

## THE WESTERN WORLD AND ITS CHALLENGES TO ISLAM\*

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It is in the nature of things in the present-day situation that if one wishes to discuss the challenges of the West and in fact of modern civilization in general for Islam, one must begin by using the sword of discrimination and by embarking on a kind of "intellectual iconoclasm". Modern civilization takes pride in having developed the critical mind and the power of objective criticism whereas in reality it is in a fundamental sense the least critical of all known civilizations for it does not possess the objective criteria to judge and criticize its own activities. It is a civilization which fails in every kind of basic reform because it cannot begin with the reform of itself. In fact one of the characteristic features of the modern world is the singular lack of intellectual discernment and of the sword of criticism in its true sense.

There is a traditional saying according to which Satan hates sharp points and edges. This old adage is a most profound truth which applies directly to the present-day situation. The Devil being everywhere, he manifests his influence by dulling all sharp points and edges which are accessible to him so that sharp distinctions disappear. The edges of doctrines become corroded and their sharp form gradually fades away. Truth and error become ever more confused and even sacred rites and doctrines, which are the most precious gifts of God to man, become hazy and indefinite as a result of this corroding influence which makes everything wishy-washy and ambiguous. To discuss the challenge of the modern world to Islam requires, therefore, a rigorous application of intellectual discernment based ultimately upon the *Shahadah*, whose first stroke when written in Arabic is in fact in the form of a sword. This sword must be used to break the false idols of the new age of ignorance (*jahiliyyah*), idols which so many Muslims accept without even bothering to question their nature. It must be used to cut away and remove all the false ideas and "isms" that clutter the mind of modernized Muslims. It must help to

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chisel the soul of the contemporary Muslim from an amorphous mass into a sharp crystal that glows in the Divine Light. It must never be forgotten that a crystal glows precisely because of its sharply defined edges.

One must always remember that in the present situation any form of criticism of the modern world based upon metaphysical and religious principles is a form of charity and in accordance with the most central virtues of Islam. Also one should never forget that the Prophet of Islam—upon whom be peace—not only possessed *adab* in its most perfect form but also asserted the truth in the most straightforward and naked manner. There were moments of his life when he was extremely categorical and he never sacrificed the truth for the sake of *adab*. Islam has never taught that one should accept that two and two is five in order to display *adab*. In fact *adab* has always been the complement to the perception and assertion of the truth in every situation and circumstance. Once an eminent spiritual authority from North Africa said, “Do you know what *adab* is? It is to sharpen your sword so that when you have to cut a limb it does not hurt”. It is this type of attitude that is needed by Muslims in their discussion of the West and its challenges to Islam. The truth not only has a right to our lives and our beings but also has the prerogative to ask us to make sense to others and to express and expound it whenever and wherever possible. Today we need to be critical even to the degree of stringency precisely because such an attitude is so rare and so much in demand.

What is lacking in the Islamic world today is a thorough examination and careful criticism of all that is happening in the modern world. Without such a criticism nothing serious can ever be done in confronting the West. All of the statements of modernized Muslims which begin with the assertion, “The way to harmonize Islam and . . .”—whatever follows the “and”—is bound to end in failure unless what follows is another divinely revealed and inspired world-view. Otherwise attempts to harmonize Islam and Western socialism or Marxism or existentialism or evolution or anything else of the kind are doomed at the start through the very fact that they begin without exposing the system or “ism” under question to a thorough criticism in the light of Islamic criteria and also because they consider Islam as a partial view of things to be complemented by some form of modern ideology rather than a complete system and perspective in itself whose very totality excludes the possibility of its becoming a mere adjective to modify some other noun which is taken almost unconsciously as central in place of Islam. The rapid change in fashions

of the day which make Islamic socialism popular one day and liberalism or some other Western "ism" the next is itself proof of the absurdity and shallowness of such an approach. He who understands the structure of Islam in its totality knows that Islam can never allow itself to become reduced to a mere modifier or contingency *vis-a-vis* a system of thought which remains independent of it.

The defensive and apologetic attitude adopted by so many modernized Muslims towards various fashionable modes of thought that issue from the West almost with the rapidity of seasonal changes is closely allied to their lack of a critical sense and a discerning spirit. Usually, obvious shortcomings and what is easy to criticize *are* criticized but few have the courage to stand up and criticize the basic fallacies of our times. It is easy to point out that the life of students in traditional *madrassahs* is not hygienic but it is much more difficult to take a firm stand and assert the fact that much of what is taught in the modern educational institutions is far more deadly for the soul of the students than the physically unhealthy surroundings of some of the old *madrassah* buildings. There are too few people in the Islamic world who can confront the West and criticize and answer with the sword of the intellect and the spirit the very basis of the challenge with which the West confronts Islam. Such is the case today but it does not have to be so. There is no logical reason why a new intellectual elite could not develop in the Islamic world which would be able to provide an objective criticism of the modern world from the point of view of the eternal verities contained within the message of the Islamic revelation.

Today in the Islamic world there are essentially two main classes of people concerned with religious, intellectual and philosophical questions: The 'ulama' and other religious authorities in general (including the Sufis) and the modernists. Only recently is a third group gradually coming into being which is traditional like the 'ulama' but also knows the modern world. But the number of this third class is still very small indeed. As far as the 'ulama' and other traditional spiritual authorities are concerned, they usually do not possess a profound knowledge of the modern world and its problems and complexities. But they are the custodians of the Islamic tradition and its protectors without whom the very continuity of the tradition would be endangered. They are usually criticized by the modernists for not knowing European philosophy and science or the intricacies of modern economics and the like. But this criticism, which is again of the facile kind so easily levelled by the modernists, is for the

most part ill-placed. Those who possessed the financial and political power in the Islamic world during the past century rarely allowed the *madrasahs* to develop in the direction of giving a possibility to the class of '*ulamā*' to gain a better knowledge of the modern world without becoming corrupted by it. In the few places where attempts were made to modify, the *madrasah* curriculum the hidden intention was more often to do away with the traditional educational system by deforming it beyond hope than to really extend its program to embrace courses which would acquaint the students with the modern world seen in the light of Islamic teachings. Furthermore, few attempts have been made to create institutions which would provide a bridge between the traditional *madrasahs* and modern educational institutions. In any case the modernists have no right to criticize the '*ulamā*' for a lack of knowledge of things for the mastery of which they never received the opportunity.

As for the second class it is the product of either Western universities or universities in the Islamic world which more or less ape the West. Now, the universities in the Islamic world are themselves in a state of crisis which is one of identity, for an educational system is organically related to the culture within whose matrix it functions. A jet plane can be made to land in the airport of no matter which country in Asia or Africa and be identified as part of that country. But an educational system cannot be simply imported and the fact that modern universities are facing a crisis in the Islamic world of a different nature from what is found in the West is itself proof of this assertion. The crisis could not exist because the indigenous Islamic culture is still alive. Moreover, this crisis effects deeply those who are educated in these universities and who are usually called the intelligentsia. This term, like that of intellectual, is a most unfortunate one in that often those characterized by such an appellation are the farthest removed from the domain of the intellect in its true sense. But by whatever name they are called, most members of this class, who are products of Western oriented universities, have for the most part one feature in common, and that is the predilection for all things Western and a sense of inferiority relative to things Islamic. This inferiority complex *vis-a-vis* the West among so many modernized Muslims, which is moreover shared by modernized Hindus, Buddhists and other Orientals in general who are effected by the psychosis of modern forms of idolatry, is the greatest malady facing the Islamic world and afflicts the very group which one would expect to face the challenge of the West. The encounter of Islam with the West cannot therefore be discussed without taking into consideration the type of

mentality which is most often the product of modern university education<sup>(1)</sup> and which during the past century has produced most of the apologetic Islamic writings which try to be concerned with the encounter of Islam and the West. (2)

This apologetic, modernized type of approach has tried to answer the challenge of the West by bending backwards in a servile attitude to show in one way or another that this or that element of Islam is just what is fashionable in the West today while other elements, for which there could not be found a Western equivalence by even the greatest stretch of the imagination, have been simply brushed aside as unimportant or even extraneous later "accretions".<sup>(3)</sup> Endless arguments have been presented for the hygienic nature of the Islamic rites or the "egalitarian" character for the message of Islam, not because such things are true if seen in the larger context of the total Islamic message, but because hygiene and egalitarianism are the currently accepted ideas in the West or at least they were before the Hippie movement. By affirming such obvious and too-easily defensible characteristics, the apologists have evaded the whole challenge of the West, which threatens the heart of Islam and which no amount of attempts to placate the enemy can avert. When surgery is needed there must be a knife with which to remove the infected zone. Also when error threatens religious truth nothing can replace the sword of criticism and discernment. One cannot remove the negative effect of error by making peace with it and pretending to be its friend.

The apologetic attitude is even more pathetic when it concerns itself with philosophical and intellectual questions. When one reads some of this type of apologetic literature, which issued mostly from Egypt and the Indian sub-continent at the beginning of this century and which tried to emulate already very stale and dead debates between theology and science in Victorian England or the France of the same period, the weakness of such works, which were supposed to answer the Challenge of the West, becomes completely evident, even more so in the background of the decades that have gone by. Of course at that time one could hear the strong voice of the traditional authorities, who, basing themselves on the immutable principles of the Islamic revelation, tried to answer these challenges on a religious level, even if they were not aware of the more abstruse and hidden philosophical and scientific ideas that were involved. But this type of voice gradually diminished, without of course ceasing to exist altogether, while the other, that of the modernists, became ever more audible and invasive.

This phenomenon has led to the rather odd situation today in which among the educated practically the most ardent defenders of modern Western civilization in the world are Westernized Orientals. The most intelligent students at Oxford or Harvard are far less confident in the West than those modernized Orientals who for some time have sacrificed everything at the altar of modernism and are now suddenly faced with the possibility of the total decomposition of this idol. Therefore, they try ever more desperately to clutch to it. For the modernized Muslims, especially the more extreme among them, the "true meaning" of Islam has been for some time now what the West has dictated. If evolution has been in vogue "true Islam" is evolutionary. If it is socialism that is the fashion of the day, the "real teachings" of Islam are based on socialism. Those acquainted with this type of mentality and the works it has produced are most aware of its docile, servile and passive nature. Even in the field of law how often have completely non-Islamic and even un-Islamic tenets been adopted with a *bismillah* added at the beginning and a *bihi nastā* *in* at the end?

Now suddenly this group, which was willing to sell its soul to emulate the West, sees before its eyes the unbelievable sight of the floundering of Western civilization itself. How painful a sight it must be for such men! Therefore they try in the face of all evidence to defend the Western "value system" and become ferociously angry with those Westerners who have themselves begun to criticize the modern world. Probably if the obvious decomposition of modern civilization, which became gradually evident after the Second World War, had become manifest after the First World War when the traditions of Asia were much more intact, a great deal more of these traditional civilizations could have been saved. But the hands of destiny had charted another course for mankind. Nevertheless, even in the present situation there is a great deal that can be done, for as the Persian proverb says, "As long as the root of the plant is in water there is still hope". On the plane of true activity according to traditional principles the possibility of doing something positive always exists, including the most obvious and central act of stating the truth, and acting accordingly.<sup>(4)</sup> Despair has no meaning where there is faith (*īmān*). Even today if in the Islamic world there comes to be formed a true intelligentsia at once traditional and fully conversant with the modern world, the challenge of the West can be answered and the core of the Islamic tradition preserved from the paralysis which now threatens its limbs and body.

To realize exactly how much can still be saved in the Islamic world it is sufficient to remember that for the vast majority of Muslims Islamic culture is still a living reality in which they live, breathe and die. From Indonesia to Morocco for the overwhelming majority, Islamic culture must be referred to in the present tense and not as something of the past. Those who refer to it in the past tense belong to that very small but vocal minority which has ceased to live within the world of tradition and which mistakes its own loss of center for the dislocation of the whole of Islamic society.

The tragedy of the situation resides, however, in the fact that it is precisely such a view of Islam as a thing of the past that is held by most of those who control the mass media in the Islamic world and who therefore exercise an influence upon the minds and souls of men far beyond what their number would justify. In most places those who hold in their hands such means as radio, television and magazines live in a world in which Islamic culture appears as a thing of the past precisely because they are so infatuated with the West that no other way of seeing things seems to have any reality for them even if that other way be a still living reality existing at their very doorsteps.

Strangely enough this Westernized minority in the Islamic world has gained a position of ascendance at the very moment when the West has lost its own mooring completely and does not know what it is doing or where it is going. If a simple Persian or Arab peasant were to be brought to one of the big Middle Eastern airports and asked to observe the Europeans entering the country, the contrast in nothing more than the dress, which varies from that of a nun to practical nudity, would be sufficient to impress upon his simple mind the lack of homogeneity and harmony of the products of Western civilization. But even this elementary observation usually escapes the thoroughly Westernized Muslim who, though well-wishing if nothing else, does not want to go face the overt contradictions in the civilization he is trying to emulate so avidly.

Of course the situation *has* changed somewhat during the past three decades. Muslims who went to Europe between the two world wars thought of the trees along the Seine or the Thames rivers practically as *Shajarat al 'ubā* and these rivers as the streams of paradise. Whether consciously or unconsciously, most members of this generation of modernized Muslims transferred practically completely their image of paradise and its perfections to Western civilization. But today this homogeneity of reaction and blind acceptance of the West as an idol is no longer to be

observed. The inner contradictions of the West that have become ever more manifest during the past three decades no longer permit such an attitude. The present-day generation of modernized Muslims is much less confident about the absolute value of Western civilization than their fathers and uncles who went to the West before them. This can be in itself a positive tendency if it becomes the prelude to a positive and objective evaluation of modernism. But so far it has only added confusion to the ranks of modernized Muslims and only here and there has it resulted in the appearance of a handful of Muslim scholars who have awakened to the reality of the situation and have ceased to emulate the West blindly. But alas! The main problem, which is the lack of a profound knowledge based upon the criteria of Islamic culture, still remains. There are still too few "occidentalists" in the Islamic world who could perform the positive aspect of the function "orientalists" have been performing for the West since the 18th century.<sup>(5)</sup>

Despite the weakening of the confidence in the West on the part of modernized Muslims, the Muslims are still on the receiving end in the realm of both ideas and material objects. Lacking confidence in their own intellectual tradition, most modernized Muslims are like a *Tabula rasa* waiting to receive some kind of impression from the West. Moreover, each part of the Islamic world receives a different kind of baggage of ideas depending on the part of the Western world to which it has become closely attached. For example, in the domain of sociology and philosophy the sub-continent has closely followed English schools for the past century and Persia French schools.<sup>(6)</sup> But everywhere the modernized circles are sitting and waiting to adopt whatever comes along. One day it is positivism and the next structuralism. Rarely does anyone bother to adopt a truly Islamic intellectual attitude which would act in an active sense and with discernment toward all that the wind blows our way. It is almost the same as in the field of fashion where in many Islamic lands women remain completely passive as obedient consumers and emulate blindly whatever a few Western fashion makers decide for them. In dress fashion as in philosophical and artistic fashion modernized Muslims have no role to play at the source where decisions are made.

It is of course true that even Western people themselves are hardly aware of the deeper roots of the movements that sweep the West one after another and that twenty years ago no one foresaw that such an extensive movement as that of the Hippies would become widely spread in the West. But modernized Muslims are even farther removed from the current in



that they are unaware not only of the roots but even of the stages of incubation and growth of such movements and wait until they occupy the center of the stage at which time they then react either with surprise or again in a state of blind surrender.

The ecological crisis is a perfect example of this state of affairs. The Muslims have waited until the crisis has become the central concern of a vast number of Western people before even becoming aware of the presence of the problem. And even now, how many people in the Islamic World are thinking of this crucial problem in the light of the extremely rich tradition of Islam concerning nature which in fact could provide a key for the possible solution of this major crisis were men to accept to use this key?(7)

To study in a more concrete fashion the challenges of the West to Islam, it is necessary to take as example some of the "isms" which are fashionable in the modern world today and which have effected the cultural and even religious life of the Islamic world. Let us start with Marxism or more generally speaking socialism. (8) Today in many parts of the Islamic world there is a great deal of talk about Marxism which, although not concerned with religion directly, has an important indirect effect upon religious life not to speak of economic and social activity. Many who speak of Marxism or socialism in general in the Islamic world do so with certain existing problems of society in mind for which they are seeking solutions. But very few of them actually know Marxism or theoretical socialism in a serious sense. With all these young Muslim students speaking about Marxism in so many university circles one wonders how many have actually read *Das Kapital* or even important secondary sources or could defend the Marxist position seriously on a purely rational plane? The Marxist fad has become an excuse for many young Muslims to refuse to think seriously about the problems of Islamic society from the Islamic point of view. It is enough to accept the label of this black-box with its unknown inside to have one's ego become inflated and one's mind fall into the illusion that one has become an "intellectual" or a member of the liberated "intelligentsia" who, following the already established Marxist solutions to all kinds of problems as thought out in a completely different socio-cultural context in other lands, no longer has any responsibility to think in a fresh manner about the problems of Islamic society as an Islamic society. It is precisely this blind following of Marxism as a package whose content is never analyzed or as aspirin to soothe every kind of pain that prepares the ground for the worst kind of

demagogy. Instead of discussing problems in a reasonable and meaningful manner, those who have fallen under the influence of what is loosely called Marxism develop a blind and unintelligent obedience which leads to a senseless confrontation and finally a mental sclerosis resulting in untold harm to the youth of Islamic society not to speak of its obvious harm to the life of faith.

Unfortunately the response given by Islamic authorities to the challenge of dialectical materialism has for the most part consisted until now of arguments drawn from the transmitted (*naqlī*) or religious sciences rather than from the rich intellectual tradition of Islam contained in the traditional intellectual (*aqlī*) sciences.<sup>(9)</sup> Now, religious arguments can be presented only to those who already possess faith of what use is it to cite a particular chapter of the Quran to refute an idea held by someone who does not accept the authority of the Quran to start with? Many of the works written by the '*ulamā*' in this field can be criticized precisely because they address deaf ears and present arguments which have no efficacy in the context in question. This is especially saddening considering the fact that the Islamic tradition possesses such a richness and depth that it is perfectly capable of answering on the intellectual level any arguments drawn from modern European philosophy. In reality what is all modern philosophy before traditional wisdom but a noise that would seek in its self-delusion to conquer the heavens? So many of the so-called problems of today are based on ill-posed questions and on ignorance of truths which traditional wisdom alone can cure, a traditional wisdom found from ancient Babylonia to medieval China and in one of its most universal and certainly most diversified form in Islam and the vast intellectual tradition which Islam has brought into being during its fourteen centuries of historical existence.

The danger of Marxism for Islam has become aggravated recently by the appearance in certain countries of a Marxism with an Islamic veneer, creating a most tempting trap for certain simple souls. This insidious use of religion, often with direct political aims in mind, is in fact more dangerous than the anti-religious and at least "honest" Marxism and corresponds to the thought and attitude of that class of men whom the Quran calls the *munāfiqūn* (the "hypocrites"). In this case also there is no way to give an Islamic response save to answer such pseudo-syntheses intellectually and to demonstrate clearly that Islam is not anything that might come along provided a *bismillāh* is added at the beginning

but a total vision of reality which cannot compromise with any half-truths whatsoever.

Another "ism" of great danger to Islam with a longer history of protrusion into the Islamic world than Marxism is Darwinism or evolutionism in general, whose effect is particularly perceptible among the Muslims of the Indian sub-continent, obviously because of the strong influence of British education there. There is no time here to point out the arguments presented by many outstanding European biologists against evolution<sup>(10)</sup> nor to marshal all the proofs brought forth by contemporary anthropologists to show that whatever may have occurred before, man himself has not evolved one iota since he set his foot upon the stage of terrestrial history.<sup>(11)</sup> Alas, practically no contemporary Muslim thinker has taken note of these sources and made use of their arguments to support the traditional Islamic view of man. For a notable segment of modernized Muslims evolution remains practically like a religious article of faith whose overt contradiction with the teachings of the Quran they fail to realize.

In fact the Darwinian theory of evolution, which is metaphysically impossible and logically absurd, has been subtly woven in certain quarters into some aspects of Islam to produce a most unfortunate and sometime dangerous blend. We do not mean only the shallow Quranic commentators around the turn of the century, but even a thinker of the stature of Iqbal, who was influenced by both the Victorian concept of evolution and the idea of the superman of Nietzsche. Iqbal is an important contemporary figure of Islam but with all due respect to him he should be studied in the light of the *ijtihad* which he himself preached so often and not be put on a pedestal. If we analyze his thought carefully we see that he had an ambivalent love-hate relation ship *vis-à-vis* Sufism. He admired Rūmī yet expressed dislike for a figure like Ḥāfiẓ. This is due to the fact that he was drawn on the one hand by the Sufi and more generally speaking Islamic idea of the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) and on the other by the Nietzschean idea of the superman which are in fact at the very antipodes of each other. Iqbal made the great mistake of seeking to identify the two. He made this fatal error because despite his deep understanding of many aspects of Islam he had come to take the prevalent idea of evolution too seriously. He demonstrates on a more literate and explicit level a tendency to be found among many modern Muslim writers who instead of answering the fallacies of evolution have tried to bend

backwards in an apologetic manner to accept it and even to interpret Islamic teachings according to it.<sup>(12)</sup>

The general tendency among Muslims affected by the evolutionist mentality is to forget the whole Islamic conception of the march of time.<sup>13</sup> The Quranic chapters about eschatological events and the latter days are forgotten. All the *ḥadīths* pertaining to the last days and the appearance of the Mahdi are laid aside or malconstured, either through ignorance or ill intention. Just one *ḥadīth* of the Prophet asserting that the best generation of Muslims were those who were the contemporaries of the Prophet, then the generation after, then the following generation until the end of time is sufficient to nullify from the Islamic point of view the idea of linear evolution and progress in history. Those who think they are rendering a service to Islam by incorporating evolutionary ideas into Islamic thought are in fact falling into a most dangerous pitfall and are surrendering Islam to one of the most insidious pseudo-dogmas of modern man, created in 18th and 19th century to enable men to forget God.

Moreover, the accepting of the evolutionary thesis brings into being overt paradoxes in daily life which cannot be easily removed. If things are going to evolve for the better then why bother to spend one's efforts for betterment. Things will improve by themselves anyway. The very dynamism preached by modernists is against the usually accepted idea of evolution. Or seen from another view it can be argued that if the effort work, movement and the like preached in the modern world are effective, then man can influence his future and destiny. And if he can effect his future then he can also effect it for the worse, and there is no guarantee of an automatic progress and evolution. All of these and many other paradoxes are brushed aside in certain quarters because of an enfeebled intellectual attitude which has as yet to produce a serious and also widely known Islamic response of a metaphysical and intellectual nature to the hypothesis of evolution. The challenge of evolutionary thought has been answered in contemporary Islam in nearly the same way as in the case of Marxism. There have been some religious replies based upon the Holy Book but not an intellectual response which could also persuade the young Muslims whose faith in the Quran itself has been in part shaken by the very arguments of the evolutionary school. Meanwhile works of evolutionary writers of even the 19th century such as Spencer, who are no longer taught as living philosophical influences in their own homeland, continue to be taught in universities far and wide in the Islamic world, especially in the

sub-continent, as if they represented the latest proven scientific knowledge or the latest philosophical school of the West. Few bother to even study the recent anti-evolutionary developments in biology itself as well as the reassertion of the pre-evolutionary conception of man movements which are gaining ever greater adherence in many circles in the West today. And what is worse there are too few efforts on the part of the Muslim intellectual elite to formulate from Islamic sources the genuine doctrine of man and his relation to the Universe which would act as a criterion for the judgement of any would be theory of man and the cosmos, evolutionary or otherwise, and which would also provide the light necessary to distinguish scientific facts from mere hypotheses and scientific evidence from crass philosophical materialism parading in the dress of a pseudo-religious belief.(14)

Another important "philosophical" challenge to the Islamic world concerns the Freudian and Jungian interpretation of the psyche. The modern psychological and psychoanalytical point of view tries to reduce all the higher elements of man's being to the level of the psyche and moreover to reduce the psyche itself to nothing more than that which can be studied through modern psychological and psychoanalytical methods. Until now this way of thinking has not affected the Islamic world as directly as has evolutionism, and I do not know of any important Muslim writers who are Freudian or Jungian, but its effect is certain to increase soon. It must therefore be remembered that Freudianism as well as other modern Western schools of psychology and psychotherapy are the side products of a particular society very different from the Islamic. It needs to be recalled also that Freud was a Viennese Jew who unfortunately turned away from Orthodox Judaism. Few people know that he was connected to a messianic movement which was opposed by the Orthodox Jewish community of Central Europe itself and that therefore he was opposed to the mainstream of Jewish life, not to speak of Christianity. Many study Freudianism but few delve into its deeper origins which reveal its real nature.(15)

Recently one of the outstanding figures of Sufism from the East wrote series of articles on Sufism and psychoanalysis in French, making a comparison between the two. With all due respect to him it must be said that he has been too polite and lenient towards psychoanalysis, which is truly a parody of the initiatic methods of Sufism. Fortunately for Muslims, until now the influence of psychoanalysis has not penetrated

deeply among them and they have not felt the need for it. This is due most of all to the continuation of the practice of religious rites such as the daily prayers and pilgrimage. The supreme centre for pilgrimage in Islam, is of course, Mecca, but there are other sacred localities throughout the Muslim world which are reflections of this centre. The supplications, "discourses" and forms of pleading that are carried out in such centres by men, women and children open their soul to the influx of divine grace and are a most powerful means of curing the ailments and untying the knots of the soul. They achieve a goal which the psychoanalyst seeks to accomplish without success but often with dangerous results because he lacks the power which comes from the Spirit and which alone can dominate and control the soul.

But psychoanalytical thought, which is agnostic or even in certain cases demonic, is bound to penetrate gradually into the Islamic world, probably mostly through the translation of Western literature into Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu and other Islamic languages. The effect of such translations will be to bring into being, and in fact is already bringing into being, a so-called "psychological literature" opposed to the very nature and genius of Islam. Islam is a religion which stands opposed to individualistic subjectivism. The most intelligible material symbol of Islam, the mosque, is a building with a space in which all elements of subjectivism have been eliminated. It is an objective determination of the Truth, a crystal through which radiates the light of the Spirit. The spiritual ideal of Islam itself is to transform the soul of the Muslim, like a mosque, into a crystal reflecting the Divine Light.

Truly Islamic literature is very different from the kind of subjectivistic literature we find in the writings of Franz Kafka or at best in Dostoevsky. These and similar figures are of course among the most important in modern Western literature but they, along with most other Western literary figures, nevertheless present a point of view that is very different from and often totally opposed to that of Islam. Among older Western literary figures who are close to the Islamic perspective one might mention first of all Dante and Goethe who, although profoundly Christian, are in many ways like Muslim writers. In modern times one could mention, on of course another level, T. S. Eliot, who unlike most modern writers was a devout Christian and possessed, for this very reason, a vision of the world not completely removed from that of Islam.

In contrast to the works of such men, however, the psychological novel, through its very form and its attempt to penetrate into the psyche of men without a criterion for Truth as an objective reality, is an element that is foreign to Islam. Marcel Proust was without doubt a master of the French language and his *In Search of Time Past* is of much interest for those devoted to modern French literature but this type of writing cannot become the model for a genuinely Muslim literature. Yet it is this very type of psychological literature that is now beginning to serve as a "source of inspiration" for a number of writers in Arabic and Persian. It is of interest to note that the most famous modern literary figure of Persia, Sadeq Hedayat, who was deeply influenced by Kafka, committed suicide because of psychological despair and that, although certainly a person of great literary talent, he was divorced from the Islamic current of life and is today opposed by Islamic elements within Persian society. Nevertheless such writers, who often deal with psychological problems found in Western society, problems which the Muslims have not experienced until now, are becoming popular among the Muslim youth who thereby become acquainted and even inflicted with these new maladies.

One of the worst tragedies today is that there has appeared recently in the Muslim world a new type of person who tries consciously to imitate the obvious maladies of the West. Such people for example are not really in a state of depression but try to put themselves into one in order to look modern. They compose poetry that is supposed to issue from a tormented and depressed soul whereas they are not depressed at all. There is nothing worse than a state of nihilism except the imitation of the state of nihilism by someone who is not nihilistic but tries to produce nihilistic literature or art only to imitate the decadence of Western art. The influence of psychology and psychoanalysis combined with an atheistic and nihilistic point of view and disseminated within the Islamic world through literature and art presents a major challenge to Islam which can be answered only through recourse to traditional Islamic psychology and psychotherapy contained mostly within Sufism and also through the creation of a properly speaking Islamic literary criticism which would be able to provide an objective evaluation of so much that passes for literature today.

The degree of penetration of anti-Islamic psychological and also philosophical Western ideas through literature can be best gauged by just walking through the streets near universities in different Middle Eastern cities. Among the books spread on the ground or on stands everywhere

one still observes traditional religious books especially of course the Qur'an. But one observes also the presence of a large number of works in Islamic languages dealing with subjects ranging all the way from Marxism and existentialism to pornography presented most often as "literature". There are of course rebuttals and answers as well, for Islam and its spirituality are still alive, but the very presence of all this type of writing itself reveals the dimension of the challenge involved.

As far as nihilism is concerned, the Islamic answer is particularly strong and the Muslims, even the modernized ones, have not experienced nihilism in the same way as have Westerners. The main reason for this is that in Christianity the Spirit has been almost always presented in a positive form, as an affirmation, as the sacred art of Christianity reveals so clearly. The void or the nihil has not usually been given a spiritual significance in Christian art as we observe for example in Islamic and also Far Eastern art.<sup>(16)</sup> Therefore, as a result of the rebellion against Christianity, modern man has experienced the nihil only in its negative and terrifying aspect while some have been attracted to Oriental doctrines especially because of the latter's emphasis upon the Void.

In contrast to Christianity where the manifestation of the Spirit is identified always with an affirmation and a positive form, Islamic art makes use of the "negative" or the "Void" itself in a spiritual and positive sense in the same way that metaphysically the first part of the *shahadah* begins with a negation to affirm the vacuity of things *vis-a-vis* Allah. The space of Islamic architecture is essentially a "negative space". Space in Islamic architecture and city-planning is not the space around an object or determined by that object. Rather, it is the negative space cut out from material forms as for example in traditional bazaars. When one walks through a bazaar one walks through a continuous space determined by the inner surface of the wall surrounding it and not by some object in the middle of it. That is why what is happening architecturally in many Middle Eastern cities such as the building of a big monument in the middle of a square to emulate what one finds in the West is the negation of the very principles of Islamic art and is based on a lack of understanding of the positive role of negative space and the nihil in Islamic architecture. The void or negative space has always possessed a positive spiritual role in Islam and its art, and it is precisely this positive aspect of the void in Islamic spirituality that has prevented Muslims from experiencing nihilism and nothingness in their purely negative sense and in the manner that nihilism has manifested itself as practically the central experience of modern man.



To return to the question of psychology and psychoanalysis, it must be added that the presence of this perspective in so much art criticism in the West has permitted this type of thought to seep into the mind of a small but significant portion of Islamic society through art significant because it wields influence and often forms the taste of the psychologically passive masses of traditional Muslims. Traditional Islamic literary criticism and literary tastes are thereby being influenced by the completely anti-traditional ideas emanating from Jungian and Freudian circles and threatening one of the most central and accessible channels of Islamic norms and values. It might, furthermore, be added that, as already mentioned, Jungian psychology is more dangerous than the Freudian in this respect in that it seems to be dealing with the sacred and the noumenal world whereas in reality it is deforming the image of the sacred by confusing the spiritual and psychological domains and subverting. The luminous and transcendent source of archetypes to a collective unconscious which is no more than the dumping ground for the collective psyche of various peoples and their cultures. Islamic metaphysics, as all true metaphysics, stands totally opposed to this blasphemous subversion as well as to the methods of profane psychoanalysis which are as already stated no more than a parody of Sufi techniques. But how many contemporary Muslims are willing to stand up and assert their basic differences rather than trying to glide over them in order to placate the modern world with all its essential errors and subsequent evils.

Another challenge to Islam which has come to the fore only since the Second World War is the whole series of movements of thought and attitudes loosely bound together under the title of existentialism, which is the latest wave of Western thought to reach the Muslims following various forms of positivism. There are of course many branches of existentialism, ranging from the *Existenz Philosophic* of the German philosophers to the theistic philosophy of Gabriel Marcel and finally to the agnostic and atheistic ideas of Sartre and his followers. This type of philosophy, which developed on the European continent early in this century still, holds the center of the stage in many continental countries. Although it has not as yet had a serious effect upon the Muslim world, during the past few years its influence, which can certainly be characterized as negative, is beginning to make itself felt again through art and more directly through properly-speaking philosophical works, which are beginning to influence some of the Muslims who are concerned with philosophy and the intellectual life. Because of the anti-metaphysical attitude of much of what is

taught in this school and its forgetting of the meaning of being in its traditional sense, which lies at the heart of all Islamic philosophy, the spread of existentialism especially in its agnostic vein is a most insidious danger for the future of Islamic intellectual life.

Furthermore, there is the tendency in certain quarters to interpret Islamic philosophy itself in the light of Western modes of thought, the latest being the existential school. Muslim "intellectuals" are directly to blame for this dangerous innovation (*bid'iah*), which strangely enough is also the most blind and unintelligent type of imitation (*taqlid*).<sup>(17)</sup> If this type of interpretation continues it will cost the new generation of Muslims very dearly. Today one sees everywhere in different Muslim countries Muslims learning about their own intellectual and philosophical past from Western sources, many of which may contain useful information and be of value from the point of view of scholarship, but all of which are of necessity from a non-Muslim point of view. In the field of thought and philosophy in its vastest sense the countries that have suffered most are those which use English or French as mediums of instruction in their universities, countries such as Pakistan, the Muslim sectors of India, Malaysia and Nigeria or the Islamic Maghrib such as Morocco and Tunisia. It is high time, with all this talk of anti-colonialism, for Muslims to overcome the worst type of colonialism possible, namely the colonialism of the mind and to seek to view and study their own culture, especially its intellectual and spiritual heart, from their own point of view. Even, if, God forbid, there are certain Muslims who want to reject some aspect of their intellectual heritage, they would have first of all to know that heritage. Both acceptance and rejection must be based upon knowledge and there is no excuse for ignorance no matter what direction one wishes to follow. One cannot reject what one does not know any more than one can accept something in depth without true knowledge. Nor can one throw away what one does not possess. This is a very simple truth but one that is too often forgotten today.

This point recalls an incident that occurred some years ago when a famous Zen master visited a leading Western University. After his lecture on Zen a graduate student asked, "Don't the Zen masters believe that one should burn the Buddhist scrolls and throw away the Buddha images?" The master smiled and answered, "Yes, but you can only burn a scroll which you possess and throw away an image which you have." This was a most profound answer. The master meant that you can only transcend the exoteric dimension of religion if you practice that exoteri-

cism and subsequently penetrate into its inner meaning and transcend its forms. He who does not practice exotericism cannot ever hope to go beyond it; he merely falls below it and mistakes this fall for a transcending of forms. The same applies on another level to man's traditional intellectual heritage. One cannot go "beyond" the formulations of the sages of old when one does not even understand them. He who tries to do mistakes his pitiful ignorance and "expansion" and apparent "freedom" from traditional norms of thought—an ignorance which is in reality the worst kind of imprisonment by the limitations of one's own nature for the true freedom which comes from the illimitable horizons of the world of the Spirit alone and which can be reached only through the vehicle provided by religion and its sapiential doctrines.

Contemporary Muslims should be realist enough to understand that they must begin their journey, in whatever direction they wish to go, from where they are. A famous Chinese proverb asserts that "the journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step". Now this first step must of necessity be from where one is located, and that is as much true culturally and spiritually as it is physically. Wherever the Islamic world wants to go it must begin from the reality of the Islamic tradition and from its own real and not imagined situation. Those who lose sight of this fact actually do not travel effectively at all. They just imagine that they are journeying. A Pakistani or a Persian or an Arab "intellectual" who wants to be a leader of thought for the Muslim people must remember who he is if he wishes to be effective and not be cut off from the rest of Islamic society. No matter how hard he tried to make a corner of Lahore or Tehran or Cairo belong to the setting of Oxford or the Sorbonne he will not succeed. The so-called Muslim intellectuals of the westernized kind who complain that they are not understood and appreciated by Islamic society forget that it is *they* who have refused to appreciate and understand their own culture and society and are therefore subsequently rejected by their own community. This rejection is in fact a sign of life, an indication that Islamic culture still possesses life.

As far as philosophy is concerned the countries where Muslim languages are used for university instruction are in a somewhat better position, especially Persia, where Islamic philosophy still continues as a living tradition and where it is not easy to say no matter what in the name of philosophy without being seriously challenged by the traditional intellectual elite. Of course even this part of the Muslim world has not

been completely spared from condescending and apologetic studies of Islamic thought from the point of view of Western philosophy, but relatively speaking there is less of a Western philosophic influence because of the two reasons alluded to above: namely the language barrier and a still living tradition of Islamic philosophy. The effect of Iqbal's two philosophical works in English, *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia* and *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, in Pakistan, and of their fairly recent translations into Persian in Persia presents an interesting case worthy of study.

Yet even in lands using Islamic languages books do appear in such languages as Persian and particularly Arabic on philosophy from a perspective totally alien to that of Islam and bearing such titles as *Falsafatunā*, *Our Philosophy*, as if philosophy as a vision of the truth or quest after wisdom or *sophia* could ever be "mine" or "ours". No Arab or Persian traditional philosopher ever used such an expression. For Muslims who cultivated Islamic philosophy, philosophy was always *al-falsafah* or *al-ḥikmah*, "the philosophy", a vision of the truth transcending the individualistic order and derived from the Truth (*al-Ḥaqq*) itself. The very appearance of such concepts and terms as "our Philosophy" or "my thought" in the Islamic languages itself reveals the degree of departure from the Islamic norm. It is against such errors that the weapon of the traditional doctrines contained in the vast treasury of Islamic thought must be used and answers drawn from these sources be provided before any further erosion of Islamic intellectual life takes place.

Returning to the question of existentialism and traditional Islamic philosophy in Persia, it must be mentioned that because of the type of traditional philosophy surviving there and based on the principiality of being (*aṣālat al-wujūd*), and itself called *falsafat al-wujūd* (which some have mistakenly translated as existentialism), existentialism of the European kind has encountered strong resistance from traditional circles. Actually anyone who has studied traditional Islamic philosophy from Ibn Sīnā and Suhrawardī to the great expositor of the metaphysics of being, Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (Mullā Ṣadrā), will readily understand the profound chasm which separates traditional Islamic "philosophy of being" from modern existentialism, which even in its apparently most profound aspects can only reach, in a fragmentary fashion, some of the rudimentary teachings contained in their fullness in traditional metaphysics. Henry Corbin, the only Western scholar who has expounded to any extent this later phase

of Islamic philosophy in the West, has shown the divergence of views between Islamic philosophy and existentialism and the correctives which the former provides for the latter in the long French introduction to his edition and translation of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's *Kitāb al-mashā'ir* (rendered into French as *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*)<sup>18</sup>. It is incidentally interesting to note that it was through Corbin's translation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* that Sartre was first attracted to existentialism, while Corbin himself turned completely away from this form of thought to the ocean of the "Orient of Light" of Suhrawardi and the luminous philosophy of being of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī.

To conclude this discussion one last basic point must be mentioned, and that is the ecological crisis which was brought into being by modern civilization but which is now a challenge to the very life of men everywhere including of course Muslims in the Islamic world. Anyone who is aware of what is going on today knows that the most immediate problem, at least of a material order, which faces the world is the ecological crisis, the destruction of the loss of equilibrium between man and his natural environment. Islam and its sciences have a particularly urgent and timely message which, as mentioned above, can help to solve, to the extent possible, this major challenge to the world as a whole. However, this message unfortunately receives the least amount of attention from modernized Muslims themselves.

We know that Muslims cultivated the different sciences of nature such as astronomy, physics and medicine avidly and made great contributions to them without losing their equilibrium and harmony with nature. Their sciences of nature were always cultivated within the matrix of a "philosophy of nature" which was in harmony with the total structure of the Universe as seen from the Islamic perspective. There lies in the background of Islamic science a true philosophy of nature which if brought to light and presented in a contemporary language can be substituted for the present false natural philosophy, which, combined with a lack of true metaphysical understanding of first principles, is largely responsible for the present crisis in man's relation with nature.<sup>19</sup>

Unfortunately the Islamic scientific heritage has only too rarely been studied by Muslims themselves and if such a study is made it is usually based on an inferiority complex which tries to prove that Muslims preceded the West in scientific discoveries and therefore are not below the West in their cultural attainment. Rarely is this precious Muslim scientific

heritage seen as an alternative path to a science of the natural order which could and did avoid the catastrophic impasse modern science and its applications through technology have created for men. Muslims with vision should be only too happy that it was not they who brought about the 17th century scientific revolution whose logical outcome we observe today. Muslim scholars and thinkers must be trained with the goal of revitalizing the philosophy of nature contained in the Islamic sciences and of studying these sciences themselves.

The end thus proposed is very different from the goal espoused by so many modernized Muslims who pride themselves that Islam paved the way for the Renaissance. They reason that since the Renaissance was a great event in history and since Islamic culture helped create the Renaissance, therefore Islamic culture must be of value. This is an absurd way of reasoning which remains completely unaware of the fact that what the modern world suffers from today is the result of steps taken by the West mostly during the Renaissance when Western man rebelled to a large extent against his God-given religion. Muslims should be grateful that they did not rebel against heaven and had no share in that anti-spiritual humanism which has now resulted in an infra-human world. What Islam in fact did was to prevent the individualistic rebellion against heaven, the Promethean and Titanesque spirit which is so clearly shown in much of Renaissance art and which stands diametrically opposed to the spirit of Islam based on submission to God. It is true that Islamic science and culture were a factor in the rise of the Renaissance in the West but Islamic elements were employed only after they were divorced from their Islamic character and torn away from the total order in which alone they possess their full meaning and significance.

Muslims should cultivate the study of the Islamic sciences firstly to show to young Muslims, so many of whom have the tendency to stop praying upon learning the first formulas of algebra, that for many centuries Muslims cultivated the sciences including most of the mathematics taught in secondary schools today and yet remained devout Muslims; and secondly to bring out the underlying harmony of the Islamic sciences with Islamic philosophy, theology and metaphysics, a harmony that is closely related to the philosophy of nature alluded to above. The great masterpieces of Islamic science such as the works of Ibn Sīnā, al-Bīrūnī, Khayyām and Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī can all be employed with both ends and purposes in view.

To conclude it must be asserted categorically once again that to preserve Islam and Islamic civilization a conscious and intellectual defense must be made of the Islamic tradition. Moreover, a thorough intellectual criticism must be made of the modern world and its shortcomings. Muslims cannot hope to follow the same path as the West without reaching the same impasse or an even worse one because of the rapidity of the tempo of change today. The Muslim intelligentsia must face all of the challenges here mentioned and many others with confidence in themselves. They must cease to live in the state of a psychological and cultural inferiority complex. They must close ranks among themselves and also join forces with the other great traditions of Asia not only to cease to be on the defensive but also to take the offense and provide from their God-given treasury of wisdom the medicine which alone can cure the modern world of its most dangerous malady, provided of course the patient is willing to undergo the cure. But even if we take the dimmest point of view with a consideration of the present day situation and realize that all cannot be saved, the assertion of the truth itself is the most valuable of all acts and its effect goes far beyond what can usually be envisaged. The truth must therefore be asserted and the intellectual defense of Islam made on every front in which it is challenged. The result is in God's Hands. As the Quran asserts "Truth hath come and falsehood hath vanished away. Lo! falsehood is ever bound to vanish" (XVII, 81 Pickthal translation).

(جاء الحق و ذهب الباطل ان الباطل كان زهوقا).

## NOTES

1. It must be said, however, that because of the very rapid decadence of Western society during the past two decades, some of the younger Muslims who have experienced the Western world on an "intellectual" level are far less infatuated with it than before and have in fact begun to criticize it. But of these the number that think within the Islamic framework are very limited. The various works of Maryam Jameelah contain many thoughtful pages on this theme and the whole problem of the confrontation of Islam and Western civilization. See especially her *Islam versus the West*, Lahore, 1968.

2. A few of the modernized 'ulamā' must also be placed in this category. See W.C. Smith *Islam in Modern History*, Oxford, 1957, where the style and approach of such an apologetic attitude as it concerns Egypt is analyzed.

3. It is here that "fundamentalist" puritanical movements such as that of the Salafiyah and the modernist trends meet.

4. See F. Schuon, "No activity without Truth", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Autumn, 1969, pp. 194-203.

5. We do not mean that Muslim "occidentalists" should emulate the prejudices and limitations of the orientalist but that they should know the West as well as possible from the Islamic point of view in the same way that the best among orientalists have sought to know the East well albeit within the frame of reference of the West. Of course because of the anti-traditional nature of the modern West such a frame of reference has not been adequate when dealing with the religious and metaphysical teachings or Oriental traditions, but that is another question which does not enter our present discussion.

6. See S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Studies*, Beirut, 1967, chapter eight.

7. See S. H. Nasr, *The Encounter of Man and Nature*, London, 1968, pp. 93.

8. As far as socialism is concerned, which is right now enjoying great popularity in the form of "Islamic" socialism, Arab socialism, etc., it is usually a mis-nomer for social justice and is adopted in many circles without an analysis of its real meaning but for political expedience or simply to appear modern and progressive.

9. A major exception to this is the five volume *Usūl-i-falsafah* of "Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā, I, one of the most venerable masters of traditional Islamic philosophy in Persia today, with the commentary of Murtaḍā Muṭahharī, Qum, 1932 (A.H. solar). As far as we know this is the only work of an Islamic character which has tried to answer dialectical materialism from a philosophical point of view drawing from traditional Islamic philosophy, especially the school of Mullā Ṣadarā.

10. See Nasr, *Encounter of Man and Nature*, pp. 124 ff, where these arguments as well as references to works on biology in which they have been set forth are presented; See also G. Berthault, *L' evolution fruit d' une illusion Scientifique*, Paris, 1972

11. See for example, Leroi-Gourhan, *Le Geste et la parole*, 2 Vols., Paris, 1964-1965; - J. Servier, *L'homme et l'invisible* Paris, 1964. E. Zolla, (ed). *Eternita' e storia, L'valor; permanenti nel divenire storico*, Florence, 1970. and G. Duran "Défiguration



philosophique et figure traditionnelle de l' homme en Occident", *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, XXXVIII/1969, Zurich, 1971, pp. 45-93. Even an academic authority like Lévi-Strauss, the founder of structuralism, has said, "less hommes out toujours pensé aussi bien."

12. It must be said, however, that fortunately in Islam there have not as yet appeared any figures representing "evolutionary religion" possessing the same degree of influence as can be seen in Hinduism and Christianity where such men as Sri Aurohindo and Teilhard de Chardin have rallied numerous supporters around themselves. The metaphysical teachings of Islam based upon the immutability of the Divine Principle has until now been too powerful to permit the widespread influence of any such deviation.

13. See Abu Bakr Sirajed Din, "The Islamic and Christian Conceptions of the March of Time", *Islamic Quarterly*, 1954, vol., pp. 229-35.

14. See Lord Northbourn, *Looking Back on Progress*, London, 1971 ; M. Lings, *Ancient Beliefs and Modern Superstitions*, London, 1965 ; and F. Schuon, *Light on the Ancient Worlds*, trans. by Lord Northbourne, London, 1965.

15. See W.N. Perry, "The Revolt against Moses", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Spring, 1966, pp. 103-119; F. Schuon, "The Psychological Imposture", *Ibid.*, pp. 98-102; and R. Guenon, *The Region of Quantity and the Signs of the Times*, trans. by Lord Northbourne, Baltimore, 1972, chapters XXIV on. As far as Jung is concerned his influence can be even more dangerous than that of Freud precisely because he deals more with traditional symbols but from a psychological rather than spiritual point of view. See F. Burckhardt, "Cosmology and Modern Science III", *Tomorrow*, vol. 13, No. 1, Winter, 1965, pp. 19-31; also his *Scienza moderna e saggezza tradizionale*, Torino, 1968, chapter 4.

16. On the significance of the void in Islamic art see, T. Burckhardt, "The Void in Islamic Art", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, Spring, 1970, pp. 96-99; and S. H. Nasr, "The Significance of the Void in the Art and Architecture of Islamic Persia", *Journal of the Regional Cultural Institute*, (Tehran), vol. V, no. 2 & 3, 1972, pp. 121-28.

17. See S.H. Nasr, *Islamic Studies*, chapters eight and nine.

18. See Mullā Ṣadrā, *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir* (*Le livre des penetrations metaphysiques*), Tehran-Paris, 1964, chapter IV of the introduction : See also T. Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence*, Tokyo, 1971, where a profound analysis of Islamic ontology is to be found if even in chapter II certain comparisons are made with Western existentialism which appear to us and difficult to accept.

19. See S.H. Nasr, *Science and Civilization in Islam*, Cambridge, 1968 ; and S.H. Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, Cambridge, 1964.

#### Suggested Readings

- T. Burckhardt, *Alchemy*, London, 1967.
- ... "Traditional Cosmology and Modern Science", *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 1967.
- H. Corbin, *Le livre des penetrations metaphysiques*, Tehran Paris, 1964.
- ... "The force of Traditional Islamic Philosophy in Iran Today," *Studies in Comparative Religion*, 1968.