

## IV.

THE DISCUSSION BETWEEN ABU BISHR MATTA AND  
 ABU SA'ID AL-SIRAFI ON THE MERITS OF  
 LOGIC AND GRAMMAR.

By D. S. MARGOLIOUTH.

IN his notice of the philosopher Abū Bishr, of Dair Ḳunnā, Ibn al-Ḳiftī<sup>1</sup> mentions that he had a public discussion with the grammarian Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥasan al-Sirāfi, famous for his commentaries on Sībawaihi's grammar.<sup>2</sup> This discussion is reported at length by Yāḳūt in his invaluable Mu'jam al-udabā,<sup>3</sup> on the authority of Abū Ḥayyān, from whose works Yāḳūt derives much that is interesting, though he accuses Abū Ḥayyān of habitually romancing. Abū Ḥayyān, whose full name was 'Alī Ibn Muḥammad al-Tauḥīdī, was an eminent writer of the fourth century of Islam, of whose works only three (to the best of my knowledge) have as yet been published: his treatises on Friendship and the Sciences, printed at the Jawā'ib press in 1301 A.H.—*without* the very important treatise on the lives of the two viziers Ibn al-'Amīd and Ibn 'Abbād, which had been promised in advertisements, but which is said to be a book that brings ill-luck; and a work lithographed in India called Muḳābasāt.<sup>4</sup> A brief account of him is given by Ibn Khillikān in his life of Ibn al-'Amīd (translated by De Slane, iii, 264); a lengthier one by Ṣafādī, which Mr. Amedroz has kindly copied for me, and which is given

<sup>1</sup> Ed. Lippert, p. 323.

<sup>2</sup> These were utilized by Jahn for his translation, and have been published in part in the Cairene edition of Sībawaihi.

<sup>3</sup> MS. Bodl. Or. 753: Life of Abū Sa'īd.

<sup>4</sup> I owe my acquaintance with this work to Mr. A. G. Ellis.

in a note;<sup>1</sup> and a very lengthy one by Yākūt, in the fifth volume of his dictionary. An extract from one of his works, which occurs in al-Kiftī's dictionary, is translated into German by Dieterici ("Philosophie der Araber," i, 144).

<sup>1</sup> على بن محمد بن العباس ابو حيان التوحيدى شيرازى وقيل نيسابورى وقيل واسطى صوفى السمىء والهميئة قال ياقوت كان يتاله والناس على ثقفة من دينه قال محب الدين ابن النجار كان صحيح العقيدة وكذا قال غيره والمتأخرون حكموا بزندقته قال الشيخ شمس الدين (i.e. Dhahabi, Or. 48, 269b)

كان سيعى الاعتقاد نفاه الوزير المهلبى قال ابن بابى فى كتاب الحريرة والفريدة كان كذاباً قليل الدين والورع عن القذف والمجاهرة بالبهتان تعرض لامورٍ جسامٍ من القذح فى الشريعة والقول بالتعطيل. ووقف صاحب كافي الكفاة على بعض ما كان يخفيه من ذلك فطلبه ليقتله فهرب والتجا الى اعدائه ونفق عليهم بزخرفة كذبه ثم عشر وامنه على ذلك فطلبه الوزير المهلبى فهرب منه فمات فى الاستتار وقال ابن الجوزى فى تاريخه زنادقة الاسلام ثلثة ابن الراوندى وابو حيان التوحيدى وابو العلاء المعترى واشدهم على الاسلام ابو حيان لانهما صرحا وهو جهمج وهو من تلامذة الرومانى \* قال الشيخ محمى الدين النووى فى تهذيب الاسماء ابو حيان التوحيدى من اصحابنا المصنفين من غرائبهم انه قال فى بعض رسائله لاربا فى الزعفران ووافقه عليه القاضى ابو حامد المرزوى والصحيح تحريم الربا فيه (Cf. Nawāwī, ed. Wüstenfeld, 707)

قال ياقوت وصحب ابن عباد وابن العميد فلم يجمدهما وصنف فى مشالبتهم كتاباً وكان مشفئاً فى جميع العلوم من النحو واللغة والشعر والادب والفقه والكلام على رأى المعتزلة وكان جاحظياً

The first question which will naturally occur in reference to this dialogue is whether it is historical or Abū Ḥayyān's.

يسلك في تصانيفه مسلكه ويشتهى ان ينتظم في سلكه فهو شيخ الصوفية وفيلسوف الادباء واديب الفلاسفة ومحقق الكلام ومتكلم المحققين وامام البلغاء وعمدة لبنى سامان سخيف اللسان قليل الرضا عند الاساءة اليه والاحسان الذمّ شانه والثلب دكانه وهو مع ذلك فرد الدنيا الذى لا نظير له ذكاءً وفطنةً وفصاحةً ومكنةً كثير التحصيل للعلوم في كل فن حُفظةً واسع الدراية والرواية وكان مع ذلك محدودًا محارقًا يتشكى صرف زمانه ويبكى في تصانيفه على حرمانه انتهى ومن تصانيفه : كتاب الصديق والصدائة

كتاب الرد على ابن جنى في شعر المتنبي

— الامتناع \* والموانسة مجلدان

— الاشارات الالهية جزان

— الزلفه ك المقابسة ك رياض العارفين

— تقريظ الجاحظ ك ثلب الوزيرين

— الحجج العقلية اذا ضاق الفضا عن الحجج الشرعية

— الرسالة في صلاة الفقهاء في المناظرة

— الرسالة البغدادية ك الرسالة في اخبار الصوفية

— الرسالة الصوفية ايضاً ك الرسالة في المحنين الى الاوطان

— البصائر والذخائر في عشر مجلدات وله فاتحة وخاتمة

— المحاضرات والمناظرات

وتسوف في حدود الثمانين والثلثمائة او ما بعد الثمانين

والله اعلم وقد طول ياقوت ترجمته زايدياً الى الغاية

\* Read الامتناع.

romance. Abū Ḥayyān has taken great trouble to establish its historical character, by giving date and persons. The date is the year 320, when Abu'l-Faṭḥ Ibn al-Furāt was vizier; and to this there appears to be no objection, since this person (al-Faḍl Ibn Ja'far Ibn Muḥammad Ibn al-Furāt, also known as Ibn Hinzābah) was made vizier in Rabi' ii, 320 ('Arīb, ed. De Goeje, p. 173),<sup>1</sup> though, owing to the death of Muḫtadir and the appointment of a new Caliph, he was succeeded by another vizier in Dhu'l-Ḳa'dah of the same year. Further, many of the audience enumerated are historical personages, who might well have attended a debate at Baghdad in that year. *Al-Marzubānī*, the agent of the Samanids, is casually mentioned by Ibn al-Athīr (anno 286, ed. Tornberg, vii, 355) as "the nā'ib of Isma'il in the Capital, known as Al-Marzubānī"; there is no reason (it would seem) why he should not have continued to hold

<sup>1</sup> A short life of him is given by Ṣafadī thus:—

الفضل بن جعفر بن محمد بن موسى بن الحسن بن الفرات  
 أبو الفتح الكاتب المعروف بابن حنزابة تقدم ذكر أخيه جعفر  
 وضبط اسم امه هناك كان كاتباً مجوداً ودينياً مستألفاً وثراً للخير  
 محباً لاهله وزر للمقتدر بالله يوم الاثنين لليلتين بقيتا من شهر ربيع  
 الآخر سنة عشرين وثلثمائة الى ان قتل المقتدر وولى القاهر فولاه  
 الدواوين ولما خلع القاهر وولى الراضى ولاء الشام فتوجه اليها ثم  
 انه وزر للراضى سنة خمس وعشرين وثلثمائة وهو مقيم بحلب  
 وعقد له الامر وكوتب بالمصير الى الحضرة فوصل الى بغداد فرأى  
 اضطراب الامور واستيلاء الامير ابى بكر محمد بن رائق عليها فاطمع  
 ابن رائق في ان يحمل اليه الاموال من مصر والشام وشخص الى  
 هناك واستخلف ابا بكر عبد الله بن على النفرى بالحضرة فادركه  
 اجله بغزة وقيل بالرملة لثمان خلون من جمادى الاولى سنة سبع  
 وعشرين وثلثمائة وسنه سبع واربعون سنة

that appointment for thirty-four years; and the presence at Baghdad of the agents or ambassadors of those princes who, though virtually independent, recognized the Caliph's suzerainty, must be regarded as characteristic of the period. This Marzubānī is evidently to be distinguished from his contemporary, the famous archæologist. *Ibn al-Ikshīd*,<sup>1</sup> whose name was Abū Bakr Aḥmad, famous as a Mu'tazil theologian, died in 326, six years after the debate (Fihrist, p. 173); since he lived in Baghdad, Sūḵ al-'Aṭash (Le Strange's Baghdad, p. 224), he could easily be present at it. He wrote a book in refutation of the views of *al-Khālīdī*, i.e. Ja'far b. Muḥammad b. Naṣīr, who is probably to be identified with the Khālīdī present at the debate. For this person died in 347 (Sibt Ibn al-Jauzī, MS. Poc. 370) or 348 (Sha'rānī's *Lawākiḥ al-anwār*, i, 157; Comm. on *Ḳushairiyah*, ii, 2), aged 95. He was famous as a saint, as indeed appears from his figuring in *Ḳushairī's* list; he is more often called *al-Khuldī*, a name of which the origin was uncertain (Jauzī, l.c.),<sup>2</sup> though it was also given to the celebrated Mubarrad (Muzhir, i, p. 100). The two persons famous as "the Khālīdī's," and named respectively Abū Bakr and Sa'īd b. Hāshim, were probably too young to be present at a debate in 320 (*Fawāt al-Wafayāt*). A younger man than Khuldī, yet not too young to be present, was *Ibn Rabāḥ*, Abū 'Imrān Mūsā, the metaphysician, a pupil of Ibn Ikshīd, said to have been alive, but past 80, when the *Fihrist* (p. 173) was composed (377 A.H.). Another very distinguished hearer was the ex-vizier 'Aḥī b. 'Īsā b. Dāwūd b. al-Jarrāḥ, who died in 335 (Jauzī, l.c.) or 334, having been born in 245 (Amedroz's *Hilāl*, p. 281); he was

<sup>1</sup> *Ikshīd*, according to Sibt Ibn al-Jauzī, means 'king' in the language of Farghānah.

<sup>2</sup> Asked why he was called Khuldī, he said: *كنت جالساً يوماً عند  
الجنيد فسئل عن مسائل فقال يا محمد اجيبهم فاجبتهم فقال من  
ابن لك هذه المسائل يا خلدی فجری علی هذا الاسم*. Jauzī says  
*Yā Khuldī* here is meaningless.

therefore 75 years old in 320. Amedroz's work contains a full account of him. Besides being an administrator, he was keenly interested in philosophy, as appears from the repeated mention of him in Ibn Abi Usaibi'ah's History of Physicians. He was besides sufficient of a saint to be credited with the working of miracles (Ḥadā'ik al-afrāḥ, p. 100).

*Ibn Ka'b*, who is less well known, is clearly to be identified with Ibn Ka'b al-Ansārī, who is repeatedly quoted in the Treatise on Friendship (pp. 7, 39, 52, 54, 72, 73) as a personal acquaintance of Abū Hayyān, yet as dead when that treatise was composed; and the last date in it is 370 (p. 67), though it was not published till after Ibn Sa'dān's death in 375 (p. 6). His sayings appear to be Sufic in character, and he is stated to have been a friend of Abu'l-Khattāb al-Ṣābī. Of this person a brief notice is to be found in Chwolsohn, *Ssabier*, i, 586, where it is stated that Abū Ishāḳ Ibrāhīm al-Ṣābī addressed him several letters.

Finally, the reporter of the debate, *Alī Ibn 'Īsā al-Rummānī*, who was Abū Hayyān's teacher, and is regularly mentioned by him as "the saintly sheykh," was born in 296 (Ibn Khill., s.v.), and would therefore have been 24 at the time. *Abū 'Alī al-Fasawī*, who was not present, but might have been, was born in 288, and would have been 32.

On the other hand, slight historic doubts attach to one or two of the audience. Of Ibn Ṭughj an elaborate life is given by Ibn Sa'īd in his *Mughrib* (translated by Tallquist, Helsingfors, 1899, p. 23 ff.). It appears thence that he was made prefect of Damascus in Jumādā ii, 319, and did not hold office in *Egypt* till 321. The *Ambassador of Ibn Ṭughj from Egypt* could not have been present at a debate held in 320. Perhaps this is only a verbal error, i.e. either the word *Egypt* or the name Ṭughj is a mistake. A rather more interesting question is connected with the name of *Kudāmah*, Abū 'Amr b. Ja'far, famous as a critic. Since in his treatise on poetical criticism he declares himself to be the first to treat that subject, it would be of interest to find him confronted with the translator of Aristotle's *Poetics*.

He was personally acquainted with the other disputant, Abū Sa'īd (Treatise on Friendship, p. 152). His death-date was not precisely known, whence Ibn Khillikān omits him. Suyūṭī (Ḥusn al-muḥāḍarah, i, 225) says he died in the days of Muḩtadir, who only survived the debate a few months. Brockelmann (i, 228) gives 310 as his death-date; De Slane (Journ. Asiatique, 1862, ii, p. 156), 337, after Abu'l-Maḩāsin (ii, 323).

A serious anachronism is to be found in the mention of *al-Kindī* as present, if by him be meant the famous philosopher, who had been dead over 50 years, and indeed is referred to in the debate as one of the ancients. Perhaps, however, some other Kindī is intended, e.g. the historian Abū Omar Muḩammad b. Yūsuf (thought by De Slane to have been a grandson of the other), a fragment of whose work has been published by Tallquist. He might without anachronism have been present at a debate in 320. Another anachronism is to be found in the presence of *Abū Firās*, who would naturally be the famous poet, born either in 320 or 321. A few names remain of persons whom I have hitherto been unable to identify with certainty—*Ibn Rashīd*, *Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḩāshimī*, *Ibn Yaḩyā al-'Alawī*, and *al-Zuhrī*. Amedroz's *Hilāl* mentions (p. 211) a house in Baghdad which belonged to 'Uthmān, son of al-Ḩasan Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Ḩāshimī, who may be regarded as the son or nephew of the *second* of these persons. Jauzī mentions a Yaḩyā Ibn Yaḩyā al-'Alawī as a great scholar, originally of Baghdad, but afterwards attached to Saif al-daulah, who died in 390. He may be identical with the *third*, but it is unlikely. Abū Bakr al-Zuhrī al-Ispahānī is quoted as a historical authority by *Hilāl* (p. 272) for the days of Muḩtadir; perhaps he is identical with the *fourth*: and since Abū Ḩayyān (on Friendship, p. 30, cf. 96) mentions an Abū Bakr al-Zuhairī as a personal friend, perhaps either Zuhrī or Zuhairī should be corrected to the other form.

On the whole, the historical character of the debate stands the test to which we have exposed it exceedingly well; and it is clear that a very distinguished company had been got

together. Such public discussions were doubtless not infrequent in Baghdad, as well as other places of importance: the well-known letter of Badī' al-Zamān gives a vivid description of such a debate, certainly of a far less serious character than the present. It needed a man of considerable personal courage and oratorical skill to venture on a disputation before such an audience, and clearly Abū Bishr of Dair Kunnā was not thus qualified; he could scarcely open his lips, and was nonplussed by the simplest puzzles. Ibn al-Sikkī, famous as a grammarian, was once in a similar plight: his antagonist, in the presence of the Caliph, being asked to propound a question in grammar, propounded the easiest he could think of; but even that Ibn al-Sikkī was unable to answer (Ibn Khill., ii, 410). Abū Bishr, being exposed to jeers on the badness of his Arabic, and also on his Christian beliefs, was still less likely to come safely through such an ordeal. Perhaps, however, we ought not to forget that the debate, as we have it, is in the main reported by one of the antagonists. And there are passages in his speech which imply that Abū Bishr said, at any rate, rather more than he is reported to have said. If Ibn al-Kiftī be right in making him come to Baghdad in 320, the rumour of the large audiences attracted by his lectures was probably what caused the vizier to summon the assembly.

In general the description here given accords exceedingly well with Abū Bishr as we see him in his translation of Aristotle's *Poetics*. His acquaintance with the Arabic language there displayed is as slipshod as his antagonist (with his approval) asserts it to be; though he makes no statement about the Greek of the *Poetics*, he in one place interprets the Syriac (which he misreads)<sup>1</sup> as though it were the original; and he puts down absurdities in the most unthinking manner. Abū Sa'īd's contention that the translations made by Abū Bishr and his colleagues are unintelligible is fully justified; only Abū Sa'īd is mistaken in ascribing the badness of these translations to the

<sup>1</sup> ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܝܢ, misread ܐܘܪܘܫܝܡܝܢ, Anal. Orient., pp. 66, 14.



translators' ignorance of Arabic; the real reason was their ignorance of the subjects on which they professed to write. One who with no philosophical training endeavoured to translate Kant's Critic of Pure Reason would produce absurdities as crass as those produced by Abū Bishr, however well he might know the English language.

The quarrel between the grammarians and the philosophers which this dialogue illustrates was long continued. In the late sixth century we find the rhetorician Ibn al-Athīr calling attention to the uselessness of the treatises of Avicenna (al-Mathal al-sā'ir, p. 187), and describing with pleasure his triumphs over philosophers. "One day," he tells us (*ibid.*, p. 95), "a professor of philosophy was with me, and the subject of the Koran cropped up. I began to describe it, and to remark on the eloquence and beauty of its words and ideas. He proceeded to quote the words of Surah liii, 22, 'That is, then, an unfair division,' and to deny that the phrase 'unfair' exhibited any eloquence or beauty. I said: 'You are to know that there are certain mysteries about the employment of words, into which you have not been initiated any more than your masters, Avicenna, al-Fārābī, and the rest, and Aristotle and Plato, who led you astray from the beginning.'" He then explains that the beauty of the word for 'unfair' (*dīzā*) lies in its rhyming with the other final words in the texts of the Surah.

Avicenna, however, comes a century later than the *dramatis personæ* of the present dialogue, which is nearer the introduction of Greek philosophy (or a travesty of it) into Baghdad, and gives us a rather vivid presentation of the attitude which the native learning adopted towards the exotic. Of the mode in which Greek learning came to be studied at the Abbasid capital we are never likely to have any accurate account.<sup>1</sup> The references to the subject in the works of Jāhīz (ob. 255 A.H., 868 A.D.) are interesting, owing to his nearness in time to al-Ma'mūn (198-218 A.H., 813-833 A.D.), to whom the tradition ascribes the introduction

<sup>1</sup> The most recent account of the matter is in the third part of Zaidān's "History of Islamic Civilization."

of the study of Greek works. He is supposed to have obtained a library of Greek books from Cyprus, and to have appointed as his librarian Sahl Ibn Hārūn, who won some fame as a miser<sup>1</sup> and writer in praise of avarice, and in general as a poet and litterateur. The story of the Cyprian MSS. rests on the authority of far later writers than Jāhīz (Comm. on Ibn Zaidūn's Epistle, i, 262; Cairo, 1305),<sup>2</sup> but the latter has some remarkable passages about Aristotle. In the extracts from his treatise on rhetoric, published at Constantinople, 1301, he says: "The Greeks have philosophy and an art of Logic; but the author of the Logic was himself a poor speaker, not regarded as eloquent, in spite of his acquaintance with the distinction and analysis of speech, its meanings and its properties. They regard Galen as the most logical of mankind, but do not ascribe to him oratory or the sort of eloquence which goes with it." The chief philosophical technicalities were already invented by the time of Jāhīz, as he enumerates them (Bayān, i, 60), but attributes their invention, not to the translators, but to the Mutakallimūna, or students of metaphysical theology. One of these technicalities<sup>3</sup> meets us as early as the Diwan of Muslim Ibn al-Walīd, and others occur in the poems of Abū Tammām.<sup>4</sup>

The notion that the Greek race was extinct, which, as we see, is admitted here by both disputants, is found in Jāhīz, who reckons Yaunān with Canaan, a tribe as extinct as Thamūd (Bayān, i, 78; Opuscula, 104, 3); since the tribe was extinct, it was natural to conclude that their language had perished also: and this error was due to the employment of the name Rūmī for Greek, which, however, ought not to have misled any man who occupied himself with philosophy.

Of the attack on the logicians by Abu'l-'Abbās Abdallah Ibn Muḥammad al-Nāshī (Brockelmann, i, 124), which

<sup>1</sup> Jāhīz, "Misers," p. 1; Bayān, i, 98; Ḥadā'iq al-Afrāḥ, 214.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *ibid.*, 46 (Comm. on Lāmiyyat al-'Ajam).

<sup>3</sup> The verb نلأشى. See De Goeje's glossary.

<sup>4</sup> عرض, جوهر, p. 168.

Širāfi declares had remained unanswered, we hear apparently only in this place. This person died in 293;<sup>1</sup> verses by him are sometimes cited (Ṭirāz al-majālis 242, Dīwān al-Šabābah 163, Hadiyyat al-umam 357), and he is also said to have been skilful as a logician. Ibn Khillikān makes him attack, not the philosophers, but the grammarians; but we learn from the Fihrist (p. 299) that he attacked the science of medicine. His point, from Širāfi, would appear to have been the very reasonable one that Logic for its value rested, not on the *ipse dixit* of the Greeks, but on its being a correct analysis of the mental process. Of similar interest is the notice of the mock metaphysical questions addressed to al-Kindī, who had been a mighty authority on philosophy some fifty years before; from Flügel's account of him (1857) we learn that he had *obtrectatores*.<sup>2</sup> The fact, moreover, that the Sabæans (i.e. the school of Thābit Ibn Qurrah) joined in the laugh at al-Kindī's expense is not without its interest.

Apparently the deriders of the new learning by no means had it all their own way. In the dialogue the mild and incompetent Abū Bishr is represented as the aggressor, the man who makes extravagant claims for his Logic. With the aid of the Aristotelian analysis of the meanings of the particle *in* (Nat. Auscult., iv, 3, p. 209), that of the grammarian Ibn al-Sikkīt was shown to be defective. In the list of the friends of the vizier Ibn Sa'dān, it is the philosopher who is always "frightening" others with the names of Plato and Aristotle, Socrates and Galen (Treatise on Friendship, p. 31).

As might be expected, the debate held in the presence of the vizier and so many men of eminence had no permanent result, except that the reputation of one of the disputants was enhanced, whereas the other was discredited for the time. The names of the Greek sages did not cease to be

<sup>1</sup> Ibn Sa'id calls him  $\text{كَلْب}$ , which (on the analogy of the Greek *ὄβριος*) might imply that he was living at the time. This would be a serious anachronism.

<sup>2</sup> This fact is omitted in the account of him by Dieterici, "Philosophie der Araber," i, 153.

highly revered. Sayings ascribed to them were quoted side by side with those of Prophets and Saints; and a whole collection of apocryphal apophthegms grew up round their names—a curious mixture of genuine and spurious specimens of Greek philosophy is given in the book called “Spiritual Words on Greek Aphorisms,” by Abu’l-Faraj Ibn Hindu (ob. 420), published in Cairo, 1900. But also the name of philosopher had some of the lofty meaning attached to it in Greece and Rome. A man who occupied himself with philosophy was thought untrue to his profession if he shed blood; and such cases were explained by the supposition that there were hypocrites in philosophy as there were in religion (on Friendship, 75).

The dialogue was reported in full by Abū Ḥayyān at the request of the *vizier*, whom perhaps we are justified in identifying with *Ibn Sa’dān*, the vizier of Ṣamsām al-daulah, since not only was the Treatise on Friendship compiled at his request, but from Ibn al-Ḳiftī we learn that other questions of a literary character were addressed to Abū Ḥayyān by that vizier (p. 82), who died in 375 (Ibn al-Athīr, ix, 29); whereas the book called *Al-’imta’ wal-mu’ānasah* was filled with anecdotes of what took place at the salons of another vizier of Ṣamsām al-daulah, called Abu’l-Faḍl Abdallah b. al-’Āriḍ al-Shīrāzī (Ḳiftī, p. 283). Curious matter from that work is quoted by Ibn ‘Arabī (*Muḥāḍarāt al-abrār*, i, 188), and by Yāḳūt in many places. Possibly the dialogue was included in the work called *Muḥāḍarāt wa-musāmarāt*, which may also be the source of a document produced by Ibn ‘Arabī (*ibid.*, ii, 77).

That document is certainly apocryphal in character, consisting of letters which passed between the Caliph Abū Bakr and ‘Alī on the subject of the accession of the former. Abū Ḥayyān began his narrative thus: “We spent the night talking at the house of the Ḳāḍī Abū Ḥāmid Aḥmad Ibn Bishr al-Marwazī al-’Āmirī in the house of Abū Ḥabashān in the Street of al-Māzubān” —when the Ḳāḍī produced these documents (from memory); he had previously recited them to no one save the vizier

Muhallabi. Another very curious extract is given by Yāqūt in his life of the secretary of state Aḥmad Ibn Thuwābah. This person was told that in order to perfect himself he should learn Euclid; a Christian teacher was accordingly fetched, who made a dot on a board, and explained that it had no parts and no magnitude—was, as he further explained, simple. Asked to illustrate the word 'simple,' he said 'like God or the soul.' The pious Moslem is horrified at a man who makes Allah the object of a comparison, and dismisses the teacher with contumely. A Moslem teacher is next fetched, who draws a straight line, and explains that it is length without breadth. Again the secretary feels convinced that some slight is intended to God's Straight Path, and bids the teacher begone to eternal contempt. This amusing scene is recorded in what purports to be a letter from Aḥmad himself, describing his noble resistance to infidel temptation in a letter to a sympathetic vizier. But Yāqūt warns us that the letter is a forgery, which may be by Abū Ḥayyān himself, who used to invent tales of the sort.

It should be added that the Muḥāḍarāt contained a Dialogue between al-Farrā and Muḥammad Ibn al-Ḥasan on the merits of Law and Grammar (Yāqūt, f. 4*b*).

مناظرة جرت بين متى بن يونس القنائي الفيلسوف وبين ابي  
سعيد السيرافي رحمة الله عليه

قال ابو حيان ذكرت للوزير مناظرة جرت في مجلس الوزير  
ابي الفتح الفضل بن جعفر بن الفرات بين ابي سعيد السيرافي  
وابي بشر متى واختصرتها فقال لي اكتب هذه المناظرة علي  
التمام فان شيئاً يجري في ذلك المجلس النبويه وبين هذين  
الشيخين بحضرة اولئك الاعلام ينبغي ان يغتنم سماعه وتوعيه  
فوائده ولا يتهاون بشيء منه فكتبت حدثني ابو سعيد بلع من  
هذه القصة فاما علي بن عيسى النحوي الشيخ الصالح فانه رواها  
مشروحة قال لما انعقد المجلس سنة عشرين وثلثمائة قال الوزير  
ابن الفرات للجماعة وفيهم الخالدي وابن الاخشيد والكندي وابن  
ابي بشر وابن رباح وابن كعب وابو عمرو قدامة بن جعفر والزهري  
وعلي بن عيسى بن الجراح وابو فراس وابن رشيد وابن عبد العزيز  
المهاشمي وابن يحيى العلوي ورسول ابن طغج من مصر والمرزباني  
صاحب بني سامان اريد ان ينتدب منكم انسان لمناظرة متى في  
حديث المنطق فانه يقول لا سبيل الي معرفة الحق من الباطل  
والصدق من الكذب والخير من الشر والحجة من الشبهة والشك  
من اليقين الا بما حوينا من المنطق وملكناه من القيام واستفدناه  
من واضعه على مراتبه وحدوده واطلعنا عليه من جهة اسمه علي  
حقائقه فاحجم القوم واطرقوا فقال ابن الفرات والله ان فيكم لمن  
يفي بكلامه ومناظرته وكسر ما يذهب اليه واني لاعدكم في العلم

بحارًا وللدِين واهله انصارًا وللسحق وطلابه منارًا فما هذا التغامز والتلامز اللذان تجلون عنهما فرفع ابو سعيد السيرافي راسه وقال اعذر ايها الوزير فسان العلم المصون في الصدور غير العلم المعروض في هذا المجلس على الاسماع المصيخة والعيون الممدقة والعقول الجامدة والالباب الناقدة لان هذا يستصحب الهيمية (والهيمية) مكسرة ويجتلب الحيا والحيا مغلبة وليس البرازي في معركة غاشمة كالمصراع<sup>1</sup> في يفة<sup>2</sup> خاصة فقال ابن الفرات انت لها يا ابا سعيد فاعتذارك عن غيرك يوجب عليك الانتصار لنفسك والانتصار لنفسك راجع علي الجماعة بفضلك فقال ابو سعيد مخالفة الوزير فيما يامر به هجنة والاحتجاج<sup>3</sup> عن رأيه اخلاص الي التقصير ونعود بالله من زلة القدم واياه نسئل حسن التوفيق والمعونة في الحرب والسلم ثم واجه متى فقال حدثني عن المنطق ما تعنى به فانا اذا فهمنا مرادك فيه كان كلامنا معك في قبول صوابه ورد خطائه علي سنن مرضي وعلي طريقة معروفة قال متى اعني به انه آلة من الآلات يعرف به صحيح الكلام من سقيمه وفساد المعني من صالحه كالميزان فاني اعرف به الرجحان من النقصان والشائل من الجانح فقال له ابو سعيد اخطأت لان صحيح الكلام من سقيمه يعرف بالعقل ان كنا نبكث بالعقل هبك عرفت الراجح من الناقص من طريق الوزن من ذلك<sup>4</sup> بمعرفة الموزون اهو حديد او ذهب او شبه او رصاص

<sup>1</sup> Read كالمصارعة.

<sup>2</sup> Read بقعة .

<sup>3</sup> Perhaps الاحتجاج .

<sup>4</sup> Read لك .

واراك بعد معرفة الوزن فقيرا الى معرفة جوهر الموزون والي معرفة قيمته وسائر صفاته التي يطول عدها فعلي هذا لم ينفك الوزن الذي كان عليه اعتمادك وفي تحقيقه كان اجتهادك الانفعالا يسيرا من وجه واحد وبقيت عليك وجوه فانتم كما قال الاول

حَفِظْتَ شَيْئًا وَضَاعَتْ مِنْكَ أَشْيَاءٌ

وبعد فقد ذهب عليك شيء هاهنا ليس كل ما في الدنيا يوزن بل فيها ما يوزن وفيها ما يكال وفيها ما يذرع وفيها ما يمسح وفيها ما يحزر وهذا وان كان هكذا في الاجسام المرئية فانه ايضا على ذلك في المعقولات المقروءة والاحساس<sup>1</sup> لزال العقول وهي يحكيها بالتبعيد والتقريب مع الشبه المحفوظ والمماثلة الظاهرة ودع هذا اذا كان المنطق وضعه رجل من يونان علي لغة اهلها واطلاهم عليها وما يتعارفونه بها من رسومها وصفاتها من ايمن يلزم الترك والهند والفرس والعرب ان ينظروا فيه ويتخذوه حكما لهم وعليهم وقاضيا بينهم ما شهد لهم قبلوه وما نكروه<sup>2</sup> رفضوه قال متى انما لزم ذلك لان المنطق بحث عن الاعراض المعقولة والمعاني المدركة وتصفح للخواطر السامحة والسوانح الهاجسة والناس في المعقولات سواء الا تري ان اربعة واربعة ثمانية عند جميع الهم وكذلك ما اشبهه قال ابو سعيد لو كانت المطلوبات بالعقل والمذكورات باللفظ ترجع مع شعبها المختلفة وطرائقها المتباينة الي هذه المرتبة البيئية في اربعة واربعة انهما ثمانية زال الاختلاف وحضر الاتفاق ولكن ليس الامر

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps الاجسام.

<sup>2</sup> Cod. نكروه.



هكذا ولقد مؤهت بهذا المثال ولكم عادة في مثل هذا التمويه ولكن ندع هذا ايضا اذا كانت الاعراض المعقولة والمعاني المدركة لا يوصل اليها<sup>1</sup> باللغة الجامعة للاسماء والافعال والحروف افليس قد لزمت الحاجة الي معرفة اللغة قال نعم قال اخطات قل في هذا الموضوع بلي قال متي بلي انا اقلدك في مثل هذا قال ابو سعيد فانتم اذا لست تدعوننا الي علم المنطق بل الي تعلم اللغة اليونانية وانتم لا تعرف لغة يونان فكيف صرت تدعوننا الي لغة لا تفني بها وقد عفت منذ زمان طويل وباد اهلها وانقرض القوم الذين كانوا يتفاوضون بها ويتفاهمون اغراضهم بتصرفها علي انك تنقل من السريانية فما تقول في معاني متهولة<sup>2</sup> بالنقل من لغة يونان الي لغة اخري سريانية ثم من هذه الي لغة اخري عربية قال متي يونان وان بادت مع لغتها فان الترجمة قد حفظت الاغراض وادت المعاني واخلصت الحقائق قال ابو سعيد اذا سلمنا لك ان الترجمة صدقت وما كذبت وقومت وما حرفت ووزنت وما جزفت وانها ما التائت ولا حافت ولا نقصت ولا زادت ولا قدمت ولا اخرت<sup>3</sup> ولا اخلت بمعني الخاص والعام ولا باخص الخاص ولا باعم العام وان كان هذا لا يكون وليس في طبائع اللغات ولا في مقادير المعاني فكانك تقول بعد هذا لا حجة الا عقول يونان ولا برهان الا ما وصفوه<sup>4</sup> ولا حقيقة الا ما ابرزوه قال متي لا ولكنهم من

1 Add ؟

2 متحولة ؟

3 اخرقت .

4 وضعوه .

بين الامم اصحاب عناية بالحكمة والبحث عن ظاهر هذا العالم<sup>1</sup> وباطنه وعن كل ما يتصل به وينفصل عنه وبفضل عنايتهم ظهر ما ظهر وانتشر ما انتشر وفشا ما فشا ونشأ ما نشأ من انواع العلم واصناف الصناعة ولم نجد هذا لغيرهم قال ابو سعيد اخطأت وتعصبت وملت مع الهوى فان العالم<sup>1</sup> مبثوث في العالم ولهذا قال القائل

العلم في العالم مبثوث \* ومحوه العاقل محثوث

وكذلك الصناعات مفضوضة علي جميع من على جديد الارض ولهذا غلب علم في مكان دون مكان وكثرت صناعة في بقعة دون صناعة<sup>2</sup> وهذا واضح والزيادة عليه مشغلة ومع هذا فانما كان يصح قولك ويسلم دعواك لو كانت يونان معروفة بين جميع الامم بالعصمة الغالبة والفطرة الظاهرة والبنية المخالفة وانهم لو ارادوا ان يخطئوا ما قدروا ولو قصدوا ان يكذبوا ما استطاعوا وان السكينة نزلت عليهم والحق تكفل بهم والخطأ تبرأ منهم والفضائل لصقت باصولهم وفروعهم والذائل بعدت عن جواهرهم وعروقهم وهذا جهل ممن يظنه بهم وعناد ممن يدعيه عليهم بل كانوا كغيرهم من الامم يصيبون في اشياء ويخطئون في اشياء ويصدقون في امور ويكذبون في امور ويحسنون في احوال ويسئنون في احوال وليس واضح المنطق يونان باسرها انما<sup>3</sup> رجل منهم وقد اخذ عن قبله كما

<sup>1</sup> Read العلم .

<sup>2</sup> Read بقعة ؟

<sup>3</sup> Add هو .

أخذ عنه من بعده وليس هو حجة علي هذا الخلق الكثير والجم الغفير وله مخالفون منهم ومن غيرهم ومع هذا فالاختلاف في الرأي والنظر والبحث والمسئلة والجواب سنخ وطبيعة فكيف يجوز ان يأتي رجل بشي يرفع به هذا الخلاف او يخلخله او يؤثر فيه هيئات هذا حال ولقد بقي العالم بعد منطقته علي ما كان قبل منطقته وامسح وجهك بالسلوطة عن شي لا يستطيع لانه مفتقد بالفطرة والطباع وانت فلو فرغت بالك وصرفت عنايتك الي معرفة هذه اللغمة التي تحاورنا بها وتجارينا فيها وتدرس اصحابك بمفهوم اهلها وتشرح كتب يونان بعادة اصحابها لعلمت انك غني عن معاني يونان كما انك غني عن لغة يونان وهاهنا مسئلة اتقول ان الناس عقولهم مختلفة وانصاؤهم منها متفاوتة قال متي نعم قال وهذا التفاوت والاختلاف بالطبيعة او الاكتساب قال بالطبيعة قال فكيف يجوز ان يكون هاهنا شي يرتفع به الاختلاف الطبيعي والتفاوت الاصلتي قال متي هذا قد متر في جملة كلامك آنفنا قال ابو سعيد فهل وصلت بجواب قاطع وبيان ناصح ودع هذا اسئلك عن حرف واحد هو دائر في كلام العرب ومعانيه متميزة عند اهل العقل فاستخرج انت معانيه من ناحية منطق ارسطاليس الذي تدل به<sup>1</sup> وتباهي بتفخيمه وهو الواو وما احكامه وكيف مواعنه وهل هو علي وجه واحد او وجوه فبهت متي وقال هذا نحو والنحو لم انظر فيه لان لا حاجة بالمنطقي الي النحو وبالنحو حاجة الي المنطق لان المنطق يبحث عن المعني والنحو يبحث عن

<sup>1</sup> بها . Cod.

اللفظ فان متر المنطقي باللفظ فبالعرض وان عبر النحوى بالمعنى فبالعرض والمعنى اشرف من اللفظ واللفظ اوضح من المعنى قال ابو سعيد اخطأت لان المنطق والنحو واللفظ والافصح والاعراب والانباء والحديث والاحبار والاستخبار والعرض والتمني والحض والدعاء والنداء والطلب كلها من واد واحد بالمشاكله والمماثلة الاتري ان رجلاً لو قال نطق زيد بالحق ولكن ما تكلم بالحق وتكلم بالقمحش ولكن ما قال القمخش واعرب عن نفسه ولكن ما افصح وابان المراد ولكن ما اوضح او فاه بحاجته ولكن ما لفظ او اخبر ولكن ما انبأ لكان في جميع هذا منحرفاً ومناقضاً وواضحاً للكلام في غير حقه ومستعملاً للفظ علي غير شهادة من عقله وعقل غيره والنحو منطق ولكنه مسلوخ من العربية والمنطق نحو ولكنه مفهوم باللغة وانما الخلاف بين اللفظ والمعنى ان اللفظ طبيعي والمعنى عقلي ولهذا كان اللفظ بائداً علي الزمان يقفوا اثر الطبيعة باثر اخر من الطبيعة ولهذا كان المعنى ثابتاً على الزمان لان مستملى المعنى عقل والعقل الهتي ومادة اللفظ طينية وكل طيني متهافت وقد بقيت انت بلا اسم لصناعتك تتناحلها وآلتك آلتى تزهي بها الا ان تستعير من العربية لها اسماً فتعار ويسلم لك بمقدار وان لم يكن لك بد من قليل هذه اللغة من اجل الترجمة فلا بد لك ايضاً من كثيرها من اجل تحقيق الترجمة واجتلاب الشقة والتوقي من الخلة اللاحقة لك قال متي يكفيني من لغتكم هذا الاسم والفعل والحرف فاني اتبلغ بهذا القدر الي اغراض قد هذبها لي يونان قال (ابو) سعيد

اخطات لانك في هذا الاسم والفعل والحرف فقير الي وصفها<sup>1</sup> وبنائها علي الترتيب الواقع في غرائز اهلها وكذلك انت محتاج بعد هذا الي حركات هذه الاسماء والافعال والحروف فان الخطأ والتحريف في الحركات كالخطأ والفساد في المتحركات وهذا باب انت واصحابك ورهطك عنه في غفلة علي ان هاهنا سرًا ما علق بك ولا اسفر لعقلك وهو ان تعلم ان لغة من اللغات لا تطابق لغة اخري من جميع جهاتها بحدود صفاتها في اسمائها وافعالها وحروفها وتاليفها وتقديمها وتأخيرها واستعارتها وتحقيقها وتشديدها وتخفيفها وسعته وضيقها ونظمها ونثرها وسجعها ووزنها وميلها وغير ذلك مما يطول ذكره وما اظن احدًا يدفع هذا الحكم او يسأل في صوابه ممن يرجع الي مسكنة من عقل او نصيب من انصاف فمن اين يجب ان نشق بشي<sup>2</sup> ترجم لك علي هذا الوصف بل انت الي ان تعرف اللغة العربية احوج منك السي ان تعرف المعاني اليونانية علي ان المعاني لا تكون يونانية ولا هندية<sup>2</sup> كما ان اللغات لا تكون فارسية ولا عربية ولا تركية ومع هذا فانك تزعم ان المعاني حاصلها بالعقل والفحص والفكر فلم يبق الاحكام اللغة فلم تنزري علي العربية وانت تشرح كتب ارسطاطاليس بها مع جهلك بحقيقتها وحدثني عن قائل قال لسك حالي في معرفة الحقائق والتصفح لها والبحث عنها حال قسوم كانوا قبل واضع المنطق انظر كما نظرت واتدبر كما تدبروا لان اللغة قد عرفتها

<sup>1</sup> وضعها .

<sup>2</sup> هندية .

بالمنشأ والوراثة والمعاني نقرت عنها بالنظر والرأي والاعتقاب والاجتهاد ما تقول له لا يصح له هذا الحكم ولا يستتب هذا الامر لانه لم يعرف هذه الموجودات من الطريقة التي عرفتها انت ولعلك تفرح بتقليدك وان كان علي باطل اكثر مما يفرح باستبداده وان كان علي حقا وهذا هو الجهل المبين والحكم الغير مستبين ومسح هذا فحدثني عن الواو ما حكمه فاني اريد ان ابين ان تفخيمك للمنطق لا يغني عنك شيئا وان تجهل حرفا واحدا من اللغة التي تدعو بها الي الحكمة اليونانية ومن جهل حرفا واحدا امكن ان يجهل اللغة بكاملها وان كان لا يجهلها كلها ولكن يجهل بعضها فلعله يجهل ما يحتاج اليه ولا ينفعه فيه علم بما لا يحتاج وهذه رتبة العامة او هي رتبة من هو فوق العامة بقدر يسير فلم يتأني علي هذا وينكر ويتوهم انه من الخاصة وخاصة الخاصة وانه يعرف سر الكلام وغامض الحكمة وخفي القياس وصحيح البرهان وانما سالتك عن معاني حرف واحد فكيف لو نشرت عليك الحروف كلها وطالبتك بمعانيها وموضوعها التي لها بالحق والتي لها بالتجوز وسمعتكم تقولون في لا يعلم النحويون مواقعها وانما يقولون هي للوعاء كما يقولون ان الباء للالصاق وان في تقال علي وجوه يقال الشيء في الوعاء والاناء في المكان والسائس في السياسة والسياسة في السائس الاتري هذا الشقيق هو من عقول يونان ومن ناحية لغتها ولا يجوز ان يعقل هذا بعقول الهند والترك والعرب فهذا جهل من كل من يدعيه وخطل من القول الذي افاض النحوي اذا قال في للوعاء فقد افصح في

الجملة عن المعني الصحيح وكني مع ذلك عن الوجوه التي تظهر بالتفصيل ومثل هذا كثير وهو كاف في موضع السكيت فقال ابن الفرات أيها الشيخ الموفق اجبه بالبيان عن مواقع الواو حتى تكون اشد في افحامه وحقق عند الجماعة ما هو عاجز عنه ومع ذلك فهو متشيع به فقال ابو سعيد للواو وجوه ومواقع منها معني العطف في قولك اكرمت زيدًا وعمراً ومنها القسم في قولك والله لقد كان كذا وكذا ومنها الائتناف كقولك خرجت وزيد قائم لان الكلام بعده ابتداءً وخبر ومنها معني رب التي هي للتقليل نحو قوله

وقاتم الاعماق حاوي المخترقين<sup>1</sup>

ومنها ان تكون اصلية في الاسم كقولك واقد واصل وافد وفي الفعل كقولك وجل يوجل ومنها ان تكون مقحمة نحو قول الله تعالى فلما<sup>2</sup> اسلما وتله للجبين ونادينا اي نادينا ومثله قول الشاعر

فلما اجزنا ساحة الحي وانحي \* بنا بطن خبت ذي قفاف عقنقل<sup>3</sup>

المعني انحي بنا ومنها معني الحال في قوله عز وجل ويكلم<sup>4</sup> الناس في المهد وكهلا اي يكلم الناس حال صغره بكلام الكهل في حال كهولته ومنها ان تكون بمعنى حرف الجر كقولك استوي الماء والخشبة اي مع الخشبة فقال ابن الفرات لمتى يابا بشر اكان هذا في نحوك ثم قال ابو سعيد دع هذا هاهنا مسالة علاقتها بالمعني العقلي اكثر من علاقتها بالشكل اللفظي ما تقول في قول

<sup>1</sup> Verse of Ru'bah: see Mughnī of Ibn Hishām (1302), ii, 35; and Mufaṣṣal, § 608.

<sup>2</sup> Surah xxxvii, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Verse of Imru'ul-Ḳais: Ahlw. 147, 27.

<sup>4</sup> Surah iii, 41.

القائل زيد افضل الاخوة قال صحيح قال فما تقول ان قال زيد افضل اخوته قال صحيح قال فما الفرق بينهما مع الصحة فبلح وجح وعصب ريقه<sup>1</sup> فقال ابو سعيد افتيت علي غير بصيرة ولا استبانة المسئلة الاولى جوابك عنها صحيح وان كنت غافلا عن وجه صحتها والمسئلة الثانية جوابك عنها غير صحيح وان كنت ايضا ذاهبا عن وجه بطلانها قال متي بين ما هذا التهجيم قال ابو سعيد اذا حضرت المختلفة<sup>2</sup> استفدت ليس هذا مكان التدريس هو مجلس ازالة التلميس مع من عاداته التمويه والتشبيه والجماعة تعلم انك اخطات فلم تدع<sup>3</sup> ان التحوي انما ينظر في اللفظ لافي المعني والمنطقي ينظر في المعني لافي اللفظ هذا كان يصح لو ان المنطقي يسكت ويجميل فكره في المعاني ويرتب ما يريد في الوهم السياح والنخاطر العارض والمحدث الطارى واما وهو يرتع<sup>4</sup> ان يبرز ما صح له بالاعتبار والتصفح الي المتعلم والمناظر فلا بد له من اللفظ الذي يشتمل علي مراده ويكون طباقا لغرضه وموافقا لقصده قال ابن الفرات ياءبا سعيد تم لنا كلامك في شرح المسئلة حتي تكون الفائدة ظاهرة لاهل المجلس والتبكييت عاملا في نفس ابي بشر فقال ما اكره من ايضاح الجواب عن هذه المسئلة الا ملل الوزير فان الكلام اذا طال مل فقال ابن الفرات ما رغبت في سماع كلامك وبيني وبين الملل علاقة فاما الجماعة فحرصها علي ذلك ظاهر فقال ابو سعيد

<sup>1</sup> .وغص بريقه .

<sup>2</sup> ? Perhaps المختلف (Hamadhani, Maḡ. 38).

<sup>3</sup> . تدعى .

<sup>4</sup> . يريخ .



إذا قلت زيد افضل اخوته لم يجوز إذا قلت زيد افضل الاخوة جاز  
والفصل بينهما ان اخوة زيد هم غير زيد وزيد خارج من جملتهم  
وذلك دليل<sup>1</sup> انه لو سأل سائل فقال من اخوة زيد لم يجز ان تقول  
زيد وعمرو وبكر وخالد وانما تقول بكر وعمرو وخالد ولا يدخل زيد في  
جملتهم فإذا كان زيد خارجا عن اخوته صار غيرهم فلم يجز ان  
يكون افضل اخوته كما لم يجز ان يكون حمارك افره البغال لان  
الحمار غير البغال كما ان زيدا غير اخوته فإذا قلت زيد افضل الاخوة  
جاز لانه احد الاخوة والاسم يقع عليه وعلي غيرة فهو بعض الاخوة الا  
تري انه لو قيل من الاخوة عدده فيهم فقلت زيد وعمرو وبكر وخالد  
فيكون بمنزلة قولك حمارك افره الحمير فلما كان علي ما وصفنا  
جاز ان يضاف الى واحد منكور يدل علي الجنس فتقول زيد افضل  
رجل وحمارك افره حمار فيدل رجل علي الجنس كما دل  
الرجال وكما في عشرين درهما ومائة درهم فقال ابن الفرات ما بعد  
هذا البيان مزيد ولقد جل علم النحو عندي بهذا الاعتبار وهذا  
الانقياد فقال ابو سعيد معاني النحو منقسمة بين حركات اللفظ  
وسكناته وبين وضع الحروف في مواضعها المقستضية لها وبين تاليف  
الكلام بالتقديم والتأخير وتوخي الصواب في ذلك وتجنب الخطأ  
من ذلك وان زاغ شيء من النعت فانه لا يخلو من ان يكون  
سابقا بالاستعمال النادر والتاويل البعيد او مردودا لخروجه عن عادة  
القوم الجارية علي فطرتهم فاما ما يتعلق باختلاف لغات القبائل  
فذلك شيء مسلم لهم وماخوذ عليهم وكل ذلك محصور بالتتابع

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps ذلك .

والرواية والسماع والقياس المطرد علي الاصل المعروف من غير تحريف وانما دخل العجب علي المنطقيين لظنهم ان المعاني لا تعرف ولا تستوضح الا بطريقهم ونظرهم وتكلفهم فترجموا لغة هم فيها ضعفاء ناقصون بترجمة اخري هم فيها ضعفاء ناقصون وجعلوا تلك الترجمة صناعة وادعوا علي المحويين انهم مع اللفظ لا مع المعني ثم اقبل ابو سعيد علي متى فقال الا تعلم يا ابا بشر ان الكلام اسم واقع علي اشياء قد اختلفت بمراتب مثل ذلك انك تقول هذا ثوب والثوب يقع علي اشياء بها صار ثوبًا ثم به نسج بعد ان غزل فسداته لا تكفي دون لحمته ولحمته لا تكفي دون سداته ثم تاليغه كنسجه وبلاغته كقصارته ودقة سلكه كرقعة لفظه وغلظ غزله ككشافه حروفه ومجموع هذا كله ثوب ولكن بعد تقدمه كل ما يحتاج اليه فيه قال ابن الفرات سله يا ابا سعيد عن مسئلة اخري فان هذا كلما توالي عليه بان انقطاعه وانخفاض ارتفاعه في المنطق الذي ينصره والحق الذي لا ينصره قال ابو سعيد ما تقول في رجل قال لهذا علي درهم غير قيراط قال متى ما لي علم بهذا النمط قال لست نازعًا عنك حتي يصح عند المحاضرين انك صاحب مخرقة وزرق هبنا ما هو اخف من هذا قال رجل لصاحبه بكم الثوبان المصبوغان وقال اخر بكم ثوبان مصبوغان وقال اخر بكم ثوبان مصبوغين بيتين هذه المعاني التي تضمنها لفظ لفظ قال متى لو نشرت انا ايضا عليك من مسائل المنطق شيئًا لكان حالك كحالي قال ابو سعيد اخطأت لانك انا سالتني عن شيء انظر فيه

فان كان له علاقة بالمعني وصح لفظه على العادة الجارية اجبت ثم لا ابالي ان يكون موافقا او مخالفا وان كان غير متعلق بالمعني رددته عليكم وان كان متصلا باللفظ ولكن على موضع لكم في الفساد على ما حشوتم به كتبكم رددته ايضا لانه لا سبيل الى احداث لغة مقررة بين اهلها ما وجدنا لكم الا ما استعرت من لغة العرب كالسبب والا والموضوع والمحمول والكون والفساد والمهمل المخصوص وامثلة لا تنفع ولا تجدي وهي الى العي اقرب وفي الفهاة اذهب ثم انتم هولاء في منطقتكم على نقض ظاهر لانكم لا تفون بالكتب ولا هي مشروحة وتدعون الشعر ولا تعرفونه وتدعون الخطابة وانتم عنها في منقطع الشراب وقد سمعت قائلكم يقول الحاجة ماسة الي كتاب البرهان فان كان كما قال فلم قطع الزمان بما قبله من الكتب وان كانت الحاجة قد مست الي ما قبل البرهان فهي ايضا ماسة الي ما بعد البرهان والا فلم صنف ما (لا) يحتاج اليه ويستغني عنه هذا كله تخليط وزرق وتهويل ورعد وبرق وانما بودكم ان تشغلوا جاهلا وتستندلوا عزيزا وغايتكم ان تهولوا بالجنس والنوع والخاصة والفصل والعرض والشخص وتقولوا الهلية والينية والماهية والكيفية والكمية والذاتية والعرضية والجوهرية والهيولية والصورية والانسية والكسبية والنفسية ثم تنمطون وتقولون جينا بالسحر في قولنا لا في شي من يا وواو وجيم في بعض ياء وفاء في بعض جيم والاء في كل ب وچ في كل ب فاء اذن لا في كل ج وهذا بطريق الخلف<sup>1</sup> وهذا بطريق الاختصاص وهذه كلها جزافات وترهات ومغالق

<sup>1</sup> الخلف . Perhaps

وشبكات ومن جاد عقله وحسن تمييزه ولطف نظره وثقب رأيه وانارت نفسه استغني عن هذا كله بعون الله وفضله وجودة العقل وحسن التمييز ولطف النظر وثقوب الرأي وانارة النفس من مناسخ الله الهبية<sup>1</sup> ومواهبه السنية يختص بها من يشاء من عباده وما اعرف لاستطالتم بالمنطق وجها وهذا الناشى ابو العباس قد نقض عليكم وتبمع طريقكم وبين خطاكم وابرز ضعفكم ولم تقدروا الي اليوم ان تردوا عليه كلمة واحدة مما قال وما زدتم على قولكم لم يعرف اغراضنا ولا وقف على مرادنا وانما تكلم علي وهم وهذا منكم لاجابة ونكول ورضى بالعجز والكلول وكل ما ذكرتم في الموجودات فعليكم فيه اعتراض هذا قولكم في فعل وينفعل ولم تستوضحوا فيهما مراتبهما ومواقعهما ولم تفقوا علي مقاسمهما لانكم قنعتن فيهما بوقوع الفعل من يفعل وقبول الفعل من ينفعل ومن وراء ذلك غايات خفيت عليكم ومعارف ذهبت عنكم وهذا حالكم في الاضافة فاما البدل ووجهه والمعرفة واقسامها والنكرة ومراتبها وغير ذلك مما يطول ذكره فليس لكم فيه مقال ولا مجال وانت اذا قلت لانسان كن منطقياً فانما تريد كن عقلياً او عاقلاً او اعقل ما تقول لان اصحابك يزعمون ان المنطق هو العقل وهذا قول مدخول لان المنطق علي وجوه انتم منها في سهو واذا قال لسك اخر كن محويا لغويا فصيحاً فانما يريد افهم عن نفسك ما تقول ثم رم ان يفهم عنك غيرك وقدر اللفظ علي المعني فلا ينقص منه هذا اذا كنت في تحقيق شىء علي ما هو به فاما اذا حاولت فرش المعنى وبسط المراد

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps الهبية.

فاجل اللفظ بالروادف الموضحة والاشباه المقربة والاستعارات  
 الممتنعة وسد<sup>1</sup> المعانى بالبلاغة اعني لوح منها شيئاً حتى لا تصاب  
 الا بالبحث عنها والشوق اليها لان المطلوب اذا ظفر به على هذا  
 الوجه عز وجل وكرم وعلا وشرح منها شيئاً حتى لا يمكن ان يمتري  
 فيه او يتعب في فهمه او يسترح<sup>2</sup> عنه لاغتماضه فهذا المعني يكون  
 جامعاً لحقائق الاشياء والاشباه الحقائق وهذا باب ان استقصيته خرج  
 عن نمط ما نحن عليه في هذا المجلس على اني لا ادري ايؤثر ما  
 اقول ام لا ثم قال حدثنا هل فصلتم قط بالمنطق بين مختلفين  
 اورفعتم بالخلاف بين اثنتين اتراك بقوة المنطق وبرهانه اعتقدت  
 ان الله ثالث ثلاثة وان الواحد اكثر من واحد وان الذي هو اكثر  
 من واحد هو واحد وان الشرع ما تذهب اليه والحق ما تقوله  
 هيهات هاهنا امور ترفع عن دعوى اصحابك وهذيانهم وتصدق عن  
 عقولهم واذهانهم ودع هذا هاهنا مسئلة قد اوقفت خلافا فارفع  
 ذلك الخلاف بمنطقك قال قائل لفلان من الحائط الي الحائط  
 ما الحكم فيه وما قدر المشهود به لفلان فقد قال ناس له الحائطان  
 معاً وما بينهما وقال آخرون له النصف من كل منهما وقال آخرون  
 له احدهما هات الان آيتك الباهرة ومعجزتك القاهرة وانني لك  
 بهما وهذا قد بان بغير نظرك ونظر اصحابك ودع ايضاً قال قائل  
 من الكلام ما هو مستقيم حسن ومنه ما هو مستقيم كذب ومنه ما  
 هو خطأ فسر هذه الجملة واعترض عليه عالم آخر فاحكم انت بين

<sup>1</sup> Cod. وسسد .

<sup>2</sup> Read . ينتزح .

هذا القائل والمعارض وارنا قوة صناعتك التي تميز بها بين الخطأ والصواب وبين الحق والباطل فان قلت كيف احكم بين اثنين احدهما قد سمعت مقالته والاخر لم احصل اعتراضه قيل لك استخرج بنظرک الاعتراض ان كان ما قاله محتملا له ثم اوضح الحق منهما لان الاصل مسموع لك حاصل عندك وما يصح به او يطرد عليه يجب ان يظهر منك فلا يتعاسر علينا فان هذا لا يخفي على احد من الجماعة فقد بان الان ان مركب اللفظ لا يجوز مبسوط العقل والمعاني معقولة ولها اتصال شديد وبساطة تامة وليس في قوة اللفظ من اي لغة كان ان يملك ذلك المبسوط ويحيط به وينصب عليه سوراً ولا تدع<sup>1</sup> شيئاً من داخله ان يخرج ولا شيئاً من خارجه ان يدخل خوفاً من الاختلاط الجالب للفساد اعني ان ذلك يخلط الحق بالباطل ويشبه الباطل بالحق وهذا السدى وقع الصحيح منه في الاول قبل وضع المنطق وقد عاد ذلك الصحيح في الثاني بهذا المنطق وانت لو عرفت تصرف العلماء والفقهاء في مسائلهم ووقفت على غورهم في قطرهم وغوضهم في استنباطهم وحسن تاويلهم لما يرد عليهم وسعة تشقيهم للوجوه المحتملة والكنائيات المفيدة والجهات القريبية والبعيدة لحققت نفسك وازدريت اصحابك ولكن ما ذهبوا اليه وتابعوا عليه اقل في عينك من السها من القمرو من الحصاص عند الجبل اليس الكندي وهو علم في اصحابك يقول في جواب مسألة هذا من باب عدة قعد<sup>2</sup> الوجوه بحسب

<sup>1</sup> Read يدع .

<sup>2</sup> Read فعد .

الاستطاعة على طريق الامكان من ناحية الوهم بلا ترتيب حتى وضعوا له مسائل من هذا وغاطوه بها واروه من الفلسفة الداخلة فذهب عليه ذلك الوضع فاعتقد انه مريض العقل فاسد المزاج حائل الغريزة مشوش اللب قالوا له اخبرنا عن الاسطقسات الاجرام واصطكاك تضاعط الاركان هل يدخل في باب وجوب الامكان او يخرج من باب الفقدان الى ما يخفي عن الادهان وقالوا له ايضا ما تشبيه<sup>1</sup> الحركات الطبيعية الى الصور الهولانية وهل هي ملابسة للكيان في حدود النظر والبيان او مزيلة له علي غاية الاحكام ما تأثير فقدان الوجدان في عدم الامكان عند امتناع الواجب من وجوبه في ظاهر ما لا وجوب له لاستحالته في امكان اصله وعلى هذا فقد حفظ جوابه عن جميع هذا على غاية الركاكة والضعف والفساد والغشالة والسخف ولولا التوقي من التطويل لسردت ذلك كله ولقد مر بي في خطه التفاوت في تلاشي الاشياء غير محاط به لانه يلاقي الاختلاف في الاصول والاتفاق في الفروع وكل ما يكون على هذا النهج فالنكرة<sup>2</sup> تتزاحم عليه المعرفة والمعرفة تنناقض النكرة على ان النكرة والمعرفة من باب الالسنة<sup>3</sup> العاربية من ملابس الاسرار الالهية لا من باب الالهية العارضة في احوال السرية ولقد حدثني اصحابنا الصابئون عنه بما يضحك الشكلى ويشمت العدو ويغم الصديق وما ورث هذا كله الا من بركات يونان وفوائد الفلسفة والمنطق ونسئل

<sup>1</sup> . نسبة Read .

<sup>2</sup> . والنكرة Cod .

<sup>3</sup> . البسة Cod .

الله عصمة وتوفيقاً نهندي بهما الي القول الراجع الي التحصيل والفعل الجاري على التعديل انه سميع مجيب قال ابو حيان هذا اخر ما كتبت عن علي بن عيسى الشيخ الصالح باملائه وكان ابو سعيد يروي لهما من هذه القصة وكان يقول لم احفظ علي نفسي كل ما قلت ولكن كتب ذلك القوم الذين حضروا في الواح كانت معهم ومحابر ايضاً وقد اختل كثير منه قال علي بن عيسى وتقوض المجلس واهله يتعجبون من جاش ابي سعيد ولسانه المتصرف ووجهه المهتل وفوائد المتتابعة وقال له الوزير ابن الفرات عين الله عليك ايها الشيخ فقد نديت اكباً واقررت عيوناً وببيضت وجوها وحكت طرازاً لا يبليه الايام ولا يتطرقة الحداث قال قلت لعلي بن عيسى وكم كان سن ابي سعيد يومئذ قال مولده سنة ثمانين ومائتين وكان له يوم المناظرة اربعون سنة وقد عبث الشيب بلهازه هذا مع السميت والوقار والدين والجد وهذا شعار اهل الفضل والشقدم وقل من تظاهر وتحلى بحليته الا جل في العيون وعظم في الصدور والنفوس واحبته القلوب وجرت بمدحه اللسنة وقلت لعلي بن عيسى اكان ابو علي الفسوي حاضراً في المجلس قال لا كان غائباً وحدث بما كان وكان الحسد لابي سعيد على ما فاز به من هذا الخمر المشهور والثناء المذكور قال ابو حيان وقال لي الوزير عند منقطع هذا الحديث ذكرتني شيئاً كان في نفسي واحببت ان اسئلك عنه واقف عليه ايمن ابو سعيد من ابي علي وايمن علي ابن عيسى منهما وايمن المراغي ايضاً من الجماعة وكذلك المرزباني وابن شاذان وابن الوراق وابن حيويه فكان من الجواب ما تقدم ذكره



DISCUSSION BETWEEN MATTĀ IBN YUNUS OF DAIR KUNNĀ,  
THE PHILOSOPHER, AND ABŪ SA'ĪD AL-SĪRĀFĪ.

Said Abu Ḥayyān : I mentioned to the vizier a discussion that took place in the salon of the vizier Abu'l Faḥ al-Faḍl Ibn Ja'far Ibn al-Furāt between Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī and Abū Bishr Mattā. My account of it was only an abridgment, but the vizier told me to write it out in its entirety. For, he said, not a word ought to be lost of a discussion which took place in so notable an assembly, between two such savants and in the presence of so many eminent men. Every sally should be preserved: no sentence neglected. I therefore wrote it out at length. Abū Sa'īd was my authority for portions of the narrative; and 'Alī Ibn 'Īsā, grammarian and devotee, narrated it at length, as follows:—

In the year 320, when the salon assembled, a salon containing al-Khālidī, Ibn al-Ikhshīd, al-Kindī, Abū Bishr's son, Ibn Rabāḥ, Abū 'Amr Kudāmah Ibn Ja'far, al-Zuhri, 'Alī Ibn 'Īsā Ibn al-Jarrāḥ, Abū Firās, Ibn Rashīd, Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz al-Hāshimī, Ibn Yahyā al-'Alawī, the ambassador of Ibn Ṭughj from Egypt, al-Marzubānī, companion of the Samanids, the vizier Ibn al-Furāt addressed them as follows:—

I desire someone to come forward and debate with Mattā (Matthew) on the subject of Logic. He declares that it is impossible to know what is correct from what is incorrect, truth from falsehood, right from wrong, proof from sophism, doubt from certainty, except by our command of logic, our control of the system established and defined by its author, and our acquaintance through him with its doctrines.

A general silence ensued. Presently Ibn Furāt said: Surely there must be someone here who can meet him, and arguing with him refute his view. I regard you as seas of knowledge, champions of our religion and its followers, lamps to guide the seeker after truth. Why, then, this hesitation and alarm?

Abū Sa'īd al-Sīrāfī raised his head and said: Vizier, excuse us. The knowledge that is stored in the breast is

different from that which is to be displayed before such an assembly, where there are listening ears, and gazing eyes, and stubborn minds, and critical spirits. Their presence occasions anxiety, and anxiety numbs the energy: it produces shame, and shame presages defeat. To come forward as champion in a crowded assembly is not like having a wrestling bout on a private field.

Ibn al-Furāt said: You are the man for it, Abū Saʿīd. Making excuse for others, you are bound to defend yourself. And the credit of your defence of yourself will redound to the whole audience.

Abū Saʿīd: To disobey the orders of the vizier is a disgrace, and to decline to follow his advice shows inclination towards failing in duty towards him. God grant that our foot slip not, and we pray of Him good guidance, and help in peace and war. Then turning towards Matthew he said: Tell me what you mean by Logic: for when we understand your meaning, our discussion as to its rights and wrongs, which are to be severally accepted and rejected, will follow proper lines and paths on which there is mutual agreement.

Matthew: I understand by Logic an instrument whereby sound speech is known from unsound, and wrong sense from right: like a balance, for thereby I know overweight from underweight, and what rises from what sinks.

Abū Saʿīd: You are mistaken; for sound speech is known from unsound by reason, if we investigate with reason. Say you know the overweight from the underweight by the balance, whence are you to know whether what is weighed is iron, gold, copper, or lead? And I find you, after knowing the weight, needing to know the substance of what is weighed, its value, and a number of other qualities which it would take long to enumerate. And this being so, the weight on which you insist, and which you are so anxious to know precisely, will benefit you only a little, and on one point, whereas many points remain; as the poet says,

“ You have kept one thing, but let many things slip.”

Moreover, a point here has escaped you. Not everything in the world admits of being weighed. For some things dry measure is employed, for others lineal measure, for others surface measure, for others rough estimate. And if this be so with visible bodies, it is also the case with noumena that are the product of reasoning; for the senses are the shadow of intelligences, which they imitate, sometimes at a distance, sometimes nearer, retaining all the time their resemblance and similarity.

But leaving this. If Logic be the invention of a Greek made in the Greek language and according to Greek conventions, and according to the descriptions and symbols which Greeks understood, whence does it follow that the Turks, Indians, Persians, and Arabs should attend to it, and make it umpire to decide for them or against them, and judge between them, so that they must accept what it attests and repudiate what it disapproves?

Matthew: This follows because Logic is the discussion of accidents apprehended by the reason, and ideas comprehended thereby, and the investigation of thoughts that occur, and notions that enter the mind; now in matters apprehended by the intellect all men are alike, as for example four and four are eight with all nations, and so on.

Abū Saʿīd: If what is sought by the reason and expressed by words with all their various divisions and divers paths could be reduced to the obviousness of the proposition "Four and four make eight," there would be no difference of opinion, but immediate agreement. But this is not so. Your example is misleading, and it is usual with you to mislead in that way. But let us drop this also. If the accidents that are apprehended by the intellect and the notions that are comprehended can only be attained by language, which embraces nouns, verbs, and particles, is not knowledge of language indispensable?

Matthew: Yes.

Abū Saʿīd: You are wrong; in answer to such a question you should say "Aye."

Matthew: "Aye"; I am prepared to accept your authority on such a point.

Abū Sa'īd: Consequently you are inviting us, not to study Logic, but to learn the Greek language. Now you do not know Greek yourself; how, then, can you ask us to study a language of which you are not master? A language too that has perished long since, whose speakers are dead, and those extinct who used to converse in it, and understand each other's intentions by its inflexions. True, you translate from the Syriac: but what do you say of ideas that are travestied by transference from Greek to another language, Syriac; and then from that language to another, Arabic?

Matthew: Although the Greeks have perished with their language, still the translation has preserved the intentions of the writers, giving their sense, and conveying the genuine truth.

Abū Sa'īd: If we grant that the translation is veracious and not fallacious, straight and not crooked, literal and not free, that it is neither confused nor inaccurate, has omitted nothing and added nothing, has not altered the order, has not marred the sense of the general and the special, or indeed of the most special and the most general—a thing which is impossible, which the nature of language and the character of ideas do not permit,—your next point would appear to be that there is no evidence save the intellects of the Greeks, no demonstration save what they invented, and no verity save what they brought to light.

Matthew: No. But they among all nations were the nation that applied themselves to philosophy, and to the investigation of the exterior and interior of this science, and to all that appertains to it or branches off from it. And to their great pains we owe all that has come to light, been propagated, been circulated, or made progress of all species of science and all forms of art. We can find this to hold good of no other nation.

Abū Sa'īd: You are in error; you hold a brief, and your judgment is partial. Knowledge is sown broadcast in the world, whence a poet says

“ Knowledge in the world is spread,  
To it is the wise man sped ”;

and so, too, are the arts scattered over all who are on the face of the earth. Hence some science predominates in one place rather than another, and some art prevails in one region rather than another. This is clear, and to add a word about it would be superfluous. Nevertheless, your statement would only be correct and your claim conceded, if Greece had been known to possess out of all nations absolute infallibility, an unfallen nature, and a structure unlike that of other men, so that if they wished to err they would have been unable to do so, had they desired to make a false statement they could not, and if the *Shechinah* had descended upon them and God taken them specially under His charge, and error washed its hands of them, the virtues clung to their roots and their branches, and the vices fled from their substance and their veins. But it would be ignorance for anyone to suppose this about them, and fanaticism for anyone to claim it for them. No, they resembled other nations, sometimes going right, sometimes wrong, sometimes speaking the truth, sometimes speaking false, sometimes doing well, sometimes badly. Nor was the whole of Greece the author of the Logic, but one particular man, who took from his predecessors, just as his successors took from him; his authority is not over all mankind, nor over the great multitude, for indeed he has opponents both among his own people and others. Moreover, difference in opinion and sentiment, discussion, questioning, and answering are inborn and natural, so how can a man produce anything whereby an end can be put to this dissension, or whereby it could be rooted out of nature, or seriously affected? It cannot be: the thing is impossible. The world remains after his Logic as it was before his Logic. Resign yourself, therefore, to dispense with the unattainable, since such a thing is wanting in the creation and nature of things. If, therefore, you were to empty your mind of other things and devote your attention to the study of the language in which you are conversing and disputing with us, and instruct your friends in words which the speakers of that language can understand, and interpret the books of the Greeks in the style of those who

know that language, you would learn that you can dispense with the ideas of the Greeks as well as you can dispense with the language of the Greeks. And here is a question: Do you hold that people's intelligences are different, and that their shares therein are unequal?

Matthew: Yes.

Abū Sa'īd: Is that difference and inequality natural or acquired?

Matthew: Natural.

Abū Sa'īd: How, then, can there be anything herein whereby a natural difference and an original inequality can be removed?

Matthew: This point has already been mentioned in your previous discourse.

Abū Sa'īd: Then did you furnish it with a satisfactory answer and a perspicuous explanation?—However, leave this. I will ask you about a single particle which is much used in the language of the Arabs, and whose senses are distinguished by intelligent persons. Do you, then, extract its senses from the Logic of Aristotle, of which you boast so much, and on which you lay so much stress. The particle is *wāw* ('and'): what are its rules? How should it be used? Has it one sense or many?

Matthew was bewildered, and said: This is Grammar, and of Grammar I have made no study: for the Logician has no need of Grammar, whereas the Grammarian does need Logic; since Logic enquires into the sense, whereas Grammar enquires into the sound. If, therefore, the Logician comes across the sound, it is accidental, and it is likewise accidental if the Grammarian comes across the sense. Now the sense is more exalted than the sound, and the sound humbler than the sense.

Abū Sa'īd: You are wrong. Logic, grammar, sound, correct expression, correct inflexion, statement, narration, predication, interrogation, request, desire, exhortation, invocation, appellation, and petition, all belong to the same region by virtue of similarity and resemblance. For example, if a man were to say "Zaid uttered the truth, but

did not speak the truth," or "spoke what was indecent, but did not say what was indecent," or "expressed himself correctly, but did not speak correctly," or "made his meaning clear, but did not make it perspicuous," or "enounced his business, but did not utter it," or "stated, but did not predicate," he would in each case be talking nonsense, contradicting himself, misusing language, employing his power of utterance in a manner not certified by his reason or the reason of others. Grammar, then, is Logic, only abstracted from the Arabic language, and Logic is Grammar, only rendered intelligible by language. The difference between sound and sense is only that sound is natural and sense intelligible, and for this reason sound is for ever perishing, obliterating nature's footsteps with other footsteps of nature, whereas sense is permanent through time, the recipient of the sense being reason, which is divine, whereas the matter of sound is earthy, and all that is of the earth dissolves. And thus it comes that you are left without a name for your art which you profess, and the Organon of which you are so proud, unless you can borrow one from the Arabic language, which indeed you are to some extent allowed to do.

If, then, you cannot do without a little of the language for the sake of your translation, no more can you dispense with a great deal of it in order to make your translation precise, in order to inspire confidence, and in order to escape error, which will otherwise molest you.

Matthew: It is sufficient for me to know out of your language the noun, the verb, and the particle: with that much I can make shift in expressing ideas which the Greeks have polished for me.

Abū Sa'īd: You are wrong. About these nouns, verbs, and particles you have to know how to employ them and arrange them in the order which the speakers of the language instinctively approve, and also you need to know the vocalization of these nouns, verbs, and particles, for error and corruption of the vowels are as bad as the same in the case of the consonants. And this is a subject neglected

by you, your friends, and your associates, although there is a mystery involved of which you have no inkling, and which has never dawned on your intellect. That is, that you ought to know that no one language exactly corresponds with another language in all respects, or has conterminous properties in its nouns, verbs, and particles, in its mode of composition, arrangement, employment of metaphor and of exact expression, duplication and simplification, copiousness, poverty, verse, prose, rhyme, metre, tendency, and other things too numerous to mention. Now no one, I fancy, will object to this judgment, or question its correctness, at least no one who relies on any fragment of intelligence or morsel of justice. How, then, can you rely on any work which you know only by translation, after this account? On the contrary, you require to know the Arabic language much more than the Greek ideas, albeit the ideas are not Greek or Indian, just as the languages<sup>1</sup> are not Persian, Arabic, or Turkish. Notwithstanding, you assert that the essence of the ideas is in intelligence, study, and reflection, and then nothing remains but using correct language. Why, then, do you despise the Arabic language, when you interpret the books of Aristotle in it, albeit you are unacquainted with its real character?

And tell me: supposing anyone were to say to you: "In respect to knowledge of verities, their study and their investigation, my condition is similar to that of those who lived before the inventor of Logic. I regard them as they regarded, and contrive as they contrived. For I know the language by birth and inheritance, and I make out the ideas by observation, reflection, scrutiny, and industry"—what can you say to him? "This will not hold good or be practical, because he does not know these objects by the road whereby you arrived at them"? And perhaps you are prouder of your imitation, though it be of a false method, than is such a person of his originality, though it be correct. And this is indeed clear ignorance and wrong judgment. And besides this: tell me what are the rules of the *wāw*, for I wish to

<sup>1</sup> This seems corrupt.



show that your insistence on Logic does not avail you at all, while you are unacquainted with a single particle of the language in which you invite us to study Greek philosophy. And he who is ignorant of one particle is potentially ignorant of the whole language, and even though he be not entirely ignorant of it, yet, being ignorant of some of it, he may chance to be ignorant of what he wants, and knowledge of what he does not want will not help him. And this is the stage reached by the vulgar, or those who are slightly above the vulgar. And why should he object to this description and reject it, and fancy that he is one of the superior class, nay, the most superior class, and that he knows the mystery of dialectic, and the hidden things of wisdom, and the secret of the syllogism, and the correct form of demonstration? Now I have only asked you about the senses of one single particle: what would happen if I were to shower down upon you the whole series of particles, and demand of you their senses and their proper and permissible employments?

Now I have heard your people assert that the grammarians are ignorant of the proper usage of *fī* ('in'), saying that it expresses the vessel, just as *bi* expresses adhesion, whereas *fī* really serves for the expression of a number of relations: you say the thing is *in* the vessel, and the vessel is *in* the place, and the administrator is *in* administration, and the administration is *in* the administrator: now this sort of thing belongs to the minds of the Greeks and is drawn from their language, and cannot be understood by the minds of the Indians, Turks, or Arabs. This, surely, is ignorance on the part of the person who asserts it, and idle quibbling at the grammarian who asserts that *in* is for the vessel, who by this definition has literally expressed the correct sense of the particle, while indirectly expressing those other senses which become apparent by analysis. There are numerous cases of the sort, but the one I have quoted is sufficient to justify the definition of Ibn al-Sikkīt.

Ibn al-Furāt here observed: Sheykh, favoured as you are with the divine assistance, answer him by explaining the uses of the particle *wāw* ('and'), in order to confute him the more

evidently, and realize in the presence of this assembly that which he is unable to perform, although he makes it especially his subject.

Abū Sa'īd: 'And' has a variety of meanings and usages: Conjunction, as "I honoured Zaid *and* 'Amr." The oath, as "*And* Allah, such and such a thing took place." Circumstance, as "I went out *and* Zaid was standing," for what follows is made up of an inchoative and a predicate. "Many a," where, however, only a few are meant, as "*And* [a valley] black in its depths, barren where it is crossed." Further, the letter can be radical in the noun, as in *wāḳid*, *wāṣil*, *wāḳid*, or in the verb, as in *wajila*, *yaujalu*, or otiose, as in the text of the Koran, "Then when they had reconciled themselves, and he had laid him forehead upwards, *and* we called him," i.e. we called him, or in the verse "And when we had passed the court of the tribe, *and* we were secluded by the innermost part of a plain with many kopjes and windings," where the 'and' should be omitted in translation. Further, it implies condition, as in the text of the Koran, "And he shall speak to the people in the cradle *and* as a grown man," i.e. he shall address the people while still an infant with the language of a grown man who is in his maturity. Further, it has the sense of a preposition when you say, for example, "The water is level *and* the beam," i.e. with the beam.

Ibn al-Furāt here said, addressing Matthew: Abū Bishr, was this in your grammar?

Abū Sa'īd: Enough of this. Here is a question more closely connected with the intelligible sense than with the verbal form. What would you say of the phrase "Zaid is the best of the brothers"?

Matthew: It is correct.

Abū Sa'īd: Then what would you say of the phrase "Zaid is the best of his brothers"?

Matthew: It is correct.

Abū Sa'īd: If, then, both are correct, what is the difference between them?

Matthew was troubled and hung his head, and was choked by his saliva.

Abū Sa'īd: You have given your answer without perspicacity and without understanding. Your answer to the first question is correct, albeit you do not know why it is correct; but your answer to the second question is wrong, though, there too, you do not see why it is wrong.

Matthew: Explain what fault you find with it.

Abū Sa'īd: If you come to my class-room you will learn; this is not the place for instruction, but for the removal of illusions with one who is accustomed to produce them. The assembly will know that you are in the wrong. And why do you maintain that the grammarian only studies the sound and not the sense, and that the logician studies the sense and not the sound?—which might be true if the logician kept silent and let his thoughts wander among ideas, and erected any fabric that he chose in floating fancy and occurring thoughts and suddenly arising conjectures; but seeing that he desires to produce his conclusions, obtained by study and investigation, to the learner and the student, he must perforce employ such words as cover his meaning, suit his purpose, and correspond with his intention.

Ibn al-Furāt here asked Abū Sa'īd to complete what he had said in explanation of the question, that the hearers might enjoy the benefit of the information, and that Abū Bishr might feel himself the more completely confuted.

Abū Sa'īd: I have no objection to giving a clear answer to this question, except that I am unwilling to weary the vizier, for a long discussion is tedious.

Ibn al-Furāt: When I wish to hear you speak, tedium and I have no acquaintance with each other. And the audience are evidently anxious to hear you.

Abū Sa'īd: If you say Zaid is the best of his brothers this is not a permissible sentence, whereas it is permissible to say Zaid is the best of the brothers, the difference between the two lying in the fact that Zaid's brothers are not Zaid, Zaid being outside the number. And the proof of this is that if anyone were to ask "Who are Zaid's brothers?" you could not say Zaid, 'Amr, Bakr, and Khālid, you could only say 'Amr, Bakr, and Khālid, Zaid not counting among them.

But Zaid being outside the number, he is not one of them, and he cannot be the best of his brothers, just as your ass cannot be the most spirited of the mules, since an ass is not a mule, just as Zaid is not one of his brothers. But the expression "Zaid is the best of the brothers" is permissible, for he is one of the brothers, and the name applies to him as well as to the others, he being a brother. So if you were asked who are the brothers, you would enumerate him with them, saying Zaid, 'Amr, Bakr, Khālid, and the phrase is like "Your ass is the most spirited of the asses." This being so, it is permissible for the word 'best' to be annexed to a single indefinite word signifying the genus, thus: "Zaid is the best man," "your ass is the most spirited ass," the singular 'man' serving in such a case for the genus, and indicating the same as the plural 'men,' just as the singular serves in the expressions "twenty dirhem," "a hundred dirhem."

Ibn al-Furāt: Nothing could be added to this explanation, and I have now a high idea of the science of grammar, as shown by this investigation and the subservience of the rules to the case.

Abū Sa'īd: The subjects of grammar are divided into the assignation or omission of vowels, the employment of letters in their right places, the arrangement of words before or after each other, striving after what is right therein and avoiding what is wrong. And if anything deviates from the rule, it must either be an archaism, rarely employed and interpreted in a roundabout way, or to be rejected as deserting the usage of the natives which they instinctively employ. As for what is connected with the tribal dialects, they may use what forms they like, and he who would speak their language must imitate them. All these rules are drawn from the four sources—imitation, tradition, limited lists, and free analogy; following a known rule, but not cases of corruption. The logicians' conceit is due to their supposing that the ideas could only be learned or rendered clear by their method, their studies and their labours. They therefore interpreted a language in which

they are weak and of which their knowledge is imperfect into another, in which they are also weak and their knowledge is imperfect. This sort of translation they made into an art, and then declared that the grammarians have to do only with words, not with ideas.

Abū Saʿīd here turned to Matthew and said: Do you not know, Abu Bishr, that *discourse* is a name applied to things which have got together by degrees; for example, you say "This is a garment": now the word 'garment' is applied to a number of things by which the object became a garment: it was woven after being spun, and its warp will not suffice without its woof, nor the woof without the warp; the composition of the discourse is like the weaving, its elegance resembles the exercise of the fuller's art on the garment; the fineness of the thread resembles the beauty of the sound; and the coarseness of the spinning resembles the harshness of the letters. The sum of the whole is a garment, but only after the performance of all the necessary operations.

Ibn Furāt here intervened: Ask him, Abū Saʿīd, another question, for by the succession of puzzles his incompetence will become the more apparent, and the lower will he fall from his eminence in that Logic which he would champion, and that truth which will not champion him.

Abū Saʿīd: What do you say of the phrase "Someone is my creditor to the amount of a dirhem save one *kirat*"?

Matthew: I have no knowledge of matters of this style.

Abū Saʿīd: I will not release you till the spectators are convinced that you are an impostor and a cheat. Here is something yet easier. One man says to another, "How much are the two dyed garments?" Another says, "How much are two dyed garments?" Another says, "How much are two garments, dyed?" Explain the senses which these several questions contain.

Matthew: If I were to shower a number of logical questions on you, your case would be similar to mine.

Abū Saʿīd: You are mistaken. If you were to ask me about any matter, I should consider it, and if it were

connected with the sense, but were correctly expressed, I should answer, without troubling whether it agreed or disagreed: but if it had no connection with the sense, I should refuse to answer; even though it had connection with the sound, but involved a form of fallacy with which you have filled your books, I should still refuse to answer: because there is no means of inventing a language which shall be established among its speakers. We cannot find that you have any words save what you have borrowed from the Arabic language, such as cause, except, subject, predicate, essence, corruption, the disused, the special, with certain formulæ that are unprofitable and useless, are little better than incompetence, and end in feebleness. Then you people in your Logic are involved in obvious contradiction; you do not produce the books, nor are they furnished with commentaries, and you profess poetic without knowing it, and you profess rhetoric, while being at the furthest distance from it; and I have heard one of you say the Book of Demonstration is indispensable: if this be so, why does he waste time with the treatises that come before that book? But if the books before the Book of Demonstration are indispensable, then the books that come after it must be indispensable also: otherwise, why did he compose books that are not wanted and can be dispensed with? All this is mystification, charlatanry, intimidation, ‘thunder and lightning’ (*brutum fulmen*). All you want to do is to impress the ignorant and vulgarize the noble. Your aim is to alarm people with your genus and species, and property, and differentia, and accident, and individual, and to talk about num-mity, and ubi-ety, and quiddity, quality, quantity, essentiality, accidentality, substantiality, materiality, formality, humanity, acquisiteness, animality: then you point out, and say, “Here is a magical operation: There is no A in B; C is in some B; therefore some A is in C. Or, A is in all B; C is in all B; therefore A is not in all C.”<sup>1</sup> And “One process is by contrary, and another by specialization.” All this is trash, vanity, quibbling, trap-setting: one whose reason is

<sup>1</sup> The symbols in the text are corrupt.

sound, discrimination adequate, wit keen, judgment acute, and mind luminous can dispense with all this by the help of God and His favour; and soundness of reason, adequacy of discrimination, keenness of wit, acuteness of judgment, and illumination of mind are among God's gracious gifts and precious favours, which He bestows on those of His servants whom He will. I know of no ground why you should pride yourselves so much on your Logic. And Abu'l-'Abbās al-Nāshī has refuted your pretensions, following on your trail, and has demonstrated your errors and shown up your weakness; and to this day you have been unable to refute one word of what he said, all you can utter being "he did not understand our aims nor perceive our intention, and he spoke according to a wrong idea." But this is only obstinacy and an attempt to extricate yourselves from a difficulty, and practically a confession of weakness and defeat. And all that you say concerning entia is liable to objection. This is the case with what you say about "he did" and "he suffered," for you do not clear up the degrees of both and their usages, nor do you understand their divisions: you are satisfied in these forms of speech with the action being done by the agent and being received by the patient, but there are stages beyond which have escaped you, and cognizances which are concealed from you. The same is the case with the doctrine of Annexion, and as for Permutation and its different varieties, and Definition with its divisions, and Indefiniteness with its different degrees, and other matters too numerous to mention, you are entirely out of the running in respect of them. And when you bid a man be a Logician, what you mean is "Be intellectual," or "Be intelligent," or "Understand what you say": for your authorities assert that Logic is Reason. But this statement is fallacious, since Logic has several senses of which you are unaware. So if another man says to you "Be a Grammarian, Linguist, Eloquent," he means "Understand what you are saying yourself, and endeavour to make other people understand you, and suit the sound to the sense, so that the former does not fall short of the latter": that is, if you

want to express a thing precisely; but if you wish to enlarge on the sense and to expand your meaning, then give the sound free-play with elucidatory synonyms, similes which are appropriate, and metaphors which defy competition: thus fortifying the sense by eloquence. I mean wave some of the matter in the air (as it were), in order that it may not be attained save by investigation and earnest effort: for when that which is sought for is secured in this way, such a prize is exalted and is thought honourable, great and mighty. Still, explain a little of it in order that there may be no dispute concerning it and no trouble required to understand it, and that it may not be avoided owing to its difficulty; and in this way the idea will embrace the realities of things and the semblance of the realities.

Now were I to give a detailed account of this subject I should go beyond the scope of the present discussion, though I do not know whether my words are leaving an impression or not.

Then he said: Tell me, have you ever settled by your Logic between two opponents, or removed the difference between two? Do you fancy that it is by the power of Logic and its demonstration that you believe that God is one of three, and that one is more than one, and that what is more than one is one, and that the Code is what you follow, and that the truth is what you say? Far be it! Here are matters that are too high for the pretensions of your friends and their chatter, and too subtle for their minds and intelligences.

But leave this. Here is a question which has produced a dispute, so put an end to that dispute by your Logic. Someone says, "To A belongs from the wall to the wall." What are the rights of the case? What is the amount which is attested to belong to A? Some suppose he has a right to both walls, with the intervening space; others, that he has half each wall; others, that he has one of the walls. Produce now your manifest sign and your triumphant miracle—though how are you to get them?—for indeed the difficulty has been solved without the investigations of your



friends or you. But let this pass. Says A, "Some statements are correct and sound, some correct and fallacious, some erroneous"; explain this sentence. Another savant objects: do you decide between the speaker and the objector, showing us thereby the power of your art, whereby you can discriminate between error and truth, right and wrong. If you say, "How am I to judge between two persons, having heard the statement of one, but not having learned the objection of the other?" we reply, "Evolve the objection out of your own mind, if the statement is liable to objection, and then show forth the truth out of the two, for the original statement has been heard by you and set before you, and that which corroborates it or can be urged against it ought to be produced by you, and indeed would give us no difficulty to produce, for there is no one in the assembly who does not see it." And it is clear now that the sound which is compound does not transcend the intelligence which is simple. Now the ideas are intelligible, and are closely connected, and are of extreme simplicity. It is not in the power of the sound, to whichever language it may belong, to conquer this simple essence, and comprehend it, and enclose it with a wall, allowing nothing within to go out, and nothing without to go in, for fear of admixture, which will entail corruption, I mean, for fear lest that process will mix truth with error, and cause what is wrong to seem right. And it is this which produced correct reasoning at the first before the invention of Logic, and again by virtue of this Logic; and if you knew how the savants and jurisconsults handle their questions, had seen how they plunge into unknown regions, how deep they dive in order to extract what they want, how skilfully they interpret what is brought before them, how widely they separate the tenable views, the useful fictions, and the near and distant applications, you would despise yourself and feel contempt for your authorities, their inventions and traditional lore would be smaller in your eyes (as compared with that) than "Suha in comparison to the Moon," or a grain of sand to a mountain. Does not al-Kindī (who is one of the lights of your school) say in answer to a question, "This is of the class of

a number," and he enumerated the views "according to possibility," "after the manner of what is possible," from the region of fancy without any order, so that some persons made up questions of this style, and deluded him with them, making him suppose they belonged to the foreign philosophy; he did not perceive that they were inventions, and thought he must be deranged or diseased or indisposed or confused. They said to him: "Tell us of the elementary bodies—does collision of the pressure of the corners enter into the category of what is necessarily possible, or does it leave the category of non-existence to be included in that which is concealed from the mind?" And again: "What is the relation of natural motions to material forms? Are they endued with existence within the range of vision and demonstration, or disconnected therewith with the extremest precision? What is the influence of the non-existence of existence upon impossibility when the necessary is excluded from being necessary in the exterior of the unnecessary owing to a *reductio ad absurdum* of its original possibility?" Notwithstanding, his answer to all this is on record, and a very silly, weak, absurd, nerveless, and contemptible answer it is. And were I not afraid of taking up too much time, I should go through his answers. I once came across in his handwriting the passage: "Variety in the annihilation of things is incomprehensible, for it implies difference in the roots and unity in the branches, and in all such cases the indefinite clashes with the definite, and the definite contradicts the indefinite, albeit both definite and indefinite belong to the category of garments that are destitute of the clothing of the divine mysteries, not to the category of divine things that crop up in the states of the mysterious." Our Sabæan friends have also told me things about him that would make a bereaved mother laugh, that would make the enemy triumph, and vex his friends. And all this he inherited from the blessings of Greece, and the benefits bestowed by Philosophy and Logic. And we ask God for His protection and help whereby we may be guided to words that are profitable, and acts that are according to the right measure. Verily He hears and answers.

Said Abū Ḥayyān: Here is the end of the notes I took from the pious sheykh 'Alī b. 'Īsā; and Abū Sa'īd had himself narrated parts of this story, but he used to say that he had not committed to memory everything that he said, only the people who were present had taken down his speech on tablets or desks which they had brought with them; but the report was very imperfect.

'Alī b. 'Īsā continued: So the meeting broke up, all the people admiring the spirit of Abū Sa'īd, and his mighty tongue, and his beaming face, and his stream of arguments. And the vizier Ibn al-Furāt said to him: "God's favour be on you, O sheykh; you have moistened many a liver, and cooled many an eye, and whitened many a face, and woven a web which the days shall not efface and fortune shall not assault."

Said Abū Ḥayyān: I asked 'Alī b. 'Īsā how old was Abū Sa'īd at the time? He answered that he was born in the year 280, and so was 40 years of age at the time of the debate, and there was a touch of white about his jaws, which went together with rectitude, dignity, piety, and earnestness: and this is the mark of men of worth and progress, and few are they who openly exhibit that adornment but are ennobled in men's eyes, and magnified in their breasts and souls, and are beloved in their hearts, and have their praises recited by their tongues. Then I said to 'Alī Ibn 'Īsā: "And was Abū 'Alī al-Fasawī present?" He said: "No, he was absent from Baghdad, but was informed of the scene: and Abū Sa'īd was greatly envied for the fame and notoriety which he acquired through this famous episode."

Abū Ḥayyān continued: At the end of this narrative the vizier said to me: "You have reminded me of something I had in my mind, and wanted to ask you about, in order that I might ascertain it. What was the position of Abū Sa'īd as compared with Abū 'Alī, and that of 'Alī b. 'Īsā as compared with them? How does al-Marāghī compare with all three? How do al-Marzubānī, Ibn Shādhān, Ibn al-Warrāk, Ibn Ḥayūyah?" My answer was 'what has been given above.