. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-160.

<sup>2</sup>All references to this work are cited from the Leipzig edition of 1866. I have also taken note of the readings from the MSS provided by C. Touati in *La pensée philosophique et théologique de Gersonide* (Les Éditions de Minuit, Paris, 1973). So far as I know, Narboni shows no acquaintance with the *Milhamot*.

<sup>3</sup>See Touati, *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41, 72-75. In one case, however, Gersonides appears to know a text that Ibn Rushd does not. Gersonides cites Abū Nasr in *De Intellectu* to establish that Allārābī, too, upheld the theory of *dator formarum*. The reference, however, is to that part of the text extant only in Hebrew. When Ibn Rushd tries to establish Allārābī's position on this matter, he refers not to *De Intellectu*, but to the work "On the Two Philosophers" (e.g., *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* VII, c. 31, p. 886, l. 2; *ibid.*, XII, c. 18, p. 1499, l. 1 [all references to this work are cited from the edition of Bouyges (Beirut: 1938-52)]). This may indicate that the relevant section of *De Intellectu* had already dropped out of some Arabic texts by Ibn Rushd's time; it may even cast some doubt on the authenticity of that section. We should note that Narboni is by no means so dependent on Ibn Rushd. He has first-hand knowledge of a large number of Muslim philosophers.

<sup>4</sup>It is possible that he does not know even all of that. There may very well have been Hebrew translations of some of the treatises contained in *Sēfer ha-De'ushim ha-Yib'uyim* (see below) by his time, but Gersonides does not seem to have known any of these works.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., *Long Commentary on Physics* V, c. 13, 218 K. All references to the Latin translations of Ibn Rushd are to the edition *apud Iunctas* (Venice, 1562; repr. Frankfurt am Main: 1962).

<sup>6</sup>See e.g., *Milhamot ha-Shem* V, 3, i, p. 220. When this paper was read, Professor Norbert Samuelson, the discussant, pointed out that in *Milhamot* VI (the discussion of, and proof for, creation), Gersonides does use arguments from the motions of the heavenly bodies. He asked why, especially in view of the fact that Bk. VI was actually the first book composed (see *Milhamot* VI, p. 417), Gersonides should have stated such a negative view of the proofs from motion elsewhere. The response to the question must be two-fold: (1) Gersonides spends the greater part of Bk. VI proving that Aristotle's arguments from motion and time (the best of their kind) are invalid. The only positive use made of arguments from the motions of the heavenly bodies is teleological: i.e., the motions of these bodies, as well as their arrangement and number, all evidence purpose which, in turn, implies creation. (2) In Bk. VI, Gersonides attempts to demonstrate creation, while in Bk. V the aim is to demonstrate the existence of incorporeal beings. While every proof for creation is also proof for a creator, the teleological proof, as offered by Gersonides, would not necessarily imply the incorporeal nature of that creator. It is the incorporeality that Gersonides contends can never be satisfactorily established by proofs from motion, but only by proofs from the nature of generation.

<sup>7</sup>Gersonides also discusses generation and *dator formarum* in Bk. I, pp. 40-45.

<sup>8</sup>The reference is to the introductory section (pp. 4-5 in the 1947 Hyderabad edition of the Arabic text).

<sup>9</sup>Gersonides and Narboni both refer consistently to the *be'ur* on this work. *Be'ur* normally refers to a middle commentary (*paraphrasis*), but it is generally held that the commentary on *Book of Animals* (hereafter, *Animalia*) is an epitome: see M. Steinschneider, *Die Hebraeischen Uebersetzungen des Mittelalters* (repr. Graz: 1956), p. 144; F.F. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus* (Leiden: 1968), p. 48. On the composition of *Animalia* and the numbering of its books, see Steinschneider, *op. cit.*, pp. 143-144. Gersonides' reference is to the section of Ibn Rushd's commentary which treats *De Generatione Animalium* II, 3 (pp. 75 C-77 C in the Latin).

- <sup>11</sup>C. 31. Gersonides will also refer to other of Ibn Rushd's writings in the course of his discussion, most importantly the *Long Commentary* on *Metaphysics* XII, c. 18.
- <sup>12</sup>*Milhamot*, p. 221.
- <sup>13</sup>See, e.g., S. van den Bergh's translation of *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* (London, 1954), vol. II, pp. 176-177 (n. 317.3).
- <sup>14</sup>See Bouyges, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pp. xxiii-xxv.
- <sup>15</sup>According to some, the earliest: see Peters, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- <sup>16</sup>*Epitome de Anima*, p. 5, 6-9.
- <sup>17</sup>*Milhamot*, p. 221.
- <sup>18</sup>The text, as quoted at *Milhamot*, p. 221, corresponds to 76 C in the Latin text of the commentary.
- <sup>19</sup>*Milhamot*, pp. 221-222.
- <sup>20</sup>But the reference to *Animalia* is still inexplicable: even a bad scribe ought not to have made such an error.
- <sup>21</sup>C. 31, especially pp. 881-886.
- <sup>22</sup>*Milhamot*, p. 222.
- <sup>23</sup>Pp. 1500, 15-1501, 5.
- <sup>24</sup>P. 1505, 2-5.
- <sup>25</sup>*Milhamot*, pp. 230-236. The Arabic preposition *bi* is ambiguous, having both a locative and instrumental sense, an ambiguity which carries over into the Hebrew translation. Gersonides is well aware of this ambiguity, see *ibid.*, p. 226.
- <sup>26</sup>E.g., *Milhamot*, p. 227. Gersonides also speaks of extracting the implication of Ibn Rushd's words: "This is the argument of Ibn Rushd that we found in his paraphrase [sic!] of *Animalia* and in some places in his commentary to *Metaphysics*, even if we did not find it in exactly this way; rather, we extracted it from the implication of his words, and we also completed it" (*ibid.*, pp. 225-226). In doing this, Gersonides was only following the example of Ibn Rushd himself; see *Epitome De Anima* I, p. 6, 7-8, and *Epitome de Caelo* II, p. 41, 10 (both in the Hyderabad, 1947 edition). In his treatise on the powers in semen, to be discussed below, he states: "These questions [and the answers] are to be found in Aristotle's words, but some of them may be found there explicitly, while others are implicit in the principles he posited. We ourselves will begin with what may be found explicitly in Aristotle's words, and then [we shall take up] what exists implicitly in his principles."
- <sup>27</sup>E.g., *Milhamot*, p. 235.
- <sup>28</sup>Ibn Rushd follows Aristotle: e.g. *Metaphysics* VIII, 4, 1044a, 35f.; *De Gen. An.* I, 1, 715a, 4-9; *De Gen. et Corr.* II, 9, 335b, 6-8.
- <sup>29</sup>Systematic proof of this assertion would extend this paper to undue length. We may note, however, that while Aristotle states (*Physics* II, 7, 198a, 24-31) that often formal, final and efficient causes are identical (or, as in *Metaphysics* XII, 4, 1070b, 25-35, that formal and efficient cause are in some sense identical), he is careful to limit this identity to things within the realm of physics and/or proximate causes. In order to salvage his position as religious philosopher, Ibn Rushd attempts to extend such identity into the realm of metaphysics and remote causes, this can only be done by positing that "efficient cause" (or "agent") is an equivocal term (see, references are to the edition of Bouyges cause" (or "agent") is an equivocal term (see, e.g., *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* III, p. 230, 14-16 [all references are to the edition of Bouyges (Beyrouth, 1930)]. Ibn Rushd's epistemology is the most difficult area in which to uphold my assertion; see, however, *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* XII, C. 38, pp. 1612, 8-1613, 4.
- <sup>30</sup>On motion as the life to the world, see: *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* III, p. 172, 3-5; *ibid.*, IV, p. 264, 11-12; *Long Commentary to Physics* VIII, c. 1, 338 H-1 and 339 D; *De Substantia Orbis* IV, 10 I. On the form of the house, see *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* XII, c. 36, 1595, 3-1596, 9.



<sup>31</sup>That is not to say that Gersonides does not repeat Aristotle's identification of final and formal cause (e.g., *Milhamot*, p. 45). Rather, it means that, for Gersonides, in both the sub-lunar and the trans-lunar worlds, efficient causes and formal causes are identical, and such causes are intellect. In the case of generation, the Active Intellect both disposes the matter and acts (simultaneously) as *dator formarum*.

<sup>32</sup>*Moreh Nebukim* II, 12. It is this definition of emanation that enables Maimonides, Gersonides, and others to speak simultaneously of creation and emanation. See H. Davidson, *The Philosophy of Abraham Shalom* (Berkeley, 1964), p. 45.

<sup>33</sup>On the collection as a whole, and for the text of this treatise, see my forthcoming edition and translation in the various series of *Corpus Averrois*. Narboni's commentary was written for former students left behind in Perpignan.

<sup>34</sup>There is some argument *contra* latency theory.

<sup>35</sup>See above, n. 26.

<sup>36</sup>In Ibn Rushd's writings on generation, the role of the parent is described in two ways. Following Aristotle (e.g., *Physics* II, 7, 198a, 25-27), the parent is described as proximate mover (*Tahāfut al Tahāfut* III, p. 211, 9-10), or as instrument, the prime mover in generation being the sun, or Active Intellect, or the celestial bodies (*Long Commentary on Physics*: V, c. 13, 218 K; VIII, c. 15, 352 B; *ibid.*, c. 46, 387 M-388 B; *ibid.*, c. 47, 388 H-I). However, in *Long Commentary on Metaphysics* V, c. 1 (p. 478, 10-16) and *Epitome Metaphysics* II (p. 50, 6-14), the parent is said to be a remote, extrinsic cause. In his commentary on the present treatise, Narboni explains *ha-manīa' ha-ri'shon* in the latter sense. Inasmuch as there is no mention of the role of the heavenly bodies in the treatise, Narboni may very well be right.

<sup>37</sup>At this point, the text actually begins to speak of "powers", a usage which continued to the end of the treatise. I cannot account for the change in number.

<sup>38</sup>Clearly, this argues against both *dator formarum* and Ibn Sīnā's theory of the role of the nutritive soul. Cf. the commentary to *Animalia*, 75 K.

<sup>39</sup>"As for the intellect, because it is not apparent that it possesses a corporeal organ through which it operates, as is the case with the rest of the faculties of the soul, doubt has arisen as to whether it enters from without, or whether it is generated in certain respects and in other respects enters from without. Aristotle deferred in investigation of this question to the place appropriate to it, and [here] he said [only] that the prevailing opinion about this is that the intellect enters from without." (Cf. the commentary to *Animalia*, 75 D.) It is difficult to explain this, particularly in view of the fact that the Arabic translation of *De Gen. An.* II, 3, 736b, 27-29 (ed. Brugman and Drossaart Luif; Leiden: 1971) faithfully renders the Greek. It is possible that Ibn Rushd is anticipating 737a, 7-11 (note, especially, the Arabic version).

<sup>40</sup>But where Narboni departs from the texts of Ibn Rushd to give his own opinion, the words of Salomon Munk (*Mélanges de philosophie juive et arabe* [Paris: 1859], p. 506) apply: "Moïse de Narbonne a un style concis et souvent obscur; ses opinions ne sont pas moins hardies que celles de Levi ben-Gerson; mais il ne les exprime pas avec la même clarté et la même franchise."

<sup>41</sup>Again, on the basis of Averroan texts: e.g., *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* VII, c. 31; *ibid.*, XII, c. 18; and the commentary to *Animalia* (75 K).

<sup>42</sup>76 C.

<sup>43</sup>E.g., 72 A-H (and cf. the argument against *dator formarum* at 75 M). It is clear that Narboni reads the text in this way, but see below, n. 49.

<sup>44</sup>I.e., the power is something divine. Cf. *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* VII, c. 31, p. 884, 13-14.

<sup>45</sup>We should note that just as Narboni and Gersonides differ in their interpretations of the beginning of the quoted passage (76 C), so their interpretations of the end of that passage differ. For Gersonides the two incorporeal movers mentioned there are the Active

Intellect (whose existence was proved in *Animalia*) and the mover of the spheres. Narboni says: "Thus there appears here a certain incorporeal mover different from the mover whose existence was demonstrated in *Physics*, the latter being prior in nature to this mover. For should the mover demonstrated in *Physics* be removed (*hushar*), this agent in the semen – which is a nature overseen (*mushqap*) and looked after (*mushgah*) by it – would also be removed, but the reverse is not true..." Presumably, Narboni refers to the divine "looking after" that results in eternity as species for corruptible beings. Cf. the *Long Commentaries* on *De Anima* (II, c. 34) and *De Generatione et Corruptione* (II, c. 59), and many references in the *Long Commentary to Metaphysics*.

<sup>46</sup>An eternal cause is necessary to prevent an infinite regress of causes. Cf. *Tahāfut al Tahāfut* I, p. 21, 1-7. Narboni paraphrases this section of the commentary.

<sup>47</sup>In Narboni, *niprad*. In the paraphrase of 76 C, Narboni uses *nibdal* to describe both the power in semen and the Prime Mover. Thus, it does not appear that he is trying to draw a distinction between *niprad* (as incorporeal in the sense of separate) and *nibdal* (as incorporeal merely in the sense of immaterial). Elsewhere in his commentary, the terms are also used interchangeably.

<sup>48</sup>I think it is clear that something has gone wrong in the transmission of 76 C. Nonetheless, all three versions of that text that we are considering agree in the use of the term "*nibdal* [*separata*]." It would be most exceptional if this term reflected anything but the use of *mufāriq* (or some equivalent) in the Arabic text. Ibn Rushd may have used that term, particularly in such an early work, under the influence of the Arabic translation of *De Gen. An.* II, 3, 737a, 7-10.

<sup>49</sup>Cf. *De Gen. An.* II, 3, 736b, 35-737a, 1.

<sup>50</sup>To give only two examples, the brief reference to the role of celestial heat in the generation of both animals that reproduce sexually and those spontaneously generated (75 H1), is fleshed out with material on the role of the sun from *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* VII, c. 31; and Ibn Rushd's brief reference to Galen at 75 K is expanded with material from that same commentary.

<sup>51</sup>P, 884, 14-15.

<sup>52</sup>75 K-76 B.

<sup>53</sup>Beginning at p. 577, 9.

<sup>54</sup>*Ad* I, 62.

<sup>55</sup>Narboni is always very careful, in this excursus, to use the plural, rather than the singular, when speaking both of "Scripture" and "religion". In what follows, Narboni alludes to Ibn Rushd's rejection of the position of the Mutakallimūn (and al Ghazzālī) on secondary causation.

<sup>56</sup>Actually, Ibn Rushd never says this in *Animalia*. Narboni is again interpolating material from *Long Commentary to Metaphysics* VII, c. 31 (p. 883, 15-18, and note no. 40 in the apparatus). The quotation which follows is based on the commentary to *Animalia*, 75 IK.

<sup>57</sup>Narboni is quoting *Tahāfut al Tahāfut*, "On the Natural Sciences" I, p. 540, 8-10.

<sup>58</sup>This is a reference to the commentary on *Animalia*, 109 D. (*ad De Gen. An.* III, 11); cf. *ibid.*, 108 M-109 A. Note that Aristotle in that chapter (762a, 21) does so far as to say that "in a sense all things are full of soul." In the Arabic translation, however, the reading is "psychic power." Nonetheless, this passage may be Narboni's justification for saying, in the quotation which follows, that Ibn Rushd was correct in saying that all the ancient philosophers believed that the souls referred to in "On the Natural Sciences" III existed.

<sup>59</sup>On "angels in heaven" in Muslim and Jewish philosophers, see van den Bergh, *Tahāfut al Tahāfut*, n. 233.2 (vol. II, p. 135) and no. 293.4 (*ibid.*, p. 162). The more usual practice is to identify angels with intelligences. So far as I know, Ibn Rushd himself does not explicitly identify angels with powers (or psychic powers, or souls). "Angels in the elements" is highly reminiscent of the theory of immanent powers in Philo, a theory which Narboni certainly could not have known directly. Narboni would appear to be following

Maimonides (*Moreh Nebukim* II, 6-7; cf. III, 39 end) who, in addition to calling the elements angels, specifically says that the formative power is an angel. Professor al-Fārūqī was kind enough to remind me of the emphasis on angels in everything in popular Muslim religious thought. I think it unlikely that this would have been known to Narboni, but one cannot rule out such an influence on Ibn Rushd.

<sup>100</sup>Here Narboni may be referring to an earlier passage in his commentary where he mentioned Provençal Jews, of an earlier date, who thought they could create animal life by correctly proportioning heat. See Steinschneider, *Hebr. Uebersetz.*, p. 180, n. 542.

<sup>101</sup>See Steinschneider, *Alfarabi* (repr.; Amsterdam: 1966), pp. 113 and 253. It seems likely that Narboni is quoting the anecdote from Ibn Bajjah's "Letter of Farewell," a work he referred to earlier in the commentary.

<sup>102</sup>The translation is conjectural. The readings of the MSS are very difficult at this point. I have based my translation on the sense of the passage, confirmatory evidence from his commentary on *Moreh Nebukim*, and what I think can be read in MS Mun. 31.

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