

of al-Māturīdī, is evident from his *Risālāt al-Tauhīd* and his observations on several controversial questions in his note on the *Sharḥ 'Aqā'id al-'Aḍūdiyyah*.

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Chapter XIV

ZĀHIRISM

A

BACKGROUND

Since the second/eighth century, an interminable dispute dragged on for a long time between those who upheld the authority of Tradition (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) in all matters of theology and jurisprudence, and those who advocated opinion (*aṣḥāb al-rā'i*).

It was expected, as pointed out by ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah* (p. 805), that the people of the Hijāz, particularly those of Madīnah, should be versed in the science of Tradition (the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad). With the rise of the 'Abbāsīd Caliphate and the shifting of the political power and the religious leadership completely to Iraq, where the people had had less access to the sayings of the Prophet, and where the aspects of life, the agrarian problems, for instance, were more diverse and complicated through the intermingling of the successive civilizations since times immemorial, a new school

that of *opinion*, made its inevitable appearance. The upholders of opinion, however, did not neglect Tradition, but they found it necessary to supplement Tradition with additions drawn from older codes and prevalent usages or framed by considerations of the actual situation in their new environment.

At the same time an esoteric movement also began among the Shī'ites under a variety of names, the most current of which was the Bāṭiniyyah¹ (seekers after the inner or spiritual interpretation of revelation). The forming of this sect is attributed to a certain Maimūn of whose descent we are completely in the dark.

The Bāṭiniyyah movement took its name from the belief of its followers that every *zāhir* (apparent state of things) has a *bāṭin* (an inner, allegorical, hidden, or secret meaning), especially in connection with revelation.² Since this movement adopted some aspects of Greek philosophy, such as emanationism,³ its followers were considered by Sunni authors to be heretics and outside the pale of faith.⁴ During the Caliphate of al-Māmūn (198/813-218/833) the Bāṭiniyyah movement was quite strong;⁵ some half a century later it was widely spread in Iraq, Persia, Sind (western India), and Oman (south-east Arabia), as well as in North Africa, but it did not enjoy an enduring influence.⁶ It is to be remarked, however, that while a number of individuals in Muslim Spain had shared ideas with the Bāṭiniyyah, no sectarian or heretical doctrine ever struck roots or succeeded in winning over communities of any dimensions there.

So, the second/eighth century had witnessed a heavy atmosphere of esoterism weighing on some fundamentals of Islam such as the essence of God, the understanding of the Qur'ān, and the attitude towards the Caliphate. Added to this there was a trend of upholding *opinion* as a valid source of jurisprudence at the same level with the Qur'ān and the sayings of the Prophet. At the same time there was also the Mu'tazilite school which assumed reason as a more deciding factor than revelation in all matters of religion.

Since all these movements had chosen Iraq as their principal battle-field, another school—contrary to all of them and as extremist as any of them—appeared in Iraq itself and insisted on the verbal understanding of the Qur'ān and of the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad as the sole guiding line to their real meanings clothed in the words of God and of His Apostle. This school was founded by a jurist Dāwūd ibn 'Alī, and it received its name the Literalists' (Zāhiriyyah) school from the clinging of its followers to the wording of the revelation and not to the interpretation of it.

¹ Shahrastāni, Vol. II, p. 29; cf. p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 29, cf. pp. 31f.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 29f.

⁴ *Farq*, pp. 14, 142; cf. pp. 152, 169, 177, 182, 216; cf. Shahrastāni, Vol. II, pp. 31f.

⁵ *Nubadh*, Introd., p. 4.

⁶ *GAL*, I, p. 194; *Suppl.*, I, p. 312.

B

DĀWŪD IBN 'ALI, HIS DOCTRINE AND HIS SCHOOL

The family of Dāwūd ibn 'Ali belonged to Kāshān, a town in the neighbourhood of Isfahān. His father was a secretary (*kātib*) to 'Abd Allah ibn Khālīd, judge of Isfahān, in the days of the Caliph al-Māmūn.⁷ Dāwūd himself⁸ was born in Kūfah in 202/817. His family moved later to Baghdād where he was brought up, educated, and afterwards laid the foundation of his school of jurisprudence which bore his name *al-madhhab al-Dāwūdi*,⁹ but which was better known as the Zāhirite school (*al-madhhab al-zāhiri*).

In Baghdād, Dāwūd ibn 'Ali attended the lectures of many eminent jurists, the most prominent of whom was abu Thaur (d. 246/860), a friend and follower of Shāfi'i. The trend of education he received from them made him shift from the Hanafite rite to that to which his father belonged,¹⁰ the Shāfi'ite, apparently because most of his professors (*shuyūkh*) were more inclined to the Traditionists (*ahl al-ḥadīth*) school to which Shāfi'is belonged than to the school of the upholders of opinion (*aṣḥāb al-rā'i*) who were the followers of abū Ḥanifah *par excellence*. Dāwūd perfected his education by an academic trip to Nishāpūr to meet Ishāq ibn Rāhawaih (d. 237/851 or 238/852),¹¹ who also was a friend and follower of Shāfi'i. Afterwards, he returned to Baghdād where he wrote his books.

Perhaps it is not very strange that a close and profound study of the Shāfi'ite school of jurisprudence led Dāwūd ibn 'Ali finally to be dissatisfied with it. He forsook it and founded a new school, the Zāhirite school, which recognized the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth as the only sources of jurisprudence. He accepted, at any rate, consensus (*ijmā'*) of the Companions of the Prophet, but he rejected analogy (*qiyās*), opinion (*rā'i*), personal approval (*istihsān*), and decisions on the authority of older generations (*taqlīd*) altogether.¹²

Dāwūd ibn 'Ali was accomplished, trustworthy, learned, God-fearing, pious, and ascetic; he was also versed in logic and proficient in the art of disputation.¹³ It was said that he believed that the Qur'ān was created and not eternal, but it seems that this was only an accusation.¹⁴ He died in 270/884 in Baghdād.

Dāwūd ibn 'Ali was a prolific writer. Ibn al-Nadīm enumerates about one hundred and fifty titles from him.¹⁵ It seems that many of these titles were only chapters of some of his books. But there are also titles which represent bulky

⁷ Sam'āni, p. 226.

⁸ His full name was abu Sulaimān Dāwūd ibn 'Ali ibn Khālaf.

⁹ Sam'āni, pp. 224, 255 ff.

¹⁰ Goldziher, p. 28 n.

¹¹ *Tārīkh Baghdād*, Vol. VIII, p. 369.

¹² *Fihrist*, p. 216; Subki, Vol. II, pp. 46; cf. p. 44.

¹³ *Fihrist*, p. 216; Subki, Vol. II, pp. 42; 44, 46.

¹⁴ Subki, Vol. II, pp. 43 f.

¹⁵ *Fihrist*, pp. 38, 216 f.

works of two thousand, three thousand, and even four thousand folios¹⁶ each. A few of these books touched the fundamentals of religion, e.g., "On the *Uṣūl*," "On the Caliphate," "Consensus and the Refutation of *Qiyās*," and "On the Refutation of *Taqlīd*."¹⁷ Most of his other books treated of branches (*furū'*) or minor aspects of *Fiqh* concerning worship and legal transactions. Unfortunately, no book has reached us from him. Ibn Ḥazm, nevertheless refers to him frequently. Muḥammad al-Shaṭṭi (d. Damascus 1307/1889) made a collection of Dāwūd's *Fiqh* gleaned from the various works of his followers.¹⁸

It was related that Dāwūd ibn 'Ali admitted analogy where the cases in question were obvious,¹⁹ but it is more probable that he rejected analogy wholly, whether the cases were ambiguous or obvious.²⁰ As for consensus (*ijmā'*), his position was totally different: he admitted the *ijmā'* of the Companions of the Prophet only,²¹ on the ground that these Companions were in constant contact with the Prophet and fully aware of his intentions.

In his theology in particular he maintains, for example, that God is hearing, seeing, etc. But he says: "I do not say that He is seeing with the agency of sight. . . ."²²

Dāwūd ibn 'Ali re-examined all aspects of *Fiqh* on the basis of his Zāhirite attitude. The following are three examples illustrating his trend of thought and argumentation in this respect.

1. *Prayer on a Journey*.—God has said in the Qur'ān: "And when you journey in the earth, there is no blame on you if you shorten the prayer."²³ This led the Muslims to reduce prayer on a journey from four *rak'ahs* to only two.²⁴ Muslim jurists generally assert that this verse envisages cutting the prayer short on a journey of some duration.²⁵ Dāwūd, on the other hand, maintained that since there is no mention of the duration of the journey in the Qur'ān,²⁶ prayer should be cut short on any journey whatever, even though it is a journey from one encampment to another.

2. *Fasting on a Journey*.—Muslims fast in Ramaḍān, the ninth month of

¹⁶ A folio comprises about twenty lines (cf. *Fihrist*, p. 159).

¹⁷ *Fihrist*, pp. 216, 217; Subki, Vol. II, p. 46.

¹⁸ *Risālah fi Mas'āl al-Imām Dāwūd al-Zāhiri*—an epistle (containing) the questions decided by Dāwūd the Zāhirite (publ. Damascus 1330/1912), erroneously thought by Broekelmann (*GAL, Suppl.*, I, p. 312) to be by Dāwūd ibn 'Ali himself. He states the date of its publication as 1930 which is also a mistake, perhaps a misprint for 1330 A.H.

¹⁹ Subki, Vol. II, p. 46, line 1; *vgl.* Goldziher, p. 36.

²⁰ Subki, Vol. II, p. 46, line 7.

²¹ *Al-Iḥkām*, Vol. IV, p. 147.

²² *Al-Mūlal*, Vol. II, p. 140.

²³ Qur'ān, ii, 184, 185.

²⁴ Muslims perform five prayers per day: one of two *rak'ahs* (units of movements), one of three *rak'ahs* and three of four *rak'ahs* each. To cut a prayer short is to reduce a prayer of four *rak'ahs* to only two.

²⁵ Cf. Mālik, pp. 146-48, etc.

²⁶ *Mafātīh*, Vol. III, p. 444, quoted by Goldziher, p. 47; cf. Shaṭṭi, p. 12.

the lunar year. In this connection we read in the Qur'an: "But he among you who shall be sick, or on a journey, shall (not observe the days on which he travels but he shall) fast the same number of other days (when he returns home)." ²⁷ It is agreed upon by all Sunni jurists that a Muslim may not observe Ramaḍān fasts on a journey which involves certain hardship, either on account of its long duration or its difficult nature, on hot days for example. ²⁸ Dāwūd and his followers assert that a Muslim should not observe fasts on a journey because the wording of the verse does not stipulate any condition. If a Muslim, according to Dāwūd, did observe fasts for some days on a journey, even then he should keep fast for the same number of days when he returns home, for his fasting while journeying was not valid. ²⁹

3. *The Question of Usury (Riba)*.—Usury is forbidden in Islam. ³⁰ But a difficulty arose from a tradition concerning it. It is related that the Prophet Muḥammad said: "(You may barter) gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, and salt for salt, only in equivalent quantities and on the spot. In all other commodities you may deal as you like, provided (the barter is transacted) on the spot." ³¹ Early Muslim jurists concluded from this tradition that a quantity of any commodity should not be bartered for a larger quantity of the same commodity; otherwise, the surplus taken would be usury (*riba*). But if, for instance, a quantity of wrought gold was bartered for a larger quantity of unwrought gold, the surplus would be a gain or, better, a wage for craftsmanship. Furthermore, they considered the six commodities named by the Prophet to be examples only; thus bartering copper, coffee, leather, apples, or wool for a larger quantity of these commodities respectively is also regarded—by analogy—as a form of usury. Dāwūd ibn 'Ali, on the other hand, believed that the Prophet Muḥammad had named these commodities on purpose. Had he intended to prolong the list, nothing would have prevented him from doing so. Accordingly, if a man bartered a quantity, say of iron, maize, apples, or pepper for a larger quantity of the same commodity, the surplus would not be usury but gain.

The jurists contemporary with Dāwūd ibn 'Ali took a very critical attitude regarding him and his school. ³² The Shāfi'ites in general criticized him severely and considered the Zāhirite school to be worthless. Al-Isfara'īni (d. 418/1027) maintained that no account should be taken of the Zāhirites. Since they rejected analogy (*qiyās*), he asserted, they could not have been able to exercise judgment and, therefore, no one of them should be elevated to the position of a judge. Some others presumed that Dāwūd ibn 'Ali was ignorant; others considered him to be a disbeliever. Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855), the famous

²⁷ Qur'an, iv, 101.

²⁸ Cf. Mālik, p. 294 (No. 22).

²⁹ Shāfi'i, p. 13 bottom.

³⁰ Qur'an, ii, 275, 276, 278; iii, 130; iv, 159; xxx, 39.

³¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Cairo, 1331/1912, Vol. V, p. 44. lines 8ff., cf. 44ff.

³² Subki, Vol. II, pp. 43, 46.

founder of the Ḥanbalite school, did not hold him in estimation. ³³ Abu 'Abd Allah Muḥammad ibn Zaid al-Wāsiṭi (d. 306/918–919), an eminent Mu'tazilite of Baghdād, looked down upon the Zāhirite school as ridiculous. ³⁴ The followers of Dāwūd ibn 'Ali, nevertheless, were not only numerous but some of them were also prominent. ³⁵

Dāwūd ibn 'Ali was succeeded, as the head of the Zāhirite school, by his son, abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd (c. 255/869–297/910). But the latter was more of a poet, *littérateur*, and historian than an enthusiastic scholar of jurisprudence. ³⁶ At any rate, he propagated the tenets of his father's school and bestowed on it so much prestige that the Zāhirite rite was in his own days the fourth of the four rites prevailing in the East, the other three being the Shāfi'i, Māliki, and Ḥanafi rites. Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd owes his real fame, however, to an anthology of love-poetry known as *Kitāb al-Zahrah*. ³⁷ The first and only extant half of this anthology was edited by A. R. Nykl ³⁸ and Ibrāhīm Ṭūkān. Abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd had some inclination towards philosophy, but philosophy did not constitute a component part of Zāhirism before ibn Ḥazm.

In the fourth/tenth century the Zāhirite school had enjoyed its widest expansion and the climax of its prestige. The 'Abbāsīd poet ibn al-Rūmi (d. 283/896) praised abu Bakr Muḥammad ibn Dāwūd in a poem which opens with the words: "O son of Dāwūd! O jurist of Iraq!" ³⁹ The famous historian, Ṭabari (d. 310/923), though not a Zāhirite, paid close attention to Zāhirite jurisprudence and studied it with Dāwūd ibn 'Ali himself. ⁴⁰ The foremost jurist of the Zāhirite school in the fourth/tenth century was 'Abd Allah ibn Aḥmad ibn al-Mughallis (d. 324/936), through whom the *Fiqh* of Dāwūd ibn 'Ali became popular in the Muslim world. ⁴¹

In the following century the Zāhirite school was already losing ground in the East; and before the middle of the century, in the days of the Ḥanbalite judge abu Ya'la (d. 459/1066), the Ḥanbalite rite took its place. ⁴² The Zāhirite

³³ *Ibid.*, cf. p. 43. Cf. ibn Khallikān, Cairo, Bulāq, 1299 A.H., Vol. I, p. 4; *GAL*, *Suppl.*, I, 66f; *Nubādh*, *Introd.*, p. 4.

³⁴ *Fihrist*, p. 172.

³⁵ Sam'āni, pp. 224–26.

³⁶ *Fihrist*, p. 216.

³⁷ *Kitāb al-Zahrah* (The Book of the Flower), the first half (published by the University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois), printed at the Catholic Press, Beirut, 1932.

³⁸ An Arabist Orientalist, born in Bohemia 1303/1885 whose academic activities since 1340/1921 belong to his sojourn in the United States. He is versed in very many languages, old and new, eastern and western. He is the representative of the Arabic theory in the rise of troubadour poetry in southern France.

³⁹ Ibn Khallikān, Vol. II, pp. 140–41.

⁴⁰ *Fihrist*, p. 234.

⁴¹ Sam'āni, p. 227.

⁴² *Nubādh loc. cit.*

school, at any rate, continued to enjoy in Syria some prestige until 788/1386.⁴³ In Egypt the school lived longer and had deeper roots. Al-Maqrizi (d. 845/1442), the famous historian of the Mamlūk age in Egypt, was not a follower of the Zāhirite school, but he had a favourable attitude towards Zāhirism.⁴⁴

C

THE ZĀHIRITE SCHOOL IN MUSLIM SPAIN

1. Al-Ballūṭi

The first representative of Zāhirism in Spain was Mudhīr ibn Sa'īd al-Ballūṭi who was born at al-Nashsharīn, a suburb of Cordova, in 273/886. After completing his studies at Cordova, he travelled to Egypt and the Hijāz for a little over three years. On his return, he was appointed as judge (Qāḍi) in the city of Merida, then transferred to the Northern Frontiers and finally made the Chief Justice of Cordova, which post he held until his death towards the end of 355/965. He upheld Dāwūd's doctrines and defended his views, though, in practice, he administered justice according to the established law of the country based on the Mālikite school of jurisprudence. He was also a man of letters, poet, theologian, physiographer, and eloquent speaker. In fact, he was the real forerunner of ibn Ḥazm.

2. Ibn Ḥazm

Life and Works.—Ibn Ḥazm was the real founder of the Zāhirite school in Muslim Spain and the most famous and prominent of the Zāhiri jurists. With him the school reached its zenith, and with his death it died away. In reality, the Zāhirite rite never recruited a community in Muslim Spain. It came on the stage as a philosophy supported by a single man who failed to use his genius in the right way.

Ibn Ḥazm was the descendant of a non-Arab, an Iberian in all probability, but he preferred to link his genealogy with a Persian freedman of Yazīd ibn Sufyān, a brother of Mu'āwiyah, the founder of the Umayyad Caliphate in the East.

The family did not attain any fame before Ahmad ibn Sa'īd, the father of ibn Ḥazm, who became a minister to the Ḥājib al-Manṣūr ibn abi 'Āmir,⁴⁵ the Prime Minister of Highām II, in 381/991.

Ibn Ḥazm, who was born in 384/994 during the long ministerial term of his father, was brought up in luxurious environment. He was fortunate enough

⁴³ *Fihrist*, p. 217.

⁴⁴ Goldziher, pp. 194–96.

⁴⁵ Al-Manṣūr ibn abi 'Āmir was Prime Minister to Highām II who was a weakling. He usurped the power and ruled Muslim Spain virtually for fifty years and as Prime Minister for twenty-six years. He died in 392/1002.

to have been given a good education. The teacher who had the greatest influence on him was ibn Muftit (d. 426/1035), a Zāhirite and a follower of Dāwūd ibn 'Alī; he chose to be eclectic in matters of worship and jurisprudence and did not agree that one should confine oneself to a particular school.

Ibn Ḥazm did not continue to enjoy prosperity and peace for long. With the outburst of the disturbances in 400/1009 and the death of his father only two years later, misfortunes began to overcome him and his family; and when he preferred, on this account, to withdraw from public life, his life became very obscure. A few years later, however, he decided to enter public life again. As a result, he experienced all ups and downs of life, from forming the cabinet to frequent imprisonments.

Six years after the fall of the Umayyad Caliphate in Cordova (422/1031) and the assassination of the fugitive Highām III, life became unbearable for ibn Ḥazm in the whole peninsula, not only because he was a client and partisan of the falling dynasty, but because he entertained also a religious doctrine which the rulers and the ruled in the peninsula did not share.

The only respite which ibn Ḥazm had was during his stay on the island of Majorca from 430/1039 to 440/1049. The local Governor of Majorca was abu al-'Abbās Ahmad ibn Rashīq, an able statesman and a man of letters. For reasons inexplicable, he invited ibn Ḥazm for a sojourn on the island. Ibn Ḥazm took refuge there and began, as soon as he could breathe freely, to propagate Zāhirism. Since he was supported by the Governor, some Majorcans followed him—perhaps out of conviction, perhaps out of political tact—but it seems certain that the majority of the islanders were not in favour of the intruding doctrine. In 439/1047, the famous Māliki jurist, abu al-Walīd al-Bāji (403/1013–474/1081) returned from a journey in the East. He held debates with ibn Ḥazm and caused his disgrace. In the following year, ibn Ḥazm was obliged to leave the island and go back on the mainland, but he was chased out of every town and village in which he tried to secure a footing. Finally, after fifteen years of complete oblivion, he found asylum on the estate of his own family in Manta Līsham where he passed away in 456/1063.

Ibn Ḥazm was a very prolific writer on different subjects ranging from genealogical tables to epistemology. It is believed that his books were four hundred comprising 80,000 folios of some twenty million words. The most important of these books are *Tauq al-Ḥamāmah* (the Dove's Neck-Ring—on confidence and confidants), *al-Mīlāl w-al-Nīhal* (Religions and Sects), *al-Iḥkām fi Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (Precision Concerning the Principles of Religious Matters) and *al-Muḥalla bi al-Āthār* (the Gilded or Ornamented with Revelation and Tradition). This last is a comprehensive book on the aspects of worship and jurisprudence in Islam. Ibn Ḥazm was also a man of letters, poet, and statesman, but he is more famous as a rationalist and theologian.

Ibn Ḥazm's Rationalism.—In his book *al-Mīlāl w-al-Nīhal*, ibn Ḥazm appears to be a rationalist. The problems of *a priori*, of time and space which confronted Kant (d. 1804) so often in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, had busied ibn

Ḥazm in the same way. It is really astonishing that the Muslim theologian had tackled these problems in the same spirit of objectivity seven and a half centuries before the German philosopher. Let us take up the theory of knowledge as discussed by ibn Ḥazm. Knowledge arises, according to him, from the following:

- (a) Sensory perception (*shahādat al-hawās*), that is, observation or sensory evidence.
- (b) Primary reason (*badīhat al-'aql* or *awwal al-'aql*), that is, *a priori* reason without the use of the five senses.
- (c) Proof (*burhān*), which goes back, either closely or remotely, to the evidence of the senses or to primary reason.

Ibn Ḥazm holds definitely that man has six senses, and that the soul grasps perceptible objects (material objects) by the five senses; thus a pleasant odour is accepted by reason . . . thus also the soul is aware that red is different from green, yellow, etc., or that there is a distinction between rough and smooth, hot and cold, etc.

The sixth sense, ibn Ḥazm holds, is the soul's knowledge of primary things; that is, there are some things which man can know through his reason as being axiomatic, without requiring any proof for them. "Such is the soul's knowledge that the part is less than the whole; thus the young child, who is only just able to discriminate, cries when he is given only two dates, but is satisfied when you give him another. This is because the whole is greater than a part, even though the child cannot define the limits of his knowledge. . . . The same sense gives the child the knowledge that two things cannot occupy the same spot; you will see him fight for a place where he wants to sit, knowing that that place is not big enough for another person, and that so long as another person occupies the place there is no room for him also. . . ."

"This is a form of primary intelligence which is common to all except those whose reason is distorted . . . or whose bodies are diseased or impotent in certain respects. . . . These truths of primary reason are truly axiomatic; they are beyond doubt and stand in no need of proof except to a madman . . . or to a scornful sophist." Ibn Ḥazm's argument for the view that these things require no proof is this: "To demand proof of anything requires time; primary reason cannot possibly avoid that fact. . . . Yet between the soul's first learning to discriminate phenomena and its knowing the complete truth of all that we have mentioned, there is not a single minute, nor can there be." But ibn Ḥazm did not deny absolutely the necessity of proof to these things; rather, he held that such proof is a matter for personal acquisition which one may achieve, while another may not, and that it may carry weight only for such as have reached a high level of intellectual training.

Other means of acquiring knowledge, according to ibn Ḥazm, are God's naming of things and men's convention as represented by the languages of

the different nations. These two means, however, belong to theology and are discussed under that topic.

Philosophy and Science.—Like all Muslim thinkers prior to his days, ibn Ḥazm had no access to Greek originals. He had a predisposition towards argumentation, and was versed in the science of dialectics (*Kalām*). He claimed to have read (evidently through translations) the works of the Milesian and Eleatic schools, of Euclid and Ptolemy, of Plato and Aristotle, and of Alexander of Aphrodisias, and to have had a general knowledge of astronomy, astrology, and medicine. He also stated that he was well versed in mathematics in general and geometry in particular.

Ibn Ḥazm does not agree with Heraclitus that the world is in constant flow nor with the Eleatics that motion is non-existent. On Being and Non-Being, he agrees with the Eleatics: Non-Being is not. In keeping with his general trend of thought, he affirms that space and time are limited and that they are, like all other things, created by God. In the same way he maintains that atoms are divisible because it is in the power of God to do everything, and to this power of His, infinite divisibility of an atom is no exception.

In physiography, he holds that the world is limited and the earth is spherical and that the sun is larger than the earth, but he agrees with Anaximenes that the sky is like a vault over the earth. He disagrees, however, with Pythagoras that there is a sister earth which helps the earth keep itself in the correct position.⁴⁶ The world, at any rate, is created, but it has existed for a very long time.

In ethics, he touches lightly on Greek philosophy and maintains with Prodicus of Ceos that death has no pain and that it should not be feared. He also holds with Epicurus and his contemporaries that the desire for pleasure and the repulsion from care are the criteria of happiness. But building up and improvement of character cannot be achieved by philosophy alone; the help of the prophets is necessary.

In his theory of knowledge, ibn Ḥazm emphasizes, in addition to sensory perception and primary reason, three means of acquiring religious knowledge which are particularly fundamental in Islam. These are: the literal sense of the Qur'ān, the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muḥammad, and consensus (*ijmā'*).

The first and foremost source of knowledge is the literal sense of the text of the Qur'ān. This must follow from the context of the fifty-ninth verse of the fourth Sūrah, "O ye who believe! obey Allah and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority, and if ye have a dispute concerning any matter refer it to Allah and to the Messenger. . . ." The text of the Qur'ān must be understood literally unless the words in question are used metaphorically and in a way current among the early Arabs. No divergence is allowed from the text of the Qur'ān except where one verse is modified or abrogated

⁴⁶ *Al-Milal*, Vol. V, p. 58; cf. Ueberweg, Vol. I, p. 68 line 34

by another.⁴⁷ A total dependence on the Qur'ān is made possible by the fact that every aspect of life and every need of men, material or spiritual, is treated in the Qur'ān or provided for in it. God says, "We have neglected nothing in the Book." This implicit meaning was reiterated explicitly in this verse: "This day have I perfected for you your religion and completed My favour to you and chosen for you Islam as a religion."⁴⁸

The second source of knowledge is the Tradition, the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muḥammad. Ibn Ḥazm accepts the true Ḥadīth or the Sunnah when related in a sure way and by reliable men in a connected chain which reaches the Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet is certainly trustworthy, and ibn Ḥazm quotes in this connection from the Qur'ān: "Nor does he speak out of desire. It is naught but revelation that is revealed."⁴⁸

Ibn Ḥazm accepts, as a third source of knowledge, consensus (*ijmā'*) or general agreement of the Companions of the Prophet but on a further condition that all of them should have been aware of the matter agreed upon and that no one of them should have shown any disagreement or hesitation about it.

In contradistinction to the other schools of jurisprudence in Islam, the Ḥanafite school in particular, ibn Ḥazm rejects all other sources of jurisprudence such as intuition (*ilhām*), hearsay (*khabar*), interpretation (*tāwīl*), deduction (*istinbāt*), personal approval (*istihsān*), refraining from the unseemly (*iḥtiyāt*), legitimating a matter passed over in silence (*dalīl al-khiṭāb*), looking for a reason in matters other than mentioned in the Qur'ān (*ta'līl*), and holding a belief on the ground that it has been held by one's predecessors or some prominent contemporaries (*taqlīd*). Only the Prophet Muḥammad must be taken as a model in all matters of belief and behaviour. He equally rejected, and more forcibly, analogy (*qiyās*) and opinion (*rā'i*) or that which a man conceives as true but without a proof, or that which a man chooses out of mere desire. The Muslims should not abide by the beliefs and laws preached by prophets prior to Muḥammad unless they are accepted by Islam as well.

Ibn Ḥazm's views about God, His essence and His attributes, are: God is one and unique; He is incorporeal; so nothing resembles Him nor does He take the shape of anything He has created. He is the creator of everything, of time, of space, and even of His own Throne. He is eternal, all-powerful and all-knowing. His power and knowledge as well as all His other names are eternal.

God cannot be conceived of as ruled by space and time, since He existed before there were space and time, for these were also created by Him. The verses in which God says of Himself: "The God of mercy sitteth on His Throne"⁴⁹ and "Then He directed Himself to the heaven,"⁵⁰ ibn Ḥazm affirms

⁴⁷ *Al-Muḥalla*, Vol. I, p. 52; *Iḥkām*, Vol. IV, p. 107, cf. pp. 59ff.; *Nubadh*, p. 28.

⁴⁸ *Al-Iḥkām*, Vol. IV, p. 147.

⁴⁹ Qur'ān, vii, 53; x, 3; xiii, 2; xxv, 59; xxxii, 4; lvii, 4.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, xli, 11.

with the Ash'arites that God's sitting or settling Himself on the Throne is known; but how it is done is unknown.

God has no attributes which modify His essence: His qualities are names and not adjectives, nor are they derived from adjectives. He says of Himself: "God's are the fairest names. Invoke Him by them."⁵¹ Thus, only these names, ninety-nine in number, by which God has named Himself, may be said to be His; we are not allowed to call Him by names which He has not mentioned as His, for example, the happy, the healthy, the beloved, the noble, or the brave, although these titles are, in themselves, true of Him and cherished by us. We are also not allowed to call Him by names, derived from the verbs with which He predicated Himself. God says: "And when they (the disbelievers) meet the faithful they say, 'We believe'; but when they are apart with their satans (comrades), they say, 'Verily we hold with you and at them we only mock.' God shall mock at them."⁵² God says further: "And they (the Jews) plotted, and God plotted: but of those who plot, God is the best."⁵³ He also says: "And the heaven—with our hands have We built it up."⁵⁴ In spite of all that, says ibn Ḥazm, we cannot call God the mocker, plotter, or builder, simply because He did not call Himself by these names. Moreover, we do not interpret His names to know how or why He is called thus: He called Himself, for instance, the hearer, the One who sees, but we cannot say that He has the sense of hearing or of sight.

Furthermore, God speaks in the Qur'ān of His (one) hand, of His two hands and of His hands; so we may ascribe to Him one hand, two hands, or many hands. In the Qur'ān He speaks also of His eye and of His eyes, but not of two eyes of His. According to ibn Ḥazm, we may ascribe to God either one eye or ascribe to Him eyes, but not two eyes. When we speak of God's eye, hand, or face, we do not mean, at any rate, that He has members similar to ours. On the contrary, the words: face, eye, and hand are used as free metaphors to mean simply God.

And though God is incorporeal, ibn Ḥazm asserts that the Muslims would see Him on the Day of Judgment.⁵⁵ They cannot see Him, for certain, with the power of sight in their eyes but perhaps with the power which is called by some thinkers "the sixth sense."

Regarding our knowledge of God, ibn Ḥazm says, we do not maintain that we come to know Him by primary reason, for we do not want to run the risk of being refuted by somebody asserting that *his* primary reason does not lead him to the knowledge of God. Nor may we allow that the knowledge of God can be acquired by the art of reasoning, by argumentation or proof; since the masses are not capable of such dialecticism. Failing to attain knowledge

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, vii, 180.

⁵² *Ibid.*, ii, 15.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, iii, 54.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, li, 47.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, lxxv, 23.

of God through these channels, some come to the conclusion that He does not exist. Nor may we allow authority or hearsay to be the criteria of the knowledge of God, because these cannot lead to real conviction. We know God only through revelation to the Prophet who is trustworthy and whose word should be accepted on its face value.

Ibn Ḥazm does not believe in the absolute free-will of man. Predestination, according to him, is nothing but the command of God that a thing should follow a definite course. Allah has created in man aptitudes, and every man behaves in compliance with his aptitudes. Accordingly, we may say that all actions of men, good and bad, are ultimately created by God.

Ibn Ḥazm was a polemist by nature, and often right in his contentions. As Hitti says, "In this work [*al-Mīlāl w-al-Nihāl*] he pointed out difficulties in the biblical narratives which disturbed no other minds till the rise of higher criticism in the sixteenth century." Yet he is to blame for the harsh language he used in his attacks on all religions and sects indiscriminately. On some occasions he attacked even some of those who shared with him the same doctrine.

Faith and Islam, says Ibn Ḥazm, are one and the same thing. Islam had abrogated all anterior religions. Therefore, no religion precedent to Islam should be followed, because every religion except Islam is obsolete and, consequently, annulled. Muhammad is the Prophet to all nations; he preached religion according to the prescription of God to him; and when he died revelation ceased. Islam was made complete; it is impossible either to add anything to it, or deduct anything from it, or make any change in it in any way.

The best people are the messengers of God; next are the prophets not entrusted with any mission to any people. After them are the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad. These last differ in their prestige in accordance with their efforts in the service of Islam and their personal character and behaviour, determined by the truth and ideals established by the Qur'an and the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad.

D

ZĀHIRISM AFTER IBN ḤAZM

For a certain period Zāhirism constituted in the East a school of jurisprudence, but in Muslim Spain it never grew beyond a persecuted philosophy. Even as a philosophy it began to decline there after the death of Ibn Ḥazm. It is true that Ibn Ḥazm built a Zāhirite system of dogma and revised Muslim law from that standpoint, but his views enjoyed only a restricted acceptance in the Muslim West. In the East they found practically no echo. This is due to the uncompromising attitude he had taken in all matters of creed, worship, and legal transactions as well as to the harsh language he used while speaking of all those who did not share with him the views he entertained. The Zāhirites in the East, and the Ḥanbalites too, have always preferred to follow Dāwūd

Ibn 'Alī, though very little *Fiqh* has reached us from him. The few attempts to introduce Zāhirism into North Africa were due largely to political considerations.

On the Andalusian soil Zāhirism found support or acceptance with individuals here and there. Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (368-463/978-1071), the famous traditionist and biographer, had some leaning towards it.

A young contemporary of Ibn Ḥazm and of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr, al-Ḥumaidi was a historian and biographer of established fame. He was a declared Zāhirite. When the persecution of the followers of the Zāhirite school reached a high pitch in Muslim Spain, he left his native land, went to the East, and settled down in Baghdad where he died forty years later. Al-Ḥumaidi was the first man to introduce Ibn Ḥazm's works into the East, but there they made no impression.

One would expect, despite all persecution, that Zāhirism should have had numerous followers for a certain period at least, as has been the case with most other movements. Ibn al-Aṭhīr says:⁵⁶ "There was in the Muslim West a multitude of them (of the Zāhirites) called the *Ḥazmīyyah* or followers of Ibn Ḥazm." Asin Palacios tried to draw a complete list of them.⁵⁷ Some of these were, to be sure, Zāhirites or with Zāhirite leanings. But a number of those who were considered by him to be such were certainly not. That al-Ghazālī was antagonistic to the Bāṭinites⁵⁸ and was one who advocated a strict religious behaviour and showed a dislike for all innovations, as we see clearly in all his works, does not make him a Zāhirite, and less so a follower of Ibn Ḥazm, as Asin Palacios tried to show.⁵⁹ Nor can we agree with Asin Palacios that Ibn Rushd (Averroës) was a Zāhirite on the mere fact that he quoted Ibn Ḥazm three times⁶⁰ in his *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*. Ibn Rushd mentioned also the Zāhirites once with disdain⁶¹ and twice with indifference.⁶² Moreover, his theme in his two small but worthy epistles, *Faṣl al-Maqāl* and *Manāḥij al-Adillah*, is that the masses cannot rise or be raised above the literal meaning of the Law, while the thinkers are called upon to ponder on the intentions of religion.

With the advance of the sixth/twelfth century Zāhirism became a problem in the Muslim West, in Spain, and in North Africa: while the masses behaved on the narrowest Zāhirite lines, Zāhirism itself was being fought on every side. Philosophy was equally combated. The rationalist thinker Ibn Ṭufail⁶³

⁵⁶ Ibn al-Aṭhīr, Vol. XII, p. 61; cf. *Tāj*, Vol. VIII, p. 245; cf. Asin, p. 280.

⁵⁷ Asin, pp. 280-329.

⁵⁸ *Al-Munqidh min al-Dalāl*, Damascus, 1st ed., 1352/1934, pp. 5, 16, 44-47.

⁵⁹ Asin, p. 299; cf. pp. 297-300.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 208, 542, 580.

⁶¹ *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, pp. 361f.

⁶² *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 429.

⁶³ Ibn Ṭufail, pp. 126f., 136ff. (second ed., pp. 178f., 188ff.)—Translation by Ockley, pp. 101 (157f.), 116-19 (171-76). See also *Ibn Ṭufail and His Philosophical Romance* (1st ed.), pp. 58f., 77-83 (second ed.), pp. 37f., 57-61.

furnishes us with a very clear picture of the situation there; a few enlightened individuals were living in the midst of a multitude of common people unwilling and incapable of thinking for themselves.

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Chapter XV

IKHWĀN AL-ṢAFA

A

INTRODUCTION

The name Ikhwān al-Ṣafa was assumed by a group of *libres penseurs* who cultivated science and philosophy not for the sake of science and philosophy, but in the hope of forming a kind of an ethico-spiritual community in which the *élites* of the heterogeneous Muslim Empire could find a refuge from the struggle that was raging among religious congregations, national societies, and Muslim sects themselves.

External evidence concerning the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa is so scanty that no clear historical picture of them is in any way possible. Were it not for abu Ḥayyān al-Tauhīdī (d. after 400/1009), a famous author and a friend of some members of the group, no facts about them would have come down to us.

The group of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafa originated in Bagrah. In about 373/983, the group was already famous and its "Epistles," which contain its spiritual doctrines and philosophical system, were in wide circulation.¹

The complete name of the group was *Ikhwān al-Ṣafa wa Khullān al-Wafa wa Ahl al-Ḥamd wa Abnā' al-Majd*,² a name which was suggested to them by the chapter of the "Ring-Necked Dove" in *Kalīlah wa Dimnah*, a book which they very highly esteemed.³

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafa succeeded in keeping complete secrecy about their names. But when abu Ḥayyān was asked, in about 373/983, about them, he named, perhaps at random, five of them: abu Sulaimān Muḥammad b. Ma'shar al-Busti, known as al-Muqaddisi, abu al-Ḥasan 'Alī b. Hārūn al-Zanjāni, abu Aḥmad Muḥammad al-Mihrajāni, a certain al-'Aufī, and the famous Zaid b. Rifā'ah.⁴

¹ *Imta'*, ii, pp. 4 ff.

² The true friends, the faithful comrades, the people deserving praise, and the sons of glory (cf. *Jāmi'ah*, i, p. 141).

³ Cf. *Rasā'il*, i, p. 310; ii, pp. 166, 193, 207, etc.; iii, pp. 173-78; iv, pp. 87, 203; *Jāmi'ah*, i, pp. 128 ff.

⁴ *Imta'*, ii, pp. 4 ff.