BOOK REVIEWS


The work under review is the third by the author, the first two being Islamic Constitution (1952) and Ijma and the Gate of Ijtihad (1954). The importance of the present work chiefly lies in the fact that it is the first systematic attempt, on the part of a modern Muslim, to interpret the bases of Islamic Law.

First we may give a bird’s eyeweview of the contents of the book as they unfold themselves as a developing argument, and then turn to a somewhat closer examination of its important themes. Mr. Faruki begins by attempting to locate a relationship between the concepts Islam, Shari’ah and Fiqh. Although he nowhere actually produces a definition of these concepts, he endeavours to make the difference and the relationship between them sensed. This is then followed up with a historical and analytical account of Fiqh or Islamic Law, as the author understands it. In the next place, Mr. Faruki deals with the question as to how far the sources of Islamic Law, that is, the Holy Qur’an, the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet. Ijtihad, i.e., fresh thought and Ijma’, or consensus of the community, can be invested with infallibility. His purpose in doing this is apparently to find a door in these sources for the rethinking and future development of the Muslim Law. This accomplished, we enter into what I consider to be the heart of the book, namely, the question of Ijtihad or fresh thought and interpretation. After this, the author discusses the nature, function and varieties of difference of opinion both within the Muslim community and those between Muslims and non-Muslims, etc. Lastly, he lays down the principle of Istihsan (seeking to bring about a state of mercy) in legislation in place of the classical principle of Istihsan or Istitilah. Whether one quite agrees with Mr. Faruki’s general conclusions or not, the work undoubtedly displays a considerable intellectual calibre and a genuinely religious sensitivity. Both of these are used by the author to liberalise the traditional Fiqh-thought in order to contribute to a reconstruction of Islamic Jurisprudence.

Perhaps the least satisfactory part of the book is the historical. This is unfortunate because it is on an appraisal and criticism of the historical that Mr. Faruki has sought to build the positive and interpretative part. The first point to be remarked is that, as we have pointed out above, Mr. Faruki does not define either Islam or Shari’ah or Fiqh. It appears that Islam is the inner religious movement of man which, ever since Abraham’s day, has been tending towards the ideal of perfect Tawhid, guided successively by Divine revelations of which the last is the Qur’an. This movement has passed through different Shari’ahs of which the last lies embedded in the Qur’an and in the Sunnah of the Prophet. But the Shari’ah (i.e., the Qur’an and the Sunnah) is in itself unknowable: it is the Din an sich for the religious consciousness of man. Whenever, and to the extent that man comes to comprehend it, it is no longer Shari’ah but Fiqh. We only note here two things: (1) that this view raises

*NOTE: This is a substantially revised form of an earlier version broadcast from Radio Pakistan to whom we record our thanks for permitting us to use the earlier draft.—(F. R.).
problems about the epistemology of religion which will have to be faced although this is not the place to discuss them and (2) that, historically, *Shar'i 'ah* as a technical term is not used in this sense (although it must be admitted that it is used by the Muslims rather loosely) and further that it developed rather late in Islam.

Again, Mr. Faruki tries to explain the academic and non-practical character of the Muslim Law by asserting that due to the utter secularism of the Umayyads, the *'Ulama* did not co-operate with the State and therefore developed their legal systems unrealistically (p. 33). It is, of course, unfortunately true that the *'Ulama* have been, generally speaking, niggardly in their co-operation with Muslim States, but the reasons for this lie elsewhere and not in the Umayyad secularism. Indeed, the view that the Umayyads were purely worldly or utter secularists so far as the basis of their State was concerned is a pure myth. Nor is it true that no *'Ulama* co-operated with the Umayyad regime at all. A *Muhaddith* like Zuhrī closely worked with the Umayyads and a legist like al-Awzā‘ī (died 157 A.H.) regarded the Umayyad administrative practice as part of the Islamic *Sunnah*. The real reason perhaps for the academic and unrealistic quality of Islamic Law is that it usually worked backwards—that is, when the lawyers began to systematize and codify the law, these legal materials had already existed in practice in the past (including much of the Umayyad administrative practice) and the lawyers merely sought to systematize them in a bookish, school-room atmosphere without touch with realities.

On the question of *Hadīth* and the Prophetic *Sunnah*, again, the author's treatment is partly somewhat inconsistent but partly also incomplete. In Chapter 4, Mr. Faruki tells us that the *Hadīth* is generally an accurate record of the sayings and acts of the Prophet. But if this is the author's position, one is somewhat surprised to discover in Chapters 7 and 14 a whole array of arguments that seem to undermine the general veracity of the *Hadīth*. one argument being the strict historical truth that the standard *Hadīth* collections did not come into existence until well after two centuries of the Prophet's death. But later on again (p. 127) Mr. Faruki tells us that the later date of actual history-writing, instead of detracting from its quality, in fact, adds weight to it because, as we proceed farther from an event in time, historical judgment about it becomes more mature. Now, the fact is that this argument simply does not apply to *Hadīth* for *Hadīth* is not at all a matter of historical judgment about the Prophet but claims to be a simple record of his sayings and acts. We are, of course, not implying that all *Hadīth* is false but only pointing to an inconsistency in the present argument. We certainly agree with the author when he contends that we should work out some modern critical apparatus of *Hadīth*. This apparatus must, we think, be supplementary to the traditional canons of criticism and must be based on the principles of historical criticism in the firm conviction that there is no ultimate dislocation between history and Islamic Faith.

On p. 57, Mr. Faruki, in order to illustrate his point that *Hadīth* (or *Sunnah*—he makes no distinction between the two) takes second place to the Qur'ān, quotes the famous tradition that when Mu‘ādh b. Jabal was being sent to Yemen, he said, in reply to the Prophet's queries that he would decide cases first on the
basis of the Qur'ān, then, failing to find guidance therein, he would resort to the Sunnah of the Prophet, etc. It is impossible to accept this tradition as genuine as it obviously projects later categories backwards. For if the Sunnah comes only after the Qur'ān and personal judgment comes only after the Sunnah (this entire case of priorities is put forward in a mechanical manner), then Mu'ādh could never have used his personal judgment so long as the Prophet was alive for the Prophet's Sunnah could have been completed only on the Prophet's death!

In Chapter 14 "Ijtihad and Sunnah," the author has made an admirable effort to differentiate between several aspects or levels of Sunnah. Seven categories are enumerated tentatively. In principle, this method of discrimination is similar to the one which advocates the resurrection of the essential value from the situational context of Ḥadīth and the structuring of these values into a system of "oughts".

In the previous chapter, Mr. Faruki has discussed the even much more difficult and sensitive question of the interpretation of the Qur'ān. Much of it does what he says on this very crucial topic is sound, although, in our opinion, not go very far. He talks of the evolution of the Qur'ānic meaning during the period in which the Qur'ān was revealed and then rightly concludes that parts of the Qur'ān must be interpreted in the light of the whole. But this is too general a conclusion and we suspect that the author's progress on this topic has been arrested because he starts from the wrong end. He starts by attempting to delimit what he calls the 'Ijmāh or infallibility of the Qur'ān. Now, this concept is a creation of Mr. Faruki's mind. He has been obviously led to this by the belief that by attributing absolute infallibility to the Qur'ān, to the Sunnah and Ijmā', the Community commits a form of shirk which is the opposite of Tawḥīd. But the Qur'ān, although not identical with God, is nevertheless the Word of God and as such, beyond the categories of infallibility or fallibility. For "infallibility" can apply only where "fallibility" is conceivable, as in the case of the Prophets as human beings. But even granting that the term "infallible" is applicable to the Qur'ān, this is not a legal concept but a theological one. What Mr. Faruki, in our opinion, should have done was to affirm that although the Qur'ān is the Word of God, it nevertheless immediately addressed a given society—i.e., seventh century Arabs—with given socio-economic conditions. Therefore, in its actual legislation it was bound to have immediate regard for that society as a model although, of course, its message is for the whole world. We wonder whether the author would not have reached better results by this method.

This method is absolutely natural and, in fact, the only one to interpret the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth. A man of the calibre of Shāh Waliy Allah of Delhi tells us essentially this much in his Ḥujjat Allāh al-Balighah (Cairo, 1322 A.H., vol. I, p. 93) by saying that the Prophet's immediate task was to create a model, out of the conditions and the materials that he had, for the rest of the world and for posterity. There is no other sense in which Islam can be either universal or eternal. Those who regard as the eternal message of the Qur'ān not only the values for man contained in its depths and divine reaches but also its seventh century Arabian socio-economic conditioning, condemn it necessarily to that space-time locality. They may try to perpetuate those very socio-economic
conditions to perpetuate this "Islam"; history teaches us unequivocally, however, that fossils can survive for a time but not for long and they may not survive as fossils even for a time if there are much more developed organisms around and there is a bitter struggle for survival.

In the chapter "Ijtihad and Qiyas", the author has made a valuable contribution not only by arguing soundly that the gate of Ijtihad must be re-opened and that Qiyas—analogical reasoning—be revived as the instrument of Ijtihad par excellence, but even more by pointing out that the very principles of Qiyas itself have to be re-worked. This is of fundamental importance because, as the concept of Qiyas developed in history, it has increasingly operated as a principle of dire rigidity rather than of legal expansion and liberalization: it has been mostly tied down to what is called the Nass or the "wording of the text"—a concept which itself has to be probed into thoroughly for it appears that in law this concept does not exist before al-Shafi'i's time. But Qiyas has also been used by Muslims in the opposite extreme and some fantastic instances of Qiyas have been recorded in history. The situation is, indeed, chaotic.

The principle of Istirḥām (Chapter 23) wherewith the author wishes both to complement and replace the older principles of juristic preference and public weal is interesting. His basic contention is that whereas the older principles were like non-Shari'ah intrusions into the Shari'ah, we may have a principle which is fundamental in the Shari'ah itself. It should be remembered, however, that many lawyers have defined even the older principles as a "form of Qiyas" or even as a "higher form of Qiyas", so that they can be easily integrated into the Shari'ah, although it must be pointed out that no one has set any limits on or prescribed a modus operandi for "Istihsān" or "Istiṣlah". But one wonders if any rules can be laid down for "Istirḥām". As a moral directive to legal operations, Istirḥām would no doubt be excellent and as such could be laid down besides the older principles which are also at bottom moral although liable to opportunist exploitation.

We also agree with Mr. Faruki on much of what he suggests by way of toleration of "differences". Indeed, we believe that Ḥima' itself—if it is to be a viable institution—must not only tolerate but even encourage healthy difference of opinion and interpretation. Our only limit to the toleration of Ḥima' is set by the paramount desideratum of the integrity of the Ummah and the stability and health of the State. Up to that point it will be impossible for anyone to presume that Islam has not tolerated (in the Prophet's time) or cannot tolerate even absolute Ḥima'.

The book is serious, thought-provoking and readable. Its get-up is commendable among Pakistani publications. It includes a glossary of technical terms and a general index.

FAZLUR RAHMAN


This book purports to be a continuation of, and a supplement to, the last chapter (Der Islamische Modernismus und seine Koranauslegung) of Ignace Goldziher's well-known work (Die Richtungen der Islamischen Koranauslegung, Leyden,
1920). The author surveys some eighty years of modern Qur’anic exegesis in the world of Islam, with particular reference to the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, taking into account *Tafsir* works in the Urdu language also. He has, however, not been able to include commentaries of Turkish authors. The present survey of modern *Tafsir* literature in the world of Islam, therefore, remains incomplete as it omits an important sector of the Muslim world where a great many changes in the religious life of the people have taken place during the past and the present centuries.

The book unfortunately does not display maturity of judgment and academic acumen. In the very preface the author expresses views and opinions which show how little and imperfect a grasp he has over the subject. He accuses Muslim writers on *Tafsir* of bringing to the fore views which had been expressed repeatedly before and parading them as if they had been presented for the first time (p. vii). After this charge of lack of originality, he hurls another charge against the modern exegetes of the Qur’an that “too little do Muslim scholars endeavour to amend and continue arguments and findings of colleagues” (p. viii). In view of these two statements of stagnation and plagiarism one wonders what remains for the learned author to survey in the modern literature on Qur’anic interpretation. The literature on the subject in Urdu can at best be a reflex, a recapitulation and a paraphrase of the views and comments of earlier masters who wrote either in Arabic or in Persian. The author supplements his remarks by saying that whenever these later writers refer to the views of others, “it is mostly when [sic] contending about principles and rarely because of a desire to reach a better apprehension of the Koran text”. There are strange arguments which presuppose exchange of ideas and arguments by *all* writers on Qur’anic exegesis without reference to the Principles of this important branch of Islamics. On the one hand they are accused of reproducing (in *extenso*?) from others, on the other they have to face the charge of lack of co-operation and exchange of views. The subtleties of the science of *Tafsir* and the numerous warnings contained in the various Hadīths restrain the writers from indulging in fanciful explanations of their own.

After making a hypothetical statement about the need for adapting the text of the Qur’an (p. 1 f.) to the demands of the age right from the death of Muhammad, and recounting the efforts in this direction of earlier writers like Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the author opines that the Qur’ān commentators serenely ignored the call of the new times (p. 2). He then goes on to say that Shāh Waliy Allah of Delhi may be regarded as the “precursor of Modern Muslim Koran interpretation, of course in the qualificative (restricted?) sense used in his work”. But Shāh Waliy Allah himself contradicts this view. In his *al-Fawā’id al-Kabīr fi Usūl al-Tafsīr* (tr. Muhammad Munir al-Dimashqī, Karachi, 1380/1960) he says:

وما ينبغي أن يعلم هاهنا أن الصحابة والتابعين ربما يفسرون

اللفظ بلازم معناه وقد يتغلب التأخرون التفسير القديم من جهة تتبع اللغة

وتحص موارد الاستعمال، وو التفرز من هذه الرسالة سرد تفسيرات السلف
Granting that Shah Waliy Allah laid the foundations of modern Qur’an interpretation in India, what is to be said about the complexion and rôle of the great religious institution at Deoband, the Dār al-‘Ulūm which claims to continue with the teachings of Shah Waliy Allâh and his immediate successors? How far the charge of conservatism and orthodoxy in the light of the author’s declaration can be substantiated against the ‘Ulamâ’ of Deoband. Prof. W. C. Smith and others who maintain that the Deobandis are hide-bound, old-fashioned, dogmatic people would like to revise their opinions in the light of Mr. Baljon’s observations. While referring to Shah Waliy Allah’s remarks on the Khawāriq performed by the saints and other holy men in Islam the author tries to establish that these depended on the recipient’s fit psychological disposition (p. 3). This might be a scientific explanation of the Karbâmâ—in wonders attributed in hagiological works to saints and the awliyâ—as just as some Muslim philosophers like al-Ghazâlî, Ibn Sinâ and al-Fârâbî have tried to explain. In their works, the nature of Prophecy (al-nubuwwah) in Islam. The fact, however, remains that the Ummah, as a whole, has never considered these explanations either to be completely satisfactory or the final word on the subject. These ingenious attempts at the logical explanation of supernatural and occult occurrences have never carried any conviction with the Muslims and have been regarded as an exercise in mental gymnastics rather than a cogent argument.

There can be no difference with the author’s opinion that these scattered observations of Shah Waliy Allâh, though remarkable enough in the Shah’s own milieu, “do not seem to have brought immediate repercussions to any extent”. This should rather have been the central theme, the raison d’être of the work under review. The eccentricities and idiosyncracies in which some modern self-styled ‘Ulamâ and interpreters of the Qur’an have indulged cannot be taken to be representative of, or reflecting, the general trend of opinion among the large majority of the Muslims. In spite of his sterling and greatly-admired services to the cause of the Muslims of the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent the fantastic and natural explanations put forward by (Sir) Sayyid Ahmad Khan in his various exegetical monographs and other writings are little read by the Muslims of today; and through how many editions have these works run? The Muslims have shown their disapprobation in unequivocal terms of all such works and rejected
later Il-Khans, are to-day outnumbered even in their native Ghurāt; elsewhere they are to be found only in a few villages on the outskirts of Herat and in a few scattered settlements in Afghan Turkestan.

This people, the Moghols, are quite distinct from the Hazaras, who have been generally regarded as the Afghan Mongols. The two ethnic groups are separated from each other not only by territory but by culture. The Moghols, though now scattered throughout Afghanistan, have their original home in the somewhat remote region of the Ghurāt, south-east of Herat; they are Sunnis and speak, or only recently ceased to speak, Mongolian. The Hazaras live for the most part in the region named after them, the Hazārajat in Central Afghanistan; they are, alone among the Afghan peoples, Shīʿīs and speak only Persian, though with an admixture of Mongolian words. In the Moghols, as has already been mentioned. Professor Schurmann sees the present-day descendants of the Nikūdarīs. The Hazaras he regards as “a mixed population made up of an Iranian substratum with a heavy Mongolian overlay”.

Professor Schurmann follows Spuler and other scholars before him in connecting the Nikūdarīs with a grandson of Chaghatay who led a contingent westward under Hūlegū and afterwards rose in rebellion against the latter's son and successor Aqāq. It seems improbable of itself that this prince, whose short-lived revolt was confined to the Caucasus area and who afterwards made his peace with the Il-Khan, should have given his name to dissident elements in Southern Persia and Afghanistan which continued their activities in that region throughout the second half of the 13th century. In point of fact there is an incontrovertible argument against such an association. The prince's name, as is clear from the spelling in the contemporary Persian historians and the Georgian and Armenian sources, was not Nikūdar/Nikūdar (Nikuder="Slave") but Tagūdar/Tagūdar (Tegūder="Perfect"), like his namesake the Il-Khan (1282-1284). See Francis W. Cleaves “The Mongolian Names and Terms in the History of the Nation of the Archers by Grigor of Akanc’,” Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies, XII/3-4. pp. 400-43 (427-28), also Pelliot. Notes on Marco Polo I. Paris, 1959, p 193). The eponym of the Nikūdarīs must, therefore, be looked for elsewhere; and in this, as in many other instances, the solution to the problem was first suggested by Yule. À-propos the Nogodar of Marco Polo he refers (The Book of Ser Marco Polo, 3rd ed., I:103), on the authority of Hammer and d’Ohsson (Histoire des Mongols, III:380) to a certain Nigudar, who, upon the outbreak of hostilities between Berke and Hūlegū in 1262, fled eastwards at the head of the greater part of the troops formerly commanded by the Jūchid princes Tutar and Quli: they made their way first to Khurāsān and thence into Afghanistan, where they occupied Ghaznah and other districts on the Indian frontier. D’Ohsson’s unspecified source is Rashid al-Dīn, who mentions a place called Bīnī-i Gāw within the territories held by Nikūdar and his men (ed. Blochet, p. 139). In another passage (ed. Alizade, p. 330) he relates how in 1299 a hazāra of Qaraunas from the Tārum area fled eastwards through Central Persia, Yazd and Kirmān and made their way to Bīnī-i Gāw of the Nikūdarīs. This latter evidence would seem fully to establish the connection between the Nikūdarīs and the general who fled eastwards into Afghanistan.
them as they failed to conform to the exegetical views of the Salaf al-Şāliḥin or what is contained in the authentic (ṣaḥīḥ) hadīths and which do not run counter to the agreed beliefs of the Muslims. Very few among the Indo-Pakistan Muslims today care to know about authors like Ahmad al-Din and ‘Abd al-Ḥakīm who were never looked upon as authors competent enough to write a Tafsīr of the Qur’ān. Practically the same is the case with all other writers and commentators mentioned in this book, with the possible exception of Abù’l Kalam Āzād, Jawhari al-Tantāwī, Sayyid Qūṭb, Abù’l ‘Āli Mawdūdī and that towering personality Muhammad ‘Abdulhusayn, whose works Mr. Baljon has utilized. It would have lent weight and force to his observations had he made a judicious selection of the so-called modern Tafsīr works before attempting to assess their value or presenting them as indicative of the trends in modern Islamic literature on Qur’ānic exegesis.

The conclusions of the author revolve mainly around the much-maligned terms of “Muslim apologetics”. This term came into existence at a time when not only the Muslims but the entire East was in a state of coma. Europe’s advance in the field of science and technology and the new discoveries had dazzled the Easterners and temporarily clouded their vision. Now that the East is coming into its own, the Muslims, among others, have started to become conscious of their rich and glorious past and a future continuous with this past. It will be helpful to take note of this new cultural development in the Muslim world. With all their love for modernism, the Muslims as a nation and as a religious community would not abandon the fundamentals of Islam and its basic values. They strictly apply this criterion to every new movement and every new phenomenon that takes place in the religious life of the Ummah, which, despite its racial and geographical diversities, remains one single mass of humanity professing one faith, acknowledging one God (Allāh) and believing in one Book and one Prophet.

The value of Mr. Baljon’s work, however, lies in the fact that he has attempted an analysis of the latest trends in Qur’ānic interpretation and underlined the line of thought that is being pursued by some of the writers on Islamics in the world of Islam today. Such a study, though purely academic, will no doubt be helpful in understanding what some of the Muslim writers have to say on the allegorical verses of the Qur’ān in juxtaposition to the expositions of the classical authors who still hold unquestioned sway over scholars in the world of Islam. Care, however, may be taken not to place too much reliance on the observations of the author as they do not wholly reflect the views of the mass of Muslims.

KARACHI


This important work, the result of researches carried out in Afghanistan in 1954 and 1955, “is an ethnography of people almost totally unknown, and a people soon to disappear forever”. The Mongols of Afghanistan, the descendants, as Professor Schurmann cogently argues, of the predatory bands known as the Nikūdaris which roamed through Central and Southern Persia under the
in 1262: I have suggested elsewhere ("The Mongol Commanders in Afghanistan and India according to the Tabaqat-i Nāṣīr of Jūzjānī," Islamic Studies, II/2, pp. 235-47 the identity of Nīkūder with another general of the same name who was operating in this very region in 636/1238-9.

On the interesting problem of the relationship between the Nīkūdarīs and the Qaraunas, a subject on which we now have the views of Pelliot (op. cit., pp. 181-96), Professor Schurmann offers no new theories or hypotheses. However, the task which he set himself was one of ethnographical rather than historical research, and his object during his stay in Afghanistan was not to solve specific problems but to collect as many data as possible on the culture of the Moghuls and other kindred and contiguous peoples. The result is the present admirable monograph, addressed primarily to the social scientist, but of interest also to the student of Afghan, Islamic and indeed world history; for the Moghuls and Hazāras are living monuments to an empire which, in the 13th century, stretched across the whole breadth of Asia.

MANCHESTER

JOHN A. BOYLE

Notice


Professor Henry Corbin has previously given to the world of scholarship numerous works in the fields of Ismā'īlism and Ṣūfī theosophy, etc., including a number of excellent editions of important original works—Kashf al-Mahjūb of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sījistānī, Jāmi' al-Ḥikmatayn of Nāṣīr-i Khusrwā, the opera of Shīhāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, the "Martyr," etc. The present work consists of an edition and a French translation (with commentary) of the following works:

(1) The Kitiib al-Yandbi’ (the 'Book of Sources') of Abū Ya'qūb al-Sījistānī (IVth/Xth century) in Arabic, text, 97 pp.;
(2) The Risālat al-Mabda‘ wa‘l-Ma‘ād (the Cosmogony and Eschatology) of Ḥusayn ibn ‘Ali ibn Muhammad, an Ismā‘īli of Yaman of VIIth/XIIIth century in Arabic, text, pp. 100-130; and
(3) a work in Persian, whose date is unknown, and which is a commentary by an anonymous author, apparently Ismā‘īli, on selected passages from Shabistāri’s Gulshan-i Rāz (VIIIth/XIVth century), text, pp. 132-61.

It is noteworthy that each of the three texts is based on one single manuscript known to exist in the world. This naturally eliminates the scope of variant readings, thus throwing the editor on his own resources. This was also the case previously with M. Corbin’s edition of Jāmi‘ al-Ḥikmatayn. In any case, we do not propose to examine the text here, which would require a long and concentrated study on the text itself; we only wish to say to the prospective reader of this work that Professor Corbin has a great deal of experience in this very field.

The fact that these three texts have come to light is no doubt in itself felicitous for it is service to knowledge. Prof. Corbin, however, has supplied us with a further reason why he has chosen these three texts together: they
jointly portray the vicissitudes of Isma’ilism as reflected in its inner history. The first text belongs to the classical Fāṭimid period, the period of glory and creativity; the second belongs to the Yamanī-Musta’li tradition of Isma’ilism after the fall of the Fāṭimid empire—it is interesting but not creative; the third belongs to the Nizārī tradition created by Ḥasan al-Ṣabbūḥ but to the phase ensuing after the destruction of Alamūt by the Mongols in 1256 A.C.—when Isma’ilism began to live “under the mantle” of theosophic Šūfism. The third text illustrates this fact.

So far as the overall religious history of Islam is concerned this fact is, indeed, important, viz. the irresistible attraction that Šūfism and Šūfi thought began to exercise on all the Muslims en masse since the XIIth century and that later even many of the Shi‘ī fell under this spell. The post-Alamūt influence of Šūfism on Isma’ilism has been emphasized by W. W. Ivanow during the past years. The fact, indeed, is that even philosophy itself after severe attacks upon it by the orthodoxy since the XIIth century, has lived more or less under the guise of Šūfism. The trouble, however with such generalizations is that terms are not defined. What is that Šūfism under whose garb Isma’ilism began to live? If by this is meant a form of theosophy and this is what M. Corbin himself says (see p. 4, line 15 of the French translation of the third work) then, surely, Nāṣir-i Khusraw was also a Šūfi for he was certainly a theosoph. Indeed, the whole Ismā’ili mental milieu, based as it is on Ta’wil (Corbin himself has been our eminent teacher on this point) could not be divorced from the essence of Šūfic spiritualism. From p. 3 (at the very beginning of the book), however, we gather that Prof. Corbin does not mean theosophy as a purely speculative philosophy, but something that is “lived through” (vie personelle). It is, however, impossible to draw any hard and fast line between the two as we have told Prof. Corbin before also. Is Ibn Sinā’s metaphysics, his doctrine of the intellect, etc., a “pure” speculation or did it affect his vie personelle? Was the philosophy of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa’ “pure” speculation or was it rather a programme of life?

Professor Corbin also raises the general question whether Šūfī theosophy might not have originated in Ismā’ili circles. He had asserted in his previous works (e.g. La Imagination Créatrice dans le Soufisme d’Ibn Arabi) that the Šūfi method of Ta’wil, e.g. had been borrowed from Shi‘ism. We have said before and we say it again that the Ta’wil was not exclusively used by the Shi‘ah but all those who wished to derive their own meanings from the Qur‘ān, had to resort to this method. And Ta’wil is not peculiar to the Qur‘ān; the Bible, e.g. had been systematically subjected to it before and the Stoics had much earlier applied the same principle of interpretation to Homer and Hesiod. Wherein lies the positive proof that Šūfis borrowed it from the Shi‘ah and not vice versa? The insinuation, that Šūfism originated in Ismā’ili circles and was not an independent growth in Islam, is far too important even to be considered, let alone swallowed without appropriate proof and evidence. But the basic trouble is that M. Corbin insists on assuming (i.e. not even explicitly formulating) his own definitions; e.g. on his definition of a Šūfi—whatever that definition may be—al-Ghazālī is neither a Šūfi nor a truly spiritual person but a “pious theologian”!

KARACHI

FAZLUR RAHMAN