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The Gachwal Studies
in
Religion and Philosophy: XI.

THE
PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY
OF AVERROES

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THE PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY OF AVERROES

Tractata translated from the Arabic

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BARODA

DEDICATION
to
DR. AZIMUDDIN AHMAD

SIR,

It was at your feet that I first learned to appreciate historical and literary research, and the following pages constitute the earliest fruits of that literary labour of mine the impetus for which I am proud to have received from you. I crave your indulgence for my taking the liberty of dedicating the same to your revered name, with the hope that it will not fail to attract the same generous sympathy from you as you have always shown to your pupil.

MOHAMMAD JAMIL UR REHMAN

PREFACE

It was as a Fellow of the Seminar for the Comparative Study of Religions at the College, Baroda, that the present work was begun. The subject was taken up in the first place as a parallel study to that contained in a paper in the Indian Philosophical Review, Volume II, July 1918, pp. 24-32 entitled "Maimonides and the Attainment of Religious Truth." But as I proceeded with my investigation I thought it might be best to let Averroes speak for himself. For this reason I have here translated certain treatises of Averroes, as edited in the Arabic text by D. H. Muller in "Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes." Munich 1859. I am confident that the book will prove an interesting one and will explain itself to the reader without any introduction on my part.

Though owing to my appointment at Hyderabad I resigned my position at Baroda soon after commencing this work I wish here to express my thanks to Professor Alban G. Widgery of Baroda for his constant sympathy with and encouragement for my work in and out of the Seminar. He has also kindly accepted the book for inclusion in the Gaekwad Studies in Religion and Philosophy. I am indebted to him for a complete revision of the manuscript and for the onerous work of seeing the book through the press. I am also indebted to my brother Mutazid Wali ur Rehman, B.A. for valuable help in rendering many obscure passages.

MOHAMMAD JAMIL UR REHMAN

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CONTENTS

- I. A Decisive Discourse on the Delineation of the Relation between Religion and Philosophy.
 - I a. Appendix: On the Problem of Eternal Knowledge which Averroes has mentioned in his Decisive Discourse.
 - II. An Exposition of the Methods of Argument concerning the Doctrines of the Faith, and a Determination of Doubts and misleading Innovation brought into the Faith through Interpretations.
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I

**A DECISIVE DISCOURSE ON THE DELINEATION
OF THE
RELATION BETWEEN RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY**

A DECISIVE DISCOURSE ON THE
DELINEATION
OF THE
RELATION BETWEEN
RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY.*

And after: Praise be to God for all His praiseworthy acts, and blessings on Mohammad, His slave, the Pure, the Chosen One and His Apostle. The purpose of the following treatise is to inquire through sacred Law † whether the learning of philosophy and other sciences appertaining thereto is permitted, or called dangerous, or commended by the Law, and if commended, is it only approved or made obligatory.

* A translation of Averroes' Kitab Fasl a'l Maqal wa Taqrir ma bain'a'l Shariata wa'l Hikmati mina'l Ittisal. Ed. by D. J. Muller, Philosophie und Theologie von Averroes, Munich 1859.

† i. e. Shariat. Compare Jewish Torah.

We maintain that the business of philosophy is nothing other than to look into creation and to ponder over it in order to be guided to the Creator,—in other words, to look into the meaning of existence. For the knowledge of creation leads to the cogniscance of the Creator, through the knowledge of the created. The more perfect becomes the knowledge of creation, the more perfect becomes the knowledge of the Creator. The Law encourages and exhorts us to observe creation. Thus, it is clear that this is to be taken either as a religious injunction or as something approved by the Law. But the Law urges us to observe creation by means of reason and demands the knowledge thereof through reason. This is evident from different verses of the Quran. For example the Quran says: “Wherefore take example *from them*, ye who have eyes.”¹ That is a clear indication of the necessity of using the reasoning faculty, or rather

1. Quran lix, 2.

both reason and religion, in the interpretation of things. Again it says: "Or do they not contemplate the kingdom of heaven and earth and the things which God hath created."² This is a plain exhortation to encourage the use of observation of creation. And remember that one whom God especially distinguishes in this respect, Abraham, the prophet. For He says: "And this did we show unto Abraham: the kingdom of heaven and earth."³ Further He says: "Do they not consider the camels, how they are created; and the heaven, how it is raised."⁴ Or still again: "And (who) meditate on the creation of heaven and earth, saying, O Lord thou hast not created this in vain."⁵ There are many other verses on this subject: too numerous to be enumerated.

Now, it being established that the Law makes the observation and consideration of creation by reason obligatory —

2. Quran vii, 184.

3. Quran vi, 75.

4. Quran lxxxviii, 17.

5. Quran iii, 176.

and consideration is nothing but to make explicit the implicit — this can only be done through reason. Thus we must look into creation with the reason. Moreover, it is obvious that the observation which the Law approves and encourages must be of the most perfect type, performed with the most perfect kind of reasoning. As the Law emphasises the knowledge of God and His creation by inference, it is incumbent on any who wish to know God and His whole creation by inference, to learn the kinds of inference, their conditions and that which distinguishes philosophy from dialectic and exhortation from syllogism. This is impossible unless one possesses knowledge beforehand of the various kinds of reasoning and learns to distinguish between reasoning and what is not reasoning. This cannot be done except one knows its different parts, that is, the different kinds of premises.

Hence, for a believer in the Law and a follower of it, it is necessary to know

these things before he begins to look into creation, for they are like instruments for observation. For, just as a student discovers by the study of the law, the necessity of knowledge of legal reasoning with all its kinds and distinctions, a student will find out by observing the creation the necessity of metaphysical reasoning. Indeed, he has a greater claim on it than the jurist. For if a jurist argues the necessity of legal reasoning from the saying of God: "Wherefore take example *from them* O ye who have eyes,"⁶ a student of divinity has a better right to establish the same from it on behalf of metaphysical reasoning. -

One cannot maintain that this kind of reasoning is an innovation in religion because it did not exist in the early days of Islam. For legal reasoning and its kinds are things which were invented also in later ages, and no one thinks they are innovations. Such should also

6. Quran lix, 2.

be our attitude towards philosophical reasoning. There is another reason why it should be so, but this is not the proper place to mention it. A large number of the followers of this religion confirm philosophical reasoning, all except a small worthless minority, who argue from religious ordinances. Now, as it is established that the Law makes the consideration of philosophical reasoning and its kinds as necessary as legal reasoning, if none of our predecessors has made an effort to enquire into it, we should begin to do it, and so help them, until the knowledge is complete. For if it is difficult or rather impossible for one person to acquaint himself single-handed with all things which it is necessary to know in legal matters, it is still more difficult in the case of philosophical reasoning. And, if before us, somebody has enquired into it, we should derive help from what he has said. It is quite immaterial whether that man is our co-religionist or not ; for the instru-

ment by which purification is perfected is not made uncertain in its usefulness, by its being in the hands of one of our own party, or of a foreigner, if it possesses the attributes of truth. By these latter we mean those Ancients who investigated these things before the advent of Islam.

Now, such is the case. All that is wanted in an enquiry into philosophical reasoning has already been perfectly examined by the Ancients. All that is required of us is that we should go back to their books and see what they have said in this connection. If all that they say be true, we should accept it and if there be something wrong, we should be warned by it. Thus, when we have finished this kind of research we shall have acquired instruments by which we can observe the universe, and consider its general character. For so long as one does not know its general character one cannot know the created, and so long as he does not know the created, he can

have no knowledge of the Creator. Thus we must begin an inquiry into the universe systematically, such as we have learned from the trend of rational inference. It is also evident that this aim is to be attained by the investigation of one part of the universe after another, and that help must be derived from predecessors, as is the case in other sciences. Imagine that the science of geometry and astronomy had become extinct in our day, and a single individual desired to find out by himself the magnitude of the heavenly bodies, their forms, and their distances from one another. Even though he were the most sagacious of men, it would be as impossible for him as to ascertain the proportion of the sun and the earth and the magnitude of the other stars. It would only be attainable by aid of divine revelation, or something like it. If it be said to him that the sun is a hundred and fifty or sixty times as big as the earth, he would take it to be sheer mad.

ness on the part of the speaker, though it is an established fact in the science of astronomy, so that no one learned in that science will have any doubt about it.

The science which needs most examples from other sciences is that of Law. For the study of jurisprudence cannot be completed except in a very long time. If a man today would himself learn of all the arguments discovered by the different disputants of diverse sects, in problems which have always excited contentions in all the big cities, except those of Al-Maghrib, he would be a proper object to be laughed at on account of the impossibility of the task, in spite of the existence of every favourable circumstance. This is similar not only in the sciences but also in the arts. For no one is capable of discovering by himself alone everything which is required. And if this is so in other sciences and arts, how is it possible in the art of arts – philosophy ?

This being so, it becomes us to go

back to the Ancients, and to see what observations and considerations they have made into the universe, according to the tests of inference. We should consider what they have said in this connection and proved in their books, so that whatever may be true in them we may accept and, while thanking them, be glad to know it, and whatever be wrong, we should be warned by it, be cautioned, and hold them excused for their mistake.

From what has been said, it may be taken that a search into the books of the Ancients is enjoined by the Law, when their meaning and purpose be the same as that to which the Law exhorts us. Anyone who prevents a man from pondering over these things, that is, a man who has the double quality of natural sagacity and rectitude in the Law, with the merit of learning and disposition – turns away the people from the door by which the Law invites them to enter into the knowledge of God, and that is the door of observation

which leads to the perfect knowledge of God. Such an action is the extreme limit of ignorance and of remoteness from God. /

If, by studying these books, a man has been led astray and gone wrong on account of some natural defect, bad training of the mind, inordinate passion, or the want of a teacher who might explain to him the true significance of things, by all or some of these causes, we ought not on this account to prevent one fit to study these things from doing so. For such harm is not innate in man, but is only an accident of training.

It is not right that a drug which is medically useful by its nature should be discarded because it may prove harmful by accident. The Prophet told a man whose brother was suffering with diarrhea to treat him with honey. But this only increased the ailment. On his complaining, the Prophet said: "God was right and thy brother's stomach was wrong." We would even say that a man who

prevents another fit for it, from studying the books of philosophy, because certain worthless people have been misled by them, is like a man who refused a thirsty man cold and sweet water, till he died, because some people under the same circumstances have been suffocated by it and have died. For death by suffocation through drinking cold water is accidental, while by thirst it is natural and inevitable.

This state of things is not peculiar to this science only, but is common to all. How many jurists there are in whom jurisprudence has become the cause of worldliness and lack of piety? We should say that a large majority of jurists are of this kind, although their science should result in better action than other sciences which only lead to better knowledge.

So far, then, the position is established. Now, we Muslims firmly believe that our Law is divine and true. This very Law urges us and brings us to

that blessing which is known as the knowledge of God, and His creation. This is a fact to which every Muslim will bear testimony by his very nature and temperament. We say this, because temperaments differ in believing: one will believe through philosophy; while another will believe through dogmatic discourse, just as firmly as the former, as no other method appeals to his nature. There are others who believe by exhortation alone, just as others believe through inferences. For this reason our divine Law invites people by all the three methods, which every man has to satisfy, except those who stubbornly refuse to believe, or those, according to whom these divine methods have not been established on account of the waywardness of their hearts. This is why the mission of the Prophet has been declared common to the whole world, for his Law comprises all the three methods leading men towards God. What we say is quite clear from the following saying of God:

"Invite men unto the way of the Lord, by wisdom and mild exhortation, and dispute with them in the most condescending manner."⁷

As this Law is true and leads to the consideration of the knowledge of God, we Muslims should believe that rational investigation is not contrary to Law, for truth cannot contradict truth, but verifies it and bears testimony to it. And if that is so, and rational observation is directed to the knowledge of any existent objects, then the Law may be found to be silent about it, or concerned with it. In the former case no dispute arises, as it would be equivalent to the absence of its mention in the Law as injunctory, and hence the jurist derives it from legal conjecture. But if the Law speaks of it, either it will agree with that which has been proved by inference, or else it will disagree with it. If it is in agreement it needs no comment, and if it is opposed to the Law, an interpretation is to be

7. Quran xvi, 126.

sought. Interpretation means to carry the meaning of a word from its original sense to a metaphorical one. But this should be done in such a manner as will not conflict with the custom of the Arabian tongue. It is to avoid the naming of an object, by simply mentioning its like, its cause, its attribute, or associate, etc. which are commonly quoted in the definition of the different kinds of metaphorical utterances. And if the jurist does so in many of the legal injunctions, how very befitting would it be for a learned man to do the same with his arguments. For the jurist has only his fanciful conjectures to depend upon, while a learned man possesses positive ones.

We hold it to be an established truth that if the Law is apparently opposed to a truth proved by philosophy it admits of an interpretation according to the canons of the Arabic language. This is a proposition which a Muslim cannot doubt and a believer

cannot mistrust. One who is accustomed to these things divine can experience for himself what we have said. The aim of this discourse is to bring together intellectual and traditional science. Indeed, we would even say that no logical conclusion will be found to be opposed to the Law, which when sifted and investigated in its different parts will be found in accordance, or almost so, with it.

That is why all Muslims are agreed that all the words of the Law are not to be taken literally, nor all of them given an interpretation. But they vary in verses, which are or are not to be interpreted. For example, the Asharites put an interpretation upon the verse of Equalisation⁸ and on the Tradition of

8. "It is he who hath created you whatsoever is on earth, and that set His mind to the creation of heaven and formed it into seven heavens; he knoweth all thing." *Quran* ii. 29. For an interpretation of this see Raji's *Tafsiri Kabir* vol. I. p. 249 et seq. Cairo. 1307. A. H. and Tabari's *Commentary* vol. I. p. 146 et seq. Cairo 1902 A. D.

Descent,⁹ while the Hanbalites take them literally. The Law has made two sides of these—exoteric and esoteric—because of the differences of human nature and minds in verifying a thing. The existence of an opposed esoteric meaning is in order to call the attention of the learned to find out a comprehensive interpretation. To this the following verse of the Quran¹ refers: “It is he who hath sent down unto thee the book, wherein are some verses clear to be understood — they are the foundation of the book — and others are parabolical. But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of love of schism, and a desire of the interpretation thereof; yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God. But they who are well grounded in

9. “ Verily God comes down every night to the earth ”
(*Nihayah fi Gharibil Hadith* by Ibu Athir vol. IV. p. 138
Cairo 1311 A. H.,) For an interpretation see the above and
Qustatain's Commentary on Bukari, vol. IX p. 178. Cairo. 1307
A. H.

knowledge say: We believe therein, the whole is from our Lord, and none will consider except the prudent."¹⁰

Here it may be objected that in the Law there are things which all Muslims have agreed to take esoterically, while there are others on which they have agreed to put an interpretation, while there are some about which they disagree. Is it justifiable to use logic in the interpretation of those which have been taken literally, or otherwise? We would say that if the agreement is positive there is no need to apply logic; but if it be conjectural there is. For this very reason Abu Hamid (Al Ghazali) and Abu Ma'ali and other learned doctors have ordained that a man does not become an unbeliever by forsaking the common agreement and applying the principle of interpretation in such things. It will certainly be agreed that complete concensus of opinion is not possible in metaphysical questions, in the manner in

¹⁰, *Quran* iii, 5.

which it is possible to establish it in practical things. For it is not possible to establish unanimity of opinion at any time, unless we confine ourselves to a small period and know perfectly all the learned doctors living in it, that is, their personalities, their number and their views about any question to be quoted to us directly from them without a break in the chain. With all this we should know for certain that the doctors living at that time are agreed that there is no distinction of exoteric and esoteric meanings in the Law, that the knowledge of no proposition should be concealed from anybody, and that the method of teaching the Law should be the same with all men. But we know that a large number of people in the early days of Islam believed in exoteric and esoteric meanings of the Law, and thought that the esoteric meanings should not be disclosed to an ignorant person who cannot understand them. For example, Bukhari has related on the authority of Ali that

he said "Talk to men what they can understand. Do you intend to give the lie to God and His Apostle?" There are many Traditions to the same effect related from other people. So, how is it possible to conceive of any consensus of opinion coming down to us in metaphysical questions when we definitely know that in every age there have been doctors who take the Law to contain things the real significance of which should not be disclosed to all men? But in practical affairs it is quite different. For all persons are of opinion that they should be revealed to all men alike. In these things unanimity of opinion can be easily obtained if the proposition is published, and no disagreement is reported. That may be sufficient to obtain unanimity of opinion in practical things as distinct from the sciences.

If it be maintained that one does not become an unbeliever by ignoring consensus of opinion in interpretation, as no unanimity is possible in it, what shall

we say of such Muslim philosophers as Abu Nasr (Al Farabi) and Ibn Sina (Avicenna)? For Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) has charged them with positive infidelity in his book: *The Refutation of the Philosophers*, in regard to three things: The eternity of the world; God's ignorance of particulars; and the interpretation concerning the resurrection of bodies and the state of the Day of Judgment. To this we should reply that from what he has said it is not clear that he has charged them positively with infidelity. For in his book *Al Tafriqah bain'al Islami w'al Zindiqah* he has explained that the infidelity of a man who ignores the consensus of opinion is doubtful. Moreover we have definitely pointed out that it is not possible to establish a consensus of opinion in such matters, especially when there are many people of the early times who have held that there are interpretations which should not be disclosed to all but only to those who are fit for

them and those are men who are "well grounded in knowledge"¹¹ a divine injunction which cannot be overlooked. For if such people do not know the interpretation in these matters they will have no special criterion of truth for their faith, which the common people have not, while God has described them as believing in Him. This kind of faith is always produced by the acceptance of the arguments, and that is not possible without a knowledge of interpretation. Otherwise, even the common people believe in the words of God without any philosophy whatever. The faith which the Quran has especially ascribed to the learned must be a faith strengthened with full arguments, which cannot be without a knowledge of the canons of interpretation. For God has said that the Law admits of interpretation which is its real significance, and this is what is established by arguments. Yet though this is so, it is impossible to establish

11. *Quran* iii, 5,

any well grounded consensus of opinion in the interpretations which God has ascribed to the learned men. That is quite evident to anyone with insight. But with this we see that Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) has made a mistake in ascribing to the Peripatetic Philosophers the opinion that God has no knowledge of particulars. They are only of opinion that the knowledge of God about particulars is quite different from ours. For our knowledge is the effect of the existence of a thing. Such knowledge is produced by the existence of a thing, and changes with changes in the thing. On the other hand the knowledge of God is the cause of an existent thing. Thus one who compares these two kinds of knowledge ascribes the same characteristics to two quite different things — and that is extreme ignorance. When applied both to eternal and to transitory things the word *knowledge* is used only in a formal fashion, just as we use many other words for objects essentially different. For

instance the word *Jalal* is applied both to great and small; and *sarim* to light and darkness. We have no definition which can embrace both these kinds of knowledge, as some of the Mutakallimun of our times have thought. We have treated this question separately at the request of some of our friends.

How can it be supposed that the Peripatetic Philosophers say that God has no knowledge of particulars when they are of opinion that man is sometimes warned of the coming vicissitudes of the future through visions, and that he gets these admonitions in sleep, through a great and powerful Director, who directs everything? These philosophers are not only of opinion that God has no knowledge of details such as we have but they also believe that He is ignorant of universals. For all known universals with us are also the effect of the existence of a thing, while God's knowledge is quite other than this. From these arguments it is concluded that God's

knowledge is far higher than that it should be called universal or particular. There is therefore no difference of opinion concerning the proposition, that is, whether they are called infidel or not.

As to the eternal or transitory nature of the world: I think that in this matter the difference of opinion between the Asharite Mutakallimun and the Ancient Philosophers is for the most part a verbal difference, at least so far as the opinion of some of the Ancients is concerned. For they are agreed on the fact that there are three kinds of creation — the two extremes and a medial one. They again agree on the nomenclature of the two extremes, but they disagree as to the medial one. As to the one extreme, it has come into existence from something other than itself, or from anything else — that is from a generative cause or matter — while time existed before it. All those things whose existence is perceived by the senses, as water, animals, vegetation, etc., are in-

cluded in this. All Ancient and Asharite philosophers are agreed in denominating this creation *Originated*.

The other extreme is that which came into existence from nothing, not out of anything, and time did not precede it. The two parties are agreed in calling this *Eternal*. This extreme can be reached by logic. This is God, the Creator, Inventor, and Preserver of all.

The medial kind of creation is that which has neither been made from nothing, "matter," nor has time preceded it, but it has been created by some generative cause. In this is included the whole world. Again they all agree on the existence of all the three categories of the universe. The Mutakalimun admit, or they ought to admit, that before the universe there was no time, for according to them time is contemporaneous with motion and body. They are also agreed with the Ancients that future time and creation have no end, but they differ as to past time and

its creation. The Mutakallimun are of opinion that it had a beginning.

This is the belief of Plato and his disciples, while Aristotle and his followers are of opinion that it had no beginning, just as the future has no end. It is clear that the last mentioned kind of creation resembles both the *originated* and the *eternal* creation. So one who thinks that in the past creation there are more characteristics of the eternal than the originated takes it to be eternal and vice versa. But in reality it is neither truly originated nor eternal. For the originated creation is necessarily subject to destruction while the eternal is without a cause. There are some, for example, Plato and his followers, who have called it *infinitely originated*, for according to them time has no end. There is not here so great a difference about the universe, for it to be made the basis of a charge of infidelity. In fact, they should not be so charged at all, for opinions which are worthy of

this are far removed from ours, those quite contrary to them, as the Mutakallimun have thought them to be in this proposition. I mean that they take the words *originated* and *eternal* to be contrary expressions, which our investigation has shown not to be the case.

The strange thing about all these opinions is that they are not in agreement with the literal sense of the Law. For if we look closely we shall find many verses which tell us of the creation of the universe — that is, of its *originated* nature. Creation and time are said to be without end. For according to the verse: “It is He who hath created the heavens and the earth in six days, but His Throne was above the waters before the creation thereof”¹² it is clear that there was a universe before this one, and that is the throne and the water, and a time which existed before that water. Then again the verse “The day will come when the earth shall be changed

12. *Quran* xi, 9.

into another earth and the heavens into other heavens"¹³ shows equally when taken literally that there will be a universe after this one. Again, the verse: "Then He set his mind to the creation of heaven and it was smoke"¹⁴ shows that the heavens were created from something.

Whatever the Mutakallimun say about the universe is not based on a literal sense of the Law, but is an interpretation of it. For the Law does not tell us that God was even before mere non-existence, and moreover, this is not found as an ordinance in it. How can we suppose that there could be any consensus of opinion about the interpretation of verses by the Mutakallimun? In fact, there is much in the sayings of some philosophers which supports what we have quoted from the Law, taken literally.

Those who differ concerning these obscure questions have either reached the truth and have been rewarded; or have

13. *Qur'an* xiv, 19.

14. *Qur'an* xli, 10.

fallen into error and have to be excused. For it is compulsory rather than voluntary to believe a thing to be true, the proof of which has already been established; that is, we cannot believe or disbelieve it as we like, as it depends upon our will to stand or not to do so. So, if one of the conditions of verification be freedom of choice, a learned man, and he alone should be held excused, if he makes a mistake on account of some doubt. Hence the Prophet has said that if a magistrate judges rightly he receives two rewards, and if he makes a mistake he deserves only one. But what magistrate is greater than one who judges the universe, whether it is so or not. These are the judges — the learned men — whom God has distinguished with the knowledge of interpretation.

It is this kind of mistake of insight which learned people are quite apt to make when they look into those obscure questions the investigation of which the Law has imposed upon them. But the

mistake the common people make in these matters is sin pure and simple, whether in theoretical or in practical things. As a magistrate, ignorant of Tradition, when he makes mistakes in judgment, cannot be held excused, so likewise a judge of the universe when not having the qualities of a judge is also not excusable, but is either a sinner or an unbeliever. If it be a condition that a magistrate shall have capacity of arbitration concerning the lawful and the forbidden, that is, knowledge of the principles of Law and their application through analogy — how much more befitting it is for an arbitrator of the universe to be armed with fundamental knowledge of the mental sciences, and the way of deducing results from them. /

Mistake in the interpretation of the Law is thus of two kinds — a mistake which can be excused in one fit to look into the thing in which it has been committed, just as an expert physician is excused if he commits an error in the

application of his science ; or a magistrate when he misjudges, and a mistake which is inexcusable in one not fit to investigate a thing. But the error which cannot be excused for anybody, and which, if it happens to show itself in relation to the very principles of the Law, is infidelity, and if in universals is an innovation, is that error which is committed in those things which have been settled by all arguments and so the knowledge of them is possible for everybody, for instance, the acknowledgement of the existence of God, of Prophecy, and of the happiness or the misery of the next world. This is so, because all these three principles are proved by those three methods, the justification of which a man cannot deny by any means, that is exhortative controversial and argumentative proofs. A denier of such things, which are the very root of the principle of the Law, is an unbeliever, a retrograde with his tongue and his heart, or through negligence, on account

of his denying them in spite of proofs. For if he be a man believing in arguments, he can verify them through these or if he believes in controversy, he can verify through that; and if he believes in religious admonitions he can well justify them through these. And hence the Prophet has said: "I have been commanded to fight with men till they say: 'There is no God but Allah' and believe in me" that is, by any of these three means of attaining the Faith.

But there are things which, on account of their obscurity, cannot be understood by inference. So, God has favoured such of his creatures as cannot understand logic, either on account of their nature, habit, or lack of mental training, by quoting examples and parables of such things and has urged them to testify as to their truth through them. For everyone has mental capacity enough to understand them by the help of dogmatic and exhortatory argument which are common to all men. This is why the Law has

been divided into two kinds: exoteric and esoteric. The exoteric part consists of those examples which have been coined to express certain meanings; while the esoteric is the meanings themselves, which are not manifested except to the learned in philosophy.

These are the very four or five kinds of methods of knowing reality mentioned by Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) in his book called *Al Tafriqah bain al Islam wal Zindiqah*. If it so happens as we have said that we can know of a thing by any of the above mentioned three methods, then we do not stand in need of any examples for understanding them. Such things should be taken literally and interpretation should find no place with regard to them. If these things form a part of the principles of the Law, one who puts an interpretation upon them is an infidel. For instance, if a man believes that there is no happiness or misery in the next world, and that the teaching is only an artifice to safe-

guard the life and property of the people from one another and that there is no goal for men other than this life, then he is certainly an unbeliever. .

When this has once been established it will become clear to you that interpretation is not lawful in the exoteric part of the Law. If the canon of interpretation be used in the principles of the Law, it is infidelity, and if used in general things it is an innovation. But there is also a certain exoteric law which requires an interpretation from learned men. It is not misbelief for them to take it exoterically, but it is so or is at least an innovation in religion if ignorant men try to interpret or explain it.

Among these is the verse of **E**qualisation and the **T**radition of **D**escent. For the Prophet said of a Negro slave girl who told him that God was in heaven: "Emancipate her, for she is a believer." For there are persons who cannot believe a thing except through their imagination, that is, it is difficult for them to

believe a thing which they cannot imagine. Among these may be classed men who cannot understand a thing except with a reference to space, and hence believe in God as though physical, notwithstanding that these are the very persons who have dealt very harshly with those mentioned above. They ought to be told that things of this character are parabolical, and that we should pause and consider the saying of God: "Yet none knoweth the interpretation thereof except God". Although learned men agree that these are to be interpreted, they differ in the interpretation according to their knowledge of principles of philosophy. There is a third part of the Law which occupies an intermediate position, on account of some doubt about it. Some say that it should be taken exoterically, and that no interpretation should be allowed in it; while there are others who say that they have some esoteric meaning, and should not be taken exoterically by the learned.

This is on account of the obscurity of their meaning. A learned man may be excused if he makes a mistake about them.

If the Law is divided into these three parts, it may be asked: to which of these does the description of the state of the Day of Judgment belong? We would reply that it is quite clear, on the very face of the question, that it belongs to that part in which there is some difference of opinion. For one group of men, who class themselves among philosophers, say that these things should be taken literally. For, according to them, there is not a single argument which makes their literal sense absurd and unreasonable. This is the method of the Asharites. But another group of philosophers interpret them; but they differ very widely in the interpretation itself. Amongst these may be mentioned Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) and a large number of Sufis. There are some who would amalgamate the two interpreta-

tions, as Abu Hamid has done in some of his books. These questions are among those in which, if the learned men err they are to be excused; otherwise, they are to be thanked and rewarded. For, if one acknowledges the reality of the Day of Judgment, and then begins to apply the principles of interpretation to the description, and not its reality, he does not in any way deny it. A denial of its reality is infidelity, for it is one of the fundamentals of the Law, and it can be easily verified by any of the three methods of argument common to all men. But one who is not learned should take it exoterically, an interpretation in his case is unbelief, for it leads to infidelity. We are thus of opinion that such people should accept the literal sense, for interpretation will certainly lead them to infidelity. A learned man who discloses the discussions of these things to the common people helps them towards unbelief and one who abets another in that direction is himself no

better than an unbeliever. It is therefore unsuitable that these interpretations should be published in any other than learned books, for in this way they will reach none but the learned. But it is a mistake both in religion and philosophy if they are put in other books, with dogmatic and exhortative arguments, as Abu Hamid has done. Although the author's intention was good, the idea thus to increase the number of learned men, he caused a good deal of mischief through it. For, on account of this method some people began to find fault with philosophy, and others to blame religion, and still others began to think of reconciling the two. It seems that this was the very aim which Abu Hamid had in view in writing these books. He has tried to awaken the nature of men, for he never attached himself to any particular way of thinking in his books. He was an Asharite with the Asharites, a Sufi with the Sufis and a philosopher with the philosophers, so much so that

he was, as has been said: "I am a Yeminite when I meet a Yeminite; if I meet a Ma'adi I am one of Banu Adnan."

Hence, it is necessary for the doctors of Islam to prevent men, except the learned, from reading his books; as it is incumbent upon them to hinder them from reading controversial writings which should not be studied except by those fit to do so. As a rule the reading of these books is less harmful than those of the former. For the majority cannot understand philosophical books, only those endowed with superior natures. People are on the whole destitute of learning and are aimless in their reading which they do without a teacher. Nevertheless they succeed in leading others away from religion. It is an injustice to the best kind of men and the best kind of creation; for in their case justice consists in the knowledge of the best things by the best people, fit to know it. It should be remembered

that the greater the thing is the higher will be the injustice done to it on account of ignorance. Hence God says: "Polytheism is a great injustice."¹⁵ /

These things we have thought proper to mention here, that is, in a discussion of the relation between philosophy and religion and the canons of interpretation in Law. If these matters had not become commonly known among men, we would not have said anything about them and would not have entered in a plea on behalf of the interpreters. For these things are suitable only for mention in philosophical books.

You ought to be aware that the real purpose of the Law is to impart the knowledge of truth and of right action. The knowledge of truth consists in the cogniscance of God and the whole universe with its inner significance, especially that of religion, and the knowledge of happiness or misery of the next world. Right action consists in follow-

15. Quran xxxi, 12.

ing those actions which are useful for happiness and avoiding those which lead to misery. The knowledge of these actions has been called practical knowledge. This is divided into two kinds: external actions, the knowledge of which is called Fiqh, that is, Theology; and actions pertaining to feelings, such as gratitude, patience, and other points of character to which the Law has urged us or from which it has prohibited us. This is called the knowledge of continence and of the next world. Abu Hamid in his book *The Revivification of the Sciences of Religion* seems to be inclined to this kind, and as the people have always turned away from the former kind of knowledge and have turned themselves to the second which leads them easily to piety, the book attained its name. But we have wandered from our own purpose and will now return to it.

If the purpose of the Law is to impart the knowledge of truth and of right

action, this cannot be attained except by one of the two methods: *viz*, by conception or verification such as Mutakallimun have maintained in their books. There are three methods of verification open to people: philosophy, dogmatics and exhortation. There are two methods of conception: either by the thing itself, or by its like. As all people cannot by their nature understand and accept philosophical and dogmatic arguments, together with the difficulty of learning the use of inferences and the long time it takes to learn them, and the purpose of the Law being to be quite common among men, it is necessary that it should contain all kinds of verifications and conceptions. Among the methods of verification there are some which are meant for the common people: that is, exhortative and dogmatic, the exhortative being more common than the other. There is one method which is meant solely for the learned, and that is the method of rational inference. Now, it is

the primary aim of the Law to improve the condition of the many without neglecting the few, and hence the method of conception and verification adopted are common to the majority.

These methods are of four kinds: the first is that which, while in particulars the same in both, that is, both exhortatively and dialectically, is still true by conception and verification. These are syllogisms of which the minor and the major premise are certain, besides being easily imagined and well known. These are set before the deductions which are drawn from them, and not from their likes. To this kind of religious injunction there is no interpretation, and one who denies them or puts an interpretation upon them is an infidel. The second kind is that the premises of which although well known or easily imagined are also positively established. Their conclusions are drawn by analogy. Upon these, that is, their conclusions, an interpretation may be put. The third

kind is just the reverse of the second, that is, the conclusions are themselves intended and their premises are well known or easily imagined without being positively established. Upon these also—that is, upon the conclusions, no interpretation can be put, but the premises may sometimes be interpreted. The fourth kind is that the premises of which are well-known or conjectural without being positively established. Their deductions are by analogy when that is intended. It is the duty of the learned men to interpret them and of the common people to take them exoterically.

In short, all that should be interpreted can be grasped by philosophy alone. So the duty of the learned person is to interpret, and of the common people to take it literally, both in conception and in verification. The reason for the latter is that they cannot understand more. A student of law sometimes finds interpretations which have a preference over others, in a general way by verification:

that is, the argument is more convincing with the interpretations than with the literal meanings. These interpretations are common and it is possible for them to be admitted by any whose speculative faculties have been developed in controversy. Some of the interpretations of the Asharites and the Mutazilites are of this type, though the arguments of the Mutazilites are generally the more weighty. But it is the duty of the common people who are not capable of understanding more than exhortation to take them exoterically. Indeed, it is not proper for them to know the interpretations at all.

Thus there are three groups into which men have been divided: Those who are not included amongst those who should know the interpretations. These are common people who are guided by exhortation alone. They form a vast majority: for there is not a single rational being who cannot accept a result by this method. The second are dogmatic

interpreters. These are so, either by their nature only, or both by nature and habit. The third are those who can be definitely called interpreters. These are the philosophers, both by nature and by philosophical training. This kind of interpretation should not be discussed with the dogmatists, not to speak of the common people. If any of these interpretations are disclosed to those not fit to receive them—especially philosophical interpretations—these being far higher than common knowledge, they may be led to infidelity. For he wishes to nullify the exoteric meaning and to prove his interpretation. But if the exoteric meaning is shown to be false without the interpretation being established, he falls into infidelity, if this concerns the principles of the Law. So, the interpretations should not be disclosed to the common people, and ought not to be put into exhortative or doctrinal books—that is, books written with an expository purpose in view—as Abu Hamid has done.

Hence, it is necessary that the common people should be told that those things which are exoteric, and yet cannot be understood easily, the interpretations of which it is impossible for them to understand, are parabolical, and that no one knows the interpretation thereof except God. We should stop at the following words of God "None knoweth the interpretation thereof except God".¹⁶ This is also the answer to the question about some of those abstruse problems which the common people cannot understand: "They will ask thee concerning the spirit: answer: The spirit was created at the command of my Lord, but ye have no knowledge given to you, except a little."¹⁷ Again, one who interpretes these to persons not fit to receive them is an infidel, because he leads others to infidelity, which is quite in opposition to the purpose of the Law. This is especially the case when corrupt interpretations are put on the principles of the Law, as

16. Quran iii. 5.

17. Quran xvii. 87.

some men of our own times do. We have known many people who think they are philosophers and hence claim to find out strange things through philosophy, which are in every way contrary to religion, and they do not admit of any other interpretation. They think they must disclose these things to the common people. But by the disclosure of wrong notions they lead them to eternal destruction.

The difference between their aim and that of the jurists can be made clear by the following example. Since it is not possible to make every one an expert physician a certain physician laid down some principles for the preservation of health and the prevention of diseases, and he allowed the use of some things but prohibited others. Now a man comes and tells the people that the principles laid down by that physician are not correct and declares them to be false, and they become discredited in the eyes of the people ; or says that they

are capable of interpretations which they cannot understand and cannot verify by practice. Do you think that people in these circumstances will ever act upon those things which are useful for their health and for the prevention of diseases or that the man himself will ever be capable of acting on them? No, he will be quite incapable of doing so and thus will lead them all to destruction.

This is the case when those interpretations which they cannot understand are correct, to say nothing of those that are wrong. For they will not believe in health to be preserved, nor disease to be prevented, to say nothing of the things which preserve health or prevent disease. This is the condition of that man who discloses interpretations of the Law to the common people and those not fit to receive them. And hence he is an unbeliever.

The simile which we have described above is a real parallel, and not merely

fanciful (as some may think) as it is correct in every respect. For the relation of the medicine to the body is the same as that of the Law to the soul. A physician is one who seeks to preserve the health when he finds it good and tries to restore it when it is missed. In the same way a religious law-giver is one who takes care of the health of souls, which is called piety. The Quran also makes clear its purpose, through religious action, by many verses. For instance: "O true believers, a fast is ordained unto you as it was ordained those before you, that ye may fear God"¹⁸ and "Their flesh is not accepted of God, neither their blood; but your piety is accepted by Him"¹⁹ and: "For prayer preserveth a man from filthy crimes and from that which is blameable."²⁰ There are many other verses of the same nature in the Quran. Thus, we see, a religious law-giver seeks to establish this kind of health by religious know-

18. Quran ii. 79. 19. Quran xxii. 38. 20. Quran xcix. 44.

ledge and practice. This is the health upon which depends happiness and in the case of its absence the misery of the next world.

This should have made it clear to you not merely that one should not speak of the wrong interpretation. But also that it is not proper to put even true ones in the books of the common people. These correct interpretations are of the faith which man has and of which the whole creation was afraid to bear the burden. By this we refer to the following verse of the Qnran : " We proposed the faith unto the heavens, and the earth, and the mountains, and they refused to undertake the same, and were afraid thereof, but man undertook it: verily he is unjust to himself and foolish."²¹ These interpretations and the idea that their discussion is necessary in the Law have given rise to many sects in Islam, so much so that they have denounced one another with infidelity and innova-

²¹ *Quran xxxiii, 67,*

tions. This is especially the effect of wrong interpretations. The Mutazilites interpreted a large number of verses and Traditions and disclosed them to the people. So also did the Asharites, though their interpretations were less in number. They only succeeded in creating hatred and wars among men, destroying the Law, and disuniting the people completely. To add to this, the method which they have adopted in proving these interpretations is adapted neither to the common people nor to the learned. For if you look closely into it, you will find that it is not correct according to the norms of logic — this anyone who has had any training may see for himself without the least effort. In fact, many of the principles upon which the Asharites build their conclusions are sophistical in their nature. They deny many fundamentals, like the proof of accident, the influence of one thing upon another, the necessity of cause and effects, abstract figures and the processes leading

to them. Indeed, Asharite Mutakallimun have been in this respects unjust to Mohammadans, for one of their sects has denounced as infidels all those who do not recognise the existence of God by methods which they have devised for the knowledge of Him : but in truth they themselves are in the wrong and are unbelievers.

It is upon this point that the difference of opinion arises. Some say that the first principle is of reason, while others allege that it is of faith. That is to say they have thought that faith, even before knowing the methods common to all and to which the Law has made a call on all, is the only method of arriving at truth. Thus they have mistaken the real purpose of the Law-giver, and being themselves in the wrong they have led others astray.

If it be alleged that the method that the Asharites and other Mutakallimun have devised are not those general methods in the purpose of the Law-giver

for the instruction of the common people, and that it is not possible without some method being adopted, then the question arises : What are those methods which are given in the Law ? We maintain that these methods are to be found in the Quran alone. For, if we look closely we shall find that in the Quran all the three kinds of methods are laid down, for the whole of mankind, both for the majority and for the learned few. If we reflect we shall come to see that no better methods can be discovered for the instruction of the common people than those mentioned in the Quran. Anyone who changes them by interpretations which are neither clear in themselves nor clearer than others to the common people, makes null and void their philosophy and their effect, the goal of which is the happiness of mankind. This is quite evident from the early and the later condition of Islam, for in the early days Muslims sought perfect excellence and piety by acting on those principles with-

out putting any interpretation upon them. And those among them who knew any interpretation did not disclose it. In the later days interpretations were used, and piety decreased, the love for others was lost, and they became divided into schisms and parties. /

Hence one who cares to remove this innovation from the Law, should turn to the Book, and should pick up from it the existing arguments for things whose belief is inculcated upon us. Further he should deeply think over the esoteric meanings, as far as possible, without putting interpretations upon them, except when they are not quite clear to all. The assertions of the Book for the instructions of the people, when thought over are things, with whose help we can reach a stage from which none but the learned in logic can differ about the esoteric meaning of that which is not clear. This peculiarity cannot be found in any other assertions but that of the Book. There are three peculiari-

ties in the assertions, which have been explained in the Quran, for the common people. First, that nothing can be found more convincing and true than these. Secondly, that they can be accepted by every nature; and they are such that none can know their interpretations, if there be any, except the learned in logic. Thirdly, that they possess a call to the righteous, for correct interpretations. This is neither to be found in the school of the Aṣharites nor in that of the Mutazalites *i. e.* their interpretations are neither generally acceptable, nor do they make any call to the righteous, nor are they right in themselves. It is for this reason that innovation has increased, and it is our desire to write about it, as far as it is possible for us, provided that we get leisure for it, have power to do it, and God gives us a respite in life. It is just possible that this may be a beginning for the coming generation; because the breach of Law, due to evil passions, and changed beliefs is simply

aggrieving and saddening. This is still enhanced by those, who ascribe themselves to philosophy, because an injury from a friend is worse than the injury from an enemy. Philosophy is a companion and a foster-sister to the Law. Hence an injury from this source is the worst kind of injury, even if we neglect the enmity, hatred, and animosity which is created between the two, although they are companions by nature and friends in reality. It has also been injured by many ignorant *friends* who ascribe themselves to it. These are the schisms which exist in Islam. May God set all aright, help all to His love, and bring together their hearts for piety, and erase enmity and hatred by his favour and grace.

Indeed God has removed much of evil, ignorance and the misleading ways through this strong government, and has led the many to good, especially the people who have walked in the path of scholasticism, and have a liking for the

knowledge of the Truth. Because it has called the people to the knowledge of God by mediate paths, which are higher than the depressions of the blind followers: and lower than that of the high-sounding Mutakallimum; and has called the learned to their duty of considering fully the principles of Law. ,

Ia.

APPENDIX.

ON THE PROBLEM OF ETERNAL KNOWLEDGE,
WHICH AVERBOES HAS MENTIONED IN
HIS DECISIVE DISCOURSE.

May God perpetuate your honour and bless you, and screen you always from the eyes of misfortune. Through your excellent intelligence and good understanding you have learned a great part of all these sciences, till your insight informed you of the doubt which arises concerning the eternal knowledge of God, with its being at the same time concerned with created things. Thus, in the interests of truth, it is now incumbent upon us to remove the doubt from your mind, after we have stated it clearly. For one who does not know the problem adequately cannot very well solve the doubt.

The question may be stated thus: If all this universe was in the knowledge of God before its creation, then, was it in His knowledge after its creation as it was before it came into existence; or was it in His knowledge before its creation quite different from that after its coming into being? If we say that the knowledge of God about it after its creation is quite different from that which it was before its creation, it becomes necessary for us to admit that the eternal knowledge is changeable; or that when the universe came into existence out of non-existence, then there is an addition to the eternal knowledge; which is impossible. Again, if we say that the knowledge of it was the same in both the conditions, then it would be said: Was the created universe the same before its coming into existence as it was after its creation? To this objection it will have to be answered that it was not the same before its creation as it was after it, otherwise the existent and

the non-existent thing would be the same. When the opponent has admitted this much, he may be asked whether the real knowledge does not consist in the cognizance of an existent thing as it is. If he says: "Yes," then accordingly it becomes necessary that when a thing changes in itself the knowledge of it must also change, otherwise it would be a knowledge of something other than the real object. Thus it would then be necessary to admit one of two things: either the eternal knowledge itself will change, or the created things would be unknown to God. And both of these alternatives are impossible with regard to God. This doubt is still further strengthened by the apparent condition of man, that is, the relation of his knowledge about non-existent things by the supposition of their existence and its relation when the thing in question is found. It is self-evident that both kinds of knowledge are different, otherwise God would have been ignorant of

its existence at the time he found it. The argument which the Mutakallimun advance to meet this objection does not by any means deliver us from the doubt. They say that God knows the things before their coming into being, as they would be after they come into existence. If they say that no change occurs, they fall into mistake. If on the other hand they admit a change, they may be asked whether this change was known in the eternal knowledge or not. Thus the first doubt occurs again. On the whole it is difficult to imagine that the knowledge of a thing before and after its existence can be one and the same.

This is the statement of the doubt in the briefest terms possible, as we have put it for your sake. A solution of this doubt requires a very long discussion, but here we intend to state a point which might easily solve it. Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) has also tried to solve this doubt in his work : *The Refutation of the Philosophers*, but his method is by

no means satisfactory. For he says something to this effect: he thinks the known and the knowledge are not connected with each other, so that when a change takes place in the one the other does not change in itself. So it is possible that it may happen in the case of Divine knowledge and the things existent, that is, they may change in themselves while God's knowledge may remain the same. For instance a pillar may be on the right hand of Zaid, it may be changed to his left without any change taking place in Zaid himself. But the illustration is not at all a correct one, for the relation has changed, that is, that which was on the right side is now on the left. That in which no change has taken place is the condition of that relation - Zaid. It being so, and the knowledge is only the relation itself, it is necessary that it should change with a change in the thing known, as the change in the relation of the pillar to Zaid, for it is now on the left after being on the right.

The view which might solve this question is that it should be maintained that the condition of eternal knowledge of existent things is quite other than the created knowledge with regard to them. For the existence of a thing is the cause and means of our knowledge of it, while the eternal knowledge is itself the cause and means of the existent thing. So if a change takes place in the eternal knowledge after the coming into being of an existent thing, as it does in the created knowledge then it is involved that the former cannot be the cause but only the effect of the existent things. Thus it is necessary that there should be no change in it, as there is in the created knowledge. This mistake always occurs by our taking eternal knowledge to be like the created one, by an analogy from the seen to the unseen. The error in this analogy has already been exposed. Just as no change takes place in any agent after the creation of his act - that is, change of kind which was not

found before - so no change in the eternal knowledge of God after the creation of the thing which was in His knowledge. So this doubt is removed. At the same time it is not necessary for us to say that as there is no change in eternal knowledge, therefore, He does not know an existent at the time of its creation, as it is. But we must believe that He knows not by a created but by His eternal knowledge. For a change in knowledge with a change of the existent thing is a condition of the knowledge which depends upon the existent thing, such a knowledge being created. Thus the relation of the eternal knowledge with the existent things is not the same as that of the created knowledge. It is not that there is no connection between them at all as some philosophers are said to maintain, who as the people think, say, at the time of doubt, that God has no knowledge of particulars at all. But this is not as is commonly supposed. They only say that He does not

know particulars by any created knowledge, one of the conditions of which is its being created by them, by which it is an effect and not a cause. This is the last of the things about it which must be remembered. For our reason leads us to the fact that God is the Knower of things, all of them emanating from Him. This is so because He is a knower, not because of His existence, nor of His existence in any form, but only because of His being a Knower. God has said "Shall not He know all things who hath created them, since He is the sagacious, the knowing" ²² The arguments also tell us that He knows by a knowledge which may be akin to created knowledge. So it is necessary that there should be some other knowledge for the existent things – and this is the eternal of God. Moreover, how is it possible to suppose that the Peripatetic Philosophers think that the eternal knowledge does not include particul-

²². *Quran* lxvi 14,

ars, while they say that these are a cause of admonition to us in our dreams, divine revelations, and other kinds of inspiration ?

That is what we think about the solution of the problem — a solution in which there is no doubt or suspicion. God is the only helper to right judgment, and leader to truth. Peace be upon you, and blessings of God and His beatitude. God is the best knower of truth : and to Him is the return and the refuge.

II

**AN EXPOSITION OF THE METHODS OF ARGUMENTS
CONCERNING THE BELIEFS OF THE FAITH, AND
A DETERMINATION OF UNCERTAIN DOUBTS
AND MISLEADING INNOVATIONS IN
INTERPRETATIONS.**

AN EXPOSITION OF THE METHODS OF ARGUMENTS
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MISLEADING INNOVATIONS IN INTERPRETATIONS.†

And after - Praise be to God, who sets apart anyone whom He will for His knowledge, rendering him fit for understanding His Law and following His path, informing him of the hidden recesses of His knowledge, the real meaning of His inspiration, and the purpose of sending the Apostle to creatures, in spite of what has become clear about the doubt of the doubters among the Prophet's own followers, and changes of meanings introduced by the false among

† A translation of *Al-Kashf'an Manhij il Adillah fi Aqaid-il Millah, wa Tarif wa Waqajih bi Hush il Ta'wil min Shubhi'l Murighah wa Bid'ill Murillah.*

his own people. He has disclosed to him that there are interpretations which God and His Apostle have not ordered. May there be the most perfect blessings upon the Trusty of His inspiration, and the Seal of His prophets, and upon his family and relations.

We have already described in the foregoing tractate the conformity of philosophy with the Law, and its other relations. We have said there that the Law is of two kinds: exoteric and esoteric. The duty of the common people is to follow the exoteric law; while the duty of learned men is to follow the esoteric one. So the duty of the common people is to follow the meanings of the Law in their literal sense, leaving aside every interpretation of it. The learned men are not permitted to expose their interpretations to the common people, as Ali, (upon whom be peace) has said, " Tell the people what they can understand. Do you wish to give the lie to God and His Apostle? "

So I thought that in the present book I should examine the exoteric meanings which the Law intends the common people to follow, and in those, search the real purpose of the Law-giver, (on whom be peace) according to my ability and knowledge. For the people of His Law have been extremely disturbed, so much so that many misguided sects and different divisions, have been produced, every one of which thinks that it is following the best Law, and that he who disagrees is either an innovator or an infidel whose life and property is at stake. All this is directly opposed to the purpose of the Law-giver. Its cause lies in the misleading things about the Law which have been put forward.

In our own times, there are four of these sects which are famous. In the first place, there is the sect of the Asharites, and these are the people who are commonly taken to be men of *Sunna*. Then there are Mutazilites, the sects of the Batinites, (Esoteric), and the sect

of the Bombasts. Every one of these sects has its own peculiar beliefs about God, and has turned many an exoteric word of the Law to interpretations, which they have applied to those beliefs. They think that theirs was the original Law which all the people are asked to follow, and he who deviates from it is either an innovator or an infidel. But when you look into all their views and then examine the purpose of the Law, it would appear that a great part of them are recent opinions and innovating interpretations. Of them I will mention here those indispensable beliefs in the Law, without which Faith does not become complete, and will search, in every one of them, the real purpose of the Law-giver, (peace be upon him,) beyond that which has been made the basis of the Law, and its beliefs before the coming into use of incorrect interpretations. I will begin by explaining the intention of the Law - giver as to the beliefs which should be held by the common

people about God, and the methods which He adopted towards them. All this is contained in the Divine Book. We will begin by an exposition of the methods which leads to the knowledge of the existence of the Creator, for this is the first thing which a student ought to know. But before this, it is necessary that we should mention the opinions of the well - known sects.

The *Bombasts* hold that the method of obtaining knowledge of the existence of the Creator is by hearing and not by reason, that is, the belief in His existence, the verification of which is incumbent upon all men, is enough to be taught by the Law-giver, and believed as an article of Faith, as is the case with his teachings about the condition of the Day of Judgment, and others with which our reason has no power to deal. This is obviously a misleading sect, for it falls short of the purpose of the Law, as regards the method adopted towards all the people, leading them to

the knowledge of the existence of God, and calling them to the confession of His belief. It is quite evident from many verses of the Divine Book, that in it the people have been called to verify the existence of the Creator by arguments of reason which are mentioned in it. For instance, there are the following verses of the Quran, "O men of Mecca, serve your Lord who has created you and those before you,"¹ and "Is there any doubt concerning God, the Creator of heaven and earth?"² and other verses on the subject found therein. It is not fit for a man to say, that if these arguments had been necessary for believing in God — that is, had his faith been not completed without understanding them — the Prophet would not have invited anybody to Islam without presenting to him all these arguments, for the Arabs already knew the existence of the Creator, so that God has said, "If thou asketh them who has

1. Quran ii, 19.

2. Quran xiv, 11.

created the heavens and the earth, they will surely answer, God,"³ and hence there was no use giving arguments. It is impossible to find a man so stupid and dull, that he cannot understand the arguments advanced by Law for the common people, through the Prophet. This is to say the least. If there be found such a man, then it is his duty to believe in God by hearing alone. So much for the ideas of the *Bombasts* about the exoterics of the Law. ✓

The *Asharites* are of opinion that the verification of the existence of God cannot be attained but by reason. But about this they have adopted a method, which is not among the methods adopted by Law, and is not mentioned in the Quran, nor the people invited through it to believe. Their well-known method is founded upon the fact that the universe is a created thing, which is itself based upon the theory of the composition of atoms, and that the atom is a

3. Quran xxxix, 39.

created thing, and that other bodies are created out of it. The method which they adopt for the exposition of the creation of an atom, which they call *al-Jauharat u'l Faridah* (sole Essence), is a misleading one even for many religious men in the business of controversy, not to speak of the common people. And despite this it is a method devoid of philosophy, and does not lead to a belief in the existence of the Creator. For if we suppose the universe is a created thing, it becomes necessary, as they say, that its Creator must also be a "Created" object. But a doubt presents itself about the existence of this created thing, which is not in the power of scholastic theology to solve. And that is this, that we can take this thing to be neither eternal nor created. For if we take it as created, then it must require another created thing, and this another, and so on to infinity. This is impossible. On the other hand, if we take Him as eternal, then it is necessary that his

action in connection with the result must also be eternal. In this way the results also become eternal. It is necessary for a created thing that its existence be dependent upon a created action. Their hypothesis can only be proved if they admit that a created action can be performed by an eternal agent. For the result of the action might be dependent on the action of the agent. But they do not admit it, for according to their principles what is coeval with created things is itself created. Moreover, if the agent sometimes acts and at other times remains inactive, it is necessary, that there be a condition better applicable in one state of things than in the other. Then about this condition the same question will rise, and so it will go on till infinity. And what the Mutakallimun say in answer to this objection that the created action is the result of eternal intention, does not relieve us of our doubt or satisfy our mind. For intention without action is dependent upon

the act, and if the act is a created thing, then it is necessary that the intention in connection with it must also be a created thing. It makes no difference whether we take the intention as eternal or created, rising before the action or with it. So we may take it as we like. All the same it is necessary for them to admit either of the three things about the universe — either a created action, with a created intention or a created action and an eternal intention, or an eternal action with an eternal intention. But a created thing is impossible from an eternal action without any expedient, even if we admit for their sake, that it comes into existence by eternal action; and putting intention itself or the action, connected with the act is a thing which cannot be understood. This is supposing an act without an agent, with a result, without any intention. Intention is a condition of the action and not the action itself. Also it is necessary that this eternal intention, should be connected

with non-existence of a created thing, for a period of time which is indefinite. So if a created thing be non-existence for an unknown period of time, then it does not become connected with the intention at the time of its creation, except after the completion of a time of which there is no limit, and that which has no limit has no end. So it becomes necessary that the intention should never take the form of action, or a time without limit should come to an end, which is impossible. This is the argument of the Mutakallimun, on which they rely in proving that the revolutions of the heavens are created. Moreover, it is necessary that to the intention which precedes the object, and is connected with it, at a certain time, there should be created in it at the time of creation of the object a determination for doing so. For the determination for the creation of an object cannot be found before that time, because if at the time of action there be found no additional

quality in the agent, than that he had at the time of intention, then action from him at that time would not be quite as necessary from him as inactivity. We may go on in this way, finding all the obscure and intricate doubts, from which, not to speak of the common people, even clever men, learned in scholastic theology, in philosophy, cannot escape. So if the common people be burdened with a knowledge of these things, it would be an unbearable problem for them.,

Then again the methods adopted by the Asharites in proving the creation of the universe are defective for all classes of men. The common people, by their very nature, cannot understand them, and they are at the same time in no way reasonable. So they are neither fit for the learned, nor for the masses. We warn our readers of them and say: The methods which they adopt are of two kinds. One of them, the more famous of the two and upon which a

majority of them relies, is based upon three premises, from which they derive the proof for the creation of the universe. They are: (1) that essences cannot be separated from accidents, that is, they cannot be devoid of them; (2) that the accidents are created things; (3) that that which cannot be separated from a created thing is itself created, that is, that which cannot be severed from the created thing is itself created. Now, if by the first premise which says that the essences cannot be separated from the accidents, they mean the bodies which stand by themselves, then the premise is correct. But if by essence they mean the particle which cannot be divided, which they call *Sole Essence*, then there is doubt about it, which is not easy to solve. For the existence of an indivisible essence is not well established in itself, and about it there are many opposite and highly contradictory opinions, and it is not in the power of scholastic theology to bring truth out

of them. That is the business of philosophers who are very few in number.

The arguments which Asharites use are for the most part exhortative. For their famous argument on this is that they say that our first knowledge about a thing is, for instance, that an elephant is bigger than an ant, for it is accepted that the former has more particles in it than the latter. If it be so, then it is made up of particles and is not a compact whole in itself. So when the body is destroyed it changes into particles, and when composed it is composed of them. But this is wrong. For they have taken a divisible quantity as a continuous one, and then thought that that which is applicable to the divisible is also applicable to the continuous. This is true about numbers, that is, we say that a certain number is more than the other, by its containing more particles in it, that is, more units. But it cannot be true of a continuous quanti-

ty, of which we say that it is bigger or greater. In this way everything may be enumerated without any reference to its bulk at all. And the science of mathematics becomes the science of number only. It is well-known that every bulk can be considered with regard to line, surface and volume. Moreover, a continuous quantity it is possible to cut in the middle and thus get two parts. But this is impossible in the units of number, nay, it is opposed to it. Then, again, the body and other particles of a continuous quantity are capable of being divided. But everything divisible is either divided into other divisible quantities, or into indivisible ones. If it is divided into indivisible ones then we have found particles which cannot be divided. And if it is divided into other divisible parts, then again the question arises whether these can be divided into divisible or indivisible parts. So if it can be divided a limitless number of times, there

would be limitless particles in a limited thing. But it is one of the primary principles of knowledge that particles in a limited thing are limited.

Among the obscure doubts which can be attributed to the Asharites is the question whether if an atom is brought into being, this is different from creation itself, for it is one of the accidents? When the created thing exists the act of creation is nonexistent for according to their principles, the accidents cannot be separated from their essences. So this has compelled them to regard creation as pertaining to the existent things and not for it. Then they may be asked; if creation implies the non-existence of a thing, with what is the act of the agent connected, for, according to them, there is no mean between existence and non-existence. If this be so, and, according to them, the action of the agent is connected neither with non existence, nor with that which is and nevertheles

brings about an existence, it must be connected with a middle substance. This doubt has compelled the Mutazilites to say that there is a substance, even in non-existence, which they call Matter or First Element. They should admit that that which is non-existent can be made existent by action. Both of these sects must also admit the existence of a void. These are questions, which as you see, cannot be solved by dogmatics. Thus, it is clear that such a method cannot be made a basis of the knowledge of God, especially for the masses. We will shortly describe a clearer method of knowing God.

Now as to the second premise, according to which it is said that all the accidents are created things:—This is a premise concerning which there are doubts, and its meaning is as hidden as the soul in a body. For we have observed many bodies to be created and such is also the case with some accidents. So there is no difference in transferring

an observed object to the invisible, in both the cases. For if it is necessary, with regard to accidents, to apply what applies of the visible things to the invisible, that is, if we should suppose a thing which we have not seen, so created, by the analogy of that which we have observed, then we should also apply it to the essences. Thus we can become quite careless of proving the creation of accidents, as distinct from that of essences. The creation of the accidents of the heavenly bodies is extremely doubtful to the observer just as there is doubt in their essential creation. For the creation of their accidents is never perceived. So it is necessary that we should clearly observe them. This is the method which surely and certainly leads pious people to the knowledge of God. This is the method of the chosen men, and that with which God has particularly blessed the prophet Abraham. He says: "And thus did We show unto Abraham the kingdom

of heaven and earth, that he might become of those who firmly believe.''⁵ For the whole doubt concerns the heavenly bodies themselves. Many controversialists have stopped here and believed that these are so many gods.

Again, time is one of the accidents, the creation of which it is impossible to imagine, for it is necessary that the non-existence of a thing be preceded by time. But in this case it cannot be imagined that the non-existence of a thing can be preceded by itself, except by accepting time as existent. So also it is difficult to imagine the creation of the space in which the universe is, for every existent thing occupies a former space. For if it is a void, as is the opinion of those who think that the void itself is space, its creation also, if we suppose it to be created, must have been preceded by another void. And if the space be a tangible body, as is the opinion of another group, then it should be contained in another

5. Quran vi, 75.

body, which would require another, and so on without limit. These are all obscure problems and the arguments which are brought to disprove the eternity of the accidents, are necessary for one who believes in the eternity of those accidents which can be perceived; that is, one who asserts that not all the accidents are created. For they say that the accidents which can be perceived by the senses are created things. If they are not created, then they will move from one place to another, or will be latent in the place in which they are to appear, before they make their appearance. Then they disprove both of these arguments, and think that they have established that all the accidents are created things. But it has become apparent from what they have said, that the apparently created portions of the accidents are created, not those whose creation is not apparent, nor those in whose case there is doubt, such as the accidents which are in the heavenly

bodies, in their movement, in their shape, etc., etc. So their arguments about the creation of all accidents, can be interpreted by the analogy of the visible to the invisible. This is an exhortative argument, except in the suggestion of reasonable arguments which depend here on the certainty of the similarity of the character of the visible and the invisible.

The third premise which says, that that which cannot be separated from a created thing is itself created, is equivocal, for it can be understood in two ways : the thing which cannot be separated from the class of created things, but can be removed from its units ; and that which cannot be separated from any one of the things in question, as if one were to say, " That which cannot be separated from this blackness in question. " The second meaning is the correct one, that is it cannot be separated from a certain accident, which is created, for it is absolutely necessary that it

should also be a created thing. For if it be eternal it becomes devoid of that accident, from which we suppose that it cannot separate. This separation is impossible. The first explanation, and that is which they mean, does not necessarily involve the creation of place, that is, that which is not separated from the class of created things. For it is possible to imagine a single place, that is, a body upon which follow accidents without limit, either opposed to one another or otherwise, as you were to say, movements without limit. Such is the opinion of many ancient philosophers about the universe, that it is made little by little. This is why, when the Muta-kallimun saw the weakness of this premise, they resolved to make it strong and secure, by making it clear, that according to them, limitless accidents cannot follow upon a single point. For they maintain that on this occasion it is necessary that there cannot be found any other accident, except that there be

an unlimited number of accidents before it at the place in question. This helps them to the impossibility of their presence, for, it is necessary that it should not be there, except after the completion of an unlimited number. As the limitless never ends, it follows that the thing which we have supposed should not be there. For instance, consider the movement of the heavenly bodies, as we know them today. If there were before it limitless movements, then it is inevitable that this particular movement should not occur. They give the example of a man, who said to another, " I will not give you this dinar, till I have given you before it a limitless number of dinars. " By this it is not possible for him to give the dinar in question at all. But this example is not a correct one. For in it there is a primary object, then a limit, and then another object between them. which is without limit. For he has said it in a limited time. So he has stipulated that he would give

the dinar between the time in which he is, and the time of which he speaks, between which there is a time without limit. This is the period in which he would give him the dinars without limit, which is impossible. So it is quite clear that this example does not illustrate the object for which it is given. Their opinion that the existence of a thing which is found after limitless things, is impossible, is not correct in all the cases. For the things which happen one after another are of two kinds: those which come to pass in cycles, and those which occur in order and arrangement. The things which occur in cycles are necessarily unlimited, except that something may interfere to prevent them. For instance if the sun rises there must be its setting; if there is a setting then it must rise, and if it rise it must have risen before. In the same way, if there are clouds there must be vapours rising from the earth; if there rise vapours from the earth, then it must be wet, if

the earth is wet, there must have been rain, and if there was rain there must have been clouds, and if thus there were clouds there must similarly have been clouds before them. Again among those things which happen by order, is, for instance, the creation of man from man, and of that man from another. If this happens by essence then it can be taken as limitless, for which the first link is not found, the last also cannot be ascertained. If this is by accident, as for instance, if man be really made by some one other than man, who must be his father, then the position of his father would be the same as that of an instrument in the hands of a maker. So it is not possible to find an agent doing limitless actions, with countless different instruments. All these views are not clear in this connection. We have mentioned them here, that it may become known, that the arguments which these people advance are no arguments at all, nor are they reasonings fit for the masses, that is,

open and clear arguments which God has imposed upon all his creatures for the sake of belief. It must now have become clear to you that this method is neither philosophical nor according to Law.

The other method is that which Abul Maali has deduced and described in one of his tractates known as *Nizamiyyah*. He has based it upon two premises : in the first place, that the universe and all that it contains may be conceived as other than what it really is. It may be quite consistent, for instance, if it may be imagined smaller than it is, or bigger, or of some other shape than it really has or having more bodies in number than it really contains or the movements which are made in it may go in the opposite direction from that which they take now. This may be so much so that it may become possible that a stone should go upwards, and fire downwards, or that the movement starting in the east should start in the west, or the

western from the eastern. The second premise is that every transient thing is created, and for it there is a creator; that is, an agent who made it in this way better than in any other.

The first premise is exhortative and very elementary. Its fallacy is quite apparent with regard to some aspects of the universe — for instance, the existence of man in some other form than he now possesses; while in some others there is doubt — for instance, whether the movement from the east might change to one from the west and *vice versa*, for this is not known in itself. It is possible that for this there may be a cause the existence of which is not evident, or it may be one of those causes which are hidden from man. It is possible that whatever of these things a man sees, is like one seeing for the first time things of the manufacture of which he is ignorant. For such a man may think that all or parts of the thing may possibly be made in just the opposite fashion

from that in which they really are made; and still in spite of this idea the same work may be obtained from them for which they were made. In this case there would be no art in them. But its maker, and one who is associated with the maker in some of his knowledge, know that the whole thing is just the opposite of what that man has seen; and that there is nothing in it but that which is absolutely necessary, or the existence of which makes it more perfect and complete, though outwardly it may not seem quite necessary in it. It is quite clear that this manufactured thing, may in this connection, be taken as an illustration of God's Creation — praised be its Great Creator.

This premise in being exhortative might be fit for all, but being untrue and falsifying the wisdom of the Creator, is not fit for any. It falsifies philosophy, because philosophy is nothing else but the knowledge of the causes of things. If there be no necessary causes for a

thing, which make its existence necessary in the form in which it exists, then there is no particular knowledge which may be attributed to the wise Creator. Just as if there had not been some necessary causes for the existence of any manufactured thing, there would have been no art at all, and no wisdom by which its maker might be praised, and which might not be found in any man other than the maker. Where would be found any wisdom in a man, if he could perform all his actions by any member of his body, or without any member at all, so much so that he could see with his ears, as he could see with his eyes, or smell with his eyes as he could with his nose. This is all only falsifying philosophy, and the meaning for which God has called himself Wise (Hakim) — High and Holy be his name from such imputations. We find that Avicenna has also adopted this doctrine, for many reasons. He says that everything, except the maker, when taken

by itself, may either be possible or allowable. Of the latter – that is, things allowable, there are two kinds: One is allowable as regards its maker, the other is necessary as regards the maker; and possible as regards its essence. The only thing which is necessary, according to all reasons, is the first maker. This opinion is extremely incorrect. Because that which is possible in itself and its essence, will not possibly turn a necessity beyond its maker, but by a change of the possible nature into a necessary one. If it be said that by these words he means “Possible with regard to itself”, that is, when the maker arises it will rise also, then we would say that this rising is impossible. But this is not the place to discuss the matter with this man. We ventured to talk of him, because of the many views which he has invented. Now we would return to our former theme. The second premise, which says that every transient thing is created, is

not in itself obvious. The philosophers have differed about it. Plato allows that the apparently transient thing may be eternal, while Aristotle denies it. It is a very intricate matter, and cannot be made clear except to the philosophers, that is, learned men, whom God has set apart for His knowledge, and has in His Book, coupled their witness with that of Himself and His angels.

Abul Maali has tried to make the premise clear by some other premises. First, that there should be something unique in every transient thing, which may make it more preferable by one of the two qualities. Second, that this particular thing cannot be any other than that intended. Third, that the thing which exists by intention is created. Then he says that a transient thing comes into existence by our intention, that is it is produced by previous volition. For all the actions are performed either by nature or by intention. And nature is

not one of the passing things which are alike, that is, it not only creates the dissimilar but does the both. For instance, sea-anemone will absorb the yellow lob in the right side of the body and not in the left. But intention is the thing which is particularly applicable to a thing opposed to its like. Then he adds that the universe is like its creation and exists in the position in the atmosphere where it was made. By the void he means another void in which the world was made. So he concluded that the universe was made by intention. The premise which says that it is intention which fixes the shape of a thing, is correct, but that universe is surrounded by a void is wrong, or at least not clear. Then again according to their notions, his act of placing the void is bad. That is, it must be eternal, otherwise it would require another void for it. The premise saying that in this connection intention is nothing but a created thing is not clear. For the intention of an action is

connected with the desired act itself, for it is one of its adjuncts. And it is clear that when one adjunct is found with the action the other must be there, for example the father and the son. If one be found potentially the other must also be so. Hence if the intention of the action is created, then necessarily the desired act must also be created. If the intention of the action be eternal, then the thing desired by that action must also be eternal. The intention which precedes the intended object, is said to be a potential intention only; that is, the intention which has not yet brought its intended object into being. This is quite clear, for when the intended object has appeared, then it becomes an existent thing, which it was not before the appearance of the intended object in action. When this becomes the cause of the creation of an intended thing, only by means of action, then, if the Mutakallimun assert that intention is created, it becomes clear that the intend-

ed object must also be created. From the Law it is clear that there is no need to go so deeply into the problem as far as the masses are concerned. So it has not mentioned any eternal or created intention, but has only said that it exists and the things are created. So God says: — "Verily, Our speech upon anything when We will the same is, that We only say unto it, Be; and it is."⁶ This has been so because the masses cannot understand the idea of created things from an eternal intention. But the fact is that the Law has not mentioned whether the intention is created or eternal, this being a doubtful thing for many people. The Mutakallimun have also no certain argument to advance for providing the possibility of a created intention for creation. For the principle with which they maintain their position for negating the existence of intention as eternal, is the premise which we have already mentioned, that is, the thing

⁶ Quran xvi, 42,

which cannot be separated from the created thing is itself created. We will mention this again when talking of intention.

From the foregoing it has become clear that the well-known methods adopted by Asharites for the knowledge of God are certain neither philosophical, nor by Law. This would be quite clear to anyone who would look closely into the kind of arguments advanced in the Divine Book about the knowledge of the existence of the Creator. For if you look closely into this matter you will find that the arguments comprise both qualities, those of being certain and at the same time clear, without being complex, that is, they have few premises.

As to the Sufis their method in theorising is not a philosophical method — that is, made up of a number of premises, and syllogisms. They maintain that the knowledge of God, or of anything existent, is found in our own

hearts, after its detachment from all physical desires, and concentration of mind upon the desired object. In support of their principle they bring many an argument from the exoteric side of Law. For instance they quote the Divine words, "And fear God, and God will instruct you,"⁷ and, "Whoever do their best endeavour to prompt our true religion, We will direct them unto Our ways ;⁸ and again, "If ye fear God, He will grant you a distinction,"⁹ and many other verses of this kind which are considered to be helpful for their purpose. We say that this method, if we suppose it to be real, is not meant for all people. Had this method been satisfactory for all people then the philosophical method would have been quite futile, and its existence among the people would have been useless, and with it the existence of the Quran. For that always invites us to theorising, judging, and admonishing by way of philosophy.

7. Quran ii, 282. 8. Quran xxix, 69. 9. Quran viii, 29.

We of course do not deny that the control of physical desires is a condition for healthy thinking, as physical health is one of its conditions. For the control of desires is profitable in acquiring knowledge by itself, if it be made a condition for it, just as health is a condition for education, though it is not very useful for it. That is why our Law has invited all of us to this method and has insisted upon it, that is, for work, not that it is sufficient in itself, as these people think, but that it is useful for thinking as we have already described. This would be quite clear to any one who cares to ponder and think over it.

As to the Mutazilites — their books have not reached us in sufficient number in this Peninsula (Spain) that we may be able to form a fair estimate of the method which they have adopted in this matter. But it seems that their methods are like those of the Asharites.

If now that it is clear that none of these methods are in accordance with

that by which the Law invites all the people, according to the difference in their dispositions, to a confession of the existence of God, it may be asked: What is that method which the Law has laid down in the Divine Book, and upon which the Companions of the Prophet depended? We would say that the method which the Divine Book has adopted, and by which it has invited all to believe, is, when thoroughly investigated from the Quran, dependent upon two principles. The one is a knowledge of God's solicitude for man, and the creation of everything for his sake. We would call this the argument of solicitude. The second is the creation of the essences of the existent things, as for example, the creation of life in the minerals, and feeling and intelligence. We would call this method the "argument of creation." The first method is founded upon two principles: first that all the existent things suit man; secondly, that this suitability must have existed

in the mind of the Maker before He intended to make the object in question, for it cannot be obtained by chance alone. Now their suitability for the existence of man can be easily ascertained by the suitability of day and night, sun and moon, for the existence of man. Such is also the case with the suitability of the four seasons, and of the place in which he lives, that is, the earth. It is also apparent with respect to animals, vegetables, and minerals; and many other things, such as rain, rivers, seas, the whole of the earth, water, fire and air. It is also evident from the different members of his body, on account of their suitability for the preservation of his life and existence. On the whole, a knowledge of the benefit derived from all the existent things may be included in it. So it is necessary for a man who wants to know God perfectly, to investigate the benefits derived from existent things. In the argument of creation is included the existence of the animal

world, the plant world, and the heavens. This method is again based upon two principles, which can be found out by every man by his very nature. The one is that all things have been made and created. This is quite clear in itself, in the case of animals and plants, as God has said, "Verily the idols which ye invoke, beside God, can never create a single fly, though they may all assemble for that purpose."¹⁰ We see "an inorganic substance and then there is life in it. So we know for certain, that there is an inventor and bestower of life, and He is God. Of the heavens we know by their movements, which never become slackened, that they work for our benefit by divine solicitude, and are subordinate to our welfare. Such an appointed and subordinate object is always created for some purpose. The second principle is that for every created thing there is a creator. So it is right to say from the two foregoing principles

10. Qurān xxii, 72.

that for every existent thing there is an inventor. There are many arguments, according to the number of the created things, which can be advanced to prove this premise. Thus it is necessary for one who wants to know God as He ought to be known, to acquaint himself with the essence of things, so that he may get information about the creation of all things. For who cannot understand the real substance and purpose of a thing, cannot understand the minor meaning of its creation. It is to this that God refers in the following verse, "Or do they not contemplate the heaven and the earth, and the things which God has created?"¹¹ And so a man who would follow the purpose of philosophy in investigating the existence of things, that is, would try to know the cause which led to its creation, and the purpose of it would know the argument of kindness most perfectly. These two arguments are those adopted by Law.

11. Quran vii, 184.

The verses of the Quran leading to a knowledge of the existence of God are dependent only on the two foregoing arguments. It will be quite clear to anyone who will examine closely the verses, which occur in the Divine Book in this connection. These, when investigated, will be found to be of three kinds: either they are verses showing the "arguments of kindness," or those mentioning the "arguments of creation," or those which include both the kinds of arguments. The following verses may be taken as illustrating the argument of kindness. "Have we not made the earth for a bed, and the mountains for stakes to find the same? And have we not created you of two sexes; and appointed your sleep for rest; and made the night a garment to cover you; and destined the day to the gaining of your livelihood and built over you seven solid heavens; and placed therein a burning lamp? And do we not send down from the clouds pressing forth rain, water pouring

down in abundance, that we may thereby produce corn, and herbs, and gardens planted thick with trees ?¹² and, "Blessed be He Who hath placed the twelve signs in the heavens; hath placed therein a lamp by day, and the moon which shineth by night; "¹³ and again, " Let man consider his food. "¹⁴ The following verses refer to the argument of invention, "Let man consider, therefore of what he is created. He is created of the seed poured forth, issuing from the loins, and the breast bones; "¹⁵ and, " Do they not consider the camels, how they are created; the heaven, how it is raised; the mountains, how they are fixed; the earth how it is extended; "¹⁶ and again, " O man, a parable is propounded unto you; wherefore hearken unto it. Verily the idols which they invoke, besides God, can never create a single fly, though they may all assemble for the pur-

12. Quran lxxvii, 6-16

14, Quran lxxx, 24.

1 Quran lxxxviii, 17,

13. Quran xxv. 62.

15, Quran lxxxvi, 6.

pose. ”¹⁷ Then we may point to the story of Abraham, referred to in the following verse, “ I direct my face unto Him Who hath created heaven and earth ; I am orthodox, and not of the idolators. ”¹⁸ There may be quoted many verses referring to this argument. The verses comprising both the arguments are also many, for instance, “ O men, of Mecca, serve your Lord, Who has created you, and those who have been before you : peradventure you will fear Him ; Who hath spread the earth as a bed for you, and the heaven as a covering, and hath caused water to descend from heaven, and thereby produced fruits for your sustenance. Set not up, therefore, any equals unto God, against your own knowledge. ”¹⁹ His words, “ Who hath created you, and those who have been before you, ” lead us to the argument of creation ; while the words, “ who has spread

17. Quran xxii. 72.

18. Quran vi, 79. The story referred to will be found in the preceding verses.

19. Quran ii, 19.

the earth " refer to the argument of divine solicitude for man. Of this kind also are the following verses of the Quran, " One sign of the resurrection unto them is the dead earth ; We quicken the same by rain, and produce therefrom, various sorts of grain, of which they eat ; " ²⁰ and, " Now in the creation of heaven and earth, and the vicissitudes of night and day are signs unto those who are endowed with understanding, who remember God standing, and sitting, and lying on their sides ; *and meditate on the creation of heaven and earth, saying O Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain, far be it from Thee, therefore deliver us from the torment of hell fire.* " ²¹ Many verses of this kind comprise both the kinds of arguments.

This method is the right path by which God has invited men to a knowledge of His existence, and informed them of it through the intelligence which He has implanted in their nature. The

20. Quran xxxvi, 33.

21. Quran iii, 188.

following verse refers to this fixed and innate nature of man, " And when the Lord drew forth their posterity from the loins of the sons of Adam, and took them witness against themselves, Am I not your Lord ? They answered, Yea, we do bear witness. "22 So it is incumbent for one who intends to obey God, and follow the injunction of His Prophet, that he should adopt this method, thus making himself one of those learned men who bear witness to the divinity of God, with His own witness, and that of His angels, as He says, " God hath borne witness, that there is no God but He, and the angels, and those who are endowed with wisdom profess the same ; who executeth righteousness ; there is no God but He ; the Mighty, the Wise."23 Among the arguments for both of themselves is the praise which God refers to in the following verse, " Neither is there any thing which doth not celebrate his praise ; but

22, Quran vii, 171.

23. Quran, iii, 16.

ye understand no their celebration thereof.”²⁴

It is evident from the above arguments for the existence of God that they are dependent upon two categories of reasoning. It is also clear that both of these methods are meant for particular people; that is, the learned. Now as to the method for the masses. The difference between the two lies only in details. The masses cannot understand the two above mentioned arguments but only what they can grasp by their senses; while the learned men can go further, and learn by reasoning also, besides learning by sense. They have gone so far that a learned man has said, that the benefits the learned men derive from the knowledge of the members of human and animal body are a thousand and one. If this be so, then this is the method which is taught both by Law and by Nature. It is the method which was preached by the Prophet and the

²⁴ 4. Quran, xvii., 46.

divine books. The learned men do not mention these two lines of reasonings to the masses, not because of their number, but because of a want of depth of learning on their part about the knowledge of a single thing only. The example of the common people, considering and pondering over the universe, is like a man who looks into a thing, the manufacture of which he does not know. For all that such a man can know about it is that it has been made, and that there must be a maker of it. But, on the other hand the learned look into the universe, just as a man knowing the art would do; try to understand the real purpose of it. So it is quite clear that their knowledge about the Maker, as the maker of the universe, would be far better than that of the man who only knows it as made. The atheists, who deny the Creator altogether, are like men who can see and feel the created things, but would not acknowledge any Creator for them, but would attribute

all to chance alone, and that they come into being by themselves.

OF THE UNITY OF GOD

Now then if this is the method adopted by the Law, it may be asked: What is the way of proving the unity of God by means of the Law; that is, the knowledge of the religious formula that "there is no god, but God." The negation contained in it is an addition to the affirmative, which the formula contains, while the affirmative has already been proved. What is the purpose of this negation? We would say that the method, adopted by the Law, of denying divinity to all but God is according to the ordinance of God in the Quran, contained in the following three verses. First, "If there were either in heaven or on earth gods beside God, verily both would be corrupted." ²⁵ Secondly, "God has not begotten issue; neither is there any other

25. Quran xxi, 22.

God with him; otherwise every other God would surely take away that which he has created; and some of them had enabled themselves over the others. Far be it that from God, which they affirm of Him. ²⁶ Thirdly, "Say, unto the idolators, if there were gods with Him, as ye say, they would surely seek an occasion of making some attempt against the possessor of the Throne. ²⁷ The argument contained in the first verse is implanted in our dispositions by our very nature. For it is well-known that if there be two kings, and the orders of the one be as effectual as those of the other, it is not possible to have even a single city under their guidance. It is impossible to have one action of a single kind from two actors. So it is necessary that, if both of them begin work at the same time, the city would be ruined, except in the case that one should work and the other remain inactive. This is against our conception of divinity. For

26, Quran xxiii, 93.

27. Quran xvii, 44.

when the two actions of the same kind are gathered upon a single object, then that object must necessarily be destroyed. This is the meaning of the verse, " If there were either in the heaven or on earth gods besides God, both would be corrupted." The verse, " Every god has surely taken away that which he had created. " has been revealed in refutation of the argument of those who believe in many gods, entrusted with different works. For in this case it becomes incumbent that the gods doing different works be independent of one another, and that they should not be existent at one and the same time. But as the world is one it is necessary that there be not in it gods with different duties. The third verse, " Say unto the idolaters if there were gods with him, as ye say, they would surely seek an occasion of making some attempt against the Possessor of the Throne, " is like the first, an argument to prove the impossibility of the existence of two gods,

whose duties are the same. This verse means that had there been in the world any other god, but the present one, able to create the world and those in it, so that his relation to it be that of a creator, then he must live with God on the Throne. Thus there would be found two existent things of the same kind in a single place. But this is impossible. For when the relation is one, the related must also be one, that is, they cannot be gathered in a single place as they cannot live in it. The relation of God to the Throne is just its opposite: the Throne exists for Him, and not He for the Throne. That is what God has said, "His Throne is extended over heaven and earth, and the preservation of them is no burden unto him."²⁸ This is the argument by nature or by Law for proving the unity of God. The difference between the learned and the masses is that the learned know more about the creation of the world, and the purpose

²⁸, Quran 11, 256.

of its different parts, like a single body, than the common people. It is to this that the latter part of the verse refers, "God forbid! and far, very far, be that which they utter! The seven heavens praise him, and the earth, and all who are therein: neither is there anything which doth not celebrate His praise; but ye understand not their celebration thereof: He is gracious and merciful."²⁹ The argument which the Asharites deduce from this verse, calling it the "argument of impossibility," is neither in accordance with natural nor legal arguments. It is not in accordance with nature, because what they say is without any proof at all; while it is insufficient by Law, because the common people cannot understand it, not to speak of their being satisfied with it. They say, that if there be two gods, then it is more probable that they would differ. If this were to happen, then there would be one of the following three

²⁹, Quran xvii, 45, 46.

cases, there being no fourth alternative. Either the desire of both of them would be accomplished, or the desire of neither would not. They say that it is impossible that the desire of neither of them be accomplished, but if it be so then the universe would neither be existent nor non-existent. If the desire of both of them be accomplished, then the universe would be both existent and non-existent at the same time. So there remains no alternative but that the desire of one be accomplished, the other's remaining unfulfilled. So one whose desire remains unfulfilled is helpless, and the helpless cannot be a God. The weakness of this argument is that as it is possible to suppose that they differ, it is just as possible to presume that they agree, a fact more becoming to the gods than difference of opinion. If they agree about the creation of the world, they would be like two craftsmen agreed upon making something. If it be so then it must be said that their actions

help them to work and live in a single place, except that some one may say, that perhaps one would do one thing and the other quite another thing, or perhaps they would work by turns. But this is an objection which cannot be advanced by the masses. But if any sceptic controvertialist were to advance it, he may be told that one who has power to create one thing has power to create the whole. So now again it comes to the same thing, whether they agree or not, and how can they help each other in work? As to working by turn, it would be a defect in both of them. It is more probable that if there be two gods, there must be two universes. But as the universe is one, its Maker must also be one, for a single work can only be done by one maker. So it is not necessary that we should understand the verse of God, "and some of them had enabled themselves over the other," as pointing to disagreement alone, but it may be taken as true even

in the case of argument, for this also leads to the same result as disagreement would do. Here lies the difference between us and the Mutakallimun, about the meaning of this verse, though Abul Maali has said something almost expressing our own views. By the foregoing you would understand that the argument which the Mutakallimun have deduced from this verse is not the one which it really contains. The impossibility to which their argument leads is not one which should be deduced from the verse in question. The impossibility which is deduced from the argument which they think is contained in the verse, is more than one impossibility, by their dividing it into three parts, while there is no division in the verse itself. So the argument which they use is the one which is known to the logicians as disjunctive syllogism, and is known in their science as definition and division. But the argument contained in the verse is one which is known in logic as hypothetical

syllogism, which is quite different from disjunctive syllogism. Any one who would look most cursorily into this science would know the difference between the two. Then, again, the impossibility which their argument points out is not that to which the argument of the Book leads. They say that universe will either be neither existent nor non-existent, or it will be existent and non-existent at the same time, or its god would be a helpless and weak god. These are impossible for ever, because of the impossibility of more than one. The impossibility which the verse refers to, is not so for ever, for in it it depends upon a certain period of time, that is when the universe is found corrupted at the time of its existence. For he says "If there be any other god but God," the universe would be found corrupted. Then he has made an exception that it is not corrupted, and hence there must not be more than one God. So now it has become quite clear that this is the met-

hod by which God has invited the people to believe in His existence, and negate the divinity of all but Him. These are the two propositions which are contained in the article of Faith, "There are no gods but He." So one who thinks over these two propositions, and believes in them by the method which we have pointed out, is a Muslim in reality, with a belief which is truly Islamic. But he whose belief is not based upon these arguments, though he confesses the article, he is a Muslim with the other Muslims, only on account of the similarity of names.

ON DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

The attributes which the Divine Book has assigned to the Creator and Maker of the universe, are only the perfect forms of those which are found in man, and these are seven in number: Knowledge, life, power, volition, hearing, seeing and talking.

Now as to knowledge, God in his

Divine Book has said the following " Shall he not know all things who has created them ? " ³⁰ The argument contained in this verse is that a created thing always shows, by the arrangement which it possesses,—its different parts being made for the sake of one another for the benefit intended to be derived from that thing,—that its maker is not nature only, but it must have been made by one who has arranged all for the end in view. So he must have a knowledge of it. For instance, when a man looks at a house he knows that the foundation was laid for the sake of the walls, and the walls have been raised for the roof. So it becomes clear to him that the house must have been built by a man knowing the art of building.

This quality is eternal, for it is not fitting that God should possess it for a time only. But we should not go down deep into this matter, and should not say, like the Mutakallimun, that He

30. Quran lxxvii, 14.

knows the created things at the time of their creation, by His eternal knowledge, for then it becomes necessary that the knowledge of the created thing at the time of its non-existence be the same which is absurd, when knowledge is said to be dependent upon the existent things. As an existent thing is sometimes an action, and sometimes only a potentiality, it is necessary that the knowledge of the two existence be different, as its time of being in potentiality is quite different from the time of its being in action. But this the Law does not explain. On the other hand it maintains quite an opposite position: that God knows the created thing at the time of its creation, as He has said, "There falleth no leaf, but He knoweth it; neither is there a single grain in the dark parts of the earth; neither a green thing, nor a dry thing, but it is written in the perspicuous book."³¹ So it is necessary that we should lay down in

31. Quran vi, 59.

Law that He knows a thing before it comes into being; knows a thing when it is, and not when it should have been; and knows when a thing has been destroyed at the time of its destruction. This is what the injunctions of the Law establish. It has been so because the masses cannot understand the universe through visible things, except in this way. The Mutakalimun have no argument to advance against it, except that they say that the knowledge which changes with a change in the existent thing is itself created, while with God nothing created can be attached. They say so because they think that that which cannot be separated from the created thing is itself created. But we have already exposed the fallacy of this argument. So it is established by the rules described, and it should not be said that he knows the creation of the created, and the corruption of the corrupted things, neither by created nor by eternal knowledge. This is an in-

novation in Islam, " And is thy Lord forgetful of thee ? "32

The attribute of life is quite evident from the attribute of Knowledge. For our observation shows that one of the conditions of knowledge is life. According to the Mutakallimun the conditions of an observed object can be applied to the unseen. What they have said about this is quite true.

The attribute of volition needs no proof, because it is one of the conditions of bringing forth a thing, that its maker must intend it. Such is also the case with power: He must possess power. But to say that He intended created things by eternal intention is innovation in religion, which was not known to the learned in Law, and cannot satisfy the masses who have reached the stage of dogmatics. We should say that He intends making a thing at the time of its creation, but does not intend at the time of its non-existence. So God

says : " Verily our speech unto anything when we will the same is that we say unto it, Be ; and it is." ³³ For, as we have said, the common people are never compelled to advance the argument that He intends doing a thing by eternal intention, but, as the Mutakallimun have said, that that by which the created things exist, is itself created.

Now if it be asked, how the attribute of Speech be assigned to and proved in God, we would say that it can be ascribed to him on account of the attributes of Knowledge and Power of creation. For speech is nothing more than act on the part of the speaker to show to the one addressed the knowledge which he has, or to disclose to him the knowledge which is in him. This is one of the actions of the maker. And when that created thing, which is really a creator, man, has power over this faculty, because he knows and is powerful, how befitting it is that it should be found

³³ Quran xvi, 42.

in the real Creator. There is another condition for this action, among the things which we can observe, and that is that which must be the means of performing it: words. This being so, it becomes necessary that that action should be performed by God in the heart of somebody, His chosen servant. It is not necessary that it should always be through the medium of words, and so created. But it may happen either through an angel; or through divine inspiration, that is without the medium of words which He may create, but through an act to the hearer, which discloses to him the true nature of the thing meant, or through words which He may create in the ears of him who has been specialised to hear His words. It is to these three methods that the verse of the Quran refers, "It is not fit for a man that God should speak unto him otherwise than by private revelation, or from behind a veil, or by sending a messenger to reveal, by His permission, that which

He pleaseth,"³⁴ So revelation is the disclosure of the intended secrets to the inspired person without the medium of words which He created, but through an action done on the mind of the one addressed. So God says, "Afterwards He approached the Prophet and drew unto him; until He was at the distance of two bows length from him or yet nearer; and He revealed unto His servant that which He revealed."³⁵ The speech from behind the veil is one which is performed through the medium of words. This is the real speech, and that is the one which God specially bestowed upon Moses, and so He has said, "And God spake unto Moses, discoursing with him."³⁶ Now as to his words, "or by sending a messenger to reveal," this is the third kind mentioned above, that is, through the medium of some angels. Sometimes God speaks to the learned men, who are the successors of the prophets, by disclosing arguments to

34. Quran xlii, 50. 35. Quran liii, 8, 10. 36. Quran iv, 162.

them. On account of these causes it is true, when the learned men say, that the Quran is the speech of God. It has now become clear to you that the Quran, which is the speech of God, is eternal, but the words expressing it are created by him, and are not human. From it are excepted the Quranic words which we commonly use in our speech, that is, these words are our own, actions, by the command of God, while the words of the Quran are those created by God. He who does not understand these things by this method, cannot understand this argument and cannot grasp as to how the Quran is the word of God. The alphabets used in the Quran are our own invention, by the command of God. We have to respect them, because of them are formed the words created by God, for the purpose which is not itself created. He who thought of words and not of meaning, that is, did not separate them, said that the Quran was created; while he who thought of the

meaning which these words express, said the Quran was not created. But the truth lies in the middle of these two extreme views. The Asharites deny that the speaker is the maker of his own speech, for they think that if they admit it, they must also admit that God is the maker of His speech. Again, when they believe, that the speech can only exist with the speaker, they think, they must also believe, taking in view the two foregoing principles, that God is Himself the creator of His words. In this case He Himself becomes the place of created things. So they assert that God is the maker of speech, but it is an eternal attribute in him, like knowledge, etc. This is the time of the speech in our mind, but not of the speech which expresses what we have in our mind, that is, the words. As the Mutazilites thought that speech is the action of the speaker, they said that by speech is meant only the words uttered. So they believed that the Quran is

“ Created. ” Since according to them the word is an action of the speaker, so it is not one of its conditions that it should exist with the speaker. The Asharites on the other hand, insist that it is one of its conditions that it should exist only with the speaker. This is true in both the cases, that is in the case of ideas in our minds, and the words which express them. But in the case of God, it is the ideas which stand with Him, and not the words expressing them. So when the Asharites laid it down as a condition, that the speech be absolutely dependent upon the speaker, they deny that the speaker is the maker of his speech; while on the other hand, the Mutazilites, when they laid it down as a condition that the speaker is the maker of his speech, ignored the existence of ideas in our minds. In this way there is some truth, and some falsehood, in the opinions of both of these sects, as must have become clear by what we have said.

Now we come to the attributes of hearing and seeing. The Law has proved them to be possessed by God by saying that hearing and seeing are the two essential qualities for knowing the meaning of things, which cannot be acquired by intellect. So a maker must know everything about the object which he is making, it is necessary that he should possess the two senses of hearing and seeing. So He must have these two faculties. All this proves their existence in God, by means of the Law, through the teaching of the knowledge which is found in him. Moreover, One on whom the name of God and the Adorned is applied must necessarily possess all the senses. For it is useless for man to worship him who cannot know that he is being worshipped, as God has said, "O my father, why dost thou worship that which heareth not, neither seeth, nor profiteth thee at all;"³⁷ and, "Do you therefore worship, beside

37. Quran xix, 43.

God, that which cannot profit you at all, nor can it hurt you?"³⁸ This is the power which has been ascribed to God, and which the Law has commanded the common people to know and nothing else.

Of the innovation which this question of attributes has given rise to, one is whether they are the same as Divine Essence or something added to it, that is, whether they are found in the essence itself (*Nafsiyyah*), or are only applied to it, (*Maanawiyyah*). By *Nafsiyyah* we mean those attributes which are found in the thing itself, and are not attached to it for the purpose of adding something to the essence, for existence, we say one or eternal. By *Maanawiyyah* we mean the attributes which are applied to a thing for some purpose which is found in it. The Asharites say that these attributes are only *Maanawiyyah*, that is qualities which are only added to the Divine Essence. So they say that he knows by a knowledge which

has been added to His essence, and lives by life attached to it and so on. This has compelled them to admit that the Creator has a body, for there must be the quality and the qualified, the bearer and the borne. This is the condition of the body, so they must say that the essence is existent by itself, and the qualities exist through it, or they must say that these attributes are independent of each other, then there must be a number of gods. This is the belief of the Christians, who say that the three personifications are those of Existence, Life and Knowledge. God has said about it the following, "They are certainly infidels, who say, God is the third of the three."³⁹ One of them stands by itself, the others being dependent upon the former. So it becomes necessary that there should be essence, existing in itself, and the accidents depending on something else. The place in which the essence and the accidents are found to-

39. Quran v, 77.

gether must necessarily be a body. Such is also the case with the Mutazilites about the question, that the essence and the attributes are one and the same thing. This they think, is for the primary principles of knowledge or may be opposed to them. For they think that according to the primary principles knowledge must be existent without the one knowing. But knowledge and the one knowing cannot be the same, except that it may be possible that the two may be very close to each other, just as the father and the son. This teaching is very remote for the understanding of the masses, and to explain it to them in detail is innovation, for it would more likely mislead than guide them to the right path. The Mutazilites have no argument to advance in proof of their proposition, for they have none. Such is also the condition of the Mutakallimun in the case of denying a body to God. For when they have established it, they are compelled to admit the creation of the body,

because it is a body. We have already said that they have no argument for it. Those who have such are the learned people, the philosophers. It is at this point that the Christians have erred. They believe in the multiplicity of attributes that they are essences existing not by the help of another, but by themselves, like the self, (*Zat*). They also believe that the qualities with these attributes are two in number – knowledge and life. So they say that God is one from the three causes. That He is three they say because He exists, lives and knows. They say that He is one, because He is a collection of all the three qualities. And so there are three religious opinions among them. One party believes that they are all the self (*Zat*) alone without any number; the other only believes in numbers of qualities. This is divided into two parties: one which thinks that they exist by themselves, and the other which makes them exist by something else. All this

is in contrast with the purpose of the Law.

It being so, it is necessary that one who wants to teach the knowledge of these things to the common people should tell them as much as the Law orders him to do — and that is only a confession of their existence without entering into details. For it is not possible for the common people to believe and understand them at all. By common people here I mean all those who are unacquainted with the laws of reasoning, though they may or may not know the science of scholastic theology. It is not in the power of scholastic theology to know of these things even when it is said that it is not a science of reasoning but of dogmatics, for these things can never be clearly understood by dogmatics alone. So, by now, the extent of these questions which should be disclosed to the common people, and the method adopted for this purpose must have become clear to you by what we have said.

OF DIVINE PERFECTION

We have already described the way which the Law pursues in teaching the common people the existence of God, the denial of His having any associates, and thereby the knowledge of His attributes, and the extent to which they have been explained in details in it, one after another. It is really an addition to, and deduction from, and change and interpretation of this very limit and extent which has not been productive of good to any and all the people. Now it remains for us to know the method which the Law has adopted in explaining to the common people the perfection of God and freedom from all defects, and the length to which it has gone in detailing it, and the cause of restricting its knowledge to them. Then we should mention the methods which it adopts in teaching the people the knowledge of His actions, and the latitude which it has allowed in this respect. Having

done so, we shall have accomplished the purpose for which we began this book.

So we say that the knowledge of things known as perfection and holiness are found in many verses of the Quran, the most clear and definite of them being the following, "There is nothing like Him, and it is He who heareth and seeth;"⁴⁰ and, "Shall God, therefore, Who createth, be as he who createth not."⁴¹ The second verse is an argument for the verse "there is nothing like Him." For it is one of the characteristics of the dispositions of all the people to think that the Creator must either be unlike the things which He has created, or having qualities which may be different from these which He has given to the created; otherwise he who is himself created cannot be a Creator. When we have admitted that the created cannot be the creator then it becomes incumbent upon us to say that the qualities of the created should either

40. Quran xlii, 9.

41. Quran xvi, 17.

be not found in the Creator, or found in Him in some different way than they are in the created. We say, "in some different way," because we have proved the divine qualities to be those which are found in the noblest of God's creatures, man, as knowledge, life, power, volition and so on. This is the meaning of the Tradition of the Prophet, "God created Adam after His own image." So it has been established that the Law has denied the similarity between the Creator and the created with fitting arguments. The denial of similarity is of two kinds, first, that there may not be found in the Creator many qualities of the created; and secondly; there may be found in him the qualities of the created in so perfect and excellent a form as could not be imagined. Of these two kinds it should be seen which one the Law has explained, and about which it is reticent. We would also try to find out the cause for this reticence.

We would say that the qualities of

the created which have been denied by Law as pertaining to God are those which show some defects; for example, death, as God says, "And do ye not trust in him who liveth, and dieth not,"⁴² or sleep and things which lead to negligence and carelessness, as regards senses and the protection of the existent things, as He says, "Neither slumber nor sleep seizeth Him."⁴³ Of such qualities are error and forgetfulness, as God has said, "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in the book of His decrees: my Lord erreth not, neither doth He forget."⁴⁴ A knowledge of those qualities the existence of which has been denied in God is one of the necessary things of common education and is why the Law has been very explicit about them. It only warns us not to meddle with those things which are far from the primary principles of knowledge, because it knows the small limits of human knowledge, as God has

42. Quran xxv, 60. 43. Quran ii, 256. 44. Quran xx, 54.

said in many different verses of the Quran, "But the greater part of men do not understand." For example He says, "Verily the creation of heaven and earth is more considerable, than the creation of man; but the greater part of men do not understand,"⁴⁵ and "The institution of God to which He has created mankind disposed; there is no change in what God hath created. This is the right religion; but the greater part of men know it not."⁴⁶ Now it may be said, what is the proof — that is, the proof advanced by the Law — of the fact that these defects are not found in God. We would say that it is apparent from the universe itself. It is quite safe. No confusion or corruption overtakes it. Had the Creator been subject to negligence, carelessness, error or forgetfulness the whole of the universe would have been destroyed. God has made this clear in many verses of the Quran. He says, "Verily God

45. Quran xxxv, 39.

46. Quran

sustaineth the heaven and the earth, lest they fail: and if they should fail, none could support the same besides him;”⁴⁷ and, “The preservation of both is not burden unto him. He is the high, the mighty.”⁴⁸

If our opinion be asked about the anthropomorphic attributes of God, whether the Law has denied them as attributes to the Creator or is only silent about them, we would say, that it is evident that the Law is quite silent about them, and their mention in it is quite near to their denial altogether. It has come to be so because the Quran in many verses speaks of His hands and face, and these verses are taken as showing physical attributes which the Creator has bestowed upon the created, just as He has given him the qualities of power, volition and so on — qualities which are common between the Creator and created, except that they are more perfect in the former. On account of

47. Quran

48. Quran ii, 256.

this many Muslims believed that the Creator has a body different from all other bodies. Such is the case with the Hanbalites and their many followers. But in my opinion we should follow the path of the Law ; and this should neither deny nor try to prove them, and whenever asked by the common people to do so, we should answer with words of God, " There is nothing like him ; and it is He who heareth and seeth,"⁴⁹ in this way preventing them from questioning. It is so because of three reasons. It is neither near to the first, nor to the second, nor to the third grade. This would be quite clear to you from the method adopted by the Mutakallimun. They say that the proof of the fact that He is not a body is that it has been proved that all bodies are created things. If they are asked to point out the method of proving the latter proposition, they adopt the method, which we have already pointed out, concerning the creat-

49. Quran xlii, 9.

ion of accidents, that that which cannot be separated from created things is itself created. You have already seen, from what we have said, that this method is not a philosophical one, and had it been so, even then a majority of the common people would not have grasped it. Moreover, whatever these people have said about God, that He is a Self (Zat) and divine attributes added to it, proves by itself that He has a body, on 'account of the denial of creation, rather an argument denying anthropomorphism. This is the first reason why the Law does not speak of these things in clear terms. The second reason is that common people think that all that is existent they can imagine and feel, all else being non-existent to them. So when they are told that there exists One who has no body, their imagination does not work and He becomes almost non-existent to them, particularly so when they are told that He is neither outside our knowledge nor in it, neither above nor

below. That is why the sect which believes in anthropomorphism thinks of those who deny it, that they also believe in it; while, on the other hand, the party thinks its opponents to be believing in a number of gods. The third reason is that had the Law denied anthropomorphism altogether there would have arisen many a misgiving about what has been said concerning the Day of Judgment, and other beliefs.

Of these one is the problem of Divine Vision which we find stated in authentic Traditions. Those who have been very explicit in denying it are the two sects of the Asharites and the Mutazilites. The belief of the latter has driven them to deny the vision altogether; while the Asharites have tried to make the two things agree, but this was impossible for them to do. So they have taken refuge in many sophistic arguments, the weakness of which we would show when talking of the Divine Vision. Another problem

which rises out of this is that it evidently gives rise to a denial of the direction in which God is. For if He has no body then the Law becomes an allegory. For the advent of the prophets is founded upon the fact that Divine Revelation is sent to them from the heaven. Upon this very principle is also based our religion, for the Divine Book has come down from the heavens, as God says, "Verily we have sent down the same (the Quran) on a blessed night."⁵⁰ The descending of the divine revelation from heaven is based upon the fact of God's being there. So also is the descending and ascending of angels from heaven, as God says, "Unto him ascendeth the good speech; and the righteous work will He exalt;"⁵¹ and says He, "The angels ascend up unto and the spirit."⁵² We would mention all the things which the deniers of direction bring to prove their proposition when we come to talk of this problem.

50. Quran xliv, 2. 51. Quran xxxv, ii. 52. Quran lxx, 4.

Another difficulty which arises is that with the denial of anthropomorphism we shall have to deny movement to God, after which it would be difficult to explain with regard to the Day of Judgment, that He would appear to the people at that moment, and would himself superintend their judgment, as He says, "Thy Lord shall come and the angels rank by rank."⁵³ It would also be difficult to explain the famous Tradition of Descent, though its explanation would be, on the whole easier than that of the former in spite of all that has been said about it in the Law. So it is necessary that there should be disclosed to the common people nothing which might lead them to a disbelief in the literal meanings of these things. This would be its effect upon the mind of the people if taken exoterically. But when it is interpreted it would come to either of two interpretations. Either interpretation would overcome the exoteric

53. Quran lxxxix, 23

side of it and of other things like it, thus destroying the Law altogether, and falsifying their purpose; or it will be said about all of them that they are only allegories, which would destroy the Law, and efface it from the mind of the people, while the man doing it would not know the sin he has committed with regard to Law. With all this, if you were to look into the arguments which the interpreters advance about these things, you would find all of them unreasonable, while the exoteric meanings are much more satisfactory, that is, verification through them is more common and much better. This should become clearer to you when we begin to review the arguments which they advance for a denial of anthropomorphism, and discuss the question of direction, as we may shortly do. You should also know that the Law never intended to disclose the question of the denial of this attribute completely to the common people, since it can be done by an explanation of the

soul, and the Law has not explained to the masses what the soul was. God says in the Quran, " They will ask thee concerning the Soul; answer, The Soul was created at the command of my Lord; but ye have no knowledge given unto you except a little. "⁵⁴ This is so, because it is difficult to establish reasons for the common people for the existence of a thing existing by itself, without a body. Had the denial of this attribute been understood by the masses then it would not have been enough for prophet Abraham to say in his discussion with the infidel, " When Abraham said, My Lord is He who giveth life and killeth : he answered, I give life and I kill. "⁵⁵ On the other hand he would have said, " Thou art a body, and God has not one, for every body is created, " as the Asharites would argue. So also it would have sufficed for Moses in his discussion with Pharoah about his divinity; and for the Holy Prophet in case of the

54. Quran xvii, 87.

55. Quran ii, 260.

anti-christ, telling the Faithful of the falsehood of his claims for divinity, because he would have a body while God has none. On the other hand he told them that our God was not one-eyed. An argument proving the physical defect in him was enough to falsify him. So you see that all these are innovations in Islam, and have become the cause of its being split up into sects, into which the Prophet tells us that his people would be divided.

Now some one may object that the Law has not made it clear to the common people that God has or has not a body, then what should they believe about him. This is a question which will naturally arise in the mind of every man, and cannot be put away from him. So it would not satisfy the common people to let them know of a thing, the existence of which they should believe, that it is not made of matter. We should say that they should be answered with the answer given by Law — That

He is the Light, for this is the quality which God has assigned to himself in His Book, for describing himself, He says, "God is the light of heaven and earth."⁵⁶ The prophet has also assigned to him the same quality in an authentic Tradition. It says that he was asked whether he had seen God, and he answered, "He was Light, and I saw him." The Tradition of the Night Journey says that when the Prophet neared the lote-tree,⁵⁷ it was completely covered with light, which did not hide it from his sight. There is also a Tradition in the book of Muslim which says that God is a curtain of light, which, if opened, would burn the opener, and yet God would not be seen. In

56. Quran xxiv, 35.

57. He also saw him another time, by the lote-tree, beyond which there is no passing: near it is the garden of eternal abode. *When the lote-tree covered that which it covered*, his eye-sight turned not aside, nor did it wander: and he really beheld some of the greater signs of his Lord. (Quran li, 16, 18.) The lote-tree is the limit beyond which neither angel nor man can pass. It stands in the seventh heaven, on the right hand of the Throne of God.

some other readings of this very Tradition it is said that He is seventy curtains of light. It should be known that this illustration is especially fit for God, for it comprises the two things, that He can be felt, our eyes and intellect being powerless to see or comprehend him, and in spite of this He is not a body too. Now according to the common people the existent thing is one which can be felt, while the non-existent thing is that which they cannot feel. So light being the best of the things felt, it is but fitting that the best existing thing should be likened unto it. There is another cause for it which should be noticed. The condition of His existence to the learned people, when they begin to ponder over him, is like the condition of the eyes when they look towards the sun. But such is not the condition of the eyes of the bat. So this quality fittingly describes the condition of the two classes of people. Moreover, God is the cause of the existence of things,

and of our knowledge of them. This is also the quality of the light in showing colours, and of our seeing them. So God has very fittingly named himself Light. When it is said that He is Light then there remains no doubt as to His Vision on the Day of Judgment. From these it must have become clear to you what the primary belief of the Law was about this attribute, and what are the innovations which rose in it afterwards. The Law is silent about it because there is not found in the universe anything unseen without a body, except that which is found by arguments among things seen as existent with this quality, and that is the soul. As the belief of the soul was impossible for the masses, it was also impossible for them to understand the existence of a Being who exists without a body. Hence they cannot understand it about God.

OF DIRECTION

This is a quality which all the people learned in Law have tried to prove,

until the Mutazilites denied it, and were followed by the later, Asharites, like Abul Maati and those who follow him. All the exoterics of the Law go to prove it. For God says, "And eight shall bear the Throne of thy Lord on that Day;"⁵⁸ and "He governeth all the things from heaven even to the earth : hereafter shall they return unto him, on the Day whose length shall be a thousand years, of those which ye compute."⁵⁹ Again, He says, "The angels ascend unto him and the spirit;"⁶⁰ and, "Are Ye secure that He who dwelleth in heaven will not cause the earth to swallow you up? and behold, it shall shake."⁶¹ There are many other verses of this kind which, if interpreted, would turn the whole of the Law into interpretation; and if taken allegorically, would make it an allegory. All the religious laws are based upon the principle that God is in heaven, from

58. Quran lxi, 17.

59. Quran xxxii, 2.

60. Quran lxx, 4.

61. Quran lxvii, 16.

whence he sends down angels to His Prophets with revelations, that from the heaven, the religious books used to descend, and that towards it was the Night Journey of the Prophet, till he reached near the lote-tree. All the philosophers are, moreover, agreed that God and His Angels are in heaven, as is the case with all the religions. The doubt which led them to deny this idea of direction was that they thought that by believing in direction it would be necessary to believe in space, which in its turn leads to a belief in anthropomorphism. But we say that this is not necessarily the case, for direction can exist without space. It is nothing but the surfaces of the body surrounding it, which are six in number. That is why we say that there is an above and a below, right and left and before and behind for an animal. Or they are the surfaces of a body surrounded by another body having the above-mentioned six directions. So the directions, which are the

surfaces of the body itself, are not the spaces of the body in any respect. But the surfaces of the surrounding bodies are space for it. The atmosphere surrounding man, and the surfaces of the sky surrounding the surfaces of the atmosphere, for they are the spaces for it. Such is also the case with different surrounding and forming spaces for one another. As to the last sky it is evident that beyond it there must be no body. For had it been so, it would be necessary that beyond it be another body and so on to infinity. So there is no space at all for the last body of the universe, for it is not possible that in it be found any body, it being necessary that there be found a body in every space. So when there is an argument for the existence of a thing in that direction, it is necessary that it be not a body. So one who denies His existence there goes against his own ideas. He is existent, has a body, is not existent without a body. They cannot say that beyond the

universe is a void. For the impossibility of a void has been made quite certain in the philosophical sciences. For that upon which the name void is commonly applied, are nothing but dimensions (*Abad*), in which there are no bodies. For when these dimensions are once removed, there remains nothing but non-existence. But if the void be supposed as existent, it is necessary to admit the existence of accidents in something not a body, for dimensions are accidents by their having a quality. But it is said by the Ancients and established by past religions that that place is the dwelling place of the spirits, God and angels. This place has no space, and is not governed by time, because everything governed by time and space can be corrupted. And it is necessary that the things there be uncorrupted and uncreated. This has been made quite clear by what I have said, for there cannot be found in that place anything but one which is existent

and at the same time can be felt, or is altogether non-existent. It is self-evident that an existent object is always referred to by its existence; that is, it is said that it exists, that is, it has an existence. So if anything exists there, it must be the noblest of all, and it is necessary that that existent thing should be referred to by the best portion of the universe, which are the heavens. God has said concerning the nobility of the heavens, "Verily the creation of heaven and earth is more considerable than the creation of man: but the greater part of men do not understand."⁶² All this is perfectly clear to the learned men "Well grounded in knowledge."⁶³

Now it has become clear to you that belief in direction is necessary by religion and reason, and that it forms a part of the Law, which is based upon it. A denial of the principles is a denial of all the religions. The cause of the difficulty in their understanding this, and in their

62. Quran xl, 59.

63. Quran iii, 5,

denial of anthropomorphism is, that there cannot be found in the visible world an illustration of such a thing. This was just the reason why the Law did not expressly deny an anthropomorphism. For to the common people verification of an invisible object can only come when its existence be known in the visible world, as knowledge, which being a condition for their own existence as visible, could to them become a condition for the existence of an invisible Maker. Now as the case of the visible was unknown in the visible on the part of the many, and none knew it but those who were well-grounded in knowledge, the Law-giver forbade an inquiry into it, as for example knowledge of the Soul. If it be needful for the common people to know anything, then the Law gives examples from the visible world. And if one example did not suffice for the understanding of the problem in view, then many examples are given, as in the case of an account of the Day of Judg-

ment. The doubt which arises out of a denial of direction, on the part of those denying it, is that the common people cannot comprehend it, particularly so, because they have not been given before hand to understand that God has no body. So it is necessary to take the action of the Law as our example, otherwise we will have to interpret that which the Law itself has not expressly said.

With regard to these problems of the Law, the people may be divided into three classes. In the first place there are people who cannot notice any doubt arising out of them, especially in things which the Law has left to be taken exoterically. These people are the greatest in number, and may be described as the masses. Then the second group of men is one which has doubts; but has not power to solve them. These are above the masses and below the learned people. It is for them that there are found in the Law

allegorical sayings, and it is they whom God has censured. For there is no allegory in the Law for the learned or the common people, and it is in this light that all the allegorical sayings of the Quran should be understood. Their example as regards the Law is like the example of the bread of wheat which though a useful cereal for the large number of human beings, may prove harmful to some. Such is also the case with religious teaching: it is useful for the many but sometimes becomes harmful to some. The following words of God point to the same thing. "He will not thereby mislead any except the transgressors."⁶⁴ But this is found only in a few verses of the Quran about a few people. Most of the verses are, however, those which speak of things invisible for which there is no example in the visible world. So they are expressed by the things nearest to them in the visible world, on account of their

64. Quran ii, 21.

similarity. Some people take the illustration as the thing illustrated, and hence they fall into confusion and doubt. This is what is called allegorical in the Law, and is not meant for the learned or the common people, which in reality form two groups of men. For these are the people who are really healthy, and delicate food is only fit for them. The other group is a group of sick men who are always few in number. So God has said, "But they whose hearts are perverse will follow that which is parabolical therein, out of love of schism."⁶⁵ These are the dogmatic and the scholastic theologians. The worst which these people have done in respect to the Law is that they have interpreted much which they thought was not to be taken literally, and then said that their interpretation was the thing intended, and that God had mentioned it parabolically only to test and try His creatures. God forbid that we

65, Quran iii, 5.

should ever have such an idea about Him. The Divine Book is a miracle of clearness and lucidity. So it is far from the real purpose of the Law for one to say about a thing which is not parabolical, that it is so, and then set about interpreting it according to his own ideas, telling the people that their duty lies in believing his interpretations. They have done so in the case of the verse of Equalisation on the Throne, and others, saying that their exoteric meaning is only parabolical. On the whole many interpretations, which these people maintain to be the real purpose of the Law, when intently looked into and deciphered, are found wanting in arguments, and not serving the purpose which the exoteric meaning would have with regard to the common people. The primary purpose of knowledge for the common people is action, so that which is most useful in action is most suitable for them. But for the learned men, the purpose of knowledge is both knowledge

and action. The man who interprets anything of the Law, thinking that his interpretation is the real purpose of it, and then discloses it to the common people, is like a man, who finds a medicine which an expert physician had compounded to preserve the health of all, or of a majority of the people; then there came a man with whom that medicine did not agree on account of the coarseness of his disposition. He presented it to some people, and then thought that by some drug, which the first physician had clearly specified, as composing that universally useful medicine, he did not mean the drug commonly known by that name — but another which he really meant, but used this name for it by a far-fetched metaphor. So he took out the first drug from the compound, and placed another in its stead, which he thought to be the one intended by the first physician. Then he told the people that this was the medicine intended. The people began

to use that "improved" medicine, and many of them got injured by it. Then there came another group of men, who, seeing the people sick on account of that medicine, thought of curing them. So they changed some of its drugs with some other than the first one, then presented it to the people for quite another disease than that intended by the first physician. Then there appeared another group which interpreted the medicine in quite another way than the two preceding groups had done. The fourth group gave a new interpretation to the drug and prescribed it for a fourth kind of disease. So as time went on with that great medicine, the interpretations of it took hold of the people instead of the drugs, and they changed and transformed it altogether. As a result the people were attacked by many different kinds of diseases, till the usefulness of the medicine was altogether lost. Such is the condition of those sects which have risen in Islam. For

every one of them has made interpretations quite different from the others, and maintained that its interpretation shows the real purpose of the Law, which was at last rent to piece, and lost its primary purpose altogether. The Prophet, knowing that a thing like this would necessarily happen among his people, said, "My people will shortly be divided into seventytwo sects. All of them will be in hell, except one." By this one he meant the sect which followed the exoteric meanings of the Law, without making any interpretations which may be disclosed to the people. If you were to look into the Law and see the corruption which it has suffered up to this time, through interpretations, the truth of this example would become clear to you.

The first to make a change in the religion – the great medicine – were the Kharijites, who were followed by the Mutazilites. They were succeeded by the Asharites, after whom came the

Sufis. Last of all came Al-Ghazzali, who went to the extreme and corrupted everything. He it is who explained philosophy to the common people, and disclosed to them the opinions of the philosophers as he understood them to be. This he did in a book called "Al-Maqasid," in which he thought he was refuting them. He planned his *Refutation of the Philosophers*, and charged them with infidelity in respect to three questions, tearing them to pieces, as he thought, in regard to consensus of opinion; and calling them innovators as regards other opinions. In this book he has advanced many specious arguments and confused reasonings, which have led astray many people both from religion and philosophy. Then he said in his book *Jawahir al-Quran* that the arguments which he had mentioned in his *Refutation* were controversial in their nature, while in fact they were mentioned in his *Al Maznun ala Ghairi Ahlihi*. Then in his *Mishkat ul Anwar* he men-

tions grades of men really knowing God. He says that all but those who believe that God is not the mover of the first heaven, and that it is not He from whom this movement originates, are precluded from it. This is an explanation from him of men learned in divine science. He has said in many places that divine science exists only by guesses, as opposed to certainties in other science. In his book *Munqidh min al Dalal* he has gone against the philosophers and maintained that knowledge can only be acquired by privacy and meditation, and that those in this rank are all very near to the rank of the prophets. He has mentioned this very fact in his *Kimiya i Saadat*. Men have become divided into parties on account of this confusion. One party chose to censure the philosophers, while the other agreed to interpret the Law, and make it conform to philosophy. All this is wrong. The Law should be taken literally; and the conformity of religion to philosophy should not be

told to the common people. For by an exposition of it we should be exposing the results of philosophy to them, without their having intelligence enough to understand them. It is neither permitted nor desirable to expose anything of the result of philosophy to a man who has no arguments to advance, for there are no arguments either with the learned people who have a mastery over both the subjects, or with the common people who follow the exoteric of the Law. So his action brought disorder in respect to both of these things, religion and philosophy, in the mind of the common people, while he saved them for the others. The disorder in religion came through his exposing those interpretations which should not be exposed ; and so also the disorder in philosophy was the result of his mentioning those things in his books which should not be put in the works on philosophy. Now it was the result of his treatment of the subjects that many people do not

know the difference between the two, because of his bringing both of them together. He has also insisted upon the fact that he knew the cause of doing so, as he did in his "*Al Tafriqa bain al Islami wa-z Zindiqah*. In it he has noted down many kinds of interpretations and has decided that their interpreters were not infidels though they may go against the consensus of opinion. Since he has done so, he is dangerous to the Law for some reasons, to philosophy for others, and to both for some other reasons. So this man, by disclosing them, has shown that he is dangerous for both the things in reality and profitable to them only by accident. For teaching philosophy to one who is not fit for it, will either falsify philosophy or religion absolutely or will show conformity between them by accident only. The right thing would have been not to disclose philosophy to the common people at all. But if teaching of it was absolutely necessary, then

only that section of the people should have been taught who saw that religion was opposed to philosophy, in order to show them that it was not so. And also it might have been taught to those people who thought that philosophy is opposed to religion. This may have been shown to either of these sections, that in reality they did not possess a knowledge of their substance and truth, that is, of religion and philosophy. Moreover, they would know that the opinion about religion, that it was opposed to philosophy was one which was either about some innovation in religion, and not about its principles, or is an error in understanding that is, a wrong interpretation of it, as was shown in the case of knowledge about particulars and other things. That is why we were compelled in this book to explain the principles of religion. These principles, when intently looked into will be found in perfect agreement with philosophy. Such is also the case

with the opinion which says this philosophy is opposed to religion. It only shows that the man has not had a sufficient training in either philosophy or religion. This is the reason that we were compelled to explain it in our tractate entitled "*Fasl al Maqal fi Muwafiqat il Hikmat lil Sharia.*"

Now that this has become clear we would return to our former theme. The only problem which remains for us to solve, out of those which we proposed is that of Divine Vision. It is thought for some reasons, that it forms a part of the problem which we have just discussed, on account of the words of God, "The sight comprehendeth him not, but He comprehendeth the sight."⁶⁶ And hence the Mutazilites have denied it, setting aside the arguments found in the Law, in spite of their greatness in number and fame, a very shameful act on their part. The cause of this doubt of the Law that since the Mutazilites

⁶⁶, Quran

denied physical attributes, and believed in exposing their ideas to every one, it became necessary for them to deny direction also. And having once denied direction they must also deny the Vision, for the thing seen must be in some direction to one who sees it. To prove their point they are constrained to set aside the traditional religion. They neglected the Traditions because they were only isolated things which should not be believed, if found opposed to the teachings of the Quran, that is, opposed to the verse, "The sight comprehendeth Him not." The Asharites tried to mix together the two beliefs, that is, the denial of physical attributes, and the possibility of vision of One having no body, by means of our senses. It became difficult for them to prove it, and they took refuge in many sophistical and conjectural arguments, that is arguments which are thought to be correct but are in reality wrong. It is so because it is possible to have the

same grades in arguments as there are among men. Just as there may be found men with perfect excellence and those below them, till we may have a man who thinks himself learned and yet he is not, being only a pedant, so there are arguments which are extremely certain, and those below them, then, there are specious arguments, and those which though really false seem to be true. The statements of the Asharites in regard to this question are of two kinds: those refuting the arguments of the Mutazilites, and those proving the possibility of the Vision of One having no body, and that there is no difficulty in our believing it. The statements by which they have opposed the Mutazilites in their argument, that the thing seen must have a direction for one who sees it, is that some of them say that it is applied only to the visible, and not to the invisible, world; and that it is not one of those cases in which the condition of the one can be

applied to the other. According to them it is possible for a man to see an object having no direction, for he sees by his power of sight only that which comes before his eyes. In this they have mixed together the senses of sight with intelligence, for the latter can perceive that which has no direction, that is, no space; but for the perception of the eye there is a condition, that the thing to be perceived be in a direction, not only that but a particular direction too. So if we take the eye to be endowed with the power of seeing, then it is not possible except under very limited conditions. These are three in number—light, the intervention of a transparent body between the eye and the object seen, and the possession of necessary colours by the object. A refutation of these conditions in the eyes is also a refutation of those primary principles of knowledge which are known to all. It would be a refutation of the sciences of philosophy and mathematics. The Asha-

rites also maintain that one of the conditions as we have said, for example, is that every rational being has a life, it being apparent in the visible world as a condition for knowledge. Hence we say to them that these are also conditions for seeing things in the visible world. So according to their own principle is the case of the visible and the invisible. In his book *Al Maqasid* Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) intended to oppose the premise that every object perceivable must be in some direction to the one seeing it. He says that a man sees himself reflected in a mirror and sees himself not in any other direction but the opposite one. Hence he can see his self in an opposite direction too. But this is a mistake, because what he sees is not his self but only an image of it. This image is in the opposite direction, being in the mirror, placed there.

Of the arguments which they advance to prove the vision of an object having

no body, two are famous ones. Of these the more famous is one which says that an object seen is either because it has some colour, or because it has a body, or it is a colour, or because it is existent. Sometimes they mention many other causes than really do exist. They say that it is wrong to suppose that it must be a body, otherwise, no colour would be visible, it being also incorrect to suppose the space to be the colour. Now when all the kinds of suppositions in the premise have been refuted we shall have to believe that only an existent object will be seen. The mistake in this statement is quite clear. For an object is visible because of itself. This is the case with the colour and the body: the colour being visible by itself, and the body through the colour. That is why a thing which has no colour cannot be seen. Had the existence of a thing been the only condition of visibility, it would have been possible to see the sound and the senses.

In that case seeing, hearing, in fact all the five senses would have been only one, which is quite contrary to our reason. This problem and others like it have obliged the Mutakallimun to admit that it is possible to *hear* the colour, and *see* the sounds. But this is against nature, as man has understood it to be. For it is absolutely evident that the sense of seeing is quite different from that of hearing. Their actions are quite distinct from one another, and the organ of the one cannot work as the organ of the other. It is just as impossible to turn hearing as to turn colour into sound. Those who say that sometimes sound can be seen, should be asked to define the sense of seeing. They would necessarily answer that it is a faculty which perceives those things which can be seen, such as colour and so on. Then they should be asked to define the sense of hearing. They would surely say that it is one sense by which sounds can be heard. Then they should be

asked whether at the time of sound it is the sense of hearing only or seeing too. If they say that it is hearing only, they admit that it cannot perceive colours. If they say that it is seeing only, then it cannot hear sounds. If it is neither alone, for it perceives colours, then it is seeing and hearing both. But in this way everything can be proved to be one, even in the case of contradictory things. This is a thing which our Mutakallimun admit or they are compelled to do so. But it is clear that it is a philosophical opinion which is only fit for those ancient people famous for it.

Now the second method which Mutakallimun have adopted for proving the possibility of Divine Vision is that which has been mentioned by Abul Maali in his book, *Al Irshad*. It says that the senses can only feel the substance (Zat) of things, but that which separates the existent thing from one another is not to be found in the substance only. So the senses cannot per-

ceive the substance, which is common to all the existent things. They can only perceive a thing because it exists. But all this is absurd, which is quite clear from the fact that if sight were only able to perceive things then it would not have been possible for it to differentiate between white and black, for there is no difference between things about those qualities which are common to all. This also becomes impossible as regards all the other senses. The sense of seeing could not perceive different kinds of colours; the sense of hearing cannot differentiate between tastes. It would be necessary that the objects perceived by the senses be all of a kind, and there should be no difference between objects perceived by seeing and apprehended by hearing. This is contrary to that which man commonly understands. In reality the senses perceive the substance of things by the power which is vouchsafed to them. The cause of this mistake lies in the fact that that which

perceives a substance, is thought to be the thing perceived. Had there not been said so much about these things, and so much respect for those who said it, it would not have satisfied anybody with a strong common sense.

The cause of such a perplexing situation in the Law, which has compelled its votaries to take refuge in such worthless arguments, as would bring a smile to the lips of anybody who has made the least effort to distinguish between different kinds of arguments, is the exposition of anthropomorphic qualities of God to the common people, a fact which has been prohibited by God and His Prophet. It is so because it is very difficult for a man to believe at the same time that there exists One without a body, who can be seen with our eyes. For the things which the senses comprehend are in the bodies or the bodies themselves. Hence the Mutakallimun have tried to prove that the Divine Vision will be an addition to

our existing qualities at that moment. This also should not have been disclosed to the common people. For since their intellect cannot go beyond their imagination that which they cannot imagine is non-existent for them. To imagine a thing which has no body is not possible, and hence a belief in the existence of an object which they cannot imagine, is impossible for them. It was for this reason that the Law refused to disclose this secret to them, and described God, for their sake, in terms which they can imagine, ascribing to him the attributes of hearing, seeing, having a face, &c. &c., at the same time telling them that He is not like anything which can be imagined. Had the intention of the Law been to make clear to the masses the fact of His having no body, it would not have mentioned these things in detail. But as light was the highest of imaginable things, it was given to them as an illustration of God, for it is the best known of the things both to

the senses and to the imagination.

Such is also the case in respect to the possibility of their understanding the things of the Day of Judgment. These have also been mentioned in terms which they can imagine. So now when the Law has adopted this course about the apparent description of God, there arises no doubt about him. For when it is said that He is Light or that there is a curtain of light upon Him, as is mentioned in the Quran and authentic Traditions, and when it is said that the Faithful will see Him on the Day of Judgment as they see the sun, there arises no doubt or suspicion out of it for the common or the learned people. It is so because to the learned it is quite clear that that condition will be an addition to our former knowledge. But when this is disclosed to the common people, they cannot understand it, and hence they either disbelieve the whole of the Law, or consider its exponent to be an infidel. So one who

adopts a method other than that laid down by the Law in this respect, certainly goes astray. If you look a little intently it will become clear to you, that in spite of the fact that the Law has not given illustration of those things for the common people, beyond which their imagination cannot go, it has also informed the learned men of the underlying meanings of those illustrations. So it is necessary to bear in mind the limits which the Law has set about the instruction of every class of men, and not to mix them together. For in this manner the purpose of the Law is multiplied. Hence it is that the Prophet has said, "We, the prophets, have been commanded to adapt ourselves to the conditions of the people, and address them according to their intelligence." He who tries to instruct all the people in the matter of religion, in one and the same way, is like a man who wants to make them alike in actions too, which is quite against apparent laws and reason.

From the foregoing it must have become clear to you that the divine vision has an exoteric meaning in which there is no doubt, if we take the words of the Quran about God as they stand, that is, without proving or disproving the anthropomorphic attribute of God. Now since the first part of the Law has been made quite clear as to God's purity, and the quantity of the teaching fit for the common people, it is time to begin the discussion about the actions of God, after which our purpose in writing this tractate will be over.

OF THE ACTIONS OF GOD

In this section we will take up five questions, around which all others in this connection revolve. In the first place a proof of the creation of the universe; secondly, the advent of the prophets; thirdly, predestination and fate; fourthly, Divine justice and injustice; and fifthly, the Day of Judgment.

First Problem: the Creation of the

Universe :—The Law teaches that the universe was invented and created by God, and that it did not come into being by chance or by itself. The method adopted by the Law for proving this is not the one upon which the Asharites have depended. For we have already shown that those methods are not specially certain for the learned, nor common enough to satisfy all the classes of men. The methods which are really serviceable are those which have a very few premises, and the results of which fall very near to the commonly known ideas. But in instructing the common people the Law does not favour statements composed of long and complete reasonings, based upon different problems. So everyone who, in teaching them, adopts a different course, and interprets the Law according to it, has lost sight of its purpose and gone astray from the true path. And so also, the Law in giving illustrations for its reasonings uses only those which are present before us,

Whatever has been thought necessary for the common people to know, has been explained to them by the nearest available examples, as in the case of the Day of Judgment. But whatever was unnecessary for them to know, they have been told that it was beyond their knowledge, as the words of God about the Soul.⁶⁷ Now that we have established this, it is necessary that the method adopted by the Law for teaching the creation of the universe to the common people be such as would be acknowledged by all. It is also necessary that since there cannot be found anything present to illustrate the creation of the universe the Law must have used the examples of the creation of things in the visible world.

So the method adopted by Law is that the universe was made by God. If we look intently into the verse per-

67. They will ask the concerning the Soul : answer, The Soul was created at the command of my Lord : but ye have no knowledge given unto you, except a little,—(Quran xxii, 85.)

taining to this subject we shall see that the method adopted is that of divine solicitude, which we know to be one of those which prove the existence of God. When a man sees a thing made in a certain shape, proportion and fashion, for a particular advantage is derived from it, and purpose which is to be attained, so that it becomes clear to him, that had it not been found in that shape, and proportion, then that advantage would have been wanting in it, he comes to know for certain that there is a maker of that thing, and that he had made it in that shape and proportion, for a set purpose. For it is not possible that all those qualities serving that purpose be collected in that thing by chance alone. For instance, if a man sees a stone on the ground in a shape fit for sitting, and finds its proportions and fashion of the same kind, then he would come to know that it was made by a maker, and that he had made it and placed it there. But when he sees nothing in it,

which may have made it fit for sitting then he becomes certain that its existence in the place was by chance only, without its being fashioned by any maker. Such is also the case with the whole of the universe. For when a man sees the sun, the moon, and all the stars, which are the cause of the four seasons, of days and nights, of rain, water and winds, of the inhabitation of the parts of the earth, of the existence of man, and of the being of all the animals and the plants and of the earth being fit for the habitation of a man, and other animals living on it; and the water fit for the animals living in it; and the air fit for birds, and if there be anything amiss in this creation and edifice, the whole world would come to confusion and disorder, then he would come to know with certainty that it is not possible that this harmony in it for the different members of the universe — man, animals, and plants — be found by chance only. He will

know that there is one who determined it, and so one who made it by intention, and that is God, exalted and magnified may He be. He would know with certainty that the universe is a created thing, for he would necessarily think that it is not possible that in it should be found all this harmony, if it be not made by some one, and had come into existence by chance alone. This kind of argument is quite definite and at the same time clear, and some have mentioned it here. It is based upon two principles which are acknowledged by all. One of them being, that the universe, with all its component parts, is found fit for the existence of man and things; secondly, that which is found suitable in all its parts, for a single purpose, leading to a single goal, is necessarily a created thing. So those two principles lead us naturally to admit that the universe is a created thing, and that there is a maker of it. Hence "the argument of analogy" leads to two

things at one and the same time, and that is why it is the best argument for proving the existence of God. This kind of reasoning is also found in the Quran in many verses in which the creation of the universe is mentioned. For instance, "Have We not made the earth a bed, and the mountains for shelter to fix the same? And have We not created you of two sexes; and appointed your sleep for rest and made the night a garment to cover you, and destined the day to a gaining of a livelihood; and built over you seven heavens, and placed therein a burning lamp? And do We not send down from the clouds pressing forth rain, water pouring down in abundance, that We may hereby produce corn and herbs, and gardens planted thick with trees."⁶⁸ If we ponder over this verse it would be found that our attention has been called to the suitability of the different parts of the universe for the existence of man. In

68. Quran lxxvii, 3, et. seq.

the very beginning we are informed of a fact well-known to all — and that is that the earth has been created in a way which has made it suitable for our existence. Had it been unstable, or of any other shape, or in any other place, or not of the present proportion, it would not have been possible to be here, or at all created on it. All this is included in the words, “Have We not made the earth a bed for you”? for in a bed are collected together all the qualities of shape, tranquility, and peace, to which may be added those of smoothness and softness. So how strange is this wonderful work and how excellent this blessedness, and how wonderful this collection of all the qualities! This is so because in the word *mihad* (bed) are brought together all those qualities, which are found in the earth, rendering it suitable for the existence of man. It is a thing which becomes clear to the learned after much learning and a long time, “But God will appropriate His

mercy unto whom He pleaseth.”⁶⁹ Then as to the divine words, “And the mountains for stakes,” — they tell us of the advantage to be found in the tranquility of the earth on account of the mountains. For had the earth been created smaller than it is now, that is, without mountains it would have been quivered by the motion of other elements, the water and the air, and would have been shaken and thus displaced. This would naturally have been the cause of the destruction of the animal world. So when its tranquility is in harmony with those living on it, it did not come into being by chance alone, but was made by some one’s intention, and determination. Certainly it was made by One who intended it, and determined it, for the sake of those living on it. Then He calls our attention to the suitability of the existence of night and day for animals. He says, “And made the night

a garment to cover you ; and destined the day to a gaining of your livelihood." He means to say that He has made the night like a covering and clothing for all the things, from the heat of the sun. For had there been no setting of the sun at night, all the things, whose life has been made dependent upon the sun, would have perished – that is, the animals and the plants. As clothing protects the people from the heat of the sun, in addition to its being a covering, so God likened the night to it. This is one of the most beautiful of the metaphors. There is also another advantage in the night for the animals: their sleep in it is very deep, after the setting of the sun, which keeps faculties in motion, that is, wide awake. So God has said, ‘ And appointed your sleep for rest, ’ on account of the darkness of the night. Then He says, “ And built over you seven heavens, and placed therein a burning lamp. ” Here by the word building He means their creation,

and their harmony with the created things, and their arrangement and system. By strength He means that power of revolution and motion which is never slackened, and never overtaken by fatigue; and they never fall like other roofs and high edifices. To this refer the words of God, "And made the heaven a roof well-supported."⁷⁰ By all this He shows their fitness in number, shape, fashion, and movement, for the existence of those who live on the earth round it. Were one of the heavenly bodies, not to speak of all, to stop for a moment all would be chaos on the face of the earth. Some people think the blast of the last trumpet, which will be the cause of the thunderbolt, will be nothing but a stop in the revolution of the heavenly bodies. Then He tells us of the advantage of the sun for those living on the earth and says, "And placed therein a burning lamp." He calls it a lamp because in reality it

70. Quran xxi, 33.

is all darkness, and light covers the darkness of the night, and if there be no lamp, man can get no advantage out of his sense of sight at night time; and in the same way if there were no sun the animals can have no benefit of their sense of seeing. He calls our attention to this advantage of the sun, ignoring others because it is the noblest of all the advantages and the most apparent of all. Then He tells us of His kindness in sending down rain, for the sake of the plants and the animals. The coming down of rain in an appointed proportion, and at an appointed season, for the cultivated fields cannot be by chance alone, but is the result of divine solicitude for us all. So He says, "And do We not send down from the clouds pressing forth rain, water pouring down in abundance that We may hereby produce corn and herbs, and gardens planted thick with trees." There are many verses of the Quran on this subject. For instance, He says, "Do ye not see

how God hath created the seven heavens, one above another, and hath placed the moon therein for a light, and hath appointed the sun for a taper? God hath also provided and caused you to bring forth corn from the earth."⁷¹ If we were to count all such verses and comment upon them showing the kindness of the Creator for the created, it would take too many volumes. We do not intend to do it in this book. If God should grant us life and leisure we shall write a book to show the kindness of God to which He has called our attention.

It should be known that this kind of argument is just contrary to that which the Asharites think leads to the knowledge of God. They think that the creation does not lead us to the knowledge of God through any of His goodness, but through possibility, that is, the possibility which is found in all things, which we can understand to be of his shape or of quite a contrary one. But

71. Quran lxxi, 14-16.

if this possibility be found alike in both the cases, then there is no wisdom in the creation of the universe, and there is found no harmony between man and the parts of it. For, as they think, if it is possible for the things to have any other form than they have now, then there can exist no harmony between man and other existent things by the creation of which God has obliged man and commanded him to be thankful to Him. This opinion, by which the creation of man, as a part of the universe, is just as possible, for instance, as his creation in the void, is like the opinion of those who say that man exists but he could have been created in quite a different shape, and yet could perform actions like a man. According to them it is also possible that he may have formed the part of another universe quite different from the existing one. In that case the blessing of the universe can have no obligation for man, for they are not necessary for his purpose.

Hence man is quite careless of them and they of him. So their existence is no blessing to him. This is all against the nature of man.

On the whole, a man who denies the existence of the effects arranged according to the causes in the question of arts, or whose wisdom cannot understand it, then he has no knowledge of the art of its Maker. So also a man who denies the existence of an order of effects in accordance with causes in this universe, denies the existence of the Creator altogether. Their saying that God is above these causes, and that they cannot have any bearing on the effects by His command, is very far from the true nature of philosophy, nay, it is a destroyer of it. For if it is possible to have the same effects with other than the prescribed causes just in the same degree as by them, then where is the greatness in producing the effects from the known Causes? It is so because the effects from the causes have one of

the following three reasons. Either the existence of the causes will be in place of the effects by compulsion, as a man's taking his food; or their being more perfect that is, the effect becoming better and more perfect through them, as a man's having two eyes, or they may have neither a better nor a more compulsive effect. In this case the existence of the effect and the cause would be by chance, without any intention at all; and hence, there would be no greatness found in it. For instance, if the shape of human hand, the number of the fingers, and their length be neither necessary nor adding any perfection in its work in seizing things of different kind, then the actions of the hand from this shape, and number of parts, would be by chance alone. If it be so, then it makes no difference whether a man is given a hand or a hoof, or something else, like the different animals, for their particular actions. On the whole, if we ignore the causes and their effects, then

there remains nothing to refute the arguments of those who believe in the creation of the universe by chance alone, that is, those who say that there is no Creator at all, and that which has come into being in this universe is the result of material causes. For taking one of the two alternatives it is not more possible that it may have happened by chance, than done by an independent Actor. So when the Asharites say that the existence of one or more possibilities shows that there is a particular Maker of these things, they can answer and say that the existence of things by one of these possibilities was by chance alone, for intention works as one of the causes, and that which happens without any means or cause is by chance. We see that many things come into being in this way. For example, the elements mix together by chance, and then by this unintentional mixing there is produced a new thing. They mix again, and this quite unintentionally produces

quite a new thing. In this way every kind of creation may be said to have come into existence by chance.

We say that it is necessary that there be found order and arrangement, the more perfect and finished than what can be imagined. This mixing together of elements is limited and pre-arranged, and things produced by them are sure to happen, and no disorder has ever happened in them. But all this could not happen by chance alone, for that which happens in this way by chance is of the least value. It is to this that God refers, "It is the work of the Lord, who has rightly disposed all things."⁷² I would like to know what completeness can be found in things made by chance, for such things are by no means better than their opposites. To this God refers in the following words, "Thou canst not see in the Creation of the most Merciful any unfitness or disproportion. Lift thy eyes

72. Quran xxvii, 90.

again to heaven, and *look whether thou seest any flaw*.⁷³ But what defect can be greater than that all the things can be found with any other quality than they really possess. For the non-existent quality may be better than the existing one. In this way, if one thinks that were the Eastern movement to become Western and vice versa, there would be no difference in the universe, then he has destroyed philosophy altogether. He is like a man who thinks that were the right side of the animals to become left, and vice versa, there would be no difference at all for one of the two alternatives is there. For as it is possible to say that it is made according to one alternative by an independent Maker, so it is possible to assert that it was all made by chance alone. For we see so many things coming into being by themselves.

It is quite clear to you that all the people see that lower kinds of creation

73. Quran lxvii, 3,

could have been made in a different way from that in which they really are and as they see this lower degree in many things they think that they must have been made by chance. But in the higher creation they know that it is impossible to have been made in a more perfect and excellent form than that given to it by the Creator. So this opinion, which is one of the opinions of the Mutakallimun is both against the Law and philosophy. What we say is that the opinion of possibility in creation is closer to a complete denial of God, than leading us nearer to Him. At the same time it falsifies philosophy. For if we do not understand that there is a mean between the beginnings and ends of the creation, upon which is based the ends of things, then there can neither be any order nor any method in it. And if they be wanting then there can be no proof of the existence of an intelligent and knowing Maker; for taking them together with cause and

effect we are led to the fact that they must have been created by wisdom and knowledge. But on the other hand the existence of either of two possibilities shows that they may have been performed by a not-knowing Maker and by chance alone. Just as a stone falling on the earth may fall in any place, on any side, and in any form. It will show the want of the existence either of a creator at all or at least of a wise and knowing Creator. The thing which has compelled the Mutakallimun of the Asharites to adopt this opinion is a denial of the action of those natural forces which God has put in all things, as He has endowed them with life, power and so forth. They avoided the opinion that there was any other creator but God, and God forbid that there be any other, for he is the only creator of the causes and they are made effective by His command only. We will talk of this in detail when discoursing on Fate and Predestination. They were also afraid

that by admitting the natural causes they might be accused of saying that the universe came into being by chance only. They would have known that a denial of it means a denial of a great part of the arguments, which can be advanced for a proof of the existence of God. One who denies any part of God's creation denies His work which falls very near to a denial of a part of His attributes. On the whole as their opinion is based upon hasty conclusions, which come to the mind of a man by superficial thought and as apparently it appears that the word "intention" can be applied to one who has power to do bad or otherwise, they saw that if they did not admit that all the creation is possible, they would not be able to say that it came into existence by the action of an intending creator. So they say that all the creation is possible so that they may prove that the creator is an intelligent one. They never thought of the order which is necessary in things made, and

with that their coming from an intelligent creator. These people have also ignored the blame they will have to bear in thus denying wisdom to the creator; or maintaining that chance should be found governing creation. They know, as we have said, that it is necessary, on account of the order existent in nature, that it must have been brought into being by some knowing creator, otherwise the order found in it would be by chance. When they were compelled to deny the natural forces, they had to deny with them a large number of those forces which God has made subservient to His command for the creation and preservation of things. For God has created some things from causes which He has produced from outside, these are the heavenly bodies; there are other things which He has made by causes placed in the things themselves, that is, the soul, and other natural forces, by which he preserves those things. So how wicked is the man who destroyeth

philosophy, and "inventeth a lie about God." ⁷⁴

This is only a part of the change which has taken place in the Law, in this and other respects, which we have already mentioned, and will mention hereafter. From all this it must have become clear to you that the method which God had adopted for teaching His creatures that the universe is made and created by Him is the method of kindness and wisdom, towards all His creatures and especially towards man. It is a method which bears the same relation to our intellect, as the sun bears to our senses. The method which it has adopted towards the common people about this problem, is that of illustration from things observed. But as there was nothing which could be given as an illustration, and as the common people cannot understand a thing, an illustration of which they cannot see, God tells us that the universe was created in a

74. Quran iii, 88.

certain time out of a certain thing, which He made. He tells us His condition before the creation of the universe, "His throne was above the waters."⁷⁵ He also says, "Verily your Lord is God who created the heavens and the earth in six days,"⁷⁶ and "Then He set His mind to the creation of the heavens, and it was smoke."⁷⁷ In addition to these there are other verses of the Book, pertaining to this subject. So it is incumbent that nothing out of them should be interpreted for the common people, and nothing should be presented to them in explaining it but this illustration. For one who changes it, makes the wisdom of the Law useless. If it be said that the Law teaches about the universe that it is created, and made out of nothing and in no time, then it is a thing which even the learned cannot understand, not to speak of the common people. So we should not deviate in this matter of the Law, from the method laid down in it

75. Quran xi, 9. 76. Quran vii, 52. 77. Quran xli, 10.

for instructing the common people, and should not tell them except this regarding the creation of the universe, which is found alike in the Quran, the Bible, and other revealed books. The wonder is that the example in the Quran is quite in accordance with the creation of the things in the visible world. But the Law does not say so, which is a warning to the learned people that the creation of the universe is not like the creation of all other things. He has used the words *creation* and *flaw*, because they connote two things, - Conception of the things that can be seen, and the creation of the things which the learned prove in the invisible world. So the use of the words *creation* (Huduth) and *eternal* is an innovation in religion, and the cause of great doubt and corruption of the belief of the common people, especially of the argumentative among them. This has greatly perplexed the Mutakallimun of the Asharites, and has proved them in great doubt. For if they

explain that God intends doing things by an eternal intention – which, as we said, is an innovation – they have put it down that the universe is *created*. Then they are asked how can a created thing come from an eternal intention. They answer that the eternal intention became connected with the action at the time of the creation especially, and that is the time in which the universe was made. Then they may be asked, that if the relation of the intending Creator towards the created thing at the time of its non-existence be the same as at the time of its creation, then that created thing is by no means better than the other thing, when at the time of its making, the action which was not found in its non-existence is not connected with it. If the relation be different then there must necessarily be a created intention otherwise the created result of an action would come from an eternal action, for what is necessary of it in action, is necessary also in intention. If it be said

that when the time of its making comes it is found done; it may be asked: is it so by an eternal or a created action? If they say by an eternal action, they admit the existence of a created thing by an eternal action; and if they say by a created action, then there must be a created intention also. They may say that intention is the action itself, but this is impossible. For intention is the only cause of the action in the intender. If an intender, intending to do an act in a certain time, finds that act quite another than that which he intended, then that act would have come into being without any intender at all. At the same time, if it is thought that from a created intention there can only be a created thing, then as a rule an eternal intention should give an eternal thing, otherwise the result of a created or eternal intention would be the same, which is impossible. All these doubts are found in Islam only through the Mutakallimun, by their explaining things in Law, which

God had forbidden them to do. For in the Quran it is not said whether intention is created or eternal. So they neither adhere to the exoteric meanings of the Law, which may have given them beatitude and salvation, nor did they attain the degree of certain and exact knowledge, so that they may have had this blessing. Hence they are neither to be counted among the learned nor among the masses, who believe and have strong faith. They are the people "whose hearts are perverse"⁷⁸ and "whose hearts are diseased."⁷⁹ They say things by their tongues which are quite contrary to those which they believe in their hearts, a cause of which is their tenacity, and love of upholding their opinions at any cost. By a repetition of attitudes like these they become quite devoid of all philosophy, as we see the case of those who are completely accustomed to the Asharite school of thought, and are well pleased with it, even to

78. Quran iii, 5.

79. Quran ii, 8.

the degree of love. They are certainly veiled on account of their habit and environment.

What we have said about this question is enough for our purpose. Now we would take up the second problem.

Problem Second: Prophetic Mission:— There are two points which are to be discussed in this problem. First, the proof of the coming of the prophets; and secondly an explanation of the fact that the man claiming to be a prophet is really so and does not lie. Many people are desirous of proving the existence of the prophets by analogy – and such are the Mutakallimun. They say that it is proved that God speaks and intends, and is the master of His creatures. It is quite consistent for such a being in the visible world to send a messenger to his dependent people. Hence such a thing is also possible in the unseen world. They have thought of making this valid for proving the advent of the prophets, by absurd and

far-fetched arguments which only Brahmins should use. They say that it is possible both in the observed and unseen world. In the observed world it is quite evident, that when a man stands up before a king and says, "O ye men, I am the messenger of the king towards you" and produces credentials for his claim, it is necessary to acknowledge him to be true. They say that in the case of the prophets, the credentials are the miracles which they perform. For certain reasons this method is quite fit and satisfactory for the common people, but when investigated there appear many flaws in the principle. Our acknowledgement of a man who claims to be the messenger of a king is not true unless we know that the symbols which he has are those of the royal messenger, which can only happen, if a king tells his subjects that whenever they happen to see such and such symbols with a man, which are particularly his, they should take him as his messenger.

When this is so, one can object, from where does it appear that performance of miracles is the special sign of the prophets? This can be proved neither by law nor by reason. To prove it by religion is still more impossible; it does not admit it. Reason alone cannot affirm that they are the special symbols of prophecy, except that in many cases they were found in people who claimed to be prophets and in none other. So in this case a proof of anyone's prophecy is based upon two premises. First, the man who claims to be a prophet has performed a miracle, and secondly, everyone who performs a miracle is a prophet.

Now as to the premise that the claimant for prophecy has performed miracles we can say that it pertains to our senses after we have admitted that there are actions performed by men, which can neither be made by wondrous workmanship or by some particular forces, but are beyond our conception. The second

premise can only be true when we admit the existence of the prophets, and that the miracles are only performed by those who are the true claimants for prophetic mission. We would say that this premise is not true but for those who believe the existence of the prophets and the miracles. For instance if it has become clear to man, that the universe is created, then he certainly knows that the world exists and the Creator too. This being so, a man can object and say how can we say that one who performs the miracles is a prophet, when the prophetic mission itself remains unproved? Even after we admit the existence of miracle in the manner in which it may seem quite impossible, it is necessary that the two sides of the premise be admitted first and then the one can be applied to the other. One cannot say that the existence of the prophets can be proved by reason, because of its possibility. For the possibility to which they refer is in fact really ignorance,

and is not found in the nature of things. For instance, if we say that it is possible that it will rain or not, then the possibility is found in the nature of things, that is, it is felt that a thing may sometimes be, and at others not be, as in the case of rain. Here, reason can exactly decide the possibility of a thing by its nature. The necessary (wajib) is quite contrary to it; that is, it is a thing the existence of which is always found. In this case reason can always decide without a mistake, because its nature cannot be changed or transformed. So when one party admits the existence of a prophet, at a certain time it appears that the prophetic mission is a thing whose existence is possible and the other party says that it cannot feel it, then that possibility becomes mere ignorance in its case. Now we believe in the existence of this possibility because we have known the prophets. We say that a knowledge of the messengers from man, leads us to a belief in the existence of

messengers from God, as the existence of a messenger from Anir, leads us to the conclusion of there being a messenger from Zaid also. This requires a similarity in the natural dispositions of both men and it is here where the difficulty lies. If we suppose this possibility by itself even in the future, it will only be by the means of the known fact and not by our knowledge and reason. Now one of the premises of this possibility has come into existence. For the possibility is in our knowledge, and the fact in itself is an established one, by one of the two alternatives, that is, whether he sent a messenger or did not. So we have nothing in this case but sheer ignorance, as is the doubt whether Anir sent any messengers in the past or did not, which is quite different from our doubting, whether or not he will send any in future. So when we do not know about Zaid, for instance, whether he has or has not sent any messenger in the past, it is not correct for us to suppose

anybody to be his messenger, if he happens to have his symbols upon him. We can admit his claim only after we know that Zaid did send a messenger. So when we admit the existence of the prophetic mission, and the miracles, then how can it be correct for us to say that one who performs the miracles is a prophet. We cannot believe in this by hearing only, for this faculty is not the thing by which such things can be proved. At the same time we cannot claim this premise to be true by experience and habit, except that the miracles performed by the prophets can be seen by one who believes in their mission, and has never seen them to have been performed by anybody else, so that they may be taken as a convincing sign for distinguishing a prophet of God, from one who is not, that is a distinction between one whose claim is right, and one whose claim is wrong.

By these things it is seen that the Mutakallimun have missed the whole

purpose of the argument from miracles because they have put possibility in the place of real existence, possibility which is in reality ignorance. Then they have believed in the premise that every one who performs miracles is a prophet, which cannot be true except when the miracles prove the prophetic mission itself, and the sender of messengers. It is not by reason that we can believe in these marvelous things, which happen again and again, and are divine, as a conclusive proof of the existence of prophetic mission, except that one who can do such things is an excellent person, and that such persons cannot lie. But it can prove the prophetic mission of a person only when we admit that the mission does exist, and that such marvelous things cannot be performed by any person, however good he may be, except by one who is a prophet. The miracles cannot prove the prophetic mission of a person, because there is no connection between them and reason, except that we admit that the miracles are

one of the works of the prophets, just as curing is the work of the physicians, so that one who can cure is certainly a physician. This is one of the fallacies of the argument. Moreover, if we admit the existence of the prophetic mission, by putting the idea of possibility, which is in fact ignorance, in place of certainty, and make miracles a proof of the truth of man who claims to be a prophet it becomes necessary that they should not be used by a person, who says that they can be performed by others than prophets, as the Mutakallimun do. They think that the miracles can be performed by the magicians and saints. The condition which they attach with them is that miracles prove a man to be a prophet, when he at the same time claims to be so, for the true prophet can perform them as opposed to the false ones. This is an argument without any proof, for it can be understood either by hearing or reason. That is, it is said that one whose claims to prophecy are wrong, cannot perform miracles, but as we have al-

ready said, when they cannot be performed by a liar, then they can only be done by the good people, whom God has meant for this purpose. These people, if they speak a lie, are not good, and hence cannot perform the miracles. But this does not satisfy the people who think miracles to be possible from the magicians, for they certainly are not good men. It is here that the weakness of the argument lies. Hence some people have thought that the best thing is to believe that they cannot be performed but by the prophets and hence magic is only imagination, and not a change of essence. Among these are also men who deny all sorts of marvelous things from the saints.

It is clear to you from the life of the prophet, peace be upon him, that he never invited any man or community to believe in his prophecy, and that which he has brought with him from God, by means of the performance of any miracles, in support of his claim, such as changing one element into another. Whatever miracles

did appear from him were only performed in the natural course of things, without on his part any intention of contention or competition. The following words of the Quran will make this clear; "And they say: We will by no means believe in thee, until thou cause a spring of water to gush forth for us out of the earth, and thou have a garden of palm-trees and vines, and thou cause rivers to spring forth from the midst there-of in abundance; or thou cause the heaven to fall down in pieces upon us, as thou hast given out, or thou bring down God and the angels to vouch for thee; or thou have a house of gold, or thou ascend by a ladder to heaven; neither will we believe thy ascending thither alone, until thou cause a book to descend unto us, bearing witness of thee which we may read. Answer: My Lord be praised, Am I other than a man sent as an apostle?" ⁸⁰ Then again, "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have

80. Quran XVII, 92-95.

charged them with imposture.”⁸¹ The thing by which we invited the people to believe in him, and with which he vied with them is the Quran. For says God, “Say, verily, if men and genii were purposely assembled, that they might produce a book like this Quran, they could not produce one like unto it, although the one of them assigned the other.”⁸² Then further he says, “will they say, He hath forged the Quran? Answer, bring therefore ten chapters like unto it forged by yourself.”⁸³ This being the case the miracle of the Prophet with which he vied with the people and which he advanced as an argument for the truth of his claim to the prophetic mission, was the Quran. If it be said, that this is quite clear, but how does it appear that the Quran is a miracle, and that it proves his prophecy, while just now we have proved the weakness of the proof of prophecy by means of miracles without any exceptions in the case of any

81. Quran, XVII, 61

82. Quran XVII 90.

83. Quran XI, 16.

prophet. Besides the people have differed in taking the Quran to be a miracle at all. For in their opinion one of the conditions of a miracle is that it should be quite different from any act which may have become habitual. But the Quran is of this sort, because it is only word, though it excels all created words. So it becomes a miracle by its superiority only, that is, the impossibility for people bringing anything like it, on account of its being highly eloquent. This being the case it differs from the habitual, not in genus but in details only, and that which differs in this way is of the same genus. Some people say that it is a miracle by itself, and not by its superiority. They do not lay it down as a condition for miracles that they should be quite different from the habitual, but think that it should be such a habitual act, as men may fall short of accomplishing. We would reply that it is as the objectors say, but the thing about it is not as they have thought. That the Quran is an evidence of his prophecy, is based, we believe,

upon two principles, which are found in the Book itself. The first being that the existence of the class of men called prophets and apostles is well-known. They are the men who lay down laws for the people by divine revelation, and not by human education. Their existence can be denied only by the people who deny repeated action, as the existence of all things which we have not seen – the lives of the famous thinkers and so forth. All the philosophers, and other men are agreed, except those who pay no regard to their words, (and they are the Materialists), that there are men to whom have been revealed many commandments for the people, to perform certain good actions, by which their beatitude may be perfected; and to make them give up certain wrong beliefs and vicious actions. This is the business of divine apostles. The second principle is, that everyone who does this work, that is, lays down laws by revelation, is a prophet. This principle is also quite in accordance with human nature. For as it is

known that the business of medicine is to cure a disease, and one who can cure is a physician, so it is also known that the business of the prophets is to give law to the people by divine revelation, and one who does so is a prophet. The Book mentions the first principle in the following:—"Verily We have revealed Our will unto thee, as We have revealed it unto Noah, and the prophets who succeeded him, and We have revealed it unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob, and the tribes, and unto Jesus, and Job, and Jonas, and Aaron and Solomon; and we have given thee the Quran as We gave the Psalms unto David; some apostles have We sent, whom We have mentioned unto thee, and God spake unto Moses discoursing with him," ⁸⁴ and again: "Say, I am not alone among the apostles" ⁸⁵ The second principle is that Mohammed, peace be upon him, has done the work of a prophet, that is, has given Law to the people by divine revelation. This also can be known from the

84. Quran IV, 161, 162.

85. Quran XLVI, 8.

Quran, where God mentions it. He says, "O men, now is an evident proof come unto you from your Lord, and We have sent down unto you manifest light." ⁸⁶ By *manifest light* is meant the Quran. Again He says, "O men, now is the apostle come unto you from your Lord; believe, therefore, it will be better for you," ⁸⁷ and again, "But those among them who are well-grounded in knowledge, and faithful, who believe in that which hath been sent down unto thee, and that which hath been sent down unto the prophets before thee," ⁸⁸ and again "God is the witness of the revelation which He hath sent down unto thee; He sent it down with his special knowledge; the angels are also witness thereof; but God is a sufficient witness." ⁸⁹ If it be said, how can the first principle be known, that is, that there is a class of men who give the Law to the people by divine revelation; and so also, how to know the second principle, that is, that which the

86. Quran IV, 173.

87. Quran IV, 168.

88. Quran IV, 160.

89. Quran IV, 164.

Quran contains, about beliefs and actions, is of divine origin? We would answer that the first principle can be known by the information which these men give about the existence of things, which were not found before, but come into existence after they have informed the people about them, and in a specified time; and by their command for doing certain things, and teaching certain precepts which do not resemble the common things and actions, which can be taught by human agency. This is so because if the miracles be of the kind of laying down Laws, proving that they cannot be laid down by human education, but only through divine revelation, then it is prophecy. But the miracles which do not take the form of laws, as the dividing of the sea, etc, do not necessarily prove the prophecy of anyone. But they can only be used as supplements to the former, if they fall very near to it. But standing alone they cannot prove it, and so by themselves alone they do not lead to a cognizance of the prophets, if the other

kind of miracles, which are its conclusive proofs, be not found in them. So according to this principle must be understood the proofs of prophecy afforded by miracles, that is, the miracles of knowledge and deeds are its conclusive proofs while others only make it strong, and can be used as witnesses. So now it has become clear to you that men of this kind do exist, and how can men be sure of them, except by their repeated appearance; as is the case with physicians and other kinds of men. If it be asked : How can it be proved that the Quran is a conclusive proof that is a miracle which is the business of the prophets to perform, as curing is the business of a physician, we would say that this can be known in many ways:- First, the precepts which it contains about knowledge and deeds, cannot be acquired by learning, but only by divine revelation; secondly, by the information which it gives about hidden things; and thirdly, by its poetry, which is quite different from that which can be achieved

by imagination or repetition of verses, that is, it is known that it is of quite a different kind from the poetry of Arabic speaking people, whether the language be acquired and learned, as is the case with non-Arabs, or it be the mother-tongue, as it is with the Arabs themselves. The first reason is the most weighty one. If it be asked how can it be known that the laws which contain both knowledge and precepts about deeds are of divine origin, so much so that they deserve the name of the word of God, we would say also that this also can be known in many ways. First, a knowledge of the laws cannot be acquired except after a knowledge of God, and of human happiness and misery ; and the acts by which this happiness can be acquired , as charity and goodness and the works which divert men from happiness and produce eternal misery, such as evil and wickedness. Again the knowledge of human happiness and misery requires a knowledge of the soul and its substance, and whether it has eternal happiness or not.

If it be so, then what is the quantity of this happiness, or misery; and also what amount of good would be the cause of happiness. For the case of goodness and evil is just the same as with food, which does not give health, if taken in any quantity and at any time; but must be used in a specified quantity and at an appointed time. For this reason we find these limited in the religious laws. All this, or a greater part of it, cannot be known but by divine revelation, or at least a knowledge through it would be better. Again a perfect knowledge of God requires a knowledge of existent things. Then a law-giver must know the quantity of this knowledge which would be good to be imparted to the common people, and the method to be adopted in teaching them. All this, or at least a greater part of it, cannot be acquired by education, learning or philosophy. This can be clearly known from imparting learning, and especially the giving of laws, making regulations, and giving information

about the conditions of the Day of Judgment. When all this is found in the Quran in the most perfect form, there can be no doubt that it is a divine revelation and His word, given through the agency of His prophet. So God has said, informing the people about it, " Say, verily if man and genii were purposely assembled, that they might produce a book like this Quran, they could not produce one like it. " This idea is further strengthened, nay, comes near exact surety and certainty, when it is known that the prophet was an unlettered man, and lived among a people, uneducated, wild, and nomadic by habit, who had never tried to investigate the universe, as was the case with the Greeks, and other nations, among whom philosophy was perfected in long periods of time. To this very fact refer the words of God, "Thou couldst not read any book before this; neither couldst thou write it with thy right hand, then had gainsayers justly doubted of the divine origin thereof."⁹⁰ Hence God

90. Quran XXIX, 47.

has repeatedly told the people this quality of His prophet. "It is He who hath raised up among the illiterate Arabians an apostle from among themselves," ⁹¹ and, "Those who shall follow the Apostle the illiterate Prophet."⁹² This matter can also be known by another method - that of comparison of this Law with the others. For, if the business of the prophets be the giving of laws by divine revelation, as has been acknowledged by all who believe in the existence of the prophets, then if you look into the teachings of useful knowledge and actions leading to happiness, which are contained in the Quran, and compare them with other divine books and religious systems, you will find it excelling all the others in an unlimited degree. On the whole, if there are books worthy to be called the words of God, on account of their wondrous nature, and separation from the genius of human words and their peculiarity by what they contain in regard to knowledge and deeds, then it

91. Quran LXII, 2.

92. Quran VII, 156

is clear that the Quran is much more worthy, and many times fitter, than they are to be called the words of God. This would be still clearer to you if you could know the past books - the Old and New Testaments. But that is not possible because they have been changed to a great extent. Were we to describe the superiority of one Law over another, and the superiority of the teachings given to us about the knowledge of God, and the Day of Judgment to the laws given to the Jews and the Christians, it would require many volumes with a confession of our own shortcomings in dealing with the subject. For this very reason, the Law of ours has been called the last of the divine dispensations. The Prophet, peace be on him, has said, "Had Moses lived in my time, he could not have helped following me," and the Prophet was right, on account of the universal nature of the teachings of the Quran, and its regulations. That is it is able to satisfy the needs of all, being meant for the whole of the human race. So God has said, "say,

"O men, Verily I am the messenger of God unto you all."⁹³ The Prophet has said, "I have been sent both to the white and the black nations."

The case of religions is just the same as that of God. There are some foods which agree with all, or most of the people. Such is the case with religions also. So the dispensations before our own were meant for some particular peoples, ignoring all others, but our religion was meant for the whole of the human race. This being the case, our Prophet excels all the other Prophets, to him comes the divine revelation, which makes a man fit to be called a prophet. So the Prophet has said informing us of his superiority over other prophets, "There is no prophet to whom has not been given a sign by which all the men would have believed. I have been given divine revelation, and I hope that my followers would be in the majority on the Day of Judgment." All that we have said must have made it

93. Qnran, VII, 156.

clear to you that the proof of the prophecy of the prophet from the Quran is not of the same kind as that of turning a staff into a serpent for the proof of the prophecy of Moses, or of giving life to the dead, and curing the blind and leprous for the prophecy of Jesus. For these, although never performed by any but the prophets, and sufficient to satisfy the common people, are not by any means conclusive proofs of prophecy, when taken by themselves, - they not being acts which make a prophet.

Now as to the Quran, its case is just like curing by medicine. For instance, suppose two men were to claim to be physicians, and one were to say that he could walk on water, and the other were to assert that he could cure a disease, and so one walked on the water, and the other cured a sick man. In this case, our verification for medicine would be only for one who has cured a sick man, but in the case of the other, it would be outward satisfaction alone. The first is far better.

The only reason by which the common people can be satisfied in this respect is, that one who can walk on water, which is against the nature of men, can certainly cure a disease, which is what men can do. This also is one of the reasons of the connection between miracle, which is not one of the conditions of prophecy, and the sign which makes a man deserve the name of a prophet: divine revelation. Of this quality is also the fact, that there comes nothing to the mind of such a man except that which God has ordained for this unique work, and specialised him for it, among all his fellow-men. So it is not inconsistent if he were to claim that God distinguished him with his revelations.

On the whole, when once it is laid down that the prophets do exist, and that the miracles cannot be performed except by them, they can become a prophecy, that is the miracles which are not in any way fit to be received as a proof for it. This is the method to be adopted with regard to the common people. For the doubts and

objections which we have described about unnatural miracles are not perceived by the masses. But if you look intently you will find that the Law depends upon suitable and natural miracles, and not upon unnatural ones. What we have said about this problem is enough for our purpose and for the sake of truth.

Problem Third : Of Fate and Predestination. This is one of the most intricate problems of religion. For if you look into the traditional arguments about this problem you will find them contradictory; such also being the case with arguments of reason. The contradiction in the arguments of the first kind is found in the Quran and the Traditions. There are many verses of the Quran, which by their universal nature, teach that all the things are predestined. and that man is compelled to do his acts; then there are verses which say that man is free in his acts and not compelled in performing them. The following verses tell us that all the things are by compulsion, and are predestined, "Every-

thing have We created bound by a fixed degree;" ⁹⁴ again, "With Him everything is regulated according to a determined measure." ⁹⁵ Further, He says, "No accident happeneth in the earth, nor in your persons, but the same was entered in the Book verily it is easy with God."⁹⁶ There may be quoted many other verses on this subject. Now, as to the verses which say that man can acquire deeds by free will, and that things are only possible and not necessary, the following may be quoted: "Or He destroyeth them (by ship-wreck), because of that which their crew have merited; though He pardoneth many things"⁹⁷ And again, "Whatever misfortune befalleth you is sent you by God, for that which your hands have deserved."⁹⁸ Further, He says, "But they who commit evil, equal thereunto."⁹⁹ Again, He says, "It shall have the good which it gaineth, and it shall have the evil which it gaineth."¹⁰⁰ and,

94. Quran LIVI 49.

96. Quran LVII, 22.

98. Quran XLII, 32.

100. Quran II, 278.

95. Quran XIII, 9.

97. Quran XLII, 32.

99. Quran X, 28.

"And as to Thamud, We directed them, but they loved blindness better than the true directions. " ¹⁰¹ Sometimes contradiction appears even in a single verse of the Quran. For instance, He says, " After a misfortune hath befallen you (you had already attained two equal advantages), do you say, whence cometh this ? Answer, This is from yourselves. " ¹⁰² In the next verse, He says, " And what happeneth unto you, on the day whereon the two armies met, was certainly by permission of the Lord. " ¹⁰³ Of this kind also is the verse, " Whatever good befalleth thee, O man, it is from God; and whatever evil befalleth thee, it is from thyself; " ¹⁰⁴ while the preceeding verse says, " All is from God. " ¹⁰⁵

Such is also the case with the Traditions. The Prophet says, "Every child is born in the true religion; his parents afterwards turn him into a Jew or a Christian." On another occasion he said, " The follow-

¹⁰¹. Quran XLI, 16.

¹⁰². Quran III, 159.

¹⁰⁴ Quran IV. 81.

¹⁰³. Quran III, 160.

¹⁰⁵. Quran IV. 80.

ing people have been created for hell, and do the deeds of those who are fit for it. These have been created for heaven, and do deeds fit for it." The first Tradition says that the cause of disbelief is one's own environments; while faith and belief are natural to man. The other Tradition says that wickedness and disbelief are created by God, and man is compelled to follow them.

This condition of things has led Muslims to be divided into two groups. The one believed that man's wickedness or virtue is his own acquirement, and that according to these he will be either punished or rewarded. These are the Mutazilités. The belief of the other party is quite opposed to this. They say that man is compelled to do his deeds. They are the Jabarites. The Asharites have tried to adopt a mean between these two extreme views. They say that man can do action, but the deeds done, and the power of doing it, are both created by God. But this is quite meaningless. For if the deed and

the power of doing it be both created by God, then man is necessarily compelled to do the act. This is one of the reasons of the difference of opinion about this problem.

As we have said there is another cause of difference of opinion about this problem, than the traditional one. This consists of the contradictory arguments advanced. For if we say that man is the creator of his own deeds, it would be necessary to admit that there are things which are not done according to the will of God, or His authority. So there would be another creator besides God, while the Muslims are agreed that there is no creator but He. If, on the other hand, we were to suppose that man cannot act freely, we admit that he is compelled to do certain acts, for there is no mean between compulsion and freedom. Again, if man is compelled to do certain deeds, then on him has been imposed a task which he cannot bear; and when he is made to bear a burden, there is no difference between his work and the work of inorganic matter. For inorganic matter has

no power, neither has the man the power for that which he cannot bear. Hence all people have made capability one of the conditions for the imposition of a task, such as wisdom we find Abul Maali, saying in his *Nizamiyyah*, that man is free in his own deeds and has the capability of doing them. He has established it upon the impossibility of imposing a task which one cannot bear, in order to avoid the principle formerly disproved by the Mutazlites, on account of its being unfit by reason. The succeeding Asharites have opposed them. Moreover if man had no power in doing a deed, then it will be only by chance that he may escape from evil, and that is meaningless. Such also would be the case with acquiring goodness. In this way all those arts which lead to happiness, as agriculture etc, would become useless. So also would become useless all those arts the purpose of which is protection from, and repulsion of danger as the sciences of war, navigation, medicine etc. such a condition is quite contrary to all that is intellegible to man.

Now it may be asked that if the case is so, how is this contradiction which is to be found both in tradition and reason to be reconciled we would say, that apparently the purpose of religion in this problem is not to divide it into two separate beliefs, but to reconcile them by means of a middle course, which is the right method. It is evident that God has created in us power by which we can perform deeds which are contradictory in their nature. But as this cannot be complete except by the cause which God has furnished for us, from outside, and the removal of difficulties from them, the deeds done are only completed by the conjunction of both these things at the same time. This being so the deeds attributed to use are done by our intention, and by the fitness of the causes which are called the *Predestination* of God, which He has furnished for us from outside. They neither complete the works which we intend nor hinder them, but certainly become the cause of our intending them — one of the two things. For intention is produced in

us by our imagination, or for the verification of a thing, which in itself is not in our power, but comes into being by causes outside us. For instance, if we see a good thing, we like it, without intention, and move towards acquiring it. So also, if we happen to come to a thing which it is better to shun, we leave it without intention. Hence our intentions are bound and attached to causes lying outside ourselves. To this the following words of God, refer "Each of them hath angels, mutually succeeding each other, before him and behind him; they watch him by the command of God." ¹⁰⁶ As these outside causes take this course according to a well defined order and arrangement, and never go astray from the path which their Creator hath appointed for them, and our own intentions can neither be compelled, nor ever found, on the whole, but by *their* fitness, so it is necessary that actions too should also be within well-defined limits, that is, they be found in a

106. Quran XIII, 12.

given period of time and in a given quantity. This is necessary because our deeds are only the effects of causes, lying outside us; and all the effects which result from limited and prearranged causes, are themselves limited, and are found in a given quantity only. This relation does not exist only between our actions and outside causes, but also between them and the causes which God has created in our body, and the well-defined order existing between the inner and outer causes. This is what is meant by Fate and predestination, which is found mentioned in the Quran and is incumbent upon man. This is also the "Preserved Tablet."¹⁰⁷ God's knowledge of these causes, and that which pertains to them, is the cause of their existence. So no one can have a full knowledge of these things except God, and hence He is the only Knower of secrets, which is quite true; as God has said, "Say, None either in heaven or earth, knoweth that which is hidden besides

107. Quran LXXXV, 22.

God " 108 A knowledge of causes is a knowledge of secret things, because the secret is a knowledge of the existence of a thing, before it comes into being, And as the arrangement and order of causes bring a thing into existence or not at a certain time, there must be a knowledge of the existence or non - existence of a thing at a certain time. A knowledge of the causes as a whole, is the knowledge of what things would be found or not found at a certain moment of time. Praised be He, Who has a complete knowledge of creation and all of its causes. This is what is meant by the " keys of the secret," in the following words of God, " with Him are the keys of secret things; none knoweth them besides Himself. " 109

All that we have said being true, it must have become evident how we can acquire our deeds, and how far they are governed by predestination and fate. This very reconciliation is the real purpose of religion by those verses and Traditions

108. Quran YXVII, 67.

109. Quran VI, 59.

which are apparently contradictory. When their universal nature be limited in this manner, those contradictions should vanish by themselves, and all the doubts which were raised before, about the contradictory nature of reason, would disappear. The existent things from our volition are completed by two things our intention and the other causes. But when the deeds are referred to only by one of these agencies, doubts would rise. It may be said is a good answer, and here reason is in perfect agreement with religion, but it is based upon the principles that these are agreed that there are creative causes bringing into existence other things; while the Muslims are agreed that there is no Creator but God. We would say that whatever they have agreed upon is quite right, but the objection can be answered in two ways. One of them is that this objection itself can be understood in two ways; one of them being that there is no Creator but God, and all those causes which He has created, cannot

be called creators, except speaking figuratively. Their existence also depends upon Him. He alone has made them to be causes, nay, He only preserves their existence as creative agents, and protects their effects after their actions. He again, produces their essences at the moment when causes come together. He alone preserves them as a whole. Had there been no divine protection they could not have existed for the least moment of time. Abu Hamid (Al-Ghazzali) has said that a man who makes any of the causes to be co-existent with God is like a man who makes the pen share the work of a scribe in writing; that is, he says that the pen is a scribe and the man is a scribe too. He means that *writing* is a word which may be applied to both, but in reality they have no resemblance in anything but word, for otherwise there is no difference between them. Such is also the case with the word *Creator*, when applied to God and the Causes. We say that in this illustration there are doubts. It should have been

clearly shown, whether the scribe was the Creator of the essence (*Jawhar*) of pen, a preserver of it, as long as it remains a pen, and again a preserver of the writing after it is written, a Creator of it after it has come in touch with the pen, as we have just explained that God is the Creator of the essences (*Jawahir*) of everything which come into contact with its causes, which are so called only by the usage. This is the reason why there is no creator but God - a reason which agrees with our feelings, reason and religion. Our feelings and reason see that there are things which produce others. The order found in the universe is of two kinds: that which God has put in the nature and disposition of things; and that which surround the universe from outside. This is quite clear in the movement of the heavenly bodies. For it is evident that the sun and the moon, the day and night, and all other stars are obedient to us; and it is on this arrangement and order which God has put in their movements that our existence and that of

all other things depends. So even if we imagine the least possible confusion in them, with them in any other position, size and rapidity of movement which God has made for them, all the existent things upon the earth would be destroyed. This is so because of the nature in which God has made them and the nature of the things which are effected by them. This is very clear in the effects of the sun and the moon upon things of this world; such also being the case with the rains, winds, seas and other tangible things. But the greater effect is produced upon plants, and upon a greater number, or all, on the animals. Moreover, it is apparent that had there not been those faculties which God has put in our bodies, as regulating them that could not exist even for a single moment after birth. But we say, had there not been the faculties found in all the bodies of the animals, and plants and those found in the world by the movement of the heavenly bodies, then they would not have existed at all, not even for a

twinkling of the eye. So praised be the "Sagacious, the Knowing." ¹¹⁰ God has called our attention to this fact in His book, "And He hath subjected the night and the day to your service; and the sun and the moon and the stars, which are compelled to serve by His Command; " ¹¹¹ again, "Say, what think ye, if God should cover you with perpetual night, until the day of Resurrection;" ¹¹² and again, "Of His mercy, He hath made you night and the day, that ye may rest in the one, and may seek to obtain provision for yourselves of His abundance, by your industry; in the other;" ¹¹³ and, "And He obligeth whatever is in heaven or on earth to serve you." ¹¹⁴ Further He says, "He likewise compelleth the sun and the moon, which diligently perform their courses, to serve you; and hath subjected the day and night to your service." ¹¹⁵ There may be

¹¹⁰. Quran LXVII, 14.

¹¹¹. Quran LXVII, 14.

¹¹³. Quran XXVIII, 71.

¹¹⁵. Quran XLV, 12.

¹¹², Quran XVI, 12,

¹¹⁴. Quran XVIII, 73.

¹¹⁶. Quran XIV, 37

quoted many other verses on the subject. Had there been any wisdom in their existence by which God has favoured us, and there would not have been those blessings for which we are to be grateful to Him.

The second answer to the objection is, that we say that the things produced out of it are of two kinds : essences and substances; and movements, hardness, coldness and all other accidents. The essences and substances are not created by any but God. Their causes effect the accidents of those essences, and not the essences themselves. For instance, man and woman are only the agents, while God is the real creator of the child, and the life in it. Such is also the case with agriculture. The earth is prepared and made ready for it, and the seed scattered in it. But it is God who produces the ear of the corn. So there is no creator but God, while created things are but essences, To this refer the words of God. " O men, a parable is propounded unto you, therefore, hearken unto it. Verily the idols which ye invoke, besides God,

can never create a single fly, although they may all assemble for the purpose; and if the fly snatch anything from them they cannot turn the same from it. Weak is the petitioner and the petitioned." ¹¹⁷ This is where the unbeliever wanted to mislead Abraham, when he said, "I give life and kill." ¹¹⁸ When Abraham saw that he could understand it, he at once turned to the conclusive argument and said, "Verily, God bringeth the sun from the east; do thou bring it from the west."

On the whole, if the matter about the creator and the doer be understood on this wise, there would be no contradiction, either in Tradition or in reason. So we say that the word Creator does not apply to the created things by any near or far-fetched metaphor, for the meaning of the creator is the inventor of the essences. So God has said, "God created you, and that which ye know."¹¹⁸ It should be known

¹¹⁷. Quran, XXII, 72.

¹¹⁸. "Hast thou not considered him who disputed with Abraham concerning his Lord, because God had given him

that one who denies the effect of the causes on the results of them, also denies philosophy and all the sciences. For science is the knowledge of the things by their causes, and philosophy is the knowledge of hidden causes. To deny the causes altogether is a thing which is unintelligible to human reason. It is to deny the Creator, not seen by us. For the unseen in this matter must always be understood by a reference to the seen.

So those men can have no knowledge of God, when they admit that for every action there is an actor. It being so, the agreement of the Muslims on the fact that there is no Creator but God cannot be perfect, if we understand by it the denial of the existence of an agent in the visible world. For from the existence of the

the Kingdom? When Abraham said, My Lord is He who giveth life and killeth: he answered, I give life and kill. Abraham said, verily God bringeth the sun from the east do thou bring it from the west; whereupon the infidel was confounded; for God directeth not the ungodly people.' Quran, II; 260

agent in it, we have brought an argument for the Creator in the invisible world. But when we have once admitted the existence of the Creator in the invisible world, it becomes clear that there is no Creative agent except one by His command and will. It is also evident that we can perform our own deeds, and that one who takes up only one side of the question is wrong, as is the case with the Mutazilites and the Jabarites. Those who adopt the middle Course, like the Asharites, for discovering the truth, cannot find it. For they make no difference for a man between the trembling and the movement of his hand by intention. There is no meaning in their admitting that both the movements are not by ourselves. Because if they are not by ourselves we have no power to check them, so we are compelled to do them. Hence there is no difference between trembling of hand and voluntary movement, which they would call acquired. So there is no difference between them, except in their names, which never effect

the things themselves. This is all clear by itself.

Fourth Problem:—Divine Justice and Injustice. The Asharites have expressed a very peculiar opinion, both with regard to reason and religion; about this problem They have explained it in a way in which religion has not, but have adopted quite an opposite method. They say that in this problem the case of the invisible world is quite opposed to the visible. They think that God is just or unjust within the limits of religious actions. so when a man's action is just with regard to religion. he also is just; and whatever religion calls it to be unjust; He is unjust. They say that whatever has not been imposed as a divinely ordained duty upon men, does not come within the four walls of religion. He is neither just or unjust, but all His actions about such things are just. They have laid down that there is nothing in itself which may be called just or unjust. But to say that there is nothing which may in

itself be called good or bad is simply intolerable. Justice is known as good, and injustice as bad. So according to them, polytheism is in itself neither injustice nor evil, but with regard to religion, and had religion ordained it, it would have been just and true. Such also would have been the case with any kind of sin. But all this is quite contrary to our traditions and reason. As to tradition God has described himself as just, and denied injustice to himself. He says "God hath borne witness that there is no God but He ; and the angels and those who are endowed with wisdom profess the same, who executeth righteousness; and "Thy God is not unjust towards His servants; " and again, "Verily God will not deal unjustly with men in any respect; but men deal unjustly with their own souls " It may be asked, What is your opinion about misleading the people, whether it is just or unjust, for God has mentioned in many a verse of the Quran, "That He leads as well as misleads the people !" He says, "God causeth to err whom He

pleaseth, and directeth whom He pleaseth;" and, "If we had pleased, we had certainly given every soul its direction." We would say that these verses cannot be taken exoterically, for there are many verses which apparently contradict them—the verses in which God denies injustice to himself. For instance, He says, "He liketh not ingratitude (*Kufr*) in His servant." So it is clear that as He does not like ingratitude even from them, He certainly cannot cause them to err. As to the statement of the Asharites that God sometimes does things which He does not like, and orders others which He does not want, God forbid us from holding such a view about him, for it is pure infidelity. that God has not misled the people and has not caused them to err will be clear to you from the following verses: "Wherefore be thou orthodox and set thy face towards true religion, the

Quran, III, 16

Quran, X, 45

Quran, XXXII, 11

Quran, XLI, 46

Quran, XIV, 4

Quran, XXXIX, 9

institution of God, to which He hath created man kindly disposed;" and, "when thy Lord drew forth their posterity from the lions of the sons of Adam." A Tradition of the Prophet says, "Every child is born according to the divine constitution."

These being contradictions in this problem we should try to reconcile them so that they may agree with reason. The verse, "Verily God will cause to err whom He pleaseth, and will direct whom He pleaseth," refers to the prearranged divine will, with which all things have been endowed. They have been created erring, that is, prepared to go astray by their very nature, and led to it by inner and outer causes. The meaning of the verse, "If we had pleased, we have given unto every soul its direction," is that He thought of not creating people ready to err, by their nature, or by the outer causes or by both, He could have done so. But as the dispositions of men are different.

the words may mislead the one and direct the other. For these are the verses which speak of misleading the people. For instance, "He will thereby mislead many, and will direct many thereby: but He will not mislead any thereby except the transgressors"; and, "We have appointed the vision which we showed thee, and also the tree cursed in the Quran, and the verses about the number of angels of hell. "Thus doth God cause to err whom He pleaseth and He directeth whom He pleaseth." It means that for evil natures, these verses are misleading, as for the sick bodies even good drugs are injurious. But some one

Moreover, God will not be ashamed to propound in a parable of a great, or even a more despicable thing: for they who believe will know it to be true from their Lord; but the unbelievers will say, what meaneth by this parable? He will thereby mislead etc. Quran, II, 24)

Quran, XVII; 62. By the *vision* may be meant the Prophet's night journey to heaven or the vision which he saw at Hudaibiyah, seeing himself entering Mecca or his vision about the Omayyeds.

Quran, LXXIV, 34

may object and ask, what was the need of creating a class of men already prepared to err, for this is the worst kind of injustice? We would say that divine wisdom designated it so. The injustice would have consisted in its being otherwise. For the nature and constitution of men, in His very creation, are such that they require some men, though very few, to be wicked and evil by their nature. Such is also the case with the outer causes, made for directing the people to the right path, which requires that some men must be bad. If many had been good then the divine law would not have been fulfilled, because either there had not been created things in which there is little evil and much good, for the good would have disappeared on account of that little evil; or there had been created things with much good and little evil. Now it is well known that the existence of many good ones with a few evil ones, is better than the non-existence of much good for the sake of little evil. This very evil was the thing which remain-

ed hidden to the angels when God informed them that He was going to create upon the earth, a vicegerent, that is, a man. "When God said to the angels, I am going to place a substitute on earth, they said, wilt thou place there one who will do evil therein, and shed blood? but we celebrate thy praise, and sanctify Thee. God answered, Verily I know that which ye know not." He means that the thing which is hidden from them, is that when there is found both good and evil in a thing, and good overpowers the evil, reason requires the creation of the one for the destruction of the other. So from all these it is clear how misleading can be attributed to Him, in-spite of His justice, and injustice disproved. The causes of misleading are created, because from them appear the causes of direction to good. For some people have not been given causes of direction to good in which there is found nothing which may lead to erring. Such is the condition of the angels. So also the

causes of good have those evil, though in their nature much evil be not found; this applies to man. It may be asked : What is the use of these contradictory verses, thus compelling the people to take refuge in interpretations, which you have absolutely forbidden? We would say that to explain this problem to the common people, they have been compelled to adopt this method. For they should know that God is just, and that He is the Creator of all good and evil, instead of believing, as many nations have done, that there are two Gods, the creator of good, and the creator of evil. So now they know that He is the Creator of both. As misleading is evil, and as there is no Creator but He, it was necessary that it should be attributed to Him, like the creation of evil. But this should be done without qualifying it, that is, that He created good for its own sake, and evil for the sake of good—on account of their connection with one another. In this way His creation of evil

would be quite just. To illustrate: fire has been made because of its necessity for the existence of things, and without it they could not have existed at all. It also destroys things by its very nature. But if you think of the destruction and evil which it causes, and compare it to the advantages which we derive out of it, you will find that its existence is better than non-existence, that is,—good. Now the verse of the Quran “No account shall be demanded of him for what He shall do; but an account shall be demanded of them,” means that He does nothing because it is incumbent upon him for it is degrading to him, to need doing a thing. If it be so, God needs that thing for His own existence, because of necessity or to be more perfect in His Being—and God is free from such imperfections. Man is just because he gains something good by being so, which he cannot gain otherwise. God is just, not that He may become more perfect by His justice, but because His perfection requires him to be just. When we understand it in this way it would

be evident, that He is not just in the same way as man is just. But it is not right to say that He is not just at all, and that all His actions are neither just nor unjust, as the Mutakallimuns have thought. For it cannot be understood by human intellect, and is at the same time falsifying religion. These people knew the meaning but were misled. For if we say that He is not at all just, we falsify the principle that there are things which are just and good in themselves and others which are evil and unjust. Again, if we suppose that He is just in the same way as man is, it becomes necessary to admit there is some defect in him. For one who is just, his existence is for the sake of things for which he is just, and so he is dependent upon another.

It should now be known that it is not necessary for all the people to be told this interpretation in its entirety. Only those should be told it who have some doubts about this problem. For not every one among the common people is confronted

by these contradictions in the universal verses, and Tradition. Such people must believe in the exoteric meanings of them. There is another reason for these verses. The common people cannot differentiate between possible and impossible, while to God is not ascribed power over the impossible. If they be told what is impossible (*Mustahil*) and they think that God has power over it, and then told that God has no power, they begin to think that there is some defect in God, because He cannot do a certain thing and hence He is weak. As the existence of things free from evil was possible according to the masses, God has said, "If we had pleased, we had certainly given every soul its direction; but the word which hath proceeded from Me must necessarily be fulfilled, when I said, Verily I will fill the hell with genii and men, altogether."¹³¹ This verse means one thing to the common people, and the other to the learned. The former take it to mean that it is not

¹³¹ Quran, XXX, 14.

incumbent upon him that He should create a class of men to whom evil may be attached. But it really means: Had we thought we could create men with whom evil could not be attached, but would have been good in all and all, and hence every one had been given his guidance. This much is enough for this problem. Now we would deal with the fifth question.

Problem fifth : Of the Conditions of the Day of Judgment :—The Day of Judgment is a thing in which all the religions are agreed, and all the learned men have proved it by arguments. The religions differ about the conditions of its existence; nay, in reality they do not differ about its condition, but about the visible things by which they should explain to the common people the conditions of the unseen. There are some religions which have made it only spiritual, that is, meant only for the souls; while others have thought it to be both physical and spiritual. The reconciliation in this matter depends upon the testimony of divine revelation, and the necessary arguments of all

the learned men, that is, that for a man there are two blessings: of the present world, and of the world to come, which is itself established upon principles, admitted by all to be true. One of them is that when it is clear that all the existent things have not been created in vain, but for some particular work assigned to them, which is the sum total of their life, then man is far fitter to be placed under this category. God himself has warned us of the existence of this purpose in all the created things. He says in the Quran, "We have created the heavens and the earth, and whatever is between them, in vain. This is the opinion of the unbelievers."¹³² Again, He says, describing and praising the learned men, who have understood, the real and inner purpose of this existence, "Who remember God standing, and sitting, and lying on their sides; and meditate on the creation of heaven and earth, saying, O Lord, thou hast not created this in vain; far be it from thee therefore, deliver us from the torment of

¹³² Quran, XXXVIII; 26.

hell fire."¹³³ The ultimate purpose in the creation of man is still more evident in him, than in other things. God has informed us of it in many a verses of the Quran. He says, "Did ye think that we had created you in sport; and that ye should not be brought again before us,"¹³⁴ and, "Doth man think, that he shall be left at full liberty, without control"?¹³⁵ and further on He says, "I have not created genii and men for any other end, but that they should serve me."¹³⁶ that is the genius out of all creation which could know him. Again, He says, informing us of the importance of knowing God, "What reason have I that I should not worship him who hath created me ? for unto him shall ye return."¹³⁷ Now it being clear that man has been created for a certain work, it is evident that the work should be of a particular kind. For we see that everything has been created for a certain work, which is found in it, and in none other; that

133 Quran. III, 188

136 Quran, LI;56

134 Quran, XXIII: 117

137 Quran, XXXVI; 21

135 Quran, LXXV, 36

is, it is specialised in it. This being so, it is necessary that the real purpose of man's creation be those deeds which are found in him, and in no other animal. These deeds pertain to his rational powers. As there are two portions of the rational powers, - practical and theoretical - it is evident that the first kind of thing is demanded of him. That is, that his faculties of knowledge and science should be found in their perfection. The deed by which soul acquires perfection in those two faculties are goodness and virtue, and those that retard it are evil and wicked. And as these actions are most of them fixed by divine revelation, religions appeared to fix them. With that there also appears a knowledge of those qualities, exhorting the people towards them. They ordered men to act upon goodness, and shew evil. They taught them the quantity of the deeds which will be good for all the people, both in practice and in knowledge taken together. They also taught them the theoretical knowledge of things, which all the people should

know, such as the knowledge of God, angels, of higher creation, and of goodness. In this way they also taught them the quantity of the acts which would be necessary to make the souls excel in virtue. This is especially the case with our religion, Islam, for when compared with other religions, it is found that it is absolutely *the* best religion. Hence it was the last of divine dispensations.

Now divine revelation has informed us in all the religions that the soul will live, and all the argument of the learned people have established the same. The souls are freed from physical desires after death. If they be pure, their purity is doubled by this freedom from desires. If they be evil this separation increases their depravity, for they are troubled by the evil which they have already earned, and their regret increases about the opportunities which they lost before their separation from the body, for this purification is not possible without it. It is to this that following verse refers:- A soul would say, "Alas, for that

have been negligent in my duties towards God: Verily I have been one of the scorers".¹³⁸ All the religions agree about this condition of man, and call it his last goodness or misery. This being so, there could not be found in the visible world anything which may be given as an illustration, so there is a difference in its description in the revelations given to different prophets. We mean to say, that there is a difference in illustrating the condition of the good and bad soul on that occasion. There are some which have not given any illustrations of that happiness or misery which the good and bad souls will have there. They have only said that the conditions there would be only spiritual, and pleasures angelic. Others have given instances from the visible world; that is, they have given instances from the visible world; that is, they have given the examples of the pleasures here for the pleasures of the next world, after deducting the trouble borne in acquiring them, and in the same way, they have illustrated the misery there,

by the example of misery here, after deducting the pleasure which we derive from it. Either the people of these religions received from God revelations which those did not receive who made the next world purely spiritual, or they saw, that illustrations from things visible are best understood by the common people and that they are best led so or checked from an action through them. So they said that God will put back the good souls in their respective bodies, and the best possible ease - in paradise. The bad souls will also return to their bodies, where they will be in the worst possible misery, which they call hell-fire.

This is true of our religion, Islam, in illustrating the conditions of the next world. There are many verses of the Quran which contain arguments as to the possibilities of the conditions of that world, which can be understood and verified by all. For our reason cannot apprehend these things more than the possibility of knowing which is common

to all, and which is of the kind of analogy of the existence of the like from the being of the like, that is of its coming into being. It is an analogy of the coming into being of the small from the existence of the big and the great. For instance, God says, "And He propoundeth unto us a comparison and forgetteth His Creation."¹³⁹ In these verses the argument used is the analogy of the return of the beginning, when both are equal. In the following verse the argument of those is refuted who differentiate between the real and *return* of the same thing. He says, "He giveth you fire out of a green tree¹⁴⁰". The doubt is that the birth was from heat and moisture, while the return will be from cold and dryness. So this doubt is met by the fact that God can create the contrary from the contrary, as He can create the like from the like. The analogy is drawn from the existence of the little from the great. For example, God says, "Is not He who has created the Heavens and the earth able to

¹³⁹ Quran, XXXVI, 78

¹⁴⁰ Quran, XXXVI; 80.

create new creatures like unto them? yea, certainly; for He is the wise Creator".¹⁴¹ These verses have two arguments for proving the resurrection and at the same time refuting the arguments of those denying it. Were we to quote the verses which give this proof our discourse would be lengthened. But all of them are of the kind we have mentioned.

So, as we have already said, all the religions are agreed that there is a blessing or misery for the human soul after death, but differ in illustrating the conditions of that moment and in explaining it to the common people. It seems that the illustration in our religion is the most perfect of all for the understanding of the people, and at the same time most inciting of them all to gain for their souls the advantages of that day. And it is the many with whom lies the primary purpose of religion. The spiritual illustration would be least inciting to the common people for desiring the things of hereafter. So they would have

¹⁴¹ Quran, XXXXVI; 81.

little liking for it, while they would fear the physical illustration. So it seems that the physical illustration would be most exciting to them, than the spiritual, while the latter would appeal only to the controversialists among the scholastic theologians, who are always very few in number. Hence we find that the Muslims have been divided into three parties about the meaning of the conditions of the Day of Judgment. One party says that that existence would be just like our present one, as regards pleasures and enjoyments, that is, they think that both are of the same genius, but differ in perpetuity and termination: the one is for ever and the others come to an end. The other party thinks that the two existences are different. But this is again subdivided into two parties. The one thinks that that existence with our present faculties is spiritual, but has been described as physical. For this there are many religious arguments which it would be useless to repeat here. The other party says that that existence is physical only; but they at the same time

believe, that the body will be different from our present body. This is only transient, that will be eternal. For this also there are religious arguments. It seems that even Abdullah B. Abbas held this view. For it is related of him that he said, "There is nought in this world of the hereafter, but names." It seems that this view is better suited to the learned men because its possibility is based upon principles, in which there is no disagreement according to all men : the one being that the soul is immortal, and the second is that the return of the souls into other bodies does not look so impossible as the return of the bodies themselves. It is so because the material of the bodies here is found following and passing from one body to another, i. e; one and the same matter is found in many people and in many different times. The example of bodies cannot be found, for their matter is the same. For instance a man dies and his body becomes dissolved into earth. The earth ultimately becomes dissolved into vegetable, which is eaten by quite a

different man from whom another man comes into being. If we suppose them to be different bodies, then our aforesaid view cannot be true.

The truth about this question is that man should follow that which he himself has thought out but anyhow it should not be the view which may deny the fundamental principle altogether. For this would be denying its existence. Such a belief leads to infidelity, on account of a distinct knowledge of this condition being given to man, both by religion and by human reason, which is all based upon the eternal nature of the soul. If it be said whether there is any argument or information in the Law about this eternal nature of the soul, we would say that it is found in the Quran itself God says, "God taketh unto himself the souls of men at the time of their death; and those which die not He also taketh in their sleep."¹⁴² In this verse sleep and death have been placed upon the same level, on account of the change in its instru-

¹⁴² Quran, XXXIX: 43

ment, and in sleep on account of a change in itself. For had it not been so it would not have come to its former condition after awakening. By this means we know that this cession does not effect its essence, but was only attached to it on account of change in its instrument. So it does not follow that with a cessation of the work of the instrument, the soul also ceases to exist. Death is only a cessation of work, so it is clear that its condition should be like that of sleep. As someone has said that if an old man were to get the eyes of the young, he would begin to see like him.

This is all that we thought of in an exposition of the beliefs of our religion, Islam. What remains for us is to look into things of religion in which interpretation is allowed and not allowed. And if allowed, then who are the people to take advantage of it ? With this thing we would finish our discourse.

The things found in the Law can be divided into five kinds. But in the first place, there are only two kinds of things : indivi-

sible and the divisible. The second one is divided into four kinds. The first kind which is mentioned in the Quran, is quite clear in its meanings. The second is that in which the thing mentioned is not the thing meant but is only an example of it. This is again divided into four kinds. First, the meanings which it mentions are only illustrations such that they can only be known by the far-fetched and compound analogies, which cannot be understood, but after a long time and much labour. None can accept them but perfect and excellent natures; and it cannot be known that the illustration given is not the real thing; except by this far-fetched way. The second is just the opposite of the former: they can be understood easily, and it can be known that the example is just what is meant here. Thirdly, it can be easily known that it is merely an illustration, but what it is the example of is difficult to comprehend. The fourth kind is quite opposite to the former. The thing of which it is an example, is easily under-

stood, while it is difficult to know that it is an example at all. The interpretation of the first kind is wrong without doubt. The kind in which both the things are farfetched: its interpretation particularly lies with those who are well-grounded in knowledge; and an exposition of it is not fit for any but the learned. The interpretation of its opposite - that which can be understood on both the sides - is just what is wanted, and an exposition of it is necessary. The case of the third kind is like the case of the above. For in its illustration has not been mentioned because of the difficulty for the common people to understand it: it only incites the people to action. Such is the case with the tradition of the prophet; "The black stone is God's action on Earth," etc. etc. That which can be easily known that is an example, but difficult to know of which it is example, should not be interpreted but for the sake of particular persons and learned men. Those who understand that it is only an illustration, but are not

learned enough to know the thing which it illustrates, should be told either that it is allegorical and can be understood by the well-established learned men; or the illustration should be changed in a way which might be near to their understanding. This would be the best plan to dispell doubts from their minds.

The law about this should be that which has been laid down by Abu Hamid (Al Ghazzali) in his book, *Al Tafriga bainal Islam wal Zindiga*. It should be understood that one thing has five existences which he calls by the name of *essential* (Zati); sensual (Hissi); rational (Agli); imaginative (Khayali) and doubtful (Shilbhi). So at the time of doubt it should be considered which of these five kinds would better satisfy the man who has doubts. If it be that which he has called *essential* than an illustration would best satisfy their minds. In it is also included the following traditions of the Prophet, " Whatever the earlier prophets saw I have seen it from my place here,

even heaven and hell," "Between my cistern of water and the pulpit, there is a garden of paradise;" and "The earth will eat up the whole of a man except the extremity of the tail." All these, it can easily be known are but illustrations, but what is the thing which they illustrate, it is difficult to comprehend. So it is necessary in this case to give an instance to the people which they may easily understand. This kind of illustration, when used on such an occasion is allowable; but when used irrelevently it is wrong. Abu Hamid has not decided about the occasion when both the sides of the question - the illustration and the illustrated - be both far-fetched and difficult to understand. In this case there would apparently be a doubt, but a doubt without any foundation. What should be done is to prove that the doubt has no basis, but no interpretation should be made, as we have shown in many places in our present book against the Mutakallimun, Asharites and the Mutazalites.

The fourth kind of occasion is quite

opposite to the former. In this it is very difficult to understand that it is an example, but when once understood, you can easily comprehend the thing illustrated. In the interpretation of this also, there is a consideration : about those people who know that if it is an example, it illustrates such and such a thing; but they doubt whether it is an illustration at all. If they are not learned people, the best thing to do with them is not to make any interpretation, but only to prove the fallacy of the views which they hold about its being an illustration at all. It is also possible that an interpretation may make them still distant from the truth, on account of the nature of the illustration and the illustrated. For these two kinds of occasions if an interpretation is given, they give rise to strange beliefs, far from the law which when disclosed are denied by the common people. Such has been the case with the Sufis, and those learned man who have followed them. When this work of interpretation was done by people who

could not distinguish between these occasions, and made no distinction between the people for whom the interpretation is to be made, there arose differences of opinion, at last forming into sects, which ended in accusing one another with unbelief. All this is pure ignorance of the purpose of the Law.

From what we have already said the amount of mischief done by interpretation must have become clear to you. We always try to acquire our purpose by knowing what should be interpreted, and what not, and when interpreted, how it should be done; and whether all the difficult portions of the Law and Traditions are to be explained or not. These are all included in the four kinds which have already been enumerated.

The purpose of our writing this book is now completed. We took it up because we thought that it was the most important of all purposes - connected with God and the Law.

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IN

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CONTENTS

Preface.

Introduction.

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