

Philosophical Tradition of Muslim Thinkers

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February 03, 2015

A little philosophy inclines man's mind to atheism, but depth in philosophy brings men's minds about to religion. - Francis Bacon: 1561 - 1626

Table of Contents

[Preface]	4
[History of Muslim Philosophers]	5
NOTES.....	15

[Preface]

Regarding religion, it is often assumed that by its very nature it is difficult, or for some thinkers impossible, to interpret and investigate it philosophically or scientifically. At the same time we find almost all great religious thinkers of prominent religions, have also been philosophers and many in Islam have also been scientists. They have interpreted and examined religions far more than a dogmatic or uncriticized faith, and have related their religious tenets to experiences and rational judgments. They have subjected, even divinely revealed tenets, to radical criticism. It is interesting to note that many of the philosophers, and even scientists, who have appeared in any history of knowledge at any time have also been believers in religion, and in some cases theologians. This tells that there is always a need of intellectual interpretation for religions. It also supports the fact that religion is not an abstract idealism; it is concrete and practical; that ideals are not only abstractly valid in the Platonic realm of ideas, but are realizable in the world of actual existence. Religion, just like philosophy and science, is related with the present and visible world. Its perception, in many ways, leads humanity intellectually toward the same everyday life experiences that philosophy and science investigate and address rationally.

[History of Muslim Philosophers]

History of Islamic philosophy begins from the time of the advent of Islam in 622 C.E. Revelation of Qur'anic injunctions, appealing to philosophical interests like, "My Lord! Increase me in knowledge,"¹ inviting to God's mathematical ways, "... and He has enumerated everything in numbers,"² and emphasizing philosophically, "Call [the mankind] onto the way of your Lord with wisdom and fair exhortation, and reason [argue] with them in the better way,"³ incited intellectual cognition, leading to philosophical discussions and scientific investigations, which soon got involved with religion in Islamic tradition. According to Islam, the faculty of reason in human beings is an innate ability, so that they may direct their instincts in subordination to it. Islam maintains that reason is the voice of God and submission to His voice is submission to reason. The famous Muslim philosopher of the twentieth century M. M. Sharif in *A History of Muslim Philosophy* argues in the light of the traditions of the Prophet of Islam, "God has given man the will to choose, decide, and resolve to do good and evil. He has endowed him with reason and various impulses so that by his own efforts he may strive and explore possibilities."⁴ Many sayings of the Prophet of Islam, started playing an important role in inspiring intrigue discussions and complex intellectual cognition by the scholars of different descent, and thinkers of other faiths and races who had entered into the mainstream of Islam. Muslim thinkers finding no contradiction between Islamic faith and the philosophical quest, considered philosophy as a legitimate approach to understand and practice the way of Islam. Therefore, soon after the advent of Islam in the seventh century, many philosophers, scientists, and literary scholars appeared in the world of Islam between eighth and thirteenth centuries, which is known the "Golden Period" of Islamic history.

One key factor which initially played a vital role in facilitating the introduction of philosophical knowledge to Muslim believers whose knowledge was based on revealed theology, was the perfection of Arabic language. The Qur'an, which was collected around 633 C.E., is the first book in Arabic prose form through which the beginning of literary composition in Arabic language can be traced back. Its perfect grammar and faultless language, thus exercised a unique influence on the Arabic language and literature that paved the way for the translation of philosophical and scientific terminology into Arabic. Oliver Leaman, in *A Short History of Islamic Philosophy*, remarks:

Since the grammar of the Arabic language is the grammar of the language which God used in transmitting his final revelation, it was taken to represent formally the structure of what can be said and how it can be used. The miracle of the Qur'an lies in the language itself, and one of the proofs of Islam is taken to be the purity and beauty of the form of expression of the text itself. It is hardly, surprising, therefore, that grammar of that language is accorded high status as an explanatory vehicle.⁵

In Arabic vocabulary, a meaningful word initially of three Arabic alphabets known as the root or *makhraj*, with the help of its very articulate and systematic grammar, is capable of evolving and creating new words with great ease. Thus the ease, fluency, and richness of the Arabic language made it possible to coin new words, and translate any foreign philosophical,

scientific, and medical terminology into literary Arabic. However, in this venture - before Arabic - the first Semitic language into which the Greek philosophical, scientific, and literary texts were translated was Syriac. In 529 C.E., the Roman Emperor Justinian declared Greek philosophy the knowledge of the pagans, and ordered to close Platonic schools all over his empire. Many scholars of Classical Greek philosophy along with their works moved to Persia. Persian emperor Khusro - I Anushirwan, welcomed them. When Alexander the Great conquered Persia, Greek knowledge was briefly introduced in Persia by the thinkers accompanying him, as well as by those who were already settled there. This was virtually the first penetration of Greek philosophy in the east. But soon after the death of Alexander, finding unfavorable attitude of the Zoroastrian Persians towards Greek learning, the Platonists turned to translate philosophical texts into Syriac which was an Aramaic dialect, a feature that also made it easy to translate philosophy into Arabic.

Philosophy and revealed religion may appear for some so discrete in nature that there cannot be a philosophy of a particular religion. But regarding the religion of Islam and linguistic suitability of Arabic tradition, this notion is not that serious. Arabic language of al - Kindi's time was in the process of constructing and perfecting technical vocabulary for Greek scientific, medical, and philosophical words. Philosophy in the Islamic world spread initially through the medium of Arabic language. Its importance in the lives of meaning seeker Muslims helped them to standardize an articulate science of Arabic grammar and lexicography. Preserving faultless and uncorrupted text of their Holy Qur'an, helped Muslim philosophers to set a higher standard of speech and expression. Philosophical thought in Islam known as *falsafah* - Arabic word for the Greek *philosophia* - emerged as a result of an intellectual discipline that matured from the philosophical appeal of the Greek, Persian, and Sanskrit texts translated into Arabic. Islamic scholars of the seventh century meditated on *falsafah*, which they defined as knowledge of all existing things of divine as well as human matters. They identified *falsafah* with the Qur'anic term *hikmah* (wisdom or organized thought), believing the origin of *hikmah* to be divine and debated Qur'anic revelation and reason or *kalam* - a term used as a translation of the Greek *logos*. Above all, an ethical reverence for seeking knowledge was infused by the Qur'anic appeal to reasoning and its Prophet's traditions advising Muslims to pursue learning, even if one has to go as far as China and acquire knowledge even from the heathens. This reverence and various other factors provided the impetus for knowledge. In order to understand why Muslim thinkers throughout the history of Islamic civilization have viewed philosophy an important subject of Islamic tradition, it is important to be familiar with the theological tradition of Islam. William Chittick, in *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy*, argues:

Like other religions, Islam addresses three basic levels of human existence: practice, understanding, and virtue; or body, mind, and heart; or, to use the well known Koranic triad, *islam* (submission), *iman* (faith), and *ihsan* (doing what is beautiful). These concerns are patently obvious to anyone who has studied the Koran or the Hadith (the saying of the Prophet), and Muslims have always considered the "search for knowledge"

that the Prophet made incumbent on the faithful to pertain to all three of these domains. ... Islamic virtue is grounded in the attempt to find God present at all times and in all places, just as the Prophet found Him present. Practice pertains to the domain of the body, understanding to the mind or "intelligence" or "intellect" or "reason" (*aql*), and virtue to the heart (*qalb*), where one is able to experience the reality of God without any intermediary.⁶

In Islamic practice, it is important to first fully understand the Qur'an and the Hadith (the Sunnah of the Prophet), and investigate the objects of faith specified in its scripture. However, some thinkers were doubtful of philosophy's compatibility with Islamic theology, but there is ample evidence that Muslim interpreters of Greek philosophy were sincere followers of the Qur'an and Hadith. At the same time it is also worth considering that Islamic jurists and theologians who would criticize the philosophers, also attacked each other with rigorous criticism.

Muslim thinkers' philosophical and scientific achievements, thus, became a remarkable aspect of Islamic discourses. Whereas, philosophical thought helped create a golden period of Islamic civilization, religious criticism amongst the believers, created many factions, different sects, and disunity, with the consequence that later on philosophy and religion became separate subjects. Though Islamic theology had stemmed from a base different from the Greek traditions, the power of Greek philosophy, in what it could do and explain, proved a temptation hard to resist for the Muslim thinkers. Thus, using the language and culture of their religion, Muslims started exploring and explaining ideas and arguments of Greek thought which were agreeable to Islamic view. Since, doctrine of Neoplatonism fitted neatly into Islamic theology; it made an overall impact on Muslim philosophy. Although Neoplatonism does not seriously affirm the idea of a God creating out of nothing, it does emphasize the existence of one supreme being out of which everything else emerges in such a way as not to tamper with the absolute unity of the One God in Islam.⁷

By the ninth century, what is known the "Islamic Golden Age," the Abbasid Caliph al - Ma'mun viewed that reason and faith can be same; that by fully opening the mind and unleashing human creativity, many wonders - including peace - can be unleashed. Thus, a great translation movement of Classical Greek philosophy and sciences, Persian literature, Indian mathematics and Roman law, came to full swing in Baghdad. Many important foreign scientific, medical, and philosophical texts were translated into Arabic. Muslim, Jewish, Christian, and Persian scholars, translating as well as writing in Arabic, interpreted the philosophical and scientific inheritance of the Greeks, especially Plato and Aristotle. Introduction to philosophy and science was initiated by al - Kindi, al - Farabi, ibn Sina, and many more in Baghdad. In the Arab Spain philosophical and scientific knowledge came to its peak, with massive translations and commentaries on Aristotle by Averroes (1126 - 1198) and his contemporary Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1135 - 1204).

Here, it is important to mention some of the early Muslim philosophers, their views about philosophy, and its compatibility with Islamic theology. Al - Kindi (801 - 873), in Latin Alkindus, was the first great Arab philosopher to follow the philosophy of Neoplatonism. He is considered an

Arab philosopher, but he was more than a philosopher with a strong theological inclination. He differed from his contemporary the Assyrian Christian Hunayn ibn Ishaq (809 - 873), in two things: his religion and his ignorance of Syriac, Greek and Latin languages. Hunayn, who had good knowledge of Latin, Arabic, Syriac, Greek and Persian languages, played a very pivotal role as a translator of Greek philosophical, scientific, and medical treatises available to him during his time. Though he was originally from southern Iraq, he had studied Greek and became known among the Arabs as the "Sheikh of the translators." He established such a method of translation that it was widely followed by all the later translators which rarely required any correction. The Abbasid Caliph **al-Ma'mun**, in recognition of his unique talent made him in charge of the **House of Wisdom**, "*Bayt al Hikmah*" the famous institution where works of many foreign languages were translated into Arabic and made available to the scholars.

Whereas Hunayn and his students translated Syriac version of Greek texts into Arabic, al - Kindi was one of the first benefactors of the translation movement that became the basic impetus for the Muslim philosophical tradition. Among al - Kindi's best - known philosophical works is *On First Philosophy* in which he has given his own definition of philosophy: "*Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things within man's possibility, because the philosopher's end in his theoretical knowledge is to gain truth and in his practical knowledge to behave in accordance with truth.*" He maintained that the noblest part of philosophy is "first philosophy," which is knowledge of the "first truth" and the "first cause." Al - Kindi believed in the compatibility, between philosophy and revelation, and was firmly convinced that he could co - interpret literal Qur'anic religious doctrines and Greek philosophical concepts. He held that philosophy and religion correspond on the basis of three arguments: first, that theology is part of philosophy; second, that the revelations of the prophets and philosophical truth conform to each other; and third, that the theological pursuit is logically ordained. For al - Kindi, supremacy of the revealed truth is prophet's privilege, who intrinsically posses this divine science that transcends human capability. He believed in revelations, creation of world *ex nihilo*, and finally its destruction.

Al - Kindi was followed by many philosophers in Baghdad which reached its highest point in Islamic literary, scientific, and philosophic spheres. Following the Greek philosophers, in Islamic tradition, knowledge of science and philosophy - in some cases theology also - were merged together in a thinker. Al - Razi (865 - 925), in Latin Razes, a highly active physician and a passionate rationalist, believed in reason and reason alone. For him logical reason is the unique criterion of knowledge and conduct. Although he was a theist believing in God, he was strongly against prophecy, revelation, and all irrational trends of thought. He argued that there is no sense in having some humans, like prophets, guiding the rest of humanity with dogmas. He believed, since God has given human beings reason in order to gain through it from the present and future the utmost benefits that mankind can obtain, so reason sufficiently guides one to God's

existence. For him instead of a prophet, reason is God's best gift to humankind. He held that human beings are born with an equal inclination toward knowledge, differing only in the cultivation of their dispositions. Some, inclined to learning them are directed to everyday practical ways of life. He rejected al - Kindi's doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*, believing that the body is created from matter, which has existed eternally, is made up of indivisible parts or atoms separated by the void.

After Aristotle the 'first teacher of philosophical sciences,' Al - Farabi (870 - 950), known in Latin Alpharabius, is generally referred to in Arabic sources as the 'Second Teacher' of science and philosophy. Al - Farabi, remaining focused on philosophy, refined Arabic vocabulary to be used more subtly and with greater ease. In spite of Greek philosophy's pagan identity, he successfully introduced Aristotle into Islamic thought, tradition, and culture, and cleared the way to make it compatible with Islamic theology. His philosophy is established on the foundation of Aristotelianism, with a superstructure of Neoplatonic metaphysics. To this he added a political theory benefiting from his study of Plato's *Republic* and *Laws*. He is therefore, regarded as the first Muslim thinker to have interpreted "Islamic political philosophy." However, the core of his philosophy is to be perceived in his conception of the "intellect." For al - Farabi, the only intellect entirely independent of matter is the "active intellect," which is actualized knowledge. Thus the "active intellect" is to the possible intellect of man, what the sun is to the eye.

Translation of Aristotelian logic became the center of great interest in the Arabic speaking world, mainly because it was useful in debates with the non-Muslims in their attempt to present the merits of the religion of Islam through rational argumentation. The distinctive feature of the development of philosophy in Islam is that Muslim thinkers within their theological preoccupation remained true to the Classical Greek ideal. According to William Chittick:

The domain of practice came to be institutionalized in the Sharia (Islamic Law), whose experts, commonly called the "ulama" (*ulama*) - the "knowers" or "scholars" - were trained in the science of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The domain of understanding developed into three basic approaches to knowledge, which can be called "*Kalam*" (dogmatic theology), "theoretical Sufism," and "philosophy (*falsafa*). The domain of virtue, the most inward of these domains, stayed for the most part hidden, but nonetheless it took on the broadest variety of manifestations. To it belong personal piety, devotion to God, love, sincerity, "god - wariness" (*taqwa*), and many other human qualities bound up with the interior life. ... The word *adab*, for which we have no adequate English equivalent, refers to proper and beautiful deportment and correct behavior, both physical and verbal. It denotes a broad domain that includes all the little courtesies and politenesses, observance of propriety and good manners, elegant handling of social situations, accomplishment in belles letters and poetry recital, skill in calligraphy and music, care to observe one's social and professional duties, and perfect harmony between outward behavior and inward attitude.⁸

Ibn Sina (980 - 1037), famously known in the West as Avicenna, a thinker of unique excellence, was a philosopher, physician, and a man of science. He writes in his autobiography that he read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* forty times, exploring whether it dealt with Being or the principles of knowledge. It became clear to him only after he read al - Farabi's *Intentions*

of *Aristotle's Metaphysics* that Aristotle was arguing on the subject of Being. Ibn Sina conceived his original argument that universals enter into human minds from outside, through the active intellect, and that reflection on specifics may prompt the mind for reception of the universals. He defined a thoughtful epistemology and psychology that formed his theory of prophecy, classifying prophethood at four levels: intellectual, imaginative, miraculous, and sociopolitical. His philosophy had a great impact in the East as well as the West. As Avicenna he was known to twelfth century authors at Oxford and Paris. He attained new fame in modern times in political philosophy through Ernst Bloch's provocative book *Avicenna und die Aristotelische Linke*.

Introduction to philosophy in Islamic tradition is incomplete without Ibn Rushd (1126 - 1198), known as Averroes in the Latin West. He produced voluminous and varied philosophical works as compared with other great philosophers of Muslim world. Three features distinguish him from al-Farabi and Ibn Sina: his methodical commentaries on Aristotle's texts, his meticulous dealing with philosophy's relation to religion, and his composition of systematic treatises on *Islamic fiqh* (Islamic Jurisprudence). He, though declared philosophy the twin sister of religion, essentially subordinated religion to philosophy. However, his main contribution to Islamic philosophy, and to that of Jewish and Christian world, is the message that there are three different routes to the same truth which are equally acceptable. His commentaries revived Aristotelianism in Western Europe and were fairly recognized by the Jews and Christians. His impact on the Latin philosophy is such that Western thought between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries is inexplicable without considering his great conceptual contribution. Ibn Rushd's presentation of rational and scientific discourses in his works, serve as a modern foundation for theoretical openness, political freedom, and religious tolerance in Western thought.

One of the interesting traditions of Muslim thinkers is that they were not merely the translators or followers of the Greek philosophers, as Oliver Leaman says, "They [the Muslim thinkers] created a metatheory, a theory about theories, which is even more radical than the theories themselves. This metatheory is sometimes called the 'theory of double truth,' and it argued that the truths of religion and philosophy are so distinct that there is no way that they can contradict each other."⁹ The Arab philosophers understood that religion and philosophy do not come into conflict, they are about the same truth, but expressed in different ways. In the history of world philosophies there is a well-recognized role of Muslim thinkers and philosophers in a successful transmission of Classical Greek philosophy to the West. They provided the foundation in the development of Western scholasticism, in the advancement of human knowledge, in the progression of empirical sciences. Muslim thinkers and philosophers have played a great role in engendering the Italian Renaissance, and in delivering an impetus to philosophical speculation to the Western thinkers from Rene Descartes to the modern time philosophers and scientists. It is important to understand that the Muslim philosophers not only played the role of translating Greek philosophies, but also made their own thoughtful contribution to the

philosophical and scientific knowledge. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, the editors of *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* argue that:

Certain philosophers of the formative period, like al - Kindi, al - Farabi, and Averroes, were interested primarily in coming to grips with the texts made available in the translation movement, rather than putting forward a properly "Islamic" philosophy. This is not to minimize the importance of Islam for any of the figures dealt with in this volume: even the Aristotelian commentator *par excellence* Averroes, who was after all a judge and expert on Islamic law, dealt explicitly with relationship between *falsafa* and Islam. And once Avicenna's philosophy becomes absorbed into the Islamic *kalam* tradition, we can point to many self - consciously "Islamic" philosophers. Still the term "Arabic" philosophy identifies a philosophical tradition that has its origins in the translation movement.¹⁰

When modern philosophical thought in the West began with Rene Descartes, Muslim philosophy had already penetrated deep into Europe. In the history of Western philosophy, there is sufficient evidence that most of the texts written in Arabic as well as in Hebrew had been translated into Latin and some other European languages. "Adelard of Bath (1116 - 50) speaks of his *studia Arabica/Arabum studia* (in reference to natural philosophy) and *magistri*, which he probably encountered in southern Italy and Sicily. Stephen of Pisa (1127), who wrote on cosmology in Antioch, expresses his debt to 'a certain Arab.'"¹¹ Hebrew translation of al - Ghazali's *Tahafut al - Falasifa*, was being studied by the Dominican Raymond Martin. Though Descartes did not acknowledge but he came to conclude, *I think, therefore, I am*, from al - Ghazali's view of being, *I will, therefore, I am*. "A Muslim scholar Kamal al - Din ibn Yunus of Mosul (d. 1242), a great Muslim teacher of his time, becoming a household member of Frederick II Hohenstaufen's family, wrote a book on logic for him. ... Andrea Alpago (d. before 1546) acquired knowledge of Avicenna's psychology from the Shiite scholar Muhammad ibn Makki Shams al - Din al - Dimashqi (d. 1531) in Damascus."¹² Translations of Islamic literature and philosophical works of al - Kindi, al - Farabi, ibn Sina, ibn Rushd, ibn Tufail, Maimonides, and many Muslim and Jewish thinkers proved helpful in the birth of European Renaissance.

Today, the students and researchers of Muslim philosophy question: What went wrong with the philosophical and scientific cultures of the Islamic civilization which transmitted knowledge to Europe, but repudiated rationalism in its own home? Why the Muslims put an end to ibn Rushd's threefold system of truth: rhetorical (religious); dialectical; and philosophical (empirical)? While there is no single answer to the decline of Islam's early inventive cultures of scientific and philosophical eminence that for centuries led the world in many areas. It is tragic, both in an historical and a human sense, but many factors contributed to the stagnation of rationalism in Islam. In the ninth century Baghdad, *Bayt al - Hikma* sponsored by the Abbasid caliphs with many thinkers and students, and faculties of philosophy, psychology, jurisprudence, medicine, astronomy, and social sciences, was in actuality a time and a milieu. It was not a physical academy or a university, but was a great center of cross - cultural intellectual and scientific production. In the same way the Umayyad Caliphate's patronized center of knowledge at Cordova was not a university

or an academy type independent institution. A running stream of knowledge of science and philosophy flowed back and forth between Baghdad and Cordova. Once the Arab patron - dynasties in Baghdad and Cordova lost power, their centers of learning were orphaned and finally died. The abandonment of rationalism is also attributed to al - Ghazali (1058 - 1111), whose arbitral book, *The Incoherence of the Philosophy* professed that causality was an illusion and rational philosophy futile. Ibn Rushd of Cordova, on the other hand rejoined that God has created a logical universe of cause and effect, and argued; "he who repudiates causality, actually repudiates reason." Al - Ghazali, though, had denounced speculative philosophy believing that philosophical skepticism puts limits on divinity, he did not reject scientific investigations.

One big blow to rationalism in the world of Islam was the fall of Arab dynasties, both at Baghdad and Cordova. Philosophical and scientific knowledge was introduced first of all as *falsafah* in Arabic language, and was patronized by the Arabs, Abbasids in Baghdad and the Umayyads in Spain as "Arabic Philosophy." The Christians in 1493, conquered Spain and ending eight centuries of Muslim rule, massacred many Muslims and Jews, and expelled many of them from Spain, but retained their philosophical and scientific works. In Baghdad, the crushing impact on Muslim heartland by the successive waves of invasions, led by the Turkic Seljuks, the Crusaders, the Ayyubid Kurds, the savage Mongols, and the Ottomans, gradually destroyed the centers of knowledge. Millions of books were thrown into the river by the Mongols and libraries were burned to ashes. Later caliphs, sultans, and monarchs who were to patronize and support centers of learning, remained involved in consolidating their positions and fighting battles. In the heartland of Islam, experiencing turmoil, massacre, and fierce rules of the Mongols and Temuri Mughals, people in all walks of life looked for solace in religious thought and spirituality instead of philosophical argumentation. Muslim lands were now flooded with saints, and miracles became a part of every - day life. Thus, mysticism, Islamized as Sufism, become an inclination and a sigh of relief for the pathos of the masses. Sufism provided a new ideology to the caliphs and monarchs, and instead of patronizing philosophical learning, they began to patronize Sufi saints. People instead of asking for their rights from the rulers, started seeking help from the blessings of the saints who would pray for them. Belief in collective piety, hope and confidence in God's grace, triumphed over the earlier concept of Classical Islam, "submission to God is submission to reason." A wave of individualistic quest for God engulfed the Muslim community, seeking solace in prayers and in music as *sama* in the Sufic - inspired services.

Arabic language was replaced by Persian and most of the philosophical works started appearing in Persian language. Significant philosophical trends after ibn Sina, were attempts to reconstruct holistic systems that refine rather than refute a range of philosophical propositions and religious questions. A new trend in philosophy, second only to ibn Sina, the "philosophy of Illumination" of Shihab al - Din Suhrawardy (1153 - 1191) appeared. The system defined a new method, the "Science of Lights," which

maintains that we obtain the principles of science immediately via "knowledge of presence." About half a century after Suhrawardy's execution, the philosophy of Illumination was viewed as a more complete system. Its aim was to expand the structure of Aristotelian philosophy to include carefully selected religious topics, defending the harmony between philosophy and religion. This gave rise to Mulla Sadra's (1572 - 1641) theory of the unity or sameness of the knower and the known. The influence of Sadra's epistemology on Muslim theo - philosophy continues even today.

In the seventeenth century, when European nations began to colonize the newly found continents of America and Australia, they acquired immense wealth from overseas. This enabled them to undertake ventures of colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Muslim world. European imperialism in the Middle East, Iran, Muslim ruled India and Southeast Asia, impacted the final blow. Colonialism drowned the Muslim world into economic recession and divided it into nation states with conflicting borders. Because scientific and educational projects are based on funding by nation's exchequer, Muslim nations were spending money on battles, either fighting for their freedom from their European masters or were involved in disputes with each other. Today in the twenty first century, Muslim nations are part of the developing world, with many problems such as poverty, economic stagnation, educational regression, and above all, political instability.

In the long history of philosophy, philosophers have been arguing and writing mostly for intellectuals and other philosophers. But now we have arrived at an epoch in our history where there is a need to adopt and follow a way of philosophy to be read, understood, and practiced by the intellectuals and non - intellectuals alike. Many complex conflicting arguments and multiple contradictions in this task need to be addressed to achieve a simple and clear intellectual vision for the common man and his world. The world is moving fast ahead, while the Muslims, still basking in their past glories are struggling to revive their lost golden period of philosophical and scientific eminence. Therefore, the struggle today between the Muslim fundamentalists and the humanists, continues to dominate the global intellectual and political scene in their own way. But the way we are instantly connected by a network of information and knowledge exchange, we are impelled to think and act globally where philosophy is no more being viewed the "queen of knowledge." Its historic role as the supreme form of intellectual life, the chronicler of time and eternity, and the guide of religious or worldly life, has been demoted to that of a handmaiden of science. Philosophy is now being understood through science, phenomenology, and linguistic analysis. Scientific education and research, and the growth of intellectual consortiums have generated a new form of global interpretation. This should be seen as an act of progressive transformation of the subject of philosophy, actualized by the scientific revolution in the West where philosophy has now attained a place in the scientific areas.¹³

Modern age is day by day projecting the increasing authority of science over cultural, religious, and social fields that fall under the jurisdiction of philosophy. In the West science and technology have succeeded on account

of their practical utility, becoming more and more a series of easy techniques and less and less a complicated system by presenting a practicable outlook than the one found in theoretical philosophy. The cutting-edge neuroscience research, and the boundless frontiers of computer science, have enabled transfer of knowledge and power from the intellectually smart minds, to the average IQ students. Research and success in neurobiology is amazingly bringing philosophy closer to science than ever. Consequently many unanswered questions of philosophy have been answered by science, which enjoy a general consensus, because it is easy to agree on the application of philosophical concepts within the scientific system. Therefore, today, instead of looking back to philosophical analysis and rational enquires, initiated by al - Kindi and many other Muslim philosophers of ninth century, Muslims need to understand philosophy through science. Muslims in the past transmitted philosophical and scientific knowledge to the West; they should not feel shy in receiving back its modernized version and scientific way of thinking and reasoning.

NOTES

1. The Glorious Qur'an, 20:114.
2. Ibid., 72:28.
2. Ibid., 16:125.
4. Sharif, M. M.: A History of Muslim Philosophy, p. 150.
5. Leaman, Oliver: A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy, p. 6.
6. Chittick, William: *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy* p. 30.
7. Ashraf, Mirza I. : Introduction to World Philosophies: A Chronological Progression, p. 97.
8. Chittick, William: *The Heart of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 31.
9. Leaman, Oliver: A Brief Introduction to Islamic Philosophy
10. Adamson, Peter and Taylor, Richard: *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy* p. 3 - 4.
11. ibid., p. 370.
12. ibid., p. 371.
13. Ashraf, Mirza I. : Introduction to World Philosophies: A Chronological Progression, p. 308.