

This is not to say that the actual proofs of God's existence, Anselm and Molla Sadra devised, are essentially the same. What both men share is that each of them -within the framework of his own religious and philosophical tradition-formulated a proof of God's existence is as a result of a quest for Him that is both philosophical and more than philosophical. Regarding Mollā Sadrā, in order to convey this aspect of his way of thinking, the term most commonly used is hekmat (wisdom). In order to express the peculiarity of Saint Anselm's proof of God's existence, Richard W. Southern has suggested, as was already mentioned, the term *sapientia* (wisdom), as a kind of coalescence of intellectus (intellect) and cogitatio (thinking). The resemblance between these two terms, sapientia and hekmat, is a felicitous illustration of the affinity and congeniality, that notwithstanding the fact that they lived centuries apart and belonged to two different, and sometimes even opposite, religious traditions- can be detected between the two men, as least as far as their approach to the necessity of God's existence is concerned.

Bibliography

- 1- Böhner, Ph. & E. Gilson, (1954), Christliche Philosophie von ihren Anfängen bis Nikolaus von Cues, Paderborn: F. Schöningh.
- 2- Brecher, R, (1985), Anselm's Argument. The logic of divine existence, Aldershot, UK: Gower Publishing Company Ltd.
- 3- Fazlur Rahman, (1975), The Philosophy of Mulla Şadrā, New York: State University of New York Press.
- 4-Hirschberger, J, (1960), Geschichte der Philosophie. I Altertum und Mittelalter, Basel-Freiburg-Wien: Herder.
- 5- Khamenei, Seyyed Mohammad, (1996), "Character and School of Mulla Sadra", Kheradnameh-e Sadra, Vol. 1, No. 4 (June), 2.
- 6- Moṭahharī, M, (n.d.), *Oṣūl-e falasafe wa raweš-e rīºālīsm,* Tehran.
- 7- Nasr, Seyyed Hosein, (1997), Şadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and his Transcendent Theosophy. Background, Life and Works, Tehran: Institute for Humanities and Cultural Studies.
- 8- Southern, R. W. (1990), Saint Anselm. A Portrait in a Landscape. Cambridge: Cambridge Univrsity Press.
- 9- Tabatabai, 'Allame Mohammad Hosein, (1998), Oṣūl-e falasafe wa raweš-e rīºālīsm, Vol. V. Tehrān: Entešārāt-e sadrā.

those who aspire to reach the Divine Mysteries and to gain a true knowledge of hikmat-i ilāhī or 'Divine Science.'" (Ibid).And therefore -to quote Seyyed Hossein Nasr again-- "The writings of Mulla Sadra are as deeply influenced by the Sufi tradition as can be imagined, both 'horizontally' and historically, through his acquaintance with earlier Sufi writings, and 'vertically', through contact with the Truth (al-haqiqah), which is itself the eternal source of all Sufism." (Ibid: 73).Fazlur Rahman, hoewever, is very outspoken in his rejection of this interpretation. He finishes the view that "according to Sadra or even for understanding his thoughts, Sufism is needed besides philosophy, as though Sufism was an independent cognitive avenue to truth, indeed, over and above philosophy", with a somewhat blunt "This is simply not true." (3, p:5) However, a close reading of Fazlur Rahman's introduction to his The Philosophy of Mulla Sadra reveals that he does not deny that there is another side to Molla Sadra's philosophy. But he takes objection to the use of a term like 'Sufism' to characterise this side, particularly, when Sufism is viewed as "an independent cognitive avenue to truth, indeed, over and above philosophy", to use his own words. Such a view would indeed not render justice to Molla Sadra's way of thinking. In his dealing with Molla Sadra's retreat from Isfahan Fazlur Rahman himself uses the following sentences: "His new posture was, therefore, one of prayer and utter resignation to God, with all his being. Rather than operate by the superficialities and artfulness of logical reasoning, he contemplated deeply and sincerely the fundamental problems of God, being, and the universe and 'gave himself up' to an intuitive invasion 'from without'. This intense accompanied by strenuous contemplation was religious exercises." (3, p:3). Judging from such sentences the difference of opinion between Fazlur Rahman and Seyyed Hosein Nasr is not as strong as the former's outspokenness suggests.

In any case, it is in both Anselm's and Mollā Ṣadrā's philosophy, this extra-intellectual or supra-intellectual dimension that makes both men look for an direct and immediate—in the literal sense of the word, i.e. without a mediating factor—approach to God's existence, an approach to God in which His existence is selfrevealing, in which His existence presents itself as inescapable, not because of what He caused to be, but because of what He Himself is. In other words, both men looked for an approach in which He Himself would be the most convincing, and even the only convincing proof of His existence.

not a similarity or even relationship can be discovered at best of secondary relevance. Nevertheless raising this question and trying to find answer to it can be usefull, since it can enhance our understanding of the particular approach and way of thinking of the two persons involved and of the two traditions and cultures they belong to.

Precisely from this latter point of view, I would like to draw your attention to a few facts or aspects, that seem to suggest a certain affinity or congeniality between Anselm and Molla Şadra. First of all, both Anselm and Molla Sadra represent a type of philosophy that is closely related to theology, a type of philosophy in which both belief and reason play an equally important part, and in which belief is not considered to be something extraneous. In the case of Saint Anselm, this philosophy, scholasticism, is based, as was already mentioned, on two pillars, auctoritas (authority) and ratio (reason). In the Islamic counterpart of this philosophical tradition we find two almost similar pillars and even with, to a large extent, similar names, viz. nagl (authoritative tradition) and (reason). This is clearly echoed in the way Seyyed ^caal Moḥammad Khāmeneºī has characterised Mollā Şadrā as an intellectual "who associated logic with Sharia, mysticism with reasoning and Quranic wisdom with human thought." (5, p:2).

Moreover, both Anselm and Molla Sadra are representatives a type of philosophy, that is much more than just an intellectual occupation, because it also involves, or, better, presupposes a way of living centered around seclusion, ascetism, undivided devotion to the spiritual world. As far as Anselm is concerned, he found this way of living when he joined the order of the Benedictines. Later on, after he had become abbot, and particularly after he had been appointed archbishop of Canterbury, he had to abandon to a certain extent this secluded life within the four walls of the monastry and to occupy himself with affairs of a more mundane and even political nature. But his Monologion and his Proslogion, the works in which developed his proof of God's existence, are the fruit of some twenty years of almost undisturbed monastic peace and tranquillity.

Mollā Sadrā having completed his period of his formal learning, "sought yet another dimension in the full development of his intellect and personality and so left Isfahan to devote himself to a life of ascetism and inner purification." (7, p: 35). According same author -Seyyed Hossein Nasr-Mollā Şadrā considered spiritual training "the absolute essential condition for 'being', and the concomitant idea that 'being' is something additional to 'essence', something that as a accident is attached to 'essence', is a "total mistake" (eštebāh-e maḥz). And it is for this reason that Anselm's argument is inadequate and that it is not on a par with the "Ṣadrian proof of the trustfull" (borhān-e ṣaddīqīn-e ṣadrāōī). Moṭahharī concludes with the remark that Kant was therefore completely right in rejecting the reasoning of both Anselm and those who followed him.

It is unfortunate that Moṭahharī did not have direct access to Anselm and his works, not even through a translation, and that he also, apparently, did not have specialist literature on the subject at his disposal. Had it been otherwise he might have realized that $z\bar{a}t$ -e akbar is a defective, if not misleading translation of what in the Latin of Anselm is called id quod maius cogitari non potest, "that than which a greater can not be thought". He might also have realized that Kant's criticism of Anselm's argument is not to the point, since Kant did not appreciate that in the eyes of Anselm existence is a reality, and not just a concept. Seen from Anselm's point of view, his argument does not, as is already mentioned, involve an unjustified change over from the concept existence to existence itself.

4. A few concluding remarks of a comparative nature

These remarks are not meant to show that Moṭahharī, had he been acquainted with the writings of Anselm or with the relevant scientific literature, would have come to a completely different conclusion. But they make it clear, I hope, that the question as to whether or not a certain similarity Anselm and Mollā Ṣadrā can be detected in this respect, is still open. It would of course be very pretentious for me to claim that I am in a position to provide the definitive answer to this question. What I would like to do, is to wind up my article with a few suggestions that at best indicate the direction in which a possible answer to this question might be looked for.

But before making those suggestions I would like to stress the importance not to lose sight of the fact that Anselm and Mollā Ṣadrā not only lived more five centuries apart from each other, but also belonged to two different religious traditions, each of them a having a history and identity of its own. Moreover, for a true understanding and appreciation of the position and merits of each one of them, it is of the utmost relevance to interpret each in the light of his own tradition and culture. The question whether or

be attached to it, is identical with Gods eternal essence; therefore it is the primacy of being that guides our mind directly to Gods essence, not something else. What is other than God, which to be sure can be only His actions, His traces, His manifestations and His epiphanies, we have to discover by others means." (6, p: 122). Another, equally apt summary of Molla Şadra's proof of God's existence is given by Fazlur Rahman, when he writes: "God is not, therefore, to be searched for beyond the realm of existence but is rather to be found in it as its absolute ground: "God is His own Witness", as the Quroan puts it." (3, p. 125).

3. Anselm's proof in the eyes of Mortazā Motahharī

This article is not the first attempt to examine the way in which both Saint Anselm and Molla Sadra have tried to proof God's existence and to raise question whether a certain similarity between their proofs can be detected. In a kind of appendix to his discussion of Molla Sadra's proof of God's existence Motahhari already raised the same question (6, pp: 125-7). He summarises Anselm's argument in a few lines, quoted from the first volume of Forugi's Sevr-e hekmat dar Orupā, and next makes his comments on it. In this book the Anselmian concept "something than which a greater cannot be thought" is rendered as żāt-e akbar (greater or greatest essence) and Motahharī in his comments focuses on this term. He observes, first of all, that in this argument the existence of something -in this case the existence of God- is infered from the idea or concept of that thing, which is both the basic point of the argument and at the same time its weakness. Secondly, as far as the syllogistic form of Anselm's argument is concerned, it resembles the type of proof that in the science of logic is called a reductio ad absurdum (borhān-e khulf). In such a proof the validity of a proposition is established by means of the impossibility of the opposite proposition. In the case of Anselm's argument, if 'the greater essence" (¿zat-e akbar) is refering to something in the human imagination, the khulf is invalid because the existence of something cannot be infered from the idea or concept of that But if it is refering to something real and objective, something outside and independent of the human mind, it is correct to say that such a 'greatest essence' must necessarily exist. However, this involves that the essence of something and its being are being seperated, not only in the mind, but also in reality, outside the human mind. This separation of 'essence' and Mollā Ṣadrā, therefore, counts Ebn Sīnā among "the other than trustfull", i.e. those who in their journey to knowledge of God resort as a mediating factor to something that is ultimately other than God and outside Him, be it 'movement' as in the case of Aristotle himself, or 'the createdness of the world' (ḥodūṣ-e ʿālam) as with the 'theologians' (motakallemīn), or 'contingency' (emkān) as with Ebn Sīnā and others (6, pp. 120-1).

Mollā Şadrā's own proof of God's existence, which he considers to be the real "proof of the trustfull" (borhan alseddīqīn), is so to say incapsulated in his overall philosophical system and for a correct understanding of this proof it is necessary to take into account the principles underlying this system. The most important ones for our subject are the "primacy" or --to use Seyyed Hoseyn Nasr's translation-- "principiality of being" (caṣālat-e woğūd) on the one hand, and both the "unity of being" (waḥdat-e woğūd) and the "graduation" or-in Fazlur Rahman's translation (3, p:34)—"ambiguity of being" (taškīk-e woğūd) on the other. On the basis of these principles Mollā Şadrā argues -according to Motahhari -- that being is the only true reality. The unity of being implies that being from the perspective of its reality is not multiple; differentiation in being is a matter of graduation or ambiguity, and does not interfere, so to say, with the reality of being. Plurality and multiplicity in this world is not to be denied, but at the same time is not inconsistent with the unity of being. Not only plurality and multiplicity, but also limitation, weakness, deficiency etc. --phenomena that accompany plurality and multiplicity-- can and must be explained from the perspective of maclūlīyat (being the effect of a cause), which implies that an effect as representing a lower level compared to its cause, always possesses a certain degree of weakness and deficiency, which are ultimately the concomitants of non-being (cadam). From the point of view of mowğūdīyat (being an existent), however, existence excludes non-being (cadam). Something that exists (mowgud) will as such, i.e. as a being, never become nonexisting (macdūm). Just like, conversely, a non-existent will from the perpective of its non-existence, never become a being. Being as such is unconditioned, and not dependant on something else. Being as such is also to be equated with absolute perfection, beauty, independence, unlimitedness (6, pp: 121-4).

Molla Şadrā's reasoning is summarized very aptly by Moṭahharī as follows: "We conclude that the reality of being in its essence, irrespective of what individuation from the outside may

of God as the intransitory Being, i.e. the existence of God as Creator. In this approach pairs of concepts like "cause" and "effect", "necessity" ($woar{g}\bar{u}b$) and "contingency" ($emk\bar{a}n$) play a key role, and in this approach the created world is seen as a kind a mediator ($war{a}sete$) from which we can infer the existence of God. In other words, in the created world there are "signs" ($ayar{a}t$) to be found that point inescapably to the existence of God the Creator.

Islamic philosophers -- hokamā-ye eslāmī is the term used by Motahhari, for which 'Islamic philosophers' is at best a weak translation-- have tried to develop rational proofs of God's existence in which creation does not figure as a mediator. Ebn Sīnā in particular prides himself of having found such a proof. He does not deny the value of a Aristotelian type of proof based on idea of creation as a "sign" of God's existence. On the contrary, in the Quroan itself this proof is alluded to in the verse "We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in themselves. till it is clear to them that it is the truth." (41:53). However, Ebn Sīnā goes on to say, this proof is typical for a particular group or class of people. There is another kind of proof, that is also alluded to in the Quroan, even in the same verse as the one just quoted, viz. in the phrase "Suffices it not as to thy Lord, that He is witness over everything?" This is the proof of the so-called seddiqin ("the trustfull") which Ebn Sīnā defines as those people "who give evidence with (or by) Him, not to (or on) Him" (yastašhadūna bihi lā caleyhi, in Moṭahharī's translation ke be khodā estedlāl mī konand na barkhodā) (6, pp: 119-20). The seddīqīn do not base their proof of God's existence on a more or less external factor like the 'createdness' or 'ephemerality of the world' (hodus-e cālam), but on an examination of 'existence' or 'being' (woğūd) as such. Being itself and as such, when approached or viewed from the perspective of being, is a direct proof of God.

In the eyes of Mollā Ṣadrā, Ebn Sīnā's proof of God's existence is not entirely satisfactory. His is not the true "proof of the trustfull". To be sure, in comparison with the Aristotelian line of thinking his approach is a big improvement. However, contrary to Ebn Sīnā's claim, there is to a certain extent a mediating factor (wāseṭe) to be detected in his argument, and that is the concept 'contingency' (emkān). Ebn Sīnā's approach is based on the idea that being is either 'necessary' (wāǧeb) or 'contingent' (momken) and on the idea that a contingent being ultimately, since a infinite regress is impossible, requires a being that is necessary.

8

the famous Latin saying *Fides quaerens intellectum* (faith in search of understanding), which is his way of saying that faith is the point of departure. Reason is a very useful, and to a certain extent even an indispensable tool to elucidate and clarify the contents of faith, but nevertheless a tool. It is for this reason that Anselm in the passage quoted above explicitly states: "Now we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought." And it is for the same reason that in Anselm's reasoning and in the way he presents his argument, prayer is not something additional, but plays a leading part.

Anselm's proof of God's existence is not just the result of abstract reasoning, it is also the outcome of meditation. This meditation is according to Richard W. Southern based on cogitatio (thinking) and intellectus (understanding) and culminates in sapientia (wisdom), which is "the experience of God's being which lies beyond this earthly life." (9, p:131)

2. Mollā Şadrā's proof of God's existence

As far as Mollā Ṣadrā's proof of God's existence is concerned, his approach and his arguments can best be understood by comparing them and contrasting them with the approach of arguments used by other Islamic philosophers in their attempt to proof the necessity of God's existence. I am following here the late Mortaẓā Moṭahharī, whose works for me have been and still are an indispensable guide in my introduction to the world of Mollā Ṣadrā and his school. In his edition of cAllāme Moḥammad Hoseyn Ṭabāṭabāoī's Oṣūl-e falasafe wa raweš-e rīoālīsm, in which he supplied Ṭabāṭabāoī's text with copious and valuable notes, Moṭahharī writes that in Islamic philosophy the various proofs of God's existence can be divided in three types or forms. These are successively the "Aristotelian proof" (borhān-e aresṭī yā aresṭūoī), the "Avicennian proof" (borhān-e sīnawī), and the "Sadrian proof" (borhān-e ṣadrāoī) (9, p: 98).

The "Aristotelian proof" is in its original form based on the reasoning that since every movement (<code>harakat</code>) requires a mover (<code>moḥarrek</code>), which in its turn is either <code>motaḥarrek</code> (put in motion by another mover) or <code>ṣābet</code> (constant, fixed, steady, in other words not put in motion), and since an infinite regress (<code>tasalsol</code>) is impossible, there must of necessity be a first mover (<code>moḥarrek-e awwal</code>). In the kind of Islamic theology, known as <code>kalām</code>, this Aristotelian model was used to argue that the world as the aggregate of essentially transitory beings required the existence

suppose that this beauty and perfection is of such a degree that is 'an island than which nothing greater can be thought', it would in Anselm's line of arguing exist in reality, and even necessarily so. Anselm's reply is essentially a elaboration of what he had already stated in his *Proslogion*. Regarding Gaunilo's example of the Lost Island, Anselm argues that 'an island than which nothing greater can be thought' is of is of a completely different nature compared to 'an being than wich nothing greater can be thought'. By comparing the two Gaunilo resembles a man who claims he cannot see daylight because his eyes cannot stand the blazing sunshine (1, pp: 306-9).

Anselm also writes: "... if anyone should discover for me something existing either in reality or in the mind alone --except 'that than which a greater cannot be thought'— to which the logic of my argument would apply, then I shall find that Lost Island and give it, never more to be lost, to that person." Almost a century and a half later Boventura (1221-1274) was to appreciate the true significance of this rather laconic remark by Anselm. Boventura explained:

"Against the objection of an island than which nothing better or greater can be conceived, we must say that there is no similarity [between this subject and this predicate]. For when I say 'a being than which nothing greater can be conceived', there is no repugnance here between the subject and the predicate, so that this being can be conceived in a rational way. But when I say 'an island than which nothing greater can be conceived'. there is a repugnance between the subject and the predicate. For 'island' refers to a defective being, while the predicate designates the most perfect of beings. Therefore, since there is a direct opposition here, this island is conceived irrationaly, and in thinking it the mind is divided against itself. It is no wonder, therefore, that we cannot infer that this island exists in reality. It is otherwise, however, in the case of 'being' or 'God', since this is not repugnant to the predicate." (2, p:16)

The second point I would like to make has to do with what was obviously Anselm's guiding principle or leit-motiv in both his personal and professional life. He himself has set down this guiding principle at the beginning of his *Monologion* in a very succinct phrase, that since then has become one of the most used expressions to characterize Medieval scholasticism, of which he was such a prominent representative. I am of course referring to

"And you, Lord our God, are this being. You exist so truly, Lord my God, that You cannot even be thought not to exist. And this is as it should be, for if some intelligence could think of something better than You, the creature would be above its creator and would judge its creator -- and that is completely absurd. In fact, everything else there is, except You alone, can be thought of as not existing. You alone, then, of all things most truly exist and therefore of all things possess existence to the highest degree; for anything else does not exist as truly, and so possesses existence to a lesser degree." (2, p:2)

It is for obvious reasons outside the scope of this article to elaborate on Anselm's argument in great detail and therefore I would like to limit myself to two aspects.

First of all, for a proper standing of this argument it is crucial to realize that for Anselm existence is not just a concept, but a reality, preceding that concept. In other words, Anselm's argument must not be interpreted as a kind of ontological argument as defined by Kant, i.e. as involving an unjustified change over from the concept existence to existence itself. In the eyes of Anselm to understand existence is more than to understand the meaning of the word existence. Therefore, in his argument Anselm makes very explicitly a stand against the way of thinking of those people who in the Bible are called "The Fool say in his heart, there is no God" (*Psalms* XIII,1; LII,1]. The Fool can understand the meaning of the word existence, but what he cannot understand, is reality itself, or, to be more precise, the relationship between words and concepts on the one hand, and reality on the other (1, p: 305).

Anselm's argument was challenged already in his own lifetime. Almost immediately after it's publication, the monk Gaunilo from the monastery of Marmoutier spoke out in defense of the biblical Fool in his *Liber pro Insipiente* ("Book on behalf/for the sake of the Fool"), to which Anselm replied almost by return. Gaunilo's objections to Anselm's proof are twofold. Firstly, he points to the fact that the human mind is capable of havings concepts to which in reality corresponds nothing. Existence in the mind does not necessarily involve existence in reality. Secondly, and more importantly, he questions the capability of human beings to have an adequate concept of God. In order to illustrate his objections Gaunilo refers to a Lost Island somewhere in the ocean, considered to be of the utmost beauty and perfection. Now

1.1. "Nothing greater can be thought": Anselm's proof of Gods existence

Saint Anselm's proof of Gods existence is to be found in his *Proslogion*, a work written in 1077-78 as a sequel to his *Monologion* dating from the year before. These two works are "meditations on the nature of God" (9, P: 113), based on a operating procedure which Anselm himself fomulates in opening sentences of the *Monologion* as follows:

"Some of my brethern have persistently asked me to give them an example of meditation, by writing down some thoughts on the divine essence and other related matters [. . .]. They have asked me that nothing should be put forward on the authority of Scripture [. . .]. They also asked that whatever conclusion was reached in the course of each investigation should be expressed in plain language with intelligible arguments and simple disputation, so that the necessary conclusions and clear truth of the matter would be clearly expressed." (9, p: 118)

It is from this point of departure that Anselm in his *Proslogion* formulates his proof of God's existence, his *ratio Anselmi* (Anselm's reason) as it is called in Christian Scholasticism. At the very root of this *ratio* (reason) lies the idea of God as "something than which a greater cannot be thought". Let me quote two key passages. The first one is:

"Well then, Lord, you who gave understanding to faith, grant me that I may understand, as much as You see fit, that You exist as we believe You to exist, and that You are what we believe You to be. Now we believe that you are something than which nothing greater can be thought. [. . .] And surely that than which a greater cannot be thought cannot exist in the mind only. For if it exists solely in the mind even, it can be thought to exist in reality, which is greater. If then that than which a greater cannot be thought exists in the mind alone, this same that than which a greater cannot be thought. But this is obviously impossible. Therefore there is absolutely no doubt that something than which a greater cannot be thought exists both in the mind and in reality." (2, p: 1)

The second passage is:

attached to cathedrals and monasteries, and later in the universities. Scholasticism rests on two pillars, auctoritas (authority) and ratio (reason). The authority is provided by the indisputable truths of the Christian faith, deriving from the Bible and handed down through the Church Fathers. The reason is the instrument used to analyse these truths and to bring them together into a coherent and comprehensive system (4, pp. 396-9).

What I would like to do in this article, is to raise the question what kind of argument or arguments Anselm of Canterbury and Molla Şadrā have used to prove God's existence and to compare these arguments in order to find out if a certain resemblance or analogy is to be detected. After all, these two men, each in his own right, have been very influential and they are still influential.

But before going into this matter, let me first give a very short biography of Anselm of Canterbury. I take it for granted that in view of the readership of this magazine, I am not expected to draw even a rudimentary sketch of Mollā Şadrā's life.

Key Words: 1- Anselm 2- Molla Sadra 3- Necessity 4- Wojub 5- Borhane Seddighin

1. The life of Saint Anselm of Canterbury

Anselm was born in Aosta, modern-day Italy, in 1033. At the age of twenty-three he left home after a quarrel with his father and in obeyance to his call in 1060 he became a Benedictine monk in Bec in Normandy (France). There he received his theological and philosophical education as well as his spiritual training and there he started his carreer as a writer. In 1063 he became prior of Bec, and in 1078 he was elected abbot of the monastery. A year later he went for the first time England to visit the monastries affiliated with Bec, among others the monastery of Canterbury. Some fourteen years later he moved to England to become Archbishop of Canterbury, where he was to stay till the end of his life in 1109 (9, briefly).

JOURNAL OF RELIGIOUS THOUGHT: A QUARTERLY OF SHIRAZ UNIVERSITY VOL. 2, NO. 4 & VOL. 3. NO. 1, SUMMER & AUTUMN 2001

Saint Anselm of Canterbury and Mollā Şadrā on the Necessity of God's Existence

Prof. Dr. J.G.J. Ter Haar*

Abstract

In the great monotheistic religions of the world the existence of God is first and foremost a fact to be accepted in faith or a reality to surrender to. Faith in God and surrender to Him are considered to be so basic and fundamental that attempts to go further and to make God and His existence the object of speculation of a highly philosophical nature are sometimes either outright rejected or at least viewed with suspicion. In both Islam and Christianity examples of this tendency can be detected. In the former e.g. in most Protestant Churches with their emphasis on faith alone, and in the latter in the Ash^carite theological school in Sunni Islam.

And yet, in both these religions we find also very clear examples of a kind of philosophical speculation that does not stop short at God and His existence. On the contrary, this speculation sometimes takes even the form of drawing up rational arguments or proofs for His existence. As far as Islam is concerned both Ebn Sīna and Molla Şadrā are important, or perhaps even the most important representatives of this tendency. In Christianity the attempt to proof the existence of God is inextricably bound up with the name of Saint Anselm of Canterbury, the "Father of Scholasticism", as he is often called (1, p: 291). Scholasticism is that kind of philosophical and theological speculation that in the Middle Ages in Christian Europe was practised in the schools

^{*} University of Leiden, The Netherlands





THE ENGLISH ARTICLES