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ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

By

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ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

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PREFACE

The idea of taking up the present study first occurred to me during a graduate seminar with Dr. Habib Amin Kurani, on the educational problems of the Middle Eastern countries. While preparing a report on the system and philosophy of medieval Muslim education, in collaboration with my compatriot, Miss Abida Farkhad, I became conscious of some features of the medieval Muslim education which were, in my opinion, quite opposed to the basic principles of Islam. The matter was discussed with Dr. Kurani who greatly appreciated the subject and very kindly consented to act as the Chairman of my Thesis committee.

It is usual ceremony to preface any such study with the expression of gratitude on the part of the writer to the Chairman of his Thesis committee. I wish I could do it. But, unfortunately the limitations of our language do not allow us to communicate and express what we really feel and experience; in fact, when we express ourselves, we conceal what we really feel. No words, no amount of creative ability to express, can enable me to communicate what I owe to Dr. Kurani. He was my advisor, guide and teacher; he was the source of my inspiration; he consoled me when I was distressed, encouraged me when I became disappointed. He is the motive force behind the present study. I commit myself to the weak points of this study; but, what is

good here, I owe it to Dr, Kurani. I wish, I could have more time to benefit from him; I wish, I could be as devoted to the cause of education as he is.

This is why I will not say: I thank the Chairman of my Thesis committee, Dr. Kurani, for his kind help and guidance.

I am highly indebted to the members of my Thesis committee, Dr. Na'im Atiyyeh and Dr. Louis P. Cajoleas, for their keen interest in the progress of my work and for their generosity of giving me a patient hearing, whenever I needed their guidance and advice, despite the fact that they were themselves busy in their official duties.

I have also to thank Dr. Albert Nagri Nâdir, of the International College, Beirut, Professors Kamâl-ul-Yâziji and Mâjid Fakhri of the American University of Beirut, Professor Khalid-ul-Hâshimi of the Baghdâd University and ash-Shaikh Muhammad Rada al-Muzaffar, Dean of Kulliyat-ul-Fiqh, an-Najaf for giving me their time to discuss some problems and lending me their books whenever I needed them.

It would be unfair on my part if I donot express my gratitude to the staff of the Jaffet Library of this University, especially Mr. Haddâd, and Mrs. Tuqan of the Education Department Library, who were` all generous enough to give me maximum possible facilities.

Among my friends and fellow-students, I am extremely

indebted to Miss Sibâ al-Fahûm, who was, in a number of ways, responsible for making my stay here possible. She was a friend in need. I have also to thank Mr. Sarfrâz Husain Ansâri of Pakistan who gave invaluable help in preparing the bibliography of this study, Misses Salmâ Beidâs and Lailâ Orfahlî of Sidon, who helped me a lot in copying relevant Arabic citations from a number of books. I am also thankful to Miss Abida Farkhâd, Miss Ni'am al-Hashimi, Messrs. Mu'in-ud-Din Khan and Mr. Yusûf Burân for their moral support.

ABSTRACT

The present study can be divided into three parts. The first deals with a general enquiry about the relationships between society and religion, between society and education, and between education and religion. In the second part, an attempt has been made to give basic principles of Islamic faith, and to sum up philosophical and educational thought among the medieval Muslims. In the last part, fundamental principles of Islamic philosophy of education have been enunciated.

The study begins with an introduction to the problem, its significance and the limitations of the present study. Muslim societies, despite having cultural disparities, have a common basis in their religion, which is not only a theological system but also a way of life. Education, being an important factor in bringing about social change, has to play an important role in the reconstruction of these societies in modern times. As education must have its roots in the culture of a given society, the Muslim societies can have a common educational philosophy, to satisfy their requirements and bring them closer to one another. This philosophy can be given to them by Islam.

The second chapter relates to an enquiry into the relationships between society, religion and education. Religion is the source of society's values and thus of its solidarity. Societies cannot do without religion. Education, being responsible

for the transfer of social values to the newly-born members of the society, has to be related directly with the source of these values- religion.

This is followed by a chapter on the basic principles of Islam. It has been shown that there is no disagreement among the Muslims in regard to these principles. It has also been discussed that Islam has to be accepted with all its social implications.

The chapter on Islamic philosophy gives a brief account of the problems of knowledge, reality and existence, free-will and pre-determination, and nature of human nature, as discussed by the medieval Muslims. This is to provide a background for the last chapter. Knowledge, according to this enquiry, is possible and can be acquired through man's own initiative by means of sense-perception, reason and revelation. Reality is of two kinds - created and uncreated. Both exist and have to be acknowledged. Man is held to be responsible being. There is no extreme type of determinism in Islam. Furthermore, man is held to be composed of body and soul and needs both to build up his personality. Man has been endowed with reason which can be used in discerning good from bad.

A survey of educational thought among the Muslims, includes what has been said by Ikhwân-us-Safâ, Ibn Sînâ, Ibn Khaldûn and al-Ghazâlî. It discloses that medieval Muslim thinkers believed in theoretical and practical education and

also that selection of subjects for a particular student should be made according to one's talent.

In the last chapter, fundamental principles of Islamic philosophy of education have been presented. It has been shown that Islamic philosophy of education has to be deduced from the Quran instead of from the Muslim thinkers who were, in the most cases, subject to the political influences of their age and in some cases governed by petty factionalism. It is also contended that in such a philosophy, we have to search for the basic principles and for details. Methodology, for instance, may change according to the requirement of a given age. In our attempt to construct this philosophy, we have taken into consideration the basic spirit of Islam instead of being governed by a kind of 'hero-worship' for the medieval Muslim thinkers. The only principle, which we have found as immutable, is that the Quran has to remain as the guiding spirit in any educational pattern in a Muslim community. Islam allows us complete freedom in the choice of subjects, methods, techniques etc. according to our needs. Islamic philosophy of education is flexible and can be adopted to suit any condition.

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TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION

The method of transliteration, adopted in this Thesis,
is explained below:

Consonants

(الهمزة) ء *		ص	s
ا	a	ض	ḏ
ب	b	ط	t
ت	t	ظ	ẓ
ث	th	ع	'
ج	j	غ	gh
ح	ḥ	ف	f
خ	kh	ق	q
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
		ي	y

Vowels

الفتحة = a	الفتحة الممدودة = â
الكسرة = i	الكسرة الممدودة = î
الضمة = u	الضمة الممدودة = û
	الكسرة الاضافة = é (Persian)

The definite article (ال) has been represented only when it is suffixed to a word beginning with a lunar letter. In case of those beginning with a solar letter, direct liaison is shown. Thus الشمس has been transliterated as ash-Shams, not as al-Shams.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE - -	iv
ABSTRACT	vii
TABLE OF TRANSLITERATION	x
Chapter	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
A. Nature and Significance of the Problem	1
B. Basic Assumptions	8
C. Method of Study	9
II. SOCIETY, RELIGION AND EDUCATION	14
A. Society and Religion	14
Religious Origin ,.	17
Function of Religion	22
B. Society and Education	29
Education:Society in Microcosm	31
Education:Agency of Social Change	35
C. Education and Religion	39
III ISLAM AS RELIGION	50
Basic tenets	50
God in Islam	52
Prophethood	58
Day of Judgement	60
Islam and Society	63
Social Relationship in Islam	69

Chapter

IV	AN OUTLINE OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY.	73
	Problem of Nomenclature	73
	Rationalistic Spirit	77
	Epistemology	82
	Metaphysics	105
V	MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN THE PAST	125
	Ikhwân-us-Safâ	130
	Ibn Sîna	133
	Al-Ghazâli.	136
	Ibn Khaldûn	138
VI	ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION	142
	Aim of Education	147
	Curriculum	154
	Teacher's Position	161
	Student's Position	163
	Women's Education ,	165
	Conclusion	168
	Bibliography	173

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Nature and Significance of the Problem

The problem to be dealt with in the present study is briefly entitled as 'Islamic Philosophy of Education'. One may doubt the existence of any such philosophy as some orientalist did in the early part of the present century¹. But the factor which tempts one to believe in the existence of such a philosophy is the educational activity which was witnessed in and accompanied with the rise of Islam. This activity emerged during the life of the Prophet himself and continued at an accelerating pace even after the fall of the Abbaside Caliphate in Baghdad. This is quite evident from the setting up of schools and educational institutions by the successors of Hilacou Khan, who after inheriting the conquered Muslim states, themselves surrendered against the force of Islamic culture and civilization². The presence of such an activity indicates the presence of some principles, acting upon which the Muslims developed a yearning for knowledge, and thus, not only did they continue the activity started by their predecessors in Greece, Iran and the Indo-Pakistan

¹. Duncan B. Macdonald, Aspects of Islam (New York,) p.297.

². Iqbal has time and again alluded to this fact and Syed Abid Ali Abid has completed a book in explanation thereof, under the title of Yourash-i-Tataar, giving the details of what was done by these barbarians from the heart of Asia to develop Islamic culture, including education.

sub-continent , but also explored further avenues of enquiry which had hitherto been unknown to humanity³. In the presence of such phenomenal activity, it is difficult to say that it happened without supported by any philosophy.

Another point worth consideration in this connection is the fact that Islam is a religion with a difference - it is a religion as well as a way of life, a culture. Professor Gibb observes⁴

Islam is indeed much more than a system of theology; it is a complete civilization....It includes a whole complex of cultures which have grown up around the religious core, or have in most cases been linked on to it with more or less modification, a complex with distinctive features in political, social and economic structure, in its conception of law, in ethical outlook, intellectual tendencies, habits of thought and action. Further, it includes a vast number of peoples, differing in race, language, character and inherited aptitudes, yet bound together not only by the link of common creed, but even more strongly by participation in a common culture, their obedience to a common law and their adoption of a common tradition.

This unity of the Muslim peoples, despite their diversity, is still maintained as is clearly brought out by Gibb in the last chapter of his work⁵.

Here arises a question. Can a civilization exist without a philosophy? Can it grow and maintain itself without any sense of direction? Can any sense of direction emerge without a proper philosophic outlook? Our assumption is that no civilization can

³For further details refer to The Arab Genius in Science and Philosophy (Washington, D.C., American Council of Learned Societies 1954)

⁴H.A.R. Gibb (ed.) Whither Islam (London, Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1932) pp.12-13

⁵ibid pp.313-81

grow and sustain itself without having a philosophic foundation, irrespective of the fact that the civilization in question may be very primitive and the philosophic point of view may be very naive. Hence, if Islam is a civilization, having all the characteristics a civilization may have, potential to grow, capacity to adapt itself in the changing circumstances, proneness to undergo a decay, it must have a philosophy, and before anything else a philosophy of education. Recent research done in this field establishes this point beyond doubt. It is now possible to make an assertion that there does exist an Islamic philosophy which covers the problem of education as well.⁶ Hence our problem settles down to this: what is this philosophy and what is this educational thought?

But it may be argued that, granting the existence of such a philosophy, the dictates of the present age are such that religion has been dethroned and has lost its utility as well as significance. It has therefore no place in the education of a society. This point of view is not unknown. Two major trends of thought of our era support it.⁷ Dialectical Materialism treats religion as outdated custom of the society: and with the emergence of a classless society, it loses its function. Freudian school of psychologists

⁶This point has been dealt with in the beginning of the Fourth Chapter of this study.

⁷This point has been taken up in the Second Chapter of this Thesis, wherein an attempt has been made to show the relationship existing between religion, education and society and that religion being the main and indispensable source of society's values cannot be excluded from the educational frame-work of any society.

holds religion to be defence mechanism, evolved by man in the primitive stages of his cultural development, against the onslaught of forces of nature bent upon annihilating him. And the leading philosophic trend in the United States of America, Pragmatism, specially as explained and elaborated by John Dewey, excludes religion, at least from the sphere of education. Thus, as it can be argued, if Islam has a philosophy of education, it is not needed; being incompatible with the present circumstances. Hence the question: do we need religion in the present stage of social evolution?

The significance of the problem to be dealt here arises from the fact that after the Second World War, most of the Muslim societies have regained their political independence and are now busy reorganizing their activities and reconstructing their structures. These activities in different societies are going on differently. In Pakistan, the largest Muslim state, there is an emphasis on progressive revivalism, as the very aims and objectives behind the creation of this state reflect. Pakistan is trying, as Iqbal suggested in his lectures, to reconstruct her structure through translation of Islamic principles in the light of modern demands. In other Muslim states like Turkey and Iran, the emphasis is on the development of national sentiments. Religion in these states has been relegated to a lower position than before, more in Turkey, less in Iran.⁸

⁸Iranian constitution declares Islam, with Shi'ite creed as the official religion of the country. No law can be passed unless scrutinized by a committee of five mujtahids.

In Egypt and other Arab states, secularism has been looming large in the recent past and serious attempts there have been more or less directed towards nationalism or Arabism.⁹ We are however, not concerned with the factors leading to these developments. What we are interested in is the fact that the forces of Islam are surging forward again albeit in different forms; and all these societies are trying to reinterpret Islamic doctrines, especially the doctrine of ijtihad. As Gibb has said the essential unity of the Muslim peoples is still being maintained, consciously or otherwise. Thus it is not unrealistic to designate the different Muslim countries as Muslim World. Recent happenings in the Middle East and North Africa support our contention. Newly agreed upon United Arab Republic declared her official religion as Islam. Broadcasting a talk on the prospective United Arab Republic, Sheikh Mahmoud Shaltout, Rector of Al-Azhar, congratulated the Arabs on this achievement and remarked that 'it has paved way to the Muslim unity.'¹⁰ New Iraqi Government under President Abdus Salam Arif, decided to set up a special committee in order to scrutinize the Personal¹¹

⁹For a detailed analysis, refer to Whither Islam by H.A.R. Gibb.

¹⁰Al-Ahram(Cairo), April 18, 1963, p.5

¹¹Muslimnews International(London), April 1963, p.25

Statutes in the light of Islamic teachings. The new policy announced by President Arif's Government lays down that in the field of education efforts will be made to develop in the children, not only love for their homelan and nation but religion also.¹² Algeria has emerged as a People's Islamic Republic. Evidence is also not lacking to show the revival of religious sentiments in Turkey. Even in Communist China, Muslims, ten million strong, are putting up a tough fight against the Central Government because of its attempts to assimilate them in Han Chinese society.¹³ The Cossaks' revolt in the Soviet Russia, their terrible exodus and immigration to Turkey - all these facts do allude to one fact, i.e. the Muslims' belief in their particular ethos and their attempts to maintain their identity. Even secularistic and nationalistic Egypt, inspite of the force of its present circumstances, is not forgetful to this important fact.¹⁴

Now, the importance of education for all these societies can hardly be emphasised. The educational systems in vogue, in almost all of these countries were either imposed on the people by the foreign rulers or have been willingly imported or, as in case of Saudi Arabia, have become out-dated and out-moded. The

¹² ibid, p.4

¹³ Anon., Muslim Unrest in China, (Hong Kong, The Union Press n.d.)

¹⁴ Religion is a compulsory subject in Egypt. Books prescribed for science subjects contain chapters on 'our heritage' mentioning the names of non-Egyptian, non-Arab thinkers of the past like Al-Farabi, Razi etc. Recent Muslim propaganda by Nasser's regime resulted in a thought-provoking article in the Time Magazine of February 1963.

intelligentia of these societies, spread from the Pacific to the Atlantic Oceans, are fully aware of the fact that borrowed systems of education cannot satisfy the needs of their people. It therefore, becomes imperative that educational set-ups in these countries should be re-studied and recast in order to help them survive under the present circumstances. Social change without a change in the educational pattern is liable to be superficial and may create further problems for the society.

The fact need not be documented that the educational system of a society must take its origin from the soil itself.¹⁵ Assuming that all Muslim societies have a common basis - Islam, and also have some common problems, it necessarily follows that their educational systems, if originating from own lives, must have a common foundation. Considering the facts that firstly Islam is a culture and the Muslim societies have this culture in their blood and secondly, it is through education that a society passes on its traditions to the new generations while religion plays an important role in the formation of social values, especially a religion like Islam, we have no alternative than to accede to the fact that Islam can be the only common ground for these different peoples to meet. To ignore this fact would be high detrimental to the vital interests of these nations. By declaring that we will assume a secular attitude may change the

¹⁵See Chapter II under 'Education and Society'

the shape of the things at the surface, but traditions in the blood of the community evolved through centuries cannot be wiped out by sudden measures. For a change which is substantial, we have to take into consideration the things which have a substantial value. Hence, it becomes important to refer to Islam while planning for a social change in these societies, and thus planning for education.

Hence the importance of the present problem as to what is Islamic Philosophy of Education? In this connection, we have not only to see what Muslim thinkers in the past have said, but have to deduce principles from their theoretical positions as well as the practices in the past, so as to arrive at a system which is Islamic as well as capable of accepting the challenge of the present era which has been thrown to all the Muslim societies by the cultural and social values of European civilization.

Basic Assumptions

It is assumed that all Muslim societies, despite having diverse cultural patterns, have common traits originating from their religious beliefs.

It is assumed that a common philosophy of education will prove a unifying force for these countries and further strengthen the cultural bonds already existing between them. This will help them maintain their identity as Muslims without hindering their progress.

Such a philosophy has to be based upon what is common among them, with such a flexibility as may permit them adjustments

to the local conditions.

Islamic creed being their meeting point can be the only common basis of this philosophy of education.

Method of Study

The method employed in this study consists of

- i) reviewing the literature available on the relationship of society, religion and education, both from philosophical as well as sociological points of view;
- ii) reviewing the literature on the basic principles Islam;
- iii) surveying the material available on the Muslim educational thought.

As there are different schools of thought in Islam, opinions relating to basic issues are so diverse as to present an impossible problem for the student to deduce general principles. What is Islamic and what is not is an acute problem. To meet this situation, it has been decided as a basic principle, to rely, in the first instance, on the Holy Quran and the Traditions which are generally accepted. Next, significance has been given to the interpretations given by the learned Imams of the Prophet's family and by his companions. It has further been decided to reject anything said by a scholar of the latter period which may be contradicting the letters and the spirit of what was

said by the scholars in the life time of the Prophet or immediately after his demise. This has been necessary because the scholars and thinkers who came on the stage later were directly or indirectly affected in their interpretations by the political factors. We cannot take up in this study the issue as to how political events influenced these scholars. It may however be pointed out that the association of the Shi'ites¹⁶ with the intellectual and rational activities led the non-Shi'ites, who had political power at their disposal, to curb these activities. As an instance we may quote Mutawakkil's hostility to Al-Kindi as well as the Mu'tazilites.

Another important principle adopted in this study is that only two major theological schools have been taken into consideration - the Sunnite and the Shi'ite (Ja'farite), as it would have been confusing insofar as this enquiry is concerned, to discuss and consider minor shades of difference relating all the schools of thought.

Finally, it has been decided, to rely upon the views of an Arab or Muslim writer instead of those of the Europeans in case a sharp difference of opinion on an issue occurs. An attempt has been to consult original Arabic sources as far as possible. So far as theological principles are concerned, an attempt has been made to document them with the sources

¹⁶De Lacy O'Leary, Arabic Thought and Its Place in History (London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1954) p.144, 156-57.

relating to the particular school of thought. Distinction, however, has not been made between the four Sunnite schools of Jurisprudence.

The procedure adopted for the study is precisely this: first of all, the nature and significance of the problem, the method, procedure and limitations of the study are stated; this is followed by an enquiry into the relationship between religion, society and education; basic principles of Islamic creed are given next, followed by a brief account of the recurrent philosophical issues among the Muslim philosophers and scholastics after the survey of main philosophical positions in respect of major problems, an attempt has been made, in addition to describing what Muslim scholars have said about education, to bring out a broad outline of a philosophy of education, based upon Islamic principle, keeping in view the present demands of Muslim societies as well as modern educational thought and practices.

Limitations of the Study

Major limitation of the study arises out of the fact that relevant material is lacking, especially in English. Most of the work done on Islamic Philosophy is either in Arabic or German, French and Dutch languages. The writer has a working knowledge of Arabic but has been handicapped by his ignorance of other languages. The material available in English is fairly out-dated and the writer is also sceptical about their reliability. Two major works in English, available here, - by De Boer and O'Leary - appeared in 1903 and 1922 respectively. Both of them

are sketchy.

As the present study does not deal with a History of Muslim Philosophy or Problems of Muslim Philosophy, it was not within the scope of this work to undertake a thorough analysis of these problems, even if the material were available. Unfortunately no work, to our knowledge, has appeared so far, dealing with the major problems of Islamic Thought. The books available are, with few exceptions, mainly biographical and historical. We cannot therefore say, that in our brief analysis, full justice has been done to the subject.

Furthermore, two limitations have been adopted in this survey in addition to those referred to above. Only those problems have taken up which have been recurrent among the Muslim thinkers and have a direct bearing on education; and secondly only representative and collective opinions have been considered and discussed instead of those of individual thinkers. Due consideration has also been given to the relative influence of these thinkers on the general masses. This is why Razi appears to be less important from our point of view as compared to, say, Al-Ash'ari.

Muslims' works in the field of education are numerous and varied. Thus in order to reach some definite conclusions about an Islamic Philosophy of Education, the writer needs to undertake a careful and painstaking synthesis. The present study is an humble effort in this respect. It is an attempt to formulate and synthesise, in the light of present day idea of a philosophy

of education, fundamental basis of an Islamic philosophy of education.

The method of transliteration, as used by the Orientalists, could not be employed in this work for the reason that type-writers do not contain the requisite keys. We have therefore modified the method. A table of transliteration has been placed at page x, for ready reference.

CHAPTER II

SOCIETY, RELIGION AND EDUCATION

A

Society and Religion

Opinions regarding the definition and functions of religion are numerous, varied and different. But, what is clear from all these diverse points of view is the fact that "in any society, the conception of religion held is so much part and parcel of their particular way of life, so coloured by their special feeling for what they consider sacred"¹ that it is hard for any one, even those having no regard for religion for themselves, to ignore it. Bacon has been quoted to have said, "Religio praecipuum humanae societatis vinculum (Religion is the most substantial bond of humanity)"².

From the point of view of our problem, it becomes necessary to undertake a brief investigation into the nature of the relationship existing between society and religion. We have accepted the definition of society given by MacIver and Page, to be used in the present study. It reads as follows:

¹Elizabeth K. Nottingham, Religion and Society (New York, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1954) p.2

²Joachim Wach, Sociology of Religion, (Chicago, Ill., The University of Chicago Press, 1944) p.6

Social beings, men, express their nature by creating and recreating an organisation which guides and controls their behaviour in myriad ways. This organisation, society, liberates and limits the activities of men, sets up standards for them to follow and maintain: whatever the imperfections and tyrannies it has exhibited in human history, it is a necessary condition of every fulfillment of life. Society is system of usages and procedures, of authority and mutual aid, of many groupings and divisions, of control of human behaviour and of liberties. This ever-changing, complex system we call society. It is the web of social relationships. And it is always changing.³

As to the definition of religion, the term is applied to such a great variety of phenomena that its explanation calls more for a description than a definition. The difficulty mainly arises from the fact that (1) religion being a complex phenomenon is not susceptible to simple and abstract reduction; (2) the point of view of the investigator tends to limit the scope of his definition;⁴ and (3) theories of the origin of religion derive it both from the endowments that man shares with animals and from his distinctively human attributes.

We therefore, propose to take two definitions of the widest possible range and synthesise them into one, although, any definition of religion is at the best a statement of what the definer thinks religion ought to be, not what it is.

The first of these definitions is given by J. Milton

³R.M. MacIver and Charles H. Page, Society: An Introductory Analysis (New York, Rinehart and Company Inc. 1949) p.5

⁴For a detailed discussion on the definition of the term refer to Sociology of Religion by Joachim Wach.

Yinger. He defines religion as "a system of beliefs and practices by means of which a group of people struggles with the ultimate problems of life. It is refusal to capitulate to death, to give up in the face of frustration, to allow hostility to tear apart one's human associations."⁵ Eric Fromme understands by religion "any system of thought and action shared by a group which gives the individual a frame of orientation and an object of devotion."⁶

These two definitions represent two different approaches to the study of religion. The former considers religion as group-directed and as a manifestation of the functioning of society. The latter is limited by its being individual-directed. As neither of ~~the two covers~~ all types of religions, we will adopt a synthesis of the both with slight modification. Religion, as referred to henceforth in this study, would mean a system of beliefs and practices which gives to the group an inner-directed strength to struggle with the ultimate problems of life and a frame of orientation as well as an object of devotion to the individual. It originates neither from purely psychological needs of the individual nor the collective needs of the group, but has mostly been the product of them both. Especially in case of the present problem, the religion referred to - Islam -

⁵J. Milton Yinger, Religion, Society and the Individual, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1957) p.9

⁶Eric Fromme, Psychoanalysis and Religion, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1958) p.21

covers both the aspects of human life.

Explanation of the Religious Origin

The theories relating to religious origin may be classified into three main types, namely, (1) those relating to the treatment of religion as originating from the human needs for the explanation of the mysterious and the awesome; (2) those considering religion as having arisen from the emotional needs of the individual; and (3) those according to which religion springs from the collective needs of the human group.

The first type regards religion as the result of the efforts of the primitive man to explain various mysterious phenomenon of life as dreams, echoes, death etc. According to Taylor, these explanations give to the 'savage mind' an animistic view of the world and represent a "fairly consistent and rational primitive philosophy."⁷

This view has been criticized to be merely cognitive, basically intellectualistic⁸, and individualistic. The main point in the criticism against this is, as Kingsley Davis has observed, that mere knowledge of the fact i.e. the death of a relative for instance, does not satisfy us and we usually tend to search for something beyond this cognitive reaction. "We want something more

⁷ Edward B. Taylor, Primitive Culture, (London, Murray, 1871) as cited by Yinger.

⁸ J. Milton Yinger op. cit. p.53

satisfying than this cold knowledge. Our emotional equilibrium has been up-set, our hopes and desires frustrated. We need, in short, an interpretation in terms of sentiments and values."⁹

The second type of such theories try to find the source of religion in the emotional needs of men - individuals. Most important of such views include that of Freud, who treated religion as an illusion. Fromme observes in this connection:¹⁰

He says, religion is a danger because it tends to sanctify bad human institutions with which it has allied itself throughout its history; further, by teaching people to believe in an illusion and by prohibiting critical thinking, religion is responsible for the impoverishment of intelligence..... And according to him, religion is collective neurosis, caused by conditions similar to those producing childhood neurosis..... Freud's third objection to religion is that it puts morality on very shaky grounds. If the validity of ethical norms rests upon their being God's commands, the future of ethics stands or falls with the belief in God. Since Freud assumes that religious belief is on the wane, he is forced to assume that the continued connection of religion and ethics will lead to destruction of our moral values.

Freud's analysis of the origin of religion is man's need for coping with threatening forces, in the same manner as a child does by relying on and admiring and fearing his father.¹¹ While Freud traces the origin of religion to the initiation of collective neurosis in man in the early stages of his development and a repetition of the experience of childhood, Radin takes up a position very close to that of Freud. Radin's contention is that, to answer the question as to

⁹Kingsley Davis, Human Society, (New York, The Macmillan Company, 1949) p.517

¹⁰ Eric Fromme, op. cit. pp.12-13

¹¹ ibid p.11

what led man originally to postulate the super-natural, we must try to visualize the conditions under which man lived at the dawn of civilization. Nature was to him like a demon, its forces bent upon his destruction and he was helpless before them, their power and capriciousness. Radin says:¹²

His mentality was still overwhelmingly dominated by animal characteristics although his life-values for themselves - the desire for success, for happiness and for long life - were naturally present..... No economic security could have existed, and we cannot go far wrong in assuming that, where economic security does not exist, emotional insecurity and its correlates, the sense of powerlessness and feeling of insignificance are bound to develop....

It is but natural for the psyché, under such circumstances, to take refuge in compensation fantasies.the main goal and objective of all his striving was the canalization of his fears and feelings and the validation of his compensation dreams.

Hence, according to both, Freud and Radin, the source of religion is traceable in the loneliness, helplessness and emotional strain which were experienced by primitive man. The logical out-come of this position is that the function of religion necessitated by the peculiar physical environment of primitive society. Now, when the conditions then prevailing are no longer present, religion has ceased to be functional and has out-lived its utility. This view is further supported by modern Materialism which "holds that religion, as it is

¹²Paul Radin, Primitive Religion: Its Nature and Origin, (New York, Viking Press, 1937) pp.5-7

practiced in all capitalistic and precapitalistic countries, it is tool which the owning classes use to prevent the masses from improving their economic conditions."¹³

Both of these views, the cognitive and the emotional origins of religion, are individualistic approaches to explain the origin of this societal institution. The third group of thinkers consider religion as a product of social inter-action and group-life. Here, we will briefly describe the views expressed by George Simmel, Emile Durkheim and Carl Jung.

According to Simmel, Religion stems from human relations. He also thinks that religious feelings and impulses express themselves in phenomena other than religion too. "I do not believe," he says, "that religious feelings and impulses manifest themselves in religion only."¹⁴ He further holds that faith implies first of all a relation between individuals. We do not base our relation with others on what we conclusively know about them. He attributes an immense social role to faith without which, in his view, society would disintegrate. The highest development of faith becomes incorporated into a form of a faith in the deity and is thus "relieved of its connection with its social counter-part."¹⁵

Durkheim lays even more emphasis on the social origin

¹³ Charles S. Seely, Philosophy and the Ideological Conflict, (New York, Philosophical Library, 1953) pp.280-81

¹⁴ George Simmel, "A Contribution to the Sociology of Religion", American Journal of Sociology, Nov.1905, p.360

¹⁵ ibid pp.366-67.

of religion. He considers society to be the object of religious veneration and the basic source of the sacred. Preservation of social unity is the primary function of religion. "So everything leads us back to this same idea; before all, rites are means by which the social group reaffirms itself periodically."¹⁶ He interprets totemic cults in this very context. In his other work on suicide, while describing the then present state of social life, he accounts for the rising curve of suicide in Western society and appearance of 'anomie' by attributing it to the fact that religion had lost its real hold on the society. He says:¹⁷

For a whole century, economic progress has mainly consisted in freeing industrial relations from all regulations.....First the influence of religion was felt alike by workers and masters, the poor and the rich,Actually religion has lost most of its power.

Jung's approach to religion is not truly functional as is the case with Simmel and Durkheim. He defines religion as a "careful and scrupulous observation of what Rudolph Otto aptly termed as 'numinosum' that is a dynamic existence or effect, not caused by an arbitrary act of will. On the contrary, 'it siezes and controls the human subject

¹⁶ Emile Durkheim, The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, trans. J.W. Swain (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd. 1915) p. 387

¹⁷ Emile Durkheim, Suicide: A Study in Sociology, trans. S. Simpson (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1951) pp. 253-55

which is always rather its victim than its creator.¹⁸ Eric Fromme is of the view that "it is a necessary consequence of his definition of religion and of unconscious that Jung arrives at the conclusion that, in view of the nature of mind, the influence of the unconscious upon us 'is a basic religious phenomenon."¹⁹

The scope of the present enquiry does not permit us to undertake a critical analysis of these theories of religious origins. It may, however, be observed that the differences have appeared on account of the tendency of these theorists to attempt a definition of the whole by concentrating on a part. Religion, as has been said earlier, is a complex phenomenon and takes various forms. Seen in their particular context, all of these views may be justified. But in order to arrive at a consolidated view, it is a dangerous over-simplification to discover and concentrate on a single level of enquiry.

Function of Religion in Society

It may appear from the theories described above, that theories, ascribing the origin of religion to the individual, do not recognize any social function of religion. But a deeper

¹⁸ Eric Fromme, op.cit., p.17

¹⁹ ibid p.18

view leads us to conclude that even if they regard religion as originating from individual effort, the social significance of this phenomenon, positive or negative, cannot be denied. It is implied in the theories of Freud and Taylor that the satisfaction of emotional needs or primitive curiosity, does transcend the individual and affect the society. Otherwise there was need for Freud to worry about the destruction of moral value, and for Taylor to contend that "we need in short an interpretation in terms of sentiments and values!" This is because of the fact that we can hardly talk of moral values and sentiments without referring to society. Hence, it may be said that, despite all the differences of opinion, there seems to be an agreement among the thinkers that religion has some function to perform in society, whatever its nature may be. We therefore, now proceed to discuss briefly the function of religion in society.

While analysing the social functions of religion, we must take into consideration the fact, as Merton has pointed out,²⁰ that unintended effects of any behaviour of a religious group is quite a different matter from what the members of that particular religious group want to achieve by it.

Elizabeth K. Nottingham holds that "...Societies depend

20

Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, (Glencoe, Ill., The Free Press, 1949) pp. 61-64

for their survival on their continued expectancy that their members will discharge certain known and acknowledged obligations.²¹ This continued expectancy or to borrow a phrase from Dewey, 'maintaining the identity'²² is the fundamental frame of reference which can be applied to judge the functional significance of any social institution.

Now, as Nottingham has pointed out, there are two pre-requisites for the society's expectancy of its members to discharge their obligations, namely, that (1) there exists an agreement on the nature of obligations which and the members have to discharge, and (2) there is sufficient power available to constrain individuals and groups to fulfil them. In her views both these pre-requisites are provided by religion. She says:²³

First, religion has helped to promote agreement about the nature and contents of social obligations, by providing values that serve to channel the attitude of a society's member and to define for them the contents of their social obligations. In this role, religion has helped to create systems of social values which are integrated and coherent.

Second, there are good reasons for believing that religion has also played a vital role in supplying the constraining power that underwrites and reinforces customs. In this connection, it should be noted that the attitude of reverence and respect with which especially binding customs (more) are regarded, are closely akin to feelings of awe,, which are evoked by the sacred itself.

This view is further supported by Durkheim,²⁴ Spencer, Dunlip and

²¹Elizabeth K. Nottingham, op.cit. p.13

²²John Dewey, Democracy and Education (New York, Macmillan Company, 1961) pp.1-10

²³Elizabeth K. Nottingham, op.cit. p.10

²⁴supra. p.21

others. Dunlip is of the view that "in fostering of group integration, religion promoted and controlled sports and entertainment of other types....The development of pictorial and plastic arts owes much to religion since art grew out of religion."²⁶ He is also of the opinion that religion has always been a means of social control in order to maintain the identity of social groups and ultimately that of society.²⁷

Similarly Malinowski observes in this connection:²⁸

In recent work [Frazer, Crawley, Van Gennep, Miss Jane Harrison] much stress has been laid upon the association of religion with the crises of life..... Religion therefore, fulfils at vital crises an indispensable function in the scheme of human culture. Culture entails a transformation of direct instinctive responses into a mode of behaviour by purposive ends, that is by cultural values. The super-instinctive type of behaviour leads men into impasses and difficulties out of which he can be extricated only by rules of thought and of behaviour, which also have to be supplied by culture. In practical pursuits magic helps man over the difficulties. The role of religion consists in the establishment of spiritual ends, dogmatic realities and moral rules of conduct. In totemism which sacrilizes important factors of the environment; in the belief in immortality and in the associated ideas about communion with spirits and their influence on human fate; in consecration of food and of indispensable elements of culture, such as fire, standard implements, tokens of wealth; in surrounding tribal traditions and order, by the halo of sanctity, religion is the source of social-cultural values.

These are a few important functions that religion performs in a society. The materialistic attack on religion,

²⁶ Dunlip, Knight, Religion: Its Functions in Human Life, (New York, London, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc. 1946) p. 3

²⁷ ibid

²⁸ Bronislaw Malinowski, "Anthropology", Encyclopaedia Britannica (First Supplementary Volume, 1936) pp. 132-39

though apparently well-argued, seems to be invalid in view of the fact that materialism (in its various forms) is itself pregnant with a new religion, as per our definition²⁹. In all its efforts to destroy religion, materialism succeeds only in part by replacing some of the religious concepts, e.g. God, by new materialistic notions.³⁰

In view of the preceding discussion, we sum up our position vis-a-vis religion and society as follows:

1. Society, being not only a collection of people but also a well-inter-woven web of human relationships and usages requires and necessitates the existence of a force which transcends the individual entities and commands respect and devotion of the members, in order to knit them in a whole, well-balanced and maintained.
2. This force emerges in the form of religion and religion alone, irrespective of its nature as to being super-natural, natural, humanistic etc.
3. Without this force, society cannot function, as in such a case, there will be no source of values for the society, to which all the individual members may owe allegiance.
4. The functions of religion in a society are four-fold, as

²⁹ supra p. 16

³⁰ An interesting study of such a situation, where all religious concepts are replaced by their materialistic counterparts is provided by Aldous Huxley in Brave New World.

referred to in the preceding discussion and as summarized by Lundberg, Schrag and Larsen.³¹

These are (1) to provide a peace of mind to the individual in the event of sacrificing his personal desires to collective aspirations; (2) to act as a source of social control and guidance by enforcing mores of the community; (3) to provide for community welfare and recreation through inculcating philanthropic tendencies and rites and rituals; and (4) to formulate foster and propagate values.

We are of the view that religion is an imperative need of any society, especially the one which is passing through a period of transition. Because during the transitional period the societies undergo changes which destroy the old patterns of behaviour and thus new patterns are, before anything else, needed which may on one hand be consonant with the present needs of the community and on the other be in tune with the heritage of the society. In other words, old values give way to the new and eyes are in search of new goals and ideals. But unless there is some source, which may generate new values, it is possible that society may destroy the old but without discovering any new ideals. This would lead to a social chaos and the individual members would not be in a position to

³¹George A. Lundberg, Clarence C. Schrag and Otto Larsen, Sociology (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1958) pp. 602-609.

appreciate the necessity of giving preference to the collective desires as against the individual ones. Not only this, a stage may also come when society as a whole loses its identity and is absorbed into another.

Furthermore, the presence of an object of devotion for all members of the society gives a sense of direction to the activities of the individuals and in case of changing societies, accelerates the process of change without creating 'anomic' conditions. The past history of the human race as well as the present events support our view. The Russian Revolution presents a very good example of the force that a religion generates, though it may be as materialistic as Communism. Similarly, sometimes nationalism becomes a religion and completely changes the destinies of societies. There remains, of course, the question, as to whether religion should include supernatural concepts like that of God or should be devoid of such notions. In this connection, we have already discussed in the previous pages the function of religion. These clearly necessitate that religion be of such a type which may not only satisfy the social needs also that of the individual, including those mentioned by Radin, Dunlop, Taylor and others.³²

We end this discussion by quoting Wach, who observes:

We like to think that the desired agreement among students of society could be reached on the basis of the formula that perfect integration of a society never

³² supra pp. 19-25

has been or can be achieved without a religious basis. However, the mistake must be avoided of defining religion in arbitrary fashion; in identifying it exclusively with ideas, rites or institutions which are subject to change and transformation, instead of conceiving it as that profoundest source from which all human existence is nourished and upon which it depends in all its aspects: man's communion with God. Let us end with the witness Carlyle has borne: 'It is well said in every sense, that a man's religion is the chief fact with regard to him. A man's or nation of men's. By religion I do not mean here the church creed, which he professes, the article of faith which he will sign, and, in words he otherwise asserts; not this wholly, in many cases not at all. . . . But a thing a man does, practically believes and this often enough without asserting it, even to himself, much less to others, the thing a man does practically lay to heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations with this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest.'³³

B

SOCIETY AND EDUCATION

Society, as per definition given earlier,³⁴ changes the behaviour of the individuals, who constitute it, insofar as it 'liberates and limits the activities of men and sets up standards for them for being followed and maintained.' This change in the behaviour of the individuals, which brings them closer to the collective norms, necessitates the existence of an agency through which influences from without the individual affect his behaviour and orientate it towards desired as well

³³. Joachim Wach, op.cit. p.383

³⁴ supra p. 15

as desirable goals and objectives. Unless the behaviour of individuals is changed according to the genus of the society and moulded into a type, generally needed and approved by the social order, the society cannot perpetuate itself. This process of changing the behaviour of individuals starts very early, immediately right after their birth. Known as socialization, it 'is both a moulding and creating process, in which the group tries to bear upon the child, and in which the individual's thoughts, feelings and behaviour gradually and continually change and develop in accordance with the values set by the society.'³⁵

Society as Dewey has said, exists through a process of transmission quite as much as biological life. This transmission occurs by means of communication of habits of doing, thinking and feeling from the older to the younger.³⁶ This transmission is necessary to acquaint the child with what is desirable, followed and respected by the society so that he may have a frame of reference to judge his actions and try to conform to the accepted norms of the society. Thus, we see that in order to build up and maintain a society, not only do we need a change in the behaviour of a newly-born child, but also have to develop a sense of social adjustment among its members.

³⁵ Robert J. Havighurst and Bernice L. Neugarten, Society and Education, (Boston, Allyn and Bacon Inc., 1957) p.61

³⁶ John Dewey, op. cit. , p.3

Hence, taken from a functional point of view, the relationship of society and education may be analysed as follows:

- a) education as society in microcosm;
- b) education as an agency to change individuals' behaviour; and
- c) education as an agency to affect planned social control.

Education as Society in Microcosm

Loomis has said, " Since the schools are society's vehicles by which the prevailing culture is transmitted to the young, it follows that there can be no great and enduring divergence and inconsistency between the elements and processes that articulate the society and those that articulate the educational system."³⁷ This means that the educational system in vogue in a given situation represents the society and reflects what is held by it and what is rejected. 'The educational social system, more than any other sub-system, suggests the greater society in microcosm.'³⁸ Continuing with Loomis' argument, we may conclude that the factors essentially responsible for the constitution, building-up and maintenance of a society may be considered to be equally significant in relation to the

³⁷ Charles P. Loomis, Social Systems, (Princeton, N.J., D. Van Nostrand Company Inc. 1960) p.249

³⁸ *ibid* p.3

educational system of the same society. This implication of this conclusion will be discussed in the following section when the issue of relationship between the educational system and religion is taken up.³⁹

Education and the Change of Individual's Behaviour

One of the oldest controversies in the field of education is over the nature of education. There are thinkers who regard education as the transmission of the cultural heritage of the society to the individual; others consider it to be the development of the individual. But whatever the case may be, one thing is clear from all such discussions that education primarily aims at changing the individual. Whether we attempt at the growth and development of the individual child or try to give him the general culture of the society, what we fundamentally mean, is to change the person being given education according to the nature of our educational aims.

This necessity to educate the child, even in the most primitive sense, arises out of the fact that the older generation wants the children to conform to accepted patterns of behaviour. In other words they desire to see the younger generation respect and follow, and perhaps improve upon, what has largely been agreed to by the society. This is not only essential from society's point of view but also from the individual's. From biological

³⁹ infra p. 46

as well as psychological angles, the individual needs a change in his behaviour in order to survive in given environmental conditions. Adaptability of individual's behaviour to the environmental conditions is a pre-requisite for his successful action upon such conditions, which is in itself necessary to continue life-processes or in Dewey's words, 'processes of self-renewal.'⁴⁰ This is precisely the reason why Dewey considers education as necessity of life.

So far as the individual alone is concerned, change of his behaviour, envisaged in the education provided to him, may be directed towards the development of his rational self, as contend the essentialists like Hutchins⁴¹ or the development of his whole personality, as is pleaded by the realists.⁴² But whatever the case may be, we cannot ignore the fact that all educational programmes - formal and organised or informal and unorganised - are conditioned by the social needs of the individual. In fact, learning which forms a part of education, is itself a social need of the human child.⁴³ In order to become an adult, the child is continuously in need of socialization, which is done by a number of agencies and institutions, primarily intended to change the child. Whiting and Child observe on this point as follows:

⁴⁰ Dewey, op. cit., p.2

⁴¹ Christian O. Weber, Basic Philosophies of Education, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960) pp.35-90

⁴² ibid pp.159-238

⁴³ Wilber B. Brookover, A Sociology of Education, (New York, American Book Company, 1955) pp.3-22

In all societies, the helpless infant, getting his food by nursing at his mother's breast, and, digesting it, freely evacuating the waste products, exploring his genitals, biting and kicking at will, must be changed into a responsible adult, obeying the rules of his society.⁴⁴

And this is the minimum which is actually needed, desired and attempted at. The general process of socialization starting at the birth of the child, takes the form of education at a later stage, when the child is physically ready to receive it. Thus, through a consciously controlled process, the society tries to change the behaviour of the individual, and further the behaviour of the groups. Dewey observes in this connection:⁴⁵

On the one hand there is the contrast between the immaturity of the new-born members of the group - its future sole representatives - and the maturity of the adult members who possess the knowledge and custom of the group. On the other hand, there is the necessity that these **immature members** be not merely physically preserved in adequate numbers, they be initiated into the interests, purposes, information, skill and practices of the mature members: otherwise the group will cease its characteristic life. . . . Beings who are born not only unaware of, but quite indifferent to, the aims and habits of the social group **have** to be rendered cognizant of them and actively interested. Education and education alone spans the gap.

Thus we see that from the point of view of the

44. John W.M. Whiting and Irvin L. Child, Child Training and Personality: A Cross-cultural Study, (New Haven, Yales University Press, 1953) p.

45 Dewey, op. cit., p. 3

individual, the education seems to be a fundamental requirement of life in a community. It takes upon itself an important social function to perform, i.e., giving a social direction to the behaviour of individual members of the society.

Education as An Agency of Social Change

The definition of society, as given earlier,⁴⁶ implies the ever-changing nature of the society. With the change in physical environment and temporal conditions, society continues adjusting itself while maintaining its identity. The change is therefore an inevitable feature of social order. But the problem which is posed by the phenomenon of social change is, that there are certain forces operating in the society which try to maintain the basic structure of the social order. Thus there should be a clash, and it is, between these forces and the essentially changing nature of the society. One tends to preserve what has already been achieved; the other attempts to up-set the balance by affecting a change. Such a situation can, however, never be allowed to continue because it may lead to disastrous results in a society where such a clash is going on. But at the same time, it is also not possible to resolve this conflict just by suppressing the forces initiating a change in the society or those trying to preserve the essence of the social order. Hence,

⁴⁶ supra p.15

there arises the need for a planned social change in order to keep up the social equilibrium by maintaining a balance between the forces bringing about a social change and those trying to resist it. Durkheim points out in this connection:⁴⁷

Change always creates problems whatever the field may be but rapid change may result into such problems which may be detrimental to the very existence of the society and may lead to a stage where all the traditional controls lose their hold over the individual.

To avoid such a situation, planning is required which, according to Dow, relates to the problem of social control. Social control, he says, is that form of control which directs or governs the actions of the society or the group that compose that society.⁴⁸ Alice Miel is of the opinion that⁴⁹

instead of resisting change, it seems that people must go out to meet change. They must deliberately plan for and guide social change instead of accepting submissively the stream of 'endless unplanned change' which Beard laments. People must be helped to see that new ways and ideas can usually be made to work if they are thoroughly selected as the basis of group action and if enough attention is given to making them work.

Hence the necessity of planning for a social change in a society seems to be an imperative need. This function is performed by a number of agencies, namely, the family, the

⁴⁷ Emile Durkheim, op. cit. pp.246-57

⁴⁸ Grove Samuel Dow, Society and Its Problems, (New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1929) p.443

⁴⁹ Alice Miel, Changing the Curriculum: A Social Process, (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1946) p.19

peer group, the church, the school etc. Here we are only concerned with the school.

On the function of education as an agency to bring about social change or to plan for it, there seems to be difference of opinion. Brubacher has mentioned two major trends of thinking in this connection. There are those " who think that the school should line up with the forces of the status quo" and there are others who " think that the school should be in the van of social progress."⁵⁰ But this difference of opinion appears to be rather normative. In practice, we come across instances where education has actually been employed as a means of bringing about social change or planning for a controlled change in the society. We agree with Bernard⁵¹ in maintain~~ing~~ that

education is not itself so much an active social control process as it is the means whereby foundation is laid upon which constructive control may be built. education is the most fundamental and perhaps the most indirect of all social controls.

Even when we declare that education should be neutral to forces bringing about change in a society, we implicitly admit that education is an agency which is potentially capable of changing the social order. This was Aristotle's position when he declared that "the best laws, though ~~not~~ sanctioned by

⁵⁰ John S. Brubacher, Modern Philosophies of Education ; (New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.1950) p.215

⁵¹ L.L.Bernard, Social Control, (New York, Macmillan Company 1939) p.663

every citizen of the state, will be of no avail, unless the young are trained by habit and education in the spirit of the constitution. If the laws are democratic, democratically; oligarchically, if the laws are oligarchical."⁵² Napoleon is said to have recognized this fact when he remarked that "There cannot be a firmly established political state unless there is a teaching body with definitely recognized principles."⁵³ Giovanni Gentile⁵⁴ made it more explicit by saying that

the State's active and dynamic consciousness is a system of thought, of ideas, of interests to be satisfied, and of morality to be realized. Hence, the state is, as it ought to be, a teacher; it maintains and develops schools to promote this morality. In the school, the State comes to a consciousness of its real being.

Similarly, Lenin publicly expressed that " education divorced from life and politics is a lie and hypocrisy."⁵⁵

Hence it is clear that, despite normative declarations that education should remain aloof from politics and activities of the agencies bringing about change in the society, the fact is that it does play a definite role in this respect and this has duly been recognized by thinkers of both the afore-mentioned schools of thought.

⁵² Sidney Hook, Education for Modern Man, (New York, The Dial Press, 1946) p.32

⁵³ ibid

⁵⁴ ibid

⁵⁵ ibid

From the above discussion, it follows that education is a must for the society and has definite functions to perform. As to the individual, it enables him to assimilate the cultural heritage of his society and orientates his individual behaviour to social ends. So far as the society is concerned, education has two-fold function to perform: (1) to conserve what has been achieved, and (2) to develop new social patterns. This latter aspect of its social function has been described by Brown and Payne as creative and constructive.⁵⁶

Furthermore, we can conclude that as education is a means of maintaining as well as changing the society, it must emerge from the given social environment, instead of being imported from abroad. Also that through education, society passes on to the new generations its values and norms. The educational system, therefore, has to take cognizance of the question of values as well as the sources from which the values of a given society emerge.

C

EDUCATION AND RELIGION

As Brubacher⁵⁷ has pointed out, three different points of view are available in relation to religious and moral

⁵⁶ Francis J. Brown, Educational Sociology (New York, Prentice-Hall Inc., 1954) p.202

⁵⁷ Brubacher, op. cit. pp.292-93

education in public schools, namely, (1) secularism," which has no religious point of view at all although it has a theory of moral education; (2) humanism which is very close to secularism in principles, does not merely stop at a pre-occupation with moral education, as does secularism. Beside constructing a theory of moral education on social basis, the humanist " hunts for God in social relationships; in fact he conceives of God as great valuer of persons; (3) religious supernaturalism which is fully convinced of the existence of that which transcends human experience, and has a belief in God who is not only immanent but also transcendental, although it further recognizes the importance of human experience and man's role in nature.

In case of religious supernaturalism " the whole philosophy of religious and moral education centres round the relationship of God as creator and man as creature." Thus according to these thinkers, religious education becomes as an imperative need of the human child and therefore a necessary part of the curriculum.

Agreeing with Brubacher as to the existence of these schools of thought, we consider it necessary to make an observation at this stage. These schools of thought emerge on account of the fact that we tend to confuse two different

58 ibid

59 ibid

concepts, namely, religion and theology. The confusion between these two concepts has not only resulted in controversy on the issue of religion in education but has also adversely affected the very spirit of religion. The damage done by this confusion has very aptly been described by Syed Amir Ali as follows:⁶⁰

A Christian preacher [Professor Momerie] has pointed out with great force the distinction between religion and theology, and the evils which have followed in this church from the confusion of the two. What has happened in Christianity has happened in Islam. Practice has given way to the mockery of profession, ceremonialism has taken the place of earnest and faithful work - doing good to mankind for the sake of doing good, and for the love of God. Enthusiasm has died out, and devotion to God and his Prophet are meaningless words. The earnestness without which human existence is no better than that of the brute creation, earnestness in right-doing and right-making is absent. The Muslims of the present day have ignored the spirit in a hopeless love for the letter.

Hence while discussing the role of religion in education we have to guard against this confusion between religion and theology which is one form, of religious indoctrination, in addition to being a formalized statement of religious beliefs and practices, paving the way for an access to the mysterious threshold of religious experience.

It would, therefore, be not out of place here to refer to Bergson who has classified religions as 'static' and 'dynamic'. The former type is defined by him as " a defensive reaction of nature against what might be depressing for the individual and

⁶⁰ Syed Amir Ali, The Spirit of Islam, (London, Christophers, March 1923) p.182

dissolvent for the society, in the exercise of intelligence.⁶¹ He further says that "static religion, such as we find it, stands alone, attaches man to life and consequently the individual to society, by telling him tales on a par with those with which we lull children to sleep."⁶² In his discussion of static religion Bergson refers to rituals and practices, like prayers and sacrifices, and says that although these are essential for a religious person; they are not religion. He considers these rituals and similar "singularly repeated exercises" as necessary like those whose function ends by instilling into the body of the soldier the confidence he will need in the hour of danger. But according to him, when these exercises are taken to be the very soul and spirit of religion, religion becomes static. Because it strangulates religion instead of strengthening it.⁶³

Continuing with Bergson, we may argue that too much emphasis on the teaching of theology, not accompanied by the efforts to expose the students to the real spirit of religion, is destined to inculcate in them dyehard religious dogmatism and inflexibility accompanied by the most common evil of intolerance. It is admitted that theology is a necessary part of religious education as it tells us the rules and

⁶¹ Henry Bergson, The Two Sources of Morality and Religion, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (New York, Garden City, Doubleday & Company Inc., n.d.) p.205

⁶² ibid pp.210-11

⁶³ ibid p.201

regulations of 'religious drill' so necessary to prepare one for imbuing the spirit of religion. But if taken alone, it leads to only formal and apparent attainment of religious faith. Thus is created the problem of sectarianism which plays into the hands of secularists who contend that religion should not form a part of the curriculum.

But the situation is gradually changing. Even in the United States, there is witnessed a rising tendency to include religion in the schools. The concern of public schools officials regarding the place of religion is unequivocally enunciated in the Tenth Year Book of the [U.S.] Department of Superintendence of the National Educational Association.⁶⁴

Our society to-day awaits a new integration of knowledge, aspirations and human purposes which will take into account the findings of science, the theory of evolution, the fact of material abundance, and the growing power of labouring classes, as well as the influence of great spiritual leaders. Until such an integration is forthcoming, the present condition of moral chaos is likely to continue and the more fundamental problems of character education will defy solution. Whether this is the task of the church or some other agency, we cannot say to-day; but it would seem to be a task that is essentially religious in nature.

The exclusion of religion from education in the United States and a number of other countries of the world is mainly

⁶⁴William Clayton Bower, Church and State in Education, (Chicago, Ill., The University of Chicago Press, 1944) p.2

due to the fact that religion has been considered to be synonymous with sectarian theology allegedly leading to a number of problems. But now, as Bower has observed, " the social conditions that gave rise to sectarianism have changed, so that the grounds upon which it rested have to an increasing extent become anachronistic and unrealistic."⁶⁵ Thus there seems to be a growing need for the inclusion of religious teaching in the school programme. In the words of President F.D.Roosevelt of the United States,"We are concerned about the children who are out-side the reach of religious influences, and are denied help in attaining faith in the ordered universe and in the fatherhood of God."⁶⁶

We consider theology to be connected with the practice of religion insofar Islam is concerned.As we shall discuss in the next chapter, Islam does not provide for practising ecclesiasts or a class of priests, and therefore, every individual is entitled and responsible for his relations with the Creator.Furthermore, religion as such is distinguished from theology by the fact that religion, as per our definition, is a system providing a centripetal force to the group to struggle with the ultimate problems of life and a frame

65 ibid p.6

66 ibid p.2

of orientation as well as an object of devotion to the individual while theology is the knowledge of ways and means of working this system. Religion is an end while theology is a means leading to that end. Our view is that theology may be excluded from the school programme but religion cannot be. If a group in actual practice does not say prayer regularly or fast according to religious injunctions, it is no use teaching these things to the students. And if these practices are adhered to by the group in daily life, their inclusion in the curriculum becomes redundant. Of course, we never teach the children in school that they should drink water when they feel thirsty or take food when they are hungry. The inclusion of theology has always created problems, especially in a community with different creeds and more often when one type of theology is imposed on a group of students who do not believe in that type of theology. It is however unfortunate that theology has always been forced down the throats of the children under the name of religion, whenever such an occasion arises.

With this brief discussion on the necessity of making a distinction between theology and religion, we proceed to discuss briefly the relationship between religion and education.

It was said earlier in the present chapter that religion is the source of basic human relationships.⁶⁷ Society's values and norms spring from the religion it professes,⁶⁸ not necessarily

⁶⁷ supra pp.15-16

⁶⁸ supra p.14

leading to a belief in the existence of God or otherwise⁶⁹. Religion is the great generator of values for the society and directs its developmental movement, providing it with goals to achieve. Education, on the other hand, is a value-conditioned activity. The school seeks to cultivate selected values in the young by means of both the subject matter and the method that it employs in the program⁷⁰.

The relationship and religion therefore, emerges from the very nature of these two institutions. One is the source of Society's values; the other propagates, disseminates and maintains the value-system of the society. Education passes on to the new generations the values of the society and thus helps it perpetuate itself. While discussing the relationship existing between society and education, it was observed, as a corollary to Loomis' remarks about education as being 'society in microcosm'⁷¹, that the factors essentially responsible for the constitution, building up and maintenance of the society may be considered to be equally significant in relation to the educational system of that society. It has also been said that no society can continue to exist unless it has a commonly agreed upon code of social behaviour, clearly defining the extents of individual's rights and responsibilities. This

⁶⁹ supra pp.19-20

⁷⁰ John Childs, Education and Morals (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts Inc., 1950) p.16

⁷¹ supra p.32

involves the question of values and their emergence. Religion's main function in the society is to furnish this common set of values which every individual may respect and adore. Hence it has been described as the great generator of social values. As such, its importance in connection with the proper functioning of the society is evident. Therefore, if educational system of any society is the same society on a smaller scale, it has to give the same importance to religion which it holds in relation to the society itself. To ignore, neglect or exclude religion from education would therefore, amount to asserting that education has nothing to do with value-system of the society and is indifferent towards common orientation of the group. But this is not the case. While referring to two divisions on the social role of education, it was brought out that both conservatives and progressives, do agree on the point that education has to perform its social function by preserving the values of the society or by giving it a new set of values. Education has also been declared to be "a value-conditioned activity."⁷² Hence, if education has its social role to perform, it cannot afford to feel shy of religion and exclude it from its folds. After all education has to include everything which is available in the society. And if a society professes a religion, education has to acknowledge this fact. We wonder, if any society could

emerge, survive and continue to exist without a religion, be it communism or left-wing existentialism!

The result of leaving aside religion is clearly manifest in the United States, with growing sense of realization to rehabilitate religion in the field of education. And this is quite natural. When education becomes divorced from the source of values of the society, its efforts to inculcate in the new generation a sense of values seems to be an activity without any goal to achieve or target to hit.

Childs asserts that " the moral interest pervades the entire educational programme. It is involved whenever a significant choice has to be made between a better and a worse in the nurture of the young. The moral factor appears whenever the school, or the individual teacher or supervisor, is for certain things and against certain things."⁷³ Continuing with this argument, we can say that it is religion, as defined earlier,⁷⁴ which is the frame of reference whenever a moral judgement is involved. If, therefore, moral interest is to pervade the entire educational programme, religion has to be made the foundation on which educational structure is to be built. It has to pervade the whole system. To include some courses of theology in the programme, is not what we mean by including religion in education.

⁷³ John L. Child op. cit. p.17

⁷⁴ supra pp. 16 and 45

What we really aim at is that younger generations have to be guided in living their religion so that they may acquire for them 'an object of devotion' and a frame of reference for the future orientation of their lives. It is what Bergson calls 'dynamic religion' and Huxley names as 'perennial philosophy' that we refer to. Religious education, therefore, does not mean theological indoctrination but as the International Council of Religious Education has declared, it is "interpreted in terms of fundamental values involved in divine-human relations and is in no sense construed as indoctrination in some sect or creed but rather as the creative development of attitudes and values."⁷⁵

Summing up our argument in the preceding pages, we outline our position that without religion, no society can ever survive. Furthermore, in order to survive and develop, society has to evolve a system through which it may initiate its new generations into values and norms already determined by it. This system is called education without which no society can continue as such. Religion and education, by virtue of their functions, are closely inter-related and reciprocated. They both help society to exist and in their efforts to achieve this end, they need each other's hand. Religion without education becomes enslavement to dogma and education without religion seems like a space-ship having lost its contact with the earth.

⁷⁵ Bower, op.cit. pp.8-9

CHAPTER III

ISLAM AS RELIGION

In the preceding chapter, we discussed the relationship between society, religion and education, wherein we attempted to show that they are very closely related and interlinked. It was also said that religion, being the main source of society's values, must be included in the general framework of the educational system planned for a given society. Hence, our contention that developing Muslim societies have to give an Islamic bias to their educational programmes. This therefore, necessitates a brief analysis of Islamic faith, especially as it stands in relation to human society.

Basic Tenets of Islam

The corner stone of Islamic belief is the declaration denying the existence of any god but Allah - a kind of monotheism, which, as Neuman¹ has said, is "pure and unblemished." This belief in the one-ness of God is the pivot of Islam.

¹ Abraham A. Neuman, "Judaism", The Great Religions of the Modern World, ed. Edward J. Jurji, (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1947) p.229

" Islam as defined by the Koran [sic] , means submission to the Supreme Being and compliance with His laws, which constitute Nature² Emerging from this belief in the one-ness of God, are beliefs in the prophets, including those of Judio-Christian traditions, in the finality of prophethood lying with the Prophet of Islam; in the Ma'âd or the Day of Judgement and life hereafter. To these three beliefs, unanimously accepted by all Muslims, the Shi'ites add two more, namely, the Imâmat³ and the 'Adl⁴.

²Mohd Elias Burney, Islam - Message of the Quran (Hyderâbâd Dn., Baitus Salâm, 1953) p.9

³It refers to the continuation of the spiritual and temporal heritage of the Prophet through 'Ali and his descendants. Imâmat, according to the Shi'ite tradition, descends by divine appointment in the apostolical line. Muhammad Raḍa Muzaffar observes in his treatise 'Aqâid-ush-Shi'ah (An-Najaf, Al-Matba'ah Al-Haidariyyah 1954):

نعتقد ان الامامة اصل من اصول الدين . لا يتم الايمان الا بالاعتقاد بها فلا بد ان يكون في كل عصر امام هاد يخلف النبي في وظائفه من هداية البشر وارشادهم الى ما فيه الصلاح والسعادة في النشاطين وله ما للنبي من الولاية العامة على الناس لتدبير شؤنهم ومصالحهم واقامة العدل بينهم ورفع الظلم والعدوان من بينهم فالامانة استمرار للنبوته .

⁴ It denotes a belief in the essential righteousness and justice of God. It is in line with the Mu'tazilite doctrine as against the Ash'arite, which is generally adhered to by non-Shi'ites. For further details, see

Muhammad Al-Kurrami, Usûl-ud-Dîn-al-Islamî (Irân, Qumm, 1369 A.H.) pp.20-26

Ahmad Amfn, Zuhr-ul-Islam IV (Cairo, Maktabah An-Nahdah Al-Misriyyah 1955) pp.81, 118-19

The principle on which the Islamic system is founded comprises (1) a belief in the one-ness, immateriality, absolute power, mercy and supreme compassionateness of the Creator; and (2) charity and brotherhood among man-kind ;(3) subjugation of passions;and (4) the out-pouring of a grateful heart to the Giver of all good;and accountability of human actions in another existence.

God in Islam

God in Islam is neither the manifestation of magnified human attributes nor an abstract philosophical concept. It is rather an all-embracing power, unique and one, omni-present, indivisible, omniscient and just. He is the Creator and ultimate cause of all creation, Forgiver of man's infirmities and iniquities- His pervasive Ultimate reality, according to a Quranic simile, being a cosmic light.⁵

God is the Light
Of the heavens and the earth.
The parable of His Light
Is as if there were a Niche
And within it a Lamp:
The Lamp enclosed in Glass:
The Glas as it were
A brilliant Star:
Lit from a blessed Tree,
An Olive, neither of the East
Nor of the West,
Whose oil is well-nigh
Luminous,
Though fire scarce touched it:
Light upon Light,
God doth guide whom He will
To His Light:
God doth set forth Parables for men:
And God doth know all things.

⁵ The Qurân , XXIV, 35

The Quran gives a summary of what is the Islamic conception of God in a chapter entitled 'Ikhlâs'. According to these verses, God is (1) one; (2) Eternal and Infinite ; and (3) Absolute.⁶ Reading this chapter alongwith the opening one, we may conclude that God is One, has created the worlds, maintains them and rules; to Him all human beings owe their existence and to Him must they submit themselves. He alone is to be adored and prayed to and supplicated. Also, God being our Judge and Ruler, we have to solicit guidance of Him. God in Islam is beyond any limitation and is Pure and Absolute Power, transcending the limits of Time and Space, which are but His creations.

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, in one of his supplications , addresses Him as " the One who guides to Himself through His own Self; the One who has abstracted Himself from any similarity with His creatures."⁷

There seems to be no difference of opinion among the various schools of Muslim Theology as to the One-ness of God. As well there is an agreement on the point that worship is alone for God - Allah. To violate this One-ness of the Creator, in theory or in practice, is the most unpardonable sin in the Islamic code. The Muslims have always been very sensitive to this theoretical or practical shirk, and many a split among the Muslims owe their origin to difference of interpretation

⁶ ibid CXII

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يا من دل على ذاته بذاته وتنزه عن مجانسة مخلوقاته

of the notion of tawhīd or one-ness of God.⁸ There is dis-agreement, however, on minor issues. The extremist group takes the notion too literally. The Wahhâbis, for instance, consider it a negation of the principle of tawhīd to pay a visit to the shrines of saintly persons and offer one's supplications there, invoking their names. But the fact is that no group of Muslims ever budges an inch from their position in respect of the principle of tawhīd and prayer is always made to Him alone.⁹

⁸ For details, see
Muhammad Rada al-Muzaffar, op. cit. pp.11-12
'Affif 'Abdul Fattah Tabbarah, Rûh-ud-Dīn-al-Islâmi
(Beirut, 1962) p.15
Muhammad al-Kurrami, Uṣūl-ud-Dīn-al-Islâmi (Iran, Qumm
1269 A.H.) pp.9-19
Edward J. Jurji, op. cit., pp.178-223

⁹ Reference may be made to Al-Muzaffar, op. cit., who observes in connection with visiting the shrines of Imâms:

وفي الدعاء المأثور الذي يدعوه الزائر بعد هذه الصلاة ما يفهم الزائر
ان صلاته وعمله انما هو لله وحده وانه لا يعبد سواه وليست الزيارة الا نوع
التقرب اليه تعالى اذ يقول : اللهم لك صليت ولك ركعت ولك سجدت
وحدك لا شريك لك لانه لا تكون الصلاة والركوع والسجود الا لك لانك انت
الله لا اله الا انت

(Trans.) And in the supplication which the pilgrim makes after his prayers, what he thinks is that his prayer and his worshipping is for God and God alone and this visit to the shrine is but a kind of approaching God. (This is clear) when he says: 'O God! I have prayed for You; I have knelt and prostrated only to You, the One and without any partner-no prayer, kneeling, and prostration can be except for You - as You are Allah and there is no God but You.

Serious controversy among Muslims appears to be on the issue of God's Attributes. The main point of disagreement in this connection is as to whether God has attributes in the sense that they are external to His Self as human attributes are or they are one with Him. Athna 'Ashari group of the Shi'ites as well as the Mu'tazilites refuse to admit independent existence of any of God's Attributes. 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib said in one of his addresses:¹⁰

اول الدين معرفته وكمال معرفته التصديق به وكمال التصديق به توحيدہ
وتوحيدہ الاخلاص له وكمال الاخلاص له نفي الصفات عنه و لشهادہ كل صفة
انها غير موصوف او شهادة كل موصوف انه غير الصفة : فمن وصف الله سبحانه
فقد قرنه ومن قرنه فقد ثناه ومن ثناه فقد جزأه ومن جزأه فقد جهله ومن جهله
فقد اشار اليه ومن أشار اليه فقد حده ومن حده فقد عدہ ومن قال فيم ؟
فقد ضمنه ومن قلل علام ؟ فقد أخلى منه - كائن لا عن حدث موجود لا عن
عدم و مع كل شئ لا بمقارنة وغير كل شئ لا بمزايلة فاعل لا بمعنى الحركات
والاله —

The foremost requirement of religion is to know Him. And the perfection of this knowledge of Him is to admit a belief in His existence, the perfection of which is tawhîd (One-ness of God). And perfection of tawhîd is absolute devotion to Him. And the prime of this devotion to Him is a complete denial of His Attributes. For any kind of description connotes that the attribute is different from its possessor and referring to any person as having attributes means that he is different from the attributes. Hence, he who described God, compared Him. And one who compared Him admitted of His having His double; and when this is admitted, it follows that He has parts. And he who admitted of Him as having parts, expressed his complete ignorance of Him and thus pointed towards Him. And he who pointed towards Him, delimited Him. And he who did this, counted Him. And He who said 'why?', attached Him to something else; he who said 'what for?', (by saying this, he by implication) alienated himself

¹⁰ 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, Nahj-ul-Balâghah Vol. I, (Cairo, Matba'ah al-Istiqlâmah, n.d.) pp. 7-8

from Him. He is but not that He became; He exists but not out of non-existence; He is with everything but without being in comparison to it; He is apart of everything but not in the sense of being dispossessed of it; He is the Doer but not involving any sense of motion or equipment. . . .

Speaking about the Mu'tazilites, Fâkhûri and Jurr have observed:¹¹

ومن المستلزمات التوحيد عندهم نفي الصفات عن الله وليس مقصود بها صفات السلبية مثل قولهم ليس كمثل شيء ولا الصفات السلبية معا والايجابية لفظا مثل قوله تعالى " قتل هو الله احد " بل المقصود بها الصفات الايجابية لفظا ومعنا مثل العلم والارادة والكلام وهنا يجدر بنا توضيح رأيهم في هذا الموضوع الخطير وتحليله ،
لم ينكر المعتزلة الصفات . . . لكنهم ينكرون كونها قديمة وكونها زائدة على الذات . . .

And among the pre-requisites of tawhîd, in their view, is to deny description of Him, but this does not include the negative attributes (sifât-us-salabiyyah) as when they say, "There is no one like Him"; nor does it include the type of description which is negative in meanings but positive in words, like His saying, "Say, He is God, the One and the Only". In fact, it refers to that type of description which is positive both in words as well as meanings, knowledge, will and speech. And here we have to explain their position in this respect and give reasons thereto.

The Mu'tazilites never denied the attributes. . . . but they do deny that they are eternal (qadîm) and additional to his Self.

Similarly, summing up Shi'ites position, Al-Muzaffar states:¹²

ونعقد ان صفاته تعالى الثبوتية الحقيقية الكمالية التي تسمى بصفات الجمال والكمال " كالعلم والقدرة والغنى والارادة والحيات هي كلها عين ذاته ليست صفات زائدة عليها وليس وجودها الا وجود الذات . . .
واما الصفات السلبية التي تسمى بصفات الجلال فهي ترجع جميعها الى

¹¹ Hanna-al-Fâkhûri and Khalîl al-Jurr, Tarfkh-ul-Falsafat-al-'Arabiyyah (Beirut, Dâr-ul-Ma'ârif, 1957) pp.145-46

¹² Muḥammad Rada al-Muzaffar, op. cit. p.14

سلب واحد هو سلب الامكان عنه فان سلب الامكان لازمة بل معناه سلب
الجسمية والصورة والحركة والسكون والثقل والخفة وما الى ذلك بل سلب
كل نقص والله تعالى واحد من جميع الجهات لا تكثر في ذاته
المقدسة ولا تركيب في حقيقة الواحد الصمد .

(Trans.) We believe that those attributes, which are positive, refer to His Essence and Perfection and are known as Attributes of Beauty and Perfection, like knowledge, power, richness, will and life are, all of them, one with His Self and do not have any separate existence from His Self. . . . And as to the negative attributes, which are known as Attributes of Majesty and Splendour (al-Jalâl), they all refer to negation of one thing and that is negation of possibility in God. It is because negation of possibility in God, entails, nay really means, the negation of body, form, motion, inertia, weight, light-ness and so on and so forth, but as well negation of all types of imperfection. God, Almighty is One in every respect; there is neither multiplicity nor composition in His Eternal Absolute Self.

As against the position taken by the Mu'tazilites and Shi'ites, the Sunnites are one with Ash'arites¹³, who admit the existence of God's Attributes apart and in addition to His Self (dhât). Farrûkh says¹⁴

يرى أهل السنة والجماعة أن الله تعالى ذات متصفه بصفات قديمة زائدة
على الذات (. . . .) وأهل السنة والجماعة يرون أن الله متصف بالصفات
المثلى ، فإنه سمي نفسه بأسماء الحسنى وهي تسعة وتسعون اسما منها
واحد يدل على ذاته هو (الله) ثم ثمانية وتسعون اسما يمثل كل اسم
منها صفة تشارك صفات البشر في اللفظ وتخالفها في الدرجة أحيانا وفي
النوع أحيانا أخرى ولا بد عند أهل السنة والجماعة (وعند الأشعرية)
من وصف الله حتى نعرف الله

¹³As a matter of fact there is no difference between the Ash'arites and Sunnites. This is supported by Umar Farrûkh who observes:

. وأصبح في العالم الاسلامي مذهب كلامي جديد اسمه المذهب الأشعري
وهو في الحقيقة اسم جديد لمذهب أهل السنة والجماعة

¹⁴Umar Farrûkh, Tarîkh-al-Fikr-al-'Arabi (Beirut, Al-Maktab at-Tijâri-lit-Tabâ'ah Wan-Nashr, 1962) pp.183-232.

(Trans.) The Sunnites believe that God's Self has Eternal Attributes in addition to His Self.(. . .) The Sunnites hold that God has Ideal Attribute. This is why He calls Himself with Good Names which are ninety nine. One of them refers to His Self (dhât) and the remaining ninety eight names represent Attributes, which compare to human attributes in letters but are different from them, sometimes in degree and sometimes in kind. . . . And hence according to the Sunnites (and Ash'arites too) one has to describe God in order to know Him.

Thus, except this difference of opinion, which, in fact, arises from the interpretations of a number of Qurânic¹⁵ verses, there exists a perfect agreement among the Muslims on the issue of the One-ness of God. It is this basic importance of the belief that has led to numerous, keen and minute interpretations in different ages, which were responsible for above-mentioned controversy. Insofar as the original teachings of Islam are concerned, the Qurân¹⁶ read with The Traditions¹⁷ is more than explicit on the point.

Prophethood¹⁸

It denotes that God appointed a number of saintly persons to act as His messengers to the world in order to guide humanity to the right path and help them maintain justice and equality and equity among themselves. The last

¹⁵ The Qurân, LXXV, 22-23

¹⁶ ibid II, 158-60; XII, 13-15, XVI, 3.21; II, 255; VII, 54; I VI, 12; VI, 59-60, 97, 104; VII, 158, XXIII, 94; LXVII, 23-24; XL 1-2 XXVII, 62, XIII, 9-11, LXVII, 4.

¹⁷ See Traditions quoted by Muhammad al-Kurrami op.cit. Chapter on 'AN-NABUWWAH'

¹⁸ "Nabî", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, eds. H.A.R. Gibb and J.H. Kramers, (New York, Cornell University Press) pp.427-28

among these Prophets is the Prophet of Islam, with whom this line ceased to continue. It is obligatory on every Muslim to believe in all of them and also in the discontinuation of Prophethood with the Prophet of Islam, who has finalized it and sealed it.¹⁹ Again there is no disagreement on this point among the Muslims.²⁰

The Shi'ites, however, differ in their belief in the infallibility of all the Prophets; they are; (they to be) immune from any kind of sin or mistake. This belief is known as 'Ismah' which has been described by Al-Muzaffar as follows:²¹

والعصمة : هي التنزه عن الذنوب والمعاصي صفاتها وكبائرها
وعن الخطأ والنسيان وان يمتنع عقلاً على النبي ان يصدر منه ذلك
بل يجب ان يكون منزلها حتى عما ينافي المروة كالتبذل بين
الناس

Thus according to this citation, 'Ismah' connotes that the Prophets are immune from every kind of sin or violation of any of God's injunctions, major or minor; from every kind of mistake or forgetfulness. The reason, he asserts, commands that the Prophet should be like this.

The argument put forth by the Shi'ites in support

¹⁹ Thus he is known as Khâtam-un-Nabiiyfn.

²⁰ Muhammad Radâ al-Muzaffar, op. cit. pp.24-31

Umar Farrûkh, op. cit. pp.114-15

'Abdul Fattâh Tabbârah oppcit. pp. 126-30

²¹ Muhammad Radâ al-Muzaffar op.cit. p.30

of their position is precisely as this:if we admit that a Prophet can commit sin or is subject to forgetfulness, then it follows that on such occasions he is not capable of guiding others and thus should not be followed; but we cannot possibly know such occasions; thus it would be contrary to God's Justice to punish us for such acts which would result from our following those orders of the Prophet which he gave when he was himself subject to and under the influence of human weaknesses and follies.²²

Similarly, the Shi'ites also hold that a Prophet is born as Prophet and not ordained as such later in his life. They refer to the Qurân in support of their position, wherein Jesus has been mentioned as Prophet although he was just an infant at that time; similar is the mention of John (Yahyâ).

O Yahyâ! Take hold/ ^{of} the Book with might:

And We gave him Wisdom
Even a young child.²³

.....
.....
He said:"I am indeed a servant of God.
He has given me Book and made me a Prophet.²⁴

Ma'ad - Day of Judgement

The third major belief in Islam relates to admittance in the life after death and that a day is doomed to come when

²²For further details see
Muhammad Jawwâd al-Mughniyyah, Ma'âlim-ul-Falsafat-al-Islâmiyyah (Beirut, Dâr-ul-'Ilm Lil Malâ'ifn,1960) pp.175-77, 222.

²³ The Qurân XIX,12

²⁴ ibid XIX,30

all creatures will stand before their Creator who will give verdict on the good or evil deeds of His creatures during their worldly life. There is no disagreement on this issue among the different sects of Muslim.²⁵ Opinions, however, differ as to the details. The main points of controversy are (1) whether human beings rise on the Day of Judgement in the physical sense of the word or otherwise; (2) doctrine of Raj'ah²⁶ or Return; and (3) whether human beings would be able to see their God face to face in the physical sense of the word on the Day of Judgement. General body of the Muslims believe that the dead will rise on the Day of Judgement both in the physical as well as spiritual senses. On this Al-Mughniyyah sums up the positions taken by various groups as follows:²⁷

The Unbelievers (malâhidah) and Naturalists say: There is no call, neither for the spirits nor for the bodies, after the death, because he who dies, is lost.

And the philosophers said: resurrection is for spirits alone without the bodies, because the body is destroyed in form as well as matter and its return is not possible; but the spirit is simple and rarefied atom (jowhar), thus there is no possibility of its destruction.

And a group of Scholastics and Jurists said: the resurrection is for bodies alone, without the spirit. Because the spirit in their view is rarefied body which permeates the material body like fire in the wood, water

²⁵ 'Umar Farrûkh, op.cit., pp.116-17
Muhammad Radâ al-Muzaffar, op.cit. pp.110-14

²⁶ Held by Shi'ites, it means that at the time of the appearance of Imâm Al-Mehdi, the dead will come to life once again as they originally were and the oppressed in this world will given a chance to take revenge from the oppressors. But this is not treated as Usûl-ud-Dîn. See comments of Al-Mughniyyah on H. Massé, L'Islam, trans. Bahîj Sha'bân (Beirut, 'Uwaidât, 1960) p.228

²⁷ Muhammad Jawwâd al-Mughniyyah, op. cit. pp.210-11

in vegetation and oil in olives.

Many among the Scholastics and others, Ash'arite like Al-Ghazâlî, Mu'tazilites like Al-Ka'kabi and Imâmites like At-Tûsi, said: the resurrection is for body alongwith soul. Afterwards they differ with one another; some say that the body will be resurrected as it is in this world; others hold that resurrection is for a body similar to this body but not exactly the same.

These are the three basic beliefs which constitute the Islamic faith. Anybody declaring to believe in these basic points, is said to have accepted the Islamic faith and no person has any authority, whatsoever, to challenge or question his status as a Muslim.

The Shi'ite sect, however, adds two more to these basic tenets, namely the Imâmat and the 'Adl - Essential Justice of God. The latter also implies the essential nature of social justice. It means that God is Just and therefore cannot be said to have any relation with an act which amounts to injustice or evil.²⁸ Furthermore, it implies that the punishment or rewards given by God are not arbitrary. This is also endorsed by the Mu'tazilites who were the most ardent supporters of this idea.²⁹

But the Shi'ites do not hold that any person professing a belief in the first three principles and not accepting the latter two falls short of the definition of a Muslim. However, in order to become a Shi'ite, it is necessary to accept

²⁸ Muhammad Radâ al-Muzaffar, op.cit. p.16

²⁹ Kamâl al-Yâziji, Ma'alim-ul-Fikr-al-Arabî, Beirut, Dar-ul-'Ilm, 1961) p.156

the latter two also.³⁰

Islam and Society

Islam like Christianity is a social religion in the sense that it does not consider an individual as an isolated living being but treats him as a part of a bigger whole - society. All the injunction in Islam, therefore, envisage to accomplish, not only individual salvation but also the social progress through establishing a dual relationship between man and God and Man and Man. Negligence of either of these aspects is strongly condemned. Islam does not allow any Muslim to seek his individual salvation through cutting off his links with society and ignoring his social obligations. It is a religion practised in community and by community. Hence, to appreciate Islam's attitude towards society, we have to take into account both of these relationships.³¹

Man-God Relationship

God in Islam as has been said earlier, is Supreme Being and man is the best of His creation, at whose disposal has been placed everything else. He has been endowed with powers which no other creature has and has been given the

³⁰ See Al-Mughniyyah's note on Henry Massé's text op. cit. p.228

³¹ Muhammad Asad, Islam - At the Crossroads (Lahore, Arafat Publications, 1955) pp.10-19

capacity to think, to observe and to choose his path.³²

Man's relationship with his Creator is direct and without any mediary. He is at liberty to call his God if he likes and whenever he likes. To have communion with Him, man does not have to seek the help or permission of any other person like him. The sole purpose of creation as the Qurân says "is that man should worship God."³³ This worship is to enable man to attain a state of 'taqwa', the easiest way to achieve which, according to a Quranic verse, is to be just. This is to be attained at individual level.

This is why " the concept of worship in Islam is different from that in any other religion. Here it is not restricted to the purely devotional practices, for example daily prayers or fasting, but extends over the whole of man's practical life as well. If the object of our life as a whole is to be the worship of God, we necessarily must regard this life, in the totality of all its aspects, as one complex moral responsibility. Thus all our actions, even the seemingly trivial ones, must be performed as acts of worship: that is, performed consciously as constituting a part of God's universal plan."³⁴ Thus, in every action, man has to keep in consideration the fact that he has a Creator, who is his Judge and will give him reward or punishment according to the nature of his action.

³² The Qurân , LXXVI, 2-3

³³ ibid LI, 56

³⁴ Muhammad Asad, op. cit. p.17

This awareness of being in undisrupted audience with God - Omniscient, Omnipresent, Absolute Power - orientates man's actions towards Him and His Pleasure. Every act performed with this orientation becomes worship ('Ibâdah) in Islam.³⁵ This is why in Traditions, the acquisition of knowledge, fighting to defend oneself, earning one's livelihood, doing one's job honestly, taking care of one's family and similar actions are sometimes called as 'Ibadah. The Prophet is reported to have said, after 'Ali had defeated and killed 'Amr ibn 'Abd Wadd in the Battle of the Ditch, that 'Ali's action during the Battle of the Ditch was superior to the 'Ibadah of both the worlds.

Hence, the question of motive takes an important place in Islamic system. We can deceive our fellow men by our apparent action but God is above these human weakness of being deceived and wrongly impressed and therefore knows what is the real motive behind one's action. We cannot deceive Him. It is, therefore, our motive which decides the quality of our action. The principle operating behind the Shi'ite notion of Taqiyyah is precisely the question of motive. A man remains Muslim, if he in the heart of heart believes in Islam, even if he renounces his faith under

³⁵ In Arabic, we come across three words, namely Du'â (supplication) Salât (prayer) and 'Ibâdah (worship). The last word is a derivative of 'Abâ (slave, servant). Hence, 'Ibadah is the expression of one's admission of being a slave or servant of God.

compulsion or threat of injury. This disguise is not a lie because God knows the motive of the person practising it.³⁶

A clue to God's dealings with men, as Jurji has stated, "is offered in the formula prefacing every sūra (Koranic Chapter) :'. . . .God the Merciful, The Compassionate,' handed down from South Arabian antiquity but to glow with a new incandescence. Before His Might and Righteousness, man stands destitute and without excuse. God is the Forgiver of man's infirmities and inequities."³⁷ With this concept of God in mind, a Muslim is required to present himself before his Creator personally, whether alone or in congregation, in order to seek His guidance and invoke His mercy, five times a day. This formal prayer is not only a device to satisfy man's inherent need to submit to some one and worship him but also establishes a direct relationship between the Creator and the created. In order to offer his prayer, a Muslim does not need the services of a priest. In case of congregational prayers, the Imām functions as a link between the participating persons and gives an air of discipline to the worship. But as to the actual homage-paying is concerned, he has nothing to do; participating individual

³⁶ For details see R. Strothmann, "Taqiyyah (Takiya)", Encyclopaedia of Islam 1st Ed.

Strothmann quotes Tabarī (Tafsīr) to have observed in comments to the Qurān XVI, 106; "If any one is compelled and professed unbelief with his tongue, while his heart contradicts him, to escape his enemies, no blame falls on him, because God takes His servants as their hearts believe."

³⁷ Edward J. Jurji, Great Religions of the Modern World, (Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1947) p.188

has himself to do what is required of him or what he needs to say or seek."Perhaps, the most gracious thing ever said about Muslim prayer is that it is an intimate converse (munâjâh) with God. A creative force in Islam, it has fostered a feeling of equality among the believers, mitigating the rankling sense of race-superiority and caste and opening a new inlet for the entry of mystical experience into the Muslim heart."³⁸

The form of formal prayer in Islam very aptly reflects the nature of Islam as a religion. When the individual joins a congregational prayer, he enters into a simultaneous dual relationship. On the one hand, he feels himself in the presence of his Creator as an individual person, directly responsible to Him for his action. But on the other, he is also aware of the fact that he is a member of a community and has to abide by the discipline of this community and also to follow the commands of the leader. Another point, which is worth mentioning here, is Islam lays great emphasis on social relationship as is evident from the congregational prayer. On the one hand, the believers are consistently reminded of the fact that they should offer their prayers with complete devotion and full attention, forgetting everything else. But at the same time, it is also binding on them to be fully aware of the needs of the congregation. Thus social aspect of man's life is so important in Islam that even during prayers, the believers are not allowed to forget it.

The direct relationship with God has led to an important

³⁸ ibid p.187

feature of this religion, i.e. the absence of any form of ecclesia. Syed Amir Ali says:³⁹

The Islam of Muhammad recognises no caste of priesthood, allows no monopoly of spiritual knowledge or special holiness to intervene between man and his God. Each soul rises to its Creator without the intervention of priest or hierophant. No sacrifice, no ceremonial, invented by vested interests, is needed to bring the anxious heart nearer to its Comforter. Each human is his own priest; in the Islam of Muhammad no one is higher than the other.

Another evidence to this effect is provided by Arnold. Sheikh-ul-Islam of Constantinople, when he was asked by Mr. Schumman of Hanover how to become a Muslim, wrote him in a letter:⁴⁰

... we ought to call your attention to the fact that your conversion to Islam is not subordinated to our consent, for Islam does not admit of any intermediary, like clergy, between God and His servants. Our duty consists only in teaching the religious truths. Consequently, conversion to Islam demands no religious formality and depends upon the authorisation of no one. It is sufficient to believe and proclaim one's belief. . . . If, as you promise in your letter, you make this profession of faith, that is to say, you declare that there is only one God and Muhammad is His Prophet, you become a Musalman without having need of our acceptance; . . .

Commenting on this letter and absence of any ecclesia in Islam, Arnold says:⁴¹

In the Musalman religion, where there is no clergy, such obligations have no place. The infant is born a

³⁹ Syed Amir Ali, op.cit. p.165

⁴⁰ T.W. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, (Lahore, Shirkat-é-Qualam, 1956) pp.455-56

⁴¹ ibid p457

Musalman, and his father or the chief of the family, gives him a name. When they wish to contract a marriage, the man and the woman or their agents make the contract in the presence of two witnesses; the contracting parties only ones interested and others cannot intervene or take part.

A Muslim prays all alone in any place which suits his convenience, and to merit the remission of his sins, he goes directly to God. He does not confess himself to others, nor ought he to do so. At his death, the Musalman inhabitants of the town are obliged to put him in a coffin and bury him. Any Musalman can do this; the presence of a religious chief is not necessary.

In a word, in all religious acts there is no intermediary between God and His servants. It is necessary to learn the Will of God, revealed by the Prophet, and to act in Conformity with it.

It is the last sentence of the above citation which calls for attention. To learn the Will of God and to act in conformity with it, is what Islam aims at. This cannot be achieved by proxy; one has to do it himself if he claims, or wishes to claim to be a Muslim. This aspect of God-Man relationship is rather important from our point of view as we will discuss in the following pages. At this stage it may suffice to say that this type of relationship and absence of any ecclesia in Islam leads to one important social consequence. There is no provision for the training of a class of scholars to act as religious preceptors. Hence, as will be taken up later on, to be well instructed in religion is a fundamental tenet of Islamic education.

Social Relationship in Islam

As has been said, Islam is a social religion and does

not allow its followers to indulge in any activity leading to social disintegration, including renunciation and asceticism. Society provides the acid test of man's behaviour as a Muslim. Islam requires of its followers to live a full-blooded but pious and righteous life, enjoying the worldly goods as ordained by their Creator. A study of the life of the Prophet, his noble companions and members of his family make this crystal clear. They did not only believe in the theory but actually lived it. The same is required of every Muslim. He is not only to believe but to act - belief in Islamic system is synonymous with action according to it. This is why there are injunctions in the Quran as well as the Traditions relating to different spheres of man's individual and social life.⁴²

Muslims " believe that Islam, unlike other religions, is not only a spiritual attitude of mind but a self-sufficing orbit of culture and social system of clearly defined features."⁴³ To say that one may believe in the cardinal principles of Islam and may not accept it as a social programme would be a contradiction in terms.

The most important feature of social relationship as presented and advocated by Islam is the place it gives to man,

⁴² Keeping in view the conditions of the pre-Islamic Arabia, it seems natural that Islam should have emphasised on action, in order to discipline the lives of the pagan Arabs, because merely accepting the theory would not have had much effect on them. This is quite justified when we follow the historical developments after the death of the Prophet as to how during the Umayyide rule the Arabs tried to relapse to their pagan practices.

⁴³ Muhammad Asad, op.cit. p.9

the individual and determine his rights and responsibilities in a social setting. The emphasis given on Huqûq-ul-'Ibâd (rights of the people) side by side with Huqûq-Ullah (rights of God) is quite evident from Traditions. Ās'Umar Farrûkh⁴⁴ has said, "Islam does not differentiate between faith and morals. Truthfulness, obedience to parents, kindness and charity towards the needy and the poor, refraining from any harm to the people, cleanliness, inviting the people to the good and asking them to avoid the evil and being just in every affair are treated in Islam as a kind of worship...." Also ordaining loyalty to the social order and work for its betterment is a part of Islamic faith. On the day of Judgement, account will be taken not only of the Muslim's performance of religious practices but also man's relations with his fellow-beings will constitute an important factor in his judgement.

According to Muhammad Rada al-Muzaffar⁴⁵, one of the most important and happy duties towards which Islam calls forth its followers, is the brotherly relations among Muslims. Al-Muzaffar has also referred to a talk between Imam Ja'far Sâdiq and Mu'allâ on the subject, wherein the Imâm outlined the duties of a Muslim towards another Muslim. This talk and many other similar discourses⁴⁶, clearly indicate the

⁴⁴ Umar Farrûkh, op.cit. p.118

⁴⁵ Muhammad Rada al-Muzaffar, op.cit. pp.105-108

⁴⁶ Muhammad al-Kurramf, op.cit. pp.4-40,77-81,103-104,
117-134

the importance which Islam attaches to social relations. These cannot be established however, unless, the Muslims accept Islam not only as a matter of faith but also as a social programme, governing their lives according to the will of God. Amir Ali observes on this point⁴⁷:

Our relations with our Creator are matters of conscience; our relations with our fellow-beings must be matters of positive rules; and what higher sanction - to use a legal expression - can be attached to the enforcement of relative duties of man to man than the sanction of religion. Religion is not to be regarded as a subject for unctuous declamations by 'select preachers', or as some strange theory for the peculiar gratification of dreamy minds. Religion ought to mean the rule of life; its chief object ought to be the elevation of humanity towards that perfection which is the end of our existence. The religion, therefore, which places on a systematic basis the fundamental principles of morality, regulating social obligations and human duties, which brings us nearer and nearer, by its compatibility with the highest development of intellect, to the All-Perfect - that religion, we say, has the greatest claim to our consideration and respect. It is the distinctive characteristics of Islam, as taught by Muhammad, that it combines within itself the grandest and the most prominent feature in all ethnic and catholic religions compatible with the reason and moral intuition of man. It is not merely a system of positive moral rules, based on a true conception of human progress, but it is also 'the establishment of certain principles, the enforcement of certain dispositions, the cultivation of certain temper of mind, which the conscience is to apply to the never-varying exigencies of time and place.

We may conclude by adding that, if Islam is to be accepted as a religion described above - and it claims to be as such - its social implication will have to be accepted.

⁴⁷ Syed Amir Ali, op.cit. p.174

CHAPTER IV

AN OUTLINE OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

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The first question to tackle in any discussion of Muslim Philosophy or Islamic Philosophy relates to the very nomenclature of the enquiry. What do we mean by Islamic or Muslim Philosophy? Are we justified in naming what was produced through the speculative enquiry of thinkers professing Islamic faith as Muslim or Islamic Philosophy? If there exists any such philosophy, what should be its name, Islamic, Arab or Muslim? These are the questions which call for a satisfactory reply, although not directly related to the problems of philosophy which we are interested in. It is however, not possible to deal with this question at length, on account of the limited scope of the present study.

A Problem of Nomenclature

The point at issue does not arise only in case of philosophy. Opinions also differ in the use of names like Islamic architecture, Islamic culture, Islamic poetry and so on. Professor Allasandro Bousani¹ of Rome University, challenged the existence of

¹ Allasandro Bousani, "Is Islamic Poetry Possible?", Minutes of the Islamic Colloquium, Lahore (Lahore, Punjab University, 1959)

anything as Islamic Poetry and declared it a misnomer. Similarly, Brockelmann prefers a name for his book as 'A History of Muslim Peoples' to 'A History of Islam'. But in connection with philosophy, the question takes a serious turn. Some authors have completely denied the existence of a Muslim philosophy or Islamic philosophy or have used the as Arab or Arabic philosophy. Furthermore, it is also contended that, apart from the question of name, there is no such thing as philosophy produced by Muslims in the past. Whatever they did in the field of speculative thought, was either a replica of Greek thought or at the most elaborate commentaries on what Plato, Aristotle and Neo-Platonists had said.²

Hence the question is two-fold:(a) Is there anything existing what may be called Islamic thought or Muslim thought or Arab thought as distinct from Greek thought;(2) if so, what should it be called, Islamic Muslim or Arab? It is not possible to examine these questions at length. We shall therefore, only touch upon this issue.

There is no doubt about the fact that the Muslims, in the very first century of their rise set upon to explore the

2.This position is taken by a number of Orientalists in the Past and the tendency is still continuing, not only with the Orientalists but also with the historians of philosophy. A recent instance is Will Durant's Story of Philosophy, in which there is no mention of the period falling in between the Neo-Platonists and Latin Scholastics, as if nothing had happened during that era.In this connection, reference may be made to Jamâl-ud-Dîn Afghani's rejoinder to E.Rénan's attack on Muslim thinkers, as quoted by Amir Ali, op.cit. p.482

treasures of Greek thought and start an intellectual quest afresh in the wake of their Greek masters. The beginning was, no doubt, made with the translations of Greek treatises through the help of Nestorians, but it was followed by commentaries and then by original thinking. We shall not do justice to these scholars by saying that they stopped at blindly translating Greek philosophy into Arabic. They in fact further proceeded to evaluate it according to their own standards. They also made perfect some of the old theories and contributed their own to the intellectual heritage they received. The emergence of the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arites is a clear evidence of the fact that the Greek thought did not go un-challenged among the Muslims. Recent researches on different Muslim scholars of the medieval ages have shown sufficient proof of their ingenuity and further work will clearly bring out the independent and contributive aspects of Muslims' efforts in this behalf.³ Discussing this point, Dr. Madkûr has observed:

اما اليوم ففي وسعنا ان نثبت - عن يقين - وجود دراسات فلسفية
ذات شأن في العالم الاسلامي وان نبين انها لم تنل بعد حظها
من الدراسة نعم هناك فلسفة اسلامية امتازت بموضوعاتها

³ As an instance reference may be made to
Rev. Robert Hammond, The Philosophy of Alfarabi, (New York,
The Hobson Book Press, 1947)

⁴ Dr. Ibrâhîm Madkûr, Fil Falsafah al-Islamiyyah (Cairo, Dâr
Ihyâ' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1947) pp. 14-15

وبحوثها بمسائلها ومعضلاتها وبما قدمت لهذا وتلك من حلول فهي
تعني بمشكلة الواحد والمتعدد Le problèm de l'unité et
La rapport entre Dieu ومخلوقاته et le monde وتعالج صلة بين الله ومخلوقاته
التي كانت مشار جدل طويل بين المتكلمين - وتحاول ان توفق
بين الوحي والعقل ، بين العقيدة والحكمة ، بين الدين والفلسفة وان
تبين للناس ان الوحي لا يناقض العقل ، وان العقيدة اذا استنارت
بضوء الحكمة تمكنت من النفس وثبتت امام الخصم وان الدين اذا تأخى
مع الفلسفة أصبح فلسفيا كما تصبح الفلسفة دينيا - فالفلسفة الاسلامية
وليدة البيئة التي نشأت فيها والظروف التي أحاطت بها وهي كما يبدو
فلسفة دينية روحية

Madkûr has not only asserted and discussed at length the existence of philosophic thought of indigènous nature among the Muslims but has also pointed out and dealt with specific problems originating from the impact of Greek thought and its method on Islamic ideas⁵. De Boer, who belongs to the category of Orientalists we have earlier referred to and who asserts that Muslims "are not to be regarded as specially great philosophers", after all admits that " there were many men in Islam who could not keep from philosophizing; even through the folds of the Greek drapery, the form of their limbs is indicated."⁶

As to the question of naming this system, we have preferred to use the name 'Islamic' for the following reasons:

⁵The problems to which mention has been made in the above cited Arabic text are (1) problem of the One and the Many; (2) relationship between God and His creation; (3) compromise between revelation and reason, between science and belief, between religion and philosophy; (4) to establish that there is no conflict between reason and revelation.

⁶T.J. de Boer, The History of Philosophy in Islam (London, Luzac & Co., 1903) pp. 22-30

- 1) When we speak of something Islamic, it does not necessarily mean pertaining to basic beliefs in Islam. It may also refer to anything connected with the general body of the Muslims, as Islamic Jurisprudence, Islamic Theology, Islamic Culture etc.
- 2) The use of this term enables us to include those thinkers, who were not Arabs like Ibn Sīnā, al-Fārābī, al-Ghazālī, but were in line with Arab scholars by virtue of being Muslims and writing through the medium of Arabic language.
- 3) As Dr. Madkūr⁷ has maintained, the difference of opinion on the issue is just scholarly hair-splitting and in fact all the three terms are synonymous. The term Islamic is preferable in view of the fact that a distinction has to be made between what Muslims practised and is not against the fundamental principles of Islam and what was adopted and practised by the Muslims and was against the very basis of Islamic faith, like asceticism, curb on the intellectual activity and free-thinking, and similar things. The latter will henceforth be called Muslim and Islamic would mean the former.

Rationalistic Spirit of Islam

The reason for the diversity of opinion on the issue

⁷ Ibrāhīm Madkūr, op. cit. p.15

is, as we think, precisely the fact that Muslims borrowed so many things from different peoples - Greeks, Iranians, Hindûs, Christians, Jews - and the inter-mixture of these elements has led, non-Muslim scholars as well as extremist Muslim sects that anything not existing during the life-time of the Prophet should be considered as un-Islamic. But the fact is that Islam does not, in any case, prescribe this rigidity of acquiring something from others insofar as its fundamental principles are not violated. To understand the problems of Islamic Philosophy, we have, therefore, first to appreciate this spirit.

Amir Ali has mentioned, on the authority of Majlisî⁸, a Tradition of the Prophet handed down by Imâm Ja'far Sâdiq, which reads as follows:

Acquire knowledge, because he who acquires it in the way of the Lord, performs an act of piety; who speaks of it, praises the Lord; who seeks it adores God; who dispenses instruction in it, bestows alms; and who imparts it to its fitting objects, performs an act of devotion to God. Knowledge enables its possessor to distinguish what is forbidden from what is not; it lights the way to heaven; it is our friend in the desert, our society in solitude, our companion when bereft of friends; it

⁸ Muhammad Baqir Majlisî, *Bihâr-ul-Anwâr*, Vol. I, Bâb-ul-Ilm

Muhammad Bâqir b. Muhammad Taqî Majlisî, was the most notable representative of his family - a leading one in Persia during the seventeenth century. He was appointed Shaikh-ul-Islâm by Shah Sulaimân I. *Bihar-ul-Anwâr*, his largest work, is an encyclopaedia of law, hadîth and theology, in 25 volumes, many of which have been translated into Persian. He is counted among the greatest Shi'ite authorities on these subjects. He died in 1698 or 1700 A.D.

guides us to happiness; it sustains in misery; it is our ornament in the company of the friends; it serves as an armour against our enemies. With, the servant of God rises to the heights of goodness and to a noble position, associates with sovereigns in this world and attains to the perfection of happiness in the next.

Similarly, Totâh has reported a number of Traditions, calling upon the Muslims to devote themselves to the cause of education⁹.

The Qurân itself bears testimony to the supreme value of learning and science. Adh-Dhamakhsharf, while commenting upon the surah al-'Alaq, explains the meaning of the Quranic words and maintains that it is through His beneficence that God has given to His servants knowledge of that which they did not know. He further says: "If knowledge did not exist, the affairs of the religion and the world (Umûr-ud-Dîn wad-dunyâ) could not be regulated.¹⁰ This is just one reference. The Qurân time and again calls upon the faithful to use their reason, and that those who have knowledge cannot be at par with those who do not possess it. The only quality of Adam, which made him superior to the angels is that he possessed knowledge.

This attitude towards knowledge, use of reason, induction, inference and attempt to discover the truth, is the corner-stone of rationalistic, scientific, philosophical and literary quest of early Muslims. Poetry and related

⁹ Khalîl A. Totah, The Contribution of the Arabs to Education (New York City, Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1926) p.84 op.cit. p.4

¹⁰ Syed Amir Ali, op. cit. p.361

and related branches of literary accomplishment were known to pre-Islamic Arabia. But, the words of the Prophet, duly supported by the Quran, gave a new impulse to awakened energies of the race. During the life-time of the Prophet, a nucleus was set up in Madinah to help the cause of education. The sayings of the Master, accompanied by his precept, led the Arabs to honour learning and yearn for it. One of the conditions offered to the prisoners-of-war after Badr to get their freedom was to teach Muslims how to read and write.¹¹ Amir Ali reports that "Ali lectured on branches of learning most suited to the infant commonwealth. Among his recorded sayings are the following: 'Eminence in science is the highest of honours. . . . Naturally such sentiments on the part of the Master and the chief of his disciples gave rise to a liberal policy, and animated all classes with a desire for learning¹²." We are not in a position here to trace the history of the development of speculative thinking among the Muslims nor can we account for the later emergence of philosophical and scientific activity among them. We end this section with the remarks that while there were available to early Muslims positive injunctions to seek knowledge, there cannot be found a single hint to the effect that a particular type of knowledge was forbidden to be sought. This is why the Muslims immediately paid their

¹¹

"Madrassa", Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, op.cit. p.300

¹²

Seyd. Amir Ali, op. cit. p.362

attention to acquiring knowledge soon after they had settled down after their encounters with the Iranian and Byzantine Empires. The start was made with translations of books from other languages like the Greek and the Old Persian. As remarked earlier, however, independent enquiry was taken up a little afterwards. Solitary examples of persecution of scholars and destruction of educational institutions, as done by al-Mutawakkil¹³ and Salâh-ud-Dîn¹⁴, were in no case on account of religious motives but were rather result of political strategy. Al-Mutawakkil wanted to suppress the rising forces of rationalism, politically inclined towards Alides and Salâh-ud-Dîn desired to undo everything connected with the Fâtimides. With the exception of these instances and few others like flogging of Imâm Ahmad bin Hanbal by Mamûn-ur-Rashîd, there does not appear any ban in Islam on knowledge or source of knowledge whatsoever.

Hence we enunciate an important principle which will serve as one of the basic assumptions in connection with the present study of Islamic Philosophy. We consider any activity to be justifiably called as Islamic, if it is carried on and undertaken by a community professing Islamic faith as outlined in the third chapter of the present study and if it does not tend to violate the spirit of the basic principles of Islam.

¹³ ibid pp.439-40

¹⁴ Ahmad Shalaby, History of Muslim Education (Beirut, Dâr-ul-Kashshâf, 1954) pp.102-107

If therefore, any judgement given by a Muslim scholar which tends to negate the spirit of these principles will not be considered as Islamic - like al-Ghazâli¹⁵'s condemnation of certain subjects like physics, mathematics, philosophy and Ikhwân-us-Safâ's opposition to the education of women - but will be treated as their individual opinions, directly or indirectly dictated by the political and social circumstances.¹⁶

B. Epistemology

The first question which arises in any discussion of knowledge and nature of knowledge is as to whether it is possible to know. Islam's position in relation to this question is very clear. It is that knowledge, whether of our ourselves or of Reality, is possible. Not only that it is possible, but also that it is the differentia of man that he is capable of getting knowledge. Let us refer to the parable of creation of Adam, as narrated in the Qurân.¹⁷ When the angels questioned the superiority of Adam, it was his knowledge which made the angels admit the fact and bow down to him as ordained by God. "God preferred Man or Adam

¹⁵ Khalîl A. Totah, *op.cit.* p.54
Al-Ghazali, *Ihya' Ulûm-ud-Dîn* (Cairo, Mustafâ Bal-Bâbi al-Halabi, 1939) pp.35-37.

¹⁶ *infra* p.

¹⁷ The Qurân, II, 30-34

to the rest of beings because "He had imparted knowledge to man which He did not do to angels."¹⁸ This is the fundamental principle laid down by the Quran. Hence, epistemology in Islam begins with the positive assertion as to the possibility of knowledge. And 'Ali treats knowledge as a pre-requisite for religion.¹⁹

Source of Knowledge

What is the source of knowledge? Thinkers have differed on this issue. Subjective Idealists altogether deny the efficacy of our senses in giving us the knowledge of things. We only know the images. Berkeley insisted that the character of the world, as we experience it, depends upon the mind perceiving it.²⁰ In his analysis of knowledge, Kant found that

- a) pure sensation is a chaotic process in which all kinds of sensory stimulations are passively received by mind;
- b) the chaos of sensation is resolved into orderliness by the two categories of perception, space and time, which group sensory qualities into objects and events;

¹⁸ Ghulâm Sarwar, Philosophy of the Quran (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1946) p.134

¹⁹ supra p.55

²⁰ J. Donald Butler, Four Philosophies (New York, Harper & Brothers, 1957) p.193

c) the unity of a conceptual and ideational type is achieved by such rational categories of mind as the need for linking causes and effects for example.²¹

Realists are divided into two groups on this issue, according to Butler's statement.²² The Monists hold that objects of the external world are presented in the mind and not represented. There is some way in which the physical material, which makes up the objects, and our consciousness can converge upon or intersect each other at a given moment of time, the time of experience. The Dualists consider that physical patterns which produce qualities in our consciousness have a different identity from those qualities and are probably quite different in their make up from the counter-parts which they produce in our consciousness.

The third group, that of Pragmatists, consider our sense-experience as the main source of knowledge. According to them "it is only as we are engaged in active experience with things that qualities come to light in such a way that we know them."²³

These are, in short, three main positions taken up by the modern thinkers vis-a-vis sources of knowledge. In comparison to these, we shall examine the position held by

21 ibid p.194

22 ibid pp. 316-20

23 ibid p.448

Muslims. Let us start with the Quran.

The Quran repeatedly asks the believers to use their reason, observation and senses to get at the true spirit of the religion instead of blindly following pure dogma."Islam is thus based on knowledge and action; to know the Supreme Being and His laws, and to obey them to attain the goal on the path of progress."²⁴ According to Burney, knowledge in the Quran "is graded from the highest and the purest source, namely wahy or revelation, down to 'fikr', khawd and 'zann',²⁵ in their natural descending order.²⁶ The Holy Scriptures of Islam recognize two sources of knowledge, namely, revelation and rational thinking, which to some interpreters, includes guess-work or analogy (qiyâs).²⁷ There are numerous verses of the Holy Quran referring to revelation as a source of knowledge. But at the same time, the Quran does not make it binding on the believers to adopt a way of blind acceptance and asks them time and again to use their own reason. It is only in certain cases, where assumptions have to be taken, that the Quran enforces pure dogma. Otherwise, it has been made obligatory for the Muslims to see the things for themselves and draw

²⁴ Mohd. Ilyâs Burney, op.cite, p.11

²⁵ thought, speculation or pondering, opinion

²⁶ ibid p.11

²⁷ The Shi'ites do not give any credence to 'qiyas' as against the Sunnites, especially the Hanafites.

conclusions.²⁸ The Quran gives invitation to the people to go round the world and see its wonders; to observe the stars and their movements; to ponder over the mysteries of creation, and make an attempt to discover the truth. This invitation is a clear indication of the fact that Islam does not like to have blind following, but instead, wishes the people to use their own sources to arrive at the truth by deduction or induction. The absence of any kind of priesthood, as has earlier been mentioned, is the direct outcome of this liberalism against pure dogmatism. If Islam had recognized only one source of knowledge or truth - the authority = there was no necessity to ask people to use their own reasoning. On this point, as will be discussed later on, even the Ash'arites recognize sources of knowledge apart from revelation, despite being the most staunch up-holder of Divine Authority as the source of knowledge.

'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib laid great emphasis on self-reasoning after observation and discovering the truth. In a number of his lectures, he invites attention to different objects, like bees, peacock etc. and asks the audience to think over them in order to understand the nature and thus its Creator.²⁹

²⁸ The Quran, XXIX,20; LXXXVII 17-20

²⁹ 'Ali Ibn Abi Tâlib, op.cit. vol.II, pp.138-142; 161-74

In one of his lectures, he maintains: "you can never know what is Divine Guidance unless you know those who gave it up; You will not accept the stipulations of the Book unless you know those who turned against it. . . .³⁰ This means that not only did 'Ali emphasised the importance of acquiring knowledge but also that real knowledge of a thing cannot be acquired unless one's knows its opposite. Thus it indicates that

- i) knowledge is possible to be acquired through man's own initiative in addition to that given to him through revelation;
- ii) that it is also essential that we acquire knowledge of the things which are not desired, in order to fully appreciate the desired ones. This therefore, gives an idea of scope of knowledge as 'Ali considered. It included not only religion, but also that which is not religion or against religion.

Kurramî has discussed this issue in details, quoting numerous Traditions of the Prophet, supporting the above view and asserting that, according to early Muslims, knowledge knew no bounds, was obligatory and also that blind following of the dogma was despised.³¹ In another Tradition, passed by Imam Ja'far Sâdiq, he has rather made it compulsory to reason

³⁰ ibid Vbl.I, p.43

³¹ Muhammad al-Kurramî, op. cit. pp.55-62

out the principles of religion.³²

We therefore conclude that insofar as the Quran, the Traditions and ideas of his trusted disciples are concerned, Islam clearly backs up the principle of acquisition of knowledge through one's own initiative. It has almost made it compulsory to use reason and common sense in understanding the spirit of religion. We can safely say that Islam is not pro-dogma. This is why in the life-time of the Prophets have been questioning his decisions. We can get such instances in the early Islamic history, for example, after the battle of Badr and conclusion of the treaty of Hudaibiyah.³³ Another important principle to which we wish to refer here is that there is no explicit order either in the Quran or in the Traditions, to the effect that Muslims should not acquire a particular branch of knowledge or should not read anything which may lead to doubting the principles of religion. Islam is not inhibited to being questioned. 'Ali is reported to have said that doubts are an indication of the fact that imân (faith) is getting ingrained in the heart of the doubter. Let us see what happened to this liberal attitude on the issue under discussion at the hands of the latter Muslim thinkers.

We can very easily discern two main branches of the main stem of thought. There is a group of those who

³² ibid p.62

³³ Syed Amir Ali, A Short History of Saracens (London, Macmillan and Co., 1900) p.5-20

consider authority or revelation to be the main source of knowledge as well as the criterion of truth. The Ash'arites and the Sinite theologians, almost en bloc, hold this position. The other group, comprising the Mu'tazilites and the Shi'ites differ with the former on the issue of reason being the source of knowledge as well as criterion of truth. In addition to these two groups, there are mystics who hold that true knowledge can be acquired only through intuition.

Ash'arites Theory of Knowledge

Ash'arite school was " a powerful orthodox reaction" against Rationalism (Mu'tazilites), which found a very energetic leader in al-Ash'ari, who studied under Mu'tazilite teachers but later on turned against them. As Farrûkh³⁴ and Iqbâl³⁵ have remarked Ash'ari's attempt was not to create a new school of thought but to transfer the dialectic method to the defence of Divine Revelation and give the orthodox a philosophical standing against the Mu'tazilite attack who "measured reality by reason alone." Al-Ghazâli, who is considered to be the main spokesman of the Sinite school, modified this position to some extent. The Ash'arites maintained that revelation is the only source of knowledge, but the latter considered knowledge to have three degrees: (a) knowledge of the common man, who

³⁴ 'Umar Farrûkh, Tarikh , p.249

³⁵ Muhammad Iqbâl, Development of Metaphysics in Persia (Lahore, Bazm-é-Iqbâl, n.d.) p.53

is restricted by his sense-experience and is satisfied by whatever the people of authority tell him;(b) scientific knowledge which does not accept anything as valid except that which is established by rational proofs;and (c) mystical knowledge which is achieved after a long period of training and ends in a vision of the ultimate truth. This stage, in al-Ghazâli's view, cannot be reached by reason, but through illumination only. It is either the knowledge of the prophets, which shines through the light of prophethood, or the knowledge of the mystic, which is obtained through Divine Grace.Even self-evident truths and first principles of reason, once man is shaken by doubt, cannot be re-established in the soul except through the help of Divine Revelation.³⁶ Thus though al-Ghazâli admits that reason and sense-perception are sources of knowledge he considers them invalid, placing revelation above all other sources. Real knowledge, in his opinion, must eradicate all doubts and this could be done by revelation alone.

Iqbal has offered the following criticism of Ash'arites Theory of Knowledge:³⁷

The Ash'arite idealist, on the other hand, misunderstands the process of knowledge. He ignores the mental activity involved in the act of knowledge; and looks upon preceptions as mere representations which are determined, as he says, by God. But if the order of presentation requires a cause

³⁶Djemil Saliba and George J.Tomeh, "Islam", The Year Book of Education 1957,(London , Evans Brothers Ltd.) pp.71

³⁷Muhammad Iqbal, op.cit., p.71

to account for it, why should not that cause be sought in the original constitution of matter as Locke did? Moreover the theory that knowledge is a mere passive reception or awareness of what is presented, leads to certain inadmissible conclusions which the Ash'arites never thought of:

a) They did not see that their pure subjective concept of knowledge swept away all possibility of error. If the existence of a thing is merely the fact of being presented, there is no reason why it should not be cognized as different from what it actually is.

b) They did not see that, on their theory of knowledge, our fellow beings, like other elements of physical order, would have no higher reality than mere states of my consciousness.

c) If knowledge is mere receptivity of presentations, God, who, as Cause of presentations, is active in regard to the act of our knowledge, must not be aware of our presentations. From Ash'arites' point of view, this conclusion is fatal to their whole position. They cannot say that presentations, on their ceasing to be my presentations, continue to be presentations to God's consciousness.

Mu'tazilites' Theory of Knowledge

The Mu'tazilites assert the possibility of knowledge through sources other than revelation. The Ash'arites' over-emphasis on theology and their pre-occupation with religious authority as something arational or irrational, led them to neglect a detailed analysis of the process which produces knowledge.³⁸

³⁸ In fact their position leads us to think as to whether it is worthwhile to seek knowledge, because it, being the result of divine revelation, not available to every body, cannot be achieved by every one. An important implication of what the Ash'arites pleaded, appeared in the closure of the door of Ijtihād which is now almost unanimously considered to be the main reason for the stagnation of Muslims culture.

The Mu'tazilites, under the influence of Greek thought as well as that of the Shi'ite Imâm Ja'far Sadiq, gave more emphasis on non-revelationary sources of knowledge. Their Basra group, in fact, undermined the revelation to such an extent that they refused to believe anything which did not come upto the standard of reason.

They divide knowledge into two main branches: the knowledge of the external world and the knowledge of that which is beyond the physical phenomenon. In other words, knowledge is either sensory or parasensory. Sensory knowledge is acquired through five physical senses. Every sense, as Abul Hudhail maintains is different from the others but not opposite to them.³⁹ All the senses, according to them, are of different types but do not contradict one another in which the knowledge resulting from them would be contradictory. These senses do not overlap one another in relation to their functions and are also differentiated in respect of the effects of stimuli on them. Sense-perception, according to them, results from the effect of stimuli on the senses. In this connection, they use three different terms, sensor, sense and sensed.⁴⁰ The difference between the stimuli and the responses resultant from these stimuli, is related to mind conceiving the perception of the object sensed. Juba'î says: "The senses of smell, the taste and

³⁹ Albert Nasri Nadir, Falsafat-ul-Mu'tazilah vol. II (Matba'ah al-Râbitah, 1951) p. 11

⁴⁰ al-hass, al-hiss and al-mahsûs

of the touch are not the same as the awareness of the things touched, tasted or smelled."⁴¹

They are, however, divided on the issue as to how sensation is changed into sense-perception. One group is represented by an-Nazzâm and the other by Abul Hudail. The former treats colours, tastes, smells, sounds, pains, hotness, coldness, humidity, dryness and similar properties as a'rad or accidents. He treats them as 'bodies too rarefied and fine' or in other words he holds that no knowledge is possible of these senses unless these 'fine bodies' enter into the sense itself and furthermore, what enters a particular sense is different from the other.⁴² Nadir observes on this point:⁴³

This kind of theory of sense-perception becomes a problem for us insofar as the knowledge of those things is concerned which are no more or those which we never experienced but only heard of. Despite the fact that it may sound strange to us an-Nazzâm has solved this problem in his view. When asked as to how he came to know that Muhammad was in this world and so the prophets other than him, he would say, 'Those who saw the Prophet, received a portion of his existence and made it a part of their souls. When they informed the followers, a part of this existence passed on to them and in turn they further handed it over to us . . .

The remaining Mu'tazilites do not consider sensations as bodies. They differentiate between the accidents and atoms.

⁴¹ Albert Nasri Nadir, op.cit., p.20

⁴² ibid

⁴³ ibid

As against the position of Democritus and Epicurus, which was accepted by an-Nazzâm, al-Jubâ`f and his followers as well as Abul Hudâil followed Aristotle, who differentiated between matter and form. The things sensed affect the senses in form not in matter.⁴⁴ Knowledge according to them is therefore, "receiving the images of external things."⁴⁵

The knowledge of physical objects, according to the Mu'tazilites, leads to the knowledge of ultra-physical things. This knowledge is acquired through the faculty of reason (al-'aql). Reason, as Abul Hudâil has defined it, is the "faculty to acquire knowledge." Al-Jubâ`f considered reason as knowledge.⁴⁶ These definitions in Nadir's view are almost identical. He says:⁴⁷

And we know that knowledge in Mu'tazilite's opinion is perception of the whole (idrâk-ul-Kullî), not sense-perception only. But al-Jubâ`f does not limit the definition of reason to the function of acquiring knowledge but treats it as in relation to its organic function. . . . In the definition of Abul Hudâil as well as that of al-Jubâ`f, we find a complete definition of reason, i.e. it is the faculty through which we acquire knowledge.

Thus the Mu'tazilites considered knowledge through the physical senses as the first stage which is followed by what they call rational knowledge. They did not agree with Plato in treating knowledge as recollection.⁴⁸ They further asserted

⁴⁴W. Windelband, A History of Philosophy (London, The Macmillan Company) pp. 139-54

⁴⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, op. cit. p. 72

⁴⁶ Nadir, op. cit., p. 35

⁴⁷ ibid

⁴⁸ W. Windelband, op. cit., p. 118

that knowledge is acquired gradually rather than being instinctive⁴⁹
All of the Mu'tazilites negated the existence of the sixth sense
(al-Hassah as-Sadisah), through which man may be able to acquire
the knowledge of God as well as the Day of Judgement.⁵⁰

Mystics' Theory of Knowledge

Al-Ghazali represents the mystics who philosophised
their system which was partly against rationalists and partly
against rigid theologians. Knowledge according to him is the
real end of life. The sources of knowledge are not to be sought
in sense-perception or reason but in direct communion with God.
Rumi, a great mystic of Iran, out-rightly rejects the efficacy
of knowledge acquired through senses or reason.⁵¹

Ikhwân-us-Safa on Knowledge

Like the Mu'tazilites, the Ikhwân too do not agree
with Plato's Doctrine of Knowledge as Recollection.⁵² They believe
that man at the time of his birth does not possess any knowledge
and acquires it later on through his own efforts and with the
help of his faculties. However, they consider all kinds of
knowledge to be potential in child which may become actual,
through education. There are various means of acquiring knowledge.

⁴⁹ Nadir, op.cit. p.36

⁵⁰ ibid p.29

⁵¹ For further details see:
Albert Naeri Nadir, At-Tasawwuf-ul-Islâmi (Beirut, al-Matba'ah
al-Katholikiyyah) p.19

⁵² 'Umar Farrûkh, Ikhwân-us-Safâ (Beirut, Maktabah Munaimanah)
pp.38-41

By means of senses, the soul is made acquainted with what is beneath its level, and through logical inference, with what is above its level, and finally it knows itself by rational consideration or direct intuition. Of these kinds of knowledge, the surest and the most deserving of preference, in Ikhwân's view, is the knowledge of one's self. When human knowledge attempts to go farther than this, it proves itself to be limited in many ways. Therefore one must not philosophise straight away but "make his first essays with what is simpler" than the origin or the eternity of the world and questions like that. "And only through renunciation of the world, and righteous conduct, does soul lift itself gradually upto the pure knowledge of the Highest."⁵³

Philosophers -Eastern and Western Islam

In Islamic literature, the word 'philosopher' applies to those thinkers who neither belong to the Mu'tazilite group of Schoolmen nor the Ash'arites'. Those belonging to Asian countries as well as Egypt are named as Eastern Philosophers while those of Spain and Western Africa are called Western.

On the issue of knowledge there is a basic agreement between all of them. They all believe in sources of knowledge other than revelation. In this respect, they are closer to the Mu'tazilite Schoolmen as compared to the Ash'arites.

⁵³ De Boer, op.cit. pp.86-87

Al-Kindi on Knowledge

Al-Kindi's Theory of Knowledge corresponds to the ethical and metaphysical duality of the sensible and the spiritual. According to it, our knowledge is either conveyed by the senses or acquired by the reason; that which lies between them - the fancy or imagination - is called a mediating faculty. The senses then apprehend the particular or the material form and reason conceives the universal - the species and genera, or the spiritual form. And just as that which is perceived is one with the sense-perception, so too that which is conceived by reason is one with reason itself.⁵⁴

Ibn al-Maskawaih's opinion

According to Ibn al-Maskawaih, all human knowledge starts from sensations transforming themselves gradually into perceptions. Earlier stages of knowing are completely conditioned by an external reality or the physical world which acts as stimulus. But the progress of knowledge, in his view, is that man should be able to think without being conditioned by matter. Thought, beginning with matter, aims at freeing itself gradually from the primary condition of its

⁵⁴De Boer, op.cit. p.102
'Umar Farrûkh, Tarikh , p.231

possibility. A higher stage is therefore reached in imagination - the power to reproduce and retain in mind the copy or image of a thing any reference to the external objectivity of the thing itself. Thought reaches a still higher stage in point of freedom from materiality when it is capable of forming concepts. He admits that concepts, insofar, they are the results of comparison and assimilation of precepts, cannot be regarded as having completely freed themselves from the gross cause of sensations. But the fact that conception is based upon perception should not lead us to ignore the great difference between the natures of concepts and percepts. The individual or the percept undergoes constant change which affects the character of knowledge based upon mere perception. The knowledge of individual therefore lacks the element of permanence. The universal (concept), on the other hand, is not affected by the law of change. Individuals change; the universal remains intact. Thus the object of all philosophical training is to develop the power of ideation or contemplation of pure concepts, in order that such a practice might make possible the conception of absolutely immaterial - God or Ultimate Reality.⁵⁵

Al-Fârâbî's Theory of Knowledge

Al-Farabi, being an Aristotelian,⁵⁶ falls in line with

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Muhammad Iqbal op.cit. pp.25-26
'Umar Farrûkh op.cit. pp.243-48
De Boer, op.cit. pp.128-31

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Rev. Robert Hammond, The Philosophy of Alfarabi and its Influence on Medieval Thought (New York, The Hobson Book Press 1947) p.ix

his theory of knowledge and is more concerned about the process as compared to the nature of knowledge. What can be inferred from his opinion on logic is that considers sensations and perceptions to be the primary sources of knowledge, which is however, subject to the final scrutiny by logic. Logic in his view is "the doctrine of proof, by which, starting from what is known and established, we arrive at a knowledge of something previously unknown."⁵⁷ Judgement according to him, results from the combination of ideas. For this purpose, we have to go back through the process of inference and of Proof to certain proposition originally conveyed to understanding, immediately obvious and admitting no further confirmation (axioms). The doctrine of proof terminates in necessary knowledge corresponding to necessary existence.

Ibn Sînâ on Knowledge

Ibn Sînâ considers knowledge to be proceeding from the senses which are of two kinds: (1) external and (2) internal. The external senses are five. Corresponding to these are internal senses or faculties,⁵⁸ namely, sensorium or sensus communis, representation or retention of images, conception, imagination and memory. These internal senses in man enable the soul to

⁵⁷ De Boer, op.cit., p.112

⁵⁸ Muhammad Iqbal, op. cit ,p.35

manifest itself as progressive reason, developing from human to angelic and then to prophetic reason. In addition to this way of acquiring knowledge, he admits another way of apprehending the rational truth in which the soul acts without the help of any of these external or internal senses.⁵⁹ This faculty of soul, he calls as active reason or 'Aql Fa''âl, and finally believes that no real knowledge can be acquired without active reason, which is the sole criterion of truth in his view.

Among the Western Philosophers, important are Ibn Bajâ, Ibn Rushd and Ibn Khuldûn. The general tendency among these thinkers conforms to what non-Ash'arite thinkers and theologians hold. The supremacy of reason is unanimously admitted and the controversy between al-Ghazâlî and Ibn Rushd on the issue of causality was mainly due to this difference of opinion.

Ibn Bâjâ's View

Ibn Bâjâ held that knowledge is attained in four stages:⁶⁰

- i) acquiring of sensations of the external objects and formation of their images;

⁵⁹F, Rehman, Avicenna's Psychology (London, Oxford University Press, 1952) pp.50-54

Ali Akbar Siyâsi, 'Ilm-un-Nafs-é-Ibn-é-Sînâ (Persian) (Tehran University, 1954) pp.132-61

⁶⁰Kamâlal-Yâziiji and Antwân Ghattas Karam, 'A'lâm-ul-Falsafat-al-'Arabiyyah (Beirut, Lujnat-ut-Talif-al-Madrasî 1957) p.781

- ii) recognition of the sensed objects;
- iii) arriving at the inner significance of the meaning of the sensed objects; and finally
- iv) apprehending their nature in abstract.

Thus according to Ibn Bâjâ, cognition results from the action of the senses, through the help of active reason.⁶¹ He does admit that senses may deceive us in giving true knowledge like error of parallex in case of sight. To correct these mistakes, the active reason comes into action. He however, does not recognise intuition. His guide in his acquisition of knowledge is the philosophy or "the knowledge of the Universal, which issues from the knowledge of the particulars study and reflection, aided by the enlightening spirit from the above." Thus in his view, as De Boer has observed, it is by rational knowledge, and not by religious enquiry and mystic dreaming, with the sensuous invariably clinging to, that the human spirit arrives at perfection. Thinking, in his opinion, is the highest bliss, for its very purpose is to reach all that is intelligible."⁶²

Ibn Rushd's view

Ibn Rushd considers logic as a must for acquiring any

⁶¹ See for further details
'Umar Farrûkh, Tarîkh pp.504-505

⁶² De Boer, op.cite., p. 179

kind of knowledge, for he says, " One who does not know the technique of making cannot know the thing made, and who does not know the thing made cannot know the maker."⁶³ He has not put forth his own theory of knowledge but it can be inferred from his philosophy that he believed in the logical or philosophical method of acquiring knowledge and was such an ardent up-holder of his opinion that his contemporary theologians declared him to be an heretic and he had to suffer on this account.⁶⁴

He divided knowledge into two kinds:(1) that which is acquired directly, and(2) that which is attained by means of analogy. He was the most staunch supporter of the rational trend as against the revelational attitude of the Ash'arites and Mystics.

Ibn Khuldûn Position

According to Ibn Khuldûn, knowledge is of different kinds; and therefore there are different ways of getting it. "As the sense of hearing apprehends different sounds without the help of sight and different colours are perceived by the eyes without any help from the tactical sense similarly

⁶³ 'Umar Farrukh, op.cit. , p.548

⁶⁴ Seyd. Amir Ali, History, pp.538-39

other observations. Everyone has its kinds and its own methods of being apprehended."⁶⁵ Thus he divided knowledge of abstractions into two categories: (1) of those apprehended by reason and (2) of those known through revelation. Hence, his division of subjects as 'Ulûm-ul-'Aqliyyah and 'Ulûm-un-Naqliyyah."⁶⁶

Conclusion

From this summary of the opinions of Muslim thinkers on the issue of knowledge and its sources as well as what has been said by the Holy Qurân, we draw the following conclusions:

1. The Holy Quran as well as the Traditions of the Prophet make it obligatory for the believers to acquire knowledge.
2. There is no reference found in the Quran which prohibits pursuit of any kind of knowledge.
3. The Quran recognises and lays due stress on man's own efforts in acquiring knowledge and discovering the truth rather than being dependent on Divine Grace alone. Sensations as a means of acquiring knowledge have been recognised by the Quran in addition to revelatory process which is available only to the prophets (or to the Imâm in a modified form, according

⁶⁵ al-Yâziji and Karam, op.cit. p.959

⁶⁶ For details, reference may be made to Nuha 'Arif-ul-Hasan, Education and Ibn Khuldum (unpublished M.A. Thesis (Arabic) Department of Education, American University of Beirut) pp.11-21

to Shi'ites).

4. Majority of Muslim thinkers admit that sensory data do form a source of knowledge.
5. Only in case of Ash'arites, we come across undue emphasis on authority. But even here, it is limited to theology alone.
6. There seem to be two groups on the issue of the criteria of Truth. One appeals to authority like Ash'arites and al-Ghazâli and the other takes reason as a frame of reference. The latter group is more inclined towards the Theory of Coherence as compared to that of Correspondance, which shows Neo-Platonic influence on them. However, the problem has not been dealt with specially by any of them and is mixed with the problem of knowledge in a general way.
7. Clear indications are available to the recognition of the method of experimentation.
8. A consensus of opinion can be seen in Ibn Khuldûn when he divides knowledge into different kinds in order to bring about a compromise between the two groups.
9. There seems to be no clash between religion and philosophical thinking as is evident from the

fact that most of the prominent thinkers not only used this method but strove to probe into the relationship between religion and philosophy and show that they were quite close to each other. This trend is quite prominent in Ali Ibn Abi Tâlib, Ibn Sînâ , al-Fârâbî and Ibn Rushd.

C. Metaphysics

Unlike the problem of knowledge, metaphysics in Islam is comparatively a latter development. Except passing references to the nature of man or nature of reality in the Quran and philosophical discourses of 'Ali, we do not come across any attempt at philosophization in the early period.

Muslims started taking interest in metaphysical problems under the influence of Greek philosophy and Neo-Platonic thought.⁶⁷ All metaphysical speculation in Islam has resulted from an effort to achieve three different objectives. These are (1) to explain Islamic belief on a rational level in the light of Hellenistic thought; (2) to refute alleged weak points in Islamic belief when seen from the point of

⁶⁷ For further details on the growth of metaphysics among Muslims, refer to:

Muhammad Iqbal, op.cit. p.22
Zabih Ullah Safa, Tarikh-é-'Ulûm-é-'Aqli Dar Tamaddun-é-Islami (Teheran University 1952) Vol.I, pp.17-22

Greek thought; and (3) to try to give an answer to the questions raised by the Greeks or Neo-Platonists of Alexandria from Islam's point of view. In all these efforts, there is one common factor, the doctrine of monotheism - Tawhîd - as presented by Islam. With the solitary exception of Abu Bakr Râzi, no Muslim thinker has gone astray from the path suggested by Islam, irrespective of the school of thought he belonged to. Thus we may say that metaphysics among Muslims is thoroughly God-oriented as against the Greek thought which lacks such an orientation. With this brief introduction, we proceed to give an account of Muslims' opinions on questions relating to metaphysics.

Problem of Existence and Reality

Muslims thinkers are divided into three main groups insofar as the problem of Existence is concerned. They are⁶⁸

- i) Existence as creation;
- ii) Existence as Emenation;
- iii) Materialism.

Existence as creation implies that reality is of two kinds - qadîm and muhdith- that is one which is not within the limits of Time and has not been created and the one which is temporal, accidental and is created. This creed is primarily linked with the Quran's version of creation.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ Madnî Sâleh, Al-Wajûd - Bahth Fi Falsafat-ul-Islamiyyah (Baghdâd, Matba'at-ul-Ma'ârif, 1955) p.2

⁶⁹ God is the Creator of everything else and is thus Eternal or qadîm and everything else is created or muhdith.

All Muslim thinkers, save Râzi, are unanimous that

- i) God is the efficient and final cause of all existence;
- ii) God is the Ultimate Cause of all efficient causes. He is in existence without being into it and was in existence before he brought others in existence;
- iii) God is essential being and His Essence and Existence are one and the same;
- iv) All other beings are contingent beings (muḥdith); and
- v) God may at His Will change this created existence into non-existence or replace it by another one.

These are the basic points on which al-Kindi, the Mu'tazilites, the Ash'arites, Ikhwân-us-Safâ, al-Ghazâli, Ibn Tufail and Ibn Rushd agree.

According to al-Kindi⁷⁰, God created the world out of nothing, both in essence and existence and this act of creation was done without the help of any agency. God's influence is transmitted through many agencies. All higher existence affects the lower, but that which is caused cannot affect the cause, which stands higher in the scale of being. All activity and higher reality belongs to soul, and matter has to act in conformity with its desires. He also considers body, time and motion as simultaneous and none of them precedes the others.

⁷⁰ De Boer, op.cit., p.100-101
Madni Saleh, op.cit., p.4

Mu'tazilites' Position

There is no basic dis-agreement between al-Kindi and the Mu'tazilites. They also divide the existence into two kinds, as al-Kindi does. Ultra-temporal existence (qadim) is God, who is the First Cause, responsible for bringing into being all secondary causes. The will and the action of the First Cause are one and the same. His Attributes are one with His Existence. World is created and contingent, which came into being when God superimposed the quality of existence on non-existing matter, in the form of pre-existing atoms which were incapable of perception without this quality.⁷¹ Thus phenomenal according to them, is a reality, though created one.

Ash'arites and Al-Ghazâli

They also treat God as Ultimate Reality, who is the Cause of everything. Their difference with the Mu'tazilites occurs on the issue of God's Attributes. Al-Ghazâli holds that existence is of two kinds: (1) Essential Being, and (2) the created world. It is necessary for the Essential Being to be one. He is the cause of himself. All the created beings are brought into existence from non-existence ('adam). The position of the Ash'arites vis-a-vis God's Attributes has been discussed in third chapter of this study.⁷²

⁷¹ Muhammad Iqbal, Metaphysics, p.42

⁷² supra pp.56-58

Ikhwân-us-Safâ

As to the created nature of the phenomenal world, Ikhwân are in agreement with others. But, unlike the Mu'tazilites, they held that the world was created in stages. Creation in their view is the coming into existence⁷³ of hulé (primeval matter). As against Aristotle, they held that matter was created by God out of nothingness and that it underwent gradual changes to assume the form of created objects.

They have further made an attempt to combine Plotinus' doctrine of Emanation with the doctrine of creation.⁷⁴ God is First Being (mawjûd-ul-Awwal) and from him emanated all other beings. He is pure in oneness, having no plurality.⁷⁵ They devised nine stages of emanation⁷⁶ in order to account for the plurality of the created world. These stages are as follows:

1. First Intellect ('Aql-ul-Awwal)
2. Universal Spirit (Nafs-ul-Kulli)
3. Universal Being (Jism-ul-Kulli)
4. First Matter - Formless simple atom, potential of form (al-hayûlâ).
5. Nature (Tabî'ah).
6. Body with dimensions.
7. Sphere (Falak) circumscribing the world, having a transparent circular body.
8. Four Elements.
9. Particulars (mawalladât)

⁷³ Madni Sâleh, op.cit. pp.47-49

⁷⁴ ibid pp.50-51

⁷⁵ Umar Farrûkh, Ikhwân, pp.88-95
Tarîkh, pp.300-302

⁷⁶ M.M.Sharif, "Neo-pltonism", History of Philosophy, Eastern and Western, ed. S.Radhakrishnan (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1953) Vol.II, pp.93-107

Doctrine of Emanation

As it has been mentioned earlier, according to this doctrine, the existence proceeded as an emanation from the Creator, who according to Plotinus, is one. First expounder of this doctrine was Plotinus who, in Professor Sharif's words, "put an end to the dualism of subjectivity and objectivity. Reality is spiritual, but neither a product of the mind nor something external and independent of mind."⁷⁷ The universe itself is created by a process of emanation. The creation itself is a timeless process. It can best be compared with the light of the Sun, which illuminates the world with its brightness. Darkness, which is matter, is nothing positive; it merely indicates the absence of light and distance from the One. Throughout the process of emanation, the One remains the same, changeless and eternal.⁷⁸

Al-Fârâbi's Position

Like Ikhwân, al-Fârâbi, up-holds the doctrine of emanation. Creation in his view was not a sudden act of Creator, but was rather in stages. Insofar as the One is concerned - God - he is in agreement with others, believing Him to be the Cause

⁷⁷ M.M. Sharif, op.cit. , p.94

⁷⁸ Frederick Mayer, A History of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy, (New York, American Book Company, 1950) pp.324-25

of creation; his dis-agreement is on the process. For, he thinks it essential for all created beings (mawjûdât-ul-muhdathât) to be emanated from the First Being. The Essential Being did not act as the cause of the First Being in the sense that It acted in order to create. But It makes the First Being proceed from It as heat proceeds from fire although fire is not heat nor is heat the fire. From the First Being comes forth the First Intellect called the First Caused, from which flows forth a second intellect and a sphere. This process continues till ten intellects and nine spheres, the lowest being the sphere of Moon (Falak-ul-Qamar), come into existence. These ten intellects together with nine spheres constitute the second principle of Being. Active Intellect, which is a mediary between heaven and earth is the third principle. Finally matter and form appear as fifth and sixth principles and this process ends. Only first of these is a unity. The first three principles, God, the Intellects of Spheres and the Active Intellect remain spirit per se, but the last three, soul, form and matter, are bodies by themselves. Thus there are six kinds of bodies; celestial, rational animal, irrational animal, vegetal, mineral and four elements.⁷⁹

79

For further details, see
Rev. Robert Hammond, op.cit., pp. 10-15, 30-31

Ibn Sîna's view of Existence

The doctrine of Emanation found in Ibn Sîna is the same as found in al-Fârâbi. Both of them believe in eternity (qidam) of God and accidental nature (hudûth) of the universe. They both agree that (1) only one can emanate from the One; (2) the cause of all possible beings (mumkinât) must be essential being himself; and (3) potentiality of creation is in conception.⁸⁰ Both of them divide the universe into two parts: one being above the sphere of Moon and the other beneath it. The former neither changes nor decays and the latter is subject to the both ('âlam-ul-kawn wal-fasad). Both of them agree that the Active Intellect governs the lower universe ('âlam-us-Saflî).

But Ibn Sîna has something to add to the position taken by al-Fârâbi. According to Iqbal, he, in his treatise on Love, defines love as the appreciation of beauty; and classifies all being into three categories from this angle: (1) those at the highest point of perfection; (2) those at the lowest ebb in this respect; and (3) those having intermediate position. Perfection in his view is " the love's movement towards beauty." Beneath the visible evolution of form is the force of love which actualizes all striving, movement and progress. Things

⁸⁰ Madni Sâleh , op. cit., p.31
'Umar Farrûkh, Tarîkh, pp.329-30

that live, innately hate non-existence and love the joy of individuality in various forms. Thus everything strives to be perfect and thus indeterminate matter, impelled by the force of love, rises from form to form.⁸¹

Materialists

Muslim Materialists are not materialists in the modern sense of the word. Modern Materialism regards matter as constituting the universe solely, including the mind. It denies any substantial existence to spirit or mind.⁸² Instead, the Muslim Materialists believed that matter is also eternal as God. Razi, believing in the eternity of matter, also treated the rational soul (Nafs-un-Nâtiqah) as eternal along with God, Matter and Time.

Ibn Rushd's View

Existence in Ibn Rushd's view is opposite of non-existence. It is the emergence of possible beings from mere potentiality to actuality and hence, is not different from its essence. It is of two kinds: (1) super-sensible (ma'qûl) and (2) sensible (mahsûs). Universe is eternal in the sense that there was no time when the universe was not in existence.⁸³ It is created

⁸¹ Muhammad Iqbal, *op.cit.*, pp.32-33

⁸² Archie J. Bahm, Philosophy - An Introduction (New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1953) pp.191-203

⁸³ De Boer, op.cit., p.192

in the sense that it has a creator. The essence of this creator, the First Mover or God, is found by him in thought which is identical with its object.⁸⁴

Consensus of Opinion

The preceding discussion discloses some points of agreement. These are as follows:⁸⁵

1. Existence is of two kinds: God and the Universe.
2. Universe is created by God.
3. God is Eternal, One and All-powerful.
4. Phenomenal world is real. Objectivity of material existence is agreed upon.
5. Spiritual world is also real. Thus created existence has a duality.
6. How body and mind interact is a question answered in different ways.

The relationship between the Creator and the created is of three types:

a) Those believing in the doctrine of Creation hold that the One created matter and also the causes to move it and in this way appeared the plurality of the created world.

b) Emanation school holds it to be a relationship as

84

ibid p.193

85. We owe this summary to Sâleh Madni.

it should be between the light and the source of light.

c) Materialists consider both God and Matter as eternal, acting in consonance from eternity.

All of them also agree that (a) for every thing created there should be a creator; (b) one which undergoes change is created (hâdith); (c) the series of causation cannot be endless and indefinite; (d) possibility of being nothing is a condition of existing; and (e) it is impossible that the possible being may become the cause of its own being. It is only the Essential Being which is its own cause in itself.

Problem of Free-will and Pre-determination

There are two major groups on this issue: (1) those who are ardent believers of free-will, and (2) those who deny it. Of course there are others who take a middle position like the Imamiyyah.

The Mu'tazilites took their position from the Qâdirites⁸⁶ who insisted on the freedom of human will and action in the full meanings of the words. But Mu'tazilites interest in the problem was from a different angle; it was the logical result of their belief in the Absolute Justice of God and in the

⁸⁶ Zuhdi Hasan Jârullah, Al-Mu'tazilah (Cairo, Sharikat Musahamah Misriyyah, 1947) p.6

efficacy of human reason to arrive at the truth. Freedom of human will is therefore, basic and fundamental in their eyes.⁸⁷ They classified all human action into two groups: (1) those resulting from his own will going and coming, reading and writing; and (2) actions which "are not subject to his will and action like respiration, development, circulation of blood. In real sense of the word, man is free in relation to the first type. The actions belonging to the second category are determined."⁸⁸ The Shi'ites also agree with the Mu'tazilites on this issue.⁸⁹ Their opponents alleged that in believing in the freedom of human will and action, the Mu'tazilites considered man as creator and therefore, committed themselves to dualism. But in fact, "they never considered man as creator of his actions, but responsible for them, because freedom of the will implies freedom to prefer one thing to another, while both are possible for man."⁹⁰

The Ash'arites did not accept the position of the Mu'tazilites and maintained that God is the Creator of everything good or bad, including man's actions. The man has no power to choose. These actions were determined by Him when he created the Universe. But man is subject to punishment for

⁸⁷ Albert Nasri Nâdir, op.cit., p.58

⁸⁸ Muhammad Jawwâd al-Mughniyyeh, Ma'âlim-ul-Falsafât-ul-Islâmiyyah (Beirut, Dâr-ul-'Ilm lil Malâfîn, 1960) pp.146-47

⁸⁹ ibid p.147

⁹⁰ Albert Nasri Nâdir, op. cit. p.59

his bad deeds because he "acquires" them.⁹¹

No doubt the controversy on this issue has been very great and was responsible to a large extent for bitterness among the Shi'ites and the Sunnites, yet there are some points of agreement. These are :

1. Opinion is unanimous on the issue of man's responsibility for what he does; the difference occurring when the question arises as to who is the creator of these actions. In our opinion, the Ash'arites failed to see the difference between being responsible for choice of one's actions and creating them. Furthermore, keeping in mind the Mu'tazilites' distinction⁹² between the primary and secondary causes, man becomes only the secondary cause of any creation, if it is attributed to him.
2. In believing man to be able to acquire, the Ash'arites indirectly agree with others on the freedom of man's choice. Hence, there appears to be an implicit agreement on this issue.
3. Taking into consideration what the Quran⁹³ says about man, it becomes clear that man's freedom of choice and will is unimpaired and the whole issue precipitates

⁹¹ Abul Hasan al-Ash'ari, Kitâb-ul-Luma' Fi Raddi-Ahl-uz-Zaigh Wal Bid'a, trans. Richard J. McCarthy, (Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut) pp.53-103

⁹² supra p.108

⁹³ The Quran, LXXVI,2-5

in logical subtleties.

Nature of Human Nature

The Quran declares man as 'the best of the creation, the one who accepted the responsibility when it was offered to him by God and the one who listens and sees.⁹⁴ From the account of the creation of Adam, as given in the Quran, some basic points emerge, which are given below:

1. There are two essential components of man - the clay or body and Rûh or soul. It is the soul which makes the body worthy and by virtue of the soul man commands superiority over other creatures.
2. He is responsible, of his nature, for the actions taken by him. "God has given man the gift of becoming conscious of his own being."⁹⁵
3. He is not an automata and a static being. He is capable of change. He may rise and he may fall.⁹⁶
4. It is the knowledge which gives him superiority over other creatures and capacity to improve.⁹⁷
5. Death is the suspension of the dynamic activities of man, which are conducted through the agency of

⁹⁴ The Quran, XXXIII, 72

⁹⁵ Ghulam Sarwar, op.cit., p.133

⁹⁶ The Quran, XCV, 4-6

⁹⁷ ibid, II, 31-34

soul⁹⁸

6."Man⁹⁸ is admitted to be a weak creature, liable to sink to the animal level, and still capable of rising to the highest rank in creation, according to his righteousness, a proper combination of knowledge and action." The Quran says⁹⁹:

O Mankind! We have created you out of a male and a female, and made you families and tribes, so that you may know one another. Surely, the most honourable of you, with Allah, is the one who is the most righteous among you. Surely, Allah is Knowing, Aware.

The above citation indicates, that while Islam insists on inherent equality of man-kind and refuses to recognize any difference of caste, creed and colour, it does take cognizance of superiority on the basis of personal achievement and the best criterion for this is piety and righteousness. It further indicates that, despite the common origin, men are different in respect of their achievement. From this we can infer that difference in the accomplishment points out to the difference in the capacity to achieve and accomplish. With these preliminary remarks, we now refer back to Muslim thinkers on the issue.

Mu'tazilites' View¹⁰⁰

It has already been said that the Mu'tazilites believed

⁹⁸ ibid, LVI, 83-87

⁹⁹ ibid , XXVIII, 5; XLIV, 4-25, XIII, 49

¹⁰⁰ Muhammad Iqbal, op.cit., pp.41-45
Nadir, op.cit., pp.74-80
De Boer, op.cit., pp.53-55

in the freedom of man's will and his responsibility for his actions. They consider man to be having a body and a soul. One group of them, led by an-Nazzâm and Abul Hudail held that the relationship between the body and the soul is similar to that of the accident to the atom. The other group, represented by Bashr bin Mu'ammâr, considered the relationship to be atomistic. According to Nadir, these positions were the result of the influence of the Greek Atomists and Plato.¹⁰¹

Like the European Rationalists of the Seventeenth Century, the Mu'tazilites were confronted with the problem of 'biological dualism'. To explain the interaction between body and mind, Descartes maintained in his Sixth Meditation that the pineal gland is the seat of mind and through this gland, interaction between the body and the soul takes place.¹⁰² To solve this problem, some of the Mu'tazilites, like Abul Hudail, considered God to be the cause of this interaction and others treated it as purely a function of the soul without the interference of the body.

Ikhwân-us-Safâ

They also treated body and soul as distinct phenomena. According to them, the soul remains in the body as an embryo stays in the uterus, in order to attain perfection.

¹⁰¹ Albert Nasri Nâdir, op.cit., p.82

¹⁰² René Descartes, Meditations on First Philosophy, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (New York, The Liberal Art Press, 1960) pp.68-85

Al-Fârâbî's Position¹⁰³

Al-Fârâbî maintained that every body has two components, form and matter. Rational soul, which takes its birth from the Active Intellect is the real man and does not die with death of the body. Soul gives completeness to the existence of the body but that which gives completeness to the existence of the soul is mind or intellect ('aql). Mind is present in the soul of a child as potentiality and actualizes in the course of its apprehending the bodily forms with the help of sensory faculty. This transition of mind('aql) from potential to the actual is not man's own action but is brought about by the Super-human Mind which has sprung from the last Sphere-Spirit or Intellect. The Super-human Spirit affecting the human mind is called by al-Fârâbî as 'Aql Mustafâd while the latter is known as 'Aql Fa''âl. The latter is also responsible for the interaction between the body and the soul.

Ibn Sînâ's View

Ibn Sînâ agrees with Aristotle in the definition of soul as "the entelechy of a natural body possessing organs." But he further says that the soul is not a mere mixture of elements but over and above it. The souls are of

¹⁰³ Zabîh Ullah Safâ, op.cit. pp.190-91
De Boer, op.cit. pp.118-21
'Umar Farrûkh, Tarîkh, pp.277-78
al-Yâziji and Karam, op.cit. pp.545-50

three types: vegetable, animal and human. Animal soul is distinguished from the vegetable soul by virtue of its functions like locomotion and perception. Perception is the passive reception of the forms of the sensible objects. Perceptive faculty of the animal soul is divided into two parts: external senses and internal senses, as referred to earlier.¹⁰⁴

Human soul as distinguished from vegetable and animal souls, is an immaterial substance, independent of the body.¹⁰⁵ The soul does not conceive through body, because, if the soul requires a physical medium to conceive other things, it must require a different body, then, to conceive the body with which it is attached.

Human soul has two faculties corresponding to the cognitive and motive faculties of the animal soul. These are the theoretical and practical intellect. The theoretical intellect is concerned with our cognition of truth. The practical intellect is the motive force behind man's actions and behaviour. The practical intellect may be considered in three types of relationships: in its relation with the animal appetitive faculty as a source of certain human emotions like shame;

¹⁰⁴ supra p.99

¹⁰⁵ This portion is based upon the following works:
Ibn Sîna, Kitâb-un-Nijât, trans. F.Rehman (London, Oxford University Press, 1952)

Muhammad Iqbal, op.cit. , pp.32-37

'Umar Farrûkh, op.cit. , pp.330-37

De Boer, op.cit. , pp.139-43

al-Yâziġi and Karam, op.cit., pp.619-31

'Ali Akbar Siyâsi, op.cit., pp.102-66

in its relation with the animal imagination in connection with deliberations concerning particular actions; and in relation with its own self as a source of moral premises and the general principle on which the morality is based. The theoretical intellect is solely concerned with the forms. If these forms are in matter, its function is to reduce them to abstractions and if they are already abstract, it receives and incorporates them into human rational soul (nafs-un-nâtiqah). Theoretical intellect passes from potentiality into actual possession of forms in three stages - of absolute potentiality, possession of some rudiments and of perfection. Potential intellect changes into actual intellect in three stages: of material intellect, of possible potentiality and perfection of potentiality. He holds that after complete actualization, human soul, through its faculties, can perform the act of thinking with the help of senses. Beyond, this stage of actualization, he admit another, that is of complete actuality as against complete potentiality. Degrees of actualization in different persons are different, which account for their different achievements. The prophets, according to him, are born with absolute actual intellect and therefore, they donot have to undergo the process of actualization of the potential intellect like other persons. Soul is declared to be immortal by him.

Conclusion

Thus from the previous discussion, it appears that the fundamental issue in connection with the nature of human nature is that body-mind dualism. He is neither body as modern behaviourists think, nor pure soul, having body as affliction, Hindu thought considers, but a combination of both. Soul needs body in order to 'actualize' or return to its 'celestial abode'. Body without soul is dead matter - the basest of the creation. Hence, personality is an ideal correlation between the body and the soul. However, the soul has an upper hand and uses the body to attain perfection. There is a common link between the humanity as all souls have originated from one source. The source of differences among individuals is man's freedom to choose or to acquire, as Ash'arites say, his actions. Degrees of perfections of different souls are due to differences in the actualization of the intellects.

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CHAPTER V

MUSLIM EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN THE PAST

Before finally attempting to present the basic principles of Islamic education, we plan to discuss in brief the ideas of Muslim thinkers relating to the field of education. This is necessary in view of the distinction which we may make between the Muslim thought and Islamic principles. Muslim thought is the product of an interaction between various factors, both originating from Islamic faith as well as belonging to non-Islamic sources. Hence, it may be the case that what Muslim thinkers say is directly or indirectly opposed to what Islam intends.

Muslim educational activity was not enforced according to a pre-determined plan. It rather evolved during the passage of time. It has been changing, developing and differentiating itself into a complex structure. Within a century after the death of the Prophet, the connotation and scope of knowledge changed to a large extent. This change entailed a change in the method and administration of education.

We should therefore, not expect medieval Muslim thinkers to have formulated their educational theory in a form as we

know it to-day. Islam never gave final details of anything closely connected with the social set-up which may change with the passage of time. It only gave broad outlines and basic principles, to be translated into action in the perspective of a particular era. Islam is flexible enough to suit the changing circumstances.¹ Therefore, if we expect Islam to have given a manifesto of education to its followers, we shall be disappointed. It was left to the people to develop on the lines suggested by the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet. It laid down two important principles: (1) that education is of primary importance to avoid a blind following of a rigid dogma; and (2) that the end of all life-activities is to seek God's Grace; everything else has to be oriented towards Him and Him alone. Education is one of the life-activities.

During the early period of their ascendancy, Muslims were pre-occupied mainly with two things: (1) to defend their borders against the on-slaught of Iranian and Roman Empires, and (2) to reconstruct their social set-up in accordance with the dictates of Islam. Their pre-occupations, coupled with the unfortunate political strife, succeeding the end of the Pious Caliphate, did not permit them to organize their educational

¹ To see how the Prophet intended that Muslims should induce and infer from the basic principles, we may refer to his talk with Mu'adh ibn Jabal, when the latter was sent to Yaman as a teacher and a judge. For details, see Bayard Dodge, Muslim Education in Medieval Times (Washington, D.C., The Middle East Institute, 1962) pp. 64-66

activity in the modern sense of the word. They let it grow and prosper freely, without putting any check or exercising any measure of control over it. The central political authority did help individual scholars and students, morally and financially, but very little attention was paid to the organisation on a rational basis during the early periods. Hence, it was through the efforts of the individual scholars that educational patterns of early Muslim society were built up. They started their activities during the life-time of the Prophet and carried them on more vigorously after his death. The compilation of the Holy Quran, undertaken by 'Ali ibn Abi Tâlib, 'Abdullah bin Mas'ûd, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas and 'Uthmân bin 'Affân, was the starting point. The result of this neglect to organise education on a collective basis was that education spread out without any plan and the first school in the Muslim world, in the modern sense of the word, came into existence as late as the fifth century of the Muslim era.²

Before this period, education was conducted in the mosques and in the houses of learned men who undertook it, as their moral and religious duty to educate the people, to help them become better servants of God. In addition to these, well-to-do Muslims established mosque-schools or kuttâb as has been mentioned by Shalaby³, Dodge⁴ and Goldziher.⁵

² Ahmad Shalaby, op.cit., p.57

³ ibid pp.18-23

⁴ Bayard Dodge op.cit. pp.1-3

⁵ I. Goldziher, "Muslim Education", Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics, Vol.V, p.199

Hence in the absence of any control by the government, these individuals ran their institutions according to their individual judgements, inclinations and prejudices. It was only after the Saljûq influence in Baghdâd, that regular schools initiated by Nizâm-ul-Mulk, appeared on the scene. Shalaby observes in this connection:⁶

The conquest of Baghdâd by Saljuks [sic] (25th Muharram 447 A.H.) was the turning point in the struggle against Shi'ism there. The Shi'a doctrines, which had been fostered by Buwayhids, no longer flourished in Baghdâd. The method followed by the Saljûqs in replacing the Shi'a heresy by the Sunni system of thought was a counter-propaganda. The people must learn the true religion, therefore colleges must be established everywhere. . . . Nizâm-ul-Mulk founded splendid colleges called after his name in Baghdâd, Nishapur and many other cities.

This gives an idea of the interest of the political authority in the establishment of schools and colleges - to give education to the people in order to win them over to the official creed---, a kind of indoctrination. This also throws some light on al-Ghazali's ban on certain subjects. Till this time, the educational activity was mostly carried on by the Shi'ite Imâms in Madînah and other people who did not belong to the official creed, like Imâm Mâlik and Ikhwân-us-Safa⁷ - who were in fact political suspects. This lack of organisation in the field of education resulted into the fact that very little

⁶ Ahmad Shalaby, op.cit. , p.57

⁷ Syed Amir Ali, op.cit. , pp.362-66

attention was paid to the formulation of a philosophy of education or even to discuss it as a problem of philosophy. The literature available on the field of education is rather pedagogical and rarely deals with the principles of education.⁸ Among the thinkers who are accepted and named as philosophers, only Ikhwân-us-Safâ, Ibn Sînâ, al-Ghazâli and Ibn Khuldûn paid attention to this branch of knowledge.

Ikhwân-us-Safâ on Education⁹

They treated education and training as complementary to each other. Training, in their view, is "polishing up one's potentialities and capabilities." and education is "the transfer of information and knowledge to the student."

They held that while in mother's womb, a child does not possess any knowledge, characteristics, religious belief or morals. After birth, the child goes on developing his faculties for four years. During this period, which they call 'training period'. he starts getting mature in receiving sensations acquiring a sense of differentiation and recognition, thinking, seeing and instinctive knowledge. In other words, he achieves readiness for learning. They further hold that physical senses in the child are alert since his birth and it is through these

⁸ For details see,
Bayard Dodge, op.cit., pp.31-64
Khalîl A. Totah. op.cit., pp. 67-77

⁹ 'Umar Farrûkh, Ikhwân-us, pp.114-34
Kamâl al-Yaziji, Ma'âlim-ul-Fikr-al-'Arabi (Beirut, Dâr
-ul-'ilm lil Malayîn, 1961) pp.277-82

senses that he gets information during his training period.

They ascribed great importance to the influence of environment on the child. They held that "the child will acquire the habits of those among whom he is reared." Children have an innate tendency to infer and deduce from the things they see and also to try to imitate. The influence of environment in their view appears in one's aptitude for special types of knowledge and arts and crafts. They further opine that a child is more suited to acquire the craft of ancestors as compared to that of others. In support of their position they allude to an order of Aradshîr Pâpkân,¹⁰ wherein he made it compulsory for the people to learn the arts and crafts of their fore-fathers and must not violate this rule.¹¹

Aims of Education

In Ikhwân's opinion, the aim of education is "to polish up the gems of the soul" and to correct its habits in order to enable it to live till eternity. They said that any knowledge which does not help the soul get a better place in the life to come, is of little or no use. Every soul has the potential for knowledge which the parents and the teachers make actual. Soul can actualize itself only through education.

Sciences (ʿulûm) have a heirarchy and it is not possible

¹⁰ An Iranian king.

¹¹ 'Umar Farrukh, op.cit., p.125

to learn all of them. Hence, in their view, a man should acquire in the first instance that science which is indispensable. He should then select for himself whatever suits his genius, aptitude and capacity.

Education starts after the fourth year of age for the boys.¹² "When the boy has reached the age of four, give him to the care of a teacher so that he may learn what he does not know - reading, writing, manners and etiquette, business arithmetic, knowledge of weights and measurements."¹³ They treated it as a good luck of the student if he got a teacher who was bright, of good manners, clear-headed, lover of truth, unbiased, without any prejudice caused by belonging to a particular school of thought. "They made it imperative for the student to follow the teacher in the initial stages of his education, but, when he has learnt quite enough, he should give up this attitude and try to discover for himself, through discussion and speculation, the truth based upon arguments."¹⁴

They divided learning into two main branches: (1) those which are innate like sense-perception leading to knowledge of self-evident truths; and (2) those which are acquired like mathematics. They further held that knowledge of certain things, like the knowledge of what is going to happen in future, is not possible.

Knowledge can be acquired in three ways: (1) by

¹² According to Farrûkh, they did not believe in women's education.

¹³ Farrûkh, op.cit., p.127

¹⁴ ibid, o

speculation, (2) by hearing, as in case of language, and (3) by insight - through seeing and rational deduction. After one has acquired knowledge, he should go out to observe the world.

Ibn Sînâ on Education¹⁵

He gives great emphasis on the early training of the child and treats it as a duty of the parents to give a pleasing name to him and provide for him a cultured nurse. Training of the child is divided into two parts: (1) cultivation of good habits before the child is influenced by evil effects, and (2) training of his intellect.¹⁶

In connection with the cultivation of good manners in the child, he disagrees with the most of the ancient and medieval thinkers on giving corporal punishment to the child. He, however, does allow it in extreme cases. He says that the best way to keep the child away from bad habits is that motivation should precede fear of punishment, which may have an adverse effect on him. Excessive punishment, he says, leads the child astray. He should be made to appreciate good habits through precepts.

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Muhammad Luṭfi Jum'ah, Tarikh Falâsafat-ul-Islâm Fil Mashriq wal Maghrib (Cairo, Matba'ah al-Ma'ârif, 1927) pp.70-71.
Kamâl Ibrâhîm, "At-Tarbiyah 'Inda Ibn Sînâ", Al-Kitâb-udh-Dhahabî lil Mahrajân-il-Alafî (Cairo, Matba'ah Misr, 1952) pp.335-41.

A.S.Tritton, Materials on Muslim Education in the Middle Ages (London, Luzac & Co., 1958) p.103

¹⁶Ibn Sînâ lays great emphasis on intellect, which is the real essence of man, while body is just its tool. See chapter IV.

Intellectual Training

The stage for intellectual training of the child comes when he is bodily strong, speaks well and is ready to receive instruction. This training, in his view, should start with the Holy Quran. He should be given an idea of the alphabet, principles of religion; poetry should be recited to him. The child should be acquainted with the manners of the society. Insistence on honesty and good behaviour should form an important part of his training. This is the elementary stage of education. At this stage, in his view, the child is to be explored for future training.

He recommends that the child should be asked to commit to memory verses from the Holy Quran and Arabic Poetry, so that his faculty of memorization gets developed. Furthermore, by this method, he will acquire a knowledge of the best specimens of his culture and is thus motivated to use them and create similar specimens. He is against the practice of giving education to the children individually and thinks that they should be taught with other children which will provide a better opportunity for him to learn.

Secondary Education

It was said while describing Ibn Sîmâ's theory of soul that he believes in different aptitudes in different persons.¹⁷

¹⁷ Supra p.122-23

On this basis, he recommends that after finishing elementary education, a child " must be educated according to his talent."¹⁸ In al-Qânûn, he is reported to have said : "It is the duty of the teacher then to study the qualities of the student and direct him to the most suitable branch of learning."¹⁹

He further recommends that, if a student finds that he cannot cope with a particular branch of learning, he should change for another in which he may do better. He also lays stress on learning some art for future living and thus selection of the subjects according to the profession chosen.

Aims of Education

The major aim of education, in his view, is action and to get benefit of knowledge in earning one's livelihood. This is because of the fact that the student should be inculcated with a taste for earning his living by the sweat of his brow and not to look forward to his father's riches, because this is a corrupting influence on his character. Thus, he differs with Ikhwân, who maintained that education is to be aimed at polishing up one's soul. But this does not mean that Ibn Sînâ did not emphasize the importance purely intellectual training to actualize the possible potentialities of the soul.

¹⁸ Ahmad Shalaby, op.cit., p.168

¹⁹ ibid

Al-Ghazali's Educational Theory²⁰

Al-Ghazâli holds parents responsible for looking after their children in a proper manner, as he considers a child like a mirror, ready to reflect anything put in front of him as well as a sacred trust in the hands of the parents. He is of the opinion that through education a child can be turned into a good citizen or a criminal. He considers self-respect, modesty and sincerity as his outstanding qualities.

Training of the child, in his view, should begin with the teaching of table-manners as a child is exposed to eating as the first occupation in life. He has given details of these manners as well as to what kind of dress he should wear. He does not approve of colourful and silken dress for the boys.

Among the general rules for the training of a child, he includes that (1) a child should not be allowed to do anything secretly; (2) he should do physical exercise daily in order to be fit to work; (3) poor children should be made to understand that accepting charity from others is detrimental to their self-respect; (4) a child should be necessarily made to conform to the manners of society as well as refrain from

²⁰ Al-Ghazali, *op.cit.*, pp.15-98

'Umar Farrûkh, *Târîkh*, pp.391-416

Ahmad Shalaby, *op.cit.*, p.194

Lutfi Jum'ah, *op.cit.*, pp.75-77

Anwâr-ul-Hasan, *Imâm Ghazâli Kay Ta'lfîmi Nazariyyât*

(Lahore, Isha'at Manzil, 1954)

Fakhûri and Jurr, *op.cit.* pp.311-336

swearing, calling names, using vulgar and abusive language etc.;

(5) a child should be allowed to play after he has come back from the school; and (6) habits of patience and forbearance should be inculcated in him.

Al-Ghazâli On Curriculum

Like Ibn Sînâ, he believes that education of a child should begin with the Quran. For the first time in the history of Muslim education, he took steps to improve the curriculum which was in vogue in his age. These steps are given below:

1. Classification of subjects into religious and non-religious studies and treatment of Jurisprudence (fiqh) as a worldly subject,
2. Exclusion of polemics from al-Kalâm.
3. Further classification of subjects as obligatory (fard 'ain) and optional (fard Kifâyah).
4. Declaring certain subjects as approved (mahmûd) and some others as disapproved (madhmûm).²¹
5. Making Tafsîr, Hadith, Fiqh and al-Kalâm, including Logic as compulsory subjects.

²¹ The reason for his condemning some subjects like physics philosophy, mathematics etc. is that in his view these subjects created a habit, arguing everything, which led the people to entertain doubt about the dictates of religion. For details see,

Al-Ghazali, op.cit. pp.35-38
Khalîl Totah, op.wit., pp.54

6. Condemnation of the ideas that rational subjects ('ulûm ma'qûlah) are not compatible with the non-rational subjects ('ulum manqûlah).
7. Division of optional subjects into three types: (1) approved (mahmûd), (2) disapproved (madhmûm) and (3) unobjectionable (mubâh). He treats medicine, arithmetic, economics, tailoring, weaving, agriculture, politics and hair-dressing as good for society. History and poetry have been declared as unobjectionable subjects.

Ibn Khuldûn's Views²²

Ibn Khuldûn considered three factors responsible for social dynamics: (1) state, (2) geographical environment, and (3) religion. In addition to these, education is an important factor which affects the life of the community. In his view, what differentiates man from animals is his social attitude, which is achieved through thinking.

We have already referred to his theory of knowledge, wherein it was said that he gives due consideration to sensations and sense-perceptions as well as human intellect as sources of knowledge. He further believes in the limitations

²² Ibn Khuldûn, An Arab Philosophy of History (Selections from his prolegomenon) trans. Charles Issawi (London, 1950)
Muhsin Mahdi, Ibn Khuldûn's Philosophy of History (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1955)

'Umar Farrûkh, Târîkh, pp. 589-92

al-Yâziġi and Karam, op.cit., pp. 953-1031

Fatahiyyah Hasan Sulaimân, Bahth Fil Madhahib-it-Tarabawi

'Inda Ibn Khuldûn, (Cairo, Maktabah Nahdat-ul-Fir

of human intellect. In his opinion, reason cannot aptly deal with matters like the Oneness of God, nature of Prophethood, nature of God's Attributes etc. In this respect, he is very close to Kant,²³ who demonstrated that understanding was a super-sensible faculty and that speculative philosophy does not add to our knowledge of God, soul and World.²⁴

Ibn Khuldûn considers education as a social institution. It grows gradually according to the needs of the community. Thus he is very close to the realistic school of education in considering that all knowledge results from the activities of sensory organs and mental faculties and also in not differentiating between theoretical and practical education.²⁵

Aims of Education

There are four aims of education according to Ibn Khuldûn: (1) to enable the pupil to plan for actions which may promote the interest of the society; (2) to try to go beyond sensory knowledge; (3) to develop good habits for which religion is essential because it is the civilizer of morals and purifier of the soul as well as the promoter of a spirit of cooperation in society;²⁶ and (4) to ensure means of livelihood. He acknowledges teaching as profession, unlike al-Ghazâli who does not allow

²³ Jamâl Salfîba, Ibn Khuldûn (Damascus, Matba'ah Ibn Zaidûn 1933) pp.10-11

²⁴ William Turner, History of Philosophy, (Boston and London, Ginn & Company 1903) p.540

²⁵ Nohâ 'Arif-ul-Hasan, At-Tarbiyah 'Inda Ibn Khuldûn, (Unpublished Master's Degree Thesis, Department of Education, American University of Beirut, 1951) p.86

²⁶ ibid

a teacher to receive payment for the instructions he gives.

Nature of Human Beings

He has three different positions in relation to the nature of human nature:

1. By nature man is good and society corrupts him.
2. God has created both good and evil tendencies in human beings. But if man does not culture his soul by accepting the guidance of religion, he is prone to fall a victim to the evil.
3. Man is more inclined towards the Good.

We can deduce that he considers nature as good while society is a corrupting force. To counteract it, religion is essential. Thus he may be compared with Rousseau, who also considered society as the source of all evil and found solution in reverting to nature. But Ibn Khaldûn differs with Rousseau on the issue of religion.

Kinds of Learning

Ibn Khaldûn divides all kinds of learning or knowledge into two main categories: (1) rational ('aqliyyah) and non-rational (naqliyyah). Rational learning is further divided into four branches as follows:

1. Logic.
2. Physics, including knowledge of man and animals.

Botany, Geology, Minerology, Medicine and Agriculture.

3. Theology including metaphysics.
4. Education including Geometry, Mathematics, Music and Astronomy.

The non-rational subjects have been classified as given below:

1. Tafsir
2. Reading and Recitation (of the Holy Quran)
3. Hadith
4. Principles of Jurisprudence and Dialectics.
5. Al-Kalâm.
6. Theory and Practice of Mysticism.
7. Interpretation of Dreams.
8. Philological knowledge, including language, grammar, prosody, literature and allied studies,

He recommends that education should start with the second category of subjects, because these studies prepare the developing pupil to grasp abstract knowledge.

Consensus of Opinion

Some common points which emerge from this brief account of the educational ideas of medieval Muslim philosophers, are that (1) education is essential and should start at an early age; (2) it should not be theoretical only but also practical so that the student may get benefit of his labour and serve the society, leading a respectable life; (3) vocational education

is unanimously favoured;(4) emphasis is given to the wholesome development of child and payment of due attention to his psychological conditions;and(5) no one has prohibited the study of sciences.Al-Ghazali does condemn certain subjects by virtue of their being 'dangerous for men of weak temperament in relation to their faith, but he has nowhere said that the study of these subjects is prohibited.

In the end, we would like to observe that these ideas in our view, were never actually translated into actual practices except in case of al-Ghazali. Thus Muslim education in the medieval time almost remained without any rational basis and was governed by the political expediecies of the ruler or general prejudices of the masses.

CHAPTER VI

ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

In the preceding chapter, we outlined briefly what medieval Muslim thinkers said about education. The present chapter is intended to present an outline of Islamic philosophy of education. But before this is done a few observations are necessary.

As it has been said, growth of education among the early Muslims was not the result of some well thought-out plan. It was a mushroom growth. It just **spread, through the zeal and enthusiasm** of some individuals. The principle working behind this growth was Islam emphasis on education and knowledge. In the beginning the problem was simple. The educational pattern set by the Prophet, in consideration of the needs of the community at that time, worked for some period. It produced good results even without any active interest of the central political authority. But later on, when the society's needs increased on account of a social revolution brought from within and without, Muslim society needed considerate thinking and a rational planning of its education. But political authorities were too busy in other affairs to give any attention to this important social institution. It went on without any pattern, getting more and more complex day by day.

Unfortunately, we cannot discuss here how education among medieval Muslims developed and how the system worked. Shalaby, Toṭah, Tritton, Talas and others have taken great pains to trace out the history of this development. The main point which transpires from these researches is that education ultimately became a tool in the hands of the rulers. Thus the occasional persecution of scholars and other dissident elements mars the history of Islamic culture. In our opinion, such a policy fundamentally negated the basic principle put forth by the Holy Quran. In this connection we have in our view both major divisions of the Muslims, the Sunnites and the Shi'ites. The Safavides' era in Iran was no less hard on scholars and thinkers as compared to the periods of whimsical dogmatism of al-Mutawakkil or the Sljûq sultans. The vested interests could not allow free growth of intellectual activities. But the Quran is more than explicit in the following verse on this issue:¹

If any one disputes in this matter with thee, now after (full) knowledge has come to thee, say: "Come! let us gather together, - our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves: then let us earnestly² pray and invoke the curse of God on those who lie.

This clearly shows that suppression, if it could not be applied to the Christians of Najrân, to whom the above verse refers, then it is not the solution of intellectual dissension.

¹ Also see
The Quran, LL, 256; CIX, 1-6 ✓

² ibid, III, 61.

See commentary by Abdullah Yusuf'Ali on this verse, which was revealed in the 10th year of Hijrah, when the Christian of Najran (Yaman, 150 miles from San'a) sent an embassy to Madinah.

The result of this policy of the rulers and bigotry of theologians, led the scholars and thinkers away from society, as is evident from the activities of Ikhwân-us-Safâ and teaching profession was adopted by persons of mediocre intelligence and accomplishment who could support the policy of the ruling class. Another important fact to keep in view in this connection is that, in the beginning, educated persons were religious leaders also and there was no such group in the social order to be named as theologians. Thus there was no disparity between education and religion. But later on, especially during the Abbaside period and with the rise of jurists, Muslim society began distinguishing between a pious person and a scholar, This distinction in our view has no justification in Islam as piety or taqwâ includes scholarship. The powers enjoyed by the jurists resulted into another important fact, that is, their opinions were considered to be 'more religious' as compared to the scholars. Thus the system gradually got crystallized as well as the gulf between theological and non-theological studies increased. The result is in the minds of some people, especially among the Muslims of India and Pakistan, Islamic education has become synonymous with theological studies. This implied identity is not warranted.

For a basic definition of Islamic philosophy of education we have therefore, to refer to the Quran and the Traditions of the Prophet, instead of looking for guidance to the theologians

who were the creatures of political and psychological influences of their age.

While dealing with the medieval Muslim education, Dr. Totah has brought out a number of defects. He has referred to it being controlled by dogma. "It looked backward more than forward. Al-Ghazâli, for example, would prohibit mind from venturing into dangerous fields."³ He has further mentioned the names of al-Maqarri and even Ibn Khaldûn in making such proclamations and says that "they were carried out into harsh practices as is well shown by the fate of Averroes."⁴ The dread of innovation which has always shackled human behaviour and retarded progress had a most undesirable influence upon Arabic institutions."⁴ This dread of innovation was the sole cause of declaring the door of ijtihâd, closed for ever, at the instance of political authorities. We shall not be exaggerating in our remarks that this step, prohibition of ijtihâd, proved most fatal for the growth of Muslim society. Syed Amir Ali observes in this connection:

The present stagnation of the Musalman communities is principally due to the notion which has fixed itself on the minds of the generality of Moslems, that the right to exercise of private judgement ceased with the early legists, that its exercise in modern times is sinful, and a Muslim in order to be regarded as an orthodox follower of Muhammad, should belong to one or the other of the schools established by the schoolmen of Islam, and abandon his

³ Khalil A. Totah, op.cit., p.92

⁴ ibid

judgement absolutely to the men, the interpretation of men who lived in the ninth century, and could have no conception of the twentieth Oblivious of the universality of the Master's teaching, unassisted by his spirit, devoid of his inspiration, they forgot that the Prophet, from the pinnacle of his genius, has spoken to all humanity. They mixed up the temporary with the permanent, the universal with the particular.

Our position therefore, is that education of the medieval Muslim society was conducted rather by the political interests of the Abbasides and vested interests of the jurists and theologians than Islamic philosophy, which is non-dogmatic in its spirit. Objections raised by Muslims at the time when a treaty was concluded between them and the Quraish of Mecca and the reaction of the Prophet to those objections, sets a very clear example of this spirit. The Prophet did use a fatwa nor did he excommunicate those who said that they even doubted his Prophet-hood, which he could easily do. But he instead, convinced them with arguments. Freedom of opinion is the corner-stone of Islamic faith. 'Ali is reported to have said: "Your doubts are stepping-stones for further cementation of your beliefs." In our opinion, it was in the political interest of the 'Abbasides to put a ban on ijtihād. They did not not people to think which might have led them to question the very validity of 'Abbaside Caliphate.

Hence, whatever the defects may be found in the medieval Muslim education, irrespective of the sect, they cannot be ascribed to the Islamic philosophy of education. These defects have to be attributed to environmental conditions and external

influences like the emergence of a priestly class among the Muslims in the wake of other communities they conquered.

With these preliminary remarks, we now proceed to present an Islamic philosophy of education, inferred and deduced from the study of basic Islamic principles and precepts of the Prophet as well as the practices of the noble members of his family.

Aim of Education

We have already mentioned that Islam lays a great emphasis on education and its attitude in this respect is quite liberal. Hence, the fundamental question in connection with an Islamic philosophy of education relates to its aim.

Totah has quoted an-Namarî⁵ as having said that aims of education are to be perfect in religion, to awaken one's intelligence, to have a companion in one's loneliness, to establish social contacts and to get money. In Totah's opinion this statement is "representative of Arab philosophy of education."⁶

We do not dispute this statement but see it from a different angle. It relates to uses of education rather than its aims. We therefore, refer to the Quran which says: "We have created mankind and the jinn, except that they should perform 'Ibadah. 'Ibâdah or worship in Islam, as we have earlier said,

⁵ Author of Jami' Bayân-ul-'Ilm. He belongs to the 12th century A.D.

⁶ Khalîl A. Totah, op.cit., pp.84-85

is not only formal observance of certain rites. It connotes a complete submission to the law of God and His Will, in every phase of life. Formal prayers are nothing but preparation for such a submission. Thus in Islamic creed, the idea of omnipresence of God permeates life in its totality, This is why formal prayers in Islam need not be performed only in a special place. God is everywhere and hence prayers can be said anywhere. But God is also present all the time and thus His presence is to be felt all the time. A Muslim is supposed to be in communion with God throughout his life - sitting on the prayer-rug, labouring the field, defending his country's borders, in short, while doing anything and everything.

Relaxations given to Muslims in their formal prayers and other ritual observances make our point clear. While referring to the sacrifice offered by the Muslims at the time of Hajj or on 'Id-ul-Aghâ, the Quran clearly says that the flesh of animals sacrificed does not reach God; what reaches Him is the piety or 'taqwâ' operating behind these offerings. The criterion of excellence in the Quranic code is piety and conforming to dictate of taqwâ. The Quran further gives us a clue to the achievement of this quality." Be just, it is nearer to taqwâ." Hence the whole matter precipitates down to this: Islam aims at preparing persons who are termed as muttaqîn (pious) - those who can lead their lives in a just way.

To achieve this state education becomes necessary. This is why there is such an emphasis on education. One has to take decision; make value-judgments and fix his goals. This world according to Islam, is an opportunity to act; judgment of these acts will be given on another day.⁷ The functions of the Prophet, as detailed by the Quran, are as given below:

- a) to recite verses to them (people);
- b) to purify them (yuzakkfihim);
- c) to teach them the Kitâb and wisdom (hikmah).

Thus in our view, the ultimate aim of Islamic education is to prepare individuals who live in a society, which is just and in which the idea of omnipresence and omnipotence of God as well as a belief in His Justice predominates. The individuals must not resign as ascetics to the wilderness of deserts and mountains, but must lead a normal full-blooded life, performing all their worldly functions but having a clear-cut notion of what they are and what they are for; orienting their lives to one goal - the life to come (Hayât-ul-Akhirah). This needs a balanced life. The Prophet declared the middle path to be the best and Ali ibn Abi Talib observed:⁸

And this world, to perish is its destiny;
And those who belong to it, have to leave it;
It is very sweet and fresh and alluring;
It rushes towards those who see it;
It settles down in the hearts of those who cast a glance
over it.

Leave it therefore, after you have taken the best out

⁷ Ali ibn Abi Talib, op.cit., Vol.I, p.89

⁸ ibid, p.91

of it as your baggage (for the journey after death).
Donot ask of it more than what is necessary; and
donot seek from it more than what is sufficient.

The Muslims are required to use this world instead of
being used by it as a tool. This is what means when he strongly
advocates for the conquest of the universe. He says:⁹

The Quran, recognizing that empirical attitude is
indispensable stage in the spiritual life of community,
attaches equal importance to all the regions of human
experience as yielding knowledge of the Ultimate Reality,
which reveals its symbols both within and without....
The Naturalism of the Quran is only a recognition of the
fact that man is related to nature, and this relation, in
view of its possibility as a means of controlling her forces,
must be exploited in the interest, not of unrighteous
desire for domination but in a nobler interest of a free
upward movement of a spiritual life.

With this ultimate aim in view, the Muslims are
required to carve out their way according to their local conditions.
The examples set by the Prophet and his trusted companions as
well as his family members are sufficient guides for us.

Totah has stated that "first comes the religious note"
in connection with the aims of Islamic education. This is
undoubtedly true. But this note is religious, not theological.
We agree with az-Zarnûji that " the object of education is to
attain the pleasure and good-will of the Almighty and win
eternal life."¹⁰

⁹ Muhammad Iqbal, Reconstruction of Religious Thought in
Islam (London, Oxford University Press, 1934) pp.14-15

¹⁰ Khalîl A. Totah, op.cit., p.85

This is in fact the fundamental point. From this aim emerge all others. Thus our position is that, if the study of the Quran and the Traditions, leads one to negate this ultimate aim, it would definitely be against the spirit of Islam, and if the student grasps the spirit of Islam without specializing in jurisprudence and memorizing ten thousand Traditions, and choosing some other field of specialization, his education is Islamic on all accounts. When al-Ghazâli severely criticised the 'ulama of his age, his target were the persons, known to be pious and well-versed in Tafsîr, Hadith and Fiqh and other branches of religious learning and the reason was simple. They were more interested in their own selves rather than promoting the cause of Islamic education. He thus says:¹¹

He who pursues learning in order to make money, so that he may attain a social position or reduce his taxes and evade his obligations towards the sultan; he who studies for the sake of any other ambition save that of serving God exposes himself to dire consequences.

When we read this statement and know that he treated fiqh as a worldly subject, we may very well deduce that even the study of the basic principles of Islamic Law may become un-Islamic if it does not fulfill the Islamic aim of education - to be pious, righteous and just.

Conditioned by this aim, we may fix our aims according

11

ibid, p.86

to our conditions. Islam does not fix them. They are flexible, open to change and improvement. What really matters is the motive which has an immense importance in Islam. We would like to quote Totah on this point. He says:¹²

Motive (niyyah) is a serious factor in the acquisition of education. In fact, Islam judges all conduct according to its motives; and the text bearing on this point (innamal a'mâl bin-niyyât) is well known and illustrative. Educators such as al-Ghazâli, al-Namari, al-Zarnuji and al-Kinâni stress motive in education. Thus they assert that this motive should be pure and untainted, in order that education may be acceptable to God and successful in its functions. Al-Ghazâli devotes the second chapter of his "Fatihat al-'Ulûm" to the rectification of motive in the quest of an education (tas, hfh al-niyyah fi talab al-'ilm). Similarly, al-Zarnuji gives a chapter to the same topic of motive in his "Ta'lim al-Muta'allim". He calls it "fasl fi al-niyyah fi ghal at-ta'allum". . . . the chief function of learning was the service of God, that the object of teaching and studying was the preparation of humanity for another world, and finally, that it was virtually wicked for one to venture on the quest of education without the sincerity and purity of motive which is required for the proper fulfillment of this noble aim. Al-'Abdari's words are conclusive when he says: "When we sought learning for a purpose other than that of God, learning refused to lend itself to anyone but that God. (talabhâ al-'ilm li ghair allah fa aba al-'ilm an yakûn illa lillâh)

To conclude, we can state that Islamic aim of education is two-fold. There is one ultimate aim - seeking the pleasure of God in achieving a state of righteousness and in acting according to the canons of Islamic justice. Then there are immediate aims. While the first is fixed and prescribed by the ordinance of God, the latter are not. They are not fixed,

¹² Khalîl A. Totah , op.cit. , pp.86-87

static or immutable. They have to be constantly made and remade and have to be the result of practical, changing situation. Islam has set an ideal in its ultimate aim of education. To achieve this ideal, one has to take an account of the means available to him. It is incumbent on all Muslims to achieve the highest within his capacity. Islam gives due consideration to human weaknesses, and therefore, accepts from a person whatever he may achieve, with the sincerity of motive. In all matters, it has laid down the minimum. To go beyond that depends upon the individual person. Hence, we may fix our immediate aims of education as may be necessitated by conditions obtaining in particular environment. In this connection, we like to refer to the fact Islam lays utmost emphasis on 'amal or deed, putting into action what we learn. This means that Islam accedes to the practical ends of education. Everything learnt has to be acted upon, to be translated into action. The Prophet is reported to have said that " one of those who will suffer most on the Day of Judgment, would be a learned man whose learning is not utilized."¹³ He is also stated to have observed that "the artisan is a friend of God." Then there is a lot of emphasis on earning one's livelihood in a just and rightful manner(kasb-ul-halâl). The logical outcome of these sayings is that Muslims have to fix their immediate aims of education

¹³ ibid , p.90

according to their needs which may change from time to time. Islam does not want its followers to get education for sitting in a mosque for twenty four hours a day and depending upon others to meet their needs. They are on the contrary required to take a full share in the struggle for life.

Curriculum

Curriculum includes all ways and means in the educative process which are designed to achieve the aims and objectives of education. Presently, there exists a controversy among educators regarding the composition and organization of curriculum. Some are of the view that curriculum should be organized on the basis of subject matter and mastery of knowledge. Other group of educators very strongly oppose this idea and conceive the curriculum as consisting of activities and experiences of students. There also exists a controversy as to whether the curriculum should be organized in a logical order or psychological order.¹⁴ We cannot however, enter into the details of these controversies. What we plan to do is to (1) briefly survey the curriculum of the Muslim schools in the past, and (2) give our remarks on the present conditions and needs of the Muslim societies in this connection.

The core of curriculum prescribed for the early Muslims was the Quran. It was not only a primer to read but

14

Nelson B. Henry, (ed) Modern Philosophies and Education
(Chicago, Ill., National Society for the Study of Education, 1955)
pp. 34-36, 232-39, 278-82

also a code of behaviour to acted upon. During the life of the Prophet, there was no disagreement, and could not be, on the interpretation of various verses of the Quran - the Prophet himself was there to guide. But after his death, opinions differed in this respect. In order to support their views, started quoting the Prophet as having said something similar. This resulted into a new branch of learning, Hadith. Thus Muslims thought it essential, in addition to the Words of God - the Quran - to have a knowledge of the Traditions. "Teachers prided themselves on the number of Traditions they could quote and students vied with each other in seeking authoritative teachers on the subject."¹⁵ Alongwith this theoretical education, there was its practical side. Daily prayers and congregational prayers on Fridays as well as annual Pilgrimage to Mecca should be considered as a part of Islamic curriculum in the early ages. Through them the real spirit of Islam was instilled in the individuals. One month of fasting in the month of Ramadhân provided another opportunity of translating Islamic principles into practice. As during that period of history, every able-bodied Muslim was supposed to take part in the defence of his country, the arts essential for warfare had their share in the training. What this type of curriculum resulted in, is clearly exemplified in the personalities of 'Ali,¹⁶ his sons and

¹⁵ Khalîl A. Tatah, op,cit,, p.48

¹⁶ 'Ali was trained by the Prophet himself from the beginning.

daughters, his wife Faṭimah - daughter of the Prophet, 'Abdullah bin 'Abbās, and a host of other illustrious persons. They embodied the principle of Islamic education to bring up the child neither as a drawing room thinker nor as an ascetic, escaping from the stern realities of life; neither as a living machine without intellect or imagination nor as a person living in an ivory tower, unfit to perform his social functions. In Islam, there is always a simultaneous mention of the world and the world hereafter(ad-Dunya wal-Ākhirah).

Looking at the personality of 'Ali, we find an illustration of this ideal; a man of nerves and courage, words and deeds; never failing in a battle, never turning away from it(karrār ghair farrār) absorbed completely while saying his formal prayers; alert absolutely while in contact with the physical reality; whose name was a terror for the militants and a source of perpetual inspiration for the peaceful; a man who always up-held the rule of justice even if it was against his own interest; a scholar of unparalleled excellence and an orator none else to match. He lived in the world but not as a slave of the world. Such is the ideal, to create which is the aim of Islamic philosophy of education.

With the influx of non-Arabic speaking Muslims, Grammar came into existence in a formal manner, in order to protect the language from being corrupted as well as

help the foreign converts to study the Quran and appreciate its spirit.¹⁷ Then emerged jurisprudence as a regular branch of learning. According to Shaikh Mustafâ Abdur Râziq, the Shi'ites took the lead in the compilation of fiqh or jurisprudence.¹⁸ By the time of the sixth Imâm of the Shi'ites, jurisprudence had forged itself as a separate branch of learning and Imâm Ja'far Sâdiq gave lesson in this subjects, as well as others, in Madînah - some important Muslim jurists being students, including Imâm Abu Hanifa.¹⁹ Similarly other branches of learning developed alongwith the passage of time. Summing up the contents of curricula during the past, Totah has quoted Abu Yahya Zakariyyah as his source and given the following list of subjects:

- Legal Subjects (Sharf'ah): Jurisprudence, exegesis, Traditions
- Literary Studies (Adabiyyah): Philology, syntax, rhetorics, prosody, composition, reading, history.
- Mathematics (riyâdiyyah): Geometry, Astronomy, arithmetic algebra, music, politics (al-siyâsah) ethics, domestic economy.
- Rational ('aqliyyah): Logic, dialectics, dogmatic theology, metaphysics, natural science, medicine, chemistry.
- Miscellaneous : surveying, veterinary, agriculture, magic, phrenology, astrology, interpretation of dreams.

¹⁷ Dodge has well brought out this issue and has shown the significance of emphasis on Arabic language. See, Dodge, op.cit., pp.31-36

¹⁸ Shaikh Mustafâ 'Abdur Râziq, Tamhîd li Târîkh-il-Falsafat-al-Islamiyyah, (Cairo, Lajnat-ut-Talîf-wat-Tarjamah-wan-Nashr 1944) pp.202-203

¹⁹ Ahmad Shalaby, op. cit., pp.232-33
'Umar Farrûkh, Târîkh, pp.189-92

Totah further observes ²⁰:

Looking on the Arabic curriculum on the whole, it seems narrow and rigid in the elementary stage and varied in the advanced. Certainly grammar, literature, theology and jurisprudence claimed most of time, tending to make it one-sided and perhaps literary-theological in character. It may seem useless to us of the twentieth century but without doubt it served the practical needs of its day. The religion of Islam permeated human life in all its aspects - social, economic, political and educational. Therefore a curriculum to be useful had to be largely religious and theological.

It is true that this curriculum has very justifiably become useless to-day. But the question arises as to whether Islam has made this curriculum immutable and final. It has not. This curriculum evolved during the course of time, differentiating itself gradually as the new needs arose. It has been under revision off and on during the Muslim rule. But with the political decadence of the Muslims, it eventually got crystallised. Material is lacking to give details of the revision of this curriculum. About India and Pakistan, however, we have evidence that the last revision took place in 1747 A.D.²¹, through the efforts of Mulla Nizâm-ud-Din Shahîd Sihâlwi. This curriculum, known as Dars-é-Nizâmî, is still in vogue in India and Pakistan. But evidence is available to the effect that the managers of these institutions - which have now become religious seminaries-

²⁰ Khalîl A. Totah, op.cit., p.56

²¹ Hafiz Nadhar Ahmad, Ja'izah-é-Madaris-é-Arabiyyah Islamiyyah Maghrabî Pakistan (Lyallpur, Jami'ah Chishtiyyah Trust, 1960) p. 766

themselves agree on the inadequacy of the curriculum they follow and attempts have already been witnessed to improve it.²²

Similarly radical changes have recently been made in the administration and curriculum of the al-Azhar University of Cairo.²³ The curriculum introduced in the recently opened Kulliyat-ul-Fiqh at an-Najaf ('Irâq) has been so devised as to include some of the modern branches of learning, like Modern Philosophy, Principles of Psychology, Sociology, and English language in addition to extending the scope of traditional subjects.²⁴

We do not say that these changes will bring such institutions up to the demands of present time. What we would like to point out that, at least on this issue, the door of ijtihâd is still open, even according to those who have believed it closed for ever. It is also to be observed that, if this curriculum could be changed in the past, it can very well be changed in the present. After all, most of the traditional subjects taught in these schools were never heard of during the life-time of the Prophet but were introduced later on. If the jurists of early Abbaside period were justified in treating Greek Logic as a part of Islamic education, there can be no reason why other subjects should not be given the same treatment, if necessary. The principle to be followed here is simple: educate

²² ibid pp.767-73

²³ For details on reforms in madâris and kuttâb, see article Madrassa by J. Pedersen in the Encyclopaedia of Islam.

²⁴ Kulliyat-ul-Fiqh, Annual Report for the Year 1959-60 (an-Najaf, Muntadân-Nashr, 1960) pp.11-14

the students to become good Muslims. For this purpose, it is essential that every student must be given a basic knowledge of the Quran and allied studies, for example in case of non-Arabs, teaching of Arabic has to be included, for making them start their educational quest as Muslims by their own reason and faith and in imitation of their parents, as is the case to-day. This has to be done in order to instill in young minds the spirit of Islamic faith before they are occupied or pre-occupied with other things. Islam does insist on early training of the child in matters relating to the formal discipline of religion. How this is to be done, is open to Muslims living in given conditions. Islam does believe in giving the child freedom of activity and also recognizes individual differences. But at the same time, it denies them a licence or eliminating the common points - values, customs, rituals and general manners of society. This is, we think, is essential for maintaining the identity of Muslim society.

Islamic curriculum has further to recognize that the child is neither a mechanical organism nor pure soul. It is rather a combination of the both, with the latter having an upper hand. Hence, the body cannot be ignored and allowed to weaken as a weak and unhealthy body cannot serve the soul well. Furthermore, Islam does not treat either soul or mind as function of body. Though, some of the contemporary schools of psychology dispute this position and treat the body to be everything, yet

none has been able to prove this fact conclusively and efforts on the other hand are not lacking to solve the mysteries of soul, treating it different from the body.²⁵ Hence, taking an Islamic assumption on this issue as a base, we have to provide for both. Subject to this reservation, we are free to frame our curriculum according to our needs. It will remain an Islamic curriculum, provided the basic condition - achievement of taqwâ - is fulfilled.

Teachers' Position

We shall not be exaggerating if we say that the teacher is the most important factor in educational system in Islam. He enjoys supreme position of respect and authority. He is the master of the destinies of the students and thus, has a very important responsibility. He has to be an example for the students. This is why Muslim thinkers have always given great importance to the selection of teachers. He is to be selected, not only in consideration of his educational qualification or his his ability to teach , but also in respect of his general behaviour as well. While he is held in great esteem, he is also expected to forego certain freedom which is enjoyed by other members of society. As Shalaby has said, the Muslims in the past attached so much importance to the teacher that they " held it to be a

²⁵C.E.M. Joad has, for example, given one chapter to 'Spiritualism' in his book Guide to Modern Thought.

calamity to replace the professor with paper."²⁶ Imâm ash-Shafi'i is reported to have said that "whoever learns from books will miss the required achievement."²⁷ This seems essential in view of the fact that Islam does not limit education to mere theoretical learning but includes its practical application, which cannot be learnt except through practical demonstration by a teacher. This leads us to a consideration of duties and character.

Shalaby²⁸ has given a list of duties of the teacher, as considered by Ibn-ul-Muqaffa', az-Zarnûji, Ibn Jumâ'a and al-Ghazâli.²⁸ This list gives an idea of what was demanded of a teacher in the medieval periods as well as indicates the importance attached to the teacher in Islamic system.

Thus we can safely say that in Islamic educational system, a teacher has to be given rights and privileges in consideration of his duties and responsibilities. Hence, if any Muslim society intends to translate Islamic philosophy into practice, the persons at the helm of affairs must be alive to the fact that unless the teacher is rehabilitated fully in the society, he cannot become a source of progressive influence on the character of the students.

From this we arrive at another important point. It relates to the training of teachers. We have not been able

²⁶ Ahmad Shalaby, op.cit., p.115

²⁷ ibid

²⁸ ibid pp.145-46

till now to find any evidence to the effect that during the medieval period, any arrangement existed to give training to the teachers. Any scholar could be a teacher. But now conditions have changed. Teaching has become a science as well as an art. Every educated person cannot be supposed to become a good teacher, especially in view of the role he has to perform in an Islamic system. Hence, a very well-planned teachers' training programme becomes an imperative need of Islamic educational system. This programme has to be related, not only to the academic training, but also to the moral training of the teachers. A highly qualified scholar in a particular branch of learning but without any moral scruples cannot be accepted as a teacher in any set-up, especially of Islam, where the teacher is not only an instructor but also the guardian and preceptor of the students.

Students' Position

Islam does not recognize any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour or financial position.²⁹ Hence the basic principle of Islamic education, relating to students, is equality. Every one has to be given an opportunity to get an education.

29

The address of the Prophet while returning from the Last Pilgrimage is the final verdict in this behalf. Insofar as human rights are concerned Islam does not allow any discrimination. Instances to this effect available in the history, like the treatment of muwalif, distinction between Dar-ul-Harb and Dar-ul-Islam, imposition of jizya on non-Muslims etc. are later developments, resulting from many factors and have no sanction in Islam. The Quran does not confine 'salvation' only to Muslims.

See The Quran, V, 69

Syed Amir Ali, op.cit. (Spirit) p.175

The Prophet gave a clear injunction in this respect by saying:
"Treat equally poor and rich students who sit before you for
the acquisition of knowledge."³⁰

Thus equality of educational opportunities is the basic point in respect of students' position in an Islamic educational system. Every one has to be educated compulsorily insofar as fundamental educational programme is concerned and opportunities of higher education have to be thrown open to every one, according to their individual talent.

Students' Character

Keeping in mind the basic aim of Islamic education, discussed earlier, the issue of character-building of the students attains great importance. Islam does not want its students to be mere store-houses of knowledge or clearing-houses of information. They have to be men of action in the better interests of the society. This is why most of the Muslim pedagogical literature is full of discussions on manners, morals and etiquette of the students who were expected to show more sterling qualities of character as compared to other members of the society. Behaviour of the students as recommended by the medieval scholars is very well summed up by Shalaby and we do not want to reproduce it here.³¹

³⁰ Ahmad Shalaby, op.cit., p.164

³¹ ibid, pp.175-76

But what we wish to emphasize is the fact that Islamic educational system cannot be complete without paying special attention to the character-building of the students. From this we may deduce the utmost importance of two steps: (1) proper selection of the teachers; and (2) proper environment. The issue finally boils down to the training of teachers to which we have already referred.

Guidance is another important feature of Islamic education and has duly been emphasised by medieval thinkers. Shalaby quotes al-Asfahâni as having said: "As a man chooses bride-groom for his female relations, so the teacher is advised to select students qualified for his particular branch."³² Similarly Ibn Sînâ treats it as a duty of the teacher to study the qualities of a student and direct him to the most suitable branch of learning.³³

Women Education

We cannot discuss here as to how education of women was conducted in early Islamic era.³⁴ It may, however, be pointed out that the importance attached by Islam to the rearing of children entails a very important role for the female members of society. Furthermore, the Prophet's injunction that education is obligatory

³² ibid p.168

³³ ibid

³⁴ For an introductory discussion on this point, see

Asmâ^h Hasan Fahmî, Mabadi-ut-Tarbiyat-al-Islamiyyah (Cairo, Lajnat-ut-Talif wat-Tarjamah wan-Nasht, 1947) pp.143-52

for every Muslim, man or woman, clearly shows that women are not excluded from this field. But Islam does differentiate between the education of boys and girls. It has to be according to their respective roles in society. Islam assigns to women duties of building up the individual and thus over-all development of the society . Madame Abbasi observes in this connection?³⁵

It is in the individual man and woman and in the home, the basic life-unit of human social organism, that qualities essential for nation-building for achieving a permanently cohesive and progressive national existence must be created and fostered. And herein lies the vital importance of the very special function that Islam assigns to a woman as administrator and governor of home to model the life of community according to Islamic principles through training the children to the standards of excellence and piety, courteous manners, efficiency and dynamism as demanded by Islam.

Thus to deny educational opportunities to women, in our view, is the direct negation of the principles of Islam. Education of the girls has to be modelled keeping in view the functions assigned to her by Islam.

Administration of School

We could not find anything in the Quran or in the Traditions of the Prophet, relating to the school administration. What is said on this issue by medieval Muslim thinkers, has, in our view, become obsolete. But from our previous discussion on the role of education as well as aims of Islamic education, we may say that the school being a society in microcosm has to reflect

the social order. This is necessary because of the fact that the schools have to provide Islamic environment to the students which is an essential part of their education.

Thus according to Islamic principles, as we think, the school is not to be run as a commercial organisation or a place which students may like for being free from the tyranny of their parents or dislike for being subjected to educational discipline. It has to be managed in a way so as to reflect the social order with a view to helping the students appreciate its spirit and model themselves according to its rules.

As to the methodology, which is mostly subject to severe criticism in the modern times, we may say that Islam does not make it binding on Muslims to follow the methods adopted by the medieval thinkers. We may change them according to our needs. Once memorization was considered to be the only way of learning, but now its utility is doubted. We may discard it in favour of something better. The medieval thinkers, mostly under the political influence, hardly allowed any student to exercise his initiative in arriving at judgments or discovering the truth for himself. But they were Muslims, not the Prophet of Islam. They could, and they did, make mistakes³⁶ (khata`ijtihâdi) and we have every right to correct those. There is nothing in this action which is against Islam.

³⁶It is interesting to note that the majority of Muslims (Sunnites) do not believe in the notion of 'ismah and attribute errors of judgment to the Prophet himself, but, are so very particular about the finality of the views of medieval theologians.

Conclusion

We have thus seen that Islamic philosophy of education is not rigid, die-hard and dogmatic; which may create disdain in the mind of 'modern man.' It does not connote what is usually inferred from the so-called Islamic schools of our times. They do not reflect Islamic philosophy of education as they violate its very basic principle, dynamism. These institutions used to be Islamic schools in the past as they then satisfied the needs of Muslim society during that period. But now, as it is evident they do not. Instead, they have been alleged to be a source of moral degeneration of Muslim societies and responsible for their stagnation. Because they produce such scholars, who by virtue of their name, assume the religious leadership of the masses but try to pull them instead of push them ahead.

When these schools were originally started, they were the only educational centres. They provided administrators, writers, scholars, thinkers, doctors, lawyers, judges, chemists and druggists, veterinarians, pharmacists, politicians - leaders and men of action - to the society. It was then that they conformed to Islamic educational philosophy. But, now what they produce are teachers of kuttâb and qâdis. In India and Pakistan, the condition is even worse; they produce imâms for the mosques, who mostly live on the charity of the people, in pitiable circumstances. Thus frustrated in their efforts, they seek an

escape in the form of rigidity and die-hard conservatism. They further indulge in such practices which result into unfortunate incidents. Thus they have violently been attacked by the intelligentsia for their reactionary activities and dogmatic attitude. We would like to quote Amin-ul-Khulî's remarks about the graduates of al-Azhar, which are more or less applicable to other countries³⁷!

It is also futile to convince them that the past has gone, that world has moved along, that the present is different from the past, that the future will also be different. And it is also futile to try to convince them that such an everlasting religion can only be general principles, broad foundations and high ideals which provide humanity with genuine guidance. These develop and grow by continuous intellectual endeavour.

The history of the Muslim people is replete with instance where these theologians manifestly acted against the interest of Muslims. We cannot afford to go into details, but, would be content by referring to what is recently going on in Iran through these scholars and how they opposed government's reform programme in Pakistan to regulate marriage and inheritance laws. Furthermore, it is through this class of scholars that most of the young people are getting sick of religion and anything connected with it.

Thus these schools claiming to be Islamic, are not really following Islamic principles, on the following grounds:

³⁷ Sadek H. Samaan, Value Reconstruction and Egyptian Education () p.17

³⁸ For more detailed analysis, see:
Khalifa Abdul Hakim , Iqbal awr Mulla (Lahore, Idara-é-Thaqafat -é-Islamiyyah, 1958)

- (1) Instead of setting an example of what a Muslim is, they are instrumental in young people's aversion to religion;
- (2) Instead of keeping society's solidarity, they are responsible for such activities which may disintegrate it.
- (3) Considering themselves as Muslims par excellence, they strive towards creating a class of priests which Islam emphatically denounces.
- (4) These deficiencies have been admitted by the enlightened graduates of these institutions. They are themselves trying to change the situation and reconstruct the whole system. But they are opposed by others in the name of Islam

As a matter of fact it is not a question of change. Supposing, they introduce changes in their institutions, the result at the most can be an improved type of theological institutions producing theologians, But as we have repeatedly said there is no place for this class in Islam. In Islam every common man has to be theologian and every theologian a common man. But with the functioning of these school alongwith other schools would mean an educational dualism. The result is a split in the community. The graduates of these institutions will assume the responsibilities of religion while others will remain ignorant of Islamic principles. This would ultimately result into strictly formal and ecclesiastical form of Islam, which is contrary to its spirit, Islam demands every Muslim

to be well versed in his faith; he should have direct experience of religion instead of having it by proxy. With the rise of a priestly class the gulf between the common masses and the spirit of religion increases. The idea of oneness in society would thus be lost. But the present conditions of all Muslim societies are such that they need solidarity. In order to achieve this end, they have only two alternatives: (1) to abolish religious schools and do away with religion, or (2) to have a common foundation of education for all members of the society. The first alternative is possible only with dire results. It could not be done even in Turkey. The second alternative is thus the only choice - to adopt Islamic educational philosophy. In this system, religious instruction will form an essential part of the curriculum. There will be specialization, in addition to other branches, in subjects like tafsir, Traditions, jurisprudence and allied studies. But the fundamental education will be the same for everyone. The religious instruction provided in this system of education will be different from what is now known by it. Iqbal observes in this connection³⁹

Our education should be thoroughly imbued with the religious spirit. But it should be realized that this religious education would be radically different in form and contents from what usually passes under the name to-day. It does not take into account or show any interest or understanding or appreciation of modern social, political, scientific and philosophical problems,

Thus by conforming to Islamic philosophy of education

³⁹K.G.Saiyyidain, Iqbal's Educational Philosophy (Lahore, Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1954) p.160

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