ensuing usurpation of Muslim power by the oppressive Mamlūk Sūltān were the best things that could possibly have happened. The merit of the book under review lies definitely not in a contribution to the concept of the “Perfect Man”, as the deceptive title seems to suggest. Ibn al-Nafīṣ has not only failed to enrich the thème de base of Arab humanism, he has rather produced a parody of it.

"By adopting for his hero the name of Kāmil, 'The Perfect One', Ibn al-Nafīṣ does homage to the Islamic idea of the Perfect Man, although the only individual features which may be traced back to that concept are the hero's abnormal bodily size and his outstanding intelligence." (p. 32-3)

On page 60 note 2, the commentators write:

"The author has emphasized the spiritual significance of ṣalāt above, p. 52 ; it is therefore surprising that he should define ṣalāt here as mere movements of the body. Individual prayer (duʿā) does not figure among the official main duties of the religious law of Islam."

In spite of all the inadequacies in Ibn al-Nafīṣ' line of argument and style many readers may not share this surprise. Ibn al-Nafīṣ was, after all, enough of a writer so as to become conscious of repetitions, at least occasionally. Since he had already explained one aspect of prayer he could here very well dispense with a restatement and stick to the second aspect.

The translation is richly annotated and in addition to the footnotes further explanations are given in "Excursus" A—H. The book is very well produced and the few printing mistakes in the Arabic text are not of a serious type.

DETLEV KHĀLID

Afzal Iqbal, CULTURE OF ISLAM, Institute of Islamic Culture, Lahore 1967, pp. xx+303, Rs. 20.00.

A welcome addition to the fast growing popular literature on Islam—as a religion and as a way of life—is this latest book by Afzal Iqbal, a member of the Pakistan Foreign Service and the author of Diplomacy in Islam (Lahore, 1962, 1966). Finding time for literary activities amidst heavy official duties which are pretty exacting—as has been the fate of the reviewer—is a phenomenon which is not fully appreciated in both official and academic circles and is an achievement whose significance has not been properly underlined. Seen in this perspective the efforts of Afzal Iqbal in presenting a readable account of the evolution and development of Islamic culture should be gratefully acknowledged. The author in one sweep has tried, and, one may say, with a fair amount of success, to survey and deal with the grass roots of Islamic culture such as the philosophical movement, the growth of jurisprudence and Islam's contact with the highly developed Greek culture. To the reviewer the term 'culture' has always proved baffling, as it is a relative term signifying the sum total of the evolution and development of a people's intellectual, moral, spiritual and sociological concepts, in fact their entire national life is covered by the word 'culture'. To make one people fully understand the culture of the other is, therefore, a task which requires a very high calibre, sophistication and philosophical outlook apart from a thorough grounding in typology.

Judged from this angle the average reader will find the book useful though a specialist may not be fully satisfied and may have to differ from the author at places. For instance,
the author says (p. vii), “Islam did not claim to be a religion originating with Muḥammad (peace be upon him!) who held that all religious teachers preaching and practising the truth professed only one religion for which the Arabic word is Islam”. It is an erroneous statement oft repeated. To the Muslims Islam is no doubt a continuation, with necessary amendments and improvements, of Judaism and Christianity but its name as such is certainly new. Had that not been the case there would have been little need to proclaim, “This day have I perfected your religion for you and conferred upon you the highest of my favours, and am satisfied that Islam be your religion (faith)”, (Qur’ān V : 4). We Muslims proudly admit that Islam is an improved and final edition of religion in its widest sense and that we do recognise Judaism and Christianity as its noble forerunners. We are neither ashamed of it nor make any fuss about it. We sincerely and firmly believe in the finality and perfection of religion—as the fountainhead of divine guidance for mankind—through the finality of the Prophet, the perfection of the revelation and the end of divine guidelines for mankind.

For an understanding of the evolution of Islamic culture and its subsequent efflorescence and impact on the sister cultures of Persia and Egypt a thorough knowledge of Islamic religious dogma, traditions and mores is absolutely necessary. The behavioral concepts of the Muslims are imbedded in their religious injunctions and the dictates of the Sunna. This is why fine arts like music, sculpture and to some extent even poetry of the Abū Nawās type are declared out of bound and frowned upon by orthodoxy. These do’s and don’ts of religion constitute the Shari‘a in Islam which in its turn has been mainly instrumental in determining the cultural and sociological pattern. Therefore, when the author defines culture “as a group of memory of our past achievements, traditions and experience” he talks out of context with the demands of Islam as a divinely ordained way of life for he identifies the evolution of Muslim culture with the unfolding of historical events which may or may not reflect true Islamic culture. Many of the conflicts, disputes, differences and controversies etc., such as the Mihāna, the issue of Imamate, the rise of the Mu‘tazilites and the Ash‘arites, the Ismā‘īlīs and the Assassins, the desecration and destruction of graves and tombs and historical monuments, the precious and proud archaeological heritage of a people, have had their origin in this very conflict and interplay of historical and classical Islam. It is why even today Muslims are prompted to look down upon what may be otherwise regarded as a masterpiece of art and sculpture in the Christian West.

Discussing the significance of the word “Jāhiliyya” the author defines it as meaning “levity, unjustified pride, vainglory, conceit” (p. 59). In the entire post-Islamic Arabic literature “jāhiliyya” has consistently been contrasted with Islam—clearly establishing that the authors of this term had only the “loss or lack of faith” i.e., absence of Islam (ɪmān) in mind. This is further supported by the Qur’ānic term “Ummiyyān” which it uses for the pre-Islamic bedouin Arabs, meaning thereby “a people without a Book” and not illiterate or unlettered people as is commonly understood for there were many among the people of Mecca and Medina at the advent of Islam who knew how to read and write. Goldziher’s studies on this subject in his Muhammedanische Studien still make refreshing reading and for those interested in the pre-Islamic milieu of the Arabian society it will be fruitful to read them again in the now available excellent English translation by S. M. Stern (vol. I London, 1967).

Apart from other such observations and the use of terms like “self-determination” (p. 149), which did not exist in the early phase of Islam the author must be complimented
on his admirable treatment of a subject which was both complex and challenging for a non-professional scholar and on which he has brought to bear hard work, serious study and a rare application and industry. One may differ from the conclusions he draws but there can be little doubt about the sincerity of his effort and the conviction of his faith in delineating the contribution of Islam to culture and winning for it an enviable and distinguished place in the comity of civilized nations and peoples.

KARACHI

7-10-'69.

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