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AL-GHAZALI'S  
TAHAFUT AL-FALASIFAH  
[INCOHERENCE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS]

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH

*by*

SABIH AHMAD KAMALI

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**TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE**

THE present work began in 1948 as part of a comprehensive plan for the translation of Islamic classics under the auspices of the Muslim Educational Conference, Aligarh, India. Prof. M. M. Sharif, then the Chairman of the Philosophy Department, Muslim University, Aligarh, was appointed as my guide. Soon after, I left Aligarh, and Prof. Sharif left India. Therefore, I could not submit to him more than the first few pages (i.e., 1-35) of the translation. Prof. Sharif's departure not only deprived me of his invaluable guidance, but also left the Muslim Educational Conference in an uncertain frame of mind. Consequently, I decided to have our contractual relationship terminated; but the translation continued.

When in 1953 I came to study at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, Montreal, Canada, the first draft of this work was complete. The Institute organised a Ghazālī Seminar, at which my readings from that first draft served a twofold purpose. On the one hand, they enabled the members of the Seminar to acquaint themselves with Ghazālī's chief philosophical work. On the other hand, they enabled me to revise my translation in the light of the comments made by the 'auditors.' Prof. Faḍl al-Rahmān of the University of Durham, England, and Dr. A. G. O'Connor of the University of Montreal were the two members of the Seminar who also kindly read (or audited) the revised version, as I could make it ready for them by slow degrees. It was at this stage that the Institute obtained for us a proof copy of Dr. Simon Van den Bergh's English translation of Ibn Rushd's *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (since published under the auspices of the Gibb Memorial Trust and the International Commission for the Translation of Great Works: Oxford University Press, 1954). It gives me very great pleasure to acknowledge the use I have made of Dr. Van den Bergh's scholarly work (*vide* the Note on pp. 309-10 which now may be taken to refer to the published work as well).

When revised and supplied with an Introduction and Notes, this work was submitted to, and accepted by, the McGill University (1945) as my M.A. thesis. That a work

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originally undertaken outside McGill should have been accepted as a Thesis, or that I should have so completely revised it as to make of it quite a new thing, is due to the interest taken in this work by Prof. W.C. Smith, Director of the Institute of Islamic Studies. Prof. Smith has also kindly tried to help me to find a publisher. It is through his good offices that the work has been accepted for publication by the Pakistan Philosophical Congress. It is a great honour for me thus to be connected with, and sponsored by the Congress, even as the sense in which that organisation has connected itself with Ghazali does honour to it. Nor is it a mere coincidence that this honour should have been done to me by the Philosophical Congress of Pakistan upon the recommendation of its President, Prof. M. M. Sharif, who had been my guide, and was one of the architects of the great plan once entertained by the Muslim Educational Conference at Aligarh.

*Sabih Ahmad Kamali*

*Montreal :*  
*March 11, 1958*

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## INTRODUCTION

*In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful*

WE BESEECH God, in the name of His greatness which transcends all limits, and His munificence which outruns all measures:

To pour upon us the light of guidance, and to remove from us the darkness of ignorance and wrong-doing;

To make us like those who saw truth as truth, and chose to follow it; and those who saw falsehood as falsehood, and decided to eschew it;

To bestow upon us the felicity which He has promised to His saints and prophets;

To initiate us, on our departure from the House of Delusion, into that happiness the height of which cannot be scanned by the understanding, and the extent of which cannot be conjured up by the imagination;

To give us, when after deliverance from the horrors of the Doomsday we approach the bliss of Paradise, "that which no eye ever saw, no ear ever heard, and which never occurred to the heart of man"; and

To invest with peace and bless our Prophet Muhammad, the Chosen one, the best one of all mankind; and his noble descendants and pure companions, who were the keys to guidance, and the lamps lit in darkness.

Now, I have observed that there is a class of men who believe in their superiority to others because of their greater intelligence and insight. They have abandoned all the religious duties Islam imposes on its followers. They laugh at the positive commandments of religion which enjoin the performance of acts of devotion, and the abstinen<sup>t</sup>e from forbidden things. They defy the injunctions of the Sacred Law. Not only do they overstep the limits prescribed by it, but they have renounced the Faith altogether, by having indulged in diverse speculations, wherein they followed the example of those people who "turn men aside from the path of God, and seek to render it crooked; and who do not believe in the life to come." The heresy of these people has

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its basis only in an uncritical acceptance—like that of the Jews and the Christians—of whatever one hears from others or sees all around. They could not avoid it; for they were born into an un-Islamic atmosphere, and their ancestors had pursued no better ways. In the second place, such heresy results from theoretical inquiries which are the outcome of stumbling—sceptically, misguidedly and stupidly—upon fanciful notions. (A similar case is that of the Disputants who discussed the questions concerning faith and belief raised by the People of wilful Innovations.)

The heretics in our times have heard the awe-inspiring names of people like Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc. They have been deceived by the exaggerations made by the followers of these philosophers—exaggerations to the effect that the ancient masters possessed extraordinary intellectual powers: that the principles they have discovered are unquestionable: that the mathematical, logical, physical and metaphysical sciences developed by them are the most profound: that their excellent intelligence justifies their bold attempts to discover the Hidden Things by deductive methods; and that with all the subtlety of their intelligence and the originality of their accomplishments they repudiated the authority of religious laws: denied the validity of the positive contents of historical religions, and believed that all such things are only sanctimonious lies and trivialities.

When such stuff was dinned into their ears, and struck a responsive chord in their hearts, the heretics in our times thought that it would be an honour to join the company of great thinkers for which the renunciation of their faith would prepare them. Emulation of the example of the learned held out to them the promise of an elevated status far above the general level of common men. They refused to be content with the religion followed by their ancestors. They flattered themselves with the idea that it would do them honour not to accept even truth uncritically. But they had actually begun to accept falsehood uncritically. They failed to see that a change from one kind of intellectual bondage to another is only a self-deception, a stupidity. What position in this world of God can be baser than that of one who thinks that it is honourable to renounce the truth which is accepted on authority, and then relapses into an acceptance of falsehood which is still a matter of blind faith,

unaided by independent inquiry? Such a scandalous attitude is never taken by the unsophisticated masses of men; for they have an instinctive aversion to following the example of misguided genius. Surely, their simplicity is nearer to salvation than sterile genius can be. For total blindness is less dangerous than oblique vision.

When I saw this vein of folly pulsating among these idiots, I decided to write this book in order to refute the ancient philosophers. It will expose the incoherence of their beliefs and the inconsistency of their metaphysical theories. It will bring to light the flimsiest and the obscurest elements of their thought which will provide some amusement for, and serve as a warning to, the intelligent men. (I mean those things which they contributed to beliefs and opinions, and by virtue of which they thought they could be distinguished from the common men.)

Moreover, this book will set forth the doctrines of the ancient philosophers as those doctrines really are. This will serve the purpose of making it clear to the hide-bound atheists of our day that every piece of knowledge, whether ancient or modern, is really a corroboration of the faith in God and in the Last Day. The conflict between faith and knowledge is related only to the details superadded to these two fundamental principles, the two recurring themes in the teachings of all the prophets—i.e., divinely ordained persons the truth of whose mission is evident from the miracles they performed. It was only a few persons having irresponsible views and perverted minds who denied these principles. But in serious discussions no importance can be attached to such persons; and no notice ought to be taken of them. And they must be branded with diabolical perversity and stupid contumacy, so that their example may be a deterrent to people who tend to think that a vainglorious conversion to unoriginal heresy would be an indication of intelligence and good sense. This book is going to demonstrate that the ancient philosophers, whose followers the atheists in our day claim to be, were really untainted with what is imputed to them. They never denied the validity of the religious laws. On the contrary, they did believe in God, and did have faith in His messengers; although in regard to the minor details, they sometimes faltered and went astray, and caused others to go astray, from the even path. We propose

to show how they slipped into error and falsehood. But our examination will not obscure their solid achievements which lie beneath the repulsive facade of their thought. Let God be the sustainer and the helper in the investigations we have undertaken.

Now to begin the book, we proceed to the Prefaces which will presage the general trend of the discussion in this book.

#### PREFACE ONE

LET it be known that it would be tedious to dwell at length upon the differences among the philosophers themselves. For prolixity is their manner, and their disputes are too many, and their opinions are scattered, and their ways are divergent and devious. Therefore, we will confine our attention to the inconsistencies which are found in the theories of the premier philosopher who is called *the Philosopher*, or the First Teacher, for he systematised their sciences, and reformulated them, eliminating all that was redundant in the philosophers' opinions, and retaining only that which was close to the basic principles and tendencies of philosophical thought. This is Aristotle, who refuted all his predecessors—including his own teacher, whom the philosophers call the divine Plato. Having refuted Plato, Aristotle excused himself by saying: "Plato is dear to us. And truth is dear, too. Nay, truth is dearer than Plato."

We have related this story in order to show that in their own view there is nothing fixed and constant in the philosophers' position. They base their judgments on conjecture and speculation, unaided by positive inquiry and unconfirmed by faith. They try to infer the truth of their metaphysical theories from the clarity of the arithmetical and logical sciences. And this method sometimes carries conviction with the weak-minded people. But if their metaphysical theories had been as cogent and definite as their arithmetical knowledge is, they would not have differed among themselves on metaphysical questions as they do not differ on the arithmetical.

As far as the translators of Aristotle's works into Arabic are concerned, our problem is even more difficult. For the translations themselves have been subjected to interpolation

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and changes, which have necessitated further commentaries and interpretations. As a result, the translations are as much in dispute among the philosophers as the original works are. However, the most faithful—as Aristotle's translators—and the most original—as his commentators—among the philosophising Muslims are al-Farabi Abū Naṣr, and Ibn Sina. Therefore, we will confine our attention to what these two have taken to be the authentic expression of the views of their mis-leaders. For what they discarded and refused to follow must undoubtedly have been utterly useless, and should not call for an elaborate refutation.

Therefore, let it be known that we propose to concentrate on the refutation of philosophical thought as it emerges from the writings of these two persons. For otherwise, the scattered character of the philosophical theories should have to be reflected in a proportionately loose arrangement of our subject-matter.

#### PREFACE TWO

LET it be known that the difference between the philosophers and others is threefold.

In the first place, the dispute is centred upon a mere word. Take for instance their use of the word 'substance' for God, meaning thereby a being which is not in a subject, or a self-subsisting being which does not need an external cause to continue it in existence.

We do not intend here to undertake the refutation of this terminology. For if the meaning of self-subsistence is agreed upon, the applicability of the word 'substance' in this sense will have to be considered from the etymological point of view. If from that point of view, the application of the word is justified, it will still be debatable whether the Sacred Law approves of its use. For the permission to use words as names (of God) or the injunction against their use is based on what appears from the letter of the Sacred Law. Perhaps you will say: "This word was used by the *Mutakallimun* in the discussion of the Divine attributes. In the Sacred Law, the Jurists never used it. It is, therefore, improper on your part to confuse the realities of things with matters of habit and custom (of which *Fiqh* treats)." But (this is inadmissible, because) I know that it amounts to a discussion

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on whether it is permissible to use a certain name which is truly applicable to the bearer of the name. And hence it is equivalent to a discussion on whether a certain (moral) action is permissible.

In the second place, there are those things in which the philosophers believe, and which do not come into conflict with any religious principle. And, therefore, disagreement with the philosophers with respect to those things is not a necessary condition for the faith in the prophets and the apostles (may God bless them all). An example is their theory that the lunar eclipse occurs when the light of the Moon disappears as a consequence of the interposition of the Earth between the Moon and the Sun. For the Moon derives its light from the Sun, and the Earth is a round body surrounded by Heaven on all the sides. Therefore, when the Moon falls under the shadow of the Earth, the light of the Sun is cut off from it. Another example is their theory that the solar eclipse means the interposition of the body of the Moon between the Sun and the observer, which occurs when the Sun and the Moon are stationed at the intersection of their nodes at the same degree.

We are not interested in refuting such theories either; for the refutation will serve no purpose. He who thinks that it is his religious duty to disbelieve such things is really unjust to religion, and weakens its cause. For these things have been established by astronomical and mathematical evidence which leaves no room for doubt. If you tell a man, who has studied these things—so that he has sifted all the data relating to them, and is, therefore, in a position to forecast when a lunar or a solar eclipse will take place: whether it will be total or partial; and how long it will last—that these things are contrary to religion, your assertion will shake his faith in religion, not in these things. Greater harm is done to religion by an immethodical helper than by an enemy whose actions, however hostile, are yet regular. For, as the proverb goes, a wise enemy is better than an ignorant friend.

*If someone says :*

The Prophet (may God bless him) has said: "The Sun and the Moon are two signs among the signs of God. Their

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eclipse is not caused by the death or the life of a man. When you see an eclipse, you must seek refuge in the contemplation of God and in prayer." How can this tradition be reconciled with what the philosophers say?

*we will answer :*

There is nothing in this tradition to contradict the philosophers. It only denies that an eclipse has anything to do with the life or the death of a man. Further, it enjoins prayer at the time of an eclipse. The Sacred Law enjoins prayer at the time of sunrise or sunset or during the day; what is unusual if, with a view to finding greater favour (with God), it also enjoins prayer at the time of an eclipse?

*If it is said :*

At the end of the same tradition, the Prophet said: "When God reveals Himself to something, it prostrates itself before Him." Does it not follow from this tradition that an eclipse is an act of prostration caused by Revelation?

*we will answer :*

This addition is spurious. We must condemn its author as a liar. The Prophet's words are only those which have been reported above. However, if this addition were authentic, would it not be easier to interpret it than to reject the evidence (of astronomical and mathematical sciences) which is conclusive and definite? People have interpreted many a plain text by rational arguments which never attained to such clarity and cogency (as the astronomical and mathematical arguments in this case have done).

The atheists would have the greatest satisfaction if the supporter of religion made a positive assertion that things of this kind are contrary to religion. For then it would be easier for them to refute religion which stood or fell with its opposition to these things. (It is, therefore, necessary for the supporter of religion not to commit himself on these questions,) because the fundamental question at issue between him and the philosophers is only whether the world

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is eternal or began in time. If its beginning in time is proved, it is all the same whether it is a round body, or a simple thing, or an octagonal or hexagonal figure; and whether the heavens and all that is below them form—as the philosophers say—thirteen layers, or more, or less. Investigation into these facts is no more relevant to metaphysical inquiries than an investigation into the number of the layers of an onion, or the number of the seeds of a pomegranate, would be. What we are interested in is that the world is the product of God's creative action, whatever the manner of that action may be.

In the third place, there are philosophical theories which come into violent conflict with the fundamental principles of religion, e.g., the religious doctrines of the world's beginning in time: of the attributes of the Creator; and of the resurrection of bodies. All these things have been denied by the philosophers. Therefore, we propose to leave the rest of the sections (enumerated above) aside, in order to concentrate on this one, and on questions allied to it, in our criticism of philosophical theories.

### PREFACE THREE

LET it be known that it is our purpose to disillusion those who think too highly of the philosophers, and consider them to be infallible. Since I have undertaken to expose the incoherence and contradiction involved in philosophical thought, I will approach them in order to attack them, not to defend something of mine own. I will refute what they believe, by showing that it is a mixture of diverse elements which come from such schools as the Mu'tazilah, the Karamiyah, the Waqifiyah, etc. My attitude towards these sects themselves is that, while it is not necessary for me to defend any one of them, we are all equally opposed to the philosophers. For we differ among ourselves only in regard to the details; whereas the philosophers attack the very basis of our religion. Let us, therefore, unite against the common enemy; for at a critical juncture, we must forget our private quarrels.

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#### PREFACE FOUR

ONE of the most artful methods employed by the philosophers is that, when in discussion they come up against a difficulty, they say: "The science of metaphysics is extremely subtle. Of all the sciences it is the most difficult even for a sharp intelligence to grasp." Those who follow the philosophers employ a similar trick in order to get rid of their difficulties. When they are unable to explain something in the work of their masters, they still glorify them and say: "Undoubtedly, a solution can be found somewhere in the sciences developed by the ancient masters. Perhaps our failure is the result of our inability to consult Logic and Mathematics on this question."

*To these suggestions, we will reply as follows :*

As far as Mathematics is concerned, one of its two branches, which is an inquiry into discrete quantity—viz., Arithmetic—has evidently nothing to do with Metaphysics. To say that it is not possible to understand Metaphysics without the help of Arithmetic is nonsense—like saying that Medicine, or Grammar, or Literature cannot be understood without the help of Arithmetic: or that Arithmetic cannot be understood without the help of Medicine.

As regards the other branch of Mathematics—viz., Geometry—which is an inquiry into continuous quantity, all that it tells us is that the heavens and all that is below them down to the Centre, i.e., the Earth, are round in shape. Further, it tells us of the number of the strata of these things: of the planets revolving in the Sphere; and of the quantity of their movements. Now, we can grant them all these things—from conviction, or for the sake of the argument. They need not adduce scientific evidence to prove them. But there is nothing in these facts which proves or disproves metaphysical principles. To say that there is something which does so is like saying: "To know whether this house is the product of a knowing, willing, powerful and living builder, it is necessary to discover whether it has six or eight sides, and what is the number of its beams and bricks." Obviously, such an assertion would be sheer nonsense. It would be like saying: "The temporal character of an

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onion cannot be known, unless the number of its layers be discovered"; or, "The temporal character of this pomegranate cannot be known, unless the number of its seeds be discovered." This sort of argument simply does not appeal to an intelligent mind.

As regards their contention that reference to Logic is unavoidable, it is right. But Logic is not their monopoly. Fundamentally, it is the same thing as in the Art of Scholastic Reasoning we call the Book of Theoretical Inquiry. The philosophers have changed its name to Logic to make it look formidable. We often call it the Book of Disputation, or the Data of the Intellects. Wheil a gullible enthusiast hears the word 'Logic,' he thinks that it is a new subject, unknown to the *Mutakallimun* and cultivated by the philosophers alone. In order to remove this misunderstanding, we propose to discuss the Data of the Intellects in a separate work, where we will avoid the phraseology used by the *Mutakallimun* and the Jurists, adopting for the time being the terms used by the Logicians, so that the whole thing might be cast into a different mould, and the methods of the Logicians might be followed in the minutest detail. In that book, we will speak to them in their language—I mean their logical terminology. We will show there that

neither the conditions for the material validity of Syllogism—laid down by them in the section of Logic devoted to Demonstration—nor those for its formal validity—in the Book of Syllogism—nor the postulates which they have formulated in the Isagoge and Categories, and which form the parts and preliminaries of Logic

are of any help to them in metaphysical sciences. But it is necessary to reserve the discussion of the Data of the Intellects for a separate book. For, although an instrument for the understanding of the purport of this book, it is not indispensable to every reader. Therefore, we are going to postpone it; so that he who does not need it may not be bothered by it here. However, he who fails to understand some of the terms used here will be well advised to begin with mastering the contents of our book called The Standard of Knowledge—viz., the (branch of) knowledge they call Logic.

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*After the Prefaces, let us give a list of the problems in whose discussion in this book we will expose the contradiction involved in the philosophers' theories.*

And these problems are twenty :

- (i) The refutation of their belief in the eternity of the world.
- (ii) The refutation of their belief in the everlasting nature of the world.
- (iii) Their dishonest assertion that God is the Creator of the world, and that the world is His product.
- (iv) Demonstration of their inability to affirm the Creator.
- (v) Demonstration of their inability to prove the impossibility of two gods by a rational argument.
- (vi) Refutation of their denial of the Divine attributes.
- (vii) Refutation of their theory that the Divine being is not divisible into genus and differentia.
- (viii) Refutation of their theory that the First (Principle) is a simple unqualified being.
- (ix) Demonstration of their inability to show that the First (Principle) is not body.
- (x) The thesis that they are bound to affirm the eternity of the world, and deny the Creator.
- (xi) Demonstration of their inability to maintain that the First (Principle) knows any one other than Himself.
- (xii) Demonstration of their inability to maintain that He knows Himself.
- (xiii) Refutation of their doctrine that the First (Principle) does not know the particulars.
- (xiv) Refutation of their doctrine that the Heaven is a living being whose movements are voluntary.
- (xv) Refutation of their theory of the purpose of the Heaven's movement.
- (xvi) Refutation of their doctrine that the souls of the heavens know all the particulars.
- (xvii) Refutation of their belief in the impossibility of a departure from the natural course of events.
- (xviii) Refutation of their theory that the soul of man

is a substance which exists in itself, and which is neither body nor an accident.

- (xix) Refutation of their belief in the impossibility of the annihilation of the human souls.
- (xx) Refutation of their denial of the resurrection of bodies, which will be followed by feelings of pleasure and pain produced by physical causes of these feelings in Paradise and Hell.

So these are questions selected from their metaphysical and physical sciences wherein we propose to expose the contradiction involved in their views. As regards Mathematics, there is no point in denying or opposing it; for Mathematics includes Arithmetic and Geometry, and these two sciences are not in dispute here. As regards Logic, it is just an investigation into the instruments of reflection over the intelligibles. And as such, it involves no contradictions which might deserve our consideration. And in the book called *The Standard of Knowledge*, we are going to introduce as much of this subject as may be helpful towards the understanding of the contents of this book.

### *PROBLEM I*

#### **REFUTATION OF THEIR BELIEF IN THE ETERNITY OF THE WORLD**

*Details of the theory (of the eternity of the world):*

THE philosophers disagree among themselves as to the eternity of the world. But the majority of the philosophers—ancient as well as modern—agree upon its eternity, holding that it always coexisted with God (exalted be He) as His effect which was concurrent with Him in time—concurrent as an effect is with the cause, e.g., light with the Sun—and that God's priority to the world is the priority of the cause to the effect—viz., priority in essence and rank, not in time. Plato is said to have maintained that the world began in time. But some people put different interpretations on his words, for they would not have him believe in the origin of the world. From Galen's book called "What Galen Believed" it appears that towards the end of his life he was inclined to be neutral on this question. He said that he did not know whether the world is eternal or originated. Often he would argue that the nature of the world could not be discovered—not because of any deficiency on his part, but because of the inherent difficulty of the problem which baffles all minds.

But such instances are few and far between. The consensus of opinion among the philosophers is that as a rule it is inconceivable that something which has a beginning in time should proceed from the eternal without there being any intermediary.

*Exposition of their arguments :*

If I were to relate all the arguments (advanced by the philosophers) and the counter-arguments which have been handed down to us, I should have to devote innumerable pages to the problem. But prolixity is no good. Let us, therefore, omit such of their arguments as tend towards arbitrary and fanciful reasoning; for any observer will find

it easy to deal with them. Our attention should be confined to those (arguments) which really appeal to the mind. It is such arguments which could possibly shake the faith of the most matured thinkers. As regards weaker minds, their faith can be shaken by the flimsiest thing.

Now, such arguments ("as really appeal to the mind") are three.

The determinant here is  
(I) the will of the Eternal, that  
which has determined the world.

In the first argument, they say :

The procession of a temporal (being) from an eternal (being) is absolutely impossible. For, if we suppose the Eternal at a stage when the world had not yet originated from Him, then the reason why it had not originated must have been that there was no determinant for its existence, and that the existence of the world was a possibility only. So, when later the world comes into existence, we must choose one of the two alternatives (to explain it)—namely, either that the determinant has, or that it has not, emerged. If the determinant did not emerge, the world should still remain in the state of bare possibility, in which it was before. But if it has emerged, who is the originator of the determinant itself? And why does it come into being now, and did not do so before? Thus, the question regarding the origin of the determinant stands. In fine, since all the states of the Eternal are alike, either nothing shall originate from Him, or whatever originates shall continue to originate for ever. For it is impossible that the state of leaving off should differ from the state of taking up.

To elucidate the point, it may be said: Why did He not originate the world before its origination? It is not possible to say: "Because of His inability to bring the world into existence"; nor could one say: "Because of the impossibility of the world's coming into being." For this would mean that He changed from inability to power, or that the world changed from impossibility to possibility. And both senses are absurd. Nor can it be said that, before the time of the origination of the world, there was no purpose, and that a purpose emerged later. Nor is it possible to ascribe (the non-origination of the world before it actually

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originated) to the lack of means at one stage, and to its existence at another. The nearest thing to imagine is to say that He had not willed the world's existence before. But from this it follows that one must also say: "The world is the result of His having become a willed of its existence—after not having been a willed." So the will should have had a beginning in time. But the origination of the will in the Divine being is impossible; for He is not subject to temporal events. And the origination of the will not-in-His-being cannot make Him a willed.

Even if we give up the inquiry concerning the substratum in which the will originated, does not the difficulty regarding the very act of origination stand? Whence does the will originate? Why does it originate now? Why did it not originate before? Does it now originate from a source other than God? If there can be a temporal existent which has not been brought into existence by anyone, then the world itself should be such an existent, so as to be independent of the Creator. For what is the difference between one temporal existent and another?

So, if the origin of the world is ascribed to God's action, the question remains: Why now, and why not before? Was it due to the absence of means, or power, or purpose, or nature? If so, the transition from this stage to that of existence will revive the difficulty we had to face at the outset. And if it is said to have been due to the absence of will, then one act of will will stand in need of another, and so on *ad infinitum*. From this it is absolutely clear that the procession of the temporal from the eternal is impossible, unless there were a change in the eternal in respect of power, or means, or time, or nature. And it is impossible to suppose a change in the states of the eternal. For as a temporal event, that change would be like any other change (in non-eternal beings). Therefore (in case of the eternal), change of any kind whatsoever is impossible. And now that the world has been proved (always) to have existed, and the impossibility of its beginning in time has been shown, it follows that the world is eternal.

This is their most clever argument. Their discussion of all other metaphysical problems is less substantial than the discussion of this one. For here they have access to a

*Canard origin argument  
done.  
This is how  
says the demand  
posed up a dilemma  
Therefore, he admits here  
No longer because admitted  
because the time for originating  
the will is demanded.*

variety of speculations which would not be available to them in any other problem. This is the reason why we began with this problem, and presented this their strongest argument at the very outset.

*The foregoing argument is open to objection on two points.*

*Firstly, it may be said :*

How will you disprove one who says that the world came into being because of the eternal will which demanded its existence at the time at which it actually came into existence, and which demanded the non-existence (of the world) to last as long as it lasted, and (demanded) the existence to begin where it actually began? So, on this view, existence of the world was not an object of the eternal will, before the world actually existed; hence its non-actualisation. And it was an object of the will at the time when it actualised. What can prevent us from believing such a thing, and what is the contradiction involved in it?

*If it is said :*

The contradiction involved here is self-evident. For that which originates in time is an effect or a product. And just as it is impossible for an originated thing to be uncaused, so it is impossible for the cause to fail to produce its effect when all the conditions and factors requisite for the causal operation are complete and nothing else remains to be awaited. The existence of the effect is necessary, when the cause is operative, and all causal conditions are complete. The postponement of the effect is as impossible as the existence of a temporal but uncaused thing.

Now, before the existence of the world, the Willer existed: the will existed, and the relation of the will to its object existed. The Willer did not have to make a new appearance: nor did the will emerge as a new acquisition, nor did it acquire a new relation to its object. For anything of this kind would amount to change. How, then, did the object of will emerge as something new? And what prevented it from emerging before it actually did? The state of its new-emergence cannot be distinguished from the pre-

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ceding states in respect of any thing or any factor or any state or any relation whatsoever; for all things remain as they were. If, in spite of all things remaining the same, the object of will is not produced at first, but comes into being later, the whole affair must be exceedingly contradictory. And contradiction of this kind arises not only in case of evident and essential causes and effects, but also in case of those which are conventional and qualified. For instance, if a man pronounces divorce to his wife, and if separation is not the immediate result of the pronouncement, it is inconceivable that it should take effect afterwards. For, in accordance with convention and legal usage, the pronouncement is made the cause of the judgment. Therefore, the postponement of the effect is unintelligible, unless the enforcement of the divorce should be bound up with, say, the coming of the next day, or entering into the house. Only then will the divorce take effect at the time of the coming of the next day, or the entering into the house, and not immediately; for the pronouncement is made a cause of divorce in relation to something which is yet awaited. Since the condition, i.e., the morrow or the entry, is not present at the moment, the effect must be held over until the absent condition should become present. So the effect, i.e., the enforcement of the divorce, will not appear unless a new factor, viz., the morrow or the entry, emerges. But if the man desires—without binding up the effect with the appearance of something which is not present at the moment—to postpone the effect, it would not be an intelligible thing, notwithstanding the fact that he has the right to make the pronouncement, and is at liberty to choose whatever details he likes. Since it is not possible for us to arrange these conventional things as we like, and since our capricious determinations are bound to be unintelligible, it follows that an arbitrary arrangement should be still less intelligible in the sphere of essential, rational and self-evident causation.

Even in the case of morals, the object of our intention is not posterior to the intention, if the intention exists, and there is no hindrance. Therefore, with intention being coupled with power, and with all obstacles having been removed, it is unintelligible that the intended thing should be delayed. Such a thing is conceivable only in the case of inclination; for inclination by itself is not sufficient to

bring about an action. For instance, the mere inclination to write does not produce writing, unless there emerges an intention, i.e., an inner agitation which as a new factor precedes an action.

So if the eternal will is to be likened to our intention, it is inconceivable that its object should be posterior to it. Unless there is a hindrance, there cannot be a gap between the intention and its object. It makes no sense to have an intention to-day that one would stand up to-morrow. One may only have an inclination to do so. But if the eternal will is like our inclination, it shall not by itself be sufficient to bring about the object of inclination. For it is indispensable that something else—viz., the inner agitation that is intention—should emerge to supplement inclination, so that the object of inclination may be produced. But the emergence of such a thing means a change in the Eternal.

And, then, the difficulty remains as it was. Namely, why does this agitation, or intention, or will, or whatever you may like to call it, originate now, and why did it not originate before? Thus, either one must posit a temporal event which is uncaused, or an infinite regress will follow.

The sum and substance of what has been said (by you) is this: That the Cause existed; that all the conditions of its efficiency were complete, so that nothing else remained to be awaited; that, in spite of all this, the origination of the effect was postponed over a length of time, the beginning of which cannot be imagined, and which could not be measured out even by millenia; and that eventually the effect made its appearance all of a sudden, without a new factor coming into operation, or a new condition being realised. And such a thing is intrinsically impossible.

*The answer to the foregoing may be stated as follows :*

How do you know the impossibility of ascribing the origin of something to an eternal will? Is it the self-evident rational necessity, or theoretical knowledge, which is the ground of your judgment? Or, to use the terms employed by you in Logic, are the two terms in your judgment joined by means of a middle term, or without a middle term? If you claim that they are joined by means of a middle term

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—i.e., if your method is deductive—you must state what that term is. But if you claim that this impossibility is known as a self-evident fact, why do not your opponents share this knowledge with you? People who believe in the temporal origin of the world are confined neither to a number nor within a city. And no one would suspect that, out of spite for reason, they believe in something which they know to be untrue. It is, therefore, necessary for you to prove, in accordance with the rules of Logic, that it is impossible to ascribe the origin of the world to the eternal will. All you have said so far only amounts to a suggestion of improbability, and to a comparison of the Divine will to our inclination or will. The comparison is false; for the eternal will *does not* resemble temporal intentions. And the mere suggestion of improbability, unsupported by an argument, is not enough.

*If it is said :*

We know by rational necessity that, if all the conditions for causal operation are complete, it is inconceivable that the cause should fail to produce the effect. He who admits the possibility of such a thing challenges the necessity of reason.

*we will answer :*

But, then, what is the difference between you and your opponents who said to you :

"We regard it as a self-evident truth that it is impossible to say that the one Divine being possesses the knowledge of all the universals—without this knowledge necessitating plurality: without its being additional to His essence; and without its multiplying in proportion to the multiplicity of the known things"?

This position, which has been criticised above, is actually what you believe with respect to Divine knowledge. Now, if it is judged by what applies to us and to our knowledge, it will be found to be utterly impossible. But you say that eternal knowledge cannot be conceived of on the

analogy of temporal knowledge.

The impossibility involved in the above-mentioned theory was felt by certain people among yourselves. Consequently, they said that He does not know anything but Himself, and that, therefore, knowledge, knower and the known thing are all one—viz., Himself. To this, one might take an objection as follows:

"The impossibility of the union of knowledge, the knower and the known thing is a self-evident truth. It is evidently impossible to suppose a creator who does not know his creature. And if the Eternal (exalted be He far above the words of all perverse thinkers) does not know anything but Himself, He will not know His creature."

*But now to recur to the criticism of this question, we will say:*

How will you disprove your opponents if they say:

"The eternity of the world is impossible. For it leads to the affirmation of spherical revolutions which are infinite in number, and consist of innumerable units. The fact is that these revolutions can be divided into one-sixth, or one-fourth, or a half. For instance, the sphere of the Sun completes one revolution in one year, while that of Saturn makes one in thirty years. Therefore, the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of those of the Sun. And the revolutions of Jupiter are one-twelfth of those of the Sun, for Jupiter completes one revolution in twelve years?"

If the number of revolutions is infinity then  
it should suffice to choose the  
number of its fractions  
which are infinite.  
Then we can make the ratio  
of revolutions among them  
indefinitely small.  
This does not prove that  
infinity cannot be a fraction.

Evidently if  
that fraction  
is  $\frac{1}{2} = 0.5$

You maintain that, in spite of the fact that the revolutions of Saturn are one-thirtieth of the Sun, they are equally infinite. Nay, you would assert that the revolutions of the Stellar Sphere, each of which takes thirty-six thousand years, are as infinite as the East-West movement of the Sun, which takes only a day and night. If someone says that this is an impossible thing, and that its impossibility is self-evident, how will you silence his criticism?

Even so, one might ask whether the number of these revolutions is odd or even, or both, or neither. If you say that it is both odd and even, or that it is neither odd nor even, it will be an evidently absurd thing. But if you say that it is

A number must be odd or even, thus if the number of revolutions odd or even, or neither

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Cannot be odd or even because we cannot add 1 to it to make it either odd or even.  
Thus it must be neither.

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even, the addition of one would make the even odd. How could it be that that which is infinite lacked just one? If you say that it is odd, again the addition of one would make the odd even. How could it be that that which is infinite lacked just one which would have made it even? It follows that you are bound to hold that the number is neither odd nor even.

*If it is said:*

The finite alone is described as odd or even. That which is infinite cannot be so described.

*we will answer:*

It there is totality which is composed of units, and which—as we saw above—can be divided into one-sixth, one-tenth, etc.; and if still it cannot be described as odd or even, then we must call it a self-evident absurdity, to prove which point we need not advance any rational argument. How will you answer this criticism? The number must be either odd or even, cannot be otherwise.

*If it is said:*

Error lies in your words: "A totality composed of units." As a matter of fact, the revolutions of the sphere are non-existent. Those which took place in the past are gone; while those which will take place in the future are yet to be produced. The word "Totality" points to beings which are present here and now. But in this case no such being is to be found.

*we will answer:*

A number is bound to be either odd or even. It is impossible that it should fall outside these two categories—regardless of the fact whether the numbered thing is a being which exists, or has perished. For instance, if we suppose a number of horses, we are bound to believe that it is either an odd or an even number. It makes no difference whether we suppose the horses to be existing, or not to be existing. Or, if the horses perished after having existed, this judgment

It makes no difference 21

whether what we are counting will cease to exist in the future. As we can empirically observe it, it becomes measurable.

would not be changed.

Besides, we will say to them: Even according to your own principles, it is not impossible that there should be discrete individual existents, who are infinite in number, and describable each by itself. The souls of men whom death has separated from the body are such beings. And they are beings whose number is not described as odd or even. How will you disprove a man who says that such a thing is a self-evident absurdity? How can you show that this criticism is different from your own rejection, on grounds of rational necessity, of the explanation of the temporal origin of the world by reference to the eternal will? And this opinion about the souls is the one adopted by Ibn Sina; and perhaps it is Aristotle's view, too.

*Interesting - The soul is eternal, however each soul is distinguishable. To this a contradiction?*

If it is said:

The true opinion about the souls is the one held by Plato. Plato thought that the soul is eternal: that, although one by nature, it gets divided when it is related to bodies; and that, after its separation from bodies, it returns to its original character, and is reunified.

we will answer:

This is even more obnoxious; and there is greater reason why it should be rejected as contrary to rational necessity. Let us say: Is the soul of Zayd identical with that of 'Amr, or other than it? If it is identical, it would be a self-evident absurdity. For each one of the two is conscious of himself, knowing that he is not the same as any other. If the souls were the same, they would be equal in respect of cognitions which are the essential attributes of the souls, and which enter into all the relations of the soul. But if you say that the soul of Zayd is other than that of 'Amr, and that the duality is the result of the division necessitated by the relation of the two souls to bodies, we will say: The division of that which is one, and which possesses no magnitude or quantity, is evidently impossible. How can that which is one become two, nay, a thousand, and then regain its oneness? Such a thing is conceivable in the case of that which has magnitude and quantity. For instance, the water of the ocean is divid-

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ed into streams and rivers, and then returns to the ocean. But how can that which has no quantity be divided?

The purpose of all this is to show that they cannot render it untenable for their opponents to believe in the origination of the world by the eternal will, unless they claim that such a thing is contrary to rational necessity. But when a similar claim is made by their critics to refute their own beliefs, it will not be possible for them to silence that criticism. And this is, therefore, an inescapable position.

If it is said:

This may be turned against you. For, it might be asked: Did God have the power, before the creation of the world, to create it one year or two years earlier than he did? Since His power is infinite, it appears that He held Himself in patience, and did not create the world. But when at last He created it, are we to call the period of not-creating finite, or infinite? If you say that it was finite, it will follow that the being of the Creator was at first measurable in terms of finitude. But if you say that it was infinite, you will have ignored the fact that this period which contained infinite possibilities did come to an end.

we will answer:

We believe that periods (of time) and time (itself) are created. However, when we deal with their second argument, we will show what is the real answer to this (objection).

If it is said:

How will you disprove one who gives up the argument from rational necessity, and tries to prove (the eternity of the world) from another point of view—namely, that all the moments being equal with respect to the possibility of the relation of the eternal will to them, there cannot be anything to distinguish one particular moment from all those before and after it?

Maybe, it is not impossible for priority or posteriority to have been an object of will. But how about white and

Akhlaq-e-Awam  
 Qasida qasida to  
 understand how in  
 the eternal will you  
 against rational necessity.  
 Qasida that the belief  
 in the eternal will is  
 against rational necessity,  
 which is what they have  
 contained within me.

black, or motion and rest? You say that white owes its origin to the eternal will, and that the substratum which actually receives whiteness was equally capable of receiving blackness. Now, why does the eternal will take whiteness, as set over against blackness? What is there to distinguish one of the two contingent things from the other, so that it should be taken by the eternal will?

We know it as a self-evident fact that nothing can be distinguished from its like, unless there be something which gives it a special character. If without such a thing a distinction between two like things were possible, then it would follow that in the case of the world, which was possible of existence as well as of non-existence, the balance could be tilted in favour of existence—notwithstanding the fact that non-existence possessed an equal measure of possibility, and that there was nothing to give existence a special character. If you say that the will (itself) produced the special character, the question will be: Why did it acquire the capacity to produce it? If you say that in the case of an eternal thing the question: Why? cannot be asked, then let the world be such an eternal thing. Do not look for the Creator or the cause of the world; for it is eternal, and in the case of an eternal thing the question: Why? is not to be asked.

If it were possible for the Eternal to acquire a special relation to one of the two contingencies, then it would be absolutely untenable to say that the world, which has a particular shape at present, could possibly have some other shape instead of the present one. For then one might say: "This (shape) has come into being by chance"; even as you might say that the will makes by chance the choice of only one moment of time, or of only one shape. If you say that such a question is irrelevant because it might be asked in the case of anything willed or determined by Him, we will say that it must be faced precisely because it arises in any event, and will necessarily present itself to our opponents, whatever their supposition may be.

*we will answer :*

The (eternal) will produced the world as it is, wherever it is, and whatever it is like. As regards the will, it is

an attribute of which the function it is to distinguish something from its like. If it had no such function, then power would have had to be regarded as an adequate principle. But since power bears an equal relation to two opposite things, and since it becomes necessary to posit a cause which gives one of these two things a special character, therefore, it must be said that, over and above power, the Eternal has an attribute whose function is to distinguish something from its like. Therefore, if one asks: "Why did the will choose one of two like things?" it will be like asking: "Why does knowledge require the encompassing of the object of knowledge as such?" As the answer to the last question is: "Knowledge is an attribute of which this is the function," so the answer to the first question should be: "Will is an attribute of which the function—rather, nature—is to distinguish something from its like."

*If it is said :*

It is unintelligible—rather, self-contradictory—to speak of an attribute of which the function is to distinguish something from its like. For by likeness is meant that there is no distinction; and by distinction is meant that there is no likeness. It is not proper to imagine that two black things in two different places are like each other in all respects. For 'This' is in one place, and 'That' is in another place; hence the necessity for the distinction between the two. Nor can two black things in the same place but at different times be absolutely like each other. For 'This' is separated from 'That' in time; how, therefore, can the two be equal in all respects? When we say: "Two black things like each other," we mean that they are alike only in respect of the particular attribute of blackness. We do not mean that they are so in an unqualified sense. For if that were the meaning, and if the identity of time and place had left no dissimilarity, then the two black things would not be intelligible, and their duality would be absolutely irrational.

The question will be settled when it is seen that the word 'will' is derived by analogy from our own will. And our will cannot conceivably distinguish something from its like. If a thirsty man has before him two glasses of water, which are equal in all respects as far as his purpose is

concerned, he cannot take either of the two, unless he thinks that one of the two is prettier, or lighter, or nearer to his right hand (he presumably being a man who habitually uses his right hand), or has some other cause—apparent or invisible—which gives it a special character. For otherwise, the choice of something as distinguished from another exactly like it would in no event be conceivable.

*Objection to this from two points of view:*

Firstly, is your assertion that such a thing is inconceivable based on self-evident facts, or on theoretical investigations? In fact, it is not possible for you to make either claim. Your comparison of the Divine to human will is as false an analogy as that between the Divine and human knowledge. The Divine knowledge is different from ours in respect of things which we have established. Why, therefore, should it be improbable for a similar difference to exist in the case of will? Your assertion is like one's saying: "A being which is neither outside the world nor inside it: neither connected with it nor disconnected from it is unintelligible; for if such qualities were attributed to us, we would not understand them." To such a person the answer would be: "This is the work of your imagination. Actually, rational proof has compelled the intelligent to assent to that doctrine." How, therefore, will you disprove one who says that rational proof also compels one to affirm an attribute of God (exalted be He) of which the function is to distinguish something from its like? If the word 'will' cannot name this attribute, let us use another name, for names are not at issue at the moment. We had used the word 'will' on the authority of the Sacred Law. Etymologically, however, 'will' signifies something directed towards a purpose. In the case of God, we cannot speak of a purpose. What, however, we are concerned with is the meaning, and not the words.

Besides, we do not admit that even our will cannot conceivably make a distinction between two like things. Let us suppose that there are two equal dates before a man who is fond of them, but who cannot take both of them at once. So he will take only one of them; and this, obviously, will be done—by an attribute of which the function is to dis-

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tinguish something from its like! As regards the causes of a special character being possessed by the object of actual choice—viz., the causes mentioned by you, such as prettiness, or nearness, or handiness—we can suppose their absence; and still the possibility of one of the two dates being taken will remain. Here you will have to choose one of the two things:

- (i) Either you can say that the equal relation of a man's purpose to the two dates is inconceivable. But that is nonsense; for the equality can be supposed.
- (ii) Or you might say that, the equality having been supposed, the excited man will keep fondly and helplessly gazing on for ever, and will not be able to take either date by mere will or choice which is devoid of purpose. But this is also impossible; and the absurdity of such an assumption is self-evident.

From all this it follows that whoever discusses the nature of volitional action—whether with reference to empirical facts, or on theoretical grounds—will have to affirm an attribute of which the function should be to distinguish something from its like.

*In the second place, the objection may be stated as follows :*

In your own theories, you have not been able to avoid the assumption of a distinction between two like things. For if the world is produced by a cause which necessitates for it a certain shape as set over against other shapes like it, the question arises: Why was this particular choice made? The rule that a distinction between like things is impossible cannot differ in different cases, e.g., an action, or something which follows by nature or by rational necessity.

*If you say :*

The entire system of the world could not have been produced in any other way than that in which it has been

produced. If the world were smaller or larger than it is, the system would not be perfect. The same is true of the number of the spheres and the stars. You assert that the Great is opposed to the Small, and the Much to the Little, of whatever they may be predicated. Therefore, in the case of the universal system, largeness and smallness would not be like each other, but different things. It is true that man's powers are too weak to comprehend the wisdom which lies in the quantities and details of the spheres. (In some cases the wisdom can be discerned—e.g., in the case of the declination of the Sphere of the Zodiac Signs from the Equator: or in the case of the Apogee, or in the case of the eccentric sphere.) But, although in most cases the secret of these things cannot be discovered, still their differences are known very well. Therefore, it is not improbable that something should be distinguished from what is opposed to it (as an alternative possibility) because of its relation to the system of things. But the moments of time are, on the contrary, absolutely similar in respect of the relation each bears to possibility and to the system of things. For this reason it is not possible to maintain that, if the creation of the world had been earlier or later by a single instant than it was, the system of things would not take shape. And the similarity of the temporal states is a self-evident truth.

*we will answer :*

Had we so desired, we could have shown that the temporal states can be treated in the same way as space-filling things. For people have said that He created the world at a time which was the fittest for creation. But we will not confine our attention to this comparison. Let us, therefore, proceed to show that, fundamentally, a distinction between two like things—i.e., two like positions—is acceptable to you. Of these two instances, in each of which absolutely no difference can be supposed to exist between two like things, one is the difference of the direction of spherical movement; and the other is the definite position of the poles in relation to the ecliptic in spherical movement.

As regards the poles, the philosophers give the following

description:

The heaven is a round body which moves on two poles, which are, as it were, fixed and constant. And the round body of the heaven has similar parts, for it is simple. Particularly so is the highest, i.e., the ninth, sphere which has no stars. And both these (spheres) move on two, i.e., the northern and southern, poles.

Now, let us say, out of what they would call an infinite number of opposite points, any two could conceivably be the poles. Why, therefore, did the two points in north and south happen finally to be chosen as the poles? Why not did the ecliptic pass through some other (two) points, so that as opposite points on the ecliptic they should have been the poles? There may be a wisdom latent in the size or the shape of heaven. But what is it that distinguished the place of the pole from any other place? What caused one particular point, as set over against all other points and parts, to be chosen as the pole? Are not all the points similar; are not all the parts of a round body equal? The philosophers cannot find a way out of this difficulty.

*If it is said :*

Perhaps the position of the point of the poles is distinct from other points by virtue of a property which is suited to that point's being the point of the pole. This property being permanent, the point of the pole does not depart from its particular place (or space, or position, or whatever name may be supposed to be applicable in this case). In the course of celestial revolutions, all the positions on the sphere, which determine its relation to the Earth and to other spheres, are changed; but the position of the poles is constant. Presumably, therefore, this position was fitter than any other position to remain constant.

*we will answer :*

This amounts to an explicit admission of a dissimilarity in nature among the parts of the primary round body. If you would have us believe that all the parts of heaven

are not similar, you will contradict your own principles. For one of the arguments, by which you tried to prove that the heaven must of necessity be round in shape, was this:

The nature of heaven is simple; for heaven is not heterogeneous, but homogeneous. And the simplest shape is the round shape. For four-sided, or six-sided, etc., figures require angularity and the difference (of parts), which requirements cannot be met, unless something should be added to simple nature.

Now, even at the expense of consistency, this position does not render our objection invalid. For the question concerning the 'property' remains unanswered. Were other parts also capable of receiving this property, or were they not? If you say Yes, the next question will be: Why does this property belong in particular to only a few of many similar things? But if they say: 'This property can reside only in *this* position; other parts of the sphere are incapable of receiving it,' we will say: All the parts of the sphere are, *qua* body which receives forms, evidently similar. This property cannot be claimed by *this* position, merely because of the latter's being body or heaven. For that character is shared in common by all the parts of heaven. So there can be only two explanations: Either it was for some arbitrary reason that a special character was conferred upon *this* position, or there had come into operation an attribute whose function was to distinguish something from its like. If neither of these two hypotheses is adopted, then, just as they cling to the theory that all the moments are equally capable of receiving the occurrence of the world, so will their opponents cling to the contention that all the parts of heaven are equally capable of receiving the character which renders fixity, rather than changeableness, the fittest thing. And again, the philosophers will not be able to find a way out of this difficulty.

*The second point on which the philosophers' criticism of the distinction between like things involves a contradiction:*

Why is it that, in spite of the similarity of directions, the movements of the spheres—in some cases, from East to West;

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in others, vice versa—are specifically determined? Obviously, the similarity of directions is like the similarity of movements. There cannot be any difference between the two instances.

*If it is said :*

If the universe revolved in only one direction, it could not have varied spatial relations, nor would there be the configurations of the stars which result from their three-fold or six-fold relations, or from their conjunction. So the universe would have one and the same (spatial) relation, and there would be no variety. In point of fact, however, these configurations of the stars are the principle of events in the world.

*we will answer :*

We do not object to the difference in the directions of movements. What we say is this: The highest sphere moves from East to West; and the one below it, vice versa. Now, whatever is the result of the roles of the two spheres might be obtained even if the roles were reversed—i.e., if the highest sphere moved from West to East, and the one below it in the opposite manner. So the roles would still remain dissimilar. The movements of the spheres having been recognised to be rotatory and opposed to each other, the directions of these movements must be equal. Why, therefore, was one direction distinguished from another like it?

*If it is said :*

The two directions are opposed to each other as contraries. How can they be equal?

*we will answer :*

This is like one's saying: "Priority and posteriority of the existence of the world are also opposed to each other as contraries. How can it be claimed that they are similar?" But the philosophers assert that the similarity of the moments of time is known by reference to the possibility of

existence, and by reference to any purpose which might conceivably be served by existence. If the philosophers' claim of difference in spite of this similarity is a warranted claim, their opponents' claim of a difference in the case of temporal states and stages will be equally warranted.

*The Second Objection to the Original Argument:*

*It may be said:* You reject as impossible the procession of a temporal from an eternal being. But you will have to admit its possibility. For there are temporal phenomena in the world. And some other phenomena are the causes of those phenomena. Now, it is impossible that one set of temporal phenomena should be caused by another, and that the series should go on *ad infinitum*. No intelligent person can believe such a thing. If it had been possible, you would not have considered it obligatory on your part to introduce the Creator (into your theories), or affirm the Necessary Being in Whom all the possible things have their Ground.

So, if there is a limit at which the series of temporal phenomena stops, let this limit be called the Eternal.

And this proves how the possibility of the procession of a temporal from an eternal being can be deduced from their fundamental principles.

*If it is said:*

We do not say that the procession of a temporal being, whatever it is, from an eternal being is inadmissible. What we call inadmissible is the procession of the first temporal being from the Eternal. For the moment of the appearance (of the first temporal being) cannot be distinguished from preceding moments by virtue of a greater aptitude for existence, which might have been demonstrated through such a thing as the presence of (suitable) circumstances, or the acquisition of an instrument or some other condition, or the development of a certain nature or a purpose, or some other cause of this kind. If the temporal being which proceeds from the Eternal is not the first one, then its procession would be admissible—inasmuch as it had been rendered possible by the appearance of a new factor, e.g., the (newly acquired) capacity of the receptive substratum, or the pre-

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sence of the suitable time and circumstances, or some other thing of this kind.

*we will answer :*

That raises a question concerning the acquisition of the capacity, or the presence of the time, or whatever may be supposed to have emerged as new in this case. So either the series will go on to infinity, or it will stop at an eternal being from which the first temporal being should have originated.

*If it is said :*

Matters, which receive forms, accidents and qualities, are not temporal at all. And the temporal qualities are the movement of the spheres—i.e., rotatory motion—and the relative attributes of that movement which emerge in course of time. (Such attributes are the three-fold, six-fold, four-fold, etc., relations of some parts of the sphere or the stars to each other or to the Earth—e.g., the consequences of sunrise, or daylight, or the decline of a star from the highest point of elevation, or its distance from the Earth—because of its being at the Apogee—or its nearness to the Earth—because of its being at the Perigee—or its tending away from some regions—because of its being in north or south.) So, evidently, these relations inevitably belong to rotatory motion; for it is that motion itself which necessitates them.

And the temporal things in what is surrounded by the concave of the sphere of the Moon—i.e., the Elements and their affections, such as generation and corruption, or mingling and parting, or transformation from one quality to another—they are all traceable one to another in a manner which it would take one too long to describe. Ultimately, however, their primary causes are to be found in the rotatory celestial motion, and in the relations of the stars to each other or to the Earth.

The outcome of all this is that the perpetual and everlasting rotatory motion is the source of all the temporal events. And this rotatory motion of the heaven is derived by the heaven from the souls of heavens. For these souls are

living things which play the same part as our souls do in relation to our bodies. And they are eternal. It, therefore, follows that rotatory motion, which is caused by the souls of heavens, must be eternal as well. The states of the souls being similar—because of their eternity—the states of the movements caused by them are also similar—i.e., these movements are everlasting.

For these reasons it is inconceivable that a temporal being should proceed from an eternal being, unless it were through the intermediary of the everlasting rotatory motion. This motion resembles the Eternal in one respect—namely, that it is perpetual and everlasting. But it resembles a temporal being in another respect—namely, that every conceivable part of it comes into being after not having been. So, *qua* temporal by virtue of its parts and relations, it is the principle of all temporal phenomena. But, *qua* everlasting and having similar states, it is something which proceeds from the eternal soul(s) (of heavens). This shows that, if there are temporal events in the world, they must of necessity be connected with rotatory motion. And, since actually there *are* temporal events, the everlasting rotatory motion is thereby proved.

*we will say :*

These lengthy details will not avail you. For the question remains: Is this rotatory motion, which is the source of temporal events, temporal or eternal? If eternal, how did it become the principle of the first temporal being? If temporal, it should stand in need of another temporal being, and therefore an infinite regress should follow. You say that it resembles the Eternal in one respect, and the temporal in another. That is to say, it is something permanent which, nevertheless, emerges and re-emerges in course of time. In other words, it is permanently renewable, or renewably permanent. Now, let us ask: Is it the principle of temporal phenomena by virtue of its being permanent, or by virtue of its being renewable? If by virtue of its being permanent, how was it that something proceeded from a permanent being, whose states were similar, at a particular moment, as set over against all other moments? But if (it is the principle of temporal phenomena) by virtue of its

being renewable, then what is the cause of the renewable character itself? And whatever that cause may be, it will need another cause, and thereby an infinite regress will follow.

This concludes our objections, which have by this time been placed on a secure basis. The philosophers employ many a clever device in order to get rid of these objections. But we propose to postpone the consideration of these devices to some other problems, lest the discussion of this one should lengthen out, and our attention should be diverted from the main question to its side-issues. Later on, we propose to show that rotatory motion is not fit to be the principle of temporal events, and that, in fact, all the temporal events have been contrived by God. In that context, we will also refute the philosophers' theory that the heaven is a living thing which moves by choice, and whose movement is psychic like our movements.

(2)

*In their second argument on this question, the philosophers assert :*

He who believes that the world is posterior to God, or that God is prior to the world, is bound to adopt one of two explanations: (a) He may mean by it that God is prior in essence, not in time, as one is prior to two. For one is prior to two by nature, although it is possible that both should co-exist in time. Or, God's priority will, on this view, be like the priority of the cause to the effect—e.g., the priority of the movement of a person to the movement of the shadow which follows him, or the priority of the movement of a hand to the movement of the ring on it, or the priority of the movement of a hand in water to the movement of the water. Both the movements in each one of these instances are simultaneous; and yet one is the cause, while the other is the effect. For it is said that the shadow moves because of the movement of the person; and water, because of the movement of the hand in water. And, in spite of the fact that the two movements are simultaneous, no one says that the person moves because of the movement of the shadow; or the hand, because of the

movement of the water. If this is what God's priority to the world means, it will be necessary that both should be either eternal or temporal. It will be impossible for one to be eternal, while the other is temporal.

But, if God's priority means (b) that He is prior to the world and time in time, not in essence, then it follows that, before the existence of the world and time, there was a time when the world did not exist. For in that (pre-existing) time, the world must have been non-existent, as its non-existence preceded its existence. And, therefore, God must have preceded the world during a period which came to an end, but which had never begun. On this view, accordingly, there must be an infinite time before time. But that is self-contradictory. And for this reason it is impossible to believe in the origination of time. Finally, the eternity of time —i.e., the measure of motion—being necessary, it follows that the eternity of motion is also necessary. And hence the eternity of that which is in motion, and the perpetuity of whose motion makes time itself perpetual.

*Objection may be taken to the foregoing by saying :*

Time did have a beginning ; and it was created. And before time, there was no time whatsoever. When we say : "God is prior to the world and time," we mean that He was and the world was not ; and that, afterwards, He was and the world was together with Him. And the meaning of our words : "... He was, and the world was not . . . , " is limited to the presence of the Creator's being and the absence of the world's being. Similarly, the meaning of our words : "... He was, and the world was together with Him," is limited to the presence of two beings. By His priority we mean that His being was the only being (before the existence of the world). The world may be compared to a man. Thus, for instance, if we say : "God was and Jesus was not ; and, afterwards, God was and Jesus was together with Him," the statement will signify, first, the presence of one being and the absence of another ; and, in the second stage, (it will signify) the presence of two beings. In order to understand this statement, it will not be necessary to suppose any third thing. If the Imagination does not refrain from supposing any third thing, let no heed be paid to the blunders of the

imagination(s).

*If it is said :*

If we say that God was and the world was not, there will be a third thing implied in the statement, besides the presence of the Divine being and the absence of that of the world. This can be proved as follows : If we suppose the future non-existence of the world, the presence of one being and the absence of another will be established. But in that case it will not be correct to say : "God was, and the world was not." On the contrary, the correct thing to say will be : "God will be, and the world will not be." For "God was, and the world was not" can be said only when it refers to the past. There is a difference between "Was" and "Will be"; and the two words are not interchangeable. So let us see what this difference amounts to. Undoubtedly, the two words do not differ in respect of the presence of the Divine being, and the absence of that of the world. But there is a third sense in respect of which they do differ. For since 'Was' belongs to the past, if we say : "God was, and the world was not" of the future, then it will be pointed out that our words are inaccurate, for 'Was' is said only of the past. This shows that there is a third thing which is expressed by the word 'Was'—namely, the past. And, viewed in itself, the past is time ; while, by reference to other things, it is motion, which passes with the passage of time. Therefore, it is evident that before the existence of the world there was time, which passed and finally expired when the existence of the world began.

*we will answer :*

The original sense of the two words 'Was' and 'Will be' in this case includes only the existence of one being and the non-existence of another. The third thing in respect of which they differ is only a relation, which is, however, necessary from our point of view. This can be proved as follows : If we suppose the future non-existence of the world, and then suppose our own existence as subsequent to it, then we will be able to say : "God was, and the world was not." And it will be right to say so, regardless of the fact whether

we mean thereby the first non-existence (which preceded the existence of the world), or the second one *after* it.

So the relative character of the past and the future is demonstrated by the fact that the future may itself become the past, and may, consequently, be spoken of in terms of the past tense. And all this results from the inability of the Imagination to apprehend the commencement of a being without supposing something before it. This 'before,' which occurs to the Imagination so inevitably, is assumed to be a veritable existent—viz., time. And the inability of the Imagination in this case is like its inability to suppose a finite body, say, at the upper level, without something above its surface. Hence its assumption that beyond the world there is space—i.e., either a plenum or a void. When, therefore, it is said that there is nothing above the surface of the world or beyond its extent, the Imagination cannot accept such a thing—just as it is unable to accept the idea that there is nothing in the nature of a verifiable being before the existence of the world.

Now, it is possible to deny the truth of the Imagination's supposition of (a) void space or (b) infinite extension above the world, by saying that (a) void space is not in itself meaningful, and (b) that extension follows the body whose sides are extended. If the body is finite, extension which follows it must also be finite. And this shows that occupied or empty space (which is not related to bodies) can have no meaning. So it is proved that, notwithstanding the Imagination's inability to accept such an idea, there is neither a plenum nor a void beyond the world.

Similarly, it may be said that just as extension in space follows body, so does extension in time follow motion. For *this* is the going-on of motion, just as *that* is the spreading-out of the sides of body. Just as the demonstration of the finitude of the sides of body prevents one from affirming spatial extension beyond it, so should the demonstration of the finitude of motion in either direction prevent one from supposing temporal extension beyond it. And one should be prevented from making this supposition, although the Imagination clings to this fantastic supposition, and is unwilling to give it up.

There is no distinction between temporal extension—which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'before' and

'after'—and spatial extension—which is described, in terms of its relations, as 'above' and 'below.' If it is possible to have an 'above'-less 'above,' it should also be possible to have a 'before'-less 'before.' (No doubt, the pre-existing 'before' may be, as the 'above' unrelated to body is, an imaginary and unreal thing.) This comparison is inevitable, and it should be considered carefully; for the philosophers are all agreed that beyond the world there is neither occupied nor empty space.

*If it is said:*

This is a devious comparison. For the world has no 'above' or 'below.' It is a round body, and a round body has no 'above' and 'below.' Even so, if you call one direction—e.g., the one corresponding to your head—'above,' and another—e.g., the one corresponding to your foot—'below,' then these will be names applicable to it insofar as it is related to you. The direction which is 'below' in relation to you is 'above' in relation to some other person, whom you might suppose to be standing on the other side of the Globe, so that the sole of his foot is opposite the sole of your foot. The parts of heaven supposed to be above you in daytime are those very parts which are below the Earth in night. For that which is below the Earth comes above it in the course of spherical revolutions. But the beginning of the world's existence cannot conceivably become its end. Suppose there is a piece of wood one of whose ends is thick, while the other is thin. Let us agree to call the direction of thinness, as far as it may go, the 'above,' and call the other the 'below.' Now, this will not bring about an essential difference among the parts of the world. For the names we have applied will differ in consequence of the difference of the position of that stick. If, for instance, the stick is turned upside down, the names will have to be interchanged—and this will not mean that there has been a change in the world. For 'above' and 'below' are purely relations to you, whereby the parts and planes of the world do not become different.

But the non-existence which preceded the existence of the world, and the original limit of the existence of the world must be essential entities; and it is inconceivable

that one of them should change so as to become the other. Nor can the non-existence supposed to follow the annihilation of the world become the one which preceded the existence of the world. The two limits of the existence of the world—one of them being the First, and the other the Last—are essential and immutable limits. Unlike 'above' and 'below,' these limits cannot be rendered interchangeable by changing relations. Therefore, it is possible for us to say that the world has no 'above' and 'below.' But it is not possible for you to say that the existence of the world has no 'before' and 'after.' And now that 'before' and 'after' have been proved, time has no other meaning than that it is what 'before' and 'after' signify.

*we will say:*

There is no difference between 'before' and 'after' on the one hand, and 'above' and 'below' on the other. But, since it will serve no purpose to stick to the words 'above' and 'below,' let us use such words as 'beyond' or 'outside' instead. Thus, we will say: The world does have an inside and an outside. Now, is there any occupied or empty space outside the world? Their answer will be: "There is neither an occupied nor an empty space beyond the world. If you mean by the 'outside' (of the world) the uppermost surface of the world itself, the world has an 'outside.' But if you mean anything else, the world has no 'outside.'" Similarly, when we are asked whether the world has a 'before,' we may answer: If that means whether the existence of the world has a beginning—i.e., one of its own limits at which it began—it has a 'before.' And this is analogous to the theory that the world has an 'outside,' if the 'outside' is interpreted to mean an uncovered limit or the boundary of surface. But if you mean by the 'before' something else, then the world has no 'before'—just as it is said not to have an 'outside,' if that means something over and above its own surface. If you say: "The commencement of an existence, which had no 'before', is unintelligible," the rejoinder will be: The existence of a finite body, which has no 'outside,' is unintelligible. If you say: "Its 'outside' is its own surface whereby it is bounded off. It has nothing external to it which could be

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called its 'outside,'" we will say: In like manner, its 'before' is the beginning of its existence whereby it is limited (in that direction). It has nothing external to it which could be called its 'before.'

It remains for us to say that God had an existence, while the world was not with Him. This much does not necessitate the affirmation of anything else. What proves that such an affirmation would be an act of the Imagination is that it is related to space and time in particular. (Although our opponent believes in the eternity of body, yet his Imagination is sometimes agreeable to the supposition of its temporal origin. And although we believe in the temporal origin of body, yet our Imagination is sometimes agreeable to the supposition of its eternity. But this is so only in the case of body.) When we resume the discussion of time, the opponent is unable to suppose the beginning of time which had no 'before.' The contrary of what is believed can be posited in the Imagination, as a hypothesis or a supposition; but this, like space, is something which cannot be posited (even) in the Imagination. Both he who does and he who does not believe in the finitude of body are unable to suppose a body beyond which there is neither a plenum nor a void. Indeed, the Imagination cannot accept such an idea. But it is said: "The clear evidence of reason does not disallow demonstratively the existence of finite body. Let no heed be paid to the Imagination." Similarly, therefore, (it may be said that) the clear evidence of reason does not disallow an existence which opened up, and yet had nothing before it. If the Imagination is unable to suppose such an existence, let no heed be paid to the Imagination. For, in the case of space, the Imagination—having found no finite body which did not have by its side some other body or air (which was imagined to be void space)—assumed that the same thing would be true of non-empirical reality. Similarly, in the case of time, when it found that every event followed another event, it refused to accept an Event which had no 'before'—viz., an existing thing which might have run its course before that Event.

This, then, is the cause of error. And the comparison we have drawn here has enabled us to refute the philosophers.

*The philosophers restate their argument for the necessity of time's eternity in another form. They say :*

There is no doubt that, from your point of view, God had the power to create the world in a year, or a hundred years, or a thousand years before He did. Now, these hypothetical measures differ in quantity. Therefore, it is necessary for you to affirm something—before the existence of the world—which had a quantitative or measurable nature, and some parts of which would be greater in quantity or size than others.

If you say that the word 'years' could be applied only when the sphere and its revolutions had come into being, then we will give up the word, and restate the argument in a different form. Thus, we will say : Supposing that since the beginning of the world till now its sphere has made one thousand revolutions, did God have the power to create before this world another world which would have made eleven hundred revolutions by this time ? If you say No, then it would mean a change of the Eternal from inability to power, or a change of the world from impossibility to possibility. But if you say Yes (which is an unavoidable answer in this case), the next question will be : Did He have the power to create a third world which would have made twelve hundred revolutions by this time ? Again, the answer must be Yes. Now, let us ask : Could what we call the third world (we call it so because that is its position in our hypothesis, although it is the earliest one) be created together with what we call the second world ? And would it still be possible for the two worlds to have made twelve hundred and eleven hundred revolutions respectively (they are supposed to have started at the same time, and to have moved at an equal speed) ? If the answer is Yes, it will be an absurdity ; for it is impossible for two movements, which have an equal speed and terminate at the same time, to differ in number. But if you say :

"The third world, which has made twelve hundred revolutions, could not have been created together with the second one which has made eleven hundred revolutions. Nay, it is necessary that the creation of the former should

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precede that of the latter by just as much as the creation of the latter itself will precede that of the first world. (The first world is called so, because it is the nearest to our imagination, as in our supposition we ascend from our own time upwards.)"

then the quantity of one possibility will be double that of another. And there must be yet another possibility which is double the whole. And this quantitatively determined or measurable possibility, some parts of which are longer than others to an ascertainable extent, can in reality be nothing other than time. For these hypothetical quantities cannot form an attribute of the Divine essence, which stands above all quantitative determinations. Nor can they be an attribute of the non-existence of the world. For non-existence is Nothing ; hence the possibility of any quantitative determination of it. But quantity is an attribute, which presupposes something of which it is the quantity. This 'something' is motion. And the 'quantity' is time, which is the measure of motion. Therefore, on your view, there must have been before the existence of the world something whose quantities should vary—that is, there must have been time. So you must believe that there was time before the existence of the world.

### *The Objection :*

All this is the work of the Imagination. The aptest way of counteracting it is to compare time and space. So, we will say : Did God have the power to create the highest sphere as larger by a cubit than the size He has actually created ? If they say No, that will show God's inability. But if they say Yes, then two cubits will be equally admissible, then three, and an infinite regress will follow. And in this, we will say, there is the affirmation of extension beyond the world which has a quantity, and which can be measured. For that which is occupied by the larger-by-two-cubits is not the same thing as that which is occupied by the larger-by-one. Accordingly, there must be Quantity beyond the world. And quantity presupposes something of which it is the quantity—viz., body or empty space. Therefore, there must be occupied or empty space

beyond the world. What is the answer to this?

Similarly, did God have the power to create the round body of the world as smaller by a cubit, or two, than the size He has created? Would there not be a difference between the two suppositions (of size)—a difference caused by the elimination of plenitude or place-occupation? For the occupied space which disappears through the loss of two cubits is greater than that which disappears through the loss of only one. Therefore, void space will have to be regarded as something measurable. But void space is Nothing; how can it be measured?

So our answer to the fantastic supposition by the Imagination of temporal possibilities before the existence of the world is the same as your answer to its fantastic supposition of spatial possibilities beyond the world. There is no difference.

*If it is said :*

We do not believe that anyone has the power to do that which is impossible. The world's being smaller or larger than it is is impossible. Therefore, it is beyond anyone's power.

*This plea will be invalid for three reasons :*

Firstly, it is repugnant to reason. For reason shows that the supposition of the world's being larger or smaller by a cubit than it is is not like the supposition of black and white, or existence and non-existence, coming together. It is only the affirmation and denial of the same thing at the same time which is impossible, and to which all impossible things can be reduced. The assertion of the impossibility of a larger or smaller size is an arbitrary, unconvincing and false assertion.

Secondly, if the world could not have been smaller or larger than it is, then its present size should be called a necessary, rather than possible, thing. And a possible thing needs no cause. Therefore, you must say what the Materialists say—viz., rejecting the idea of the Creator, or the Cause of causes; although, actually that is not your belief.

Thirdly, this false assertion cannot even prevent your

opponents from confronting it with something similar to it. For instance, we can say : Before the world came into being, its existence was not possible. On the contrary, existence is commensurate with possibility: being neither more, nor less, than it. If you say : "This means that the Eternal has changed from inability to power," we will say : No, since existence was not possible, it was beyond power. The impossibility of realising what is not possible does not show inability. If you say : "How is it that the existence of the world, which was impossible, became possible?" we will answer : Why should it be impossible that something impossible in one state be possible in another? If you say : "The states are similar," we will answer : Similarly, the quantities are equal. Why, then, should one quantity be possible, and another smaller or larger than it by as much as a nail impossible? If that is not impossible, this cannot be impossible either. So this is the way to meet their arguments.

Our answers have brought out the truth that the possibilities supposed by the philosophers are meaningless. What must be taken for granted is that God is eternal and omnipotent, and that if He wills, no action is impossible for Him. And this much does not necessitate the affirmation of an extended time—unless the Imagination in its artful way should add something (to the meaning of 'action').

(3)

*Their third argument for the eternity of the world*

Seizing (upon the word 'possibility'), they say : The existence of the world must have been possible, before the world had come into being. For it is impossible that, having been impossible, it should have become possible. And this possibility had no beginning—that is, it never lacked being. And the existence of the world never ceased to be possible; for there was no state when it could be described as impossible. Since the possibility never ceased to be, therefore, commensurately with it, that which is possible never ceased to be. For the meaning of our words : "Its existence is possible," is that its existence is not impossible. If existence was always possible, it must always have

been not-impossible. If it had always been impossible, it would be false for us to say that it was always possible. And if it were false to say that it was always possible, it would be false to say that the possibility never ceased to be. And if it were false to say that the possibility never ceased to be, it would be true to say that the possibility had a beginning. And if it were true to say that it had a beginning, it must have been impossible before that (beginning). And this would lead to the affirmation of a state when the world was not possible, and God had no power over it.

#### *The Objection :*

The origination of the world never ceased to be possible. Undoubtedly, its origination could conceivably take place at any moment of time. If it is supposed to have existed for ever, it will not be an originated thing. Accordingly, the actuality will not be commensurate with the possibility, but incongruent with it.

And this is like their saying (in the case of space) :

"The supposition of the world as larger than it is, or the supposition of the creation of Body above the world (and the creation of a second body above the first one, and so on *ad infinitum*) is possible; for the possibility of making additions is unlimited. In spite of this, however, an absolute and infinite void space is impossible."

Similarly, an existence whose limits are not determined is impossible. Nay, as it is said :

"Body with finite surface is possible. But its quantities—i.e., the possibilities with respect to bigness or smallness—cannot be specified,"

similarly, therefore, the origination of the world is possible. But the possibilities of the commencement of its existence being early or late cannot be specified. It is only its being an originated thing which is specified; and only that specific character is, therefore, called a possible thing.

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#### *Their fourth argument:*

*In this argument, they say:* Every originated thing is preceded by the Matter in which it is. No originated thing is independent of Matter; and Matter itself is not originated. It is only the Forms, Accidents and Qualities passing over Matter which are originated. This can be explained as follows :

Before its origination, every originated thing must have been either possible, or impossible, or necessary. Now, it is impossible that it should have been impossible; for that which is impossible in itself is never brought into being. Again, it is impossible for it to have been necessary in itself: for that which is necessary in itself is never deprived of existence. It follows that it must have been possible in itself. Therefore, the possibility of its existence was there before it existed. But the possibility of existence is a relative attribute which cannot exist in itself. There must be a substratum to which it could be related. But there is nothing but Matter to serve as a substratum. So it was related to Matter. This is like the relation we mean when we say that Matter receives heat and coldness, or blackness and whiteness, or motion and rest—that is, it is possible *for Matter* that these qualities should originate (in it), or that such changes should occur (to it). Similarly, therefore, possibility will be an attribute of Matter. And for Matter itself there is no (other) Matter. Hence the fact that it is not originated. If it had been originated, the possibility of its existence would have preceded its existence. And in that case, possibility would exist in itself, unrelated to any (substratum). But possibility being a relative attribute, its existing in itself is unintelligible.

It is not possible to say that possibility means the possible thing's being feasible, and the Eternal's having power over it. For we know that something is feasible only when it is possible. We say that someone has power over it, because it is possible; or that no one has power over it, because it is not possible. If by calling something possible we were to refer to its feasibility, then it would amount to saying : "Someone has power over it, because he has power

over it," or : " It is beyond power, because it is beyond power." And that would be the definition of a thing by referring to that very thing. It is now clear that the judgment about the possibility of something is a distinct intellectual judgment, whereby is known another judgment —viz., the one about its being an object of power.

Again, it is impossible to explain possibility in terms of the Eternal's knowledge of the nature of the possible thing. For knowledge requires the known thing. Therefore, knowledge of possibility and possibility itself which is the object of this knowledge must be different things. Moreover, even when identified with knowledge, possibility will remain a relative attribute which *must* be related to an essence. But there is nothing but Matter which could serve as such an essence ; for Matter precedes every originated thing, and primary Matter itself is unoriginated.

*To this, objection may be taken as follows :*

The possibility they have mentioned is derived from an intellectual judgment. True, when the Intellect can suppose the existence of something—the supposition not being inadmissible to reason—we call that thing possible. Or, if the supposition is inadmissible, we call the thing impossible. Or, if the Intellect cannot suppose the non-existence of something, we call that thing necessary. But these intellectual judgments do not need an existent to which to be related as attributes. There are three reasons for this contention.

Firstly, if possibility required an existing thing to which it might be related, and whose possibility it might be said to be, then impossibility would likewise require an existing thing whose impossibility it might be said to be. But, as a matter of fact, the impossible in itself does not exist. Nor is there any Matter to which impossibility occurs and to which it is related as an attribute.

Secondly, in the case of blackness and whiteness, the intellectual judgment of possibility is made before their existence. If this possibility were to be related to a body to which they occur (so that one might say : What the possibility of blackness or whiteness means is that it is possible *for this body* to become white or black), then

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neither white nor black would in itself be possible, and the predicate of possibility would not be applicable to either of the two, for the possible thing would be the body to which blackness or whiteness was to be related. Now, we must ask : What about blackness or whiteness in itself ? Is it possible, or necessary, or impossible ? The only answer to this question is that it is possible. From this it follows that an intellectual judgment of possibility does not require the assumption of an existing essence to which possibility should be related.

Thirdly, they think that the souls of men are self-subsisting substances which are not body, or Matter, or impressed upon Matter. And, according to Ibn Sina and some other great thinkers, these souls are originated, and are possible before they have been originated. But before the existence of these souls, there is no essence or Matter. And yet their possibility is a relative attribute. Now, if this attribute cannot be explained in terms of the power of a powerful being or agent, how then can it be explained at all ? So this difficulty will arise from their own theories.

*If it is said :*

It is not possible to reduce possibility to an intellectual judgment. For intellectual judgment means nothing (in this case) but the knowledge of possibility. Now, possibility, *qua* an object of knowledge, cannot be identical with knowledge. For knowledge only encompasses its object, follows it, and is related to it—whatever the object may be. When the non-existence of knowledge is supposed, the object of knowledge does not disappear ; but with the annihilation of the object of knowledge, knowledge will be annihilated. For knowledge and its object are *two* things ; one of which is the follower, and the other is that which is followed. So, even if we suppose that all intelligent men have failed to suppose the possibility, or that they are unaware of it, still we will say that the possibility—nay, even the possible things themselves—will remain undisturbed. The intellects may be unaware of the possible things. But, obviously, the possible things remain, regardless of the fact whether any intellect is aware or unaware of them. Nay, they will remain, even if all the intellects and all the intellectual

persons pass away.

As regards the three points you have made, they are not cogent. For :

(Firstly,) impossibility is a relative attribute which does not require an existent to which it could be related. By the impossible is meant the combination of two contraries. If a place is white, it will be impossible for it to be black and white together. So even in this case, there must be a designated subject. To this subject an attribute is attributed ; and as long as the connection lasts, it is said that the contrary (of *this* attribute) is impossible *for* the subject. In this way, impossibility becomes a relative attribute existing in, and related to, a subject. As regards necessity, it is no hidden fact that it is related to the necessary being.

The second point—namely, that blackness in itself is possible—is wrong. For if blackness is taken in abstraction of the substratum in which it resides, then it will be impossible, not possible. It becomes possible only when it is supposed to be a quality *in* a body. A body is prepared for the successive occurrence of qualities ; and successive occurrence of qualities is possible to bodies alone. Otherwise, blackness has no individual self to which possibility could be attributed.

Now to take the third point—i.e., the soul. There is a class of philosophers who believe that the soul is eternal, and that the connection between the soul and bodies is possible *for* the soul. To this class, your objection does not apply.

As regards those who believe in the temporal origin of the soul, some of them believe that the soul is impressed upon Matter, and follows (this) composition. (This seems to have been Galen's view in some of his works.) Therefore, on this view, the soul will be *in* Matter, and possibility of each soul will be related to its Matter.

As regards those philosophers who believe in the temporal origin of the soul, and who do not consider it to have been impressed upon Matter, the possibility of the soul would mean to them that it is possible *for* Matter that the rational soul should direct it. Thus the possibility of the soul, which preceded its origination, will be related to Matter. For, although the soul is not impressed upon

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Matter, yet there is a connection between the two—viz., a connection arising from the fact that the soul is the director or the employer of Matter. In this way, therefore, possibility will ultimately be related to Matter.

#### *The Answer :*

It is right to reduce possibility, impossibility and necessity to intellectual judgments. As regards the contention that intellectual judgment means knowledge which requires a known thing, we will say : The intellectual judgment of possibility has a known thing—in the sense in which colouredness or animality or any other universal judgment is, according to the philosophers themselves, an established fact for reason. No one can say that known things do not correspond to these kinds of knowledge. But such 'things' do not exist among real objects. This is why the philosophers themselves have explicitly stated that the universals exist in minds, not in real objects. It is only the objective particulars which exist in the real things. These particulars are the data of the senses, not of the Intellect ; but they are the cause of the Intellect's drawing from them a rational judgment by making abstraction of Matter. Hence colouredness is a distinct intellectual judgment independent of the judgments of blackness and whiteness. In Being, a colour which is neither black nor white, etc., is inconceivable. But the unqualified Form of Colouredness is an established fact for reason. So it is said that this Form is a Form which exists in minds, not in real objects. If this is not an untenable position, the position we have taken cannot be untenable either.

In reply to their assertion that the supposition of the non-existence or unawareness of intellectual persons will not annihilate possibility, we will say : Will such a supposition annihilate the universal judgments, viz., the Genera and Species ? If they say Yes (which is the only answer ; for indeed the Genera and Species mean intellectual judgments only), the same will be our answer with respect to possibility. There is no difference between the two kinds of judgment. If they claim that the Genera and Species will continue to exist in the Divine knowledge, again the same thing will be true of possibility. Thus our objection comes to

tell. And it was our purpose to expose the incoherence of their thought.

As regards their plea that impossibility is related to Matter—to which something has been attributed, and for which the contrary of that thing is, therefore, impossible—it must be pointed out that all impossible things are not of this kind. For instance, the existence of a partner of God is impossible. But in this case there is no Matter to which the impossibility could be related. If they assert that the meaning of the impossibility of a partner of God is that God's singular being or His unity is necessary, and that singularity is related to Him, we will say: No, the world exists with Him; His being is, therefore, not singular. If they assert that His singularity—insofar as it precludes a rival—is necessary, and that, impossibility being the term contradictory to necessity, impossibility is related to Him, we will say: We mean that God's singularity—insofar as it precludes a rival—is not a singularity which precludes the co-existence of the contingent creatures with Him. For in the former sense, His singularity is necessary; in the latter, it is not. Now, we will make use of this distinction to concoct a relation between Him and the possibility (which the philosophers would have us relate to a substratum), even as they have concocted a relation between Him and impossibility—by shifting the discussion from impossibility to necessity, and then relating singularity to Him through (His) attribute of necessity.

As regards the plea that blackness or whiteness has no self or individual essence, it is true if it means that this is so in Being. But it is not true if it means that this is so for the Intellect as well. For the Intellect does apprehend universal blackness, judging that it is possible in itself.

Finally, the plea concerning the originated souls is invalid. For they have individual essences as well as a possibility which precedes their origination. And there is nothing to which this possibility can be related. The philosophers' statement that it is possible for Matter that the soul should direct it gives only a remote relation. If such a thing can satisfy you, then it would not be improbable if one said: The meaning of the possibility of the existence of an originated thing is that it was possible for a powerful agent to originate it. In this way, possibility will be related to an

agent, although it is not impressed upon him—even as you related it to a passive body upon which it had not been impressed. To relate it to an agent is not different from relating it to a patient: for in neither case does 'impression' take place.

*If it is said :*

In all your objections you have tried to meet difficulties by raising other difficulties. You have not tried to solve the difficulties which had been raised by the philosophers.

*we will answer :*

After all, this method has exposed the invalidity of the philosophers' theories. Nor do the causes of the difficulties remain unravelled during the process of questioning (their principles) and reducing (them) to absurdity. However, in this book we have undertaken only an attack on their doctrines, and a refutation of their arguments. It is not our business to support a particular point of view. That is why we would not go beyond the purpose of this book. Nor would we try to find out arguments which might prove the temporal origin of the world; for the only thing we intended to do was to refute the philosophers' claim that its eternity is definitely known.

But, in order to affirm the true doctrine, we will—if Divine help enables us to do so—write a separate book, after having concluded this one. We will call that book "The Principles of Beliefs," and will be concerned therein with Affirmation, as in the present one we are concerned with Destruction. And God knows the best.

## PROBLEM II

### REFUTATION OF THEIR BELIEF IN THE EVER-LASTING NATURE OF THE WORLD, TIME AND MOTION

LET it be known that this problem is a corollary of the preceding one. For as the philosophers consider the world to be eternal—i.e., without a beginning in time—so do they consider it to be everlasting—i.e., never coming to an end. (They say that) its corruption or annihilation is impossible; and that it always was, and ever will be, as it is.

The four arguments they advanced to prove the eternity of the world apply to its everlasting nature as well. And the same objections will be taken to them as have been taken before.

They say that the world, as an effect whose Cause is eternal and everlasting, must be together with the Cause; and that since the Cause is unchangeable, the effect cannot change either. This is the basis for their denial of a beginning (of the world); and this very argument is applicable to the end (of the world). This is the first line of thought they take in this problem.

In the second place, they say that if the world passes away, its non-being will be *after* its being. Thus it will have an ‘*after*’; wherein lies the affirmation of time.

In the third place, they say that the possibility of existence never ceases. Therefore, it is proper that the possible being should be (unceasing) in agreement with the possibility. [But this argument is not cogent. For we consider the eternity of the world to be impossible; but not its everlasting nature—if God (exalted be He) grants it an everlasting existence. It is not necessary for something which has a beginning in time to have an end; while it is necessary for an action to be originated and have a beginning in time. No one, except Abu Hudhayl al-'Allaf, has laid it down as a necessary condition that the world should come to an end. Said he: As an infinite number of spherical revolutions in the past is impossible, so is it in future. But this is wrong; for the whole of the future does not enter

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into existence, either concurrently or successively; while the past has entered into existence successively, although not by concurrence. Since now it is clear that we do not find from the rational point of view any impossibility in the supposition of the everlasting existence of the world, and that, on the contrary, we consider its perpetuation as possible as its annihilation, the knowledge as to which one of the two possibilities will actually happen is to be derived from the Sacred Law, for it has nothing to do with theoretical investigation.]

Their fourth argument is allied to the third one which we considered above. For they say: When the world passes away, the possibility of the existence must still remain, for that which is possible can never become impossible. But possibility is a relative attribute. And (they claim) everything which is in time needs a preceding Matter; hence everything which passes away must also need a Matter out of which to pass away. This shows that the Matters and the Roots do not perish; it is only the Forms and the Accidents subsisting in them which perish.

The reply to all this has been stated earlier. However, we put this problem in a separate place, because they have two new arguments.

(i)

The first argument is the one adopted by Galen. Said he: If the Sun were liable to annihilation, signs of decay in it would be visible in course of time. But the astronomical observation of its size has for thousands of years revealed the same quantity. If, therefore, it has not decayed through these long ages, it follows that it is incorruptible.

*Objection to this argument from several points :*

The syllogistic form of this argument would be:

- (i) If the Sun were corruptible, decay should befall it.
- (ii) But the consequent is impossible.
- (iii) Therefore, the antecedent is impossible.

This is what they call a hypothetical conjunctive syllogism.

Here the conclusion does not follow; for the antecedent is not true—unless a new condition were added to it, viz., the assertion that if the Sun were corruptible, decay would be inevitable. So this consequent does not follow from this antecedent, without the addition of a condition, such as the assertion that if the Sun were liable to corruption-by-decay, then decay would be inevitable, or it must be shown that decay is the only way in which corruption takes place. For only then would the consequent necessarily follow from the antecedent. And we do not admit that decay is the only way in which things are corrupted. On the other hand, decay is one of the ways in which corruption takes place. And it is not improbable that even in the state of perfection something should be overtaken by corruption all of a sudden.

Secondly, even if it is granted that there is no corruption without decay, how did Galen know that decay has not befallen the Sun? His reference to astronomical observation is absurd. For quantities discovered by astronomical observation are only approximate. If the Sun, which is said to be one hundred and seventy times as big as the Earth, or any other thing of the same size as the Sun loses as much as a range of hills, the loss cannot be apparent to the senses. So it may be assumed that the Sun is in decay, and that so far it has lost as much as a range of hills, or a little more; and that the human senses cannot perceive this loss, for in sciences which depend on observation quantities are known only approximately. This may be illustrated. The philosophers tell us that gold and sapphire are composed of elements and are, therefore, liable to corruption. But if a sapphire is kept for a hundred years, the senses will not be able to perceive the diminution it has suffered. Therefore, the loss suffered by the Sun during the entire history of astronomical observation may be compared to that suffered by a sapphire in a century. In neither case is the loss or decay apparent to the senses. Hence the utter unsoundness of Galen's argument.

We have ignored many other arguments of this kind; for intelligent people laugh at such things. This one was mentioned here only to serve as an example of what we have passed over. And this is the reason why we proposed to confine our attention to the four arguments which, as already has been seen, require some ingenuity in order that we may

solve the doubts raised by them.

(2)

*In their second argument for the impossibility of the annihilation of the world, the philosophers say:*

The substances in the world are imperishable. For no cause of their annihilation will be intelligible. If that which has not been non-existent becomes so there must be a cause of this change. Such a cause

will either be the will of the Eternal. But this is impossible. For if not having been the Willer of the non-existence of the world, He becomes one, He undergoes a change. Or it will lead to the conclusion that the Eternal and His will continue uniform in all states, but the object of the will nevertheless changes—first from non-existence to existence, and then from existence to non-existence.

Thus, the argument we had advanced to prove the impossibility of the origination of something in time because of the eternal will also proves the impossibility of its passing into non-existence.

Besides, there is another difficulty which is even more formidable. Namely, the object of the will is obviously the action of the willer. Now, even if he who was not an agent, but became one later, does not change in himself, yet it is necessary that his action should become an existent after not having been one. For if the agent remains as he was at the time when he had not effected an action—viz., even if at present he has no action—then he will have done nothing. And non-existence is Nothing. How, then, can it be an action? Suppose He annihilates the world, whereby an action which had not been done before emerges. What can this action be? Is it the existence of the world? Impossible, for existence has come to an end. Is it the non-existence of the world? No, for non-existence is Nothing; hence it cannot be an action. To be an existent is the least degree of an action. But the non-existence of the world is no existent; hence it cannot be said to be effected by an agent, or produced by a producer.

This difficulty (claim the philosophers) has divided the *Mutakallimun* into four groups, each attempting the impossible by trying to solve it:

(a) The Mu'tazilah say: The action which proceeds from Him is an existent—viz., Annihilation, which is created by Him not in a substratum. So the whole world will perish all of a sudden. And the created Annihilation itself will perish, so that there will be no need for another Annihilation, which would start an infinite regress.

But this is false for several reasons. Firstly, Annihilation is no intelligible existent whose creation could be supposed. Secondly, if it were an existent, it would not perish by itself, without any cause of annihilation. Thirdly, even on this assumption the world does not perish. For if Annihilation is supposed to be created within the world itself, the whole supposition will be absurd. For the substratum and that which subsists in it come into contact, and, therefore, coexist—though only for an instant. If, therefore, the world and Annihilation could be supposed to coexist, they would not be mutually exclusive; and then the world would not be annihilated. But if Annihilation is created neither within the world nor in any other substratum, how then can the existence of the one exclude that of the other?

Further, this view is obnoxious for another reason. It implies that God has not the power to annihilate *some* of the substances of the world, and allow others to survive. Nay, it is implied here that He has not the power to do any thing, except to create Annihilation which is to annihilate the whole world at once—for not being in a particular substratum, it is brought to bear upon the whole simultaneously and indiscriminately.

(b) The Karramiyah say: Destruction is an action of God, which (action) signifies an existent originated within the Divine essence (may He be exalted above what is said of Him). Thus, the world becomes non-existent through this action. Similarly, existence is the result of an act of production which occurs in His essence, and because of which the existent becomes an existent.

This is also false. In the first place, it makes the Eternal subject to temporal phenomena. Further, it goes outside the scope of intelligible reality, for by production is understood a being which can be ascribed to will and

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power. To affirm any thing else besides will, power and the being to which power extends—viz., the world—is unintelligible. The same is true of destruction.

(c) The Ash'ariyah say: The Accidents perish by themselves, and their immortality is inconceivable. For if it were conceivable, their annihilation would be inconceivable in that sense. As regards the Substances, they are not immortal in themselves, but because of an immortality which is additional to their being. So when God does not create immortality for them, the Substances will perish because of the absence of that which would make them immortal.

This is also false: because it comes into conflict with the sensible facts, inasmuch as it implies that blackness or whiteness does not survive and continue, but has its being renewed ever and anon. The Intellect rejects this assertion, as it would reject the assertion that body has its being renewed ever and anon. For the Intellect, which judges that the hair on the head of a man today is the same hair as, and not merely similar to, the hair which was there yesterday, makes the same judgment in regard to the blackness of the hair.

There is yet another difficulty in this theory. For if that which survives does so because of a (derived) immortality, it follows that the Divine attributes should likewise continue because of a (derived) immortality: that this immortality should need another immortality to immortalise it, and that, therefore, an infinite regress should follow.

(d) Another section of the Ash'ariyah say: The Accidents perish themselves: but the Substances perish when God would not create in them motion or rest, etc. When it has nothing of the sort, it perishes.

It appears that both the groups among the Ash'ariyah incline towards the view that destruction is not an action, but a refraining from action: for they do not find it intelligible to regard non-existence as an action.

Since all these methods of explaining the destruction of the world have been found to be invalid, there is no ground left for anyone to believe in the possibility of the destruction of the world.

This criticism applies when the world is admitted to have originated in time. For, although they admit the temporal

origin of the human souls, still they assert the impossibility of their destruction, basing the argument on the same principles as we have related above. In short, the position taken by them is: The annihilation of anything—whether eternal or originated in time—which exists in itself, not in a substratum, is impossible. If one says to them: "When fire burns under water, water is destroyed," they will answer: It is not destroyed. It only changes into steam. Later on, steam will change into water once again. Matter, i.e., the *Hayuli*, persists in Air. It is the same Matter as was there beneath the Form of water. Now the *Hayuli* has put on the Form of Air, having divested itself of the Form of water. When the air is cooled, it will condense, and water will reappear. Matter does not emerge anew (during these changes). On the contrary, the Matters are common to all the Elements. It is only the Forms passing over them in succession which change.

#### *The answer:*

We might possibly defend all the classes of the *Mutakallimun* mentioned by you, and demonstrate that inasmuch as your fundamental postulates include much like what is to be found there, it is unjust on your part to criticise them. But we prefer brevity, and will confine our attention to only one of these classes. Thus, we will say: How can you disprove one who says that production and destruction are the effects of the will of the Omnipotent? So when God wills, He produces; and when He wills, He destroys. And this is what His being the Omnipotent *par excellence* means. And in the course of all these activities He Himself never changes: it is only the action which changes. As regards your objection: "It is necessary that an action should proceed from an agent. What proceeds from God?" we will reply that that which proceeds from Him is what has newly emerged, viz., non-existence. For there was no non-existence before the action. Since it newly emerges, it is that which proceeds from Him.

#### *If you say:*

Non-existence is nothing. How can it proceed?

#### *we will answer:*

Being nothing, how did it happen at all? Its proceeding from God only means that that which happens is to be related to His power. If its happening is intelligible, why should its relation to power not be intelligible? And what is the difference between them and one who absolutely denies the occurrence of non-existence to Accidents and Forms, saying that since non-existence is nothing, it cannot occur, and occurrence and emergence cannot be predicated of it? For our part, we never doubt that the occurrence of non-existence to Accidents is conceivable. Therefore, that of which the occurrence can be predicated can also intelligibly happen, regardless of whether it is called a thing, or not. And, finally, the relation of this intelligible occurrent to the power of the Omnipotent is also intelligible.

#### *If it is said:*

This objection may be taken to the position of a man who thinks that the non-existence of a thing *after* its existence is possible. Such an one might be called upon to explain what it is that occurs. But in our view it is impossible that any existent should cease to exist. To us, the non-existence of Accidents means the occurrence of their contraries, which are themselves existents. It does not mean the occurrence of abstract non-existence which is Nothing. How can occurrence be predicated of that which is nothing? If the hair whitens, it is whiteness which occurs. And that is all. And whiteness is an existent. We would not say that that which has occurred is the non-existence of blackness.

#### *This is false for two reasons :*

Firstly, does the occurrence of whiteness include the non-existence of blackness, or not? If they say No, they will be opposed to intelligible reality. If they say Yes, is that which includes other than that which is included, or identical with it? If they say that it is identical, it will be a self-contradiction: for nothing includes itself. But if they say that it is other, then is this 'other' intelligible,

or not? If they say No, we will answer: How, then, do you know that it is included? The judgment about its being included is an admission of its being intelligible. But if they say Yes, then is this intelligible included one—namely, the non-existence of blackness—eternal, or originated in time? If they call it eternal, it will be absurd. But if they call it originated, how can that of which a temporal origin is affirmed not be intelligible? If they say that it is neither eternal nor originated in time, it will be absurd. For if before the occurrence of whiteness it were to be said that blackness is non-existent, it would be false. If after the occurrence of whiteness it is said to be non-existent, it is true. So, obviously, it has occurred. And this occurrent is intelligible. Therefore, it is reasonable to ascribe it to the power of the Omnipotent.

Secondly, there are some accidents which, even according to them, perish *not*-by-their-contraries. Thus, motion has no contrary. The antithesis between motion and rest is the antithesis between possession, and non-possession, i.e., being and non-being. Rest means the non-existence of motion. So when motion is non-existent, it is not a contrary, viz., rest, which has occurred, but pure non-existence. The same is true of attributes which are to be classed as perfection, e.g., the impression of the image of sensible objects on the vitreous humour of the eye: or the impression of the Form of the intelligibles on the soul. All these represent the commencement of a being, without the disappearance of a contrary. And their becoming non-existent means the loss of a being to which no contrary succeeds. So their disappearance does mean pure non-existence. Hence non-existence comes to occur. And the happening of this occurrent non-existence is intelligible. And that of which the occurrence is in itself intelligible can intelligibly be related to the power of the Omnipotent, even if it were not a 'thing.'

From this it is clear that if the happening of any thing because of the eternal will is conceivable, it makes no difference whether that which happens is existence or non-existence.

### PROBLEM III

OF THEIR DISHONESTY IN SAYING THAT GOD IS  
THE AGENT AND THE MAKER OF THE WORLD  
WHICH IS HIS ACTION OR PRODUCT: AND  
THE EXPLANATION OF THE FACT  
THAT THESE WORDS HAVE ONLY A  
METAPHORICAL, NOT REAL,  
SIGNIFICANCE TO THEM

**B**ARRING the Atheists, all the philosophers are agreed that the world has a maker: that God is the Maker or the Agent of the world, and that the world is His action or product. But this is a dishonest distortion of their principles. There are three reasons why, according to their principles, the world's being the action or the product of God is inconceivable. One of these reasons is to be found in the nature of the agent: another in the nature of the action, and the third one in the relationship between the action and the agent.

The reason to be found in the nature of the agent is that it is necessary for an agent to have the will for the action: to have free choice, and to know what he wills. But, according to the philosophers, God has no will. Nay, He has no attribute at all. Whatever proceeds from Him is a necessary consequence.

Secondly, the reason found in the nature of the action is that an action must have a beginning in time. But the philosophers consider the world to be eternal.

Thirdly, the reason found in the relationship between the action and the agent is that, according to them, God is one in all respects, and only one proceeds from one. But the world is composed of different things. How can it proceed from Him?

Let us investigate each one of these three reasons, and see how fallacious their reasoning is, when they endeavour to defend their position.