

Foundations of Muslim's Shuracracy

(Part V)



V. On Harmonizing the Athenian Democracy with the Societal Islamic Paradigm (SIP) !!!!!!!

V.1 Preliminary Methodological considerations;

The central question we address in these essays, is whether *Democracy* as exemplified by the practice of *Athenians* in the 5th and fourth centuries BC, is compatible or is at odds with *Islamic Shuracracy*?

It is worth recalling at the outset, that we are dealing here with two *irreducible antinomic religious systems expressing themselves in two antagonistic societal settings, with well defined quasi-exclusive paradigms;*

- a) *the Local Pagan Societal Paradigm of Classical Athens (LPSPCA)* and
- b) *the Universal Monotheistic Societal Islamic Paradigm (UMSIP),*

It goes without saying, based on historical precedents, that *fickle harmonization*, in the sense of amalgamating part of the *Islamic political concepts* with some of their *Greek's counterparts*, should be rejected beforehand as infertile, since similar simulacra have been tried before at the *religious/philosophical* levels by the *Neo-Platonist school*, to no avail, *save in generating agnostic chimerical sects with multicoloured creeds and beliefs ad infinitum!*

It is worth recalling also that, a large number of the *syncretising philosophers* and *mystics* who have endeavoured to harmonize *antagonistic religious principles, concepts* and *philosophical systems*, or *mystical theosophies*¹, flourished by the beginning of the Christian era onwards.

The most outstanding figures of this era are no doubt;

¹ *Theosophy, literally "god-wisdom" (Greek: θεοσοφία theosophia), The term comes from the Alexandrian philosophers, called lovers of truth, Philaletheians, from phil "loving," and aletheia "truth." The name Theosophy dates from the third century of our era, and began with Ammonius Saccas and his disciples, who started the Eclectic Theosophical system.*



- a) The Hellenized Jewish philosopher; **Philo of Alexandria**² (gr. Φίλων ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεὺς) (20 BC - 50 AD), notorious for his **use of allegory to fuse and harmonize Greek Stoic³ philosophy with Jewish exegesis.**

And although, as expected, his approach didn't appeal to his Hellenistic philosophizing contemporaries, who shunned mixing antagonizing concepts and paradigms⁴, it did find favor however with **Saint Paul**, a **Hellenized Jew himself** bound on **harmonizing Christianity with Stoic Philosophy.**

Philo's platonic concept of the "**Logos**"⁵ as "**God's Verb**", rational to the supreme degree, and representing the sum of the powers and the divine energies, and the "**ideas**"⁶ of all things and his interpretation of the "**Divine Logos**"; as the "**Verb**" or "**God's Speech**", which is a sort of a **second God!**; "**Image of God**", **created by God Himself** was echoed literally by **John** the compiler of the **fourth Gospel** in his introductory verses, far beyond the intellectual grasps of any hypothetical disciple of **Jesus Christ** (John; 1; 1-3):

1- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 The same was in the beginning with God.

3 All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made

And while on one hand, some of the early **Pauline Christians** saw in **Philo** a cryptic **Pauline Christian!**, **the Ebionites**⁷, on the other hand, the true followers of

² known also as **Philo Judaeus**, **Yedidia**, and **Philo the Jew**,

³ The Stoics revered Socrates for his rational self-control and the simplicity of his material life. The school was founded by **Zeno** of Cyprus (c. 336-262 B.C.), who began lecturing on the Painted Porch (**Stoa Poikile**) of a temple in Athens named for the (now lost) paintings of Polygnotus which were there.

⁴ His doctrine embraces the Platonic doctrine of ideas, the Neo-Pythagorean doctrine of the type as well as some of the Stoic doctrines .

⁵ Aristotle's famous definition of man; "**man is an animal having logos**". See for more on this; "**Reply to Natalia (part 3) on this link;**

{ <http://www.alhiwar.org/en/content/view/30/2/>}

⁶ Pervasive in platonic thinking,

⁷ Ebionites (**Greek**: Ἐβιοναῖοι Ebionaioi from **Hebrew**: עֲבִיּוֹנִים, Ebyonim, "the Poor Ones") were an **early Jewish Christian** sect that lived in and around **Judea** and **Palestine** from the **1st to the 4th century**. They were more faithful to the authentic teachings of Jesus and constituted the mainstream of the Jerusalem church before being gradually marginalized by the followers of Paul of Tarsus after the conversion of Constantinus 1^{er} to Christianity. In contrast to mainstream Christianity, the **Ebionites**

the *Church of Jerusalem* headed by **Saint James**, who opposed on doctrinal ground *Saint Paul*, saw in *Philo* no more than a *Hellenist Jew gone astray* and in *Saint Paul* himself no more than an *apostate of the LAW*.

Needless to say that *Pauline Christology* is the First instance of *biblical-hellenized-cultic-mystery* harmonisation gone astray in Monotheisme.

Seen from this perspective, it will not do for *Christians*, save for the *Nazoreans* (*Ebionites*)⁸, to say that the *Old Testament* represents the only *pre-history* of Christianity, *since from this early harmonization*, **Egyptian and Greek histories**, as well as *Platonic* and **Stoic philosophies**, should just as well, if not better, be entitled to figure in *this pre-historic pantheon of Christianity*, without which its origins will be irrevocably blurred.

The second noteworthy harmoniser between *Pagan teaching* and *Judaism* was the Greek;



b) *Numenius of Apamea* (View of Apamea's ruins, Syria), an avowed *Neo-Pythagorean* and forerunner of the *Neo-Platonists*, who flourished during the latter half of the second century AD.

insisted on a universal necessity of following Jewish religious law and rites, which they interpreted in light of Jesus' expounding of the Law. They regarded Jesus as a mortal human messianic prophet but not as divine {which is the Koran's stance too}, revered his brother James as the head of the Jerusalem Church and rejected Paul of Tarsus as an "apostate of the Law". Their name suggests that they placed a special value on religious poverty. {Ebionites, From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia}. {See their modern representatives on this site for more details; <http://ebionite.com/> }

⁸ *Encyclopedia Britannica* writes: "Most of the features of Ebionite doctrine were anticipated in the teachings of the earlier Qumran sect, as revealed in the *Dead Sea Scrolls*. They believed **in one God** and taught **that Jesus was the Messiah and was the true "prophet" mentioned in Deuteronomy 18:15.** (Encyclopaedia Britannica Online). They were wrong concerning this expectation, since it applies perfectly as a glove only to the Prophet of Islam, see for details our article on this site {**An absolute dating for the Israeli Exodus out of Egypt (Part VI)**}


He is notorious for Mixing *Pythagorean's Philosophy* with *Platonism* and for calling *Plato* an "*Atticizing Moses*", meaning by this; that *Plato* was the equivalent of *Hellenic Moses*.⁹

According to *Proclus*¹⁰; *Numenius* held that there was a kind of *trinity of gods*, the members of whom he designated as;

- 1) "*father*," the supreme deity or pure intelligence,
- 2) "*maker*," the creator of the world and
- 3) "*that which is made*," i.e. *the world*.

His works were highly esteemed by the *Neoplatonists*, and *Plotinus' student Amelius*¹¹, is said to have composed nearly two books of commentaries upon them.

But the most prominent figure in *Neo-Platonism* was no doubt the Egyptian;

- c) **Plotinus**  (Greek: Πλωτῖνος) (ca. AD 205–270) of Alexandria, who elaborated a new version of *Platonism* by a new *re - interpretation* of its fundamentals in the light of *Aristotle's criticisms* and the religious context of his age.

His teaching was collected by his pupil; *Porphyrius* in the "*Enneads*"¹².

The fourth (IV) to the sixth (VI) *Enneads* were translated into *Arabic in Baghdad* towards the mid ninth century, and were falsely assigned to *Aristotle*. These tractates will be known later as; "*The Theology of Aristotle!*" or quoted as; the "*Sayings of an old wise man*", which once translated in Latin in Europe, bore the name; *Plotiniana Arabica*¹³.

⁹ see *Treatise of the Good First book, Practical Questions 13 Plato as a Greek Moses*.

¹⁰ **Proclus** Lycaeus (412 –485), surnamed "*The Successor*" or "*diadochos*" (Greek Πρόκλος ὁ Διάδοχος *Próklos ho Diádokhos*), was a Greek Neoplatonist philosopher, one of the last major Greek philosophers. See his commentary on the dialogue of *Plato; Timaeum*, 93.

¹¹ **Amelius**, a native of Apamea was a Neoplatonic philosopher and writer of the second half of the 3rd century; he was a pupil of Numenius and secretary of Plotinus.

¹² Porphyry edited the writings of Plotinus in fifty-four treatises, in groups of nine (Greek. *ennea*) or *Enneads*.

¹³ . A Latin version of this pseudo *Theology* appeared in Europe in 1519. (Cf. O'MEARA, *An Introduction the Enneads*. Oxford: 1995, 111ff.).

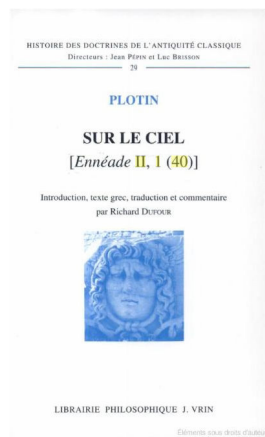
This pseudo “*Theology of Aristotle!*”¹⁴, is considered one of the most important witnesses of *Arabic neo-Platonism*, *completely at odds with Islam!* It will have a great influence on the thoughts of the early philosophizing *harmonizers in Islam*, not so well impregnated with the Islamic Paradigm, such as; *Al-Farabi* and *Avicenna*.

Noteworthy among these early harmonizing attempts before the advent of Islam, the well known case of harmonising the two *philosophies of Plato and Aristotle*, whether implicitly, as in the case of **Plotinus**, or explicitly, as in the work of his Syrian pagan pupil; **Porphyry (Porphyrius) of Tyre** (Greek: Πορφύριος, c. A.D. 233–c. 309), noted for his inflammatory diatribe; “*Adversus Christianos*” (*Against the Christians*) in fifteen books, which the Roman Emperor converted of late to Christianity; *Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus* (c. 280¹ –337 AD)



, as well as other emperors either banned or burned.

A detailed case of Plotinus re-interpretation of the original thoughts of Plato is given by a thorough analysis of **The Second Ennead, First Tractate**, entitled; “*ON THE KOSMOS*” OR “*ON THE HEAVENLY SYSTEM*” (*Enn. II, 1 (40)*) by *Richard Dufour*



¹⁴ This volume contains the translation of Plotinus' *On the descent of the soul into bodies* (IV 8 [6]) and its Arabic paraphrase, with a commentary.

This tractate is no doubt of capital importance, not only because of the subject matter in itself, but more so in relation to the philosophical debate it engages with the accepted philosophical Greek tradition of Plato, Aristotle and Heraclitus¹⁵.

Plotinus wants to assert himself in *the Enneads* as the leading exegete of Platonic doctrines, though this essay shows perhaps more than any other the difficult cohabitation between; *independence of mind* and *fidelity to the texts of the Master!*

Indeed, what is presented in this Tractate as an interpretation of “*Timaeus*”, becomes a de facto “*treason*” of the original by Plato!

***The end result is a neo – platonic’s interpretation which tries to read in Timaeus a theory which is not there!*¹⁶.**

Plotinus had many pupils who influenced other subsequent figures, all espousing the same syncretism as paradigm. Of these suffice to mention;



- a) **Iamblichus Chalcidensis** (born at Chalcis, modern Quinnesrin in Syria), (c. 245-c. 325), (Greek: Ἰάμβλιχος), best known for his *Collection of Pythagorean Doctrines*, in ten books, containing extracts from several ancient philosophers of which only the first four books, and fragments of the fifth, survive.

He studied first under *Anatolius of Laodicea*¹⁷, and later went on to study

¹⁵ Plotin’s view of the world and the sky is to be placed within the context the dominant cosmological theories of his time such as: the *Timaeus* of Plato, *De Caelo* of Aristotle, and the stoic vision of the universe.

¹⁶ See for details; Richard Dufour; *Sur le ciel(Ennéade II, 1 (40)) De Plotinus, Librairie Philosophique. J. Vrin éditeur.*

¹⁷ Bishop of Laodicea in Syria, one of the foremost scholars of his day in the physical sciences and in Aristotelean philosophy.

under *Porphyry*, the pupil of *Plotinus*.

Iamblichus disagreed with *Porphyry* over the practice of *theurgy*¹⁸, and he responded to his mentor in his attributed “*De Mysteriis Aegyptiorum*” (*On the Egyptian Mysteries*).

On returning to Syria around 304 AD he founded his own school at Apameia (near Antioch), a city famous for its *Neoplatonic philosophers*, whose influence *spread over much of the ancient world just before the advent of Islam*¹⁹.

One of the modifications introduced by *Iamblichus* to *neo-Platonism* was his idea *that*;

The soul is embodied in matter, making matter as divine as the rest of the cosmos.

This constituted a fundamental departure from the ideas of his *Neo-platonic predecessors*, who maintained that matter was a deficient concept.

After the rise of the **Abbasid Caliphate** in mid second century of Hijra (*mid eight century AD*), and their encouraging of translations of ancient works by **Jews, Christians and Sabians**²⁰, much of the *Neo-Platonic* legacy ended up in

¹⁸ *Theurgy* (from Greek: *θεουργία*) describes the practice of magic rituals performed with the intention of invoking the action of one or more gods, with the avowed aim of uniting with the divine, achieving henosis (ἕνωσις Greek for unite or unity) is the divine work committed to by each individual toward the goal of union with the Monad, Source, or the One, and perfecting oneself.

¹⁹ During the revival of interest in his philosophy in the [15th](#) and [16th](#) centuries, his name was often preceded with the epithet "divine" or "most divine".

²⁰ *Sabians* (*Arabic*: صابئین, *Greek*: σεβεοί/σεβόμενοι, *Yiddish*: תושבים) are adherents of religions derived from the beliefs of a community which was based in the [Harran](#) region of southeastern [Anatolia](#) and northern [Syria](#). There are two kinds of Sabians, non-gnostic Sabians (*Sābi'ūna Hunafāh*) and gnostic Sabians (i.e. the *Sābi'ūna Mushrukūn* [Sabians of Harran](#) and [Mandaean Nasarean Sabians](#)). They are not to be confused with the [Sabaeans](#) of [Sheba](#) whose etymology is completely unrelated being spelled with an initial Arabic letter "Sin" instead of the initial letter "Sad" (though the issue was confused because at least one tribe of Sabaeans, the [Ansar](#), are known to have adopted the religion of the *Saabi`ah Hunafa`*). The Sabian faith is also known as *Seboghataullah*, meaning "submersion in the divine mystery". ***From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia***

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the hand of *Muslims*, who were ill prepared to deal with its intrinsic contradictions, having at this time no tradition of their own concerning these subject matters!

V.1 The Impossible Task of Harmonizing Islam with Philosophy

No doubt *Neo-Platonism* represented the last of the great schools of Classical pagan philosophy and in order to survive under hostile Christian dominated empire, a synthesis of Platonism, Aristotlism, Stoicism, and Pythagoreanism, was seen as the best approach for conveying an esoteric interpretation of classical Greek Paganism, incorporating in one shell; *philosophy*, *mysticism*, *theosophy*, and *theurgy* (higher occultism) in a mixed esoteric discourse for the initiated.

For three centuries since its inception, Neo-Platonism served as the last bastion of Pagan wisdom and esoteric philosophy.

The end came just one century before the advent of Islam.



Indeed, the Emperor Justinian²¹ closed the school of Athens in 529, and *Damascius*²², his pupil *Simplicius*²³ the famous Aristotlean commentator, and five other Neoplatonists set out for Persia where they pleaded for an asylum at the



court of *Khosrau I* of Persia, hoping they would be able to teach and continue there under the protection of this King.

²¹ Known as *Justinian I* or *Justinian the Great* (Latin: *Flavius Petrus Sabbatius Iustinianus*, (482/483 –565) was Eastern Roman Emperor from 527 till his death.

²² *Damascius* (Δαμάσκιος, born in Damascus ca. AD 458, died after AD 538), known as "the last of the Neoplatonists," was the last scholar of the School of Athens.

²³ *Simplicius* (Greek: Σιμπλίκιος) of Cilicia, lived c. 490-c. 560 AD, was a disciple of Ammonius and Damascius, and was one of the last of the Neoplatonists.

They found the conditions unbearable, and when the following year *Justinian* and *Khosrau* concluded a peace treaty, it was provided that the philosophers should be allowed to return to Athens.

But Even after Classical Learning was quenched; a *Neo-Platonism* current remained, undergoing new metamorphoses depending on historical junctures and circumstances, popping up first under the garb of *Christian Mysticism*, then under other guise in Islam; *Philosophy, Ishraqi and Sufi Esotericism*, to appear later under the garb of *Judaic Kabbalah*.

Muslims inherited thus of a current of *Neo-Platonism* as an underground *counter culture*, as it has always been, when its centers of learning in; *Alexandria, Syria* and *Jundishapur* came under *Muslim rule*, along with pre-Islamic *Iranian and Indian* philosophy.

It was at the outset, very clear, in the mind of all Muslims who have an understanding of both *Monotheism* and *Pagan Greek philosophy*, that any attempt to fuse the two is like trying to mix *oil* and *water*!

And while Philosophers, in principle, hold that one must accept the possibility of “*Truth*” with capital “T” from any source and follow the argument wherever it leads, the fact that philosophers within the same philosophical school and working under the same paradigm don’t agree on the same “truths” in plural and not the singular, void this hollow argument from its meat.

On the other hand, Islam, unlike any other religion upholds that, not only the Koran is inimitable, but that all its plain assertions concerning past, actual and future events, as well as any that has bearing on discoveries, scientific facts, should be all put to the acid test of scientific falsification, proving by this continuous verification of its assertions as the program of Creation continue to unfold by popping up our realities of the day, till its cataclysmic stop, that the Koran has no human origin, but comes from God.

Moreover, the Koran fustigates freewheeling speculative thinkers who have no proofs to show for their arguments, which is the principal predilection of philosophers in the first place, while pouring praises on scientists as the following two verses show²⁴:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ ثَمَرَاتٍ مُخْتَلِفًا أَلْوَانُهَا وَمِنَ الْجِبَالِ جُدَدٌ بَيضٌ وَحُمْرٌ مُخْتَلِفٌ
أَلْوَانُهَا وَغَرَابِيبُ سُودٌ

Seest thou not that Allah sends down rain from the sky? With it We then bring out produce of various colours. And in the mountains are tracts white and red, of various shades of colour, and black intense in hue.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ وَالْدَّوَابِّ وَالْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلِفٌ أَلْوَانُهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ

And so amongst men and crawling creatures and cattle, are they of various colours. Those truly fear Allah, among His Servants, who have knowledge²⁵: for Allah is Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving.

And also²⁶;

قُلْ هَلْ عِنْدَكُمْ مِنْ عِلْمٍ فَتُخْرِجُوهُ لَنَا إِنْ تَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ أَنْتُمْ إِلَّا تَخْرُصُونَ

Say: "Have ye any (certain) knowledge? If so, produce it before us. Ye follow nothing but conjecture: ye do nothing but lie."

And also²⁷;

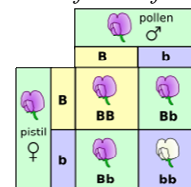
وَقَالُوا لَنْ نَدْخُلَ الْجَنَّةَ إِلَّا مَنْ كَانَ هُودًا أَوْ نَصَارَى تِلْكَ أَمَانِيُّهُمْ قُلْ هَاتُوا بُرْهَانَكُمْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

And they say: "None shall enter Paradise unless he be a Jew or a Christian." Those are their (vain) desires. Say: "Produce your proof if ye are truthful."

While concerning speculative minds²⁸;

²⁴ Al-Qur'an, (35; 27-28 (Fatir) (فاطر) [The Angels, Originator]

²⁵ One identifies immediately from the context the scientists alluded to nowadays and their fields of



enquiry, namely; the science of heredity and variation in living organisms; genetics, and mineralogy.

²⁶ Al-Qur'an, (6; 148) (Al-Anaam) (الأنعام) [Cattle, Livestock]

²⁷ Al-Qur'an, (2; 111) (البقرة) (Al-Baqara) [The Cow]

وَإِذَا قِيلَ إِنَّ وَعْدَ اللَّهِ حَقٌّ وَالسَّاعَةَ لَا رَيْبَ فِيهَا قُلْتُمْ مَا نَدْرِي مَا السَّاعَةُ إِنَّ نَظْنَ إِلَّا ظَنُّنَا وَمَا نَحْنُ بِمُسْتَثْقِينَ

"And when it was said that the promise of Allah was true, and that the Hour- there was no doubt about its (coming), ye used to say, 'We know not what is the hour: we only think it is an idea, and we have no firm assurance. "

Or in this verse addressing the Prophet of Islam²⁹;

وَإِنْ تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَنْ فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَنْ سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ إِنَّ يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

Wert thou to follow the common run of those on earth, they will lead thee away from the way of Allah. They follow nothing but conjecture: they do nothing but lie.

This doesn't mean that the *Koran puts a lead on thinking* or *has banned critical thinking altogether*, as many simple minded people are led to believe judging by the present day stagnation of nominal Muslims, while forgetting that it was *Islam* that brought unlettered backward desert Arabs to the forefront of Civilisation in the first place, and made *Arabic* the *first Lingua Franca of Science* for more than five centuries³⁰!

Suffice to say, that it was the *fundamentalist³¹ schools*, of rational inclinations such as the *Mu'tazilite* and the *Ash'arite* that had occupied central stage in Islamic thinking, while *Neo-Platonists would be philosophers* were marginal to say the least.

Moreover, the mere existence of the different *schools of thought* that had developed in Islamic Jurisprudence such as the; *Maliki, Hanafi, Shafi'ee, Hanbali, Dhahiri*,...schools, among others, is an obvious proof of the claim.

²⁸ Al-Qur'an, (45; 32) (Al-Jathiya) (الجنثية) [Crouching]

²⁹ Al-Qur'an, (6; 116) (Al-Anaam) (الأنعام) [Cattle, Livestock]

³⁰ Europe was stagnant at the time and would have never witnessed its renaissance without its encounter with Islam and the ensuing centuries of fruitful contact and painstaking translation of Arabic manuscripts up to the point that most of these manuscripts are conserved presently in Europe and not in any Islamic country.


³¹ Islamic fundamentalism as projected by western Christian stereotypes are inaccurate since Islamic belief requires all Muslims to be fundamentalists; i.e.; knowledgeable of their religion.

One can even argue, using historical parallels that the *Islamic faith*, far from being opposed to the development of scientific knowledge, is in fact encouraging it, since it is a necessary tool to prove the Koran's assertions by subjecting them continuously to the test of scientific falsification.

There is a real symbiosis and a fruitful interaction between *the Koran* and the *natural world*, considered both as two faces of the same truth, since emanating both from God.

This reasoning was understood by all monotheists to hold true and is known historically as; “**the allegory of the two books**”, i.e.;

- a) the Written Book; the autographic Bible, now lost, or the autograph Koran we possess and
- b) the open book; nature and creation.

The Medieval Christian *Neo-Platonist*, *philosopher*, *theologian*, and *mystical*³² writer; **Hugh of St Victor** (b. 1096 – 1141) ³³ has this to say about this allegory;

For the whole sensible world is like a kind of book written by the finger of God—that is, created by divine power—and each particular creature is somewhat like a figure, not invented by human decision, but instituted by the divine will to manifest the invisible things of God's wisdom.

³² One of his freewheeling speculative craziness is a formulation of a code of the **laws governing** the **soul's** progress to union with **God!!!!!!**. No wonder if the Koran condemns such unfounded and unsubstantiated foolishness.

³³ Hugh of St Victor (d.1142), *De tribus diebus*



The same is echoed by **Francis Bacon** (1561-1626)³⁴:

'[There are] two books or volumes to study, if we will be secured from error; first the scriptures, revealing the will of God, and then the creatures expressing his power; whereof the latter is a key unto the former.'

This allegory will prove itself, **contrary to the expectations of both; Jews and Christians, who maintained for centuries, even after the advent of Islam and its characterisation of the Bible as being corrupted and tampered with,** an acid test that was devastating for Judeo-Christian believers, as everyone knows, while the Koran withstood firmly unscathed the test and still endures.

On another level, one has to realise that;

one particularity of Islam is that it has integrated reason and rational thinking in its religious paradigm, whereas Western thought was forced to use reason, borrowed from the practice of Muslim thinkers, in order to free itself from the dogma of the Church and desacralize intellection! as the following verse confirms³⁵;

أَفَلَا يَتَذَكَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ وَلَوْ كَانَ مِنْ عِنْدِ غَيْرِ اللَّهِ لَوَجَدُوا فِيهِ اخْتِلَافًا كَثِيرًا

Do they not consider the Qur'an (with care)³⁶? Had it been from other Than Allah, they would surely have found therein Much discrepancy.

And also³⁷;

³⁴ *Advancement of Learning* I.vi.16

³⁵ *Al-Qur'an*, (4; 82) (*An-Nisa*) (النساء) [*Women*]

³⁶ *In the sense of to ponder; weigh in the mind with thoroughness and care and thoroughness.*

³⁷ *Al-Qur'an*, (29; 43) (*Al-Ankaboot*) (العنكبوت) [*The Spider*]

And such are the Parables We set forth for mankind, but only those understand them who have knowledge.

Fortunately, this fact didn't go unnoticed and we have many testimonies;

The first one is due to the English translator of Arabic manuscripts; *Adelard of*



*Bath*³⁸ (*Adelard of Bath's* Latin translation of *Euclid's Elements*, c. 1309–1316); in a dialogue with his Nephew on the merit of Islamic rationality³⁹;

ADELARD⁴⁰: I think then that we should begin with lighter matters, and if here I fail to give you a reasonable account, you will know what to expect in more important subjects. Let us begin then at the bottom, and so proceed upwards. . . .

ADELARD: It is a little difficult for you and me to argue about animals. I, with reason for my guide, have learned one thing from my Arab teachers, you, something different; dazzled by the outward show of authority⁴¹ you wear a head-stall. For what else should we call authority but a head-stall? Just as brute animals are led by the head-stall where one pleases, without seeing why or where they are being led, and only follow the halter by which they are held, so many of you, bound and fettered as you are by a low credulity, are led into danger by the authority of writers.

Hence, certain people arrogating to themselves the title of authorities have employed an unbounded licence in writing, and this to such an extent that they have not hesitated to insinuate into men of low intellect the false instead of the true. Why should you not fill sheets of paper, aye, fill them on both sides, when to-day you can get readers who require no proof of sound judgment from you, and are satisfied merely with the name of a time-worn title?

³⁸ Adelard of Bath (*Latin*: Adelardus Bathensis) (c. 1080 – c. 1152) was a *12th century English* scholar. He is known both for his original works and for translating many important Arabic scientific works of *astrology*, *astronomy*, *philosophy* and *mathematics* into Latin { From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia}.

³⁹ From Adelard of Bath, Dodi Ve-Nechdi, ed. and trans. H. Gollancz, (London: Oxford University Press, 1920), 98-99. This text is part of the *Internet Medieval Source Book*.

⁴⁰ Adelard of Bath (*Latin*: Adelardus Bathensis) (c. 1080 – c. 1152) was a *12th century English* scholar. He is known both for his original works and for translating many important Arabic scientific works of *astrology*, *astronomy*, *philosophy* and *mathematics* into Latin { From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia}.

⁴¹ He is alluding to Church authority.

They do not understand **that reason** has been given to individuals that, **with it as chief judge, distinction may be drawn between the true and the false.**

Unless reason were appointed to be the chief judge, to no purpose would she have been given to us individually: it would have been enough for the writing of laws to have been entrusted to one, or at most to a few, and the rest would have been satisfied with their ordinances and authority.

Further, the very people who are called authorities first gained the confidence of their inferiors only because they followed reason; and those who are ignorant of reason, or neglect it, justly desire to be called blind. However, I will not pursue this subject any further, **though I regard authority as matter for contempt.**

This one thing, however, I will say. **We must first search after reason, and when it has been found, and not until then, authority if added to it, may be received.** Authority by itself can inspire no confidence in the philosopher, nor ought it to be used for such a purpose. Hence logicians have agreed in treating the argument from authority not as necessary, but probable only. if, therefore, you want to bear anything from me, you must both give and take reason. I am not the man whom the semblance of an object can possibly satisfy; and the fact is, that the mere word is a loose wanton abandoning herself now to this man, now to that.



The second is from John William Draper (1811-1882) in the "Intellectual Development of Europe";

"I have to deplore the systematic manner in which the literature of Europe has continued to put out of sight our obligations to the Muhammadans. Surely they cannot be much longer hidden. Injustice founded on religious rancour and national conceit cannot be perpetuated forever.

The Arab has left his intellectual impress on Europe. He has indelibly written it on the heavens as any one may see who reads the names of the stars on a common celestial globe."

The third is from Robert Briffault in the "Making of Humanity";

"It was under the influence of the arabs and Moorish revival of culture and not in the 15th century, that a real renaissance took place. Spain, not Italy, was the cradle of the rebirth of Europe.

After steadily sinking lower and lower into barbarism, it had reached the darkest depths of ignorance and degradation when cities of the Saracenic world, Baghdad, Cairo, Cordova, and Toledo, were growing centers of civilization and intellectual activity. It was there that the new life arose which was to grow into new

phase of human evolution. From the time when the influence of their culture made itself felt, began the stirring of new life.

"It was under their successors at Oxford School (that is, successors to the Muslims of Spain) that **Roger Bacon** learned Arabic and Arabic Sciences. Neither Roger Bacon nor later namesake has any title to be credited with having introduced the experimental method. **Roger Bacon was no more than one of apostles of Muslim Science and Method to Christian Europe**; and he never wearied of declaring that knowledge of Arabic and Arabic Sciences was for his contemporaries the only way to true knowledge. Discussion as to who was the originator of the experimental method...are part of the colossal misinterpretation of the origins of European civilization. **The experimental method of Arabs was by Bacon's time widespread and eagerly cultivated throughout Europe.**

"**Science is the most momentous contribution of Arab civilization to the modern world**; but its fruits were slow in ripening. Not until long after **Moorish culture** had sunk back into darkness did the giant, which it had given birth to, rise in his might. It was not science only which brought Europe back to life. Other and manifold influence from the **civilization of Islam** communicated its first glow to European Life.

"**For Although there is not a single aspect of European growth in which the decisive influence of Islamic Culture is not traceable**, nowhere is it so clear and momentous as in the genesis of that power which constitutes the permanent distinctive force of the modern world, and the supreme source of its victory, natural science and the scientific spirit.

"The debt of our science to that of the Arabs does not consist in startling discoveries or revolutionary theories, **science owes a great deal more to Arab culture, it owes its existence.** The Astronomy and Mathematics of the Greeks were a foreign importation never thoroughly acclimatized in Greek culture. The Greeks systematized, generalized and theorized, but the patient ways of investigation, the accumulation of positive knowledge, the minute method of science, **detailed and prolonged observation and experimental inquiry were altogether alien to the Greek temperament.** Only in Hellenistic Alexandria was any approach to scientific work conducted in the ancient classical world. What we call science arose in Europe as a result of new spirit of enquiry, of new methods of experiment, observation, measurement, of the development of mathematics, in a form unknown to the Greeks. That spirit and those methods were introduced into the European world by the Arabs.

"It is highly probable that but for the Arabs, modern European civilization would never have arisen at all; it is absolutely certain that but for them, it would not have assumed that character which has enabled it to transcend all previous phases of evolution."

So given these two divergent Worldviews and paradigms with their attending nuances and shades, a Muslim surely cannot be simultaneously;

a) A speculating philosopher *in the Greek pagan tradition* and being at the same time

b) *A true empirical scientific adherent of Islam, asking always for proofs and facts, before believing in things.*

One of these two options is certainly redundant, notwithstanding the fact that both paradigms agree on the use of science as an investigation tool.

This shows that Muslims in general and Philosophers among them in particular, were light years behind the requirements of their *Islamic Paradigm* and still remain up to this day.

No wonder then! if all attempts at synthesising Islam and/or harmonisation it with speculative freewheeling thinking will ultimately fail.

The obvious reason for such failures is that speculative freewheeling philosophical thinking lacks the obvious scientific requirement of substantiating its premisses, which are held by the Koran, as a must in any enquiry, in order to validate its assertions and prove consequently its transcendental nature

Many of the early debates which were concerned with this impossible task of reconciling *Islam* with *Greek philosophy*, didn't discern at the outset this particularity in Islam, *which makes havoc of analogies and parallel either with Judaism through Philo, or with Christianity through Saint Paul!*

The *Jewish* as well as the *Christians harmonizers* following their leads used normally philosophical arguments to prove that **one's preset religious principles** are true.

This is a common weak technique found in the writings of all harmonizers, who forget that this fictional artifice ***could not pass the acid test of scientific***

falsification, since both the *Old* as well as the *New Testaments*, failed to pass it when confronted either with historical, geological or scientific proven facts, on account of tempering with the sacred texts as well as having no extent autographic texts, as the Koran is.

The drastic approach for a *hypothetical nominal Muslim philosopher*, to apply analytical philosophy to his own religion by asking questions such as:

What is the nature of God? Or

How do we know that God exists?

- The first question has no meaning in Islam, since the later has no use for “**Theology**” understood as; “**The study of the nature!!!! of God**”, nor does Judaism has it or needs it either, being both true monotheistic religions.

- *The second question, being at the outset, intractable and non decidable as posed, is transformed in Islam, to a falsification problem, easily dealt with if presented as a testable empirical question, namely; is the Koran a human composition?*

Here the burden of proofs is on the detractors’s shoulders to falsify one and only one single plain assertion of the Koran.

Notice that the two questions above make sense and have meaning in both;

- a) The philosophical discourse of the Greeks in their *theologies*⁴², since having a *pantheon of gods* perceived in their own images and speculating about their natures, and also in;
- b) Christian’s **theology**, through Pauline Gnostic mystery cult Christology, with endless speculations about the Nature of Christ taken blasphemously as one third ($\frac{1}{3}$) of a **polytheistic** triune godhead, which is anathema in Islam.

⁴² We know already of two books of Proclus; “*Platonic Theology*”: A long (six volumes in the Budé edition) systematic work, using evidence from Plato's dialogues to describe the character of the various divine orders and “*Elements of Theology*”: A systematic work, with 211 propositions and proofs, describing the universe from the first principle, the One, to the descent of souls into bodies. We know also **the Theology of Aristotle** as a paraphrase of parts of Plotinus' Six Enneads along with Porphyry's commentary into Arabic.

God in Islam being transcendent and unlike any of His creatures, cannot be perceived by humans or apprehended, save through what he says Himself about Himself through his attributes.

And these attributes are taken by Muslims at their face value, with no anthropomorphism lurking behind, knowing pertinently that God is unlike any of His creation, and that language can't convey more than that..

A trivial limited analogy;

You don't expect a man made automaton or robot endowed with artificial intelligence, to answer a tricky question on the nature of his maker; the man, unless the programmer puts the answer or answers in its artificial brain!

And certainly, even with this, the robot can't make sense of the question!

This point made clear, it evident that harmonizers impregnated with ***Hellenistic Neo-Platonism*** as a paradigm and Worldview, while confessing Islam as religion, are not the best representative of Islam as Is, but constitute in fact a continuation of the ***neo-platonic sub counter culture*** pervasive in the area before the advent of Islam.

The proof lies in the fact that whenever the Koran contradicts any saying of their Greek philosophising masters, they side, to their own loss, with their ignoramus ***speculating*** masters on the issue, not with the Koran!

They didn't realize, that the unfolding program of creation will sooner or later catch up with the Koran's assertion proving them correct, as it did up to now.

Needless to say, that this type of Neo-Platonist reasoning is an awful aberration for a Muslim.

Of these neo-Platonists harmonisers living in the Islamic era we can cite;



Avicenna (*Abū Alī al-Ḥusayn ibn Abd Allāh ibn Sīnā* (Arabic: ابن سينا) (c. 980 – 1037), the compiler of “*The Book of Healing*” (كتاب الشفا) among others, who tried to harmonise **both; Plato with his reluctant pupil Aristotle**, and **Islam with Greek philosophy**, though to no avail, since he built his conclusions in both attempts on two false premises;

- a) Concerning Plato and Aristotle he thought of the “*pseudo theology of Aristotle*” as belonging to the later, while it was in fact of Plotinus,
- b) While his attempt at harmonizing **Islam** with **Greek philosophy** shows blatantly that he was more of an incontrovertible neo-Platonist than a Muslim.

V.2 The Impossible Task of Harmonizing Islam with Theosophy

We find also these types of Harmonizers in splinter sects and especially in the plethora of **Persians’ Isma’ili propagators and missionaries such as**;

- a) **Hamid al-Din Abu’l-Hasan Ahmad b. ‘Abdallah al-Kirmani** (996–1021 CE), the compiler of **Rahat al-‘aql** (Peace of Mind, or Comfort of Reason);
- b) **Abu Mo’in Hamid ad-Din Nasir ibn Khusraw** (spelled *Khusrow*) **al-Qubadiani** (1004 - 1088 CE) the compiler of **Safarnama** (The



Book of Travels) and « **Kitab Jami’ Al-Hikmatain** » : “ **The Book encompassing the two sagesses** ” (or *harmony of Greek Philosophy with the Ismâ’ili théosophie*), and

- c) **Abu Yaqub Sijistani** (was alive before 971 CE)⁴³, the compiler of

⁴³ He was a member of the Ismaili underground mission — (the *da’wa*, in Arabic) — that operated in the Iranian province of Khurasan and Sijistan during the tenth century. He had become a supporter of the Fatimids imams, then ruling from their headquarters in Al Qairawan (Tunisia) in North Africa. He

“The Wellsprings of Wisdom” (ينابيع الحكمة) and *“Revealing the Concealed”* (كشف المحجوب), among others.

Now going back to square one we may ask the pertinent question;

Given that we can't achieve any fusion or harmonization between Islam and either; philosophy or theosophy, due mainly to their speculative non substantiated nature, can we nonetheless hope to achieve such in Politics, and if possible, how? And in what sense?

End.

To be followed by part VI