the philosophical forum
A QUARTERLY

Editors' Note

It is part of the parochialism, if not the chauvinism, of the "History of Western Philosophy" that in its ordinary presentations, it traces a course which all but eliminates the Islamic and Jewish contributions to philosophy. Indeed, in its furthest reaches, and in its origins, modern history of philosophy, though it took the Greeks and Romans seriously, marked them off as "Pagan philosophy," and beginning with the early histories (e.g. by Hegel, and by Feuerbach) established a distinctly "Christian" framework for Western thought. The "History of Philosophy" is no historical accident, of course. A proper historiography and sociology of philosophy would seek to understand the shifting currents and emphases as themselves historical developments, and this work is hardly begun. Yet it is useful, we think, as part of this task, to encourage the publication of studies in those rich areas of philosophy which have been left outside the accepted mainstream. Such an area is Islamic philosophy. Though such names as Averroes, Avicenna and Alfarabi are part of the traditional curriculum in Medieval philosophy (as are, among the Jewish medieval philosophers, such names as Ibn Gabirol or Maimonides), they are more often than not encountered as transitional or contributary figures: transitional in the transmission of the Greek philosophical heritage to the Latin West; contributary in what they offered as grist for the mill of "Western thought." The distinctive contexts of their thought; its autonomy; its peculiar enrichment and elaboration in cultures often quite different from that of Catholic, or later, Protestant Europe—all these features are most often glossed. In part the problem is linguistic. In part, however, it is cultural and even political, even where it is no longer a religious problem. A small contribution to deparochialization may be made in making available the work of scholars in Islamic philosophy to a wider audience. *The Philosophical Forum* has, from time to time, published both articles about and translations of Islamic philosophy. In this issue, with the cooperation of a group of scholars in Islamic philosophy, we have focused on one part of the wider spectrum. The range of articles here covers a large historical period, as well as a wide variety of geographical and cultural centers. The emphasis is on the concepts of Being and of the Self in Islamic philosophy,

but the modes vary from the theological-metaphysical to the analytic-logical. In philosophical content, the contributions range from discussions of such classical metaphysical concepts as Being, Creation, the nature of Universals; to such epistemological questions as the relation between reason and other modes of knowing, knowledge of the self, and the relation of philosophy to religion, in modes of discourse and demonstration; to psychological theories—e.g. the atomist theory of perception—and ethical theories embedded in their metaphysical and epistemological contexts—e.g. Rāzī's epicurean theory of pleasure and pain. The contributions are especially rich in the Islamic discussions of modality: of possibility, necessity, impossibility, and in the interplay of rationalist and mystical modes of thought. So too, there is displayed the acutely subtle methodological self-consciousness of the Islamic philosophers, in what we might characterize as the metaphilosophical discussion of the nature of philosophy itself, (e.g., in the essay on Alfarabi), and of the concept of truth. Thus, for example, Prof. Ivry gives us a critical reassessment of Averroes' so-called "double truth" concept, in the context of a unified view of his philosophy. At the borders of current research, several contributers (Profs. Corbin, Izutsu, Rahman, Nasr) deal with Iranian sources of Islamic philosophy, and Prof. Corbin, in particular, offers a distinctive reconstruction of the continuity between ancient Iranian thought and Zoroastrism, with later Islamic thought.

All of this discussion is intrinsically interesting to the philosopher, and to the historian of ideas, touching as it does, in new and unique ways upon traditional and current philosophical, methodological and logical issues. But to read it only as a unique contribution to the *Problematique* of Western philosophy is not yet to understand this philosophical content in its own right. Several questions arise: What is distinctive in Islamic thought? How does it transform the classical Greek heritage? And what does it bring that is new and unfamiliar to the West, or to the Greek tradition? How are its different modes of philosophizing related to the contexts of medieval Islamic cultures, to Islamic theology? How was philosophy done in the Islamic world, and by whom, and in what institutional and social structures? Only the fuller study of the Arabic, Iranian, and Indian contexts, and of the complex thousand-year history of this development can yield even the beginning of an answer to these questions. Still, it may be useful to point to the main feature of Islamic philosophy as an aid to reading the contributions to this special issue of *The Philosophical Forum*.

Paradoxical as it may seem at first, Islamic philosophy is not "religious" philosophy in the sense that most of us understand this expression. One is more likely to understand its spirit by contrasting it to, rather than seeing it as the counterpart of, "Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages." For throughout its long history in Islam, philosophy was understood by those who practiced it as the science of the sciences that included the investigation and interpretation of religion (revelation, prophecy, and the divine law) as a *philosophic* problem. None of the specifically Islamic religious sciences (such as theology or jurisprudence) was ever conceived by a Muslim philosopher as a worthy competitor of philosophy; instead, these religious sciences, too, were subjected to philosophic investigation as to their framework, method, aim, and limitation. In the classical period of Islamic philosophy, religion (including theology and jurisprudence) were investigated within the framework provided by political philosophy. This can be seen from the articles on Alfarabi and Rāzī; it was true of Avicenna and Averroes; and it continued to hold true for those Muslim philosophers in the post-classical period who chose to remain faithful to the so-called Peripatetic tradition. This political framework was largely abandoned in the post-classical period (which is well represented in this issue by the last four articles) and replaced by a new framework provided by Islamic mysticism (Sufism). The prophet was now seen primarily as the Perfect Man of the gnostic tradition rather than as the lawgiver who founds a new community. In the post-classical period, philosophy did in a certain sense become the handmaid of something that was thought to be higher than philosophy. Yet Islamic mysticism, and the "new wisdom" that emerged out of the integration of philosophy and mysticism, was by no means more "sectarian" than classical Islamic philosophy. Its investigations ranged widely through pre-Islamic and non-Islamic religious thought and experience. And it cannot be construed as an Islamic "religious" science or as "religious" philosophy in this sense. Neither "Pagan philosophy" nor "Christian philosophy," therefore, are adequate models for the study of the practice of philosophy in a religious community. One must consider the possibility that religion and philosophy can be conceived and practiced as two radically different things which can coexist in a state of permanent conflict and creative tension.

Marx W. Wartofsky,   Muhsin S. Mahdi,
Boston University.   *Harvard University.*

Articles

ALFARABI ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION *

MUHSIN MAHDI

I

Philosophy and religion are relative latecomers in the history of the human arts. Their emergence presupposes the full development of the

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practical arts and of all the popular arts (sec. 140).[1]† For it is only after these have been developed (150.2-3) that men's souls desire to understand the causes of sensible things that appear on earth and in the heavens and to know many of the things (figures, numbers, colors, etc.) discovered by the practical arts. This desire, in turn, prompts some men to investigate the reasons for these phenomena (150.6, cf. 150.3). The investigation engendered by the desire to know the causes or reasons characterizes a new epoch in the development of the human arts, which unfolds by stages as follows.

1. First (150.7, 150.9), the investigation is conducted by means of rhetorical methods because rhetoric is the first syllogistic method to be perceived by men,[2] who begin to use rhetoric to investigate mathematical things and nature.[3]

2. The second stage (sec. 141) is reached when inquirers come to learn about dialectical methods. A long time passes during which they continue to use rhetorical methods, which results in differences of opinions and a multiplicity of doctrines, frequent discussions about the opinions that each verifies for himself, and frequent occasions in which they challenge each other's positions. As they contend against one another, each will need to firm up the methods he uses and try to make them irrefutable or difficult to refute. They continue this effort and keep testing the firmer methods until they learn to use dialectical methods. Initially, or when dialectical methods are being learned, rhetoric, sophistry, and dialectic, are mixed together. Then rhetorical methods are rejected in favor of dialectic. But because there is a similarity between dialectic and

and M. Grignaschi (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1971). Includes a French translation.
VC: Virtuous City. Alfārābīs Abhandlung Der Musterstaat (Ārā' Ahl al-Madīna al-Fādila), ed. F. Dieterici (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1895). French translation: *Al-Fārābī: Idées des habitants de la cité virtueuse*, tr. R.P. Jaussen *et al.* (Cairo: Institut Français d'Archéologie Orientale, 1949).
VR: [Virtuous] Religion. In Alfarabi's Book of Religion and Related Texts (Kitāb al-Milla wa-Nuṣūṣ Ukhrā), ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1968).
Averroes, *DT: Decisive Treatise. Ibn Rushd (Averroes): Kitāb Faṣl al-Maqāl*, ed. G.F. Hourani (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1959). English translation in sec. 10 of *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, cited above.

† *Alfarabi's Book of Letters (Kitāb al-Hurūf)*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1970). References are to page(s) and line(s) unless it is indicated that they are to chapters or sections.

sophistry, at first both are used in the investigation and verification of opinions. The distinction between sophistry and dialectic is the last step in this stage, at which point sophistry is rejected and used only for the purpose of examination or testing.

The steps taken in this second stage seem to be as follows. (We are dealing with the investigation of theoretical matters, physics and mathematics, 150.9-10, 150.11, 151.5). The use of rhetoric leads to the emergence of a variety of views and positions, and inquirers confront each other. Each will try to defend his position by refining his method and to contend against the methods and opinions of the others. In the process there emerges a mixture of rhetoric, sophistry (contentiousness), and dialectic. Since sophistry has been used in criticizing rhetorical methods, the rejection of rhetorical methods leaves sophistry and dialectic. And since sophistry "resembles" dialectic, what is left may be largely dialectical or largely sophistic: some inquirers will use largely the one, others the other. Alfarabi first mentions the emergence of dialectic, then the distinction between dialectic and sophistry. But he also notices that the "similarity" between the two leads "many people" to use sophistry (not dialectic) in the investigation and verification of opinions. It is only later that the inquiry into theoretical affairs and their investigation and verification settles upon dialectical methods alone, and sophistry is set aside for use in testing and examination only.

Thus sophistry is not presented as a separate "historical" stage. It is present at the end of the rhetorical stage and the beginning of or alongside the dialectical stage, and then it is kept for use under special circumstances. It is one of the two lines of development after the rhetorical stage: a false line of development which is rejected as the inquiry into theoretical things settles on dialectical methods.[4]

3. The third stage begins (sec. 142) with the discovery of the insufficiency of dialectic and ends with the completion of philosophy (in 152.6). The following are the steps taken in this third stage. (a) Dialectic is employed until dialectical forms of address are perfected. It then becomes evident by the use of these very dialectical methods that they are not sufficient for attaining "certainty." This leads to the investigation of the methods of "instruction and certain science." (b) While this is happening, two new directions emerge. (1) Men "fall upon" or discover the "methods of mathematics" or the proper methods for the investigation of "mathematical affairs" (cf. 150.9); these methods become perfect or almost perfect.

And it appears that as a result of all this the difference between the methods of dialectic and the methods of certainty begins to appear to the inquirers and they begin to distinguish between the two to some extent. (2) Men become inclined to the "science" of "political affairs" (as distinguished from theoretical affairs, physics and mathematics), and these are investigated with a mixture of dialectic and the certain methods, at a time when dialectical methods have become so firm as to be "almost scientific." This situation continues until "philosophy" reaches the state it reached at the "time of Plato."

It is important to notice that Plato's philosophy or the philosophy of "Plato's time" is not contemporaneous with the discovery of dialectic. The discovery of dialectic, the dialectical inquiry into theoretical affairs, and even the separation of dialectic from rhetoric and sophistry and the rejection of the latter two, had occured earlier. Rather, it is contemporaneous with the very end of the dialectical period when philosophy is about to be completed. It is preceded by the discovery of the insufficiency of dialectic for attaining certainty. This discovery, which is attributed to dialectic itself, appears to lead also to the discovery of a certain correlation between "the methods of instruction" on the one hand and of "the certain science" on the other.

The discovery and the subsequent perfection of the "methods of mathematics" seems to be a *parallel* development. But the coming of age of the methods of mathematics precedes the coming of age of the methods of certainty (in physics and politics), and both seem to contribute to the development of the inquiry into the methods of instruction and the certain science. The advance in the methods of mathematics and the inquiry into the methods of instruction and the certain science, in turn, enable men to see the "difference" (*farq*) and distinguish "to a certain extent" between dialectical methods and the methods of certainty (cf. secs. 162-165).

In *On Philosophy* (fr. 8 Ross) Aristotle does not emphasize the place of mathematics. He moves from natural science to the "highest wisdom." Alfarabi assumes that physics and mathematics were being investigated from the beginning of the "theoretical" epoch (150.9-10). Although physics seems to be the theoretical science proper (151.5) which is being investigated rhetorically, sophistically, and dialectically, we learn (151.10) that the "methods of mathematics" are distinct and that their rapid advance contributes to the clarification of the distinction between dialectic and certainty and to the development of the scientific method in general. Again, in *On*

Philosophy Aristotle distinguishes between the inquiry into nature and the highest wisdom; in Alfarabi the latter inquiry seems to correspond to the beginning of the search for the method of the certain science initiated by the development of mathematics and politics.

Alfarabi's and Aristotle's accounts converge when they speak about the emergence of the "knowledge of political affairs" (151.12). Aristotle connects this event with Socrates. Alfarabi says that "men become inclined to" this knowledge, but does not explain why; neither does Aristotle. The implication is that the perfection of the methods of mathematics, the distinction between dialectic and certainty, and in general the investigation of the methods of instruction and of the certain science, lead inquirers to set apart those matters which are not subject to the method of certainty —not mathematical and, generally, not "theoretical" in this sense. Their "principle" is will and choice. As men begin to see that these matters cannot be investigated by the method they have come to regard as the highest science and that they have a different kind of principle, they incline to know them. This seems to form part of their effort to understand the distinctions among various subject matters and their desire for a comprehensive science of all things. Although they had known a great deal about political matters (in a practical way, on the basis of generally accepted opinions, etc.), now that they have come to learn about the methods of instruction and the certain science and to distinguish among the methods—that is, now that they know the limits of rhetoric and dialectic—they are inclined to know political affairs scientifically or with certainty. The "way of Socrates," according to Alfarabi, consisted in the attempt to make his people understand their ignorance of "scientific investigation" (*P* 22.1-2); and Socrates possessed the ability to conduct "*scientific* investigation of justice and the virtues" (*P* 22.5). Hence the event described here (151.12-15) does refer to Socrates. Socrates emerges out of a physical and mathematical tradition, which he supplements with the scientific investigation of political affairs. His primary achievement is not the refutation of sophistry. This had happened earlier (sec. 141). What characterizes Socrates' (and Plato's) "stage" is the search for the certain science or for certainty. He investigates political affairs with a mixture of dialectical and certain methods in which the dialectical component has become so firm as to be almost scientific. Alfarabi is silent here about the contribution of Thrasymachus (*P* 22.1-8), which is postponed for a later stage (152.2 ff.; cf. the parallel account in *R* 55.13-16).

4. The fourth stage is reached (sec. 143) when the matter rests in the way it rested in the "days of Aristotle." At this stage scientific inquiry reaches "the highest level" (*yatanāhā*); all the methods are distinguished from each other; and "universal" theoretical and practical philosophy becomes complete, with no place in it for further investigation. Philosophy becomes an art that is only learned and taught. It is taught in a twofold manner: privately to the few and publicly to the many. Private instruction is conducted by means of demonstrative methods only. Common or public instruction is conducted by means of dialectical, rhetorical, and poetic methods (not sophistical, cf. 151.6, *R* 57.4). Of these three, rhetorical and poetic methods are more likely to be employed in instructing the multitude in theoretical and practical things that have been established as correct by demonstration.

The position of "poetic methods" in the development described so far is rather curious. While poetry as images and as the activity of imaging forth was present from the beginning of the discussion (131.9 ff.), there was no such thing as "poetic philosophy" (as there was a "sophistic philosophy," for instance, 131.5, 132.7, *passim*) and "poets" did not figure in the enumeration or ranking of those who belong to the few (134.12-15). Then, in the account of the emergence of the "popular arts," poetry developed "alongside the development or after the development" of the (syllogistic) art of rhetoric (142.12), but the account (142.12-17) and explanation of its development as a syllogistic art dealt with the practice of poetry rather than with the general rules of the art as distinguished from the general rules of the other syllogistic arts, all of which presumably had to wait for Aristotle. Next, the poets are included among the wisemen of the nation and the authoritative source of its language (143.4-6). Finally, the "art of poetry" is enumerated among the five popular arts and its function is described (148.14-19), and it is said emphatically that all these arts and those who occupy themselves with them are vulgar (sec. 139).

In the epoch whose stages we are describing here, in contrast, the sequence is rhetoric, followed by dialectic and sophistry, followed by science and certainty. Poetry re-emerges only at the post-demonstrative period as one of the three methods of common or popular instruction (the other two are dialectic and rhetoric) and as one of the two methods (the other is rhetoric) especially appropriate in instructing the multitude in theoretical and practical things established by demonstration. What is missing is the role of poetry in the inquiry into the causes of things.[5]

5. The fifth stage (secs. 144-145) comprises what will be needed "after *all* these things" mentioned in the four preceding stages—that is, to give the nomoi. This need is felt by the men of demonstration (otherwise, Alfarabi could not have said that this need arises only "after *all* these things"), and the nomoi needed here are the nomoi to be given by demonstrative men, the philosophers who know all the arts listed above (sec. 143). These are obviously "human" nomoi.[6]

"Giving the nomoi" is an art. Its aim or the only thing that one seeks from practicing it (cf. 131.7) is "instructing the multitude" in those "theoretical and practical" things or affairs which have already been "discovered" in "philosophy" (cf. 131.8). The theoretical things are the ones "discovered," "finished with," and "verified," by demonstration; while the "practical" things are the ones "discovered by the faculty of prudence." Hence "philosophy" comprises demonstration and prudence.

The "art of giving the nomoi" comprises the ability to do three things. (a) Excellent imaging forth of the theoretical intelligibles which the multitude find hard to conceive (the ones they can conceive with ease can be given as they are, cf. Averroes, *DT*). (b) Excellent discovery of every political activity that is useful for reaching happiness. (Cf. *AH*. This is done by the exercice of the faculty of prudence, whose activity is not confined to these "practical" things, but covers the art of giving the nomoi in general.) (c) Excellent persuasion about both of the former two things (the theoretical and the practical) by means of *all* the methods of persuasion (see *R* and *A*; these include "arguments" and "external" methods: threats and promises, etc.).

"Religion" comprises the nomoi concerning both of these "genera" (the theoretical and the practical) and, in addition, the methods by which the multitude are persuaded, instructed, their character is formed, and they are made to follow everything by which they achieve happiness (cf. *AH*). The nomoi are indispensable but not sufficient (as *AH* explains). In addition, the lawgiver must practice and provide for the ways of instructing the multitude and forming their character.[7]

Unlike the things that emerge in the first four stages, the emergence of everything needed in the fifth stage (religion, jurisprudence, and theology) is expressed through conditional sentences (if . . . then, etc.; cf. the context of the conditional expression in 131.15). This is perhaps meant to hint that the legislation of this philosophic religion is not a normal or necessary development, but something that is desirable or an object of wish, and

to hint at the superior arrangement in which philosophers-legislators or givers of a philosophic religion succeed each other (and thus insure the rule of living wisdom or continuous, original legislation; cf. *AH, VC, PR*).

The "art of jurisprudence" accepts the "*particular* practical things" (cf. 133.9) declared by the giver of the religion and discovers what he had not declared, following his intention. Nothing is said here about the content the things discovered. "Theology," on the other hand, (a) discovers the "*universal*, theoretical *and* practical, affairs" not declared, or other than the ones declared, by the giver of the religion, following his intention. It is stated emphatically that this is "another art" (153.4). (b) Defends the religion. This latter function is contingent on the presence of a group who try to refute the religion, etc. It comes in the second place. "The art of these two faculties" (jurisprudence and theology) is "only possible through the common methods, that is, the rhetorical." This means that in the religion legislated by philosophers jurisprudence and theology dispense with dialectical and poetic methods, which are also "common" (cf. 152.4, 132.21-22).[8]

The account of the pre-history and history of the rise, development, and succession, of *all* the syllogistic arts in *all* nations is now concluded (sec. 146). This is the "order" according to which the syllogistic arts arise or should arise in the nations out of their own innate dispositions and natural make-up—that is, it is not necessarily the order according to which they may be imported from other nations (cf. 154.12-15). The next chapter (ch. 24) proceeds to discuss, first, the modifications of this order within the nation itself and, second, the question of transnational movement of these arts. Also, this order is said to be "the order which *we* required (or narrated)" (153.14), indicating that it is perhaps the natural or correct model which may, however, be modified by accident or luck or art.

II

The correct religion is the religion based on a philosophy that is fully developed after all the syllogistic arts had been distinguished from each other, according to the order detailed above (sec. 147). The following are the possible departures from that order.

1. When a philosophy is not yet "demonstrative, based on certainty," but verifies its opinions by rhetoric, dialectic, or sophistry, it may contain untrue opinions. These untrue opinions are said to be "wholly" untrue,

yet it is not "perceived" that they are untrue. And *all* the philosophy, or most of it, or much of it, may consist of such untrue opinions. The fact that philosophy is not yet making use of scientific demonstrations does not mean that the opinions it contains are necessarily untrue: they may be untrue. It is the truth or validity of the opinions that is relevant for the religion based on philosophy, not how these opinions were arrived at. In the present case, the philosophy is based on mere opinion or falsification. If a religion is subsequently based on such a philosophy, it, too, will contain many untrue opinions.

2. If, in addition, the religion dispenses with many of these untrue opinions and substitutes their similitudes, which a religion normally does in difficult things that are hard for the multitude to conceive, this religion will be still farther away from the truth: it will be a "corrupt" religion and its corruption will not be "perceived." (Cf. 131.10 ff.)

That in many things it is necessary for religion to dispense with the things themselves and substitute for them their similitudes and images, is accepted throughout. It is also sensible to say that a religion that substitutes similitudes for the things themselves is farther removed from the truth than a religion that presents the things themselves (were such things easy to understand by the multitude). Why should it be especially "corrupt"? It seems that "many of those untrue opinions" (154.2) include the untrue versions of opinions which, were they to have been true, it would not have been necessary to dispense with them and choose their images instead. We may thus be considering the worst case (mentioned in 153.17) where the entire philosophy may consist of entirely false opinions. When the religion, in turn, consists of a vast number of untrue opinions and, in addition, a large number of these are set aside in favor of their similitudes (154.3-4; the religion does this, not just because it is necessary, but also because it is in the habit of doing it), then the religion is "corrupt" in addition to being false, i.e., it is not based on correct opinions and lacks "good" similitudes for those correct things which are correctly judged to be hard to understand in themselves. It is also "corrupt" in the sense that it hides its untrue opinions. In the first case listed above, the falsehood may eventually be perceived; in this case, the "corruption cannot be perceived," apparently because demonstrative philosophy has not emerged as yet.

3. It is assumed that under normal conditions the philosophy described above (153.15-18) will continue to develop until it becomes demonstrative in the manner explained earlier. Under these conditions the giver of the

nomoi must take the opinions he needs for his religion from "the philosophy that happens to exist in his own time" (154.5-6). If this philosophy is not yet fully developed (which is true of the first case listed above), the religion will not be correct; but this is unavoidable. The extremely bad or "corrupt" case, even more corrupt than the second case listed above, is the case of the giver of the nomoi who neglects the philosophy of his time (contemporary philosophy) and adopts instead the opinions given in an earlier or the very first religion (i.e., that of 153.18 ff.) as though they are true, and then (following the practice of the giver of the nomoi in the second case listed above) proceeds to use their similitudes to instruct the multitude.

Cases 1 and 2 are assumed to be contemporaneous or alternative ways of basing religion on pre-demonstrative philosophy at a time when demonstrative philosophy (or an improved version of the earlier forms of pre-demonstrative philosophy) has not yet emerged. A giver of the nomoi who "comes afterward" will come at a time when demonstrative philosophy is emerging or has been completed. The philosophy of "his time" will be demonstrative philosophy. Thus the degree of corruption is determined by the distance of the similitudes from the truth as well as the availability of the truth. In the present case (3), the giver of the nomoi presents distant similitudes of untrue opinions at a time when he has the opportunity to adopt true opinions as the basis of his religion.

4. If a giver of the nomoi should come after the one just mentioned (3) and choose to follow him instead of turning to an even more complete demonstrative philosophy, his religion will be still more corrupt.

Assuming that the development of philosophy is in the direction of demonstration and certainty and perfection, Alfarabi requires that the nomoi and religion be based on the most developed and up-to-date philosophy. The need for a new lawgiver and religion arises when philosophy or science has progressed to a point where it becomes necessary to "reform" the earlier nomoi or religion. Once theoretical and practical philosophy is completed (in the sense of sec. 143), the religion based on it will be the last and final religion (as in sec. 144; this lawgiver may be called the "seal" of lawgivers) which will need jurisprudence and theology for "practical" purposes only. This will be the "correct" (154.8) religion in the true sense; all others are "corrupt" to various degrees. (Hence the twofold division of 154.8-10.) The statement that in both cases religion "comes to exist" *after* philosophy (after the philosophy based on certainty, which is true philosophy, in the one case, and the philosophy based on opinion in the

other) does not mean that any religion that comes after true philosophy must be "correct." On the contrary, religions existing in the time of or even after true philosophy may be extremely corrupt (cases 3 and 4 listed above). "Correct" religion *can* exist only after true philosophy. Corrupt religions exist after pre-demonstrative philosophy, and this "after" may continue during and even after the emergence of true philosophy. After true philosophy, there is "need" for a religion based on it (152.7), but this need may not be satisfied. It is contingent on the philosopher-king, the philosopher who possesses the art of the lawgiver (sec. 144).

Again, all the above refers only to the development of philosophy and religion within the nation itself and out of its innate disposition and natural make-up, not when they are imported from "outside" (divine source or other nations). Thus the departures from the model enumerated above (sec. 147) took place also within this context. The departures that follow (secs. 148-151) are, in contrast, due to the transfer of religion and philosophy from one nation to another.

III

First, Alfarabi states the general principle. If a religion belonging to one nation is transferred (either as it is or after altering it by addition, subtraction, etc.) to another nation and it is used to form the character, to instruct, and to govern this second nation, then it is possible that in the second nation a religion—that is, a religion based on philosophy—may develop before (a) philosophy and (even) before (b) the arts of dialectic and sophistry. Similarly, if philosophy does not develop naturally in a nation but is transferred to it from some other group (belonging to another nation) among whom it had existed earlier, it is possible for philosophy to develop in this nation after the religion based on philosophy that had been transferred to it earlier.

The question of the correctness or corruption of religion is not at issue. The religion that is transferred to a nation may very well be correct and the changes made in it to adjust it to the new circumstances may be correct also. The founder of the new religion may be a stranger and may even be a true philosopher-lawgiver. But it is more likely that he belongs to the nation to which the religion is being transferred. In this case, he may have travelled abroad, studied the philosophy and religion of a foreign nation, and came back with a religion for his own nation. Or, he may be

ignorant of philosophy altogether, someone who borrows a religion about which he may have heard from foreigners. In any case, his own nation lacks an indigenous philosophy and may even lack indigenous dialectic and sophistry. It is assumed to possess indigenous rhetoric and poetry, which are needed for the instruction of the many in the imported religion.

In the case of the philosophy transferred to a nation from another "group" (philosophy belongs to a "group," not to a nation as a whole), it can develop in this nation after the religion which has transferred to it earlier. It can, of course, also be transferred to it before the religion is transferred. The question is whether philosophy can be transferred "out of season" and what this means. The answer will depend in part on whether the study of a foreign philosophy by one or a few "travellers" can be considered adequate transferrence or whether one needs a "school" or a tradition that must take roots in the new nation. If the latter is the case, can this happen without the development of the stages which must precede demonstrative philosophy when it develops as an indigenous tradition? Does Alfarabi mean that the course of development will be rhetoric, then religion (jurisprudence/theology), then dialectic/sophistry, then demonstrative science? Or does he mean that the stage of dialectic/sophistry can be dispensed with? One thing is clear: religion can be transferred from the rhetorical stage on; it does not need to wait until after the demonstrative stage. This parallels the development of an indigeneous religion. The difference, presumably, is that the transferred religion can be a "higher" religion because it can be imported from a nation in which religion is based on a later stage of development in philosophy.

What does Alfarabi have in mind? Did he live in a nation in which this "possibility" was realized? Surely his religion came *before* philosophy (and dialectic and sophistry) and, correspondingly, his philosophy came after religion. Yet he is not concerned with the historical origins of that religion or with where it came from. His account of the origin and development of language and of the arts which precede the philosophic arts indicates that the Arabs in the years 90-200 after the founding of their religion were still occupied with the science of language (sec. 135) or that the indigenous development of the arts among the Arabs was still at the stage (presented in ch. 22) of the practical arts and the other popular arts (150.2). Further, "the philosophy which exists today among the Arabs was transferred to them from the Greeks" (159.1, cf. 151.15-16, 151.18, and *AH*, where true philosophy came from the Greeks, from Plato and

Aristotle). Why is Alfarabi silent about the origin of the religion existing "today" among the Arabs? Is it because it is "divine" and therefore something about which Alfarabi, like Socrates, feigns ignorance?'

We must understand his intention through his aim. What he plans to teach the philosophers of his time and his coreligionists is that their religion consists of similitudes of true philosophy. And what he plans to *do* for his coreligionists is to reform the religion in this direction (acting as a theologian who discovers "universal theoretical and practical affairs which the founder of the religion has not declared," cf. 153.2-3). He may also have in mind such things as the history of the influence of Platonic "religious" ideas on Christianity and Islam and on the dialectic and rhetoric of the Muslim theologians, which he, in turn, brings to completion of perfection by recovering the most perfect philosophy, the true origin of that "religion." There is, finally, the question of the authority of philosophy, philosophic defense of religion, and the dangerous situation in which philosophy may find itself, to which he turns in what follows.

1. The first case discussed by Alfarabi in this connection is this (sec. 149). A religion based on a perfect philosophy but in which all or most of the *theoretical* matters are given through similitudes is transferred to a nation that is ignorant of the fact that this religion is based on philosophy or that its contents are similitudes of theoretical matters verified in philosophy by means of certain demonstrations. Someone (presumably the founder) remained silent about this fact. As a result, this nation believes that these similitudes are the truth and the theoretical affairs themselves. Afterward, the (perfect) philosophy on which the religion depends "as to its excellence" is transferred to that nation. In this case, "there is no assurance against" or it may very well happen that (a) this religion will oppose philosophy and its followers will contend against philosophy and reject it; and philosophers will contend against this religion so long as they do not know that this religion consists of similitudes of the contents of philosophy. However, (b) when philosophers learn that this religion consists of similitudes of the contents of philosophy, they will not contend against this religion; yet the followers of this religion will continue to contend against them. This will lead to the following results. (*1*) Philosophy and the philosophers will have no authority (rule) on, and both will be rejected by, that religion or its followers. (*2*) Religion will not be defended to any appreciable degree by philosophy. (*3*) Philosophy and the philosophers are in danger of being "greatly harmed" by that

religion and its followers. (4) The philosophers may be *forced* at this point to contend against the followers of religion "in search of the *safety* of those who are engaged in philosophy." They "choose" or "try" not to contend against "the religion itself" but only against "the belief" of the followers of the religion "that religion contradicts philosophy." They exert themselves to remove this belief by trying to make the followers of the religion understand that the contents of their religion are similitudes.

The explanation of the reason for the "silence" about the truth of the dependence of this religion on perfect philosophy may have been given earlier (in sec. 148). Religion was transferred before the transference of philosophy and therefore the new founder (whether he knew about the fact of the matter or not is not now at issue) could not disclose the dependence of his religion on philosophy. Even if he knew the fact of the matter, he may have been wise to remain silent: his followers could not have understood what he was talking about. Whether, to what extent, and to whom, this fact is disclosed in the "model" nation is not discussed, but can be learned from *VC* and *PR*, where those who show signs that they will be able to contend against philosophy are trained not to do so. This is assumed to be what the philosophers will do later on in the nation whose case is under discussion. Hence the conflict between religion and philosophy in this particular context results from the reversal of the historical sequence of the appearance of philosophy and religion.

This reversal seems to be responsible also for the predicament that the philosophers themselves do not as yet know that religion consists of similitudes of the theoretical contents of philosophy. In the "model" situation, the appearance of demonstrative philosophy goes hand in hand with the criticism of rhetoric, dialectic, and sophistry, the development of mathematics, and the "inclination" to the "science of political affairs." It is only after philosophy (both theoretical and practical) is completed that philosophers begin to understand the public use of rhetoric and poetry and the need for lawgiving and religion. In the present case, religion (and jurisprudence and theology) are already there, and it is assumed that philosophers have not yet reached the point of realizing the need for founding a religion or appreciating the need for the religion that is already there. Religion and theology appear to be part of the rhetoric, dialectic, and sophistry, which the philosophers are trying to reject. Yet the time has arrived when the fact of the matter can be revealed both to the followers of the religion and to the philosophers, for the benefit of both.

The benefit to religion is that it will not be opposed and in fact will be "greatly defended" by the philosophers, while the benefit to philosophy is that it will avoid the "great harm" that religion can inflict on it. These two benefits go hand in hand in the sense that the safety and development of philosophy will rebound to the strength of religion, and a more "enlightened" religion will in turn tend to support and protect philosophy.

Indirectly, Alfarabi depicts a happy and peaceful picture of what may happen when the followers of religion and the philosophers are enlightened about the true relationship between religion and philosophy. Religion will not oppose philosophy. Its followers will not contend against philosophy but will welcome it. Philosophers will not contend against religion. Philosophy and the philosophers will be *ruling* that religion and its followers, and will be accepted and honored by them. Philosophy will "greatly defend" the religion. Otherwise, and out of concern for their own safety, philosophers may have to contend against religion. They "choose" not to contend against religion itself (they are not in a position to oppose it directly and openly, but consider the case of al-Rāzī). They will be satisfied with removing the belief that religion contradicts philosophy and making the followers of the religion "understand" that their religion consists of similitudes. And they will exert themselves to do just this, because this is the crux of the matter. For, once they succeed in this, the rest follows. They will have established that philosophy is the source and the truth itself, and that religion is the step-child of philosophy. They will be honored and elevated to the rank of prophets.

Alfarabi does not blame religion or its followers for their attitude to philosophy and the philosophers. He understands the dangers and their source; and he does not expect relief from that front. The key to the solution is in the hands of the philosophers. First, they must be educated to understand the true relation between philosophy and religion. Then they must be taught what they need to do to improve their position: theirs is an educative role. The "myth" of the origin of religion is part of the new lawgiving activity of the new philosophers. (The rest describes the situation as Alfarabi found it and his proposed solution.) The "myth" is absolutely essential for the proposed solution; any other "myth" is intolerable to demonstrative philosophy.

2. The second case is this (sec. 150). The imported religion was originally based on a "corrupt ancient" philosophy (rhetorical, dialectical and/or sophistic). This religion is assumed to have been imported first;

and it is left open whether or not the fact that this religion was originally based on such a philosophy is known to the followers of the religion. Next, "correct and demonstrative philosophy" is imported to this nation. In this situation, philosophy and religion will be totally opposed to each other. Alfarabi begins with philosophy. Philosophy (demonstrative philosophy) will oppose both the religion and its philosophic basis. And because of this, religion will oppose this philosophy. The situation is presented as a state of total war in which each of the contestants seeks complete victory and the destruction (refutation) of the other. Each tries to subdue the nation and remove the other from the field.[10]

3. The third case discussed by Alfarabi (sec. 151) is the case of the nation already in possession of a well-established religion when dialectic and sophistry are imported. They will be harmful to religion and will make those who believe in it think that it is of little or no importance. The power of dialectic and sophistry consists of proving and disproving the same thing. Therefore their use shakes the hold of religious beliefs, generates doubts about them, and reduces them to things that have not as yet been verified, or else makes one perplexed about them to the point that he begins to think that nothing can be affirmed, neither these beliefs nor their opposites. This is why lawgivers as well as the princes set up to protect religion emphatically forbid the practice of dialectic and sophistry. This is true of all religions.

Alfarabi does not say what kind of religion he is talking about and implies that this makes little difference. Dialectic and sophistry (useful as they are for the development of philosophy) are harmful and destructive so far as religion is concerned. He seems to approve of the position taken by lawgivers and princes against these two arts. (He reminds us of the position of Averroes in the *DT*, where dialectic and sophistry are rejected in favor of rhetoric and demonstration.) It is assumed that the religion in question is established by means of rhetoric and poetry. In the context of the development of the philosophic arts, sophistry and dialectic form a later and higher stage. They are inherently superior to rhetoric and poetry as methods of investigation. A religion based on rhetorical persuasion has little chance of winning in a situation where dialectic and sophistry have a free hand. The only way it can prevent their victory is by the use of non-argumentative means: legal exclusion from the community. The case will be different when religion allies itself with demonstrative philosophy and gains its support. Philosophy knows the uses of rhetoric

and poetry as public (post-demonstrative) arts. It knows the philosophic counterparts of the things imaged or expressed through similitudes in religion. Above all, it knows what dialectic and sophistry are all about; it knows their shortcomings and how to silence them.

Alfarabi (like Averroes after him) is therefore proposing an alliance between religion and demonstrative philosophy against dialectic and sophistry. Theology must be cleansed of dialectic and sophistry and become more rhetorical, following the example of the lawgiver. This alliance is profitable to both religion and philosophy: religion will be well supported by demonstrative philosophy in its conflicts with dialectic and sophistry; and philosophy will be supported by religion in its conflict with dialectic and sophistry.[11]

The main obstacle to this alliance is the fact that a minority of lawgivers have forbidden the followers of their religions to engage in philosophy (sec. 152). The explanation of the interdiction against philosophy is sought by Alfarabi in the character of the nation and in the character of the religion and the lawgiver.

a. A lawgiver may forbid the "nation" to engage in philosophy because its character is such that it cannot be taught the truth or theoretical affairs as they are. The natural make-up of the people who make up the nation is such, or the lawgiver's "purpose in it or from it" (see 156.15) is such, that it should not be acquainted with the truth itself, but have its character formed by the similitudes of the truth only. Or else it may be a nation whose character is such that it must be formed by "actions, deeds, and practical things, only," not by theoretical affairs or by very little of these.

It is assumed that the lawgiver had made a correct assessment of the character of the nation, determined what and how much it can know, and forbade philosophy because it is incompatible with the character of the nation and its natural make-up. The nation may also have been meant to play a subordinate role in the universal scheme envisaged by the lawgiver for a large number of nations (cf. *AH*), which is perhaps what is meant by the "purpose in it or from it." But what if philosophy develops in such a nation despite the lawgiver's declared interdiction? The lawgiver (who legislated for his own time, cf. *PR*, *VR*) was correct when he forbade philosophy; but things have now changed and the law must be interpreted and supplemented to take account of the new conditions, even though the philosopher will not be able to disclose the true reason for the earlier legislation. The philosopher must justify philosophy in terms of the new

conditions. He may argue that the religion was in fact based on true philosophy; the interdiction was appropriate earlier but must now be lifted; and philosophy must now be permitted, among other things, for its use in the defense of religion against dialectic and sophistry. In any case, the appearance of philosophy in the nation despite the lawgiver's interdiction indicates a change in conditions and points to the need to discover new opinions and practices (which is the function of theology and jurisprudence). It is possible that the original lawgiver was not a philosopher, and yet knew something about philosophy or something like philosophy and its impact. This does not make much difference. The interpretation of the intention of the lawgiver in this respect depends on whether the rise of philosophy is an accident and a passing phenomenon, or an event indicating a fundamental change in the character of the nation (as described in 156.13-17). If it is an accidental and a passing phenomenon, then perhaps the philosopher will do well to migrate or remain silent and leave the nation at peace with its religion. If, on the other hand, a fundamental change has taken place in the character of the nation, then the religion must be interpreted and supplemented to enable philosophy as much freedom of action as necessary, something which the original lawgiver would have done had he lived under the new conditions.

The new interpretation is necessary for the sake of the philosopher as well as the believers who are now in a position to question the religious beliefs in their original form. The latter will need room to ascend to the degree of understanding corresponding to their respective capacities. Otherwise, they will reject the beliefs and find no higher interpretation in which they can believe—that is, they will reject the beliefs simply. This will harm the religion. It will lose its more intelligent followers, and their public questioning and rejection of beliefs will threaten the faith of the community at large. It may be necessary to present the new supplement to the religion as an interpretation of the old religion rather than as an innovation. But this is something which the philosopher must decide on in his capacity as theologian and jurist.

b. But a lawgiver or founder of a religion may also forbid philosophy because it does not serve his private interest. He brings forth a "corrupt and ignorant" religion (156.18; cf. PR, VC, VR) with which he does not seek the happiness of the nation but his own happiness; he uses the nation to make himself, not the nation, happy. He is afraid that, should he permit inquiry into philosophy, the nation will come to understand the corrupt character of the religion and of what he sought to establish in their souls.[12]

It is "apparent," Alfarabi concludes (sec. 153), that if a religion contends against philosophy, so will the art of theology in that religion; and theologians will contend against philosophers to the same degree that the religion contends against philosophy.

This proposition is obvious to the extent that the theologian does not discover things not declared by the lawgiver and remains attached to the lawgiver's original purpose. But the theologian's function is also to deduce propositions appropriate to new conditions. What is meant, apparently, is religion as it exists at any particular time. Since the theologian is a "servant" of religion, he will oppose what the religion opposes. This does not take into account the possibility that theologians may be divided into groups with different attitudes to philosophy, or the activity of the philosopher in reforming religion and enlightening the believers about the true relation between religion and philosophy (as explained in sec. 149). It simply warns the philosopher that he must be prepared to contend with opposition, not only from the religion itself or the lawgiver's declared statements and intention, but also from the theologians who tend to defend the lawgiver's intention, elaborate his statements, and then defend them by all the means available to them.

Harvard University.

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[1] And all the vulgar arts that have been mentioned so far from sec. 114 to sec. 139, cf. 149.1-3, i.e., the five arts in sec. 138 and the practical and political arts which precede them, but not the "theoretical affairs" and the "ruling art simply."

[2] Cf. 150.9 with 131.5, 132.14, 142.6 ff. Rhetoric has already been practiced in connection with language and politics (secs. 127, 129, 138), but not in the investigation of causes of things. Now it is used out of the desire for knowledge, investigation, verifying "opinions" for oneself, instructing others, and verifying things when one is challenged by others (cf. sec. 164).

[3] These two subjects were initially mentioned in this order: physics, mathematics; now the order is reversed. Cf. 150.9-10 with 150.3-6. Cf., also secs. 96-98 on the views of the multitude, the earlier ones among the ancients, the early physicists, and the "divine" thinkers, respectively, on not-being. The earlier ones among the ancients (rhetoric), the early physicists (dialectic), and the "divine" thinkers (demonstration). The "divine" thinkers (*Ilāhiyyūn*) are Plato and Aristotle, secs. 142-143. On the various methods, cf.. further, secs. 215 ff.

⁴ Cf., however, sec. 142; *R* 55.12-14. The reason that rhetoric leads to a variety of opinions has something to do with the fact that it uses primary as well as figurative and metaphorical meanings indifferently (cf. secs. 127, 163-165). Accidentally, dialectic and sophistry also make use of figurative and metaphorical meanings (sec. 164); hence, perhaps, the reason for the confusion of these methods.

⁵ Cf. Alfarabi's summary of the *Organon* (Bratislava, University, MS 231, TE 41, fol. 180*b*) on philosophic poetry (Empedocles and the Phythagorians). On the logical methods, especially with reference to 152.2-6, cf., *ibid.*, fols. 180*b*, 217*b*, 218*a*, 219*a*, 219*b*, and *A*. On the post-demonstrative use of rhetoric, see *R* 57.4-9. On a curious aspect of post-demonstrative rhetoric and poetry, see sec. 165. With reference to what follows, one must keep in mind Socrates' disclaimer of knowledge about "divine" things. Hence, only "human" religion is at issue here. See comments on sec. 148 below.

⁶ Secs. 144-147 recapitulate and, in part, repeat secs. 108-113. The first question is why (assuming that the order of this part of the book is correct) did Alfarabi begin his discussion with secs. 108-113 before proceeding to the account of the beginning in secs. 114 ff. Then there is the question of the differences between the two blocks. The beginning of Part II recalls the beginning (fr. 8) in *On Philosophy* with Socrates going to Delphi, perhaps to be interpreted as the beginning of "human religion" or the religion legislated on the basis of philosophy. Then follows the account of the true beginning, which (in the cyclical view) is arbitrary in any case. 152.5-8 repeats 131.8-10.

Cf. Maimonides *Logic* ch. 14 end. Maimonides says: "In these times, all this—I mean the regimes and the nomoi—has been dispensed with, and men are being governed by divine commands." This is one interpretation of the sequence: philosophy, human religion (nomoi), divine religion (commands). So "religion, if it assumed to be human" (131.6), comes after philosophy; if it is "divine," it may come at any time. One could perhaps say that since Alfarabi is commenting on Aristotle's *Metaphysics* he deals exclusively with pre-divine religion or nomoi. It is curious, however, that the phrase ("if it is assumed to be human," 131.6, cf. 153.10-11, 153.14 "we required") is about all that is said about "other" kinds of nomoi or religion.

⁷ So far, sec. 144 elaborates and explains the earlier version in sec. 108. Further elaborations can be found in *AH*, *A*, *L*.

⁸ In secs. 109-112 Alfarabi spoke more elaborately of the subordinate character and the "posteriority" of jurisprudence and theology in relation to religion and indirectly to philosophy. The context was wider than that of "demonstrative" philosophy and the religion based on it, which is "repeated" in secs. 147 ff. The character of jurisprudence and theology depends on the religion, which in turn depends on the character of the philosophy on which the religion is based.

In any case, given what religion does (132.12), theology "perceives" only persuasive things and verifies them through persuasive methods and arguments. The premises and opinions used by theologians in verifying opinions are rhetorical and, at best, dialectical. "Theoretical things" are mentioned specifically (132.12, 132.18). Theology verifies and defends (133.3); nothing is said about "deduction" or "discovery" *(istinbāṭ)* in sec. 111.

In sec. 112 (on the relation between the jurist and the prudent man) the jurist (like the prudent man) discovers the "correct opinion in particular practical" matters. But the difference is in the character of the premises: the jurist uses premises received from the giver of religion (these are *particular* practical matters), while the prudent

man uses premises that are generally known to all and other premises he obtains by experience.

The difference between jurisprudence and theology is not based on the distinction between discovery and defense as in *ES* ch. 5, but on the distinction between the discovery of "*particular practical* things" and the discovery of "*universal, practical and theoretical*, things." Defense is an additional function. Thus theology occupies a more exalted position in *BL* (cf. *AH*) than is *ES* ch. 5.

⁹ Cf. Alfarabi's summary of the *Organon, op. cit.*, fol. 177*a*: "What some people believe is by some *divine* act. . . . Let us leave that to whoever practices external philosophy. . . . Rather, we say that we are now talking about that instruction which is *human* and is included in the philosophy which comprehends *human* intelligibles," etc.

But does it make any difference where that religion came from, whether it is divine or human? Alfarabi discusses this issue in *VR*, *VC*, *PR*, and the conclusion is that it makes no difference, at least not after the perfection of philosophy in the Socratic school and after "philosophic religion" has become possible. It is curious, to say the least, that he insists on giving the impression (an impression based on what one may deduce from what he says about the language of the Arabs and the philosophy existing among them in his time) that the religion of the Arabs (like Christianity before it) came from the Greeks at a time when the Arabs lacked philosophy and dialectic and sophistry, and were at the stage of the pre-philosophic arts.

¹⁰ What could be the "existential" reference of this case and why this inordinate boldness? Could Alfarabi be referring to "non-Muslim" religions which are completely inhospitable to philosophy? Or, certain forms of Zandaqa? Or, Epicureanism, etc., which are mentioned at the end of the *VC*? There philosophy joins hands with the religion based on perfect philosophy to fight the religions based on pre-demonstrative philosophy. He could also be referring to certain unacceptable interpretations of Islam by Kalām and Rāzī.

¹¹ Sec. 152 begins by enumerating four groups who have shown four different attitudes to philosophy: (1) sympathized with, or encouraged it, (2) permitted its pursuit, (3) remained silent about it, and (4) forbade it. Alfarabi is silent about the first three groups. The third was mentioned in sec. 149. The fourth was also the attitude of the lawgivers and princes toward dialectic and sophistry. The rest of the section deals with the reasons for the fourth attitude, just as sec. 151 explained the reason for forbidding dialectic and sophistry. This indicates that the "groups" in question are lawgivers (see 156.18) and princes set up to protect religion (perhaps the theologians and jurists as well). To "forbid" means to forbid every follower of the religion (the entire nation) in contrast to the first three attitudes which imply that some may pursue philosophy.

¹² This case, or something very close to it, was talked about earlier (in sec. 150), where the rise of philosophy led to total war with religion. It is to be assumed that this is meant to be the case here too.

RĀZĪ'S PSYCHOLOGY *

LENN EVAN GOODMAN

Although he is an atomist Rāzī is not a materialist. Of the five things which he believes must exist, three are sufficient to the conception of a purely natural world: time, space, and matter. The other two, God and Soul, are regarded by Rāzī as immaterial entities related to the world as transcendental principles which find their embodiment (or, in the case of God, their effect) by projecting themselves onto the sphere of finitude. It is characteristic of the eclecticism of Rāzī that he ignores the fact that, in adopting atomism, one of the prime objectives of the ancient *physikoi* whom he so admires was the confinement of ontology to the purely mate-rial—or, as we would put it, the elimination of immaterial essences. In the atomism of Democritus essence and accident alike are reduced to differences of atomic shape, arrangement, and position; and, while the tempered atom-ism of Epicurus considers size as well to be an atomic quality, Epicurus does not depart from the Democritean objective of the elimination of all

predication in favor of mere ascription of location, in keeping with the atomists' positivistic dream of speaking only of what Democritus and Leucippus had called being and non-being, *viz.* atoms and void, and never confusing mere higher order functions of being (qualities) with being itself. Asclepiades (d. *ca.* 40 B.C.), the Greek medical man by whom Rāzī's atomism may have been influenced, made the denial of teleology a prominent feature of his atomism. But Rāzī follows Galen in upholding teleology.[1] He apparently does not detect the relationship which Asclepiades saw between atomism and positivism. Rāzī classes matter as "passive" and "inanimate," incapable of action or activity in its own right but capable only of serving as "substrate to the forms."[2] Rāzī feels a need apparently to supplement his materialism with Platonism every bit as strongly as he feels the need to speak atomistically. He attributes the "order" of the natural world to divine intervention[3] and the motion of matter to the influence of Soul[4]—a far cry from the objectives of any rigorous materialist, who would make all motion an intrinsic property of matter and treat "order" as no more than the necessary law inherent in its motion. Rāzī's departure from strict materialism is doubtless due to his hesitancy regarding the adequacy of materialism not merely as an account of nature *per se* but as an account of psychology: for Rāzī treats the human soul as an offshoot of Soul at large,[5] and the human mind as an emanation of the Godhead.[6]

The purpose of this paper is to examine Rāzī's psychology with the end in view of observing the interpenetration of materialism and immaterialism in his psychological thinking and assessing the success of each of these two rival claims to the philosopher's allegiance in accounting for the phe-nomena of psychology.

We shall consider first Rāzī's theory of perception and sensation (*1*), then his account of pleasure and desire (*2*), next his model of free will and motivation (*3*), then his account of the relationship of body to soul (*4*), finally his view of rationality and immortality, his monopsychism and his views on metempsychosis (*5*).

1. *Rāzī's Theory of Perception and Sensation*

With regard to perception, Rāzī is a materialist. This is not to say that his philosophy (or for that matter his medicine, to the best of my knowledge) affords any detailed account of the physical basis of the *con-*

sciousness of sensation. But few philosophers have essayed such an account. What Rāzī does provide is a materialistic model for the anatomical effects which are presumed to underlie that consciousness: He treats perception as irritation due to the physical contact of two bodies. "Perception is the impinging of the perceived upon the percipient. Impinging means the direct action of that which impinges upon that which is impinged upon." [7] This precious direct quote from Rāzī, as Kraus calls it, could not be more strikingly reminiscent of the Epicurean doctrine that only the material can affect (or be affected by) the material. "The natural state," Rāzī writes, "is insensible. For sensation arises only through impact. This impact moves that which it affects from the state which it is in." [8]

Thus Rāzī conceives perception along Democritean-Epicurean lines as due to a physical dislocation in matter pertaining to the percipient, caused by the impact of (atoms of) the object perceived. The absence of a distinction between what is perceived and the material body itself is characteristic of the naive/causal realism which grew out of materialism.[9] It is characteristic of such an account that the specific characters of various sensations are explained in terms of the physical configurations of the constituent parts of the matter involved. Whether Rāzī carried the physicalistic account of sensation as far as Plato had done [10] is doubtful. But it seems clear that if he did not thus fully elaborate this aspect of his psychology it is because he found adequate the general model which had been put forth by Plato. Plato had spoken of the elaboration of such probable accounts and plausible explanations as were possible in such areas as a pleasurable diversion from discourse about eternal things.[11] But Rāzī, with his busy schedule [12] and distaste for all that he considered impractical [13] had little relish for such "pastimes" [14] as the systematic elaboration of the possible combinations and permutations of atomic configurations. He did, nevertheless, write a treatise refuting a refutation of Galen's theory of taste,[15] and he did have occasion to deal with the physiology of perception more specifically in his books on medicine, alchemy, and anatomy. Here it was possible to verify or to apply the theory.

From the point of view of *Quellenforschung* it is perhaps sufficient to observe that ample materials for the construction of such a doctrine as Rāzī's account of perception-sensation were available in Plato's *Timaeus*, or in Galen's compendium of it.[16] Philosophically it is of greater moment that the doctrine of "secondary qualities" put forward in the *Timaeus* cannot strictly be called Platonic.

Plato, in dealing with sensations as they present themselves to "the mortal part of the soul," [17] is, as Cornford points out, probably adapting Democritus' "attempts to connect the character of a sensation with the shapes of the atoms in the body which yields it." [18] Thus Plato's treatment of the mechanistic model is to be read in the concessive mood. It is not intended to be an account of the Truth, but must be read in the light of all that Plato taught regarding the uncertainty of our knowledge of temporal things. No more would be claimed by Plato for the approach of *Timaeus* than that some such account must be inferred; the particular explanation selected is no more than a "plausible account." [19] Such was not the case with Plato's "source." Democritus, as Theophrastus stresses,[20] ignored the distinction (which Plato preserves even in the heart of his concessive mechanistic account) between the things perceived (*aistheta*) and the affections of the organs of sense. For Plato the secondary characteristics are objects, for Democritus they are, of course, subjective and "conventional" [21] —the result of a physical displacement. Thus Plato preserves a sort of sensum between the subject and the thing itself, as he must if he is to pursue the critique of sense judgements into idealism. For Democritus what we perceive *is* the thing—although we do not necessarily perceive it *as* it is, *i.e.* at the atomic level.

It is significant that Rāzī rediscovers the more literal level of the Democritean position. His espousal of the doctrine of perception found in *Timaeus* is not qualified as is Plato's. He seems to follow the counsel of Epicurus—*adopt* the "plausible account," [22] rather than merely put it forward as a conceptual placeholder, like one of Plato's myths, or his own [23]—as much as to say, "In terms of matter, the materialists hold the field."

Thus Rāzī remained faithful to the fundamental materialistic dogma of naive/causal realism with regard to perception: He defends the proposition that bodies are as they appear to be (with explicit reference to solidity) in the same breath with atomism;[24] for one is as much a foundation of materialism as the other: Material bodies, as Epicurus argues,[25] would lose their claim to solidity and with it their ontological primacy unless they were composed of indivisible particles. But epistemologically solidity itself can only be grounded in the realist's approach to "direct" perception.[26] It is for this reason that touch is made paradigmatic in the materialistic account of the senses.[27] And for the same reason realism is adopted—naive realism at the phenomenological or subjective level, causal realism at the

atomic or objective level: What is must be identical with what is perceived if materialism is to draw "empirical" support from the axiom that only the physical can make contact with the physical organs of perception. It is for this reason, no doubt, that it is Epicurus who comes closest of all professional philosophers to naive realism, which he moderates into causal realism only to the extent that the former is incompatible with atomism.[28] Rāzī parallels Epicurus faithfully in this respect, even sharing his disregard for the possibility of tension between atomistic reductionism and the artlessness of naive realism.

One consequence of the realism of the Epicureans was their famous acceptance of the inference that the gods must be real since men have perceived them.[29] It is diverting to discover a parallel train of reasoning in Rāzī (although his contemporaries and more immediate successors would have found the thought distressing): Prophetic revelation (and thus *religion* as understood by Muslims, Christians, and Jews) is attributed by Rāzī to the manifestation of demons to certain individuals. These demons, Rāzī avers, are the souls of persons too evil to have fully divested themselves of matter for the nonce. They give themselves out as angels and instruct their dupes (the prophets) to bear messages to mankind—with the net effect of producing dissension and bloodshed.[30] Rāzī transfers here to the Islamic context the Epicurean moral outrage[31] at the works of religion as well as the Epicurean account for the generality[32] of the infection. But it is interesting to note that to the extent that the "demons" are not yet totally divorced from physicality, they continue to be "covered" by Rāzī's (mechanistic) perceptual scheme—as were the material gods by the Epicurean theory of perception.

As in Epicureanism, the theory of perception is crucial in Rāzī's philosophy, for it affords the nexus between ontology and ethics: *i.e.* between materialism and hedonism.[33] If perception actually puts us in direct contact with the physical world, then it hardly seems to make sense to distinguish between the universal and "wholesome" natural response of the organism to its environment or any part thereof and the "correct" response thereto. This is the crux of ethical naturalism. If what is perceived is what is real (not in Berkeley's but in Epicurus' sense!) then inference may be made directly from perception to the rule of action. If the account of perception can be broadened to include all sensations, indeed, no inference is necessary: sensations bear with them their own springs of action and hence their own justifications. But, of course, such a broadening of

the theory of perception is implicit in the theory itself. For if sensation is defined as disturbance of the matter of the sense organ (or, to be precise, disturbance of that matter beyond a certain threshold), then it is apparent that no such disturbance will take place without a physical cause. Sensation of every sort may be fully assimilated to perception; and this is precisely what Rāzī does.[34] He is thus enabled to ground both his psychological and his ethical hedonism (as well as the ethical naturalism by which the two are fused) in his theory of perception. The only fully germane distinction among objects in the context of action becomes whether they are (or will be) painful—hence whether they are (and should be) avoided. (The reason for omitting pleasure from consideration will be made apparent shortly.)

Pain is attributed by Rāzī to removal (*sc.* of matter pertaining to the subject) from the natural state. Thus pain is a species of sensation. Indeed, in a way, pain *is* sensation ("irritation"); or, to speak more normally, pain is a disturbance of the percipient's matter above a threshold which lies beyond the threshold of sensation and marks the approach of "harm," *i.e.* permanent dislocation from the natural state.[35] The "natural state," of course, would mean for Rāzī the appropriate physical placement and arrangement (*cf.* the "*concilium*" of Lucretius) which makes a body capable of life as an organism. Pain is thus seen as serving the primary biological function of providing a warning system to the organism as to potential threats to the delicate equilibrium upon which life depends. Pain in this respect is biologically primitive, prior even to sensation or perception in the more refined senses of the terms—elemental or "atomic" to them, as it were.[36]

The notion of process or change is essential to Rāzī's conception of sensation as he explicitly states.[37] Rāzī explains the self-anaesthetizing character of certain prolonged sensations on this basis,[38] and provides, by so doing, empirical grounds for the almost religious claim of Epicurus[39] that sharp pains are brief and lasting pains, bearable.

2. *Rāzī's Account of Pleasure and Desire*

Pain is defined by Rāzī as the sensation of the painful.[40] The definition is not trivial, since it involves reference to a primary datum of experience. Nevertheless, Rāzī does not define pleasure as the sensation of the pleasur-

able. Rather he defines it reductively, as the relaxation of (or release from) pain.[41] This Epicurean[42] theory of pleasure as relief from pain is crucial to Rāzī's ethical system. For Rāzī's ethic is founded upon the premise that pleasure is nothing "positive" to be sought but only a release, the necessary pre-condition of which is some form of pain or discomfort.[43] This account of pleasure, which has its origin in Plato's critique of hedonism, is transformed by Rāzī into a comprehensive "logic of pleasure" which is made the foundation of Rāzī's own "critical" hedonism. Rāzī's ethic is a systematic derivation of a moderate asceticism from these purely hedonic considerations. Rāzī counsels the curbing of desire on grounds that "pleasure" (the specious object of desire) is only a return to normalcy from a distressed condition. Thus the augmentation of desire only implies an augmentation of distress. Man's object should not be pleasure (*i.e.* the return from pain) but rather prolonged enjoyment of the relaxed or normal state which is the true object of all desires and the end point of all pleasures. Rāzī is able to put the weight of his hedonic calculus behind this counsel only to the extent that pleasure can be treated strictly as a nought, *i.e.* only to the extent that he can claim that every pleasure has an equal pain (or at least an equal displacement) as its condition: only if pleasure can be treated exclusively as a withdrawal from pain can the focus of hedonism be transferred from the seeking of pleasures to the avoidance of pains which is the keystone of Rāzī's ethical regime.[44] Thus the nullity of pleasure, *i.e.* the assertion that pleasure is nothing in itself but only a relief from pain, is a psychological doctrine which is crucial to Rāzī's ethics.[45] He calls upon his knowledge as a physiologist and upon his materialistic theory of perception-sensation for the evidence requisite to secure his categorical assertion of the negativity of pleasure. For only if pleasure is nothing but a release from pain can hedonism be confined to the ethical role which Rāzī has reserved for it.

Thus Rāzī treats pain biophysically as a kind of distension of which pleasure is the release.[46] He explains the fact that pleasure produces a sensation at all as due solely to the fact that matter is undergoing a process—*viz.* the process of returning to normal; and he argues that unless there had been a prior departure from the natural state no pleasure would have been undergone. Thus pain, or at least displacement, is a physiological precondition of pleasure. Rāzī rebuts the claim that some pleasures are not in fact preceded by pains by pointing out that some departures from the natural state proceed so gradually (*i.e.* by intervals so minute) as to be

insensible, while the "return" to normalcy may be more sudden and therefore perceptually more pronounced. Thus he maintains the model of displacement and return. Had there not been a gradual departure from nature, he argues, "restoration" would have been neither necessary nor possible. He offers hunger and thirst as examples. The pleasure of eating or drinking would not have been possible had it not been for the necessity of restoring an insensibly displaced (physical) condition. And, of course, in the extreme, the displacement grows sufficiently severe to be hardly insensible.[47] The same process may be reversed: pain may come suddenly, as by a blow, and be removed only gradually (thus without pleasurable sensation) in the course of healing.[48]

Pleasure cannot be a positive sensation in its own right, Rāzī argues, because the self-same physical causes (*e.g.* a cold breeze) which give pleasure to an individual in one case cause him pain in another. The determinant of the difference is his prior condition, whether he was warm or cold, comfortable (*i.e.* in a state of nature) or uncomfortable (in an unnatural state) at the outset.[49] Those who claim that the pleasures arising from the sight of a lovely face, the sound of a beautiful voice, the taste of some delicious fruit which one has never known before (and of which, therefore, there has been no sense of deprivation) have no pain or discomfort as their precondition, are in Rāzī's view factually mistaken. The appreciation of a lovely face is heightened by the plainness of one's companions, the enjoyment of musical tones is augmented in proportion to the shrillness and discord of the sounds to which one has been accustomed, and sweet tastes taste sweeter to those who have been deprived of them —even though the particular face, sounds, tastes, were hitherto unknown to their percipient. Deprivation, according to Rāzī, is an absolute precondition of enjoyment; and the rule observed to hold in some aesthetic categories is properly extended to all. Those who are sated with a particular aesthetic quality will not only be unappreciative of more of the same, they will even grow insensible to it and ultimately find it painful—if it persists to the extent of removing them perceptibly from the state of nature: light is pleasurable to man, but darkness may seem restful after prolonged exposure to light.[50] The same considerations, applied systematically to such areas as sexual activity, appetite, anger, and even reading, yield the "spiritual physic" which forms the core of Rāzī's ethical regime.

To sum up Rāzī's argument thus far: all perception is due to the physical impact of atoms upon the sense organs of the percipient. Percep-

tion is a species of sensation or irritation; and all irritation is due to physical dislocation. Sensation therefore occurs only in an abnatural state: if pain is due to dislocation, then pleasure must be due to the process of relocation. By consistently maintaining his doctrine of the neutrality of pleasure, *i.e.* the dogma that pleasure is nothing in itself but only a return from pain, Rāzī is enabled to derive his moderate asceticism from purely hedonic principles.[51] There is a strong superficial resemblance here to the doctrine of Plato which treats desire as a sieve and applies "the art of measurement" to the decision-making process. But, as I have shown in dealing with Rāzī's ethics, Rāzī does not use hedonism as the means of undermining the hedonic ethical standard. Unlike Plato, he remains unswervingly loyal to the hedonic principle as *the* ethical ground. Thus it cannot be said without gross distortion that Rāzī's treatment of pleasure is "Platonic." In mood as well as in terms of its ontological underpinnings, Rāzī's treatment of the ethical dimension of pleasure is far closer to that of Epicurus[52] than to that of any other ancient philosopher.

By treating pleasure as it were as the opposite side of the same coin as pain, Rāzī of course keeps pleasure within a strictly materialistic frame of reference. If the body is imagined as being composed of numerous polyhedrons, spheres, cylinders, and other hollow, elastic vessels, each of these or various combinations of them may be imagined as capable of distension in various dimensions through a range of limits, either on account of the presence or absence of appropriate materials within, or on account of the impact of the environment from without. Distension may rise to the level of sensation, pain, or harm. It seems plain that Rāzī does envision the body in such a manner[53]—a fact of some importance to his psychology of desire.

Rāzī's account of pleasure lends itself naturally to the materialistic treatment of desire on the analogy of appetite. Thus he reduplicates Epicurus' treatment of hunger as the paradigmatic natural desire, the repletion of appetite as the paradigmatic pleasure.[54] And Rāzī is not slow to draw the Epicurean conclusion:[55] where pleasure is a matter of filling an empty vessel, the futility of limitless "pleasure seeking" need not occur. The mechanistic treatment of appetite is thus readily expanded to encompass desire in general.[56] Since atoms lack plasticity, the void is the condition of all motion in atomistic systems. The dislocation responsible for pain, hunger, appetite, or desire in general is no exception. Indeed Rāzī accounts for appetite mechanistically in terms of the attraction of the atoms by the

void[57] and specifically the attraction of the (depleted) organ for the matter proper to it.[58] In itself, of course, the void was totally indeterminate—a fact which plays a critical if little stressed role in Epicurean physics, and hence in Epicurean psychology as well. In explaining generation and the arbitrary character of free will[59] the Epicureans, as is well known, fell back upon an appeal to an uncaused atomic "swerve," the famous *clinamen*. In defending the actuality of this foundation of chance and indeterminancy in their system, Epicureans relied upon the fact that there *was nothing* to prevent the occurrence of such a swerve.[60] Since the atoms moved in the void, this literally was true. Epicurean atoms being infinitely elastic (absolutely solid), their collisions were strictly deterministic; but their behavior while not colliding was governed only by the indeterminancy of the void. The two governing principles of the Epicurean universe, chance and causal law, therefore, have space and matter respectively as their conditions. It can thus be said that it was by recognizing the absolute indeterminacy of space alongside the absolute determinacy of matter that Epicurus unfettered the atomic universe from the determinism of Democritus. Rāzī too requires an arbitrary principle in his universe, by means of which to explain (irrational) choice, spontaneity, error, and (excessive) appetite.[61] He too asserts an uncaused or spontaneous motion;[62] and he too discovers in the empty void the principle of this motion. As in the Epicurean universe, the order and pattern of atoms place limits upon this principle of disorder —as in the case of appetite: the void in itself is appetite (as it were) unqualified, the undifferentiated lack of and attraction for any and all matter. The void (*i.e.* depleted cavity) in this organ is specifically a lack of what will fill or complement the nature of this cavity, restore the natural condition—although, of course, *qua* void it still preserves, as it were, some measure of indeterminacy.

Desire then, is an emptiness, properly, a specific kind and quantity of emptiness, capable of being filled. When its specificity is ignored desire may be treated as without limit, an unqualified or unquantified (*i.e.* ever-changing, ever-increasing) demand which is by its very nature incapable of satisfaction.[63] But while specificity is a condition of the rationality of desire, it is the indeterminacy of the void *qua* void which makes possible the arbitrary aspect of choice,[64] which, along with rationality, is for Rāzī, as for Epicurus, a condition of free will.

3. *Rāzī's Model of Free Will and Motivation*

The ascription of the freedom of the will to the alleged indeterminacy of motions at the atomic level raises a serious problem regarding the phenomenology of willing. For the results of free will (and thus presumably its grounds) seem *prima facie* anything but at hazard. Sir Arthur Eddington, who for a time sought refuge for free will in Heisenberg's indeterminacy principle,[65] seems for that time to have ignored the fact that such treatment demanded a radically unconventional phenomenology of willing. Free choice, to the extent that it is grounded in indeterminism, must have something of the "arbitrary," capricious, random, and spontaneous in its operation. The Epicureans do show some responsiveness to this problem. At least if one analyzes the phenomenology of willing (*voluntas*) as presented by Lucretius[66] one finds the element of spontaneity ever present. Will here does take on some of the character of chance to which it is ascribed. Rāzī however goes appreciably further in his recognition of this implication of binding free will to chance. He frontally attacks the Aristotelian treatment of free choice (*boulesis*) as a purely rational process,[67] sharply distinguishes will from reason (indeed, to some extent he places them at odds to one another),[68] and boldly invokes a model of pure will as spontaneous, arbitrary, capricious and originative[69]—just as its origins at the atomic level would lead us to expect it would be. Will is rational only to the extent that it is limited and determined by reason—which Rāzī introduces initially in the role of a governor set upon the limitlessness of pure desire.[70]

Free will as it functions in motivation, then, is not the spontaneous and arbitrary expression of pure chance. Rather it is spontaneity and caprice moderated by reason. The determinacy of choice is attributed to rationality; its indeterminacy, to chance. No actual material configuration is wholly indeterminate; thus no natural choice is wholly indiscriminate. Freedom is identified by Rāzī (as by Epicurus) with indeterminacy. The bounds of freedom are thought to be the limits of necessity and the limits of necessity to be the origins of freedom. Appetite, desire, and even free will are thus accounted for in strongly materialistic terms by the introduction of chance and the void alongside atoms and determinacy. But motivation is more complex than the pure principle of freedom—rationality is needed to define and delimit the bounds of choice. Whether rationality can be accounted for materialistically remains to be seen. It is clear that irration-

ality, which Rāzī, like Epicurus, identifies with the boundless—paradigmatically the boundlessness of desire—has its natural analogue in (unqualified matter and) the void.

Human choice, it would appear, is the resultant of an interplay between the absolute spontaneity of the will as such and the moderating, modulating, qualifying, and limiting effect of reason. The classic differentiation of soul from mind, which Rāzī adopts[71] must be understood along these lines. The principle of rationality, mind, cannot be identical with the principle of spontaneity, soul. Both are necessary to the individual; and, for Rāzī indeed, both are necessary to the world, for it was the passionate desire of soul, *i.e.* the world Soul, for matter which was responsible for the origination of reality as we know it. "Soul was enamoured of matter so as to ground her perceptual and intellectual perfections in it; thus arose—from the mingling of these two together—the race of generated things."[72] This cosmogonic union, to which Rāzī traces the origin of all things, stems from the spontaneous (and irrational) desire of Soul for matter—that is for embodiment in matter. The soul, of course, cannot be said to have hungered for matter on account of any void that was in her. Nevertheless, her desire in itself was indiscriminate, as indeterminate as the matter which was its object. There was nothing in that desire as such to determine or differentiate matter in any way. This is why Rāzī says that Soul unaided was powerless to bring her desire to fruition: her desire needed the determining action of rationality; matter needed the determination of form —mind, in a word, was necessary to the completion of the creative act which Soul alone could only initiate.[73] Void of course was the condition of indeterminacy, the objective ground of spontaneity which made possible that initiation as an originative, undetermined, spontaneous act.

The glimpse which Rāzī's account of the act of the cosmic Soul affords us into the relations of reason and desire, opens the way to an understanding of the limitations which Rāzī must have found in materialism as an account of the phenomena of psychology—and thus to an appreciation of the grounds for his departure from materialism in accounting for the relationship of body to soul.

4. *Rāzī's Account of the Soul-body Relationship*

Matter, according to Rāzī, is passive and inanimate; soul is active and alive.[74] Indeed it is the principle of life and action[75] and as such cannot

be material. Rāzī's affirmation of the immateriality of the Soul [76] may seem curious to some modern readers. Why did he not press on in the direction pointed by his materialistic psychology of perception and appetition? Why did he not attempt a comprehensive materialistic psychology? The answer I think becomes apparent from an examination of the materialistic options which presented themselves to Rāzī. Some early theologians, *mutakallimūn*, had predicated intelligence of individual atoms,[77] a position which will have seemed absurd to any serious natural philosopher who sought a coherent scientific account of nature in the doctrine of atoms.[78] The alternative, however, to situating consciousness in the atom was to follow Epicurus into the derivation of thought from what does not think.[79] It does not appear that Rāzī was impressed by the *ad hoc* and rather opportunistic postulate of these *mutakallimūn* that whatever is predicated of an aggregate must be predicable of each of its members. But neither does he appear to have been willing to ascribe mental events and predicates to complexes whose elements were in no way mental themselves. He does not seem to have had much sympathy for the typical, if simplistic notion of some mechanists that consciousness may arise from the mere augmentation of complexity in a system which is in itself in no way conscious. Perhaps he suspected that this "derivation" was capable of being made "a two way street": that if consciousness could be derived from what was in no way conscious it could equally be reduced to what was in no way conscious, thus robbed of its unique character. One of Rāzī's grounds for maintaining the eternity of matter (and thus branding himself forever as a materialist in the eyes of pious Muslims) was his acceptance of the Greek (and equally Epicurean) doctrine that nothing comes from nothing. Does consciousness then come from nothing? No ontological economy was afforded by a scheme which derived a unique aspect of experience out of the thin air of "complexity." Here surely Plato, who delineated a source of consciousness as the crystallized precipitate of a "super-saturated" reality, or even Aristotle with his faithful adherence to the priority of the actual to the potential, was much more to the point. They at least provided a source for the one irreducible given of psychology. Plato's ontology and the value system it presupposes or implies are somewhat foreign to the philosophical temperament of Rāzī. Thus Rāzī does not found his philosophy upon the doctrine that only the intellectual is real; he would no more reduce the material to the intellectual than he would reduce mind to matter—both are irreducible elements of the world, without which reality as we know it would be

totally unthinkable. Thus Rāzī derives Soul from his analysis of psychology; he does not derive his psychology from his analysis of Soul.

While soul affords the possibility of consciousness in bodies, it is not soul but mind which is the principle of rationality. Soul, as we have seen, is a principle of desire. She is by nature forgetful—or rather oblivious;[80] and unlike mind, which is pure rationality, she is capable of learning only by experience [81]—*i.e.* only by suffering, a state to which only embodiment can bring her.[82]

Rāzī's characterization of Soul as passionate [83] and oblivious [84] provides a valuable clue to the discovery of the role played by this immaterial hypostasis in his psychology: matter may be called pure oblivion, but matter cannot learn. If Soul is obsessed with pleasure or some other object of desire, she is capable of restraint; if she errs, she is corrigible—indeed her corrigibility is the means of her salvation. Thus soul is capable—as matter for Rāzī is not—of serving as the seat of consciousness. What is ensouled may be rational; what is not may not.

Rationality is introduced by Rāzī initially in the context of control: Rationality is the capability of recognizing or discovering measure. Mind places the bridle upon desire without which desire would be unencompassable.[85] But Rāzī has of course no *a priori* predilection for the "cybernetic" model of control. He naturally recognizes in the reflexive character of consciousness an adequate base for the governing function. For if he did not introduce consciousness in this role, it would nonetheless be necessary for him to introduce it ultimately to account for understanding.

Rationality is not confined by Rāzī to its ethical function. The task of discovering a measure (a mean, as Aristotle would say) is by and large an epistemic one; and, while Rāzī does not elaborate the kind of systematic epistemology which was to be developed by Fārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes, he does clearly attribute knowing to the reason (rationality or intellect), thus assigns to mind the sciences both natural and metaphysical [86] in which the subjective rationality of the mind complements and is complemented by the objective rationality of the universe.[87] That Rāzī should at this point echo Plato's metaphysical parody of Empedocles' naturalistic doctrine of like-to-like is of course no coincidence. Mind in giving consciousness to Soul and showing her the rationality of the cosmos (which is the work of mind—God's mind) is introducing her to her "kin," and by so doing making her aware of herself as an immortal and immaterial being —thus showing her the way to her true home.[88]

5. *Rāzī's Doctrines of Rationality, Immortality, Monopsychism,
   and Metempsychosis*

No major philosophical thinker in the Islamic orbit was capable of withstanding the force of the Plotinian conception of emanation. For emanation proposed itself as the answer to virtually every major metaphysical question with which the thinkers of this period were most vitally concerned. If we with our predilection for epistemology and our pretensions of ontological austerity demand to know how it is that Rāzī, who could withstand the authority of Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, *and Aristotle*,[89] could not withhold assent from the hypostases of Plotinus, the reply must be given simply that it was in the hypostases of Plotinus and not in the authority of prophets or of Aristotle that Rāzī found the answers to the puzzlements which philosophy had awakened in him.

Like soul, mind is known to Rāzī by its works. The fact that there is life in the world—that things move "by themselves"—is sufficient argument to Rāzī for the existence of soul;[90] the fact that there is rationality—*i.e.* that there are order, measure, pattern, law, continuity, and determinacy, in man and in the world—is sufficient evidence for the existence of mind. Why, however, must mind or soul be hypostatized, treated not merely as a real but as a universal being—and that on a cosmic scale? An answer, I think, cannot be attempted without some lowering of our critical guard. The priority of the actual to the potential is only the first step in the rationale of such an answer; a full scale Platonic investigation of the ontological condition of the immaterial, the intellectual, would be required for the completion of the process. We do not doubt the ancient notions that matter is the basis of individuation,[91] or time is the basis of change (and *vice versa*). What we have come to doubt is the possibility of existence without individuation, experience without (*i.e.* transcending) time—notions which (with their supporting arguments) were as commonplace to men who looked to Plato for "answers" rather than merely for insights as are the arguments and postulates of Kant and Hume to us.

When Plato had anchored being to goodness and both to rationality,[92] and when Aristotle had reached across the barriers of the categories to identify thought, thinker, and thinking, God, the Prime Mover, happiness, mind, and the good life, the source of all truth and being, summit of all goods, and end of all activities,[93] they both had left a legacy of inestimable

value to their heirs in the monotheistic traditions—for here, expressed, explained, and argued with full philosophical force was the Truth which the prophets in their (for Rāzī unsuccessful) way had all along been trying to teach: the world owed its existence (inasmuch as it was good) to that of what was absolutely good. Rationality in being sprung from absolute rationality; life, from life.

For Rāzī to deny the existence of a rationality (*i.e.* that of God) from which all other rationality—subjective or objective—was derived would be for him to claim that the more could be gotten from the less. The same would be claimed for soul—indeed for being at large. Thus it was far from possible for mind (in man) to be reduced to its (animal) functions of sensation or control. On the contrary, not only were mental functions such as thought and understanding irreducible, but they inevitably pointed beyond themselves to their own ideal—a comprehensive, all-embracing, transcendent, universal and (therefore) timeless mind, the mind of God. Viewed with Platonic eyes, the given seemed as naturally to point upwards as it does to point downwards from the positivist perspective. Hypostasis was as reasonable an outcome of this position as is reductionism of that.

Given the Platonic ontology, the immortality of the soul might be taken as a matter of course. But Rāzī does not base his argument for immortality on Platonism, perhaps because this would appear too aprioristic, perhaps because he prefers (as in his ethics)[94] to compartmentalize his philosophy and so insulate each subject it considers from the defects in his treatment of the others. Thus the arguments of Plato for immortality are treated with some diffidence. Ethics is not made to rest on them[95] but refers rather to Plato's initial disjunction between immortality and total silence of the soul[96]—a disjunction which Rāzī with his Epicurean bent seems to take somewhat more seriously than does Plato himself—as though eternal life and eternal lifelessness were *both* equally real alternatives to be planned for and anticipated, with no cushion of myth between the idea and its possibility. There is surely no desire in Rāzī to demonstrate the obscure by the more obscure. The existence of a hypostatic world Soul is argued not *a priori* but *a posteriori*, from its "effects."[97] And immortality similarly is not argued by assuming the immateriality of the soul. If the soul is material, then its matter either is eternal or has come to be; if the latter its matter will require matter of its own (leading to an infinite regress); but the former is what was to be proved.[98] Formally (if it is Rāzī's) the argument leaves a bit to be desired; but the parallel with Rāzī's argument for the

eternity of matter [99] is instructive. In both cases the *reductio ad absurdum* drives a wedge between that which is material and that which cannot be accounted for purely in terms of matter. Matter must be eternal since what has come to be in time requires matter as its substrate, but for matter to have matter of its own is absurd. (As much as to say, Atoms have no atoms! [100]) Time is not reducible to matter because change is not to be accounted for solely in terms of matter. Likewise Soul is not reducible to matter. A purely material soul would necessarily *be* its matter—and matter as such cannot act. [101] The body is to be understood as a compound of matter with soul, *informed*, both physically and psychologically by mind. [102]

Either element of this union, matter or Soul, may exist in its pure form. Their differentiation is not, as Aristotle may have supposed, merely conceptual, for both existed independently prior to creation; [103] and it is their independent existence rather than (as in Aristotle) their combined existence which is a necessary condition of there being anything at all. [104] Thus if things were to dissolve into their utmost elements, soul and matter would remain, segregated once again. Indeed the ultimate goal of Soul (and God's purpose in allowing it to have injected itself into material existence originally) is for it to discover its foreignness to matter, the immateriality of its existence, and so allow it to return to and rest content in its true home. [105]

The immortality which Rāzī's gnostic-Platonic soteriology promises is not, of course, individual immortality; for individuality is left behind with matter, which is its only ground. The souls of those who find their way out of the ruins of the body (by study of philosophy) are re-united with their source. The loss of individuation is the (logical) condition of immortality.

For Rāzī, as for Plato, monopsychism, immortality and metempsychosis are doctrines which go hand in hand. (Although again there is no cushion of myth to soften the demands of this implication upon credibility.) Human souls which do not fully purge themselves of materiality may descend to the animal level [106]—indeed the "freeing" of such souls from this captivity is the sole justification of the slaughter of harmless animals, according to Rāzī. [107] With the doctrine of metempsychosis we approach an area which, of all those we have touched on, seems perhaps least attractive from the Western perspective. What logic there can be in claims that the same "person" was once a dog, a lion and a different man has generally seemed baffling to Western thinkers. The paradoxical notion of *collective* identity which is intended to mediate the identification of diver-

gent identities does little to alleviate the situation. We must nonetheless admire the logical doggedness of Rāzī in holding fast to metempsychosis as the logical implication (and, as we should think, price) of the Platonic doctrine of immortality: for if matter is the ground of mortality *and individuation*, the immortal soul will be not only disembodied but disindividuated as well. And if monopsychism is to hold only in proportion to purgation of the soul from matter, then Soul-substance not yet liberated will not vanish or disintegrate upon death (as materialists would have it) but must linger in the natural world, still individuated by some body. The doctrine of metempsychosis was held in particular abhorrence by traditional Muslims; Rāzī is all but unique as its advocate among Islamic thinkers.

Conclusion

Rāzī's psychology, then, appears to be a blend of materialistic and Platonic elements—a blend which is prefigured in the thought of Plato himself, but which Rāzī's more literal atomism renders much more plainly a dualism than Plato's may be claimed to have been. Rāzī's theory of perception, except with regard to consciousness, is materialistic. (He was to be followed in this line of thinking by Fārābī and Avicenna, who assimilated "imagination" to sensation as a "re-presentation" of the perceptions of sense.) Pleasure, pain, appetite, and desire are also capable of being treated materialistically by Rāzī. However, where sensation becomes judgmental, where desire becomes motivation, at the level of consciousness and even sub-consciousness ("oblivion") Rāzī finds it necessary to introduce immaterial constituents to his universe: soul, which he makes an independent hypostasis, and mind which he traces directly to God. Not only does he find it impossible to reduce the mental or animal functions to mechanistic terms, he finds it necessary to postulate the immaterial existence of a hypostatized Soul as ultimate origin and goal of all souls in this world. Souls, by their nature, are one; only their association with matter has divided them. They are therefore subject to transmigration until fully purged of matter.

Although Rāzī postulates a "supernatural" origin for all life and understanding, at no time does he ascribe special gifts to prophets or mystics not enjoyed by the rest of mankind. He regards the pretensions

of the prophets to epistemic supereminence as manifestly fraudulent.[108] Reason is man's highest gift. Fārābī's assimilation of the prophet to the philosopher king and ascription of prophetic/mystic awareness to contact with the Active Intellect—a hypostasis not yet found in Rāzī—is thus a first step towards the accommodation of prophecy within philosophy without departure from the categories provided by the Greek philosophers. Avicenna's brilliant synthesis of Greek with Hebraic categories in the concept of the 'aql qudsī or Sacred Intellect is perhaps to be regarded as the apogee of this trajectory toward fusion of the prophetic and philosophic concepts. For Rāzī the notion of prophet and that of philosopher are utterly alien to one another.[109]

Seeking the grounds of Rāzī's rather stringent dualism, one finds them, I believe, in the unassimilability for Rāzī of mental and life functions to the categories afforded by the material world. Faced with the atomist's dilemma of ascribing life and consciousness to atoms or deriving them from what is not alive or conscious, Rāzī, here a true eclectic, turns from atomism to Platonism, which seemed to afford ample room for an account of the higher as well as the lower reaches of psychology.

University of Hawaii.

REFERENCES

[1] The *Fihrist* of al-Nadīm (tr. Dodge, New York, 1970, pp. 706-708 cites several titles of Rāzī's in defense of teleology, including a (teleological) justification of the creation of wild beasts (*cf.* Rāzī's *Philosophical Life* tr. Arberry pp. 707-708), a defense of the wisdom of creation, and a (Galenic) teleology of the dilation of the pupil.

[2] Kraus: Jurjānī p. 189, Isfahānī p. 196, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 213; but contrast *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 706 where a title regarding the inherence of motion in bodies is attributed to Rāzī. The apparent contradiction cannot be resolved without a full treatment of Rāzī's physical theory. But it can be pointed out here that "body" is not equivalent to "matter". Motion is possible only through the "active" aspect—*i.e.* soul or mind which make bodies of matter.

[3] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 205, and Qazwīnī *ad loc.*

[4] Kraus: *Munāzarāt* p. 309, etc.

[5] Kraus: *e.g. Munāzarāt* pp. 308-311.

[6] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, p. 206; Qazwīnī *ad loc.*

[7] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149.3-4.

[8] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149.3-4.

[9] Epicurus *Letter to Herodotus* 39b; *cf.* Leucippus and Democritus *apud* Alexander of Aphrodisias *De Sensu* 56.12 (Kirk and Raven no. 588).

[10] *Timaeus* 61 D ff.

[11] *Timaeus* 59 C.

[12] *Philosophical Life* tr. Arberry p. 712.

[13] *Cf.* his rejection of abstract mathematics, *Philosophical Life* ed. Kraus p. 109, tr. Arberry p. 711.

[14] The language is Plato's: *Timaeus* 59 D, tr. Cornford.

[15] *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 705. That Rāzī should have defended Galen in this case is of particular interest since with respect to taste Galen regarded the evidence as warranting a departure from his usual anti-atomistic stance. See Rudolf E. Siegel *Galen on Sense Perception*, Basel, 1970, pp. 158 ff. If the senses be arranged in classical order from "highest" to "lowest"—sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch—it appears that Galen relied least upon a particle explanation in the case of the most "refined" senses and turned to such accounts most readily in the case of the "grossest."

[16] The Arabic text is edited by R. Walzer and Paul Kraus in *Plato Arabus* I, *Galeni Compendium Timaei Platonis*, London, 1951; Rāzī wrote a supercommentary on Plutarch's (quasi-creationist) commentary on *Timaeus*, *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 706; *cf.* Kraus p. 140.

[17] *Timaeus* 17 C.

[18] Cornford, *Plato's Cosmology*, New York, repr. first ed., 1937, p. 260.

[19] *Timaeus* 59 C.

[20] *De Sensu* 61; *cf.* Cornford p. 261.

[21] Democritus fr. 9, Sextus *Against the Mathematicians* VII 135; (Kirk and Raven no. 589).

[22] Epicurus *apud* Sextus VII 216, *Principal Doctrines* XXIV, *Letter to Herodotus* 49-51.

[23] See my discussion of Rāzī's Myth of the Fall of the Soul, in *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. G.F. Hourani, Albany, forthcoming.

[24] Kraus: Mīrak p. 219.

[25] *To Herodotus* 41.

[26] *To Herodotus* 39 b.

[27] See especially Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 433-6, IV 42-477.

[28] *Principal Doctrines* XXIV, etc.

[29] *To Menoeceus* 123; *De Rerum Natura* V 1169-82.

[30] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 177, (Arabic tr. p. 178).

[31] *De Rerum Natura* I 62-135, etc.

[32] Cicero *De Natura Deorum* I 16.43.

[33] See my discussion of Rāzī's Ethic in *Studia Islamica* XXXIV, 1971, pp. 5-26.

[34] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149; *cf.* Epicurus *To Herodotus* 38 b.

[35] Kraus: *loc. cit.*

[36] Note Rāzī's titles on the relation of excessive heat (pain) to bodily harm, *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 704, etc.; *cf. e.g.* Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 945 ff.

[37] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149.4.

[38] *Spiritual Physick*, tr. Arberry, London, 1950, p. 25; Kraus: Shīrāzī p. 42; *cf. Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 377—Rāzī will have found it impossible to deal fully with coitus without discussing this aspect along the lines proposed in the *Spiritual Physick*; *cf.* Kraus pp. 142-155.

[39] *Vatican Sayings* 4, etc.

[40] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149.1-2.

[41] *loc. cit.*

[42] Epicurus *To Menoeceus* 130 ff.; Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 962-6.

[43] See note 33.

[44] See the *Spirtiual Physick*, passim.

[45] *Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry esp. p. 39, ed. Kraus p. 36.

[46] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 149, *cf.* Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 944-966.

[47] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 153.

[48] *loc. cit.*

[49] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 151.

[50] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 155.

[51] See notes 33 and 45. Rāzī's doctrine of pleasure reinterprets the Epicurean bifurcation of pleasures into those which are static and those which involve motion (frg. 1 *apud* Diogenes Laertius X 136) by treating the static state (*ataraxia*—*loc. cit.*) as the goal of desire, and pleasure itself as the process of reaching that end, an interpretation hardly at variance with the Epicurean program (*cf. Principal Doctrines* XIV).

[52] See esp. *To Menoeceus* 128-129. Several authors including Ibn al-Qiftī, Abū'l-Faraj b. al 'Ibrī, and Hillī attempt to cite Epicurus as the source of Rāzī's hedonism but run aground on an early confusion of Epicurus with Pyrrho, which was due to a copying error. Fārābī and Sā'id al-Andalūsī are among those not victims of this error; *cf.* Kraus p. 141. For the relations between Plato's and Epicurus' accounts of pleasure, *cf.* V. Brochard *La Theorie du Plaisir d'après Epicure*, Paris, 1912, pp. 252 ff.

[53] *Cf.* S. Pines "*Rāzī Critique de Galien*" *Actes du Septième Congrès International d'Histoire des Sciences*, Jerusalem, 1953, p. 483.

[54] With Epicurus *Vatican Sayings* LIX *cf. Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry pp. 75-76 ed. Kraus p. 70 ; *cf.* also Kraus Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 143 and the lost book on pleasure ctied at *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 703; and *Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry p. 40.

[55] *I.e.* as to the limitation of all *natural* desires: With *To Menoeceus* 128 and *Vatican Sayings* 60, etc., *cf. Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry pp. 27, 39, etc.

[56] See *e.g. Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry p. 29, where money rather than food or drink is what must be "restored."

[57] Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw pp. 217-218; *cf.* Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 265; Pines "*Rāzī Critique de Galien,*" p. 484.

[58] Pines *loc. cit.* Apparently Rāzī believed that different sorts of void (as determined by the surrounding atoms) might attract different sorts matter. If so, this may have figured in his account of magnetism (*Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 706), as the "general" attraction of matter by the void may have done in what appears to have been Rāzī's theory of gravitation (see Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 218).

[59] Diogenes of Oenoanda fr. xxxiii, William col. ii, end; Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 223 ff.

[60] *De Rerum Natura* II 235-236, *cf.* Epicurus' stock phrase "There is nothing to prevent..." (*e.g. To Herodotus* 48).

[61] See my "Rāzī's Myth of the Fall of the Soul" for further discussion of this need.

[62] *Munāzarāt* ed. Kraus pp. 311-313.

[63] *Spiritual Physick* I-III; *cf.* Epicurus *To Menoeceus* 128 and *Vatican Sayings* 60.

[64] *Cf.* Marzūrī's objections to the absolute indeterminacy of the Razian void, ed. Kraus p. 201. Rāzī's void is neither active nor passive (Kraus: Jurjānī p. 189, etc.) like the Epicurean void which can neither affect nor be affected: *To Herodotus* 67.

[65] *The Nature of the Physical World*, Cambridge, 1948, pp. 294-295.

[66] *De Rerum Natura* II 263-293.

[67] *Munāzarāt* ed. Kraus pp. 311-312.

[68] *Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry pp. 25-33.

[69] *Munāzarāt loc. cit.*, Kraus: Isfahānī, p. 207, etc.

[70] *Spiritual Physick*, tr. Arberry pp. 25-33, 58; *cf.* Epicurus *Principle Doctrines* XX.

[71] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pp. 203-204.

[72] Kraus: Qushajī p. 216.

[73] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 206.

[74] Kraus: Jurjānī p. 189, Bīrūnī p. 196, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 213, w. Qazwīnī *ad. loc.*

[75] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 204.

[76] *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 706 lists a title of Rāzī's in defense of the proposition "That the Soul does not have a Body."

[77] Abū Husaỹn al-Salīḥī *et al. apud* al-Ash'arī *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* ed. H. Ritter, Wiesbaden, 1963, pp. 309-311.

[78] *Cf.* Rāzī's reported polemics against the (*kalām*) rejection of the stability of matter, *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 705. Rāzī's commitment to natural science (evidenced by his very unmetaphysical approach to alchemy, for example—*cf.* the studies of Ruska on this subject) apparently demanded of him acceptance not only of the stability but also of the eternity of matter: The doctrines of the eternity and rigidity of matter represented bulwarks of natural science to all ancient and medieval philosophers.

[79] *Cf.* esp. Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 939 ff.

[80] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 204.

[81] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 205.

[82] Kraus: *Munāzarāt* pp. 309-310, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 205.

[83] Kraus: Qushajī p. 216.13, etc.

[84] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pp. 204-205.

[85] See esp. *Spiritual Physick* tr. Arberry pp. 25-33, *cf.* Epicurus *Principal Doctrines* XX.

[86] *Spiritual Physick* I.

[87] *Cf.* Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 206, etc.

[88] *loc. cit.* and *Munāzarāt* p. 309.

[89] Kraus: Sā'id al-Andalūsī p. 181; *Munāzarāt* p. 303.

[90] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pp. 203-204; *cf.* his argument for the existence of God from His works, Kraus: Nāsir-i-Khusraw pp. 225-226.

[91] *Cf.* Strawson *Individuals* ch. II and esp. the last remark in ch. III, which is priceless.

[92] *Sc.* principally in the *Republic*, the *Timaeus*, and the *Symposium*.

[93] In *Metaphysics* alpha, Lambda, *Physics* VIII, *Nicomachaean Ethics* I 1, *Categories* passim, etc.— and, if you will, *De Anima* III 5.

[94] See "The Epicurean Ethic of . . . Rāzī" p. 12.

[95] *Spiritual Physick* XX.

[96] *Cf. Phaedo* 70.

[97] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī pp. 203-204, *cf.* the treatment of God, Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 226.

[98] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 214.

[99] *loc. cit.*

[100] *Cf.* Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* II 970 for this Epicurean treatment of the Peripatetic doctrine that matter has no matter.

[101] Kraus: Jurjānī p. 189, Bīrūnī p. 196, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 196; *cf.* Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 288. Plato's argument at *Phaedrus* 245 is that the soul must (exist and) be immortal as a principle of self-motion. Rāzī's dualism in a way is no more than the working out of the logic of this argument: Only the immaterial can initiate motion, but only *in* the material is motion possible.

[102] Kraus: Bīrūnī p. 197, Marzūqī p. 197, Nāsir-i-Khusraw pp. 286-287.

[103] Kraus: *Munāzarāt* pp. 300 ff., etc.

[104] Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 214; *cf.* the concluding portion of my essay on "Rāzī's Myth of the Fall of the Soul."

[105] See Kraus: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī p. 205, Nāsir-i-Khusraw pp. 285-286, etc.

[106] Kraus: Ibn Hazm p. 174, Nāsir-i-Khusraw p. 176.

[107] *loc. cit.*

[108] Kraus: *Munāzarāt* pp. 300, 303.

[109] *loc. cit.*; *cf.* his "pity" for theologians, *Fihrist* tr. Dodge p. 706.

IBN SĪNĀ'S CONCEPT OF THE SELF *

PARVIZ MOREWEDGE

The Problem

The work of the most celebrated Muslim philosopher, Ibn Sīnā, known to the West as Avicenna, has often been investigated from an historical point of view for the contribution it has made to the development of western philosophy.[1] The significance of this *geistesgeschichtlicher* approach notwithstanding, we propose to undertake a textual analytical study of a recently edited text of Ibn Sīnā. It will be shown that such an approach can serve as a source of philosophically stimulating inquiries into topics of contemporary interest. In this essay we shall concentrate on the concept of God and the self, using a recently edited text of Ibn Sīnā on metaphysics which was written in the latter part of his life as the basis for philosophical analysis, and make reference to the familiar works of Ibn Sīnā only when such notes are relevant to the arguments presented.

Let us begin by making two aspects of this inquiry explicit. It is taken for granted that the problem of God and the self is not restricted to either Ibn Sīnā's philosophy or to his Islamic cultural tradition. For example, Augustine, a Christian, mentions in a celebrated passage that all that he wishes to know is God and his soul-self.[2] Likewise, Buber, a Jew, states emphatically in his renouwned I-and-Thou philosophy that the salvation of man is dependent on a non-alienating relationship between man and God.[3] Incidentally, in the works of these two philosophers, con-

scious attempts are made to relate the concept of God to the concept of the self, a task which meets with success in several of Ibn Sīnā's mystical works.[4] Consequently, the significance of Ibn Sīnā's contribution does not lie in his role as an apologist for Islamic dogma, but rather in his presentation of a solution to a problem of primary concern to great philosophers operating within the framework of monotheistic religions. As is to be expected, our critical study of his work will examine the logical adequacy of the solution he proposes to this universal problem.

The second aspect of this inquiry endeavors to clarify the meaning of the concept "God" as follows. Since we are specifically concerned with clarifying Ibn Sīnā's notion of wājib al-wujūd (translated hereafter as the Necessary Existent), and are not assuming that this concept is equivalent to the God of Islam, it should be pointed out to the reader who might consider our inquiry a mere logical exercise in Ibn Sīnā's texts without relevance to other philosophical or religious system, that wājib al-wujūd is conceptually related to the notion of an ultimate being in many mystical works in Islam.[5] It should also be mentioned that many western philosophers have attempted to explain the concept of the self by means of non-religious notions, e.g., Wittgenstein's notion of "the limit of the world"[6] or by some non-religious aspect of God, e.g., Descartes'[7] notion of infinity or Kant's criticism of Descartes.[8] Our inquiry will attempt to elucidate the notions about the ultimate being and doctrines, such as the principle of sufficient reason, in other non-religious metaphysical systems.

Moreover, this inquiry may also clarify the possible confusion about Ibn Sīnā's relationship to Islam in instances where the tenets of the latter conflict with rational philosophy. E. Gilson, who considers the Islamic philosophers as originators of modern European rationalism, makes the following observation about Ibn Sīnā:

> Avicenna had succeeded in solving that difficult problem by building up a philosophy whose crowning part was a natural theology, thus leaving a door open to the supernatural light of Revelation. What Avicenna really thought of the rational value of religious beliefs is not quite clear. If, as there are good reasons to believe, he did not make much of them, he at least was clever enough never to entangle himself in serious theological difficulties.[9]

Having stated our two basic approaches and issues related to them, we shall construct the first set of arguments concerning two paradoxes in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical works.

I. TWO PARADOXES IN IBN SĪNIAN METAPHYSICS

A close inspection of a recently edited text, the Metaphysica (Ilāhiyyāt) of the Book of Sciences (Dānish Nāma,[10] hereafter designated as DAI) reveals two fundamental paradoxes in Ibn Sīnā's philosophical system. These paradoxes do not occur in isolated passages; evidence gleaned from Ibn Sīnā's other writing supports the contention that the paradoxes in question are in fact representative of his metaphysical system.

An intuitive, but not precise, formulation of the first paradox can easily be presented as follows. It can be observed that Ibn Sīnā tends to follow the Aristotelian doctrine that all actual entities are either substances or accidents (i.e. falling within one of the nine categories). In addition, Ibn Sīnā states that there is an actual entity, the Necessary Existent, which is neither a substance nor an accident. A similar intuitive formulation of the second paradox might be presented as follows. The human soul, which is the self-person, is a substance. No substance can be united with any other entity. The self-person, however, can and does achieve ultimate perfection by its union with the Necessary Existent in a so-called "mystical state." If our formulations are accurate, then it is prima facie obvious that Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical system contains two serious paradoxes dealing with the fundamental theorems of his system. Let us therefore turn to a detailed textual examination of the passages in which the aforementioned paradoxes appear.

1. The Paradoxes of the Necessary Existent

Although the notion of the Necessary Existent is used in depicting the first cause of every other entity in Ibn Sīnā's system, the term "wājib al-wujūd" is not used as a primitive[11] in this text, but rather, as a derived term. In DAI Ibn Sīnā states explicitly that "hastī," translated here as "being-qua-being," is the most primitive, undefined, descriptive sign in a differentia (faṣl), it cannot have a definition (ḥadd); and (2) since it has neither a description (rasm) nor a distinguishing mark (ishāra), it is the most determinable[12] and transcendental term (DAI, p. 8). Moreover, Ibn Sīnā affirms that intentionally, "being-qua-being" has a unique meaning

(*yak ma'nā*, DAI, p. 37) which does not acquire a different sense when applied to categories (DAI, p. 36). He assumes that "being-qua-being" is applicable to three different subdivisions: impossible (*mumtani'*) entities, contingent (*mumkin*) entities, and the Necessary Existent (DAI, p. 65). Consequently, according to this formulation, the concept of the Necessary Existent must be derived from the concept of "being-qua-being," the ontological significance of the Necessary Existent notwithstanding. In a previous study, we have shown that Ibn Sīnā does adhere to a variation of the ontological argument as stated by Malcolm.[13] Moreover, he does not regard the Necessary Existent as a self-caused universal property which is applicable to many entities (DAI, p. 77). These considerations provide some strong evidence in support of the view that for Ibn Sīnā the Necessary Existent is an actual entity. If our argument is sound, then it follows that whatever is true of "being-qua-being" in general must also be true of the Necessary Existent, since the latter is a determination of the former. But this conclusion contradicts two other explicit statements made by Ibn Sīnā. The first of these indicates that in its first division (*qismat-i awwal*), being-qua-being is divided into substance (*jawhar*) and accident (*'araḍ*) (DAI, p. 9). The second statement indicates that the Necessary Existent is neither a substance nor an accident (DAI, p. 77). These statements lead to an obvious paradox, namely (i) that the Necessary Existent is a substance (since every being is a substance or an accident, and whatever is a necessity cannot be an accident) and (ii) (according to Ibn Sīnā's own assertion) that the Necessary Existent is not a substance. Prior to investigating passages in other Ibn Sīnian texts which shed light on or provide parallels to the aforementioned paradoxes, some remarks are in order in answer to those who would attempt to read this paradox in light of the Greek philosophical influence. Having already disputed in other studies the contention of those who would see in Ibn Sīnā a follower of either Plotinus or Aristotle, we shall concentrate here on no more than a few decisive points which will distinguish the concept of the ultimate being, to which the aforementioned philosophers subscribe, from the Necessary Existent of Ibn Sīnā.[14]

With regard to Aristotle it should be noted that his concept of "being-qua-being" (τὸ ὄν ᾖ ὄν) is equivalent to Ibn Sīnā's "*hastī*."[15] Whereas Aristotle's prime mover is a substance (οὐσία) which is coeternal with the world,[16] Ibn Sīnā's Necessary Existent is not a substance (*jawhar*). It is said of It that It emanated the world. Objections may be raised to this contrast of the prime mover with the Necessary Existent on other counts, such as

translating οὐσία as a substance, a confusion several scholars have avoided by translating it differently.[17] But, in a text entitled *The Book of Definitions* (*Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*), Ibn Sīnā states explicitly that the term substance (*jawhar*) has been used by ancient philosophers since Aristotle, and that he uses *jawhar* for the same concept. With regard to Neoplatonists we recall that the concept of The One (τὸ ἔν) is above being (ὑπερούσιός) according to Proclus; Plotinus affirms that the One generates (γένητης) being, while Ibn Sīnā states that being-qua-being is more determinable than the Necessary Existent.[19] In view of these considerations we believe that greater insight into the passages in question may be gained by examining passages in other texts of Ibn Sīnā which shed light on the discrepency between his view of the ultimate entity and those of the Greek philosophers mentioned. At the outset we acknowledge that a complete examination of this discrepancy falls outside the provenance of this essay;[20] and in the context specified for our inquiry, the writings of the Greek philosophers mentioned will not be of much assistance in settling the argument at hand. Even with regard to Ibn Sīnā's works, one may inquire whether the quotations from the DAI should be viewed as mere isolated remarks unrepresentative of his general philosophy. This question can be answered by investigating the contents of similar passages in three other texts Ibn Sīnā wrote on metaphysics (*Ilāhiyyāt*) proper: the *Ilāhiyyāt of al-Shifā'* (hereafter *al-Shifā'*), the *Ilāhiyyāt of al-Najāt* (hereafter *al-Najāt*), and the last section of *al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbihāt* (hereafter *al-Ishārāt*).

In *al-Shifā'* there are two passages specifically related to the problem of the substantiality of the Necessary Existent. In the first passage, he quotes an imaginary opponent (with whom he tacitly agrees) as saying that Ibn Sīnā has been careful not to say that The First (which is a common name for the Necessary Existent) is a substance (*al-Shifā'*, p. 348). In the other passage he indicates that we can talk about the Necessary Existent only by privation and that we cannot make any affirmative statement about It. He shows, for instance, that when we say that the Necessary Existent is a substance, we mean that It is not in a subject; we are not saying anything positive about It (*al-Shifā'*, p. 367). Moreover, in *al-Shifā'*, where motion is discussed in respect to the First Principle, he is careful not to call the First Principle a substance, but calls It instead a power (*quwwa*). Thereupon he attributes to it all other "features" one finds attributed to the Aristotelian first principle, namely infinity (*ghair mutanāhī*, ἄπειρος), immateriality (*ghair jismī*, κεχωρισμένη τῶν αἰσθητῶν) and eter-

nity (*dā'im*, ἀἴδιος) (*al-Shifā'*, p. 373). It is also mentioned in this text that no reason (*burhān*) can be attributed to the Necessary Existent (*al-Shifā'*, p. 354). In these passages many similarities can be pointed out regarding the description of the Necessary Existent. For example, in *al-Shifā'* it is mentioned that the Necessary Existent is that for which is impossible not to exist (*al-Shifā'*, p. 35); while in *al-Najāt*, considered a shorter version of *al-Shifā'*, it is stated that the Necessary Existent is that whose non-existence is impossible to conceive (*al-Najāt*, p. 244), and in DAI (p. 76) it is mentioned that Its essence is no other than existence. In *al-Najāt* existents are divided into substances and accidents (*al-Najāt*, p. 200) as in DAI; moreover, in the former text the following enumeration of the qualities of substances is presented: prime matter, form, and separated entities (viz. Intelligences)—none of these is applicable to the Necessary Existent (*al-Najāt*, p. 208). The doctrine of DAI, that the Necessary Existent has neither differentia nor genus, is also repeated in other texts (*al-Ishārāt*, vol. III, p. 53; *al-Shifā'*, p. 347).

Although some significant differences between the metaphysical texts of Ibn Sīnā must be acknowledged (we have enumerated these elsewhere), few of these are relevant to the specific paradoxes under consideration.[22] Two special differences should be clarified; the first, stated explicitly only in DAI, is that the Necessary Existent is not a substance. Having shown that It has neither genus, nor differentia, nor cause, we can safely deduce that it cannot be a substance (according to the other texts) regardless of Its position in DAI. Only in DAI does Ibn Sīnā use the concept of *hastī* (being-qua-being); in his other metaphysical texts he employs *wujūd* (existence) and *mawjūd* (an existent). This point is crucial to the clarification of his celebrated essence-existence distinction. This distinction and the use of *hastī* do not prevent him from considering the Necessary Existent as a derived concept in his system. In *al-Shifā'* (p. 29), he notes that that the primary entities which are *a priori* to the mind (*nafs*) are "being an existent" (*mawjūd*), "being something" (*shay'ī*) and "being necessary" (*darūrī*). As the last term differs from *wājib*, there is no reason to interpret *darūrī* as related to the Necessary Existent and to say that in this text It is named by a syntactically primitive name. It is beyond the scope of this paper to compare these texts further; it is our assumption that the texts we have cited show sufficiently that the non-substantiality of the Necessary Existent is a prominent theme in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical works and that our paradoxes

were not taken from isolated passages untypical of the *corpus* of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics.

2. *The Necessary Existent and Modalities*

At this point it is useful to outline the relationship between Ibn Sīnā's concept of modalities and his views on the Necessary Existent, for It is introduced within the context of modalities (e.g. DAI, chap. 18; *al-Shifā'*, book I, chap. viii; and *al-Ishārāt*, vol. III, chap. V). The argument in these sections may be interpreted as avowing that there are three kinds of being: necessary (*wājib*), contingent (*mumkin*), and impossible (*mumtani'*). On these grounds it has been claimed that Ibn Sīnā proves the actuality of the Necessary Existent. This assumption, however, is open to several objections. A closer inspection of the passages (which we shall discuss only on the basis of DAI) shows that Ibn Sīnā's classification refers to the possible realms, specifically to any entity to which "being-qua-being" can be applicable (*har cha warā hastī hast*) (DAI, p. 65) rather then to an existent (*mawjūd*). Thus, his assertion implies that the concatenation of modalities of "necessity," "contingency," and "impossibility" to "being" is legitimate. Subsequently Ibn Sīnā declares that the "impossible being" cannot denote any actual existent (DAI, p. 65). This passage seems to justify the claim that he is not presupposing that a reference to a name implies the existence of the designatum. Since Ibn Sīnā mentions the impossible being, but does not admit its existence, it may be argued by analogy that we cannot deduce that *wājib al-wujūd* denotes anything on the basis of a mere assumption that it is a legitimately formulated name. So far, our inquiry has not provided us with the proper tools for naming the Necessary Existent; while we have discovered that Ibn Sīnā assumes that the name is legitimate, we have not yet discovered why this name has an actual designatum. Since traditional justification of the Necessary Existent is presented by analyses of the ontological and cosmological arguments, and since we have mentioned the Ibn Sīnian ontological arguments, let us turn our attention to Ibn Sīnā's analysis of causation.

3. *The Necessary Existent and Causality*

The Necessary Existent is discussed also in the context of causality. For example, in *al-Shifā'* it is mentioned that the Necessary Existent is

the reason (*burhān*) for all things (*al-Shifā'*, p. 354). The various references in DAI on this subject can be grouped into four kinds of causal features attributed to the Necessary Existent.

(a) Ibn Sīnā claims on the one hand that the existence of the world (*'ālam*) is the result of that which is not alike—of that which does not resemble—entities in the world. Like the sun, the Necessary Existent is the source of light, of beings, and of the realization of the world. On the other hand, he states that the analogy is wanting, for unlike the sun, the Necessary Existent has no subject (DAI, p. 38). In another passage he clarifies the nature of this type of a dependence relation. For Ibn Sīnā, a cause is concurrent with the existence of its effect; the former is not a source of becoming, as the cause of a house is not its builder (DAI, p. 69), but rather the structure and the composition of its constituents—i.e., the form of the house is the holder (*dāranda*) of the house, and not a thing. In this case, the Necessary Existent corresponds to the formal cause of the (contingent) world.

(b) Moreover, since the world, including matter, was ultimately emanated from the Necessary Existent, both the material aspect of the world and the Necessary Existent partake of the same constituent. Thus, the Necessary Existent, unlike the prime mover of Aristotle, is the (remote) material cause of the world. Likewise, Ibn Sīnā states that in preserving the right universal order, the Absolute Good is receptive to the love It receives from particulars. Therefore, the Necessary Existent may be considered as being the (continuous) efficient cause of the world, for love is a continuous activity of every entity striving for its perfection.

(c) Since the Necessary Existent is the common beloved of whatever exists (DAI, p. 151), the Necessary Existent is the final cause of every entity in the world.

(d) Because of the Necessary Existent, an aspect (*rūy*) of every being is a necessity (DAI, p. 115). In this respect the Necessary Existent may be considered as the ground of being, or its sufficient reason, i.e. the cause of its actualization, and therefore, the cause of its realization.

When we consider these passages as a group, the following interpretation emerges: the Necessary Existent is not related to the world as an alienated entity, but rather, as a unifying principle or sufficient reason for the world. An objection could be raised to one assumption implicit in the proposition that one can find a causal solution to the problem of the specification of the Necessary Existent. The assumption is that the notion

of causality, particularly "a teleological" causation, is legitimate. Contemporary philosophy takes a very critical stance towards "causal explanation." Since we do not claim to have "justified" causation in any sense and do not assume its legitimacy, we shall neither expand on, nor press this particular interpretation, but merely point out its various aspects and deductions following therefrom.

4. *The Necessary Existent and the Union with the Self-Soul*

Being unable to find an adequate analytical depiction of the concept of the Necessary Existent, we shall single out a few passages in which Ibn Sīnā actually asserts something affirmative about this concept.

(i) We begin with a passage in the DAI where he turns his attention from the descriptive analysis of metaphysical concepts to the normative aspects of his metaphysics. He states explicitly that the greatest pleasure (*khwushī*) and the highest happiness (*sa'āda*) and fortune are found in union (*paiwand*) with the Necessary Existent (DAI, p. 102). An inspection of passages surrounding this statement proves without doubt that it is not an accidental assertion, for arguments are proffered explaining how the highest intelligence (*'aql*) attains to perfection; it is suggested that the Intelligence mentioned sees (*bīnad*) that entity from which goodness, the best order, and happiness come (DAI, p. 106). In brief, here we have an assertion that the person's intelligent-aspect of mind unites with the Necessary Existent. Later we shall clarify the sense in which this union is to be understood.

(ii) In *al-Ishārāt* (vol. III, p. 53) there is another striking passage in which an equally affirmative feature of the Necessary Existent emerges. Here Ibn Sīnā asserts that the only way in which one can indicate or point to (*ishāra*) the Necessary Existent is by mystical intelligence (*al-'irfān al-'aqlī*). The passage in *al-Ishārāt* is definitely not untypical since the entire text is written in the language of allusion and remarks; and, moreover, the last section of this text, which is devoted entirely to the analysis of mystical experience, includes an enumeration of the process of the stations (*maqāmāt*) of the mystic.

(iii) The third set of selections deals with the nature of the soul after the death of the body. In a treatise entitled *Ma'rifat al-Nafs* (*The Mystical Knowledge of the Soul*), Ibn Sīnā notes that the soul itself belongs to the

category of substance, while the feature of its combination with the body belongs to the category of relation.[23] Thereafter he argues that the soul is independent of the body, asserts that it is attracted to the Divine Light as a needle is attracted to a magnetic mountain, and cites Qur'ānic passages supporting his arguments. There are at least two difficulties in this doctrine: determining the category of a person and specifying the nature of the disembodied soul. The first problem, arising out of Ibn Sīnā's assertion that a soul is independent of the body, shares the well known difficulties faced by the Cartesian dualistic mind-body theory: difficulties of depicting the mind-body relation and the nature of a person. We shall leave the analysis of this much discussed problem in Ibn Sīnā's system to a later study and proceed to the second difficulty, which concerns the nature of the disembodied soul. In the work cited, Ibn Sīnā remains on the level of vague analogies and religious similies in describing the actual state of the soul upon disembodiment. In the Ibn Sīnian system, a soul cannot be identified with what it knows. In this connection we recall Ibn Sīnā's attack of Porphyry's view that the knower becomes the known, an attack which may be seen as evidence for the view that Ibn Sīnā holds the individual soul after death to be distinct.[24] But a close reading of his text fails to reveal any one passage in which he explicitly asserts that the soul does in fact preserve its individuality. In an interesting passage in al-Ishārāt, he states that the rational soul (al-nafs al-nāṭiqa) does not become the soul of the active intelligence (al-'aql al-fa''āl), and notes specifically that it becomes connected (ittiṣāl) with the active intelligence (al-Ishārāt, vol. 3, p. 270). The depiction of the union-like relationship between man and God as a process of self-realization is not peculiar to the passages we have mentioned. For example, in his essay on love, Risāla fi'l-'ishq, Ibn Sīnā asserts that a bipolar movement governs the relation between every entity and the Absolute Good (al-khair al-muṭlaq). (a) Since every entity, such as the human soul, depends on the Absolute Good for its perfection, it strives to be assimilated into the later. (b) Manifesting a receptability to the Absolute Good is necessary for implementing the best order in the universe in which all entities are to attain their perfection. In this Risāla Ibn Sīnā states specifically that the highest degree to which entities approximate this perfection (kamāl) is explained by the mystic's concept of ittiḥād, which can be translated as "being united" or "being in an harmonious affinity." [25] Another example of the same doctrine is found in al-Najāt (p. 293), where Ibn Sīnā states that it is the aim of the rational soul (al-nafs al-nāṭiqa)

to become united (muttaḥad) with the Absolute Good (al-khair al-muṭlaq); here he uses the terminology he employed in the aforementioned works to depict his key concepts.

Accordingly, the passages cited from al-Ishārāt, Risāla fi'l-'ishq, and al-Najāt suggest that Ibn Sīnā either attempts to depict a state in which the soul is connected to (ittiṣāl) or united (ittiḥād) with a higher entity, such as the active intelligence, the Absolute Good, or wishes to assert that the perfection (kamāl) of the soul is to be found in such a state. From these passages we can deduce therefore that Ibn Sīnā's aforementioned statement in the Dānish-nāma does not stand in isolation, but that it presents a doctrine recurring in his work, even though a connection (ittiṣāl), a union (ittiḥād) and a blending (paiwand) of a substantial soul with another entity runs into logical difficulties when the argument presupposes the traditional Aristotelian scheme.

We have argued elsewhere that this concept of the process of self-realization and the related union of persons with the ultimate being is a theme common to much Persian mystical poetry. It is pronounced in ṣūfism as well. R. A. Nicholson's remarks on the ṣūfīs' attempt to become the perfect man corroborate our findings that the process of self-realization is a prominent theme in Persian mystical poetry and other movements historically related to Ibn Sīnā's philosophical tradition.

> What do the ṣūfīs mean when they speak of the Perfect Man (al-insān al-kāmil), a phrase which seems first to have been used by the celebrated Ibn al-'Arabī although the notion underlying it is almost as old as ṣūfism itself? The question might be answered in different ways, but if we seek a general definition, perhaps we may describe the Perfect Man as a man who has fully realized his essential oneness with the Divine Being in whose likeness he is made. This experience, enpoyed by prophets and saints and shadowed forth in symbols to others, is the foundation of the ṣūfī theosophy.[26]

5. The Paradox of the Concept of the Self

In the preceding section we stated a positive feature of the Necessary Existent, namely the relation implied by "being in union with" which is attributed to the soul. We should ask, however, whether this relationship is legitimate within the framework of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. A review of points discussed previously shows that this finding is not a solution, but rather, that it leads to another paradox as follows. There are three kinds of

substances: the material body (*jism*), the intelligence (*'aql*) and the self-soul (person, *nafs*, *jān*, ψυχή, *anima*) (DAI, p. 119). Like each substance, the self has its perfection (*kamāl*, ἀρετή), a perfection which resides, according to Ibn Sīnā, in its union (*paiwand*) with or its blending into the Necessary Existent (DAI, p. 102). The body bars the soul from knowledge of the Absolute Good. But after its disembodiment, the soul ascends towards the Absolute Good (DAI, p. 106). Furthermore, in this union the self loses its identity, preserving no longer its status as a substance without being destroyed. No aspect of the Necessary Existent is changed in this union (DAI, p. 80). An examination of these passages and the logical use of the *payvand* sense of a union discloses another paradox in Ibn Sīnā's system, namely:

(i) That the soul can be united with something (since the soul can be united with the Necessary Existent, by existential generalization it can be united with something).

(ii) That the soul cannot be united with anything. A substance persists and preserves its identity while undergoing every kind of change—alteration, diminution, growth and locomotion—that is all, except generation and destruction. In the *paiwand* sense of the "union of *x* with *y*," *x* loses its identity, as does a piece of ice, which, melting in water, loses its distinguishability as ice. (While there are obviously many different senses of "union," not all of them correspond to *paiwand* as shall subsequently become clear.) Change, in this sense, cannot be attributed to the soul. From (i) and (ii) we deduce that "the soul can be united with something" and that "it is false that the soul can be united with something."

By way of summarizing this part, we note that if we assume the categorical metaphysical schemata taken for granted by Ibn Sīnā, then two paradoxes emerge from the notions of the Necessary Existent and the soul. We shall now examine some tentative solutions to these paradoxes.

II. ANALYSIS OF IBN SĪNIAN PARADOXES

Even though some of Ibn Sīnā's writings suggest consciousness on his part of such paradoxes in his system, we shall proceed to a direct examination of the paradoxes in question, making use of a few tools of contemporary philosophical analysis.[27] The significance of historical and

textual analysis notwithstanding, it is our contention that the clarification of the logic of these paradoxes and their solutions is to some degree helpful in understanding the text.

6. *Difficulties in the Exact Formulation of the Paradoxes in Question*

Let us begin by commenting on the difficulties encountered in naming the Necessary Existent. One may consider the problem in a formal language of the first order predicate calculus, including relations (as two place predicates) and functors.[28]

(1) Among the first types of signs are individual constants of the zero level, named for individuals. Prima facie, if we interpret these signs in terms of traditional metaphysics, individual signs will then stand for primary substances, as they are used as a subject of expressions forming a sentence. Since the Necessary Existent is not a substance in Ibn Sīnā's system, it cannot be the designatum of an individual constant.

(2) Relations and properties are attributes, i.e., properties are one-place attributes, whereas relations are *n*-place attributes where *n* is greater than one (1). Ibn Sīnā explicitly designates these relations and properties as accidents (DAI, p. 28). Since the Necessary Existent is not an accident, it cannot be named by attributes.

(3) The Necessary Existent cannot be designated by so-called secondary signs, such as functors, because secondary signs as such are defined in terms of attributes and/or substances. Such a naming would make the concept of the Necessary Existent dependent on some particular contingent existents. Ibn Sīnā states explicitly, however, that the concept of the Necessary Existent is in no way dependent on anything other than itself (DAI, p. 67).

(4) Suppose one attempts to name the Necessary Existent by means of a definite description as follows. One may let *a* be the Necessary Existent if and only if $a = ((i x))$ where *x* has the intersection of the following properties: unity (*yakī būdan*), immobility (*bī-taghayyurī*), power (*qudra*), eternity (*qadīmī*), wisdom (*'ālimī*), etc. Furthermore, in keeping with the argument offered by Rescher, one may assert that for Ibn Sīnā '$\emptyset a$' (is true), implies '*E ! a*'. For instance, since Ibn Sīnā states that the Necessary Existent is eternal, one may state that "the Necessary Existent exists" by substituting 'the Necessary Existent' for '*a*', and 'is eternal' for '$\emptyset$'.[29] However,

neither the description nor the subsequent analysis can apply to the case of the Necessary Existent for the following reasons. We have no guarantee that the Necessary Existent is an individual of such a nature that it could be substituted for 'a' in 'Øa'. Consequently, the assertion that predication implies existence in Ibn Sīnā's system does not assist us in this investigation. Moreover, in this very context, predication is significant only in the case of so-called 'genuine' properties. Ibn Sīnā asserts that the so-called properties of the Necessary Existent are mere privations (bī-ṣifatī) which tell us at best what the Necessary Existent is not. While they may assist us in approaching a definition, they do not state occurrent properties; the Necessary Existent cannot be named by a definite description of privations. In addition, any definite description may not even be proper, for naming does not guarantee existence. From a syntactical formulation, one may not be able to deduce existential statements without presenting additional evidence. It is not difficult to show how the paradox of the soul can be displayed in another formal language. For example, "substantiality" could be regarded as a predicate, "soul" as an "individual," and "is in union with" as a relation. An axiom could be symbolized so as to express the common feature of substances as follows: the only changes in which the identity of a substance is not preserved is destruction. Thereupon one could show that this axiom is contradiced by the theorem that a soul's eternal bliss is achieved by its union with the Necessary Existent.

Before proceeding any further with a suggested solution to these paradoxes, let us clarify the meaning of the "paradox" and the role that paradoxes can play in philosophical analysis. In an interesting note, W. V. Quine states that:

> . . . a paradox is just any conclusion that at first hand sounds absurd but that has an argument to sustain it. . . .[30]

Likewise, we take paradoxes to be similar to antinomies which display an absurdity. Whereas an antinomy cannot be solved due to a contradiction embedded in the problem, a paradox (παράδοξος, against reason) can be solved by means of a logical solution which entails the formulation of a framework of distinctions between: the levels (e.g., object and meta), contexts (extensional and intensional), kinds of languages (materic and topological), different senses and uses of words, or other analytic (ἀνα-λύω, to open up, to distinguish) means.

Our supposition is that a paradox can be constructed only in a precise manner in the context of a semi-formal or formal language, and that the solution to the paradox must relate to the formulation: as such it is a linguistic procedure. (For this reason a paradox is welcomed by the logician who can reconstruct his framework and sharpen his analytic tools by solving it). In light of this discussion, let us inquire into the nature of our paradox. We are interested in the concept of the Necessary Existent, which cannot be named in our substance-event language, and in the concept of the Self, of which a not well-formed attribute is predicated, since a substance cannot be united with anything. Now a modest set of criteria for a satisfactory solution would include:

(a) The formulation of a language as an alternative to the substance-event language in which: (1) the main theorems and concepts of the theory (which were asserted in the paradox) could be formulated, and (2) there would be no contradiction; and

(b) A new formulation, which would be productive in stimulating controversies regarding the rest of the theory. Obviously, a solution lies not in a theory, but is about a theory, and a solution can be limited to the context of the passages in which the paradox is formulated. It should be pointed out that we are not affirming a belief on Ibn Sīnā's part in "processes," or that we refuse to deal with the general question of his intent or motivation. We only proffer the following hypothesis: if one chooses for primitives process-types of words which allow union of two processes, then the difficulties encountered in handling this theory by casting primitives into substance-types of words will disappear. Obviously, the construction of such a process language, which involves temporal indices, is beyond the scope of this paper. It is not our intent to present a formal solution to the paradoxes in question, but rather to outline a general schema by means of which a solution can be developed in the reconstructionist sense of philosophical analysis.[31]

7. Processes and Substances

In order to discover the intuitive meaning of a primitive which can be substituted for substances, we turn first to several texts in the history of philosophy and then proceed to the primary and the extended uses of this primitive in ordinary language. Philosophers refer often to a "process"

family of language as an alternative to a "substance-event" language. Frequently, the distinction is made within a context in which the "substance-event" language is regarded as being responsible for considering the subject-predicate form of expression as being primary. Whitehead notes, "In their natures, entities are disjunctively 'many' in process of passage into conjunctive unity. This Category of Ultimate replaces Aristotle's category of 'primary substance'." [32] Broad states, "Here is then prima facie, a distinction between two sorts of substantives, which we will call "Processes" and "Things" respectively.[33] Ingarden affirms, "The general constituent property of a process as an object is that it is a temporally extensive aggregate of phases";[34] Mead asserts, "I have been presenting the self and the mind in terms of a social process." [35] A similar tendency is found in Dewey's concept of *Experience* and in Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, among others.

Generally, a thing, and individual concrete entities, such as a chair, are regarded as substances. Corresponding to any substance is a history usually initiated by the generation of the substance and terminated by its destruction. During its history, a substance persists through all changes and does not evolve into other substances. Events are fixed, non-repeatable points in the history of substances; events are fixed by temporal and (for the material substances) spatial indices. A description of processes presents greater difficulty, since as primitives they are happenings—such as playing a tune—they contain events, and they are distinguishable by what is called a rope-cluster of family resemblances. Unlike an event, a process, such as playing a tune, is repeatable; it has phases and may take a shorter or longer period of duration, as for instance, maturing. A process may be emanated from and may evolve into another process without a discernible temporal cut, as hatred may become love. With respect to this investigation, the interesting feature of the processes considered is that they can be united with each other in many ways, and that they may be used to express Ibn Sīnā's ethics of the process of self-realization in the sense of union (*paiwand*) of the person-soul with the Necessary Existent. It is not within the aim of this inquiry to verge further into a description of process types of entities, and it is unnecessary, as excellent source references are available on this material.[36] But at this point objection may be raised to process-language philosophy on grounds like these: is not the introduction of process language philosophy obfuscation with artificial concepts which could be explained as well in ordinary language? Is it the task of the philosopher to introduce further artificial concepts, such as processes which oppose

substances—concepts which may lead to new difficulties? Should he not demonstrate instead the possibilities ordinary language offers for describing in perfectly clear ways situations related to the term "union" which give us difficulty only when we insist on using our narrow notion of substance? But counter-objections may be raised as follows: the ordinary language analysis of so-called process words to replace the substance-event schemata of philosophers is actually a useful first-stage clarification of an inexact pre-scientific concept (the explicandum) formulated for the purpose of providing an exact explicatum of the concept in question.

8. *Various Senses of "Union" Employed to Clarify "the Process of Mystical Union (paiwand)"*

Next let us examine some of the senses in which the concept of the process of union is used in ordinary language, in order to clarify the doctrine of *paiwand* by means of the primary and the extended uses of process words taken from these cases.

There are several senses of "union" which do not correspond to *paiwand*, as in the relation "*a* is in union with *b*," or its mere syntactical variants, as illustrated below.

(a) "A man and a wife are united in marriage." In such a sense of "union," the identity of both *a* and *b* is preserved and the relation is symmetrical.

(b) "A quantity of what appears to be blue paint is mixed (united) with what appears to be a yellow paint and results in green paint. In this case of union, the identity of both *a* and *b* is destroyed, though neither one of the quantities is destroyed.

(c) "A computer sequentially multiplies a series of numbers (each being different from zero (0) in a set of memory locations) by the content of an accumulator. Each number is subsequently set to zero (0) and the result (sum) of the calculation is united in the accumulator." In this sense of "union," in which the identity of *b* is preserved, the relation is asymmetrical; since the operation is performed in discrete steps, there is a discernible procedure with specifies at any time whether a particular memory cell has preserved its value, and further, whether it has become part of the accumulated sum in the accumulator.

(d) "The letter 'A' is written on a white board; thereupon the board is covered with a white disappearing ink under which 'A' temporarily disappears; during an interval a painted white patch is in a sense 'united with' or 'blended with' the rest of the board; after the interval, the 'A' reappears, thereby destroying the 'union'." Union in this sense is a temporary relation, happening during an interval, and occurring between the persistence and reappearance of individuals.

It is obvious from our analysis of Ibn Sīnā's concepts that the senses of union enumerated do not correspond to *paiwand* union. Without a doubt, there are many other senses of "union" which show an affinity to some usages of "blending" and "evolving" as well as to other words which express the meaning of *paiwand* more closely.

(e) "An observer sees a piece of ice in a warm water. The ice blends continuously with the water until it is united with it." The following observations apply to this union: (1) the ice, i.e. *a* has not been destroyed but it has been blended with the water; (2) there is a sense in which we speak of the degree to which the ice is more or less "water" or "water-like"; and finally (3) there is a(n open) neighborhood (of time) during which one cannot distinguish the ice from water.

(f) "An observer watches a piece of wood burning in a fire. As the log blends slowly and continuously with the fire, it finally becomes part of the flame itself." The observation previously made on case (e) applies to this union.

(g) "A wave blends into (is united with) the sea." Again, the observations made previously (e) apply to this case, except that a wave is not normally called a thing; rather, it is an aspect of something to which some philosophers, like Spinoza, refer as a "mode" rather than as a "substance."

Whereas the substance-event language may be used without many complications to explain cases (a) through (d), it is questionable whether cases (e), (f) and (g) can be explained by it. While one could attempt to explain cases (e), (f), and (g) by means of the substance-event language, the cost of such a procedure would be such extreme complexity that the introduction of another category, namely that of "process," is justified on the basis of the simplicity alone in which (e), (f), and (g) can be described in the process language. The difficulties confronted by the substance-event language are due to the following two restrictions inherent in the logic of the use of "substance"; first of all (1), substances do not admit of degree, as Aristotle states, ". . . but substance is not said to be more or less than that which is:

a man is not more truly a man at one time than he was before, nor is anything, if it is a substance, more or less what it is. Substance, then, does not admit of variation of degree." (*Categoriae*, 4a-5); secondly (2), substances preserve their identity through all changes except generation and corruption. "Blending," "evolving," and "uniting" attributed to entities in cases (e), (f), and (g) cannot be attributed to substances, unless the theory is revised to such an extent that its applicability and consistency becomes questionable, as in Spinoza's attempt to designate exactly one "substance" and to use "mode" in naming those entities called "individuals" in ordinary language.

Now one may claim that the meaning of *paiwand*, as well as mystical union and phrases used by the mystics such as "a person," "becoming more and more God-like," "no distinction can be made between the self, the world, and God," can be understood perfectly well in ordinary discourse, since many terms such as "evolving," "fusing," "blending," "uniting," and other clusters of process terms are available in ordinary language.

One solution to this paradox would be to recommend the withdrawal of the "substance-event" language and to disregard premises such as "In its first division being is divided into substance and accident" (DAI, p. 9).

III. CONCLUDING REMARKS

By way of concluding this inquiry we shall point to additional areas of investigation which would benefit from further clarification of the philosophical and the historical topics discussed in this paper. For example:

(i) Is there something fundamentally inherent in substance—event types of languages which prevents them from being adequate frameworks for systems in which the mystical ethics of self-realization are embedded? Could this factor be one reason for the wealth of mystical treatises expressed in poetry and of mystical recitals composed by the writers who were very capable logicians and masters of peripatetic metaphysics?

(ii) Since Ibn Sīnā is known to have written both technical and philosophical texts in the Aristotelian tradition, as well as mystical works, which found many imitators, what kind of generalizations can be made about these two kinds of philosophical writing? Mystical texts, on the one hand, deal with practical questions of the ethics of self-realization, in which processes are important constructs in depicting epistemo-normative

predicates needed for a theory of personal salvation. The substance-event language, on the other hand, is useful for a descriptive analysis of nature (*tabī'a*, φύσις). If this distinction can be upheld, then we could ask: did philosophers, such as Ibn Sīnā, Ṭūsī, and Suhrawardī use different philosophical styles based on a sophisticated theory of methodology and on views on the role of constructs, such as substances and processes, in metaphysical systems? What, moreover, is involved in constructing an axiomatic process-type language which can interpret theories such as the process of self-realization and ethics in Ibn Sīnā's system? Obviously, such a language would require temporal indices, value functors, and a clear construction of processes as individuals which are unadaptable to any of the presently available standard formal languages.

(4) Was the increase in metaphysical poetry and mystical allegories after Ibn Sīnā influenced by the awareness of philosophers that ordinary language and the language of poetry could more adequately explain some of the significant themes of philosophical ethics than the traditional peripatetic metaphysics with its limited concepts? If this were indeed the case, may the traditional interpretation of "victory of the theologians over the philosophers due to Ghazālī" have been overly exaggerated? After all, the "victory" might have been one which enriched the language of philosophy by integrating ordinary and poetical discourse, rather than by abandoning philosophical works which continued to be written by the very same people writing mystical works.

A consideration of these and related questions will enable us to obtain a better grasp of the possible solution to the paradoxes in question. We hope that our inquiry has at least formulated the questions in such a way that the philosophical and historical significance of a recently edited text of Ibn Sīnā emerges more clearly.

Baruch College of the City University of New York
and New York University.

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[1] Among the most typical studies are: E. Gilson, "Les sources greco-arabes de l'augustinisme avicennisant," *Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge*, 8 (1933), 37-42. E.I.J. Rosenthal, "Avicenna's Influence on Jewish Thought," *Avicenna: Scientist and Philosopher*, ed. G.M. Wickens (London, 1952), pp. 66-83. The wealth of such material is at least in part due to the numerous references made by later western philosophers to Ibn Sīnā's works. For instance, Aquinas, who

supposedly referred to Ibn Sīnā's works a few hundred times, does not refrain from commencing the discussion of some of his most important works by making direct reference to Ibn Sīnā. In Aquinas' work, *On Being and Essence*, the second sentence reads, "Moreover, being and essence are what the intellect first conceives as Avicenna maintains in the first book of his *Metaphysics*." *Selected Writings of St. Thomas Aquinas*, ed. R.P. Goodwin (New York, 1965), p. 33. In connection with this ambiguous reference we note that Ibn Sīnā states that the three primary concepts known by the soul (*nafs*) are an existent (*al-mawjūd*), a thing or an entity (*al-shay'*), and a necessity (*al-darūrī*).

[2] Augustine's assertion, "God and the Soul, that is what I desire to know." When asked, "Nothing more?", he answered, "Nothing whatever", attests to the significance of this problem. *Soliloquies*, II, 7, i, in *Basic Writings of Saint Augustine*, ed. W.J. Jones (New York: Random House, 1948), vol. 1. p. 262.

[3] His celebrated "I and Thou" doctrine prescribes an I-Thou relation between man and God; in the process of defining this relation ship, the I is favorably modified in contrast to the I-It relationship in which man takes the role of the spectator rather than of the participant in "the phenomenal happenings". Buber states:

> To be sure, whoever knows God also knows God's remoteness and the agony of doubt upon a frightened heart, but not the loss of presence. Only we are not always there.

M. Buber, *I and Thou*, trans. W. Kaufmann (New York, 1970), p. 147.

[4] In relating man to God, Buber notes, "Although we on earth never behold God without world but only the world in God, by beholding we eternally form God's form." *I and Thou*, p. 167. Augustine's inquiring mind does not establish a specific relationship between man and God without noticing the affinity between himself and God. He writes, "And how shall I call upon my God—my God and my Lord? For when I call on Him I ask Him to come into me." *The Confessions*, I, ii, in *Basic Writings of Augustine*, p. 4. As he ponders further, he is related to God by being uplifted and filled by the Divine.

> And when Thou art poured forth on us, Thou art not cast down, but we are uplifted; nor art Thou dissipated, but we are drawn together. But, as Thou fillest all things, dost Thou fill them with Thy whole self, or, as even all things cannot altogether contain Thee, do they contain a part, and do all at once contain the same part? Or has each its own proper part—the greater more, the smaller less? Or is it that Thou art wholly everywhere whilst nothing altogether contains Thee?

Ibid., I, iii. Although the last formulation appears to adhere closely to his religious beliefs, we should acknowledge that Augustine does not proffer any argument or rigorous system, but rather, as the title of his work denotes, a confession. His illuminationist theory and other devices have by no means adequately "resolved" the problem of specifying the concept of the self and God or their significant relations.

[5] P. Morewedge, "The Logic of Emanationism and Ṣūfism in Ibn Sīnā," *The Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Part I: 91:4 (1971), 467-476; Part II: 92:1 (1972), 1-18.

[6] For example, in a famous passage in his early writings, Wittgenstein asserts that:

> The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world—not a part of it.

L. Wittgenstein *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D.F. Pears and B.F. McGuiness (London, 1961), (5.641), p. 119. In contemporary philosophy various aspects of this problem are isolated and treated separately; see for example, S. Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, 1963). In his later writings, in which he emphasizes behaviorism, Wittgenstein states:

> Doing itself seems not to have any volume of experience. It seems like an extensionless point, the point of a needle. This point seems to be the real agent. And the phenomenal happenings only to be consequences of this acting. "I do . . ." seems to have a definite sense separate from all experience.

L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigation*, trans. G.E.M. Anscomb (New York, 1953), (620), p. 161e. We observe a shift in emphasis here from "a metaphysical Subject" being "a limit of the world" to a process of "Doing" as "the real agent of . . . the phenomenal happening." We note then, that in the writings of several western philosophers, the specification of the self in relation to God is a key problem. We note further that some philosophers, such as Wittgenstein in his later writings, do not emphasize the relationship between the self and the God of religions, but rather the activity, the process, in terms of which they refer to a person. Subsequently we shall find that in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics there are many passages in which the self can be interpreted as "an agent" of "an emanative process."

[7] Descartes offers an example of the philosopher *par excellence* who asserts the epistemic primacy of self-knowledge in celebrated passages such as the following: "I clearly recognize that nothing is more easily or manifestly perceptible to me than my own mind." Descartes, *Philosophical Writings*, trans. and ed. E. Anscombe and P.T. Geach (London, 1963), p. 75. However, there is another passage in Descartes in which he asserts explicitly that self-knowledge can be based only on the knowledge of the Divine.

> I must not think that my conception of the infinite has come about, not through a proper idea, but by a denial of the finite—as I conceive of the rest and darkness by the way of the denial of motion and light; on the contrary, I clearly understand that there is more reality in an infinite than a finite substance, and that therefore in a way my primary concept (perceptionem) is rather of the infinite than of the finite—rather of God, than of myself.

Ibid., p. 85.
[8] Kant, among other philosophers, sharply attacks Descartes' doctrine that the person as a soul can be known independently of other entities, holding that, "the consciousness of my own existence is at the same time an immediate consciousness of existence of other things outside me". *Immanuel Kant's Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. N. Kemp Smith (London, 1953), p. 245 (B276). While placing both knowledge of the soul and of God as transcendent entities into the *noumena*, Kant like Augustine, attempts to connect the concept of the soul to the concept of God, as is evident from an interesting note added to the second edition of the first *Critique*.

> In a systematic representation of the ideas, the order cited, the *synthetic*, would be the most suitable; but in the investigation which must necessarily precede it the *analytic*, or the reverse order, is better adapted for the purpose of completing our great project, as enabling us to start from what is immediately given us in experience—advancing from the doctrine of the soul to the doctrine of the world, and thence to the knowledge of God.

Ibid., p. 325.

[9] E. Gilson, *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1938), pp. 38-39.
[10] An excellent edition of this text, written in Persian, was completed by M. Mo'īn (Tehran, 1952). Translations of the passages are from my own forthcoming work, a translation of and a commentary on Mo'īn's edition. P. Morewedge, *The Metaphysics of Avicenna* (Ibn Sīnā) (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul; New York: Columbia University Press, 1973).
[11] The term "primitive" is used here in the same sense as "the axiomatic primitive constant" in Carnap's usage. R. Carnap, *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and its Applications*, trans. W.H. Meyer and J. Wilkinson (New York, 1954), p. 171. For Ibn Sīnā, of course, *hastī* is primitive in an intuitively epistemological sense of the a priori. However, if we were to translate his theory into modern terminology, then "Necessity" and "being-qua-being" would be primitive, while "The Necessary Existent" would be defined by the two aforementioned terms.
[12] For the classical formulation of the notions of determinates and determinables see, W.E. Johnson, *Logic* (New York, 1964), I, Chap. xi. For Ibn Sīnā the concept of being (*hastī*) is more determinable than the concept of the Necessary Existent, as there is actually no "being-qua-being". All actual, possible but non-actual, and impossible entities are determinations of being in the sense that "being-red" is a determination of "being-colored". For a clearer presentation of a similar concept, see Carnap, pp. 65-69. In these descriptions the most determinate entity would be of level zero; *hastī* would be of the highest level.
[13] See P. Morewedge, "Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Malcolm and the Ontological Argument," *The Monist*, 54:2 (April 1970), 234-249. In this work we argue that Ibn Sīnā held a variation of the second version of the ontological argument, in which the Necessary Existent was depicted not as an individual God separated from the word, but as something resembling the concept of the principle of sufficient reason in western philosophy. According to this analysis,, the truth of statements about contingent entities, such as one's self, depends ultimately on the principle of sufficient reason, which results in the peculiar nature of God. Evidently, a fruitful study would be to investigate the parallel doctrines of Leibniz and Ibn Sīnā concerning this issue.
[14] P. Morewedge, "Contemporary Scholarship in Near Eastern Philosophy," *The Philosophical Forum*, II:1 (Fall, 1970), 122-140.
[15] P. Morewedge, "Philosophical Analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' Distinction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92:3 (1972). Also see, "Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's Logic and the Ibn Sīnian Tradition," in *Essays in Islamic Science and Philosophy*, ed. G.F. Hourani (Albany: State University of New York Press, Forthcoming 1973).
[16] *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. W.D. Ross, 2 vols. (London, 1958), 1069a 30.
[17] For example, in his translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, Hope uses the term "primary being," while Owens suggests the use of the term "entity"; see Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, trans. R. Hope, (Ann Arbor, 1966) and J. Owens, *The Doctrine of Being in Aristotelian Metaphysics* (Toronto, 1963), especially chapter four.
[18] Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*, ed. and trans. A. M. Goichon (Cairo, 1963). Whereas Aristotle uses τί ἔστι only once for the first of the ten categories, Ibn Sīnā uses *jawhar* throughout his work; see *Topica* 103a 22.
[19] In *Elements of Theology*, trans. E.R. Dodds (London, 1963), p. 101; and *The Enneads*, trans. S. MacKenna (London, 1962) "generate" is used for γένητης, while P. Henry and H.R. Schwyzer's translation, uses "gush" for the same term in *Plotini Opera*, II (Paris and Bruxelles, 1959) p. 291.

[20] See, for several significant distinctions between Ibn Sīnā's views and the views of the Neoplatonists, "The Logic of Emanationism . . .," Part II, p. 11.

[21] *Al-Shifā' Al-Ilāhiyyāt*(*La Metaphysique*), ed. G.C. Anawati, M.Y. Moussa, S. Dunya, and S. Zāyed, intro. I. Madkour, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1960). *Al-Ishārāt wa'l-Tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1960). *Al-Najāt* (Cairo, 1938).

[22] An unpublished poper, entitled "Three Metaphysical Texts of Ibn Sīnā and a Point of Philosophical Analysis," delivred at Columbia University, April 1971. Basically, *al-Shifā'* was written earlier than the other two works and carries greater religious overtones, evident, for instance, in the tacit acceptance of doctrines, such as punishment and reward after death, of which one finds a *revocatio* in other works; *al-Ishārāt* is the most mystical work, while the *Dānish Nāma* attempts to combine the mystical and metaphysical aspects. There is no way of indicating which of the latter two texts was written first.

[23] "Risāla fī Ma'rifat al-Nafs al-Nāṭiqa wa Ahwālihā," in *Ahwāl al-Nafs*, ed. F. El-Ehwany (Cairo, 1952), p. 186.

[24] J. Finnegan, "Avicenna's Refutation of Porphyrius," in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta, 1956), pp. 133-146. Also, see M.E. Marmura, "Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls," *Medieval Studies* 22 (1960), pp. 232-239 and P. Merlan, *Monopsychism Mysticism Metaconsciousness* (The Hague, 1963), pp. 27-30.

[25] *Risāla fi'l 'ishq*, in *Traites Mystique d'Aboū 'Alī al-Hosain b. Abdallāh b. Sīnā ou d'Avicenne*, ed. M.A.F. Mehran (Leyde, 1899), p. 22.

[26] Nicholson, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Oxford, 1967) pp. 77-78.

[27] The term "philosophical analysis" is used in many different ways. As the investigation of this term is beyond the scope of our study, we shall limit our use of it to both the senses specified by V.C. Chappel, as "two different ways in which Wittgenstein himself conceived philosophy and language in the *Tractatus* and in his latter work." *Ordinary Language, Essays in Philosophical Method* (Englewood Cliffs, 1964), p. 2. The first kind is exemplified by R. Carnap's "A Rational Reconstruction" as applied to the explication of the two senses of probability in his *Logical Foundations of Probability* (Chicago, 1951); see especially pp. 576-577. For a critical analysis of his method see P.F. Strawson: "Carnap's Views on Constructed Systems versus Natural Languages in Analytic Philosophy," in *The Philosophy of Rudolf Carnap*, ed. P.A. Schilpp (La Salle, 1963), pp. 503-518. According to this method, the problem lies in doing away with substance as the axiomatic primitive constant of an axiomatic system for depicting mystical experience. The problem then becomes: can such a system be adequately formalized, symbolized, and descriptively interpreted? The second approach, following the directions taken by Malcolm and others, presents the problem in a simplified fashion; see N. Malcolm, in *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*," ed. P.A. Schilpp (Evanston, 1942), pp. 343-368. According to this view, the root of the problem lies in the restricted ways in which philosophers attempt to explain various kinds of experiences by the narrow conception of substance, whereas there are many satisfactory ordinary "process words" which explain the experiences in question as we shall see.

[28] See R. Carnap. *Introduction to Symbolic Logic and Its Application*, trans. W.H. Meyer and J. Wilkinson (New York, 1958).

[29] N. Rescher, *Studies in Arabic Philosophy* (Pittsburgh, 1966), p. 73.

[30] W.V. Quine, *The Ways of Paradox* (New York, 1966), p. 1.

[31] If processes are value-embedded entities, as is indicated in the later works of Whitehead, then his earlier schemas for a substance-event language would not be satisfactory, in spite of the fact that they allow for temporal indices; see A.N. Whitehead, *An Inquiry Concerning the Principles of Natural Knowledge* (London, 1955); cf. R. Carnap, *An Introduction to Symbolic Logic*, pp. 229-230, where Carnap suggests a topological and a metric construction for Whitehead's early substance-event language.

[32] A.N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York, 1955), p. 32.

[33] C.D. Broad, *An Examination of McTaggart's Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1933), vol. 1, 142.

[34] Roman Ingarden, *Time and Modes of Being*, trans. Helen R. Michejda (Springfield, 1964), p. 109.

[35] George H. Mead, *Mind Self and Society* (Chicago, 1963), p. 186.

[36] See L.S. Ford and J.B. Cobb, Jr., "The Prospect for Process Studies," *Process Studies*, 1:1 (1971), pp. 3-8.

IBN SĪNĀ ON NECESSARY AND POSSIBLE EXISTENCE

GEORGE F. HOURANI

Ibn Sīnā's analysis of necessary and possible existence, and his proof of a First Cause derived from it, were famous in medieval Arabic and Latin philosophy and have again attracted much attention and comment among modern historians of medieval philosophy. But they have seldom been considered in the light of all the versions written by Ibn Sīnā himself on these related topics. Broadly speaking, medieval theologians such as Ghazālī, Ibn Rushd, Maimonides and Aquinas based their remarks on the versions of the *Shifā'* or the *Najāt*, while modern scholars have made use of whichever texts happened to be accessible to them. This practice has not been disastrous for a general understanding, since the texts do not contradict each other and overlap to a considerable extent in content. Each one, however, adds something of its own, being the result of an independent effort of presentation by the author and in no case a copy of another version. Thus, for purposes of closer analysis and more accurate criticism of Ibn Sīnā's arguments, it seems desirable to make the main versions available in a western language and to assemble them in one publication. There are too many passages in which Ibn Sīnā discusses the necessary and the possible for a complete collection to be practicable.

I have selected for translation passages from four treatises in which Ibn Sīnā concentrates on these questions and presents his arguments in a continuous manner. There are two other books where the same topics appear, but in more dispersed forms: the *Ishārāt* and the *Dānish nāma-i 'Alā'ī*. The *Ishārāt* has been translated into French[1] and an English translation of the *Dānish nāma* has now been published.[2] The four texts below and the *Ishārāt* have been published in Arabic and the *Dānish nāma* in Persian.[3]

No attempt is made here to present the texts in a chronological order.

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Among the four books quoted, we know only that the *Shifā'* was written before the *Najāt* and *al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*; and internally no evidence of change in doctrines is visible to me. The order adopted is merely pedagogical, proceeding from the simpler and shorter to the longer and more elaborate discussions.

These four translations are based on Arabic printed editions, to be mentioned before each translation; the page references inserted are to these editions. Manuscripts have not been consulted—that would have been a much larger enterprise, in view of their abundance for Ibn Sīnā's works. The few emendations made are based on sense and must therefore be regarded as provisional.

These translations aim at accuracy above all. Consistency in rendering technical terms has been maintained. English style has been sacrificed where necessary to get closer to the Arabic. Thus, for example, *wājib al-wujūd* is translated as "necessary of existence," although that does not sound too good in English, because all other translations, "necessarily existent," "necessary being," "that whose existence is necessary" run more risk of either adding something or removing something present or implied in the original expression. My hope is that any loss in verbal elegance will be compensated for by a brighter manifestation of Ibn Sīnā's logical elegance.

A few notes have been added, textual or explanatory, but I am leaving the tasks of general interpretation, analysis and criticism of these arguments to be continued by others.

1. *'Uyūn al-masā'il*, ed. M. Cruz Hernandez, *Archives d'Histoire Doctrinale et Littéraire du Moyen Age*, 25-26 (1950-1951), pp. 303-323.

This short treatise was traditionally attributed to Fārābī, but is now generally thought on grounds of style and content to be not by him, and perhaps by Ibn Sīnā. See F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam* (London, 1958), pp. 21-22. Even if it is not Ibn Sīnā's, it provides a good introduction to the arguments of the longer passages given below. Cruz in the same article has also edited the medieval Latin translation by Domingo Gonzalez.

A shorter version entitled *Tajrīd risālat al-da'āwa l-qalbiyya* is published in *Rasā'il al-Fārābī* (Hyderabad, 1926). The differences in content are small in the passage translated here.

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Translation:

[308] We say: Existents are of two kinds. In one of them, when the thing itself is considered, its existence is not necessary; this is called "possible [4] of existence." In the second, when the thing itself is considered, its existence is necessary; this is called "necessary of existence". If we suppose something possible of existence to be non-existent, no impossibility follows from that, so it cannot do without a cause for its existence. And if it does exist it becomes necessary of existence by another thing; consequently it is something that is always possible of existence by itself and necessary of existence by another thing. This possibility is something that belongs either to what is everlasting or to what exists for a time but not all time.[5]

Now it is inadmissible [6] that possible things can continue in an infinite chain of causes and effects, or be in a circular relation;[7] they must terminate in something necessary, which is the first existent. So when the necessary of existence by itself is supposed non-existent, an impossibility results. There is no cause for its existence, and it is inadmissible that its existence would be by another. It is the first cause for the existence of things, and consequently its existence is the most prior existence. It is free [309] from all kinds of defect; its existence is therefore complete. Consequently its existence is the most complete existence, free from causes such as matter, form, act and end, and it has no quiddity other than that it is necessary of existence; this is its individual nature.[8] Consequently it has no genus or differentia or definition, and there is no demonstration of it, but it is the demonstration of all things.[9] Its existence by itself is without end or beginning, no privation is mixed with it, and its existence is not potential. Consequently it is not possible that it would not exist, it has no need of anything to provide its permanence, and it does not change from one state to another. It is one, in the sense that the reality that it has does not belong to any other thing.

2. *al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*, in *Rasā'il Ibn Sīnā* (Hyderabad, 1935), pp. 2-4.

A. J. Arberry translated these passages in *Avicenna on theology* (London, 1951), pp. 25-28, but not accurately enough to represent adequately Ibn Sīnā's closely reasoned argument.

Translation:

[2] *The first principle: establishment of the necessary of existence.*

Know that every existent either has a cause [10] for its existence or has no cause. If it has a cause it is something possible, whether it is [referred to] before its existence, when we are supposing it mentally, or in the state of existence; for the possibility of existence of that whose existence is possible is not annulled by its entry into [11] existence. If it has no cause in any way for its existence it is necessary of existence.

If this doctrine is accepted as true, the proof that there is in existence an existent having no cause for its existence is as I shall state. This existent [12] is either possible of existence or necessary of existence. If it is necessary of existence our problem concerning it is settled at once. If it is possible of existence, the possible of existence enters into [11] existence only by a cause which makes its existence outweigh its non-existence. But if its cause too is possible of existence, and in like manner there is [a series of] possibles dependent on one another, then there will be no existent at all, because this existent [12] which [3] we supposed does not enter into existence unless it is preceded by an infinite [series of] existents,[12] and that is impossible. Therefore possibles terminate in something necessary of existence.

The second principle: the unicity of the Exalted.

. . . .

The third principle: the denial of causes for Him.

This is a consequence of the first principle. Know that the necessary of existence has no cause whatever. There are four kinds of causes: that from which the existence of the thing [arises], the efficient cause; that for whose sake the thing has existence, the final, perfecting cause; that in which the thing has existence, the material cause; and that in which the existence of the thing consists, the formal cause. . . .

[4] So we say: The demonstration—an obvious one—that He has no efficient cause is that if He had had a cause for existence He would have been a created being,[13] while that cause would have been necessary of

existence. So, if it is established that He has no efficient cause, this leads us to think that His quiddity is His individual nature, i.e. His existence; and He is neither a substance nor an accident. And it is inadmissible that there should be two [such beings], each one deriving existence from the other, or that He should be necessary of existence in one respect and possible of existence in another.

· A proof that His quiddity is not distinct from Himself, but rather that His existence is unified in His reality:[14] If His existence were not His reality itself, His existence would be an accident [15] of His reality. But everything accidental is caused, and everything caused requires a cause; and this cause would either be external to His quiddity or itself be His quiddity. If it were external, He would not be necessary of existence and not be free from an efficient cause. If the cause were the quiddity, then the cause must be fully existent in order for the existence of another thing to arise from it; but quiddity before existence has no existence, and if it had such a prior existence it could do without a second existence. Then the question would come up again in connection with that [prior] existence: If it were accidental in the quiddity, where would it come from and be attached to it?

Thus it has been established that the individual nature of Him who is necessary of existence is His quiddity, that He has no efficient cause, and that necessity of existence is for Him what quiddity is for other things. And from this it is evident that the necessary of existence does not resemble other things in any respect, because the existence of all things apart from Him is other than ⟨their⟩ quiddity.[16]

3. *al-Najāt*, ed. M. S. Kurdī, 2nd ed. (Cairo, 1938), pp. 224-227, 235.
Parts of these passages have been accurately translated into French by A. M. Goichon, *La distinction de l'essence et de l'existence d'après Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)* (Paris, 1938), pp. 159-163, 166-167. A complete Latin translation is given by N. Carame, *Avicennae Metaphysices compendium* (Rome, 1926), pp. 66-70, 91-93.

Translation:

[224] THE SECOND TREATISE OF THE "METAPHYSICS".

Chapter: Explanation of the ideas of the necessary and the possible.

The necessary of existence is that existent which cannot be supposed non-existent without the occurrence of an impossibility. The possible of existence is that which can be supposed non-existent or existent without the occurrence of an impossibility. The necessary of existence entails existence. The possible of existence is that which has no entailment of any kind, i.e. either of existence or of its absence. (This is what we mean in this context by "possible of existence," although by "possible of existence" may also be meant what is in potentiality, and "possible" is also predicated of everything that truly exists—as has been given in detail previously in the "Logic.")[17]

Next, the necessary of existence may be necessary by itself or not by itself. What is necessary of existence by itself is what is due to itself, not due to another thing, i.e. it is such a thing that from the supposition of its absence an impossibility follows. On the other hand, what is necessary of existence not by itself is such that if something other than it were postulated it would become necessary of existence. As examples, 4 is necessary of existence not by itself but on the supposition of $2+2$, and burning is necessary of existence not by itself but on the supposition of contact of a naturally active force with a naturally passive force, I mean of one which burns with one which is burned.

Chapter: The necessary by itself cannot be necessary by another thing. The necessary by another thing is possible.

It is inadmissible that one thing should be necessary of existence by itself and by another thing at the same time. For if the other thing were removed or its existence not considered, inevitably either the necessity of its [18] existence would remain unaffected and thus not be the necessity of its existence by another thing, or the necessity of its existence would not remain and thus it would not be the necessity of its existence by itself.

Everything that is necessary of existence by another thing is possible of existence by itself, because the necessity of existence of what is necessary of existence by another thing is dependent on some connection and relation, and the consideration of the connection and relation is other than the consideration of the very thing itself which has the connection and relation. Then the necessity of existence is established only by consideration of this connection. So consideration of the thing itself alone must entail necessity

of existence, or possibility of existence, or impossibility of existence. But it is inadmissible that it should entail impossibility of existence, because everything whose existence is impossible by itself does not exist, even by another thing... [226]....[19] Nor can it be an existent that entails necessity of existence ⟨by itself⟩,[20] for we have said previously that, when something is necessary in its existence by itself, the necessity of its existence cannot be by another thing. So what remains is that by consideration of itself it is possible of existence, while by consideration of the injection of the connection with that other thing it is necessary of existence, and by consideration of the interruption of its connection with that other thing it is impossible of existence; but itself by itself, without condition, it is possible of existence.

Chapter: What is not necessary does not exist.

Thus it is now clear that everything necessary of existence by another thing is possible of existence by itself. And this is reversible, so that everything possible of existence by itself, if its existence has happened, is necessary of existence by another thing; because inevitably it must either truly have an actual existence or not truly have an actual existence—but it cannot not truly have an actual existence, for in that case it would be impossible of existence;[21] so it remains that it truly has an actual existence. And in that case its existence is either necessary or not necessary. But that whose existence is not necessary is still possible of existence [only], and its existence has not been distinguished from its absence; and there is no difference between this state of it and the first state, because it was already possible of existence before its existence, and now it is in the same state as it was. So if it is postulated that now it has been made anew, a proper question can be asked about this state [of renewal]: Is it possible of existence or necessary of existence? If it were possible of existence, and if that state were also present previously in the thing's [pure] possibility, no new state would now have arisen. But if its existence is necessary and it is necessitated by something prior, the existence of a [new] state is necessary by this prior thing, and that state is nothing but the thing's [22] emergence into existence; therefore its emergence into existence is necessary.

Further, everything possible of existence either has its existence by itself or has it due to some cause. If it is by itself, it is itself necessary of existence, not possible of existence. If it is by a cause, either its exist-

ence is necessary whenever the cause exists, or else it remains as it was before the existence of the cause, but this is impossible. Therefore its existence is necessary whenever the cause exists.

[227] Thus everything possible of existence by itself is necessary of existence only by another thing.

. . .

[235] Chapter: Establishment of the necessary of existence.

There is no doubt that there are existents,[12] and every existent [12] is either necessary or possible. If it is necessary, the existence of the necessary is at once verified, which was the conclusion sought. If it is possible, we shall show that the existence of the possible terminates in the necessary of existence. First we shall set forth some premisses.

One of these is that it is not possible that all the things possible by themselves should simultaneously have an infinite number of causes possible by themselves. This is because all of them are either existent together or not existent together. If they are not existent together in infinite number simultaneously, but exist in a temporal series—we shall postpone discussion of this. If they are existent together and there is nothing necessary of existence among them, then inevitably their total insofar as it is that total, whether it is finite or infinite, is either necessary of existence by itself or possible of existence. So if it is necessary of existence by itself, but each of its units is possible, the necessary of existence would be composed of possibles of existence, which is absurd. And if it is possible of existence by itself, the total needs for existence something to bestow existence. This will be either external to the total or internal to it. If it is internal, either one unit will be necessary of existence, yet every one of them was [considered] possible, so this is absurd. Or this unit will be possible of existence and will be a cause for the existence of the total; but a cause of the total is primarily a cause for the existence of its parts, of which it is one, thus it will be a cause for the existence of itself. This is impossible; but even if it were true it would in a way be the very conclusion sought; for everything sufficient to make itself exist is necessary of existence, yet it was [considered] not necessary of existence, which is absurd. What remains, then, is that it is external to the total, and it is not possible that it should be a possible cause, for we have assembled all causes possible of existence

within this total; therefore it is external to it and necessary of existence by itself. So now the possibles have terminated in a cause necessary of existence, and all possibles do not have an infinite number of possible causes.

4. *al-Shifā': al-Ilāhiyyāt*, ed. G. C. Anawati and others (Cairo: 1960), vol. I, pp. 37-39. First treatise, chapter 6.

This passage has been carefully translated by A. Hyman in A. Hyman and J. J. Walsh, eds., *Philosophy in the Middle Ages* (New York, 1967), pp. 240-242. The main purpose of a new translation is to provide a uniform vocabulary between this and the previous passages. In a few places my translation varies from Hyman's more than verbally.

Translation:

[37] *Chapter: The beginning of the statement on the necessary of existence and the possible of existence: that the necessary of existence has no cause, that the possible of existence is caused, and that the necessary of existence is not matched by another thing in its [mode of] existence and not dependent on another thing for that existence.*

We return to our subject and say: Each one of these, the necessary of existence and the possible of existence, has its own properties. Thus we say: Things that are included in existence are subject to a rational division into two kinds. One of them is that which, when it is considered by itself, is not necessary in its existence. It is evident that its existence is also not impossible, otherwise it would not have been included in existence. This [kind of] thing is in the sphere of possibility. The other kind is that which, when it is considered by itself, has its existence of necessity.

So we say: The necessary of existence by itself has no cause, while the possible of existence by itself has a cause. The necessary of existence by itself is necessary of existence in all its aspects. It is not possible for the existence of the necessary of existence to be matched by another existence, so that each one of the two would be equal to the other in the necessity of its existence and they could be substituted for each other.[23] It is inadmissible that its existence would be composed of any plurality whatever. It is also inadmissible that the reality which belongs to the necessary of existence should be shared in any way. Thus from these assertions of ours

it follows that the necessary of existence is not relative, changeable, plural or sharing in respect to its [mode of] existence which is its unique property.

[38] That the necessary of existence has no cause is evident. For, if the necessary of existence had a cause for its existence, its existence would be by that cause. But whenever the existence of a thing is by something [else], if it is considered by itself without another thing, an existence is not necessary for it; and whenever a thing is considered by itself without another thing, and an existence is not necessary for it, it is not necessary of existence by itself. It is clear, therefore, that if the necessary of existence by itself had a cause it would not *be* necessary of existence by itself. So now it is evident that the necessary of existence has no cause.

And from this it becomes evident that it is inadmissible that anything could be both necessary of existence by itself and necessary of existence by another thing. For, if its existence were necessary by another thing, it would be inadmissible that it could exist without that other thing, and whenever it is inadmissible that it could exist without another thing it is impossible that its existence should be necessary by itself. [Conversely], if it were necessary by itself, it would then have happened,[24] and necessitation from another would have had no effect on its existence; [whereas],[25] when another thing has an effect on a thing in its existence, its [the latter's] existence is not necessary by itself.

Further, whenever anything considered by itself is possible of existence, both its existence and its non-existence are by a cause. For, if it exists, existence has happened to it in distinction from non-existence, and if it does not exist non-existence has happened to it in distinction from existence. Now inevitably each one of the two states[26] happens to it either from another thing or not from another thing. But if it is from another thing this other thing is the cause, while if it does not happen from another thing ⟨it is necessary of existence by itself, not possible of existence by itself as we had supposed⟩.[27] Thus it is clear that everything that has not existed and then exists is determined by something admissible other than itself.[28] And the case is the same for non-existence.

This is because either the quiddity of the thing is sufficient for this determination or a quiddity is insufficient for it. Now if its quiddity is sufficient for either one of the two states[26] so that it [39] happens, and that thing is necessary in its quiddity through itself, and yet it was supposed not necessary, this is absurd. And if the existence[29] of its quiddity is insufficient for it, but [it is] something to which the existence of itself is

added,[30] so that its existence must be due to the existence of another thing not itself, then this thing is its cause; therefore it has a cause. So, in sum, one of the two states is necessary for it not through itself but through a cause. The factor of existence [31] comes by a cause which is a cause of existence, while the factor of non-existence comes by a cause which is the non-existence of the cause for the factor of existence, as you know.

We say: It is necessary that [the possible] becomes necessary by the cause, and in relation to it. For, if it were not necessary, upon the existence of the cause and being in relation to it it would still be [merely] possible, and it would be admissible that it would both exist and not exist, without being determined by one of the two states.[26] And [even] while the cause existed it would need all over again the existence of a third thing by which existence would be determined for it rather than non-existence, or non-existence rather than existence; so that thing would be another cause, and the argument would go on to infinity. But [even] if it went on to infinity, in spite of that its existence would never have been determined for it, so an existence would never have happened to it. And this is impossible, not only because of the infinite series of causes (for in this context it is doubtful whether such an extension is impossible), but more because there does not exist *any* extension by which it can be determined, after it has been assumed as existing already. Therefore it has now been verified that everything possible of existence does not exist unless it is necessary in relation to its cause.

State University of New York at Buffalo.

REFERENCES

[1] *Le livre des directives et remarques*, French tr. A.-M. Goichon (Beirut-Paris, 1951).
[2] *The metaphysics of Avicenna*, English tr. P. Morewedge (New York: Columbia University Press, 1973).
[3] For Arabic and Persian editions and further bibliography see A.-M. Goichon, "Ibn Sīnā," New Encyclopaedia of Islam (Leiden, 1960).
[4] *Mumkin* in all these extracts means "logically possible," "contingent."
[5] The two classes of things referred to are the everlasting, unchanging things of the heavens and the generated things of the world of becoming. Both are possible in the sense employed; even everlasting things are contingent, not existing through any necessity in their own essences, so they need external causes.
[6] *Lā yajūz*: literally "it is not permitted." *yajūz* has a more subjective ring than *yumkin*, "it is possible," being used in Islamic law for the class of actions permitted by the *sharī'a* (divine law).

[7] i.e. of causes and effects. There can be cycles, in which events the same in character recur in the same causal relations, but there cannot be a circle, in which two or more individual events are related to each other as both causes and effects in the same sense. See *Najāt*, pp. 235-236.
[8] Quiddity: *māhiyya*. Individual nature: *anniyya*.
[9] The denial of a demonstration of it seems to contradict the demonstration of its existence that has just been given. The Latin translation contains additional words: *neque demonstratio super ipsum ⟨ex causa⟩, immo est demonstratio ⟨et causa⟩ omnibus rebus.* "There is no demonstration of it ⟨from a cause⟩, but it is the demonstration ⟨and cause⟩ of all things." This reading would solve the contradiction, because the previous demonstration proceeded from things as effects to their first cause, while there is no demonstration that starts from a higher cause and proceeds to the first cause as an effect. Either the Latin translator felt the difficulty and supplied explanatory words, or his Arabic manuscript contained words missing from ours, of *'Uyūn* and *Tajrīd*.
[10] *Sabab*: not clearly distinguished from *'illa* in these passages. Both are translated as "cause." See A.-M. Goichon, *Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sīnā* (Paris, 1938), s.vv. *sabab* and *'illa*.
[11] *Dukhūluhu fī*: This could also mean "inclusion in." But Ibn Sīnā just below does speak of possibles "entering into" existence. They do so from non-existence, not from a "subsisting" realm of pure essences. See below, *Risāla 'arshiyya*, p. 4: "quiddity before existence has no existence." See F. Rahman, "Essence and existence in Avicenna," *Mediaeval and Renaissance Studies*, 4 (Oxford, 1958), pp. 1-16, and in *A history of Muslim philosophy* (Wiesbaden, 1963-1966), I, 484-486; P. Morewedge, *The metaphysics of Avicenna*, Commentary; "Philosophical analysis and Ibn Sīnā's 'Essence-Existence' distinction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 92 (1972), pp. 425-435.
[12] Read *al-mawjūd*, "existent," Printed ed.: *al-wujūd*, "existence."
[13] *Hādithan*: normally "generated," but that would contradict Ibn Sīnā's whole cosmology, in which causes are needed for everlasting things as well as generated ones: see, e.g., *'Uyūn al-masā'il*, p. 2, above, and note 5. So *hādithan* must be used here in a broader sense, to include what is termed elsewhere *al-hudūth al-dhātī*, "essential origination": see Goichon, *Lexique*, s.vv. *hudūth* and *muhdath*.
[14] Himself: *dhātihi*. Dhāt can also mean "essence." Reality: *haqīqa*.
[15] Read *'arad*. Hyderabad ed. has *nafs*, "self," which makes the sentence self-contradictory. The following sentence, "everything accidental," gives the clue to the correctness of *'arad* here. Ibn Sīnā implies that in other things existence is an accident. But "accident" must be understood here in a special sense, not that of accidents that belong to existing substances.
[16] Read *māhiyyati⟨hi⟩*. Hyderabad ed. *māhiyyati*.
[17] i.e. of the *Shifā'*. The *Najāt* has no section on logic.
[18] i.e. of the first thing.
[19] P. 225, last line, from *wa lā an yakūna*, to p. 226, line 2, *fī hādhā*, are bracketed by the editor as an irrelevant and confused insertion in an otherwise orderly argument. I follow him in omitting these lines.
[20] Add ⟨*bi-dhātihi*⟩, for complete sense.
[21] It is not clear to me why what does not have existence actually cannot be possible of existence, unless he means that there is a contradiction between the assumption of the thing's existence having occurred and its not existing actually. See Goichon, *Distinction*, p. 163, for further criticism of Ibn Sīnā at this point.

[22] i.e. of the effect.

[23] *Yatalāzamān*. See Goichon, *Lexique*, s.v. *talāzama*. Not "necessarily accompanying each other" (Hyman).

[24] *Ḥaṣala*. There is no implication of origination in time, for the necessary by itself is eternal.

[25] The text at p. 38, lines 8-9 is difficult. The Cairo edition has: *wa law wajaba bi-dhātihi, la-ḥaṣala. Wa lā ta'thīra li-ījābi l-ghayri fī wujūdihi lladhī yu'aththiru ghayrahu fī wujūdihi. . . .* To make sense with least possible change, the following reading and punctuation are suggested: *wa law wajaba bi-dhātihi, la-ḥaṣala, wa lā ta'thīra li-ījābi l-ghayri fī wujūdihi. ⟨wa⟩ lladhī yu'aththiru ⟨hū⟩ ghayruhu fī wujūdihi. . . .* I have translated according to this conjecture.

[26] i.e. existence and non-existence.

[27] A sentence such as the following is needed to complete the argument: *⟨fa-huwa wājibu l-wujūdi bi-dhātihi, ghayru mumkini l-wujūdi bi-dhātihi kamā faradnāhu⟩.*

[28] *Takhaṣṣaṣa bi-amrin jā'izin ghayrihi. jā'izin*, "admissible," seems out of place. *Khārijin*, "external," would be better and graphically close.

[29] The text has *wujūd*, "existence." But it is wrong to say that the *existence* of the quiddity is insufficient for the thing's existence. A word meaning "nature" or "character" is needed instead of *wujūd*.

[30] *Bal amrun yudāfu ilayhi wujūdu dhātihi. Dhāt* means "self" or "essence." "Essence" could also make sense here, but in this passage *dhāt* has been used regularly for "self."

[31] *Al-ma'na l-wujūdī.* The usual meaning of *ma'nā*, "idea," "concept," is inappropriate here, because Ibn Sīnā is referring to real existence as having a cause. "Attribute" (Hyman) is better, but suggests that existence is an accident added to essences. "Factor" is a vague word, and so is *ma'nā* frequently, even in medieval philosophical usage.

TOWARDS A UNIFIED VIEW OF AVERROES' PHILOSOPHY

ALFRED L. IVRY

For most people the name of Averroes (A.D. 1126-1198) conjures up, if anything, association with the theories of double truth and monopsychism.[1] To judge from the scholarly literature, few theories have been more maligned than Averroes' so called "double truth" concept, which was not, we are usually told,[2] held by him (nor by most Averroists) in the crude sense the term connotes: two equally valid though mutually contradictory truth-value systems. Instead, we are to believe that Averroes considered that there is one truth which could be expressed in two or more ways, particularly through either a traditional, religious framework of terminology and beliefs or a philosophical one. And indeed, a judicious reading of Averroes' writings on this subject mostly supports this latter view,[3] though disclosing that this one truth is essentially a philosophical one, that the religious truths are in substance, even if not in style, philosophical truths; indeed that for Averroes to talk of truth values is to talk philosophy. It is generally quite clear that Averroes' universe is basically an Aristotelian one, his Paradise far from the houri-ing crowd; and that he considers those things which cannot be accommodated into the philosopher's scheme as probably non-existent. Thus the equivocation on such issues as miracles, individual Providence and resurrection, and the emphasis upon the universal elements in the Muslim creed.[4]

What appears as equivocation to one person, however, may appear to another as a simple statement of faith which should not be minimized or forced into another conceptual framework; and, as we shall see, there are in fact sufficient grounds to justify entertaining another interpretation of the double truth theory, one which is closer to its literal meaning but not as crude as at first imagined.

Averroes' theory of monopsychism presents a problem of another sort, particularly vexing for those who wish to insist upon his orthodoxy.

For their purpose the term "monopsychism" is, however, an asset, since Averroes never claims that there is only one *psyche*, one soul, in the universe; indeed he freely admits the existence of individual souls, and describes in great detail, in his various commentaries to the *De Anima*, *Parva Naturalia* and elsewhere, the various aspects and different natures of souls. However, the term "monopsychism", like "double truth", is a misnomer, and actually refers to Averroes' alleged belief in the existence, ultimately, of but one *nous*, intellect, in the universe; or rather, in that sublunar part of the world which we mortals inhabit. Building upon an amalgam of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic ideas which he inherited from his predecessors,[5] Averroes seems to believe than man's intellect is essentially part of that universal intellect known as the Agent or Active Intellect, *nous poietikon*. This universal mind is viewed as that force which is responsible for both the ability to think and the thoughts which are thought; by which thinking the individual intellect is led, through increasing degrees of generalization and abstraction, towards conjunction with an intelligible reality ultimately identical with the Agent Intellect itself.

Eventually, therefore, we return to our origin; dust to dust, and intellect to Intellect, with nothing personal remaining. Indeed, as I have attempted to show elsewhere,[6] Averroes emphasizes that man can actually pass from particular to universal being and die unto his self while still alive, if his intellect is sufficiently acute.

It is true, however, that Averroes does not hold out the prospect of an indefinite tarrying in the angelic realm of pure intelligibles for the fortunate, philosophical few who reach this level of knowledge and being. Something non-intellectual, it would seem, brings them back to mundane physical reality, probably the very fact of their physical existence, to which their intellect is, in spite of all, *somehow* related. Conversely, the defenders of Averroes' orthodoxy can argue that some individual yet only quasi-physical element is always present in the soul, besides the physical faculties; and that since the intellectual faculty is never in our experience totally divorced from the soul, so the individual soul *cum* intellect (or at least some kind of quasi-noetic yet still conscious psychic entity) can endure after death.

Yet even if we grant, as we shall attempt to show, that it is not totally bizarre to attribute to Averroes the notion of a "pneumatic body" (or a "corporeal form") as constitutive of Being in its fundamental sense, attribution of personality to this substance does seem to go beyond the bounds of Averroes' system.

Here, however, we must pause and ask whether there is an Averroian "system" of which one can speak in one breath? Can in fact the various parts of Averroes' philosophy be brought together into a coherent whole without doing injury to the individual parts? As mentioned above, descriptions of Averroes' philosophy tend to emphasize what are perhaps the more dramatic aspects of his thought, and treat the rest of his work as variations upon themes enunciated by his predecessors, particularly by Avicenna, in the field of physics, metaphysics and ethics. This is probably a wise, and certainly a safe approach to take; and yet it seems to this writer that something can be said for an approach to Averroes' philosophy which attempts to understand the various aspects of his work as part of a unified scheme, in which certain ideas keep reappearing. This article will attempt to sketch the lines of this approach, beginning with the doctrine of intellection already touched upon.

In many ways Averroes' epistemology would seem to be the least typical aspect of his philosophy, representing what appears to be an idealist salient in a phalanx of "naive realism."[7] Yet if the Agent Intellect of Averroes bears great resemblance to the Universal Mind of Plotinus, there are also important differences. For Averroes the intellect of the individual is not simply an external form; as a good Aristotelian he believes in the soul as the form of the body, and therefore in the intellect as intrinsically related to the body. Specifically, it is the material or "hylic" intellect, a substantiation of the passive aspect of Aristotle's intellect, which is viewed as the particular link to man's body.[8] The material intellect is considered to be that substance which, by virtue of its intimate relation with the imaginative faculty of the soul, is able to receive forms from that faculty, without any corporeal interference or distortion.

The material intellect is, in effect, an ability or disposition (*epitēdiotēs*, to use Alexander Aphrodisias' term) to intelligize, retaining the passive characteristic of its Aristotelian origin. Yet for Averroes, as for most of his predecessors, this ability or potentiality has to be rooted in some substance, it cannot be a free-floating disposition. Unlike his predecessors, however (who follow Themistius in this), Averroes cannot see granting this potentiality its own independence, positing thereby a substance which is characterized by potentiality alone.[9] For him there must be an actual substance to which the material intellect belongs as its potentiality. Averroes locates this actual substance in the universal Agent Intellect, and thus

it is that the substantiality of the material intellect is due to the Agent Intellect.

If we ask ourselves why this substance can no longer be the individual active intellect in man, as it is for Aristotle, the answer must lie in the post-Aristotelian appreciation of the necessity for positing a universal formal, efficient and final cause of intellection. The position of such a Being in the guise of the Agent Intellect may be seen as an efficient (rather anti-Proclean) way of guaranteeing the eternal continuance of existent species, assuming an eternal universe, since the species would always be actual at least in the Agent Intellect; and thus as a way of relieving each individual intellect of the necessity to be all-knowing or self-contained (which features would have to be predicated of individual intellects if one wished, in the absence of one such universal substance, to avoid the assumption of a creation from nothing).

The Agent Intellect is accordingly seen as both the repository and dispenser of forms, and is therefore the organizing principle of our world, that common source through which we can consciously (as well as un-consciously) relate to each other and to our environment.

Now, whatever Averroes' negative attitude to the Agent Intellect, as a separate, unmixed "Giver of Forms" may be,[10] he agrees with the depiction of it as that faculty which brings ideas in men's minds from potentiality to actuality by somehow actualizing man's ability to comprehend the poten-tiality intelligible forms in objects. The Agent Intellect is able to do this because it is the source of all forms, both the form of the object thought and the form of the subject thinking. Not that the forms of things are not inherent in their matters also, since Averroes is no less an Aristotelian in this issue than he is a Neoplatonist.[11] Yet if an object has a form of its own, it is not, in this view, a completely independent form; rather, it is a form which is part of a species and genus, i.e. those larger forms through which the individual form is ultimately related to the Agent Intellect, the repository of all such "secondary substances." There is, however, nothing really secondary in the significance of species or genera for Averroes, neither epistemologically nor, ultimately, ontologically. Indeed, since it is only through their universal dimension that we can have knowledge of particular forms,[12] it would seem particularly unfair were Averroes to minimize the reality of intelligible substances and the Agent Intellect.

In intellection, then, a symbiotic relation is established between the subject and object, the object "come alive" to the subject, is as it were,

illuminated,[13] and impresses itself upon the sensitized soul of the subject. The Agent Intellect is this sensitizing force for both the subject and object, the common denominator of both, in the participation of which they are able to relate to each other. Nor need we picture this force as an occa-sionalist one, activated from outside the soul each time one thinks; rather should we conceive of the Agent Intellect as an integral part of the soul, functioning through various faculties constantly to stimulate as well as to facilitate intellection.

What, we are entitled to ask, are these faculties? As we have seen, the material intellect is characterized by an ability to receive all forms without distortion, and is therefore a passive faculty. Once the process of intellec-tion has begun, however, the scheme subscribed to by Averroes views the thoughts initially received in the material intellect as active in the intellect, thereby forming the "intellect in act." This "speculative intellect" is "innately" interested in improving itself, in understanding the universal truths in things, and gradually may do so, through its power of abstraction (achieving then a state of perfection sometimes known as the "acquired intellect").[14]

Though it would seem that the "intellect in act" is thus the appropriate agency of the Agent Intellect in man for initiating mental activity (even as it most resembles the Agent Intellect in its dynamic aspect), the fact remains that Averroes does not discuss it in these terms. Perhaps due to its dependence upon the material intellect for its raw materials, the intellect in act is viewed generally as a second, intermediate stage of intellection. In a provocative move, Averroes locates what can be seen as man's initial impulse to think in another faculty, and that an improbable one: the faculty of imagination.

Ordinarily the role of the imaginative faculty in intellection is under-stood as portraying, i.e. rendering in its genre, the various corporeal impres-sions of the sensory faculties; in other words, as presenting the intellect with an accurate picture of corporeal reality. The intellect is then supposed to take these "corporeal images" and convert them to intelligible entities. There is thus a three-fold stage in intellection in which the raw, physical impressions of our senses receive representative replicas, which in turn become increasingly abstract ideas.

This, however, poses a problem for Averroes and others in the classical tradition, for whom knowledge can only be between like entities, in which

the subject can know the object only because they share a common character. How, therefore, can the intellect work in a non-intellectual genre? How, for that matter, can the imagination "represent" physical impressions? Digressing for a moment, we are tempted to ask whether, in fact, anything that purports to describe something else in different terms (which is the only way description is possible) ever "really" does describe it? Can we ever be sure that we know what x is when we can only talk about it in non-x terms? If today we may be prepared to say that since this is the only way knowledge is possible, this is all we mean by knowledge, and that therefore our question is meaningless, one can still sympathize with the yearning in man for a knowledge of a thing that proceeds from within, as it were, purporting to depict the essence of a thing in its own terms. This was the goal of philosophy traditionally, and to achieve it, Averroes knew, there must be bridges between the various modes of being which would enable like to know like. The material intellect is one such bridge, and the most conspicuous one Averroes constructs.

We have already discussed the one extremity of this bridge, the Agent Intellect, and now must call attention to the other. We have discussed the material intellect as a passive potentiality, and have seen that as such it is related to the actual Agent Intellect; yet the material intellect is also considered to have an ability or disposition to intelligize, a disposition which as a functioning capability may be seen as active. This disposition is located in the faculty of imagination, and in fact it is more correct to say that in Averroes' view it is the imagination which is "disposed," which "has" the disposition, to intelligize.[15] The imagination is to be seen as actively inclined towards intellection. By its very presence it encourages or promotes the transformation of images into ideas; in short, one may say that through its disposition the imagination initiates the process of intellection.

The implications of this view are, apparently, not only that the intelligible is potentially present in the imagined form, but that the faculty of imagination is itself potentially intelligent, even while being actually tied up with corporeal images. This potential intelligibility in the imaginative faculty is the individuating feature of the material intellect, even as its actual intelligibility is its universal feature. Physical and intelligible reality thus have a common meeting ground in one of man's own faculties, and one need not assume either a break in the chain of being or the creation of an independent psychic substance, such as an independent material intellect,

to fill this gap. *Nous* is thus extended into *fantasia*, even as the latter assumes a (latent) intelligibility.

Here one may wish to extend this line of reasoning beyond the confines of imagination, to include the sensory faculties also within the purlieus of *nous*. For the imagination is, after all, an intermediate faculty which receives sensory impressions from the sense organs. Can it do so if these sensory faculties are not "disposed" to render their physical impressions imaginatively, i.e., if there is not some inherent possibility in these sensory impressions for them to be imaginative?

Furthermore, are these erstwhile corporeal faculties of the soul not also to be considered potentially intelligible? Surely sensory perceptions are imaginable, i.e., representable in the imagination; therefore they too are intelligible, if at two removes. Moreover, here we may apply the Aristotelian principle that considers intellect and intelligence to be one in intellection, since in that action nothing is seen as separating object from subject.[16] When something intelligible is thought, in this view, it is actualized to such a degree that subject-predicate distinctions become meaningless, and therefore we can say that the intelligible is, in intellection, an intelligent substance. In this manner one could see the perceiving faculties of the soul as permeated with varying degrees of intelligibility and intellection, and the role if not the nature of intellect to be more pervasive than originally construed.

Yet this perspective need not be confined to the faculties of the soul only, since every object which is thought, and therefore intelligible, may be said to be intelligent in so far as it participates in *nous*; and this would include objects outside the soul as well as those within it. After all, the process of intellection normally begins with objects outside the soul that are perceived within the soul, the forms of which become one with the intellect in being fully known. Carrying this Aristotelian scheme one step further, these intelligible forms ultimately conjoin with the Agent Intellect once the individual intellect achieves a state of intellectual perfection. Hence all objects participate in the intellect, and we would seem to be in an Idealist universe dominated by the Agent Intellect. The world, in this view, would be divided into essentially separate principles of Matter and Form, with Form the true Being; which view, we may add, is not ordinarily associated with Averroes' name.

This discussion assumes, of course, a correlation between the being of x and its being thought, between the knowledge of x and its being a real

existent. And indeed, however we may understand the concept today, we may still say that the form of a thing "exists" in the mind, even as its matter clearly does not. We should, however, be reluctant to say that we (or our minds) similarly "exist" in the object in the act of intellection, even if in Aristotle's view subject and object are one in that action. Yet, even if we are unwilling to posit ontological significance to this reciprocal identification (or even, indeed, to grant the legitimacy of the reciprocity), we are still obliged to acknowledge that there is some sense in which we as subject are related through intellection to the world of objects, some sense in which we internalize the external world.

For Averroes this internalization is an instantiation of the essential unity of forms. Of course he too would not have been happy with the proposition that we "exist" in an object, or, e.g., that a stone is intelligent (because it is intelligible); unless he were to understand the latter proposition to mean that the form of a stone is part of an intelligible reality, a reality dynamic to the point where physical distinctions are overcome. Where, however, does this presentation of Averroes' views leave matter and the perhaps naive view of nature as a physical principle? Have we not, in fact, been scanting the corporeal, physical aspect of Averroes' metaphysics in emphasizing the intelligible and epistemological? Let us attempt, therefore, to redress the balance, even in the field of Averroes' psychology.

Now the banner of Aristotle's physical system, of course, is the integration of form with matter. This basic, practically universal synthesis of forces is equated, as everyone knows, with the principles of actuality (form) and potentiality (matter); and extended into the field of psychology with the view of the soul as the form/actuality of the body. By the time the psychological part of this tradition reaches Averroes, however, it has become altered, for the intellect is now considered as an independent substance in its own right, and as such subject to the Aristotelian division into matter and form (or, more properly, potentiality and actuality), yet the various divisions of the intellect now seem rather like independent entities, the material intellect pure potentiality, the intellect in act (and of course the Agent Intellect) pure actuality.

It would appear that Averroes recognized this development and attempted to arrest it. Without giving up the post-Aristotelian view of the intellect in its various divisions, Averroes is conscious of the joint presence of form and matter in all stages of the intellect. While emphasizing one aspect of the intellect in any given context, Averroes so explains it as to

bring in the other as well. Thus the material intellect is a potentiality to receive form, but is at the same time also actual, as related to the Agent Intellect. The latter is "pure" actuality, of course, but besides being related to the material intellect is responsible for, i.e., related to, the changes wrought in potential forms, and therefore related to the matter which contains this potentiality. What, moreover, is the disposition in imaginative forms if not this very advance guard of the Agent Intellect, the active aspect of the material intellect? Furthermore, through this imaginative faculty the intellect as a whole is integrated with the body as a form-matter combination of being; a combination which, we have seen, can be extended to every perceiving faculty of the body, and beyond.

This, however, would seem to be Aristotelianism turned on its head, in which the intellect, in the name of sharing reality with matter, actually winds up dispossessing, or threatening to dispossess, physical reality. Averroes seems to recognize this, and is careful to qualify the statements regarding the relationship of intellect to body. In fact, he is rather ingenious in inventing explanations designed, it would seem, to maintain distinctions between beings even while insisting upon their relatedness. Thus we find him distinguishing between different kinds of relationships, essential and accidental ones; between different kinds of subjects, and even different kinds of potentiality, in intellection;[17] seeming thereby to forget that these are but different and complementary perspectives on what is essentially, in intellection, a unified existence.

Particularly is this evident in the dichotomy of potentiality and actuality, in which we are to believe that the same substance is potentially A while actually B, where A and B are different genres of existence; that the imagination, for example, is potentially intelligent while yet being actually imaginative; and that this distinction maintains the independence of imagination from the intellect. It would almost appear that Averroes believes that there is a fundamental ontological (as opposed to existential) difference between the potential being of x and its actualization, despite the fact that the scheme of potentiality-actuality is designed primarily, as he knows, to account for the unbroken continuity of being. Just as his other ingenious explanations are designed to distinguish between intelligible and corporeal reality in the process of intellection, Averroes here seems to ignore the common ontological substratum of potential and actual beings in order to emphasize their subjective differences.

Parenthetically speaking, if it seems peculiar today to speak of a

potential state of being as though it were already an existent, it remains true that this locution enables us to describe change in things without taking recourse in a disconnected, non-evolutionary view of the universe. Of course, we can speak of potential being only because we have experience of actual being; we know that x was potentially y when x has become y actually. Potentiality is therefore something that has been and will be, but never is; its existence is tied up with that of actual being. If, in view of this, Averroes distinguishes between the imaginative and intellectual faculties in man on the grounds that the former is potentially intelligible, we must conclude that he has not succeeded in this way in establishing a realm of corporeal being separate from intelligible being; that, in fact, he has bridged the gap between form and matter only by extending the sphere of form.

Perhaps, however, we are being overly zealous in our critique of Averroes' handling of form and matter, and failing victim to that very error we attribute to him, viz., the ubiquitous positing of form. For however unsuccessful we may judge him, Averroes attempts to distinguish between various forms of objects, even as he distinguishes between the form and matter within objects. If, in the nature of intellection as traditionally understood, there is an internal logic which forces one in an idealist direction, Averroes' various attempts to qualify this interpretation should not be minimized. He would seem to realize that, in a world where all is form, nothing is form; that differences of perspective, however relative, express real differences of being, whatever the ultimate identities; and that it is necessary to posit a material principle if only to render distinctions between forms meaningful. This, then, is the function of matter in intellection, to serve as the principle of physical individuation.

How does matter do this however? Let us return to the material intellect and imagination for another look at their characteristics. Perhaps we may understand Averroes' use of the material intellect if we see it as an expression of the immanent, latent presence of intellect in man even as the disposition of the imaginative faculty represents the immanent realizability of this presence. In this way one could perhaps understand that both faculties represent the inherently active ability of intellect to be manifested in man, *at the point at which this manifestation has not yet occurred.* The intellect may be seen as trembling on the brink of realization in the material intellect and imagination, and it is only they which keep it from continual fulfillment, even as they allow for its ultimate realization.

Looked at in this way, the material principle is again described pri-

marily in relation to the formal principle, though it is not completely identified with it; and the material principle must be that part of the imagination and even of the material intellect which keeps it from this complete identification. However, how can we describe this matter in its own terms, even as we also explain matter's relation to form? Will it suffice to say simply that matter is a "natural" substratum (of form), the underlying substance (of all change), as posited by Aristotle? [18] What is the nature of this substratum, this substance? Can we hope to say anything more of matter than we can say of substance in general, viz., that it is that of which things are predicated, and nothing else? [19] Though we may indeed feel with Aristotle that any further description of matter borrows from the vocabulary of form and accidents (and threatens thus to overthrow the entire form-matter construct), it is interesting to note that the medieval tradition felt it could probe the issue further; and in the process subjected matter to the same fate of fragmentation and reduplication that the intellect had endured.

Of course Aristotle had already stated that the matter normally considered as such, i.e. the body which united with form to produce a substance, was not itself a simple substance, but one already formed in a particular way, i.e., already shaped by a given form. [20] For each element was seen to have a combination of qualities which functioned as its form, since they determined its identity: air having hot and moist qualities, earth cold and dry, fire hot and dry, and water cold and moist qualities. As these qualities are contraries, it was understood that they shared a common substrate which enabled them to interchange, thus providing a rational explanation for the conservation of matter. However, by Averroes' time opinions differed on the nature of this fundamental matter, this common substance in all elements, and one finds it considered now as matter and now as form.

Of the "material"-aspect of this first or primary matter, nothing further could be said than what was originally posited of matter: that it is a substance which serves as the substratum for form, having the ability or potentiality to receive all forms and thereby being the common element in all beings. This feature is the only one given matter, because any other would limit its effectiveness as the common "stuff" of all being, it being the universal recipient of form. Here, though, one would seem to be reasoning in a circle, since we should like to know what enables this substance to be a common substratum, what empowers it to receive all form, what actualizes

it; in short, what form does this first matter take? It is thus that we are led, again and at last, to the notion of "corporeal form", which is, for all practical purposes, identical with primary matter, being the ultimate synthesis of form and matter.[21]

Here Averroes differed with his predecessors, particularly Avicenna, in a way strikingly similar to their differences over the nature of the intellect. Avicenna had felt that the corporeal form should be described as a simple disposition to receive extension, the dimensions of a particular form being the delimiting factor of a given substance.[22] For Averroes, however, this meant that the ability of first matter to receive forms would be rooted in a disposition, i.e., in another ability, and first matter would have nothing substantial, nothing actual, upon which to receive the dimensions of particular forms. Actuality would thus appear to emerge ultimately from potentiality, instead of the reverse, as it ought to, by general agreement.

Accordingly, Averroes saw the corporeal form of first matter as having to be an actual substance, and in the concept of corporeal form as an indeterminate tridimensional extension he thought he found this ultimate substance.[23] As indeterminate, this form would not, supposedly, hamper the ability of primary matter to receive all (particular) forms; while as an existing (though indeterminate) extension, primary matter could be thought to already possess the actual nature required to precede potential states of being. Ultimately, then, Averroes views matter as something possessing an indeterminate extension, i.e., as an extensionable mass, something which is capable of changing from one thing into another, because change is an inherent part of it.

While we may today be inclined to agree with this description of matter, we may nevertheless be excused if we point to the problems raised by the particular terminology of Averroes. For it emerges from his description of corporeal form that it is a peculiar kind of actuality. For what, indeed, is an "indeterminate extension" or "tridimensionality" other than the *ability* to have extension, that is, a potentiality or disposition for extension? An indeterminate mass or infinite matter is not itself something that ever actually exists, but is a concept postulated *post facto* by the existence of changing finite masses to explain their ability to change. The form of first matter is therefore a potentiality in act or an active disposition, rather like the active potentiality which is represented by disposition in the imaginative faculty. And like the intellect again, we must also apparently

root the substantiality of this first matter in its form, in this idea of an actual potentiality for receiving dimensions. Of course we should want to locate this substance in matter *per se*, but, as we have seen, we are not able to describe it independently of form. The most we can say is that primary matter would appear to be an unspecified mass which can be characterized only by its ability to become something; or, more strongly put, it is that which is in a perpetual state of becoming. For Averroes, however, it is this very becoming which must be seen as substantial, the being of matter occurring in its becoming.

This is the meaning of Averroes' disagreement with Avicenna, since for Averroes it is wrong to posit a realm of pure form, or of pure matter, even if in the mixture of both there seems to be a loss of identity for each. Yet this is apparently preferable to Avicenna's more compartmentalized view of corporeal form as a pure disposition which must, as Averroes sees it, somehow leap across a void of non-substance to become a substance: an ontological leap which reoccurs in Avicenna's view of the establishment of an individual intellect out of a material intellect considered as pure disposition. For Averroes no such leap is necessary for animate or non-animate beings, since matter is from the beginning an actualized potentiality, form a substantiated potentiality.

Ultimately, then, we seem to have a matter which is best understood as energy, something in constant change, in which the form-matter distinction collapses into a description of relative degrees of potentiality; and with an inherent actualizing device—which we may as well call form—which allows the energy to move to particular, momentarily stable expressions.

Of course it is the formal qualities of the elements and not the corporeal form itself which give primary matter its "real" stability, it itself having only the possibility of stability (though as we have seen this is to be considered as a "real" possibility). It is in the meeting of the specific elemental qualities with the unspecified yet actively receptive substance of primary matter that the move from becoming to being as normally construed occurs; when form ostensibly "becomes" a matter which we can recognize.

Looking to the origin of these elemental forms, we find that they are derived, in the traditional scheme to which Averroes subscribed, from the movements of the heavenly bodies, particularly the sun and moon;[24] which movements are seen as activated by animating forces commonly known

as the intellects of the spheres, i.e., their formal principle.[25] The formal, substantiating quality of the elements, and thus of everything corporeal (since everything corporeal is composed of elements), is thus itself a product of the inter-relation of form and matter, this time in the supernal sphere.[26]

Here of course we use the term "matter" more equivocally than ever, since the heavenly bodies, being viewed as eternal, i.e., as unchanging, can not be thought to possess matter in the sense of its serving as a substratum for change in any substantial sense. The matter of the spheres rather represents their potentiality for change of place only, i.e., for movement; even as their form is the actualization of this movement. As this movement is eternal, however, this potentiality is always being realized. It is fair to say, therefore, that the matter of the spheres is functionally indistinguishable from its form, its potentiality practically identical with its actuality.

Nor does the positing of a fifth element, the ether,[27] as the "matter" of these spheres, alter this situation, since it merely provides a "physical" rationalization for the eternal perpetuation of these bodies in their given forms, without satisfactorily explaining the nature of their material component. Indeed, in positing such a substance as ether, the very distinction between matter and form seems to break down, since each heavenly body would seem to possess its own, unique combination of a fully actualized substance that neither required or permitted any change. Even movement for such an entity should only be seen as an innate realization of its nature, an expression of its actuality, the only nature such beings can have.

Nevertheless, and in spite of the conceptual ambiguities involved, the assertion of a fifth element as the matter of the heavens emphasizes the attempt of the classical and medieval tradition to explain the heavens along "physical" principles uniform with those found in the sub-lunar sphere; and, there as here, to keep nature from becoming completely identified with form. If, however, the basic nature of sub-lunar matter can be characterized as composed of varying degrees of potentiality, the basic nature of supernal matter may be viewed as composed of varying degrees of actuality. The variety here, however, is not in the internal degrees of actualization, but in the different degrees of perfection vis-à-vis one another, as measured by the separate movements of the spheres and their respective locations in the heavens.

Movement is thus the distinguishing characteristic of the heavenly bodies, that which differentiates one from another.[28] It is through its

movement that each sphere is conceived as attempting to reach beyond itself-despite, or rather as an expression of its perfect nature—to emulate the nature of the sphere above it, the final cause of its motion. In this innate desire for perfection, expressed by its movement, the matter of the heavenly bodies resembles that of sub-lunar bodies with their innate yearning or disposition for what is construed as ever more perfect form. It is thus natural for man to seek to improve his intellect, that is, to reach the stage of perfect form; for this is the basic drive of all of nature.

Referring to a "basic drive" or force returns us to the description of nature as a mass of energy, or rather as an energy which, at various stages and in various degrees assumes a fixed nature, a recognizable "matter." This nature is, however, not to be thought of as form or energy alone, even if we cannot specify what else its mass is; for matter, however elusive a concept, is not therefore illusory, in this scheme. By insisting upon the presence of matter with form at all levels, Averroes attempts to convey a concept of material (one may almost say "physical") form, a "pneumatic body" which is as much body as it is spirit. It is this ultimate concept of animated matter which Averroes sees as characteristic of all being, with the form-matter dichotomy a roughly adequate representation of its nature.

Form and matter, then, in Averroes' thought, are ultimately metaphors of a unified continuum of being, formulations which permit emphasis now of one aspect, now the other. Thus the dominant characteristic of the fundamental being of the supernal world is actuality or being, even as the dominating characteristic of the sub-lunar world is potentiality or becoming; yet even within each realm the other aspect is maintained, not as an opposite but as a fully complementing principle, one which allows for communication between and within each realm, and which allows us to consider all of the world as one natural whole. The universe in its entirety is thus one chain of being, for Averroes, a chain composed of two inextricably woven strands. We need not, ultimately, think of sub-lunar and supernal spheres, for the entire universe is united by the same two principles, two in theory, one in practice.

In this way Averroes responds to the idealist challenge in late medieval thought, and attempts to bury the ghost of multiple and separate realities. Thus even a supposedly separate form like the Agent Intellect is to be seen, in this context, as the form of the sub-lunar sphere which is our earth, i.e., as the final cause of the material forms we recognize. Moreover, the Agent Intellect is itself considered to be an effect of the motion of the

lunar sphere and its intelligent moving principle; i.e., it is related to the rest of the supernal spheres as intimately as it is related to the sub-lunar one. If, nevertheless, we wish to speak of the Agent Intellect or the other intellects of the spheres as "separate," our intention thereby is to stress one aspect of its being only, viz., its collective nature, its existence as a genus, or as a principle of form. As has been pointed out, however, Averroes makes it clear that this formal principle extends into man's very corporeal nature, is itself implicated with matter.

The intellect of man is part of this universal intellect, even as all form is part of the formal principle in the universe; it is only man's unique fortune to be conscious of this and to be able to expedite its occurrence in full. Yet this does not mean that man can fundamentally or completely separate his intellect from all matter, no more than the Agent Intellect can. Thus, even if the individual intellect can unite with the "separate" intellect of the Agent Intellect and through it have a vision of perfect form, this vision would have to include an understanding of the innate relation of the Agent Intellect to matter, to the sphere of which it is the intellect, and to the matter of the heavens. That is to say, ultimately, as the Agent Intellect, the individual intellect would have a vision of the fundamental unity of all being, as expressed in the diverse relationships of form and matter. The separateness of the individual intellect is thus a relative thing in man; freed from specific material attachments, the intellect relates to these same attachments on the generic level; a level which, in its dependence upon the existence of specific material objects, returns man to an awareness of his origins.

Momentarily, then, the form of man, crystallized in his intellect, reaches that level of comprehension beyond separateness in which the fundamental relatedness of all being is disclosed, a relatedness expressed in the fundamental relationships of all individual beings. The intellect is one, then, for all men, even as all of nature is one for all men; and this is a unity which comprises an infinity of multiplicities.

This integration of the one and the many, of form and matter, of actuality and potentiality, is strikingly illustrated in Averroes' treatment of the relation of God and the universe. Here Averroes is treading on very dangerous ground, for the Islamic belief in God's unique oneness does not allow much room for discussing this subject in philosophically meaningful terms (a problem shared by all monotheistic faiths). Yet, though Averroes necessarily equivocates in his polemical works on this point,[29] he appears

to take a clearer stand in his philosophical works bearing on the subject, particularly in his view of God as the direct mover of the universe.

Unlike Avicenna, who posits a first intellect through which the formal and material structure of the universe unfolds, Averroes sees God as this first intellect, i.e., as the formal principle of the universe, the actualizing agent of the world.[30] The matter of this universe is seen as uncreated, be it the completely in-formed "matter" of the spheres or the relatively unformed matter of our world. Matter has its inherent form, also uncreated, be it the fixed form of the heavens or the changing form of the earth. God in this scheme is therefore to be seen as the initial actualizing force for this entire structure, the ultimate animating principle of the forms, and thus of matter itself. He is, in short, the first and final and moving spirit of the universe.

This view is in accord with Aristotle's idea of God as an unmoved mover, and like Aristotle, Averroes must be content to see God as coeternal with the world. More than a mechanistic principle, however, God as agent is for Averroes very much God as form. Indeed He is the ultimate mover because of His perfect form. Here Averroes benefits from that integration of the Aristotelian tradition with the Neoplatonic which was common in the medieval period, and which viewed the heavens as ordered in concentric layers, the form of each, i.e., its intellect, stemming from that of the preceding sphere, and thus being in a sense contained within that preceding form.[31] Each sphere is thus considered to be more intelligent, more universal than the next, until we arrive at the first form, which knows, contains and thus in a sense "is" all forms. Nor does Averroes' apparent acceptance of this scheme oblige him to believe that God "created" these forms any more than He created their matter, since for Averroes the eternal matter is found in every object together with its form, and therefore the form of objects must be eternal too and separate from the first form. The form (and matter) of each sphere "stems" from the preceding ones in a structural sense only, but not in any chronological one (for how can there be temporal priority in the eternal heaven?) Ultimately all the heavenly bodies are thus related to one another, and influence one another, even as God is related to them all and, as first mover and first form, influences them all.

We may thus say that for Averroes, God's relation to the world is, in one sense at least, unmediated; that, as the Form of Forms, He is in a way identical with the world. Yet here we must again remember that Averroes' world is a combination of form and matter, and not one form and

one matter but an infinity of forms and matters. The God of Averroes is identical with the forms of this world in their most generic, formal sense, but this is not the "true" sense of norm, its ultimate reality, but only *one* sense of form, indeed the most comprehensive, but not, nevertheless, exhaustive. There is a reality from which God is excluded, the reality of specific, material objects. Yet, He is not excluded here totally either, since this reality is part of a greater one, of generic forms, which is within God's domain. Nor is His presence absent even in the essence of the individual object, since we have seen the very primary matter as having a formal principle which links it to the world of form. God is therefore in the world, but He is not of the world, at least not directly part of that formal-material composition which constitutes all of being.

God's relation to the world thus resembles that of the Agent Intellect to man and the sub-lunar sphere; both being in one way present in their objects, and in another way absent. The Agent Intellect is the perfected actual form of all sub-lunar beings, while God is the ultimate principle of actuality in these actual forms, that which makes them able to be what they are. As the Agent Intellect never functions apart from the matter of individual beings, so God never acts except through their forms; yet the matter, in itself, is not the form, even as the individual form in itself is not God. And though we have reached the point where we no longer see it sufficient to define what the "self" of matter is in isolation from form (or, for Averroes, the "self" of form in isolation from the form of form, i.e., God), neither is it particularly helpful to identify one with the other completely. We thus fall back upon Averroes' relativist distinctions between potentiality and actuality, form and matter, and the various aspects of the intellect; not denying the very real unity of being, but not denying the very real differences within this unity either. Extending this perspective to include the Divine presence in the world, we can state that God as the form of forms is the ultimate unifying factor in all beings, and as such omnipresent; but at the same time He is not the only factor, and indeed, *as* the form of forms He is removed from direct association with objects.

In this manner Averroes maintains the Aristotelian vision of a world of discrete physical entities, while incorporating the Neoplatonic view of an underlying ideal oneness. The price of this merger may indeed be the loss of distinctive meaning for the concepts of form and matter, and the suspicion of over-integration and ultimate redundancy in Averroes' handl-

ing of the concept of the form of forms, an actualizer of the actual. Behind the semantic difficulties, however, there lies a modern, profound vision of a unified universe, one in which the components of change and stability, of being and becoming, find apt expression; and a universe in which the retention of an all-pervasive principle of actuality supplies a guarantee of continuity and order in nature.

It is, of course, these very notions of "continuity" and "order" which most identify this scheme with pre-modern, medieval thought; and however modern we should like to see him, Averroes is a man of his time, working with philosophical formulations, the precise nature of which it is hard to justify today. If the formulations often appear archaic, however, the problems usually are not, and Averroes' manner of resolving them frequently compels our admiration.

The ethical side of Averroes' philosophy is a point in question, for his approach here is at once both modern and particularly medieval; and it harmonizes with the rest of his philosophy in a truly impressive manner. It is known that Averroes believed in the real nature of value, i.e., in its objective existence in nature and in man's actions,[32] a view which complements his attitude to the real nature of physical reality. (It is of course only in this sphere of ours, the place of individual actions and events, that one can speak meaningfully of value systems, since the heavens being unchanging, are considered *a priori* as "good"; i.e., their virtue is synonymous with their nature.) In taking this objectivist position, Averroes is, of course, not unique among the philosophers, who in this respect generally differ with the theologians of Islam. Like other philosophers, Averroes also considered (sub-lunar) matter, seen as an independent principle of existence, as responsible for the occurrence of evil, it being seen as a reflection of the imperfect state of (physical) nature; whereas God, viewed as pure form, is in this scheme absolved of all responsibility for the evil in the universe.[33]

The inadequacy of this line of reasoning for Averroes, and for all who hold that God is both omnipotent and benevolent, is quite evident. For how can God be both omnipotent and nature have an independent principle of existence? Accordingly, if we do not wish to fundamentally negate the independent reality of matter for Averroes, and we do not wish to believe that he considered evil as an illusion, then we must be prepared to modify the notion of God's omnipotence as commonly held, along lines closer to Averroes' basic approach.[34] Here our previous discussion of Averroes'

concept of eternal form and matter can serve us in good stead, for we have learned to accept the idea of a reality in which God plays a part, but one which has other parts as well. It is therefore not a rationalization for Averroes to attribute evil to matter, even as all movement and change are attributed to matter as independent principles. It is true, of course, that matter is not fundamentally independent, and that movement and change are dependent upon actualizing forces which ultimately return us to God. So too we can see the occurrence of evil as an inevitable part of the nature of matter (in that matter seldom achieves perfect form and is often distorted, man is usually hostile, etc.); which nature however, includes its formal structure, in this way also ultimately implicating God.

The existence of evil is therefore a relative thing: a property of matter. It is nevertheless an integral part of formal reality too. And however much form, like matter, is an independent principle, it is also related to the form of forms, God. God is thus remotely related to evil, even as He is remotely (or rather indirectly) related to all of matter; He is, one may say, that force which actualizes matter so that it may produce an evil action. To say that God is therefore responsible for evil is, however, an improper deduction, no more correct than to say that all men are guilty for the crimes perpetrated by a particular individual. In a sense this latter proposition is of course true, but not in a sense that makes it possible to use the term "responsibility" meaningfully, since it blurs the crucial distinction between remote and immediate causality, and it is in the latter sense only that "responsibility" is usually—and correctly—used. Particularly is God's responsibility for evil remote to the point of non-existence in Averroes' scheme, since he believes that God is the Creator of the universe in a relative sense only, viz., as its actualizing agent; and He is not, therefore, responsible for matter *per se*. Accordingly, we must as it were limit the notion of Divine omnipotence, even as we have had to circumscribe the extent of His omnipresence.

While theoretically encroaching upon cherished tenets of religious belief, this approach nevertheless frees God from responsibility for an evil world, without removing Him entirely from it. Nor need one see God equally removed from responsibility for the good in the world, if we identify this good with the realization of the true form of an object; for God is more closely identified with form than He is with matter.[35] Of course the occurrence of both good and evil in our world are both, in this scheme,

only indirectly attributable to God, and man is free here, within limits set by God and nature, to do what he wills.

Mentioning freedom of the will brings us to another area in which we can apply the particular approach of Averroes. This well known problem for all theology points out that man is considered to be a free agent, yet God is considered omniscient; and this is rightly seen as an impossible contradiction, for that which God knows will happen, has to happen. Averroes, however, may well hold that man is free on the only level in which freedom, i.e., change, is possible, viz., the level of individual existents, man's own sphere. In the supernal world of unchanging form and matter, which is ultimately "contained" within God, there is no possibility of freedom, and therefore no meaning to the term. Here the genera and species of beings exist from all eternity and as such are known to God.[36] Paradoxically, however, it is due to the eternal availability of diverse species that man may be seen as having the choice, limited but real, between actualization of various forms on earth.

Freedom and determinism are also, therefore, relative notions for Averroes, applicable only to particular spheres of being; and if Averroes is not unique in this solution of the paradox, his holding it is particularly convincing because of his firm belief in the reality and inter-dependence of both spheres of being. Man is not, in this view, essentially free or essentially determined; he is both free and determined, and highlighting either aspect depends upon the context in which man is placed.

It is this significance of context that brings us back to our point of departure, to Averroes' theory of double truth. We have said that Averroes' truth is essentially philosophical, as opposed to religious, and having reviewed the major areas of his writing, feel that this is a justified remark.[37] Yet, to be consistent with what we have seen of Averroes' approach in other matters, we should be prepared here too for a more subtle juxtaposition of opposites, firstly because the philosophy which Averroes presents may be viewed as, and was no doubt intended to be, a religious philosophy.

Indeed, this philosophy has all the elements of religion: a God whose presence pervades the universe, ordering it along "good" lines, and affording man a beatific vision and immortality of sorts. It is true, of course, that when fully explicated, these notions emerge as quite unorthodox ones, abstractions barely qualifying Averroes to be seen as a monotheist, let alone a Muslim. Particularly could Averroes be faulted as a traditionalist for the implications of his philosophy regarding the lack of personality in

God, and the lack of individual immortality in man, as well as for the existence of natural principles independent of God which somehow limit His nature. It seems well-nigh impossible for Averroes to modify his position on these issues sincerely, to accommodate the dogmas of Islam or any particularist religion; and as we have stated before, his "accommodation" of religion, such as it is, is weighted in the direction of philosophy. This is inevitable, for to be consistent with the basic approach of the rest of his philosophy, Averroes would have to maintain that God is and is not personal, nature is and is not independent, miracles do and do not occur, there is and is not individual immortality, etc. It is no wonder that Averroes seems to choose between such mutually exclusive propositions; and we are entitled to believe that even when he does not specifically convert religious terms and statements into philosophical ones, he has the philosophical equivalents in mind when he speaks, however loosely, of souls, miracles, God's will, and such.

Here, however, we are tempted to entertain an alternative solution to the double-truth theory, one closer to its literal meaning and to that relativist attitude to truth which we have seen as being most fundamental to Averroes' thought. Extending this perspective to the political sphere, we may say that in Averroes' view certain locutions are possible there which are absurd outside that sphere. These locutions are, accordingly, not absolutely valid, whatever their claim to absolute truth. Their validity is rather due to their being an integral part of a reality which is a natural expression of man's social nature.[38] As man is everywhere found in political association, which in Averroes' time meant religious groupings, it is thus inevitable that he formulate his view of reality along traditional religious lines.

Within the perspective of Islamic society, for exemple, Averroes could contend that it is natural (even as it is necessary) to affirm the existence of a personal God, a heaven and hell, angels and immortal souls; even as it would be false, or rather meaningless, to make these assertions in a non-religious framework. Affirmation of religious truths is thus a true expression of the natural order of things, a valid reflection of the nature of society and man. In this sense one can perhaps justify the retention of the above stated contradictory propositions, each being seen as true in its own context, valid relative to the perspective in which it is found. Thus the notion of a personal God, e.g., makes sense as part of a religious view of the world, which

concerns how the impersonal force which permeates the universe is represented, in organized society.

We should, of course, like to know whether the expression of religious beliefs tells us anything about the nature of God and the universe *per se*, even as it tells us a great deal about the nature of man and society. Can we ever get beyond the context in which truth is uttered to the truth in itself, that with which religion and philosophy ordinarily presume to deal? If we are to follow the lines of Averroes' approach, we should answer that we can never really know the nature of God *per se*, even as we can never know the nature of form or matter or any object *per se* ; but that every substance is known only in and through its relation with others, i.e., in a given context: form in relation to matter, God in relation to the world. In the latter relation, the religious expression of God's being is one of the ways in which we can come to understand Him; our knowledge of man and society leading us to an understanding of God, in that the three are intertwined. The religious way, like any other, is not in itself sufficient, and certainly no particular tenet of faith should be taken as absolute truth in itself; but the religious expression, like all others, presents a glimpse of that reality which defies complete, objective description. In other words, the religio-political dimension of life is in itself one dimension of a reality which can be experienced and known only in partial expressions.

This view of religious truth, we need hardly say, is not the conventional one, and relativizes the religious experience in a way quite contrary to the absolute claims of religion itself. Indeed, this approach transforms religion into part of a philosophical world view; a view which, instead of finding philosophical equivalents for some religious terms and ignoring the others, takes the entire religious system as a philosophical metaphor, couched in religio-political terms. Unlike the former approach, however, that in which religious assertions are seen as representing philosophical truths in particular form, this latter approach obliges us to extend our notion of philosophy beyond the specific frameworks in which Averroes operated, indeed beyond philosophy itself as traditionally construed.

For here we can no longer appeal to a form-matter continuum, or a potentiality-actuality syndrome, or indeed to any specific philosophical system, to provide us with a key with which to understand revelation, or redemption, or any other religious concept. Religious terms are not, after all, a natural extension of philosophical terms, and without a common

meta-structure neither set in itself can be seen as necessariliy complementing or in any way explicating the other. Accordingly, if we are to accept both systems as valid, we must be prepared to see both as partial truths, or, more appropriately, both as essentially metaphorical, the religious terms being only more dramatic, more human, but the philosophical terms no more "true" therefore. Indeed, this relativist doctrine ultimately must be prepared to abandon the notion of an objective truth, lacking as it does a common criterion for truth values; [39] and it must be prepared to accept a view of truth and knowledge in which practically anything and everything could be a permissable expression of existence. It is highly doubtful that Averroes would have accepted this conclusion, however metaphorical his use of philosophical terms may be. [40]

Of course we could imagine that the concept of a universal common force which we have explored in this article, the notion of an energetic mass which assumes different shapes in different contexts, provides the needed common criterion. This concept, however, if extended completely beyond one perspective, one set of terms, however attenuated, to include another completely different set, loses the specific correlations which gave it whatever specific meaning it had. Nor is it sufficient to insist that the notion of a universal force is self-evident, that it itself is the common denominator between disparate formulations of reality, related to each a priori; since even if we could bring ourselves to accept this notion, we could not then proceed to use it in any effective way. The idea of a universal mass of energy which is evident not only in the physical sphere but in the moral and political spheres as well is, however poetically or mystically attractive, philosophically meaningless. We cannot proceed with it from one area of life to another with any assurance or necessity, since it ultimately asserts only that the various aspects of reality are just that, various aspects of reality. This notion, in other words, legitimizes every particular formulation of reality, but in no way explains them; it tells us that which is, is, because it is part of that which is. We look in vain, however, for a description of the principle of unity itself, for some understanding of its nature that would make its presence in everything necessary and rationally meaningful. To put it more formally, we find there is no principle of discrimination, no principle of verification applicable to the concept of a basic force which appears in and underlies all; if everywhere this is true, and it is everywhere applicable then it is nowhere true and ultimately superfluous.

Accordingly we say that the vision Averroes arrived at, if taken in the most comprehensive manner possible, took him beyond the bounds of traditional philosophy, indeed beyond the bounds of rational discourse in general. It is unlikely that he envisaged or desired such a conclusion, unlikely that he was prepared to go this far in the direction of relativity, unlikely that he thought the Aristotelian framework, however modified, to be ultimately arbitrary, unlikely that he was, au fond, a mystic. It is more probable to believe that Averroes saw himself as a philosopher rooted in the philosophical tradition and taking it as his primary sphere of reference; while accepting the legitimacy of religious expressions as a political formulation of traditionally philosophical truths.

If we wish to keep Averroes for philosophy, however, we should at least remember that this use of key terms in the philosophical repertoire is not conventional, that in fact he stretched the lines of the philosophical tradition he inherited practically beyond recognition. There emerges, however, from his paradoxical use of terms, a daring insight that, philosophically challenging in itself, and bordering on the mystical, foreshadows both the theism and secular science of later centuries. [41]

Cornell University.

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[1] Thus even a specialist such as H. Corbin in his recent book, *Histoire de la Philosophie Islamique* (Paris, 1964), pp. 334-342, opens and closes his discussion of Averroes' thought with these two doctrines, respectively.
[2] Cf., e.g., E.I.J. Rosenthal, "The Place of Politics in the Philosophy of Ibn Rushd," *Bulletin of The School of Oriental and African Studies*, XV: 2, 1953, pp. 246, 255 ff. A notable exception to this interpretation, one closer to the view advanced at p. 28 below, is however entertained by P. Merlan, *Monopsychism Mysticism Metaconsciousness* (The Hague, 1969), pp. 102-113.
[3] Cf. G. Hourani, *Averroes on the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*, (London, 1961), pp. 44, 51, 56 ff.
[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 54, 77 and elsewhere. Cf. too *Averroes' Tahafut Al-Tahafut*, 2 trans. S. Van Den Bergh (London, 1954), I: 280, 359 (461, 581 Bouyges) ff.
[5] An amalgam most recently, and provocatively, discussed by Merlan, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-84, building upon earlier, and often more thorough, studies by O. Hamelin, F. Rahman, and others; all beginning with *De Anima* III 5 430ª 15.
[6] Cf. my article, "Averroes on Intellection and Conjunction," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 1967.
[7] Borrowing the term from Van Den Bergh, *op. cit.*, p. xiv, who describes Aristotle as a "naive realist".

[8] *Cf.* Averroes' discussion of the material intellect in his *Commentarium Magnum in Aristotelis De Anima Libros,* ed. F. Stuart Crawford, (Cambridge, Mass., 1953), p. 383 ff.

[9] *Cf.* Averroes' turnabout on this issue, as expressed in his epitome of the *De Anima,* called *Talkhīṣ Kitāb al-Nafs* by A. Ahwani (Cairo, 1950), p. 90.

[10] Since in Averroes' view the forms are inherent in their matter; *cf.,* e.g., his epitome of Aristotle's *Physics,* (in Arabic) in the collection *Rasā'il Ibn Rushd* (Hyderabad, 1947), pp. 7 f., and see Corbin, *op. cit.,* p. 340.

[11] *Cf.* G. Quadri, *La Philosophie Arabe dans l'Europe Médiévale des Origines à Averroès,* Fr. Transl. R. Huret (Paris, 1947), p. 239.

[12] *Cf.* Averroes' epitome of Aristotle's *Metaphysics,* called *Talkhīṣ mā ba'd al-Ṭabī'a,* ed. O. Amin (Cairo, 1958), pp. 65, # 37.

[13] *Cf.* the *Comm. Magnum in De An., op. cit.,* p. 401, and see the *De An.* III 5 430ᵃ 16.

[14] *Cf.* the *Comm. Magnum in De An., op. cit.,* pp. 389, 438 and elsewhere, for a description of these various aspects of the intellect; and see Merlan, *op. cit.,* p. 85.

[15] *Cf.* Ahwani's edition of the epitome of *De An., op. cit.,* p. 86 and the *Comm. Magnum* to the same work, *op. cit.,* p. 405; and see *De An.* III 3 427ᵇ 15.

[16] *Cf. De An.* III 4 430ᵃ 3, 30; *Met.* XII 7 1072ᵇ 19; 9 1074ᵇ 33.

[17] Among the published works of Averroes, *cf.* his *Comm. Magnum in De An., op. cit.,* p. 400, and the *De Animae Beatitudine, Opera Omnia* (Venice, 1575) IX: 149 D ff; and see further my article, *loc. cit.*

[18] *Cf.,* e.g., *Met.* VIII 1 1042ᵃ 32.

[19] *Cf. Met.* VII 3 1029ᵃ 7, and see Averroes' Grand Commentary on the *Met., Tafsīr Mā Ba'd al-Ṭabī'a,* ed. M. Bouyges, 3 vol. (Beirut, 1938-1948), II: 773.

[20] *Cf. De Generatione et Corruptione* II 1 329ᵃ 24 ff.

[21] *Cf.* the analysis of the concept of corporeal form as articulated by al-Ghazālī, Avicenna and Averroes, in H. Wolfson's *Crescas' Critique of Aristotle* (Cambridge, 1929), pp. 579 f.; and see too L. Gauthier, *Ibn Rochd* (Paris, 1948), p. 72 f.

[22] *Cf. Met.* VII 3 1029ᵃ 12.

[24] *Cf.* the epitome to the *Metaphysics,* ed. Amin, p. 154 (# 62) ff.; and see *De Gen. et Corr.* II 10 336ᵃ 32 ff.

[25] Subsuming the notion of the "soul" of the spheres under that of their intellect, as Averroes so intended. *Cf.* the *Met.* epitome, *op. cit.,* pp. 128, 136 (# 9, 24).

[26] *Ibid.,* p. 158 (# 69).

[27] *Cf. De Caelo* I 3 270ᵇ 20, and see Averroes' epitome to this work in the Hyderabad collection of epitomes. *op. cit.,* pp. 3, 16 f.

[28] *Cf. De Caelo* I 2 269ᵃ 24 ff.

[29] *Cf. Tahafut Al-Tahafut, op. cit.,* pp. 203 f. (340 f. Bouyges); though Averroes is not beyond intentional ambiguity in his philosophical works either. Thus in his epitome to the *Met., op. cit.,* pp. 145-149 (# 47-53), he contends that God is both self-sufficient and unrelated to anything, while yet being all-knowing and responsible for the unity of all being.

[30] *Cf.* the *Met.* epitome, *op. cit.,* p. 149 (# 54), and see Corbin, *op. cit.,* p. 339. *Cf.* too *Met* XII 7 1072ᵇ 7.

[31] This view attempted a more efficient organization of the heavens than that envisaged by Aristotle in *Met.* XII 8 1073³ 27 f. *Cf.* the *Met.* epitome, *op. cit.,* pp. 140, 142, 145 (# 36, 41, 47), and see E. Renan, *Averroès et l'Averroïsme³* (Paris, n.d.), p. 121 f.

[32] *Cf.* G. Hourani, "Averroes on Good and Evil," *Studia Islamica* XVI: 1962, p. 15.

[33] *Cf.* e.g., *Met.* epitome, *op. cit.,* p. 162 (# 76).

[34] For without this modification either, we must conclude with Hourani, *op. cit.,* p. 21 f., that evil is ultimately God's creation and Averroes' arguments for absolving Him of this responsability unsatisfactory. Of course, with this modification, as with the others mentioned in this article, we seriously qualify Averroes' orthodoxy.

[35] Similarly, God is seen as concerned with the preservation and ordering of the species, with general harmony in the universe, as detected in the motions of the celestial spheres. *Cf.* the *Met.* epitome, *op. cit.,* pp. 160 (# 72) f.

[36] *Ibid.,* p. 144 (# 44), 163 (# 77). This view does not, however, oblige us to conclude, as do most critics, that the resolution of this issue is essentially deterministic. *Cf.,* however, H. Gatje, "Averroes als Aristoteleskommentator," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 114: 1964, p. 65; and see Hourani, *op. cit.,* p. 25.

[37] *Cf.* Hourani, *ibid.,* pp. 35 f.

[38] *Cf. Tahafut Al-Tahafut, op. cit.,* pp. 359 (581 Bouyges) f., and see Aristotle's *Politica* I 2 1252ᵇ 27.

[39] *Cf.* Merlan, *op. cit.,* p. 111.

[40] He would perhaps have said (though probably not in these words) that there are metaphors and there are metaphors.

[41] This article was written in Tunis while on an HEW Faculty Research Abroad (Fulbright) Award in 1972-1973. I wish to express my appreciation herein to the librarians of the Institut des Belles Lettres Arabes (IBLA) and the Bibliothèque Nationale for their courtesy in extending to me the use of their facilities.

FOR THE CONCEPT OF IRANO-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY *

HENRY CORBIN

I

The title I have proposed for the present paper seemed to me to express best the contribution of those philosophers whose solemn anniversary we celebrate together here. The term "Irano-Islamic" is symmetrical with those which our Arabist colleagues are coming to use more and more, when in speaking of the history of art or of institutions, they have recourse to the characterization "Arabo-Islamic" or "Arabo-Muslim." The term "Indo-Islamic" has equally become a current usage. Thus, when we speak of "Irano-Islamic philosophy," we take it in one sense as indicating that this philosophy belongs to the whole of Islamic philosophy, but at the same time we situate and determine this relation in terms of the specific Iranian contribution to Islamic culture in general.

It turns out that this specific Iranian contribution is, *eo ipso*, what permits us to speak, in several particular cases, of a continuity of philosophic consciousness between pre-Islamic and Islamic Iran. This continuity is exactly the theme of the present conference. Among other examples of this continuity, I have chosen to begin by dealing with one of the most brilliant seventeenth-century students of the great philosopher Mīr Dāmād. I speak here of Quṭb al-Dīn Ashkevārī. In his great historical encyclopedia of spiritual personalities (those of the pre-Islamic period, of the Sunnite Islamic period, and of the Shīʿite Islamic period) he dedicates a long article to Zoroaster, in which he writes: "He whom the Zoroastrians call *Astvat-Eretha*, the *Saoshyant* who is preparing the transfiguration of the world, is the same whom we Shīʿites call the Waited-For Imām (the XIIth Imām)." [1]

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* Text of a paper given at the International Congress of Iranology held at Shīrāz, October, 1971, on the occasion of the 2500th anniversary of the foundation of the Persian Empire. The general theme of the Congress was "Iranian Continuities."

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It is clear that such a statement could have come only from the pen of a Shīʿite Iranian thinker, typically representative of an "Irano-Islamic philosophy."

It is only a quarter of a century ago that the very idea of this Iranian continuity provoked a certain astonishment, if not outright rejection, in the West. The idea seemed to present a paradox, going counter to the generally accepted views among Orientalists. In speaking of the Islamic period, one ordinarily made use of a locution, inherited from medieval Latin Scholasticism, and spoke simply of "Arabic philosophy," a concept under which it would be difficult indeed to include a statement such as the one just cited from Qotboddīn Ashkevārī. On the other hand, the reticence of the West, in accepting this continuity, as well as the reduction imposed by the substitution of an ethnic term for the term by which the Iranian philosophers characterized themselves (*hukamā-yi Islām, falāsifa-yi islāmiyyūn*, "philosophers of Islam, Islamic philosophers"), had already been experienced as a double paradox by Iranian thinkers. The student of philosophical and religious thought thus finds himself faced with the task of revising these classifications, which however time-honored, are nonetheless hasty and ill-conceived; and this, in the context of a massive philosophical literature.

But that's not the only difficulty. More than once, in dealing with certain problems favored by our philosophers, especially those which have to do with prophetic and Imāmite philosophy (*hikmat-i nabawiyya wa walawiyya*), I have been told that this isn't really philosophy. We are confronted with a concept of philosophy, whose development in the West has taken place over three or four centuries, and has culminated in a conception which, more or less frankly, identifies philosophy proper with one or another form of agnosticism or rationalism. Of course, it is perfectly within our rights to challenge this arbitrary limitation of the concept and the program of philosophy. However, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, I will give special preference to the use of the term *metaphysics*, in talking about the work of these philosophers. These philosophers were metaphysicians, as is indicated by the term which designates them, the *hukamā-yi ilāhī*. It is possible for a philosophy to be agnostic and for it not to take itself any the less as a philosophy. But metaphysics and agnosticism are incompatible. The agnostic philosophy of our own day holds that philosophy should renounce metaphysics. For the metaphysician, agnostic philosophy is no longer philosophy.

I realize that this is a somewhat brutal way of clearing the ground.

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But it is inevitable, if one is to do it in few words. This may, however, suffice to evoke the scorn, the prejudices and the misunderstandings that we must evade, if we are to do justice to the concept and to the history of Irano-Islamic philosophy.

In this context, two facts seem fundamental to me: 1. There is the work in the VIth-XIIth century of Shihāb al-Dīn Yahyā Suhrawardī. It was the expressly formulated aim of the young *shaykh al-Ishrāq* to effect by his work a "resurrection of the philosophy of the sages of ancient Persia concerning Light and Darkness." This furnishes philosophers with evidence *par excellence* for the claim of a continuity in Iranian philosophical consciousness. It was this, more than the repatriation, of sorts, of the Hellenized Magi into the tradition of Iranian Islam, with which Suhrawardī was able to inaugurate this chapter of Irano-Islamic philosophy. 2. Second: if it is true that elsewhere in Islam philosophy seemed to have been lost in the sands after the death of Averroës (1198), yet there was such an abundant development of philosophy in Iran, notably after the Safavid Renaissance, that we should ask ourselves seriously whether Shī'ism didn't have something to do with this rise of metaphysics.

II

As to the work of Suhrawardī, judging by the renewed interest in it even in Iran, as well as the interest which it has awakened in the West, I believe that its significance is bound to grow in the coming years. To be sure, the term *ishrāq* presents a formidable complexity to the translator since it signifies both the arising, the coming up of the Light, in the East, i.e. the *Orient*; and at the same time, the illumination afforded by this Light. That is why the translation as "illuminative philosophy" doesn't do justice as a characterization of the intention of the *shaykh al-Ishrāq*. The term *Ishraqiyyūn* alternates with the term *Mashriqiyyūn*. These are the "Orientals," and it is upon this idea of "Orient" and "Oriental" that the *Ishraqiyyūn* put the accent, when they contrast themselves with the *Mashsha'ūn*, i.e. the Peripatetics. Yet, at the same time the term "Orient" has an essentially metaphysical meaning for the Shaykh and his disciples. It is not at all because one is geographically an Oriental, or from the East, that one is given to an "Oriental" philosophical consciousness. On the contrary, it is because one has received the gift of this mode of consciousness that one is, in the philosophical sense of the word, an "Oriental."

According to Suhrawardī, it is this gift which the ancient Iranian sages received, and this is why they became, thereafter, the representatives *par excellence* of the *ishrāqī* philosophy, that is to say, "Oriental".[2]

Here, a decisive feature of this view presents itself: This "Orient" which is the absolute origin (*oriens-origo*) and which is Light itself, The Light of Lights, the origin of all the beings of light, is understood by Suhrawardī by way of a concept which is both characteristically and fundamentally Zoroastrian: the concept of *Xvarnah*, The Light of Glory. It is from this Light of Glory that the angelic and archangelic hierarchies originate, in a system which is somewhat like that of the Neoplatonist Proclus. Suhrawardī attributes not only the vocation of the prophet Zoroaster, but also the ecstatic charisma of the legendary sovereigns of ancient Iran like Fereydūn and Kay Khusraw to their vision of this Light of Glory. Along these lines, he also tries to reveal the mystical sense of the actions of some of the heroes of the *Shāh-Nāme*. He knew the Zoroastrian cosmology, which divided the world into *mēnōk* (an ethereal or celestial state) and *gētīk* (an opaque, material state). He knew the names of the *Amahraspands* or the Zoroastrian Archangels, and in this context announced his most original project: the interpretation of the Platonic Ideas in terms of the Zoroastrian angelology. In thus relating Plato and Zoroaster, he anticipated by about three centuries the work of the Byzantine philosopher Gemisthius Plethon. As for his cosmology and physics, these culminate in the idea of the *Rabb al-naw'*, the Angel, or "Lord" of each species of the Beings of Light, thereby modifying the Platonic Ideas or Forms by this *furūhar* or *fravarti*, derived from Mazdaen cosmology.

Following Suhrawardī, there is the whole sequence of *Ishrāqiyyān-i Īran*: from Mullā Ṣadrā in the XVIIth century, and Hādī Sabzavārī in the last century, it reaches until our own time. But there is a fact which has so far received too little attention: that is the Zoroastrian response to Suhrawardī's enterprise, by a group of Zoroastrians living in the vicinity of Shīrāz, in the XVIth century, who emigrated to India under the leadership of their high priest Azar Kayvān, during the reign of Shāh Akbar. The dominant figure in the group is Farzāna Bahrām, who professed an extraordinary devotion to the work of the *Shaykh al-Ishrāq*. We owe to this group a half dozen works in Persian, which in effect constitute a Zoroastrian *Ishrāqī* literature. Their own judgment of these works is particularly instructive: they considered them as "semi-parsīs" and therefore took care to edit them themselves.[3]

This double fructification of Suhrawardī's illustrates the theme of Iranian continuity especially well. One may recall, incidentally, that the cosmological ideas of the *Rabb al-naw'*, the Angel or "Guardian" of each species, were so well-assimilated in the thought of an Iranian researcher, that in the last century, Furṣat Shīrāzī referred to these ideas to explain the mythical creatures drawn in effigy on certain monuments in Persepolis. He cited, in support of his interpretation, the texts of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī and Hādī Sabzavārī, though he fell short of explaining what sort of contest could set these creatures in opposition to the Sovereign who confronts them. Perhaps it was easier for him to be able to see a representation of the Fravarti in the effigy which the Bird of the Sun carries in its flight.

I have just mentioned the name of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī. His name and his work dominate what has since come to be called the School of Ispahan, and through it, the philosophical community which has perpetuated itself in Iran until our own time. At the same time, this work is a high point of the *Ishrāq*. The last parts of his work were elaborated in Shīrāz, where Mullā Ṣadra taught at the Madrasa Khān. We may still make a pilgrimage to the high chamber where he gave his lessons. The brief evocation to which we must limit ourselves here essentially aims at suggesting how closely inter-related in Mullā Ṣadrā's work are the Imāmite metaphysics and the philosopher's own most profound intuitions, and how these are richly realized in a conception of the world in which are revived the features of the cosmology and eschatology of ancient Iran.

However, we would achieve only an incomplete understanding at best, if we were to neglect the whole period of Irano-Islamic philosophy which prepared the way for Mullā Ṣadrā. I am thinking of such Shī'ite metaphysicians as Ṣā'in al-Dīn Ispahānī, Haydar Āmulī, Ibn Abī Jumhūr, who, in the XIVth and XVth centuries, admirably put into textual form the *hadīth* of the holy Imāms, whose content is particularly rich in *gnosis*. The dominant feature here seems to me to be the assimilation and reintegration into Shī'ite thought of the collosal work of Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī, through which Shī'ism rediscovered the inspiration of the School of Almeria. The *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* have generated about five hundred commentaries, most of them Iranian works, and in large part the works of Shī'ites. We cannot hope to fully understand the course of Islamic thought until there has been undertaken a thorough analysis and comparison of these commentaries.[5]

III

As to the work of Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d.1050/1640), its proportions are grandiose. There are two principal monuments: the great philosophic encyclopedia which is entitled "The Four Spiritual Voyages," and the very full commentary, unfortunately left incomplete, on the great collection of the *hadīth* of the Imāms, the *Usūl min al-Kāfī* of Kulaynī. It is this intellectual monument which attests most clearly to the way in which the contributions of the Shī'ite tradition can be an extraordinary stimulant to philosophical meditation. Another evidence of this is the work of Qādī Sa'īd Qummī.

We owe to Mullā Ṣadrā a veritable philosophic revolution: He substituted, for the venerable metaphysics of immutable essences, a metaphysics which recognized the primacy of the act of Being, of existing; a substitution which brought with it the possibility of an intensification as well as a degradation of the essences. We owe to him a metaphysics of the Imagination, which for the first time, founded the Imagination upon an essentially spiritual nature, independent of the physical organism and constituting, as it were, the ethereal "body" of the soul. His metaphysics of Being led Mullā Ṣadrā to propose his characteristic thesis on intrasubstantial and transsubstantial motion (*harakat-i jawhariyya*), thus introducing motion and change even within the substance of the quiddities, which had been until then considered immovable. From then on, one can speak of an *inquietude* of Being which makes itself felt from one end of the scale to the other, among all the degrees of Being, and which leads each of the beings in an ascendant motion, as long as this being doesn't fall behind on its own account, too enfeebled to carry the weight of its metamorphoses.

It is precisely here that the metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā seems to me to correspond strictly to the Shī'ite urgency, which maintains man in a state of tension and striving, because his perspective is essentially eschatological, and is oriented towards the *Parousia* of the "Awaited-for Imām." A philosopher like Mullā Ṣadrā knew quite well that this *Parousia* is not an event which comes upon one from the outside, one fine day. It is an event in the making in the secret recesses of consciousness, and it is the transformation of consciousness which this event achieves, so that The One who will be the ultimate manifestation of Perfect Man, and will bring our *Aiōn* to a close will be able to manifest Himself and be recognized. Mullā Ṣadrā

is the philosopher of metamorphoses and palingeneses. His metaphysics of the act of Being culminates in a metaphysics of Presence, of a presence to all the suprasensible universes beyond the world of death. His metaphysics of the Imāmate culminates in a metaphysics of Witness, in an Imāmology founded upon what is given in the *hadīth*, in which the Imām is characterized as The Witness, who by his presence to the Invisible, to the Inaccessible, renders equally present to this Invisible those who bear witness to Him of this presence. The secret of the Imām is therefore that of the Witnesser-Witnessed, of the Contemplator-Contemplated in short, the very sense of the Theophany without which man would have no positive conception of God.[6]

IV

I have just spoken of the essentially eschatological perspective of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy, just as it is also the perspective of Shī'ite consciousness. It is precisely in this respect that this philosophy and this mode of consciousness give evidence of a hidden connection with the most profound thought of ancient Iran. It would appear that Zoroastrism had the privilege of inaugurating an authentically eschatological perspective, culminating in the idea of *apokatastasis* (the restoration of all things to their initial purity), assured only of the dénouement of the struggle unleashed at the very beginning between the Ohrmazdian powers of Light and the Ahrimanian counter-powers of Darkness. In this perspective, there develops a theology of the *Aiōn*, of the Ages of the World graded over twelve Millenia in terms of which there will be forthcoming the epiphany of Saoshayant preparing the Resurrection (though these twelve Millenia are not to be understood in terms of our arithmetic computation).

A striking parallelism presents itself here. Among the other "gnostic" Shī'ite *hadīth*, there is one which describes the descent of the "Mohammedan Light" into the world as a descent which progresses along twelve Veils of Light, which are the twelve Imāms, and which typify the twelve Millenia of our *Aiōn*. The twelfth of these Imāms is the Imām of the Resurrection, the *Qā'im al-Qiyāmat*. However one may explain it, this homology of structure would appear to be charged with meaning for the phenomenology of religious thought. If, moreover, we consider that the term used by the prophet of Islam in certain *hadīth*, to announce the *Parousia*

of the twelfth Imām who will issue from his line, offer a striking correspondence with the terms which, according to certain traditions, Zoroaster used to announce the coming of the Saoshayant issuing from among his descendants, then we find ourselves with a theme which well deserves to hold the attention of Irano-Islamic philosophy.

In a still more general way, the philosopher cannot help but pay attention to the fact that the Shī'ite consciousness as such determines what is usually called "periodization of history." While admitting that the cycle of prophesy is closed since the appearance of the "Seal of the Prophets," Shī'ism refuses to admit that religious humanity has had all of its future already behind it; it refuses to enclose itself in the past. The cycle of prophecy of the prophet-legislators was succeeded by the cycle of the "Friends of God," the cycle of the *walāyat* or of spiritual initiation. Exoterically, the time of the *sharī'at* still endures, but esoterically, the time of the *walāyat* has already begun in the minds of men. A triple time, therefore: time of the Law; time of the *walāyat*; time of the ultimate epiphany of the Imām of the Resurrection. The idea of this periodization of history, of a "turning of time," seems to me to be a major question for philosophy. Are we ready to say that Irano-Islamic philosophy, at once combining the contributions of ancient Iran and of Shī'ite Iran, has also anticipated our modern philosophies of history?

I believe that the question has to be posed both prudently and profoundly. First of all, the periodization we have described here has a sense which is much more existential than chronological; the periodization is verified in the modes of being and understanding, rather than in objectively determined and measurable periods. On the other hand, referring to the cautions which I expressed at the beginning of this paper, I will call attention to the fact that a philosophy of history may be frankly agnostic, and may eliminate every "polar" dimension of man, reducing every process and every explanation to an immanent political causality, and yet present itself as being a philosophy of history. By contrast, that which certain Western philosophers, like Baader, and Schelling, have called *Historiosophy* would not be able to do without a metaphysics, for if one ignores or excludes the hidden, esoteric sense of things, the living phenomena of this world are reduced to those of a cadaver.

Therefore, I believe that the periodization of the world in the Iranian cousciousness, both in Zoroastrism and in Shī'ism, is essentially a *Historiosophy*. In this sense, it has a profound affinity not only with one or

another philosophy of history, but with the *Historiosophy* which burgeoned in the West, in the XIIth century, namely that of Joachim de Fiore. We know what an influence Joachism had on European philosophy, up until our own times. Doesn't this itself suggest a present and urgent interest in Irano-Islamic philosophy?

There is finally one aspect with which I would like to conclude. About thirty years ago, the great Catalan writer, Eugenio d'Ors, said that the concept of Zoroastrism would end in something like a Chivalric Order. Is it by accident that we find at the basis of the Shī'ite ethos the idea of *futuwwat* (*javānmardī*) which connotes both the idea of youthfulness and the idea of chivalry? Is it by accident that we ascertain that there is something in common between the idea of "The Fellowship of Saoshayant" and the idea of the "Fellowship of the Hidden Imām"? Is it by accident that it turns out that in the one as in the other there continues to express itself the same ethos which I would willingly characterize as a "confident pessimism"? [9]

And I would also say willingly that it is this ethos which seems to me to best situate our Irano-Islamic philosophy in the framework of the general history of philosophy, which is nothing other than the history of man's growing awareness of the human adventure. From the human point of view, one can only envisage with pessimism the cause of the powers and the beings of light, under whatever name the Iranians designated them in the course of centuries. But the same conception of the world which proceeds from this pessimism, paradoxically also offers its counterweight: a confidence which never despairs and which justifies total devotion of the soul.

The ancient Iranians felt themselves united in battle dedicated by the Fravartis to come to the aid of Ohrmazd. The Shī'ite Iranians always knew themselves to be as one with that handful of men who would never betray the Imāms descended from the Prophet. The philosopher whom I cited at the beginning, Quṭb al-Dīn Ashevārī, was aware that it was a matter of the perpetuation of this same struggle. Irano-Islamic philosophy thus attains to a dimension which is universally human.

REFERENCES

[1] Cf. Qoṭboddīn Ashkevarī, *Maḥbūb al-Qolūb*, Part I, Shīrāz (lithographed, n.d.), p. 144. The XII Imām, identified here with the zoroastrian Saoshyant is sometimes identified with the Paraclete by many Shī'ite authors. See my study on *L'idée du Paraclet en philosophie iranienne*, Accad. Naz. dei Lincei, Convegno, "La Persia nel Medioevo," Roma, 1970.

[2] It is these whom Sohrawardī designates as the *Khosrāwaniyūn*, and whose eponymous hero is the ecstatic king Kay Khosraw, the eighth and last of the dynasty of the Kayānides. Concerning Sohrawardī, *shaykh al-Ishrāq*, see my collection *En Islam iranien: aspects spirituels et philosophiques.* Vol. II: *Sohrawardī et les Platoniciens de Perse*, Paris, Gallimard, 1971. See also my *Histoire de la philosophie islamique*, Vol. I, Paris, Gallimard, 1964.

[3] Cf. my work *En Islam iranien . . .*, Vol. II, pp. 354 ff.

[4] Cf. Forṣat Shīrāzī, Kitāb-e Āthār-e 'ajam, lithogr., Shīrāz, 1352, pp. 171-179.

[5] Cf. H. Corbin, *L'imagination créatrice dans le soufisme d'Ibn 'Arabī*, Paris, 1958. On the work and the doctrine of Ḥaydar Āmolī, see my work *En Islam iranien . . .*, Vol. III, pp. 149-213. Two of his treatises have been edited in collaboration with M. Osman Yahya: Haydar Āmolī, *La Philosophie Shi 'ite* (Bibliothèque iranienne, Vol. 16), Teheran-Paris, 1969. Presently in press are the "Prolegomenas" (*Moqaddamāt*) of his great work entitled *The Text of Texts* (*Naṣṣ al-noṣūṣ*) which is perhaps the most monumental Shi 'ite commentary on the *Foṣūṣ al-Hikam* of Ibn 'Arabī.

[6] On Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī see my work *En Islam iranien . . .*, Vol. IV: *L'Ecole d'Ispahan*, pp. 54-122. See also my edition and translation (into French) of the *Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques* (*Kitāb al-Mashā'ir*), Bibliothèque iranienne, Vol. 10, Teheran-Paris, 1964. There is also an important chapter on Mullā Ṣadrā in *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVIIᵉ siècle jusqu'à nos jours*, textes persans et arabes choisis et présentés par Sayyed Jalāloddīn Ashtiyānī, introduction analytique par H. Corbin, Vol. I, Bibliothèque iranienne, Vol. 18, Teheran-Paris, 1971.

[7] See my work *En Islam iranien . . .*, Vol. IV, general index, v. "Voiles."

[8] *Ibid.*, index, v. "joachisme," as well as my study on *L'idée du Paraclet* (*vide supra*, Note 1), Chapter VII.

[9] See *En Islam iranien . . .*, Vol. IV, book VII: *Le douzième Imām et la chevalerie spirituelle.*

CREATION AND THE TIMELESS ORDER OF THINGS: A STUDY IN THE MYSTICAL PHILOSOPHY OF 'AYN AL-QUDĀT

TOSHIHIKO IZUTSU

'Ayn al-Qudāt al-Hamadhānī (or Hamadānī) whose name was once almost totally obliterated from the pages of the history of Islamic philosophy, has recently been resuscitated out of oblivion and his importance is beginning to be duly recognized among those who are interested in the philosophic aspects of sufism. However, no systematic study of the thought of this remarkable mystic-philosopher has yet been undertaken.

Hamadānī closed his short, tragic life in Hamadān in an age which just preceded the appearance of Ibn 'Arabī and Suhrawardī,[1] two outstanding figures in the history of Islamic thought, of whom he may rightly be regarded as a precursor. He deserves this peculiar position for two obvious reasons. Firstly, he, as a thinker, unified in himself sufism and scholastic philosophy. A disciple of Ahmad Ghazālī, he was in fact a living embodiment of the tradition of profound mystical experiences that had come down to him under the name of sufism (taṣawwuf) represented by such names as Ḥallāj and Bāyazīd Basṭāmī (or Bisṭāmī). He was at the same time an intellectual endowed with an unusually keen power of rational analysis which enabled him to philosophize on the basis of his own spiritual visions.

Secondly, in metaphysics he stands closest to Ibn 'Arabī, and that not only in the sense that his metaphysical thinking is strictly dictated by and in accordance with his mystical experience but in the sense that his position shows a striking structural similarity to what is known as the thesis of the

"unity of existence" (waḥdat al-wujūd) on which Ibn 'Arabī established the whole edifice of his mystical metaphysics. In this respect Hamadānī was uncontestedly a forerunner of Ibn 'Arabī.

These considerations—which may readily be developed into a number of long articles concerning the historical relationship between these men— would seem to suggest that it is possible for us to follow historically the spirit of Hamadānī as it goes through the Master of illuminationism (Suhrawardī) and the *Magister Maximus* of the unity of existence (Ibn 'Arabī), and develops into a peculiar type of theosophic philosophy that has come to be known in the latter phases of Islamic thought, and particularly in Iran, as *Hikmat*-philosophy.[2]

The present paper purports to throw light on the basic pattern of thinking which characterizes Hamadānī as a mystic-philosopher, through a concrete example, namely by examining the peculiar way in which he dealt with the Islamic concept of creation.[3]

II

What characterizes Hamadānī's pattern of thinking in a most striking manner is that his thought is structured in reference to two different levels of cognition at one and the same time. That is to say, the process of philosophic thinking[4] in Hamadānī is as a rule related to two levels of discourse, one referring to the domain of empirical experience based on sensation and rational interpretation, and the other referring to a totally different kind of understanding which is peculiar to the "domain beyond reason." There is admittedly nothing new in this distinction itself. For almost all mystics naturally tend to distinguish between what is accessible to sensation and reason and what lies beyond the grasp of all forms of empirical cognition. Otherwise they would not be worthy to be specifically called "mystics." What is really characteristic of Hamadānī is rather that everything—i.e. every event, every state of affairs, or every concept which deserves being discussed in a philosophic way—is spoken of in terms of these two essentially incompatible levels of discourse. All the major concepts that have been sanctioned by tradition as authentically Islamic, whether they be philosophic or theological, are to be discussed and elaborated on these two levels of discourse in such a manner that each of these concepts might be shown to have an entirely different inner structure as it is viewed in reference to either of the two levels.

It is noteworthy that Hamadānī does not simply and lightly dispose of reason. He ascribes to reason whatever properly belongs to it. In human life reason has its important function to fulfil; it has its own proper domain in which it maintains its sovereignity.[5] In fact he visualizes the "domain of reason" (ṭawr al-'aql)[6] and the "domain beyond reason" (ṭawr warā'a al-'aql)[7] as two contiguous regions, the latter being directly consecutive to the former.[8] This means that the last stage of the "domain of reason" is in itself the first stage of the "domain beyond reason," so that only those who have reached the utmost limit of the "domain of reason" by having exhausted all the rational resources of thinking, are able to step into the domain of trans-rational faculty of the mind. This latter domain discloses itself to man when, at the extremity of his rational power, an all-illuminating light suddenly emerges in his interior. The appearance of this "inner light" (nūr fī al-bāṭin)[9] transforms the vision of the world into something which man has never dreamt of. He is now an 'ārif whereas he has been —being confined within the "domain of reason"—an 'ālim. The former term designates a man who perceives by the help of his "inner light" the hidden, i.e. trans-empirical, structure of things. Henceforth his philosophy, if he does philosophize at all, will be characterized by his double vision of the world—the world as it appears to him as an 'ālim or a rational thinker, and the same world as it reveals itself to him as an 'ārif. The characteristic feature of Hamadānī's thought to which reference was made at the outset can be accounted for in terms of this kind of double vision of the world.

The "domain beyond reason," according to Hamadānī, is of a peculiar nature; it is structured in quite a different manner from the "domain of reason." Nevertheless the two domains are not unrelated with each other. Quite the contrary; the "domain of reason," in the view of Hamadānī, is but a pale reflection of the "domain beyond reason". The true reality of things is disclosed only in the latter domain, while the former presents a distorted or disfigured picture of the same reality, the distortion being due to an action which is inevitably exerted by the cognitive patterns peculiar to reason and sensation. But no matter how pale and distorted a picture it may be, it *is* still a picture of reality. And in that sense the two domains are closely connected with one another. That is to say, for every important event or state of affairs found in the "domain of reason" we may be sure to find its original form in the other domain.

Thus, in the view of Hamadānī, there is a general and fundamental correspondence between the "domain of reason" and "the domain beyond reason," but far more remarkable is the discrepancy between them in terms of the pictures of reality they present to us. The cleavage is so wide and deep that in the majority of cases the correspondence is hardly perceptible. Hence the difficulty with which we are faced when we decide to investigate philosophically the basic make-up of reality fixing our sight upon the state of affairs in both these domain at one and the same time. Moreover, human language is so made that its vocabulary and syntactic rules are primarily adjusted to the structure of the "domain of reason." The words and sentences by means of which we describe things—or think about them—are not naturally focused on the "domain beyond reason." Thus a mystic who, in the capacity of a philosopher, wants to talk about something he has observed in the latter domain, finds himself forced to use the linguistic tool specifically prepared for describing the things belonging to the "domain of reason."

According to Hamadānī, two ways are open for the mystic to take in such a situation. Either (1) he has recourse to "equivocation" (tashābuh),[10] using one and the same word in two widely different senses as it refers to the one or the other domain; or (2) he describes the two corresponding states of affairs using for each of them an entirely different set of words and sentences. In his Zubdah Hamadānī uses both these methods. It goes without saying that when he chooses the second alternative the interpretation on our part becomes a subtle and difficult matter, for in such a case we are liable to be misled into thinking that he is talking about two completely unrelated things. The concept of "creation" which constitutes the main topic of the present paper is just a case in point. "Creation" (ījād) is the key-word he uses in reference to the "domain of reason," while the same fundamental event is talked about in terms of "God's Face" (wajh Allāh) when he looks at the matter from the point of view of the "domain beyond reason." "Creation" and "God's Face" would superficially appear to have almost nothing to do with each other. For Hamadānī, however, there is between the two a remarkable structural correspondence, the main difference between them consisting in the fact that the one properly belongs to the "domain of reason" and the other to the "domain beyond reason."

III

The concept of creation is something easily accessible to ordinary rational

understanding. Let us begin by examining what Hamadānī has to say about it in reference to the "domain of reason."

It is to be remarked that on this level of thinking Hamadānī readily accepts, at least at the initial stage, the fundamental ideas that have been developed by theologians and philosophers concerning God's creation of the world of being. Thus he starts by dividing all existent things into two major categories: "pre-eternal" (qadīm) and "originated" (ḥādith). The pre-eternal—which in reality is a unit class, consisting as it does of one single member, namely, the Necessary Existent—is a class of existents for whose existence there is no temporal beginning. An originated, in contrast, is an existent having for its existence a temporal beginning. Creation in this context may be defined as something being brought into existence at a certain definite point of time.[11] This conception of creation is a commonplace among theologians. By itself it does not play a very conspicuous role in Hamadānī's thought.

There is another understanding of the distinction between the pre-eternal and originated, which is cherished by philosophers and which Hamadānī himself adopts and develops in an important way. According to this second understanding, the pre-eternal means "that which does not require for its existence any cause," whereas the originated means "that which requires for its existence a special cause."[12] Nothing except God can come into existence without an existence-giving cause ('illa mūjida). As there are innumerable things in the world, there are correspondingly innumerable causes working there, but they are all ultimately reducible to the Cause of all causes, God. Creation in this context means that something that has been in the negative state of non-existence comes into the positive state of existence through the activity of its Cause. This conception of creation is also a commonplace in Islamic thought.
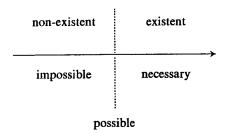
It should be noted that whether we adopt the first understanding or the second, creation at this stage is invariably regarded as a temporal event. In the view of Hamadānī, however, the deep structural meaning which underlies this kind of common-sense understanding of creation is solely that Something (ma'nā) which, "when viewed outside of the veils of mystery, is called God (Allāh) in the common parlance of the Arabs,"[13] is the ultimate source of all existent things in all their exuberant colors and forms. But God's being the ultimate source of all things is not necessarily a temporal event. Rather it has in itself nothing to do with time. It is only

at the level of empirical cognition that this originally atemporal state of affairs evolves as a temporal event in accordance with the essential requirement coming from the peculiar structure of our reason and sensation. In the "domain beyond reason" it reveals itself as something entirely different from creation understood as a temporal event. This point will be fully discussed later on. For the time being, let us remain in the "domain of reason" and pursue the development of Hamadānī's thought on this level of discourse.

We have seen above how the term "originated" is interpreted as "that which has (or needs) for its existence a cause." Now Islamic philosophers are unanimous in calling this kind of thing "possible" (mumkin, pl. mumkināt). A "possible" thing is everything that has in itself no ground for its own existence. In a loose sense Hamadānī also calls all things in this world "possible," meaning thereby exactly what other philosophers mean by the word "possible."[14] On closer scrutiny, however, he finds this common conception of the "possible" quite inaccurate and not sufficiently elaborated. And this observation provides him with an occasion to develop his own original idea about ontological possibility.

There is a general agreement among philosophers that ontological possibility stands opposed to ontological necessity on the one hand, and to ontological impossibility on the other.

Now, if we combine the two different definitions of creation that were given above, it may be redefined as something coming into existence through the activity of its cause at a certain point of time. The thing, before coming into the state of existence, is of course in the state of non-existence. But as long as a thing remains in the state of non-existence it is "impossible" to exist. This is Hamadānī's understanding of ontological impossibility. However, at the very moment when it comes into the state of existence and turns into an actually existent thing, the thing becomes

non-existent	existent
impossible	necessary

possible

"necessary" to exist, that is to say, it is necessarily existent. Where, then, is the place left for possibility? It is only to be found in the imaginary point where the thing turns from the state of non-existence to the state of existence. The thing is "possible" just for a fraction of a moment which in reality is reducible to nullity.

Hamadānī clarifies this rather unusual conception of ontological possibility by comparing its structure to that of the "present" which is in his view also nothing but an imaginary point between the past and the future —a typically Ghazālīan conception of the present, comparable to the famous view of St. Augustine in the West. Here follow Hamadānī's own words about this problem:

> "Thus the boundary of the 'necessary' is directly contiguous to the boundary of the 'impossible', there being between the two absolutely no intervening space. The only thing that serves as a line of demarcation between them is the 'possible'. But the latter in truth has no reality at all; it is just like a mathematical point ideally posited on a straight line. It is comparable also to the boundary-line separating the past from the future in the structure of time. In fact the end of the past is directly connected with the beginning of the future. As for the boundary-line between them, it has no reality except in imagination. For if you posit in imagination a point on the line of time and divide it into the past and the future, you will find on the whole stretch of the line nothing physically distinguishable from the past and the future, nothing which you might point out as really constituting the boundary between the two segments. For it is nothing but a point posited there by imagination." [15]

The upshot of this argument is that there is in actuality no ontological possibility, and that, therefore, everything is either "impossible" or "necessary." What is generally considered "possible" is but an imaginary boundary-line separating the "impossible" from the "necessary."

Our next question is: What does Hamadānī exactly mean when he declares that whatever is not yet existent is "impossible to exist" (muhāl al-wujūd)? In an Islamic context—and such is precisely the context in which Hamadānī discusses his problems—this question is of vital importance because it is immediately connected with the question of Divine Power (qudra). Besides, one of the most widely accepted philosophic principles states that whenever and wherever there is a complete cause the effect must necessarily come into being, just as the movement of the hand necessarily causes the movement of the ring on one of its fingers, and that without any discrepancy between the two in terms of time. How, then, does it come about that a thing comes into existence today while another

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thing remains in the state of non-existence until tomorrow in spite of the fact that the most complete Cause of existence is always there? [16]

Hamadānī defines ontological impossibility in terms of the "lack of the (necessary) condition (faqd shart)." A thing remains in the state of non-existence despite the eternal existence of its Cause, as long as the "condition" (shart) for existence is not actualized. Man—to explain the matter through an ordinary example—is naturally endowed with the power to speak. This power (qudra) is the cause of his speaking after silence. But despite the existence of this power in him, he may remain silent. In other words, the cause exists but the effect does not. This discrepancy between the cause and the effect is due not to any defect in the cause itself but to the lack of the necessary condition for the production of the expected effect, which is in this case the will (mashī'a) to speak. Similarly, the stars while veiled by a cloud remain invisible even if the power of sight exists in us in a perfect state. The stars being invisible in no wise indicate that our power of sight is defective. On this analogy, a thing which is still in the state of non-existence is, so to speak, covered by the veil of the non-actualization of the necessary condition. And as long as the thing is veiled by the non-actualization of the condition, the Cause (i.e. the Divine Power) does not bring it into existence—not because of any defect ascribable to the Cause itself. It is in this sense that a thing which is still non-existent is said to be "impossible" to exist. As soon as, however, the veil is removed, it turns into the state of possibility, and by that very act turns into the state of necessity. [17]

By this concept of ontological "condition" Hamadānī explains the distinction which is usually made by philosophers between two sorts of impossibility: the "impossible by itself" (muhāl bi-dhāti-hi) and the "impossible by something else" (muhāl bi-ghayri-hi). The "impossible by itself" is everything which stands to Divine Power in the same relation as an odor does to the organ of sight; an object of smell can never be an object of sight, not because of any defect in the organ of sight, but simply and solely because it is not by essence anything to be seen. Thus the "impossible by itself" is never given existence by Divine Power, not because the latter is defective in any respect, but because such a thing is by essence not in a position to become an object of Power. In terms of the concept of "condition," this may be expressed by saying that the "impossible by itself" is that for which an ontological condition can never be actualized. [18]

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The "impossible by something else" on the contrary—and this is the kind of "impossible" which we have been discussing in the foregoing paragraphs—stand to Divine Power in the same relation as an object of sight does to the organ of sight as long as that object remains veiled by something. Formulated in a more technical manner, the "impossible by something else" is that whose "condition" is actualizable, but not necessarily to be actualized.[19] In reference to the positive aspect of the "impossible by something else"—by the "positive aspect" is meant the "condition" for existence being actualizable—Hamadānī sometimes calls it the "possible by itself" (mumkin bi-dhāti-hi)[20] so that we have the equivalence: "impossible by something else" = "possible by itself." It is to be noted that the word "possible" is here used to mean something different from the "possible" conceived as an imaginary point between non-existence and existence.

It is also important to remark that in the opinion of Hamadānī the need for the ontological "condition" does not detract from the perfection of the Cause. For it is something essentially of a negative nature. It is not to be conceived as something positive filling up the deficiency of the Cause. It consists merely in removing the veil. The dispersion of clouds enables the earth to receive the light of the sun; it works upon the natural capacity of the earth, but it does not affect in any way the activity of the sun. In like manner an ontological "condition" takes off the veil from the thing in the state of non-existence in such a way that the thing becomes ready to receive the light of eternal Existence (nūr al-wujūd al-azalī).[21] The "condition" concerns the capacity or "preparedness" (isti'dād) of the thing; it has nothing to do with the nature of the Cause.

As to what precisely such an ontological "condition" is in more concrete terms and as to how it becomes actualized, Hamadānī unfortunately does not give us any explanation in Zubdah.

IV

As we have seen in the foregoing section, creation is primarily and essentially a temporal event. It is a temporal event in that it consists in something being transposed from the state of non-existence, i.e. the state of ontological impossibility, into the state of existence, i.e. the state of ontological necessity, by the activity of the Cause at a certain point of

time, i.e. as soon as the ontological "condition" is actualized. We must note, however, that for Hamadānī there is hidden under the conception of creation a more fundamental state of affairs which is in itself atemporal, namely God's being the ultimate source of all existent things. From this point of view, creation is nothing but a special form in which this essentially atemporal state of affairs is conceived and represented by the human mind in accordance with the rules of the "domain of reason." In other words, imagination cannot represent, the intellect cannot conceive of, God's being the ultimate ground of existence for everything except in the form of a temporal event, called "creation."

In the "domain beyond reason," however, God's being the ultimate metaphysical ground assumes an entirely different form. The most important key-term here is "God's Face" (wajh Allāh). What corresponds to "creation" is expressed on this level of discourse by "God's Face." This phrase which has its immediate origin in the Qur'ān is philosophically used by Hamadānī as a symbolic expression for a very peculiar relation holding between the ultimate Ground of existence and all existent things. The relation is to be conceived as absolutely preclusive of all associations with the notion of time. It is a timeless, metaphysical relation (nisba).

The Qur'ān in more than one place makes reference to God's Face. One of the key-passages is the following:

To God belong both the East and the West. So whithersoever you may turn, there is God's Face (II, 115).

Thus God's Face is everywhere. He turns his Face to everything. And everything exists by His turning His Face toward it. All things are sustained in existence by being directly exposed to the existence-providing light which emanates from God's Face. At the first glance it might look as if we had here a very simple and ordinary kind of dyadic relation between God and the world: (x R y) which would read "God faces the world" with its converse (y R x) reading "The world faces God"—in short, a perfectly symmetrical relation. And in fact Hamadānī sometimes does use in reference to this relation the word muqābala meaning literally "mutual facing."

The expression, however, is simply misleading, for the relation as Hamadānī conceives it is a peculiar instance of an asymmetrical relation usually exemplified by "father of," "greater than," etc. The elucidation of

this point will lead us into the very core of Hamadānī's metaphysics on the trans-rational level of discourse.

The basic relation $(x \, R \, y)$ reading "God faces the world" does not, in Hamadānī's understanding, simply mean that x and y stand face to face in the general context of existence. It is to be taken as indicating that there is an existential energy (which Hamadānī calls the "light of existence") issuing forth from x and proceedings towards y. But since there is no time in the dimension of which we are talking now, the existential energy has in reality no time to "proceed." Rather, the existential energy being activated, all existent things are actualized on the spot, there and then. The things are but so many instantaneous crystallizations of the existential energy. God's Face does not precede the world in terms of time; its precedence is conceivable only in terms of ontological rank (*rutba*).[22]

It is noteworthy that in theological terminology the basic relation $(x \, R \, y)$ reads "God *knows* everything," for God's turning His Face toward something means nothing other than God's knowing it. And God's knowing it means in the terminology of Hamadānī that the thing exists.[23]

The nature of the basic relation $(x \, R \, y)$ being such, it will immediately be noticed that it does not allow of being simply converted to $(y \, R \, x)$. God faces the world, but the world has no face to turn toward God. For everything in the world is in itself and by itself a sheer "nothing." We can even go a step further and say that "where there *is* God there absolutely *is* nothing."[24] This last statement is primarily a reference to what mystics actually see in the state of self-annihilation (*fanā'*) in which all things without a single exception are seen to be absorbed and dissolved into the absolute unity of Existence which alone remains in its dazzling splendor. Says the Qur'ān:

All that exists upon the earth perishes and disappears; there still abides the Face of your Lord in His majestic splendor (LV, 26-27).

All things are perishable except His Face (XXVIII, 88).

The conception, however, has also an ontological significance, in the sense that it indicates that everything which *seems* to exist is in reality non-existent. Paradoxically though it may sound, every "existent" (*mawjūd*) is essentially "non-existent" (*ma'dūm*). Says Hamadānī "Everything, in so far as it is considered in itself, i.e. apart from the sustaining power of God,

is non-existent." [25] But—another paradox—this non-existent thing *is* existent in so far as it is considered in relation to God's Face.[26] "Every existent thing, except God, has no reality (*dhāt*) of its own; thus it has no existence. Its being existent has no real ground except in so far as it is contiguous to the eternal Reality." [27] Mystically this is a reference to the state of "survival" (*baqā'*). Ontologically it means the denial of the self-subsistence of things together with the assertion of their real existence as reflections of Existence. Theologically it means that everything exists in so far as it is known by God.

Thus, to come back to the point from which we started, the converse of our original relation $(x \, R \, y)$, i.e. $(y \, R \, x)$, can only read: y has "a certain relation (*nisba mā*)" to x.[28] That is to say, all things stand in a certain relation to God's Face, and if it were not for this relation nothing in the world would exist. But this "certain relation" cannot surely be "facing."

The relation in question is really a very peculiar one. For $(y \, R \, x)$ is not a relation obtaining between two solidly established entities. As we have just seen, y is essentially a non-thing, while x, being God, is something infinite. It is a relation subsisting between a non-thing and an infinite thing. But the existence of such a relation is equivalent to its non-existence. "All existent things altogether have no relation at all to the infinite width of Divine Knowledge." [29] All things put together, Hamadānī says, are but a single atom (*dharrah*) in the presence of Divine Knowledge. And to this he adds: "Nay, even an atom is still *something* at least; in reality the whole of all existent things is *nothing* in relation to Divine Knowledge".[30]

Since, in this way, y is essentially a non-thing, i.e. nothing, and x is infinite, the distance separating one from the other is infinite. That is to say, seen from the point of view of y, x is infinitely remote and removed from the latter so that there can actually be no relation to be established between the two terms except the negative relation of non-relation, for the two terms here can in no wise be positively connected with one another.

Since, however, the original relation $(x \, R \, y)$ does obtain—and seen in terms of this formulation, x, instead of being infinitely remote from y, is infinitely close to it—we cannot say that $(y \, R \, x)$ is sheer nothing either. Hence the very peculiar nature of the relation $(y \, R \, x)$: it *is* and it *is* not at one and the same time.

It is this unusual metaphysical situation that Hamadānī refers to when he says: "Every thing is present to (*ḥādir li*) God, whereas God is present with (*ḥādir ma'a*) every thing." [31] This small particle "with"

(*ma'a*) is one of the key technical terms of Hamadānī. He refers to the idea also in abstract form, *ma'iyya* (literally "with-ness"). The point is that God is "with" every single thing, but not even a single thing is "with" God. It is inconceivable, he says, "that anything whatsoever could ever exist 'with' God, because nothing possesses the rank of 'with-ness' vis-à-vis His existence. Thus it is not for anything to be 'with' God, but He is 'with' everything. If it were not for His 'with-ness' nothing indeed would remain in existence." [32] The most important part of what is indicated by this statement is the idea that a thing—corresponding to y in our formula $(y \bar{R} x)$—does not and can not exist "with" God(x) as something facing God, as something self-subsistent and separate from Him, and this even when it is empirically or physically existent. How can this be otherwise when the basic relation $(x R y)$ itself is an exclusive product of x? The relation is realized not because there are two terms x and y. The very term y is a product of x's "with-ness." y maintains its essentially precarious existence only in so far as God is "with" it as indicated by the relation $(x R y)$. But if we view this relation starting from y taken as something existent—as suggested by the outward from of the converse of the relation, i.e. $(y \bar{R} x)$—we find y, to our surprise, deprived of all ontological solidity, somewhat in the nature of a shadow, a reflected image in the mirror. [33] It is this lack of ontological solidity that makes y unable to be "with" x.

Another significant fact about the relation $(y R x)$, according to Hamadānī, is its timelessness. That is to say, all things in relation to God's Face are equidistant in terms of time, there being no distinction here between the past, present, and future. A thing happened yesterday; another thing happens today; still another will happen tomorrow. All the three things stand in exactly the same relation to God. "The relation of all existents to God is one. Those that exist at present, those that existed in the past, and those that will exist in the future are equal to each other in their relation to God. It is our reason that establishes temporal succession among them, thinking that *this* precedes *that*." [34] The timelessness of the relation here in question is ultimately due to the fact which we have observed earlier, namely, that for Hamadānī all things are essentially non-things. They simply do not exist in the strict sense in the "domain beyond reason."

Time, as it were, is the locus of motion (*zarf al-ḥaraka*), and motion is actualized only where there are bodies. [35] Thus where there are only non-things, i.e. where there is nothing, time cannot be actualized. In other words, in the domain (which is accessible only to mystics) in which nothing

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"other" than God exists, the actualization of a time-order is entirely out of question. Says Hamadānī: [36] "Absolutely no self-subsistent thing exists in the domain where the Absolute *exists*, neither at present nor in the past nor again in the future. He who maintains that the world is now existent 'with' the existence of the Absolute is making a grave mistake. For in the domain in which the Absolute *is*, there is neither space nor time." [37]

The timelessness of the "domain beyond reason" brings Hamadānī to the problem of eternity. Eternity is for him nothing other than this timelessness transposed forcefully, as it were, to the temporal order of things and expressed in terms of time. Now in the intellectual tradition of Islam two basic kinds of eternity are distinguished: one is "pre-eternity" (*azaliyya*) and the other is "post-eternity" (*abadiyya*). "Pre-eternity" is visioned in the direction of the past; it is the beginningless past. When one does not reach any starting-point for the existence of a thing, no matter how far back one may trace it in the past, one calls it "pre-eternal" (*azalī*). It goes without saying that in the Islamic context of thought God is the only existent that is entitled to be qualified by this adjective. "Post-eternity" is the opposite of "pre-eternity." It means that a thing does not reach any end in the direction of the future. Here again God is the only existent that can properly be called "post-eternal" (*abadī*). All this is perfectly correct as long as we remain consciously in the "domain of reason" and philosophize on that level. But it would be a gross mistake to think that this is the final and ultimate truth of the matter. From the point of view of the "domain beyond reason," pre-eternity is not a matter of the past; nor is post-eternity a matter of the future. For, as we have seen above, there is in this domain neither past nor future. And in such a domain pre-eternity and post-eternity must necessarily coincide with each other. We shall bring the present paper to an end by quoting an interesting passage in which Hamadānī discusses this problem in a way which is very typical of him.

"He who thinks that pre-eternity is something to be sought for in the direction of the past is making an inexcusable mistake. But this is a mistake committed by the majority of the people. I say it is a mistake, because in the domain in which pre-eternity is really actualized there is neither past nor future. Pre-eternity covers the future time as well as the past time without any distinction between them. Those who cannot help imagining between them a distinction are simply compelled to do so because their reason is still in the shackles of their habit of relying upon visual imagination."

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"In reality, the time of Adam is just as close to us as this present time of ours. For in the presence of pre-eternity all different times turn out to be one and the same. Perhaps the relation of pre-eternity to different times may best be compared to the relation of knowledge to various places. In fact the knowledges (of various things) are not differentiated from one another in terms of being close to a place or being far from a place.[38] Rather knowledge bears one and the same relation to all places. Knowledge is 'with' every place, whereas no place is 'with' knowledge. . . ."

"Exactly in the same way must one conceive of the relation which pre-eternity bears to time. For not only is pre-eternity 'with' every unit of time and 'in' every unit of time, but it comprehends in itself every unit of time and precedes every unit of time in existence, whereas time cannot comprehend pre-eternity just as no place can comprehend knowledge."

"Once you have understood what I have just said, it will be easy for you to understand that there is no distinction at all between pre-eternity and post-eternity in terms of their reality. But when this same reality is considered as related to the past it is provisionally called pre-eternity, while when it is considered as related to the future it is called post-eternity. These two different words are needed simply because of the two different relations."[39]

In connection with the problem of creation there is another interesting thesis Hamadānī puts forward in *Zubdah*, namely the concept of continuous creation corresponding to the "ever-renewed creation" (*khalq jadīd*) of Ibn 'Arabī. But this will rather form an appropriate topic for an independent paper.

McGill University.

REFERENCES

[1] 'Ayn al-Quḍāt (1093-1131), Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (1153-1191), Ibn 'Arabī (1165-1240).

[2] On the nature of *Hikmat*-philosophy in Iran, see my *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 57-149.

[3] In the interests of brevity and uniformity, I shall draw in this paper exclusively on his major philosophic work *Zubdat al-Ḥaqā'iq* (in Arabic) which has been edited and published by Dr. Afif Osseiran as a volume in the Publications of Tehran University (No. 695), 1962.

[4] That is, as long as he tries to expound his ideas philosophically in a rational way. Sometimes he talks purely as a mystic, as he does in his *Tamhīdāt* (Persian, ed. Afif Osseiran, Tehran, 1962); then he shows quite a different pattern of thinking.

[5] For lack of space I cannot here go into details about what Hamadānī regards as the essential function of reason. For this particular problem see *Zubdah* XV, p. 25, XVII, p. 27, XVIII, p. 28, XLIII, p. 48, XCVII, p. 98.

[6] XCI, p. 92, LVII, p. 63.

[7] XI, p. 27. "The domain beyond reason" is one of the most important key-concepts of Hamadānī. It is designated by a number of slightly different phrases (see I, p. 10, XIV, p. 23, XXIV, p. 32, XXVIII, p. 36). Sometimes Hamadānī uses the plural *aṭwār* "domains" or "regions" to indicate the existence of gradation in this domain (see XVI, p. 27, XCV, p. 96, XCVI, p. 97).

[8] XXVIII, p. 35.

[9] XI, pp. 26-27.

[10] This aspect of the linguistic problem of Hamadānī has been elucidated in my previous paper *Mysticism and the Linguistic Problem of Equivocation in the Thought of 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī*, "Studia Islamica," XXXI, 1970, pp. 153-170.

[11] II, p. 12.

[12] VII, p. 17.

[13] III, p. 13. See also IV, p. 14, V, p. 15.

[14] XXXI, p. 38, XXXII, p. 39.

[15] VIII, p. 18.

[16] XXXVII, pp. 43-44.

[17] XLVII, p. 52.

[18] XLVIII, p. 53.

[19] *Ibid.* 1. 10, reading *mā lā yajib wujūd shurūṭi-hi* instead of *mā yajib*, etc.

[20] *Ibid.* and XLVIII, pp. 53-54.

[21] XXXVII, pp. 43-44, XLI, p. 47.

[22] XLIV, p. 49.

[23] X, p. 20. I have dealt with the problem of God's knowledge in more detail in my above-mentioned paper (see Note 10), pp. 163-166.

[24] LII, p. 56.

[25] XXXI, p. 38.

[26] *Ibid.*

[27] XXXVIII, p. 44.

[28] XV, p. 27.

[29] XV, p. 25. As pointed out above, "Divine Knowledge" is but a theological expression for the ultimate source of existence.

[30] XLV, p. 50.

[31] XII, p. 21.

[32] LVII, pp. 62-63.

[33] XLII, p. 47.

[34] XV, pp. 23-24.

[35] L, pp. 54-55.

[36] LII, p. 56.

[37] Thus Hamadānī eliminates both space and time from the "domain beyond reason." And this is not the only place where he does so. In fact he repeatedly reminds us that the domain lies beyond time and space, that it is timeless and spaceless. In practice, however, when it comes to describing the structure of this domain he

usually has recourse to spatial concepts and images. Or we may more positively say that Hamadānī—at least in his verbal presentation— tends to reduce everything in this domain to spatial relations. Is this due to the very nature of his original visions? Or is it rather merely a matter of linguistic description? This could be a very interesting, but also very controversial question.

[38] Hamadānī means to say that the essential structure of knowledge *qua* knowledge does not change whether the object known happens to be far away or near. The knowledge of a star far off in the sky does not differ in this respect from the knowledge of this table here in this room.

[39] LIV, p. 59.

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ'S THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE *

FAZLUR RAHMAN

A. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ṣadrā affirms the identity of the knower and the known, i.e., of thought and being, in all knowledge. But the nature of this identity must be defined carefully. It is not the case that external objects, as they are, become objects of knowledge. Indeed, the forms of external objects, immersed as they are in matter and material concomitants, cannot move into the mind and become known, since mental forms and material forms are different in several essential respects.[1] It will be shown further that the status of mental existence is radically different from the status of external existence.[2] When something becomes an object of knowledge, therefore, it acquires an altogether new *genre* of existence (*nash'a 'ilmīya*) where several of its characteristics of external existence are removed and it acquires certain new characteristics. For example, a mental form ceases to be material and becomes a universal—a genus or a species, etc. Ṣadrā, therefore, declares absolutely that neither of the external and mental existences can change into (*lā tanqalib*) each other[3] and thereby moves away from the position of naive realism adopted by Aristotle into a form of idealism with Plotinus.

This position is supported by a consideration of sense perception. It is not true that in sense perception the object of knowledge is the quality coming to inhere in the sense organ (through the external object) and

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* This brief paper seeks to give the general features of Mullā Ṣadrā (Ṣadrā al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī)'s theory of knowledge. His ideas on specific divisions of knowledge— perception, imagination and intellect—are treated in different chapters in a book currently being written about his philosophic thought.

producing a qualitative change in that organ. If that were the case, then, when my hand becomes warm or my tongue sweet, then someone else could equally feel the same heat by touching my hand or coming to suitable contact with my tongue. But this is manifestly absurd. Again, if the perceptible form were to inhere in a bodily organ—and the organ, being physical, has a form of its own—then one physical organ will have two forms, which is also absurd. Indeed, when the soul perceives warmth or cold, it does not become warm or cold.[4]

These considerations show that perceptible forms are not externally existent forms; nor are they forms present in the sense organs at the time of perception. Perceptible forms are, therefore, operations or emanations from the soul itself and the presentation of an object to a sense organ only provides the occasion for the projection of the form from the soul. All forms in knowledge are produced by the soul in this way and Ṣadrā says that the relationship of cognitive forms to the soul is analogous to the relationship of the contingent to the Necessary Being, God.[5] If this is so with regard to sense perception, how much more true it will be of imagination and still more of intellection? For in sense perception at least the sense organ mediates between the external object and the act of perception, but in imagination and intellection there is no bodily organ employed.

As for the definition of knowledge, philosophers have given several views about it. Although each of these views is open to serious objections, it is, nevertheless, possible to arrive at a satisfactory definition on their basis when taken together; but it will be found at the same time that some of these views are so far from truth that they cannot be corrected. The first view to be considered is that which defines knowledge—particularly intellectual knowledge—in terms of abstraction or separation from matter. Abstraction is taken to mean abstraction from matter and elimination of material attachments. That is to say, abstraction is taken as something *negative*. Now, whenever we know something, we are aware that knowledge is something positive and we are not aware of any negations. Again, when we know animal or man, we do not negate matter from him; indeed, the concept animal or man includes material dimensions.[6] This shows that abstraction does not occur by the negation of anything. Secondly, whenever it is possible to say, "A knows B," it would be absurd to say, "A is abstract to B," or "B is abstract to A." For if B is abstract, it must be so to everyone else as well as to A. Finally, "to be abstract" can never

be a translation of "to be knowledge;" that is why *it requires a proof to show* that all knowledge *includes* abstraction.[7]

The second approach to the definition of knowledge is to say that knowledge consists in the imprinting of the form of the object in the subject. It is obvious that this is not true of self-knowledge, since it is admitted by all that self-knowledge does not come about by the imprinting of one's form into oneself. Secondly, the imprinting of forms in matter does not become knowledge for material bodies. Nor is it true to say that, in matter, the presence of quantity, space, position, etc. prevents it from knowing, for when the soul knows things, it knows them along with quantity, quality, position, etc. And to say that knowledge consists in imprinting of forms in something whose function it is to know begs the question and is, therefore, not an answer. Certain philosophers, in order to avoid the difficulties that beset the theory of imprinting of forms, have defined knowledge as a unique relationship between the subject and the object. Apart from the fact that this view still does not cover the phenomenon of self-knowledge (since it is difficult to construe self-knowledge as a *relation* between the self and itself), it necessitates the conclusion that those things which do not actually exist cannot be known in any sense, for there can be no relationship between the mind and the non-existent. It is also difficult on this view to explain ignorance in the sense of mis-knowledge, since, if this relationship is present, there is true knowledge; and if it is absent, there is no knowledge at all. If one holds with Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī that knowledge is not a mere relation but a relational quality (*Kayfīya dhāt iḍāfa*), one is vulnerable to similar objections. It would also follow that God's knowledge is an extrinsic quality to His being and not essential to Him.[8]

Indeed, the view that knowledge is an accidental quality of the mind was also held by Ibn Sīnā in certain contexts. But Ibn Sīnā notes the well-known difficulty as to how, if the mental form is to correspond to the external reality, a substance in external reality can become an accident in the mind. Ibn Sīnā's answer is that this mental form, which is an accident to the mind, is of such a nature that, if it were to exist externally, it would be a substance and not an accident. That this is not a genuine solution of the difficulty is obvious, since this explanation commits the same mistake as the doctrine of abstraction. For it is meaningless to say that something which is a substance-in-itself turns into an accident in the mind. It is the same thing as if someone were to say that animal, when

it exists in a mind, is neither a substance, nor a body, nor growing, nor sentient, etc., which is manifestly absurd. This view, when logically pressed, would make the mental forms exactly like paintings or engravings of an animal on a wall, for it is also true of these that if they were to exist in the external reality, they would be substances, physical, growing, sentient, etc. This fatal mistake arises because "abstraction by the mind" is held to *denude* objects of their essential characteristics and turn them into mere engravings on the mind.[9]

Al-Suhrawardī, finally, sought to translate the phenomenon of cognition into the terminology of Light. He posited the categories of Light as that which is Light to itself, and that which is Light to something else. The first is the self-existing, self-knowing substance, which is correct insofar as it identifies true being with knowledge. He was inconsistent, however, in the rest of his theory of knowledge. For even those things which are, according to him, pure Darkness (*ghawāsiq*), he allowed to be cognizable by direct illuminational awareness, like pure body and pure quantity. Again, since animals possess cognition, at least of particulars, they must be taken, on his principles, to be endowed with Light; but since all cognition entails self-cognition, it follows that animals are pure intellects.[10]

Ṣadrā then proceeds to state his own doctrine of knowledge:

"Knowledge is neither a privation like abstraction from matter, nor a relation, but a being (*wujūd*). (It is) not every being but that which is an actual being, not potential. (It is) not even every actual being, but a pure being, unmixed by non-being. To the extent that it becomes pure from an admixture of non-being, its intensity as knowledge increases.[11] Primary matter, which is pure indeterminacy and potentially, is the furthest removed from possessing the status of knowledge. It becomes determinate by receiving a bodily form. But body itself cannot become knowledge, since it is not pure being: parts of a body, being mutually exclusive, are never present to each other and hence it can never attain a real unity which is requisite for true being and knowledge. None of the imagined parts of a continuous body can be predicated of the whole, nor can the whole be predicated of them, and yet the body as a whole attains its being through the continuity of these parts and its perfection lies in an increase in that continuity. Now how can something, whose perfection (*kamāl*) entails its non-being (*zawāl*), belong to itself (i.e., as a self-subsistent entity)? And a thing which cannot belong to itself, cannot attain or possess itself and a thing which cannot possess itself, how can it be possessed by something else?"[12]

Now "attainment and possession (*al-nayl wa'l-dark*)" are of the essence of knowledge. Therefore, body and its physical relations can never be

a proper object of knowledge, except through a form other than this bodily form. This other form is an altogether new form having a spiritual character, a form arising from within the soul. In the words of Coleridge:

. . . We receive but what we give
And in ourselves alone does Nature live.[13]

Knowledge, then, *is pure existence, free from matter*.[14] Such existence is the soul when it has fully developed into an Acquired Intellect. The soul then does not need forms inhering in it as its accidents but creates forms from within itself or, rather, *is* these forms. This is the meaning of the identity of thought and being. This also explains the dictum referred to previously, viz., that all knowledge is related to the soul as the contingent world is related to God. For just as God is Pure and Simple Existence, the Absolute Mind, and all other existents are related to Him, thanks to the unfolding existence (*wujūd munbasit*), at different levels —which constitute a systematically ambiguous world of existence of identity-in-differences, at the same time generating a semi-real realm of essences, so does the soul give rise, thanks to the unfolding knowledge (which is a perfect analogue of the "unfolding existence" of God), to different levels of knowables—of perception, imagination, estimation, and intellection—as systematically ambiguous knowables which are, in a sense, different and in a sense identical.[15]

It is important to note clearly the sense in which the phrase "pure existence free from matter" has been used; otherwise, it is liable to be gravely misunderstood. Something which is free from matter is also called a form or pure and abstract form. Form, in this sense, can also mean essence. This is precisely what is *not* meant here, else we will revert to the doctrine of abstraction of forms whose relationship to the soul will again become one of accidental quality. On the contrary, when a form is free from matter, it becomes a pure existent, not an essence, and an existent cannot be known through a form but through an intuitive self-identity or direct knowledge. Without this existential dimension to the form and the consequent identity of knowledge and existence, it would, indeed, be possible to object that from the *concept* "form free from matter," it is not possible to deduce "knowledge," for the two are not the same. That is why even when we know that God, for example, is free from matter, we have still to *prove* this self-knowledge by a further argument. The answer is

that we are not here talking of *an abstract concept* "form free from matter," but of the fact that existence cannot be known except through self-identity and direct intuition, and this is possible only in a being free from matter.[16]

A similar answer applies to the following objection reported by al-Ṭūsī to have been raised by al-Mas'ūdī: "If my self-knowledge is identical with my self, what about my knowledge of my self-knowledge ... *ad infinitum*? If this latter is also identical with my self, then my self is no longer simple but composite. If not, then perhaps my primary self-intuition is also not identical with my self." The answer is that whereas my primary self-intuition is identical with my self, my higher-order statements are not about my self existentially but only indirectly or *as a concept*. Thus, whereas my primary intuition can be expressed by saying, "I know myself," my higher-order statement about my self-knowledge will take the form "I know *that* I know myself." It is obvious, however, that even my primary self-intuition can be stated in the indirect form: "I know *that* I am." Al-Ṭūsī's answer, therefore, would seem to be more correct than Ṣadrā's, viz., that my primary self-knowledge is in an essential manner identical with my self, and therefore, direct, but it can also be stated in an indirect manner where it is not identical with my self but is *about* myself.[17] Elsewhere, Ṣadrā himself states that an indirect knowledge of the self is also possible, in which case it is not an intuition but is of a conceptual order.[18]

B. THE PROBLEM OF "MENTAL EXISTENCE (AL-WUJŪD AL-DHIHNĪ)"

Ṣadrā's statements that knowledge requires a new status of being for the known object, a "being-for knowledge," raises the question of the nature of mental existence (*al-wūjud al-dhihnī*), and the relationship of this existence to the known object. The first task in this connection is to *prove* that there is such a thing as "mental existence" as distinguished from real existence; this Ṣadrā claims to have accomplished by showing that since, in sense perception, the external material object in itself cannot be presented to the mind and hence known, the soul must create a corresponding form, of its own nature. This is much more true in the case of images which the soul creates from within itself. As for the intellective form,

Ṣadrā's position is that these forms exist in their own right in a Platonic sense, *as immaterial individuals (afrād),* and that when the soul fully knows them, it does so by an illuminationist direct knowledge whereby it becomes identical with them. However, since the ordinary soul cannot intellect them fully due to its preoccupations with the "affairs of the body and material things," it can see them only in a "blurred" manner as a well-sighted person might see a distant thing in the dark.[19]

Because of its "blurred vision" of the Form, the mind is then enabled to form "essences," which come to behave as "universals" applicable to different species. In doing so, the mind necessarily does violence to the nature of reality, since reality is not essence but a spectrum of existences. Essences are merely something "unreal" and "negative," being concomitants of partial existence and accompanying the latter at all of its levels. Nevertheless, the mind's operation with them is also a reality of its own order and it is true that in some sense they "exist in the mind."

Hence all forms, whether sensible, imaginative, or intellective, exist in the mind. But we must be careful in trying to understand the meaning of the expression "in the mind." These forms do not *inhere* in the mind as the form of a horse inheres in a piece of wax, for example. They are rather attached to the mind as acts or creations are attached or present to their actor or creator.[20] The use of the particle "in" differs with different types of existents. Something may exist in a place as water exists "in" a pitcher or a pitcher "in" a room. But when things are said to be "in" space or time, this is a different use. A third, philosophic use of "in" is when things are said to be "*in* the external world." In this usage the "external world" does not mean a place "in" which things exist but merely denotes a status or level of existence, i.e., a level where things operate with their natural properties. When, again, something is said to be "*in* the mind," the mind cannot in this use be conceived of as a "container," but it simply means that the mind has a set of properties or essences which it is able to apply to the external reality and to classify things.[21] Of course, the mind, as an external existent and as a piece of the furniture of objective reality, is qualified (*muttaṣif*) by the known essences which can, in this sense, be said to qualify the mind (*kayf nafsānī*). However, intrinsically speaking, the mind looks upon the external world and operates upon it with notions, concepts, or essences (*ma'ānī, mafāhīm, māhiyyāt*).

The question of the relationship of this mental form to the external reality has troubled most Muslim philosophers since Ibn Sīnā, and has

produced elaborate discussions. At the root of these discussions is the consideration that if the mental form is to reflect the reality faithfully, then the former must preserve the latter's characteristics. From this arises the demand that if something is a substance in the external reality, the mental form must be a substance as well. But Ibn Sīnā and others have described the mental form as a quality or accident of the soul which, as we have said, is, in a sense, correct. But this description, from the point of view of knowledge, is extrinsic. Others have argued that the mental form retains the essential characteristics of the external reality with certain modifications: just as, for example, a piece of magnet, when outside the hand, attracts iron, but when held in the hand, does not attract it! This line of argument is absurd and commits the fallacy of confusing different orders of existence. For an idea or form in the mind does not move out of itself and exist externally so that when it is outside the mind, it has certain characteristics while, when in the mind, it has certain other characteristics.[22]

Others, in order to escape these difficulties, invoked the doctrine of abstraction, as we have seen above, and asserted that what the mind knows (and possesses) is not the outside reality itself but a picture or copy of it and that such a mental image need not possess what the outside reality possesses—it might not be a substance, for example. Some others define the mental form or image as *being such that if it exists outside the mind, it would be a substance.* This is the view, among others, of Jalāl al-Dīn al-Dawwānī. Shall we also say, then, that the mental form, say, of man, is such that if it exists outside the mind, it would have two hands, two feet, etc.? This abstraction doctrine is even more absurd and dangerous than the example of the magnet, for it has as its necessary consequence that we should not know reality. For, surely, the one thing that is certain about our mental act of knowledge is that we know about man, for example, that he is a substance, has a body with all its parts, has a straight or upright stature, etc.[23]

According to Ṣadrā, this problem has arisen from a confusion of the types of proposition of logically different orders. In an informative categorial proposition, the mental concept or idea is asserted, and hence related to, something outside the mind, e.g., "such and such is a man." These propositions are 'existential' (*wujūdī*), and such predications are called "ordinary informative predications" (*al-ḥaml al-shā'ī*). But in propositions where a concept or idea refers, not to reality, but to itself,

the predication is called "primary or tautological" (*al-ḥaml al-awwalī*). In this case, the predicate only gives the meaning or definition of the subject, e.g., "man is a rational animal." The mental form is, therefore, only the meaning or the essence and does not go beyond itself whereas in the informative proposition the mental form is not contemplated *per se*, but is made only the "way of seeing through" (*ḥikāya li'l-manẓūr ilayh*), to reality.[24]

Indeed, even the talk about mental forms is not correct because it gives the impression of pictures, likenesses, etc. What the mind has are the notions or concepts or essences (*ma'ānī, mafāhīm, māhiyyāt*), as has been said before. In order to have these, the mind is not in need of "forms existing in the intellect." Philosophers have gone astray in this point because they have identified the mental act of knowledge with an accident or a picture in the mind and have not really believed in the identity of the knower and the known in the act of knowledge in a mental order of existence. There are other philosophers who do not concede the mental order of existence at all and think that the doctrine of mental existence, far from solving problems, created certain formidable difficulties. We must now turn to the more serious of these objections in the thesis of mental existence and their solutions.

In the realm of concepts or notions, there are those which do not correspond to the outside reality; indeed, some cannot exist at all in reality since they are self-contradictory (like a square-circle). Now, these notions as such are genuine, since among other things, they are distinct from one another and have meanings. The belief in mental existence would, therefore, entail that these self-contradictories exist in the mind. Ṣadrā's reply is that although the mind can conceive impossibilities, this does not make them genuine concepts. But their reality as notions must be admitted and there is no difficulty in this since we have argued that mental existence is disparate with real existence. We must, however, distinguish between a notion in this sense and a real essence. Some people, because they did not distinguish between the two, have asserted that when we say that, e.g., "a square-circle is impossible," a square-circle must exist in our minds to make such a proposition possible. Indeed, an impossible like "God's peer," must exist not only in the mind but also in reality, for if "God's peer" exists in the mind, then for it to be God's peer, it must also exist externally. By this argument, they seek to destroy the mental order of existence. According to Ṣadrā, the area of the conceivable is larger than

that of the real and the possible. In other words, not all that is impossible—logically impossible—is absurd in the sense that it has no meaning at all. In this sense, a mind can even conceive itself to be non-existent —which is, of course, logically impossible. But to be a meaning—and hence exist in the mind—is one thing and to be a real essence is quite another. The impossible has no essence, for it can have no instances in reality. In general, Ṣadrā seems to distinguish between (1) the real which has an essence and real instances; (2) the non-existent, e.g., the mythical bird called 'anqā', which is not real and has no instances in reality but can logically have instances since it is not impossible—this also has an essence; and (3) the impossible which logically *cannot* have real instances and consequently has no essence (*ḥaqīqa*), but is conceivable by the mind and therefore has meaning and is a genuine notion (*mafhūm*).[25]

In the realm of propositions we predicate positive attributes of things that do not exist, e.g., in the proposition "every 'anqā' can fly." Even in the case of a thing that really exists, we do not confine ourselves to its existent examples but pass judgments on its potential members as well, as, for example, when we say, "the sum of the three angles of all triangles is equal to two right angles." The objection to the first example is that it does not really refer to anything non-existent or mental, but refers to external reality in a hypothetical mode. The proposition, therefore, actually states, "Something, if it were to exist and possess such-and-such attributes, would be an 'anqā'." All existence is, therefore, real existence and no other order of existence is called for. In the case of the second example, the judgment must be true of an infinite number of particular instances of triangles, all of which must be simultaneously conceived in the mind, which is impossible. In his reply, Ṣadrā states that in the case of universal or general propositions, the judgment does not concern itself directly with individuals as such, as the latter-day philosophers appear to be "firmly of the view," but rather with the notion. Only through the notion does the judgment pass indirectly to the individuals; and the universality characterizes the meaning of the notion itself.[26]

Thirdly, the antagonist argues on the basis of our propositions about the past: if we have seen a man A in the past (who is no longer there) and talk about him, surely we are talking about *him* and not about our present images of him. In reply, some people have suggested the identity of the object of this past experience and the mental image, which is absurd. Ṣadrā's answer is that we *use* our present mental images to refer to or to

describe the object of our past experiences (just as, of course, we can use these images to describe subjectively or reflexively our own mental state now).[27]

University of Chicago.

REFERENCES

[1] *Al-Asfār al-Arba'a*, Tehran, 1378 A. H.—, Safar I, part 3, pp 300-304. A fuller treatment of the identity of the knower and the known is in the context of intellectual knowledge.

[2] See section B of the present paper.

[3] Safar I, part 3, p. 281, lines 5-6.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 282, line 1 ff.

[5] This is a consequence of Ṣadrā's view that the soul is God's analogue in simplicity and that a simple being is all the things, and from it, therefore, flow all things.

[6] Safar I, part 3, p. 306 first para; Safar IV, part 2, p. 95, 1. 6 ff.

[7] Safar I, part 3, p. 289, last para.

[8] Knowledge as form is discussed in *Ibid.*, p. 288, line 8 ff.; knowledge as relation. p. 290, line 3 ff.

[9] Safar I, part 3, pp. 305-308.

[10] Safar I, part 3, p. 291, line 16-p. 292, line 5.

[11] I.e. until it becomes an absolutely simple form as intuitive intellect; see n. 5 above.

[12] Safar I, part 3, p. 297 beginning-p. 298, line 4.

[13] Coleridge in his poem, "Ode to the Moon." It is obvious that it is no part of this position as such that things do not exist in the external world, i.e., that it is not subjective idealism. Ṣadrā, however, does land himself in grave difficulties by saying that the direct objects of the soul's knowledge are its native ideas and the external objects are perceived indirectly or by second intention.

[14] Safar I, part 3, p. 292, line 6; *ibid.*, p. 294, line 15; Safar I, part 1, p. 290 line 6, etc.

[15] See particularly al-Sabzawārī's n. 1, Safar I, part 1, p. 290 and n. 1, Safar I, part 3, p. 311. This also clarifies the meaning of Ṣadrā's oft-repeated dictum that knowledge is a form of substance, a higher form of substance than the material world.

[16] Safar I, part 3, p. 294, lines 5-14.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 294, last line-p. 296, line 7.

[18] Safar IV, part 1, p. 47, line 5 ff. where Ṣadrā describes both forms of self knowledge and al-Sabzawārī's important note; *ibid.*, p. 65, line 15.

[19] Safar I, part 1, p. 289, line ff; Safar I, part 2, p. 68, line 15 ff.

[20] Safar I, part 1, p. 287, line 9 ff.; see above notes 5 and 15

[21] Safar I, part 1, p. 311, last para.

22 *Ibid.*, p. 280, line 9 ff.
23 *Ibid.*, p. 306, line 3 ff.
24 *Ibid.*, p. 292, line 11 ff.; *ibid.*, p. 271, line 17 ff.
25 *Ibid.*, p. 312, line 3 ff.
26 *Ibid.*, p. 270, line 4 ff.
27 *Ibid.*, p. 271, line 12 ff.

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ AND THE DOCTRINE OF THE UNITY OF BEING

SEYYED HOSSEIN NASR

It is in the nature of rational thought and the whole process of reasoning to depend on a principle or source other than itself. For modern European philosophy this source has been for the most part the sense experience of everyday life or the sentiments and emotions related to the life of the senses. These elements the modern philosopher has sought to analyze and systematize with the aid of his rational faculties. The situation in traditional philosophy in general and Islamic philosophy in particular is far different because here the source outside of reason upon which reason relies and whose content it seeks to analyze is either revelation or an experience of a spiritual order situated beyond the limited experiences of common everyday life. This spiritual experience like revelation stands above and "comprehends" reason (in the original Latin sense of the verb *comprehendere*, which means to embrace or encompass) rather than being "comprehended" by it. Revelation and realization of a spiritual and intellectual character are in fact the principles of reason while at the same time they provide reason with the "material" which is then analyzed and systematized in order to be known discursively.

Late Islamic philosophy, which reached its summit with Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, known usually as Mullā Ṣadrā, is a type of traditional philosophy in which the wedding between rigorous logical analysis and rational thought on the one hand and the profoundest mystical experience on the other can be seen clearly. And nowhere is this wedding more evident than in the discussion of the doctrine of the Unity of Being (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), which lies at the heart of both the theosophical school of Mullā Ṣadrā, or his "transcendent theosophy" (*al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliyya*), and Sufism or Islamic gnosis (*al-ʿirfān*) in general.[1] The attempt of Mullā Ṣadrā to couch the

basic doctrine of the Unity of Being in rational terms does not hide the fact that the source of this doctrine is an *experience* of the Unity of Being, an experience made possible through the discipline provided by Islamic esotericism, which can enable man to transcend the world of multiplicity and to reach the stations of annihilation (*fanā'*) and subsistence (*baqā'*) wherein he gains a vision of the ultimate oneness of all things in their transcendent Origin.[2] If the path to the realization of such an experience had not existed in Islam, the experience itself would have been impossible and no theoretical discussion of it would have taken place. A situation would have resulted similar at least in this respect to modern European philosophy, whose mainstream has remained unconcerned since the Renaissance with authentic spiritual realization and those types of spiritual experiences which culminate in gnosis and illumination, precisely because since that time and until very recently the possibility of such an experience had nearly disappeared for men living in the climate of Western civilization in Europe and in its offshoots on other continents. But in the Islamic world in which Mullā Ṣadrā was born and lived his whole life the experience of the "Unity of Being" has been and continues to be an ever living possibility to which theosophers and philosophers can not but turn their attention, for here is to be found the supreme experience of human life. In the case of Mullā Ṣadrā, this experience was also achieved personally, for this remarkable Safavid sage, who was a contemporary of Leibniz, was both a rigorous logician and a gnostic and mystic of a high order. Moreover, because of the synthetic nature of his doctrines, he sought to encompass the teachings of the philosophers and Sufis before him concerning this cornerstone of all Islamic metaphysics.

To understand Mullā Ṣadrā's treatment of the doctrine of the Unity of Being, therefore, it is necessary to review the general background of the discussion of this question before him.[3] Many different views on the Unity of Being have been expounded by various philosophers and Sufis over the ages with different degrees of profundity, some revealing the Unity of the Godhead in its full splendour and others veiling this Unity by emphasizing the Divine immanence and the theophany of the One in the mirror of the many. Muslim theologians and Sufis from the early period were concerned with the meaning of Unity (*al-tawḥīd*), since it stands at the heart of the Islamic revelation.[4] They distinguished between the Unity of the Divine Essence (*tawḥīd al-dhāt*), the Unity of the Divine Names and Qualities (*tawḥīd al-asmā' wa'l-ṣifāt*) and the Unity of Divine Acts (*tawḥīd*

al-af'āl), which is related to the unicity of the whole created order. The philosophers also, both Peripatetic and Ismā'īlī, and also later the illuminationists (*al-ishrāqiyyūn*), dealt extensively with this subject, especially since Islamic ontology from its earliest stages became based upon the fundamental distinction between existence (*wujūd*) and quiddity (*māhiyya*) and philosophers began to meditate upon the relation between the two. Of the numerous views expressed on the meaning of the Unity of Being[5] these are of particular importance for an understanding of Mullā Ṣadrā's teachings:

1. The view of certain Ismā'īlī metaphysicians espoused also by an outstanding follower of Mullā Ṣadrā's school, Qāḍī Sa'īd Qummī. According to this view the source of reality is not Pure Being but the giver of Being or Unity (*muwaḥḥid*), which itself resides above all concepts, even that of Being. It is the *Deus Absconditum*, the Supra-Being whose first Act is *kun, esto*, the giving of existence to all things. According to this view unity resides in the source of universal existence itself.[6]

2. The view of the followers of the *ishrāqī* philosophers, who accept the doctrine of gradation (*tashkīk*) applied by Suhrawardī to light, but apply it to being (as was done by Mullā Ṣadrā himself) and believe in the Unity and gradation of being. The main contention of this view, which received its final systematization at the hands of Mullā Ṣadrā, is that Being is an extensive reality possessing a state of complete perfection and purity belonging to God or the Necessary Being alone as well as grades and states embracing the whole of existence and distinguished from each other through their degrees of intensity and weakness. In such a perspective the Unity of Being is preserved in relation to multiplicity, which issues forth from Pure Being like the rays of the Sun, united with and yet separate from their Source.

3. The view of the foremost among the gnostics, especially of the school of Ibn 'Arabī, who have expressed the most profound metaphysical formulation of *wahdat al-wujūd* possible, based upon their ineffable inner experience of the One.[7] According to this view there is only one Being, that of God, besides which there is no other. In reality nothing else can even be said to exist (*lā mawjūd illā Allāh* as Ibn 'Arabī has stated), and things that *appear* to exist are nothing but theophanies (*tajalliyyāt*) of the One Being which alone Is. This view of the Unity of Being is called hypostatic unity (*wahda shakhṣiyya*) and expresses the highest experience of the One.

Mullā Ṣadrā, while being fully aware of the implications of the first view, which places the Principle above even Being, expresses both the second and the third views in various parts of his writing and then tries in the discussion on cause and effect (al-'illa wa'l-ma'lūl) in his major work the Asfār to harmonize these two views and in fact also to incorporate the first by stating that that which is called Being is in its supreme state not only absolute but also free even from the condition of absoluteness. It is the *hyperousion* for which even the term Pure or Absolute Being is used only symbolically and as an aid for the mind to be able to refer to it.[8]

In seeking to harmonize the various views on the Unity of Being Mullā Ṣadrā makes use of a terminology current among later Islamic philosophers and going back originally to Naṣir al-Dīn Ṭūsī, who in his *Tajrīd* used it to describe the various ways of considering quiddity.[9] Ṭūsī distinguishes between quiddity as "non-conditioned" (lā bi-sharṭ), "negatively conditioned" (bi-sharṭ lā) and "conditioned by something" (bi-sharṭ shay'). To this must be added the states of "with no conditions" (bi-lā sharṭ) and "absolutely non-conditioned" (lā bi-sharṭ maqsamī), a term which came into use later when this way of considering the various aspects of quiddity came to be used for the discussion of being. In discussing Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine of the Unity of Being this terminology must be kept in mind along with the various meanings given to this doctrine by earlier schools, of which the three meanings mentioned above are particularly important for our understanding of Mullā Ṣadrā's views on this cardinal issue.

In chapter thirteen of the first book (safar) of the Asfār Mullā Ṣadrā discusses the essential principles upon which the doctrine of Unity must be based. These principles can be summarized in two categories:

1. Unity means the impossibility of division in the respect in which something is said to possess Unity. And conversely, whatever is said to possess Unity is indivisible in the respect in which it possesses it.

2. The existence of multiplicity is undeniable and cannot simply be negated as if it were not there. Rather, it must be explained and related to Unity.

Taking these principles into consideration Mullā Ṣadrā believes that logically speaking four different interpretations of the Unity and/or multiplicity of Being are possible:

1. The Unity of Being and the existents.

2. The multiplicity of Being and the existents.

3. The Unity of Being and the multiplicity of the existents.

4. The multiplicity of Being and the unity of the existents.

Naturally Mullā Ṣadrā chooses the third possibility alone as being acceptable and he interprets it either in the light of the synthesis of the two views mentioned above or in some places as the Unity and gradation of being in which Unity is manifested in multiplicity and multiplicity in Unity.[10] With this understanding he turns in the discussion of cause and effect in the Asfār to a synthesis of various doctrines and expresses in the pages whose translation appears below the heart of his doctrine of the Unity of Being:

Know that things in their act of existence (wujūdiyya) possess three degrees (marātib). The first degree is pure Being, whose existence does not belong to anything other than itself, a Being which is without limit. This the gnostics call the Hidden Ipseity (al-huwiyya al-ghabiyya), the absolutely Hidden (al-ghayb al-muṭlaq) and the Essence of Unity (al-dhāt al-ahadiyya). It is this Being which has no name and no quality and which discursive knowledge and perception cannot reach, for everything that possesses name and description is a concept among others and is found in the mind or in apprehension. And all that which can be attained by knowledge and perception possesses a relation with that which is other than itself and is attached to that which is different from itself. Whereas It [Pure Being] is not like that, for it comes before all things and It is what It is in itself without change or transformation. It is pure Hiddenness and Mystery and the absolutely unknowable except by means of its concomitants and effects. And as far its sacred Essence is concerned It can not be limited or determined by any determination, even that of absoluteness, for this would place Its Being under the conditions of restrictions and particularizations such as particular differences and individuating characteristics. The concomitants of His Essence are conditions for Its manifestation and not the causes of Its existence, for were such to be the case it would cause imperfection in His Essence. This absoluteness is therefore negative, requiring the negation of all qualities and attributes from the root of His Essence, and the negation of relatively and change with respect to quality, name, determination or anything else, and even the negation of these negations, since all these are concepts deduced by the mind.

The second degree is that of existence belonging to something other than the thing itself. It is relative existence conditioned by qualifications that are added to it and qualified by limiting conditions such as the intelligences, the souls, the heavens and the elements and the compounds of which men, the animals, etc., are comprised.

The third degree is that of the "Absolute Existence in its deployment" (al-wujūd al-munbasiṭ al-muṭlaq) whose generality must not be confused with universality [of the concept in its logical sense]. Rather, it has another meaning, for existence is pure actuality whille the universal concept, whether it be natural or metaphysical, is in potentiality. In order for it to become actualized and gain

concrete existence it needs something other than itself to be added to it. Further-more, this ["Absolute Existence in its deployment"] is not a unit in the arith-metical sense, a unit which is the principle of numbers. Rather, it is a reality deployed upon the "temples" of possible existents (mumkināt) and the "tablets" of the quiddities (māhiyyāt). It cannot be bound by any particular description or determined by any defined limits such as contingency and eternity, priority and posteriority, perfection and imperfection, cause and effect, substantiality and accidentality, separation from matter and corporeality. Rather, according to the nature of its own essence, without anything else being added to it, it possesses all the ontological determinations and objective modes of existence. In fact objective forms of reality issue forth from the grades of its essence and the different modes of its determination and its different states of being. It is, according to the common language of the Sufis, the principle of the Universe, the empyrean of life, the "throne of the Compassionate," the truth by which things are created and the reality of realities. It multiplies, while it remains one, according to the multiplicity of existents, which are united with the quiddities. It is eternal with that which is eternal and created with the created. It is intelligible with the intelligible and sensible with the sensible. For this reason it is confounded with the universal [in the logical sense], but it is not that. Words are incapable of describing the way it deploys itself upon the quiddities and embraces all existents, except by means of symbolism. In this way it is distinguished from the Being which does not enter under any form of symbol-ism, allegory or indication [and cannot be approached] except by means of its effects and concomitants.

> For this reason it is said that in a way the relation of this being [the Absolute Existence in its deployment] to the existents of this world is like the relation of prime matter [the hylé] to particular bodies. Know that this Exist-ence, as we have often stated, is other than the abstract, affirmative, general, evident concept conceived of in the mind, which is a contingent concept: and this truth is one of those that is hidden from the majority of discursive thinkers, especially those of the recent period.[11]

A careful analysis of this passage reveals the way in which Mullā Ṣadrā has sought to achieve a synthesis of the views of the philosophers and the Sufis on the concept of the Unity of Being. The first way of con-sidering Being, that is, Being as lā bi sharṭ or non-conditioned, corresponds to the hyperousion, the Divine Ipseity in its absolutely unconditioned state transcending every determination including even the quality of transcending every determination.[12] As already mentioned, even the term "Being" when used to describe this reality is only an aid for human comprehension and not a definition. The metaphysics based upon this conception of Absolute Reality is supra-ontological although using the language of ontology. Mullā Ṣadrā gives here a "description" of Being in its highest sense, a description which is exactly that of Sufis like Ibn 'Arabī and in fact nearly repeats the words used by the Sufis of his school.[13]

In the second stage Being is considered as bi-sharṭ shay', or con-ditioned by something. This is perhaps the easiest stage of Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine to understand, for it corresponds to the states of cosmic existence which, by nature, are ordered hierarchically, from the angelic to the ter-restrial. In all of these states Being is conditioned by certain determinations which cause it to descend through the various links in the "chain of being" and to actualize all things within the fold of universal existence. The description of the hierarchy thus generated and seen in its relation to the source, which is Pure Being, is but another way of depicting the doctrine of Unity and gradation (tashkīk) of Being which Mullā Ṣadrā himself expounds in so many of his other writings and which is identified by Muslim philosophers of Persia with the doctrine stemming from the "Pahlavi sages" (al-hukamā' al-fahlawiyyūn).

Finally in the third stage, that of envisaging Being as negatively con-ditioned or bi sharṭ lā, Mullā Ṣadrā describes what would correspond in the terminology of the Sufis[14] to the state of "Oneness" (al-ahadiyya) on the one hand and to the "Breath of the Compassionate" (nafas al-rahmān) or the "Most Sacred Effusion" (al-fayḍ al-aqdas)—which causes the Divine Names and Qualities to enter the plane of distinction or Unicity (wāhidiyya) —on the other. This latter state is already in the domain of "conditioned being," bi-sharṭ shay', and stands in fact at the apex of cosmic manifestation.

In this way Mullā Ṣadrā tries to synthesize the various views on this profoundest and most hidden and yet most manifest principle of meta-physics and to show how Being is One while various determinations and ways of considering it cause man to perceive the world of multiplicity which veils Unity. But in reality, for the man who possesses spiritual vision the Unity of Being is the most manifest and evident of truths and it is really multiplicity that is hidden from him. Moreover, all intellectual and meta-physical discussions of the doctrine of Unity are ultimately based upon this gnostic vision of the Unity of Being or an intuitive intellectual participation in that beatific vision whose truth is already announced in the Quranic verse which states that God is the First and the Last, the Outward and the Inward (LVII, 3), or in other words, the only Reality that Is.

Aryamehr University,
Tehran.

REFERENCES

[1] On Mullā Ṣadrā, his life, works and teachings, see S.H. Nasr, *Islamic Studies*, Beirut, 1967, chapter ten; Nasr, "Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī," in M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, vol. II, 1966, pp. 932-961; and H. Corbin, introduction to Mullā Ṣadrā's *Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, Tehran-Paris, 1964. We are preparing a work in English entitled *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and His Transcendent Theosophy* in which we hope to deal with all the different aspects of his thought.

[2] On the stations and states in Sufism leading to the experience of the One see S.H. Nasr, *Sufi Essays*, London, 1972, chapter five.

[3] For a general treatment of this subject Muslim thinkers see T. Izutsu, "An Analysis of *Wahdat al-wujūd*—Toward a Metaphilosophy of Oriental Philosophies," chapter three of his *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, Tokyo, 1971, pp. 35-55.

[4] See F. Schuon, *Understanding Islam*, trans. by D.M. Matheson, London, 1963, and Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1972, pp. 16 ff.

[5] For the views of various Muslim schools on this doctrine summarized in a masterly fashion by one of the most outstanding of the living traditional philosophers of Iran, see Sayyid Muhammad Kāẓim 'Aṣṣār, *Waḥdat-i wujūd wa badā'*, Tehran, 1350 (A.H. solar), part I.

[6] See H. Corbin, "De l'acte créateur comme *absolution* de l'être ou de l'être absolu comme absous du néant," in "De l'épopée héroïque à l'épopée mystique," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, XXXV, 1966, pp. 195 ff.

[7] For Ibn 'Arabī's view of the "Unity of Being" see S.H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages*, Cambridge (Mass.), 1964, pp. 104 ff.; T. Izutsu, *A Comparative Study of the Key Philosophical Concepts in Sufism and Taoism—Ibn 'Arabī and Lao-Tzu, Chuang-Tzu*, vol. I, Tokyo, 1966; and T. Burckhardt, *An Introduction to Sufi Doctrine*, trans. by D.M. Matheson, Lahore, 1959, pp. 57 ff.

[8] "The use of the term Being for this supreme state is only to aid comprehension. Otherwise, whatever interpretation is given of the 'Pure Hiddenness,' the 'Absolutely Unknowable' and the 'Mysterious and Rare Griffin' is a form of determination, whereas that Truth is above all determination." S.J. Āshtiyānī, in S.M.K. 'Aṣṣār, *Waḥdat-i wujūd wa badā'*, p. 35.

[9] See T. Izutsu, "Basic Problems of 'Abstract Quiddity,'" to appear in the collection of papers on Islamic logic edited by T. Izutsu and M. Mohaghegh as volume II of the collected papers of the McGill Institute of Islamic Studies, Tehran Branch.

[10] The Muslim sages consider the degrees of knowledge to depend on the extent to which man is able to comprehend Unity. They therefore place in a hierarchy the views ranging from the sheer experience of external multiplicity, to the realization by the Peripatetics that the elements of multiplicity are somehow united through their existence, to the doctrine of the Unity and gradation of Being as stated by the later theosophers, to the realization formulated by the Sufis that in reality there is only One Being. In section seven of the first chapter of the *Asfār* in fact Mullā Ṣadrā nearly equates Unity with Being and states that man becomes aware of Unity to the extent that he approaches Being and vice-versa.

[11] *Asfār*, lithographed edition, pp. 191-193. This section also appears in S.J. Āshtiyānī (ed.), *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens*, vol. I, Tehran-Paris, 1972, pp. 173-176. An analysis of this passage with partial translation is given by H. Corbin in his French introduction to this work, pp. 69 ff.

[12] A distinction must be made here between Being as *lā bi-sharṭ* and as *bi-lā sharṭ*. In the language of Mullā Ṣadrā's school the first corresponds to the Mystery of Mysteries, the Absolute and Ultimate Reality envisaged without considering the world of manifestation and determination. The second refers to the same Ultimate Reality but envisaged with consideration of the domain of manifestation. Finally, it must be added that later students of Mullā Ṣadrā in the thirteenth/nineteenth century, such as Mīrzā Hāshim Rashtī, Sayyid Raḍī Māzandarānī and Āqā Muhammad Riḍā Qumsha'ī adopted the term "absolutely non-conditioned" (*lā bi-sharṭ maqsamī*) in place of *lā bi-sharṭ* to describe the same state of Absolute and Ultimate Reality.

[13] Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, who followed Ibn 'Arabī so closely in his purely metaphysical works, writes as follows in his *Risāla fī tahqīq al-wujūd*: "Know that Being in itself is other than mental or objective existence, for each of these is a kind of being whereas Being is what it is in Itself, i.e., non-conditioned (*lā bi-sharṭ*) and not determined by absoluteness on relativity. It is neither universal nor particular, neither general nor particularly determined, neither unity—if unity is taken as being added to Its Essence—nor multiplicity," Shāh Ni'matullāh Walī, *Rasā'il*, vol. 8, edited by J. Nourbakhsh, Tehran, 1351 (A.H. solar), p. 236.

[14] We have in mind especially the terminology used by 'Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī in his *al-Insān al-Kāmil*. See al-Jīlī, *De l'Homme universel*, trans. by T. Burckhardt, Lyon, 1953, pp. 44 ff.