

# THE DOCTRINE OF DEISM IN QUR'ANIC STUDIES AMONG ALBANIAN CONTEMPORARY SCHOLARS IN BALKANS

- HASAN TAHSIN EFENDI -

A CASE STUDY



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## **Abstract**

The objective of this study is to explore and analyze the main intellectual and religious trend and tendencies in the writings of Albanian *Ulema* in their dealing with *Qur'anic studies*, in the modern time, in the Balkan Peninsula in South-East Europe, **Hoxha Hasan Tahsin Efendi** -a case Study. In conducting this study, the researcher has utilized inductive, historical, critical, and analytical methodologies. The Albanian lands in the Balkan Peninsula were governed and ruled by the Islamic Ottoman Empire almost six centuries. Historically, Albanians were able to show to the world a very good sample of peace, religious tolerance, unity and harmony among themselves, as a multi religious and multiethnic society in Europe. The attention and the engagement of the *Albanian Ulema* with the *Qur'anic sciences* have been tremendous since the spread of Islam in South-East Europe. Despite the tough political, economic, and religious challenges in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries they were not distracted from conducting their learning and teaching in the field of Qur'anic studies. As a result of very close contacts of Albanian Ulema with different ideologies, cultures and civilizations within the Ottoman Empire mixed ethnicity, in the Middle East as well in Europe, the researcher based on different references, was able to discover a *philosophical doctrine and approach called -Deism-* in dealing with some Quranic issues as a result of the Pan-European Alliance and Nationalism against the Ottoman Empire and Arab states to undergo for social, military, cultural and administrative reforms, similar to the European life style and standards. The negative impact of Deism on the thoughts and beliefs of our Albanian scholar and astronaut, Hoxha Hasan Tahsini were tremendous. The results and conclusions of this study proved that the current and modern historical references of Albania are deviated almost completely and not to be trusted at all because of the hatred, falsehood and bias attitude against Islam and Muslims, which led them to failure of the understanding the true picture of Islam. They also failed to understand and to manifest the great role and positive impact on their geopolitical, religious, national, social, and cultural affairs, values and interests, which was manifested by the Islamic Ottoman Empire.

**Keywords:** *Albanians, Balkans, Doctrines, Reformist, Hoxha Hasan Tahsin*

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
Bismil-lahir-Rahmanir-Rahim!

*(In the Name of God, the All-merciful, the Compassionate)*

## **Introduction:**

Praise belongs to God the All-Powerful, and in Him we seek succour, we pray for His guidance and ask Him to protect us from our faults and misdeeds. Whom He guides none can misguide, and whom He misguides none can guide.

I bear witness that there is no god but God, and that He is One and without a partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (Allah’s peace and blessings be upon him) is His servant, His chosen and beloved. The most heartfelt benedictions are for the worthiest creature, our Prophet Muhammad, as well as his purified Progeny, his honoured and worthy Companions, as well as their followers until the Day of Judgment. He clarified the meanings of the Noble Qur’an to his Companions; whoever obeyed him was guided, and whoever disobeyed has gone astray.

The elaboration of the subject of exegesis (*tafsir*) of the Book of God is generally considered as one of the most respected fields in the Islamic tradition. Countless scholars both in the past and present have greatly contributed to the clarification of the meanings of the Noble Qur’an as well as the intentions of its words, since the Qur’an includes countless and everlasting miracles, as long as there is life on earth, being a “sea without a shore”.

Unlike any other book, the Qur’an has always been at the centre of attention and remains so, due to its miraculous nature in structure, themes, concepts and legislation. No one can add or subtract anything from it, because the Lord of the worlds has revealed it through the Noble Spirit (Gabriel) into the heart of His slave and Prophet, in pure Arabic.

All the efforts for retaining the Qur’an in the heart, commenting upon it, clarifying its words, and discovering its meanings, as well as copying and teaching it, besides God’s promise to preserve and protect it, are a clear argument pointing to its miraculous nature at every time and place. Regarding this aspect, God the All-powerful says:

﴿ إِنَّا نَحْنُ نَزَّلْنَا الذِّكْرَ وَإِنَّا لَهُ لَحَافِظُونَ ﴾ [ الحجر : 9 ]

"Verily, We have sent down the Dhikr (Qur'ân) and surely, We will guard it"

Many great scholars and experts have excelled in this domain, both in the past and in the present,<sup>1</sup> spending all their lives at the service of the Noble Qur'an by researching, clarifying, and reading it, besides establishing schools in various parts of the Islamic world, inspired by their faith in God and their love and devotion to His Book, which He sent down as a mercy, guidance and light for the whole world, as well as the preservation of the heritage and civilisation of Islam, and humanity in general. In this context, the orientalist J. J. G. Jansen says: "*Even the calligraphers and design masters spent their lives at the service of this Qur'an...*"<sup>2</sup>

Considering the fact that Albanian scholars have made considerable contributions in this field throughout ethnic Albanian lands,<sup>3</sup> I felt the duty to research, study and present their efforts as documented by their books and manuscripts in different Islamic disciplines,<sup>4</sup> which abound in the Ottoman libraries and elsewhere.

This matter requires that we shed light on their scholarly work within their historical, social and religious setting. Such an investigation will no doubt bring them closer to us, enabling us to grasp the way they lived their pure religion's principles, in accordance with the strong Rope of God, never falling prey to destructive orientations existing in those places, such as colonialism, atheism, communism and the great world powers, so that they could protect their wholesome religious inheritance and their culture.<sup>5</sup>

Such scholars remained steadfast and unswervingly protected their religion and Qur'an, learning the latter by heart, studying its reading, clarification, and exegesis, within their reach and existing possibilities. One must remember that they lived in rather difficult conditions, facing great hardships that may easily be compared to those of certain contemporary

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<sup>1</sup> In most serious libraries in the world one will find hundreds of books and treatises on the Qur'an, its secrets and miracles, both by Muslim and non-Muslim authors.

<sup>2</sup> J. J. Jansen, *The Quran interpretation in Modern Egypt*, Leiden: E.J.Brill, 1980.

<sup>3</sup> See the important book on this subject written by the known Albanian orientalist Hasan Kaleshi, *The Contribution of Albanians in Islamic Learning*, eds. N. Ibrahim, M. Ajdini, Riyad: International Organization of Student Federation, 1992.

<sup>4</sup> Refer to the research by the Albanian historian Muhamed Mufaku-Arnauti in his *Albanian Culture in Arabic Script* and *Arabic-Islamic Reflections in Albanian Literature* as well as other works mentioned below.

<sup>5</sup> Muhamed Mufaku-Arnauti, *The Issue of Religion in Albania*, Kuwait, Al-Arabi Journal, 1978, p. 78; and *Albanian Culture in Arabic Script*, p. 75.

reformist scholars in several Arab countries.<sup>6</sup>

These scholars were typical examples of patience, resistance and the persistent defence of their religious identity, despite experiencing all kinds of plight, and despite the political pressure and continuous tyranny they were exposed to in the Balkan countries they lived.

Endless praises be to God the Magnificent, because the history of the Albanian people, was full of events, developments, and political as well as religious changes<sup>7</sup> from earliest times, starting from the Roman, then Byzantine and Ottoman periods, all the way to the communist period. Therefore, we believe it is important to study the history of exegesis of the Noble Qur'an in those lands, as well as the movements and developments of this science, in order to know the attitudes of Albanian scholars in such encounters, and also understand the intellectual orientations that are observed in their Qur'anic studies.

They had truly benefitted from the Qur'anic text: "*sensational, rejuvenating and rich, but the different orientations that appeared did not originate from the Qur'anic text*",<sup>8</sup> on the contrary, they were a result of their co-operation with the Noble Qur'an, in conformity with the circumstances in which they lived and the scientific knowledge they had acquired from the Arab, Ottoman and Persian heritage.

Albanians produced such sincere scholars and contributors in the way of God who sacrificed everything to defend their Islamic and national identity vis-à-vis colonialism and disintegration. This specific characteristic of binding and unifying the religious and national aspects is considered as one of the main features in the early as well as contemporary religious studies in Albania. Such great scholars cannot be studied without special reference to the inseparable link between religion and homeland. The foreign reader should not be surprised at or deny this characteristic, because they grew within

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<sup>6</sup> In our study of the different movements and currents of *tafsir* in the Arab world we find that the same encounters and circumstances were experienced by Muslims in the Balkans, especially in Albania. Their circumstances and encounters were related to their conflicts with the foreign invaders, the nature of power structure, the attitudes towards the Ottoman caliphate, their immigration in neighbouring countries for safety and religious reasons etc. See Fikret Karcic, *The Bosniaks and the challenges of modernity - Late Ottoman and Habsburg times*, El-Kalem, pp. 15, 97-98, Sarajevo 1999; If-fet Muhamed Sharkawi, *Religious Thought versus Modern Challenges: An Analytical Study of Tafsir Orientations in Contemporary Period*; Beirut: Dar al-Arabi, 2nd ed., 1979, p. 191.

<sup>7</sup> Muhamed Mufaku-Arnauti, an historian and author of Albanian descent who lives and works in Jordan, writes: "Albanians are the only European people who embraced Islam in their majority." See "Albanian Culture in Arabic Script"; Kuwait, 1983, vol. I, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> This is the view of Sharkawi in his *Religious Thought and the Modern World*, p. 13.

a worldview that resulted from the religious, political, social and economic circumstances of their times. This orientation was a result of their reaction to foreign policies acting to their detriment. Albanian Muslim scholars were influenced so much from these circumstances that they could not possibly differentiate between the importance of defending their religion and defending their homeland.

## **PROBLEMATICS OF THIS STUDY**

The problematics of this topic is related to the fact that the cultural and ideological developments of Muslim scholars in Albania are still being studied by scholars of both Muslim and non-Muslim background from a variety of disciplines, based especially on ideological and religious orientations which appeared in Albanian scholarship. Several such studies dealt with Sufism, Shi'ism, and Orientalism, especially those written by the more contemporary authors. Such scholars did not occupy themselves with the research of Qur'anic studies, especially exegesis, since the latter was viewed in the general framework of Albanian inheritance.

This investigation deals with the study of the most important currents as well as intellectual and religious doctrines that have appeared in the past yet unresearched Qur'anic studies.

During the second half of nineteenth century until the declaration of independence of Albania in 1912, there appeared several new streams in the field of Qur'anic studies due to the synthesis of the knowledge accumulated by Albanian scholars in different Muslim lands, especially the Arab world. They lived among peoples with a different culture and value system, and it was normal for them to be influenced by them, just as they would influence others in turn. Under such influence, Albanian society started reflecting the influence of civilizations and cultures existing in the Middle East<sup>9</sup> faced with the challenges met by its Muslim populace<sup>10</sup> in the modern period.

The study will seek to address and answer the following questions:

**1.** *What were the most important challenges met by Albanian scholars in the contemporary period?*

**2.** *Which were the most important intellectual and religious orientations observed in the Qur'anic studies of Albanian scholars?*

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<sup>9</sup> Such as Egypt, Syria, Algeria and the Indian subcontinent.

<sup>10</sup> Among which were: Immigration and abandoning homeland to the benefit of the colonizers; replacing the Arabic script with the Latin; foreign rule; Albanian unity before the common enemy and other questions which we shall deal with later.

3. *What was the contribution of Hoxha Tahsin Efendi in the service of science?*

4. *To what extent he was influenced by the doctrine of Deism?*

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

The importance of this study consists in serving as a defining point in a broader and more complete investigation of the currents, movements and developments in exegesis in Albanian lands. Such a study is non-existent in Arab libraries, as well as non-Arab libraries,<sup>11</sup> apart from the publication of a few brief contemporary works dealing with political and social reports on the religious and theological movements in Albanian lands, as well as on the perceived danger of Muslim Albanians to these territories. A study is needed which would take into consideration the influence of internal and external factors in the formation and development of such currents in Albanian lands, which differs in many aspects from other Balkan countries,<sup>12</sup> especially since the Ottoman caliphate ruled for a very long period almost six centuries in this region, leaving noticeable Islamic traces up to the present, despite the decimation by the communist regime during the second half of the twentieth century.

There is an important point to note, regarding the fact that many Muslims, students and respected professors do not have access to such a study yet, just as they lack the much-needed literature in studying and understanding the different currents of exegesis among Albanian scholars.

Moreover, I believe that such a study will contribute to the knowledge of the Muslims in general, and the students of the field in particular, contributing to the improvement of their scientific and academic level.

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<sup>11</sup> Here we have in mind the study of the different currents in exegesis, Qur'anic studies and religious intelligentsia among Albanians, whereas the political and historical studies from an Orientalist perspective as well as the atheist approaches are numerous.

<sup>12</sup> The main reasons being 1) The percentage of Muslims there is higher, exceeding 70%; and 2) The former Albanian communist state declared atheism from 1967 until 1991, considering itself the first atheist country in the world, same as the Chinese state where religious activities were baned during the years 1955-77. For more details see: Nathalie Clayer, "Islam, State and Society in Post-communist Albania" in: *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, pp. 115-38; Hugh Pullton, Taji Suha Faruki, *Muslim identity and the Balkan State*; editors, Hurst & Company London, 1997, p. 115.

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE IN RELATION TO SOME QUR'ANIC QUESTIONS IN HASAN TAHSIN EFENDI'S THOUGHT

#### I: INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF THIS DOCTRINE AMONG ALBANIAN SCHOLARS

The origin of this orientation among Albanians goes back to the second half of the nineteenth century, as can be seen in different writings on both of its branches: the philosophical rational, and the scientific empirical. There is as yet no work on this issue, because this orientation has not taken a fully developed shape. Thus, the only available literature on this issue are the different periodicals which were published and distributed by the Supreme Council of the Shari'ah in Albania,<sup>13</sup> where such philosophical and scientific ideas were expounded.<sup>14</sup>

This scientific approach to the Book of God, both from the point of view of understanding and commentary, is a consequence of the appearance of the rationalist reformist orientation and which had unfortunately influenced Albanian thinkers too. One may say that this scientific method is the other branch of religious reformist thought which appeared in Albanian literature until the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup>

Some of these articles were translations from foreign languages, but the great majority were original contributions from Albanian authors.

Scholarly works that were being published in these Islamic periodicals sought to point out the wisdom and scientific miracle of the Qur'an, through

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<sup>13</sup> *Kultura Islame*, no. 7-8, Mars-Prill 1944, pp. 173-9, which contains a commentary of the verse: *And indeed We created man out of an extract of clay. Thereafter We made him as a Nutfah in a safe lodging. Then We made the Nutfah into a clot, then We made the clot into a little lump of flesh, then We made out of that little lump of flesh bones, then We clothed the bones with flesh, and then We brought it forth as another creation. So Blessed is Allâh, the Best of creators.* (al-Mu'minun, 12-14)

<sup>14</sup> Refer to scientific articles in *Zani i Naltë*, reproduced in the compilation of papers (no. 10-46) presented in Shkodra for the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the journal's first issue. It was published from 1924-1939, after which it was discontinued by the secular regime, only to be published under the new name *Kultura Islame*.

<sup>15</sup> This phenomenon can be also seen in the Islamic periodicals published in Kosova, such as *Edukata Islame*, Nr. 37-38, 1983 (pp. 12-18); Nr. 46-47, 1986 (pp. 3-8); Nr. 33-34, 1982 (pp. 15-21).



the application of the obligations and the principles which God the All-Powerful revealed in the Noble Qur'an, enjoining people to perform them in the best way. Such studies focused on the commentary of verses dealing with subjects like the prohibition of wine, pork, and the harms of smoking, etc... They were then checked against the opinion of expert in the modern sciences, in order to approach the wisdom of the Divine injunctions.

Such writings also dealt with deep philosophical issues, and they presented the thought of great Islamic scholars on Sufism, logics, ontology, etc., such al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Rushd, Ibn Sina and Imam al-Ghazzali.

Here we must elaborate on these two scientific and philosophical methods, through works of Albanian thinkers and scholars of the nineteenth and twentieth century, in order to understand the historical circumstances leading to this phenomenon.

One of these Albanian scholars met with the leading figures of the reformist school in Islam, namely Jamal al-Din Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, and he lived at a time where the French Enlightenment was predominant in Europe. At this time, the reformist movement had already started spreading within the Az'har University. The study of the philosophical and scientific doctrine will help us understand the ideas of this reformist Albanian scholar, who had outstripped his Ottoman contemporaries in different humanities.

## **II: LIFE, EDUCATION AND ACTIVITIES OF HASAN TAHSIN EFENDI<sup>16</sup>**

Hasan Tahsin Efendi was born in 1811<sup>17</sup> in the Ninat village of the Filat municipality of Yanina in south-eastern Albania, or what is known as Çamëria

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<sup>16</sup> Many Albanian, Turkish, and Western scholars have written encyclopedic entries on the life and works of this cleric who was influenced by the Enlightenment. An Albanian-Turkish cultural organisation bears his name. In collaboration with the president of AIITC, Dr. Ramiz Zekaj, this organisation held an international conference on Hasan Tahsin's thought on 20.12.1997, with the participation of many religious figures, Muslim as well as non-Muslim. The proceedings of the conference were later published in a volume: Ibrahim Hoxha, *Hoxhë Hasan Tahsini-të tjerët për të*, Tiranë, 1998. Due to the lack of references on Hasan Tahsin's life and thought, we will elaborate on his personality based on the works presented in this Conference, which include some important papers translated from Turkish and other languages into Albanian. One such scholar is Shemsedin Sami Bej Frashëri, author of the well-known literary and scientific encyclopedia in Ottoman, *Qamus al-A'lam*. We will also refer to the extensive study of the Turkish scholar Ömer Faruk Akuni, published in the Turkish encyclopedia of religion, *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, pp. 198-206.

<sup>17</sup> According to other sources, he was born in 1812, or 1813 (*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*, p. 198).

(present Greece). His father, a *qadi*, (Islamic judge) was his first teacher. He received his elementary education in his hometown, and his university degree in Istanbul, where he graduated with excellent grades.

The famous Albanian scholar Shemseddin Sami Bej Frashëri who was a towering figure of Ottoman letters was best informed on the life and knowledge of his teacher Hasan Tahsin,<sup>18</sup> who dedicated all his life to the pursuit of science. Hasan Tahsin preferred the humanities, but did not like history. He had studied the different religious disciplines, such as exegesis, hadith and the Shari'ah sciences with his father, who was a scholar on his own right. It was extremely rare for Albanians and Turks to find scholars who were well-versed both in religious sciences and the modern humanities, and Hasan Tahsin Efendi was one of them.



The Albanian famous Historian Ibrahim Daut Hoxha <sup>19</sup>

He knew Arabic, Persian, Ottoman and Western literature, and had even written poetry in Turkish, as well as works on mathematics. He was interested in two areas: acquiring of science to reach the truth, and serving mankind, especially his own people. He would leave gatherings in which there was no talk of knowledge and science, and would say: “*What else would cheer the lover, if in meeting with his beloved, love is not pondered over?!*”

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<sup>18</sup> This great literary figure wrote many books and treatises on a variety of subjects, in Arabic, Ottoman, and French. His most famous treatise is *Himmetu al-humam fi nashr al-Islam*, translated into Albanian as: Sami Frashëri, *Përpyekja e heronjve në përhapjen e Islamit*, tr. Ismail Ahmedi; Logos-A, 2003, Prishtinë, pp. 41-43.

<sup>19</sup> I was honored with Dr. Ramiz Zekaj to meet him personally at his house in Tirana in 2000, who provided us some very important references about Albanian History and a very important reference about life and activity of Hoxha Hasan Tahsini, in 2000. Thank for his welcoming and generosity.

For him greater national concerns had priority over personal interest. Whenever he would earn any money, he would spend it on books, and he would often fall asleep reading. He ate only when he was very hungry, and his food was very simple. His room was full of books, engineering equipment, astronomical instruments, and different maps. He was rather concerned with the well-being of the ummah, and he often thought on the ways to bring about a unity among Muslims. Ten years before his death, he founded a special society which was called *The Geographical Society for the Unity of Muslim People*. Describing the goals of this society, he wrote: “*We are obligated to spread our religion and to work in this path. The Europeans have no right to obstruct us, because they themselves send missionaries throughout the world, and it is equally justifiable that we do the same.*”

In scientific gatherings, he would focus on the compatibility of the Shari‘ah with science, insisting that it was not against being civilized, by offering Qur’anic and Prophetic texts as evidence. His ideas were not accepted in the general religious circles, because certain clerics of the Ottoman state criticized and opposed him vehemently, to the effect that his reputation suffered seriously, and he was accused as a heretic and a disbeliever, similar to Ibn Arabi, Ibn Sina, Ibn Rushd, Socrates, etc.

However, he was not concerned with hearsay. In fact, how could someone who knew the Creator so well deny Him at the same time? Often, people would leave his sermons and lectures, because he expounded and elaborated on difficult philosophical questions which they could not grasp, and if to say: “We seek shelter in God against the straying of this cleric!” He was an ascetic person and he loved knowledge.<sup>20</sup>

The Ottoman Minister of Education, Reshid Pasha, wished to send a group of gifted students to Europe to study humanities and spread their knowledge in Ottoman circles of learning since, according to him, the Ottoman Empire was in a state of civilizational and scientific backwardness, and this would serve as a first step in saving it from further decline.

A group of students applied for these studies, but only three were sent to Paris, and Hasan Tahsin Efendi was one of them. However, two of these students returned to Istanbul, as they did not wish to continue their studies, whereas Hasan Tahsin Efendi decided to stay and learn Western science and philosophy. He had good relations with the Turkish ambassador and was

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid, see Shemsedin Sami Bej Frashëri’s article translated into Albanian from Turkish, pp. 65-73. See also pp. 81, 83, 88, 122-124, 161, as well as: *Türkiye Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi*, Cilt, 18, 1998-, Bağlar Bashë, kisikli caddesi, 7, Üsküdar, İstanbul, pp. 192, 200, 201, 202, 203, 205, 206.

fortunate to be employed in the Embassy of the Ottoman State in Paris, serving as an imam for its employees and a teacher for their children, while studying at Sorbonne. He stayed in Paris for over sixteen years, and studied humanities as well as natural sciences such as physics, chemistry, geography, geology, astronomy, psychology etc.

When the Ottoman Prime Minister Fuad Pasha died in Paris, Hasan Tahsin Efendi was appointed to perform the ritual bath and lead the funeral prayers, and to supervise the transport of Fuad Pasha's body to Istanbul, wherefrom he would never go back to Paris.<sup>21</sup>

The Ottoman state had anticipated for a long time the opening of a university for humanities and after Hasan Tahsin's return to Istanbul, the Ottoman state appointed him the dean of this University which was called "Darul-Funun" (The House of Arts), due to his reputation as a scholar on the field. Hasan Tahsin immediately started contacting different scholars of the Islamic world, inviting them to the University, for lectures.

Once he had invited Jamal al-Din al-Afghani to lecture on the necessity of breathing for every living being.<sup>22</sup> To prove his point, Afghani performed an experiment, in which he locked a pigeon in a cage, which he sealed hermetically. A few moments later, the pigeon died. When the audience witnessed this strange behaviour of Afghani, they reprimanded him sharply, by saying: "How can the university allow such a person to kill innocent animals?!" They opposed this kind of behaviour as incompatible with Islam, claiming that the reason for this was the fact that the Dean of the University had studied in France, where he had become a secularist, and an atheist, therefore calling for his resignation and replacement.

In another occasion, Hasan Tahsin Efendi asked Afghani to deliver a speech on the importance of industry, and to clarify his views in the treatise *al-Rad al al-dahriyyin*. At first, he had politely declined due to the lack of his command of Turkish, but then he had brought his speech text in Turkish and had presented it to the Minister of Education, who had approved it; thus, Afghani lectured in Turkish in front of the clerics and the scholars.

Among the audience was Shaykh al-Islam of the Ottoman State, Hasan Fehmi Efendi. It is well-known that the Turkish ulama had a negative opinion about the reformist movement, and they opposed the views of Afghani,

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, a study by the Turkish scholar Ismail Habib, pp. 89-97.

<sup>22</sup> On the influence of Enlightenment on Afghani and Abduh, see M. Amarah, *el-Islam bayn al-tanwir wa al-tazwir*, Cairo: Dar al-Shuruk, 1st ed., 1995, pp. 238-68; Nasir Hamid Abu Zayd, *Min al-mu'tazilati wa Ibn Rushd illa Muhammad Abduh*; Mahmud Hamdi Zakzuk, *Mafhum al-tanwir fi fikr Ibn Rushd*, Murad Wahbah, Mona Abu Sunnah, *Ibn Rushd wa al-tanwir*, Dar al-thakafat al-jadid, 1st ed., 1997, pp. 105-13, 129-48.

Abduh, and Hasan Tahsin. In his speech, Afghani said: “the prophecy of what shall happen in the future is part of a specific art and profession.” The audience misunderstood these words as claiming that prophecy is a kind of art or profession. However, there is a clear difference between prophecy (*al-tanbbu'a*) (التنبؤ) and prophethood (*al-nubuwwah*) (النبوة) and because of the hostile environment, Afghani was forced to go to Cairo in 1288/1871. The incident of the pigeon and this remark of Afghani caused the firing of Hasan Tahsin Efendi from the position as Dean of the University, after a year in office.<sup>23</sup>

According to his biographers, Hasan Tahsin never married. He was an ascetic who was dedicated to the experimental sciences. For nearly half a century he taught at a private school, travelling from one place to another with a group of students of natural sciences. It is said that he became self-conceited to the extent that some of his gestures and thoughts went against the Shari'ah, as a result of his amazement with the Western world.

He passed away in 1880 (or 1881) in Erenkoy near Istanbul, and was buried at the Sahrayi-Cedid Mezarligi graveyard. His tomb was unmarked and it is still unknown. May God have mercy upon his soul and forgive his errors!

### III. HIS WORKS

The overwhelming majority of Hasan Tahsini's works were written in Turkish and in Albanian, but most of them have been lost. The following is a list of his works which were mentioned in the conference, and quoted in other sources too:<sup>24</sup>

- **Tarih-i Tekvin yakut Hilkat (History of Creation)** - in Turkish;<sup>25</sup>
- **Esas-i ilm-i Hay'et (Basics of Geometry)** - in Turkish;<sup>26</sup>
- **Psiholoji yakut ilm-i Ruh (Psychology-science of the spirit)**- in Turkish;<sup>27</sup>
- **Esrar-i Abu ve Hava (Secrets of the Water and the Air)** - in Turkish;<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi İslam Ansiklopedisi*, p. 202.

<sup>24</sup> *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfi İslam Ansiklopedisi*, as well as other references.

<sup>25</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1310 A.H.

<sup>26</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1311 A.H.

<sup>27</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1309 A.H.

<sup>28</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1309 A.H.

- **Hej'etul-alem (Shape of the World)**<sup>29</sup> - in Turkish,<sup>30</sup>
- **Mir'atus-sema'i (Mirror of the Sky)** in Turkish;
- **“Ligjet natyrore”- (Natural Laws)** in Albanian translated from French;
- **Aklamul-ekvam – (Pens of Nations)** Title is in Arabic.
- **Hulasatul-efkar (Summary of Thoughts)** – Title is in Arabic.
- **Usul-i Fenn-i Felahet-Kimyayi Ziraat- (Foundations of agriculture)**<sup>31</sup>;
- **Murabbi-i Et-fal (Children's Teacher)**<sup>32</sup> co-authored.
- His articles have been published in the Islamic journal **“Mecmua-i Ulum”**,<sup>33</sup> and also in newspapers in Istanbul, such as **“Hafta”** and other daily publications in Turkish.<sup>34</sup>

Hasan Tahsin Efendi was a good astronomer. In one of his works on astronomy, he writes that he was the first to discover the movements of four stars. He writes that modern science has discovered the heliocentricity of the planetary system rather late, even though the Qur'an has spoken about such matters twelve centuries earlier in a decisive and amazing way:

﴿ وَالشَّمْسُ تَجْرِي لِمُسْتَقَرٍّ هَآءَا ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ وَالْقَمَرَ قَدَرْنَا مَنَازِلَ حَتَّىٰ عَادَ كَالْعُرْجُونِ الْقَدِيمِ لَا الشَّمْسُ يَنْبَغِي لَهَا أَنْ تُدْرِكَ الْقَمَرَ وَلَا اللَّيْلُ سَابِقُ النَّهَارِ يَوْمَئِذٍ فِي فَلَكٍ يَسْبَحُونَ ﴾ [ يس:38-40 ]

*“ And the sun runs on its fixed course for a term. That is the Decree of the All-Mighty, the All-Knowing. And the moon, We have measured for it mansions till it returns like the old dried curved date stalk. It is not for the sun to overtake the moon, nor does the night outstrip the day. They all float, each in an orbit”. [ Yasin:38-40 ]*

#### IV: ANALYSIS OF HIS PHILOSOPHICAL DOCTRINE

<sup>29</sup> This is the same as *Esasu ilmil-hej'eti*, but it has been printed with another title in 1297 A.H. as an article in the *Majmu'a al-'ulum*.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid, a study by the Turkish scholar Mahmut Kemal Inal, p. 106, in which Hasan Tahsin Efendi is listed among the great Turkish poets, is entitled *al-Shu'ara al-atraq fil-qarn al-akhir*.

<sup>31</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1291 A.H.

<sup>32</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1289 A.H.

<sup>33</sup> Published in Istanbul in 1297 A.H.

<sup>34</sup> For more details on his works and scientific ideas, see: Akun, op. cit., pp. 203-6.

*“If ‘philosophy’ means love of wisdom, than we love it, insofar as it seeks the truth, whereas if it deals with the straying of instincts through false efforts and destructive theories, we do not accept such knowledge, be it even from a Muslim who knows the Islamic worldview, since the acceptance or rejection of an idea must depend on its conformity with the Qur’anic revelation and that which the divinely inspired Prophet affirmed”.*<sup>35</sup>

I say this for the Albanian cleric, professor, and astronomer Hasan Tahsin Efendi, because unfortunately, many scholars of the Conference confirmed that he was greatly influenced by the French philosophers’ ideas, distancing himself from the truth, until he became an expert<sup>36</sup> on August Comte’s positivism,<sup>37</sup> which is based on empiricism more than on rationalism.<sup>38</sup>

He was also greatly influenced by deism, which is a theistic philosophy which accepts God’s existence, but rejects the need for revelation and religion. *“A deist believes in a Creator, but he believes that there is no need for revelation and that the intellect and reason suffice. This view corresponds to that of modern Indian Brahmins, who believe that every religious thought that does not conform to the intellect is rejected.”*<sup>39</sup>

The view of deism on the natural phenomena is that God the Almighty does not intervene at all, because nature has its own laws which preserve it, and that nature itself decided on its own course, hence being in no need of creation,<sup>40</sup> whereas the motion and biological development of creatures are nature’s responsibility!

This is indeed a dangerous idea, and therefore we must look closer and objectively at Hasan Tahsini’s views. In my view, this philosophical doctrine has been studied very little by the commentators and scholars of the Qur’an. What follows is the definition of the Enlightenment, which is closely and directly related to the issue at hand, especially with the views of Hasan Tahsin Efendi, who as we said was greatly influenced by deism.

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<sup>35</sup> Akun, op. cit., pp. 203-6; Neda Ja’ranah, Abd al-Hamid ibn Muhammad, *el-Mad’hal al-tafsir*, p. 303.

<sup>36</sup> Ibrahim Daut Hoxha, *Hoxhë Hasan Tahsin Efendiu*, Nexhip P. Alpan’s article, p. 31.

<sup>37</sup> *Kamusul-meuridil-vesit*, Munir Ba’lebakkij and Ruhi Ba’lebakkij, p. 455.

<sup>38</sup> Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English, 5<sup>th</sup> edit. Oxford University press, 1995, p. 899.

<sup>39</sup> Serial classroom lectures of my late Prof. Dr. Irfan Abd al-Hamid Fattah at the International Islamic University Malaysia, during my M.A. & Ph.D, (1997-2002).

<sup>40</sup> Ibrahim Daut Hoxha, *Hoxhë Hasan Tahsin Efendiu*, Dritan Spahiu’s article, p. 43.

## V: THE NATURE OF ENLIGHTENMENT AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS

Some Arab dictionaries state that (التنوير) “Enlightenment” is a philosophical movement of the seventeenth century which is based on rationalism, and the idea that consciousness is the main factor for the development of societies, and that the negative qualities of a society result from ignorance of the human nature. This philosophy arose before the French revolution as a reaction to religious fanaticism, and feudalism. According to Kant, “*The Enlightenment liberates man from the inability of the functioning of the intellect without an external guide. This inability comes from the loss of courage and the claim of the intellect to function without a guide.*”<sup>41</sup>

The Russian Encyclopaedia defines Enlightenment as:

*“A political and social movement, whose followers tried to correct social conflicts, change morals, lifestyle and politics, through the spread of ideas on goodness, justice, and science. Essentially, the enlightenment means the principle that consciousness plays the decisive role in the development of a society, whereas social injustice comes from ignorance and lack of mutual trust. Also, the ignorant cannot understand the objective rules of society. The enlightened thinkers address all levels of society especially those in power. The enlightenment took place before the feudal revolution and greatly influenced in the weakening of the Church and feudalism. The enlightenment thinkers fought not only the Church, but also religious dogmas and the methods of dogmatic thought. At the present, the enlightenment has no influence in social thought except among Marxist intellectuals.”*<sup>42</sup>

Some Western religious and political encyclopaedias in English provide greater details on the goals and the most well-known figures of the Enlightenment, which we consider important: “*A historical period and a European intellectual movement which redefined the relationship between religion and politics. Enlightenment is an ambiguous term. Historians have studied its origins, places where it spread, its most well-known personalities, and main characteristics. The Enlightenment movement refers to the French Enlightenment, namely the period of rationalism. It appeared in eighteenth century France and ended with the French Revolution, after failing to realize the main goal of the 1789 revolution.*”

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<sup>41</sup> Murad Wahba, *al-Mu'jam al-falsafiyya*, Dar al-thaqaf al-jadid, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., 1979, p. 135.

<sup>42</sup> A group of authors compiled an encyclopedia of philosophy edited by Rosenthal and Yudwin, Arabic tr. Sermi Kerem, ed. Sadiq Jalal, George Tarabishi, Beirut, Dar al-tulay'ati, 6th ed., 1987, pp. 145-6.



This is the narrow meaning of the term, whereas the wider meaning of this movement is related to its reformist nature, especially with respect to a return to ancient Greece as understood during the Renaissance. In a broader sense, the Enlightenment started in the seventeenth century, with John Locke's approaches to knowledge, politics, and religion. Its most well-known figures in Britain were: *Joseph Priestly, Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith, and Edward Gibbon. Among the French, the most well-known were Voltaire, Baron de Montesquieu, Denis Diderot, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In Germany: Christian Wolf, Moses Mendelssohn, Imanuel Kant etc.; and in North America: Thomas Paine, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, etc.*

Some other religious and political encyclopaedias' entries on Enlightenment say:

*"The political and religious system in pre-Enlightenment Europe was controlled by the Christian clergy, who had all the power and decision making. The kings took their legitimacy of rule from the clergy which was considered holy and having divine authority. The proponents of the enlightenment rejected this political and religious system in its totality, and considered reason as the fundamental source of human goodness. They focused on the importance of rational critique, natural law, objectivism, and universalism. They also concentrated on modern science, the rights of nature, freedom, equality and fraternity, non-fanaticism and religious tolerance, complete liberation from religious superstitions and irrationalism, and the non-reliability of a supernatural religious authority..."*<sup>43</sup>

In defining the Enlightenment in a work from 1784, Kant invites people to rely on themselves, because they must exercise their own will to think about politics and religion, and to believe in themselves, instead of relying on others. People must use their own minds in order to achieve true knowledge and to gain a better understanding of politics and religion.<sup>44</sup> The characteristics of this philosophy were:

- 1- *the liberation of reason from religious superstitions,*
- 2- *irrationalism,*
- 3- *regressive methods,*

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<sup>43</sup> Robert Wuthnow (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, Routledge, London 1998, pp. 233-4.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 234.

4- *as well as the change from political tyranny to progress and improvement.* With the development of these rational powers, people could progress to perfection.<sup>45</sup>

According to this view, religion and politics must be studied rationally and in view of human nature.

Nature has a special rational order, and it functions in accordance with universal physical laws. Natural phenomena as well as the political, religious, and moral issues must be studied rationally. The nature around as well as the complex human issues must be divided into their components, in order to discover the relationship between cause and effect.<sup>46</sup>

Based on the above, every dogmatic belief or superstition which cannot be analysed rationally must be uprooted, even if it pertains to the foundations of religion and politics. The philosophy of the enlightenment was based on the principle of tolerance and non-fanaticism, in order for people to have freedom of belief and speech. The religious and political fanaticism disabled people's rational faculty and prevented their development and true understanding.

It is obvious that the Enlightenment's main goal was separation of religion from politics. This gave rise to a group of atheistic thinkers who claimed that there is no benefit from religion or piety, and insisted on clearing politics from every religious influence. There was another group of thinkers among the proponents of the Enlightenment who were not atheists, but who wanted to rationalize religion and rejected the divine authority of the clergy. In their view, a religion which is based on reason must respect the natural principles as well as political rights of both believers and atheists.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> On cause and effect relationship, see Muhammed al-Iraqi, Muhamed Atif, *al-Naz'atul aqliyyeti fi falsafati Ibn Rushd*, Egypt, Darul-Ma'arif, n.d., pp. 163-7.

<sup>47</sup> See: Rober Wuthman, *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, Routhedge, London 1998, 233-235; Paul Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Macmillan Publishers, London 1967, pp. 519-525.

## CHAPTER TWO:

### I. DEISTIC IDEAS IN HASAN TAHSIN'S THOUGHT

Deism was an offshoot of the Enlightenment. It reached its peak at the end of the nineteenth century. The followers of the Enlightenment believed in the philosophy of progress, which in its foundations denied tradition, i.e. the whole religious, cultural, and historical inheritance, as incongruent with the needs of time.<sup>48</sup>

According to deism, the true religion is naturalism. The great majority of the followers of deism denied revelation, which they considered as superstition and illusion. God wished happiness for His creatures, and therefore He created values as the means for the realization of bliss. The salvation of men cannot depend on any revelation. The true, correct religion is a free expression of one's will and reason in every time and place. The principles of Christianity and Islam are trivial and consist of political tyranny, deceit, trickery and cunning on the part of theologians, and they stand opposed to reason.<sup>49</sup>

Deism spread among many thinkers of seventeenth and eighteenth century in England, finally acquiring a new meaning: the absence of God from nature. God created the world and its laws, and then He detached Himself from nature, leaving it to its self-regulating power.<sup>50</sup> This idea was an extrapolation of mechanistic interpretations of Newtonian physics, according to which the world resembles a coordinated mechanical engine.<sup>51</sup> The proponents of this philosophy held reason to be superior to revelation, and claimed that religion makes people intolerant, fanatical, and closed to dialogue. They rejected the idea that the intellect is subject to chaos due to the sin of Adam. In the seventeenth century, many atheists opposed the permissibility of religious rites and worship, claiming that they were superstitions.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For more details, see: Peter Gay, *The Enlightenment-An Introduction*, Random House, New York, 1966.

<sup>49</sup> Robert Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, 1995, 188.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid*, p. 188.

<sup>51</sup> Merrian Websters's *Encyclopedia of World Religions*, Springfield, 1999, p. 284.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p. 284.

After careful reading and analysing, as well after consulting some of our professors who are experts on religion and philosophy in the West,<sup>53</sup> we decided to point out the following important metaphysical points on the functioning of the universe, which issue forth from the Qur’anic text:

1. The created order is subject to laws, in which there are no contradictions:

﴿ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ طِبَاقًا مِمَّا تَرَىٰ فِي خَلْقِ الرَّحْمَنِ مِن تَفَاوُتٍ فَارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ هَلْ تَرَىٰ مِن فُطُورٍ ثُمَّ ارْجِعِ الْبَصَرَ كَرَّتَيْنِ يَنقَلِبْ إِلَيْكَ الْبَصَرُ حَاسِنًا وَهُوَ حَسِيرٌ ﴾ [ الملك:3-4 ]

*“ Who has created the seven heavens one above another; you can see no fault in the creation of the Most Gracious. Then look again: "Can you see any rifts?" Then look again and yet again: your sight will return to you in a state of humiliation and worn out “. [al Mulk:3-4 ]*

﴿ وَتَرَىٰ الْجِبَالَ تَحْسَبُهَا جَامِدَةً وَهِيَ تَمُرُّ مَرَّ السَّحَابِ صُنِعَ اللَّهُ الَّذِي لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يَكُن لَّهُ كُفُوًا شَيْءٌ وَإِنَّهُ حَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَفْعَلُونَ ﴾ [ النمل:88 ]

*“ And you will see the mountains and think them solid, but they shall pass away as the passing away of the clouds. The Work of Allâh, Who perfected all things, verily He is Well-Acquainted with what you do “. [al Naml:88 ]*

﴿ أَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا جَعَلْنَا اللَّيْلَ لَيْسَكُنُوا فِيهِ وَالتَّهَارَ مُبْصِرًا إِنَّا فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ ﴾ [ النمل: 86 ]

*“See they not that We have made the night for them to rest therein, and the day sight-giving? Verily, in this are signs for the people who believe”. [ al Naml:86 ]*

﴿ إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمْحٍ بِالْبَصَرِ ﴾ [ القمر: 49-50 ]

*"Verily, We have created all things with Qadar. And Our Commandment is but one as the twinkling of an eye". [al Qamar:49-50 ]*

﴿ اللَّهُ يَعْلَمُ مَا تَحْمِلُ كُلُّ أُنْثَىٰ وَمَا تَغِيضُ الْأَرْحَامُ وَمَا تَزْدَادُ وَكُلُّ شَيْءٍ عِنْدَهُ بِمِقْدَارٍ ﴿٨﴾ عَالِمُ الْغَيْبِ وَالشَّهَادَةِ الْكَبِيرُ الْمُتَعَالِ ﴾ [ الرعد: 8-9 ]

*“ Everything with Him is in (due) proportion. All-Knower of the Unseen and the seen, the Most Great, the Most High ” [al Ara’d:8-9 ]*

<sup>53</sup> Namely my late Prof.Dr. Irfan Abd al-Hamid Fattah, the interview was conducted on 15.01.2003 in his office at the International Islamic University, Malaysia.

2. These harmonious and precise laws of nature are from God, not from nature.

3. Since only God is the Creator of both nature and its laws, only He can destroy it:

﴿ إِنَّ رَبَّكُمْ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُغْشِي اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ وَالنُّجُومَ مُسْحَرَاتٍ بِأَمْرِهِ ۗ إِلَّا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ ۗ بَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴾ [ الأعراف: 54 ]

“ Indeed, your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and earth in six days and then established Himself above the Throne. He covers the night with the day, [another night] chasing it rapidly; and [He created] the sun, the moon, and the stars, subjected by His command. Unquestionably, His is the creation and the command; blessed is Allah, Lord of the worlds. ” [ al A’raf:54 ]

﴿ إِنَّمَا أَمْرُهُ إِذَا أَرَادَ شَيْئًا أَنْ يَقُولَ لَهُ كُنْ فَيَكُونُ ۚ فَسُبْحَانَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَإِلَيْهِ تُرْجَعُونَ ﴾ [ يس: 82-83 ]

“Verily, His Command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it, "Be!" - and it is! So glorified be He and exalted above all that they associate with Him, and in Whose Hands is the dominion of all things: and to Him you shall be returned” [Yasin:82-83 ]

Even the tiniest particles in nature are from God the All-Powerful:

﴿ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ اللَّيْلَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِضِيَاءٍ ۗ أَفَلَا تَسْمَعُونَ قُلْ أَرَأَيْتُمْ إِنْ جَعَلَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْكُمُ النَّهَارَ سَرْمَدًا إِلَىٰ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَنْ إِلَهُ غَيْرُ اللَّهِ يَأْتِيكُمْ بِاللَّيْلِ ۗ تَسْكُنُونَ فِيهِ ۗ أَفَلَا تُبْصِرُونَ ﴾ [القصص:71-72]

“ Say: "Tell me! If God made the night continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, which god besides God could bring you light? Will you not then hear?" Say: "Tell me! If God made the day continuous for you till the Day of Resurrection, which god besides God could bring you night wherein you rest? Will you not then see?" [ al Qasas:71-72 ]

After this summarized introduction to this philosophical school and its goals, we hope to understand the essence of Hasan Tahsin Efendi’s ideas, and the influence of Enlightenment and deism on his thought.<sup>54</sup> Unfortunately, he was unconsciously a victim of this philosophy.

We will illustrate this influence by referring to the papers presented in the Conference mentioned above, as well as in other written sources.

<sup>54</sup> The Enlightenment has influenced many Albanian thinkers. For more details see Irfan Abd al-Hamid Fattah, *al-Fikr al-din fi muwajahati tahaddiyat al-hadathah*, IUM; Research Center, 2001, pp. 29-37.

## II: THE NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THIS DOCTRINE ON THE THOUGHT OF HASAN TAHSIN EFENDI

### i) His view on the spirit<sup>55</sup> and death

Ibrahim Hoxha mentions that Hasan Tahsin Efendi participated in a meeting on the question of the spirit. The clerics held that the spirit is a material entity which leaves the body like a vapour, and then it rises to God, and is preserved until the Day of Judgement, when it returns to its master. Hasan Tahsin Efendi's reply was: *"Nay, the spirit is not something separate from the body. The cause of the body's death is the ceasing of the functioning and motion of the organs: if one does not breathe, one does not move, and this is death!"*

Everybody was astonished by this explanation of death by Hasan Tahsin Efendi,<sup>56</sup> as it differs from the explanation provided by the Islamic tradition, based on the Qur'an and Hadith, as well as the expositions of great Muslim scholars like Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzi in his book *al-Ruh* (الروح) ("The Spirit"). According to this tradition man is composed of a body and a spirit, and when he dies, the spirit leaves him and it goes to the Creator, in order to return to his grave during the questioning of the dead therein.

In the fourth section of his book, he writes: *"Does the spirit die, or only the body? People have different opinions on this question. A group believes that the spirit dies and that it tastes death because every thing shall taste death, whereas a second group believes that the spirits do not die, as they have been created eternal, but it is the bodies that die. In this, they rely on some ahadith which speak about the punishment or bliss after the spirit's separation from the body until God returns them to these bodies again, arguing that, if the spirits died, they would not experience punishment or reward. In this context, the Almighty God says,*

" وَلَا تَحْسَبَنَّ الَّذِينَ قُتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ أَمْوَاتًا بَلْ أَحْيَاءٌ عِنْدَ رَبِّهِمْ يُرْزَقُونَ فَرِحِينَ بِمَا آتَاهُمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَيَسْتَبْشِرُونَ بِالَّذِينَ لَمْ يَلْحَقُوا بِهِمْ مِنْ خَلْفِهِمْ أَلَّا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ " [ آل عمران: 169-170 ]

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<sup>55</sup> Cf. (compare) the proceedings of the conference on Hasan Tahsin Efendi in Tirana. I have personally never come across such a text in his own writings, and will therefore rely on what has been quoted in the papers of that conference, regretting the lack of substantiation of such remarks from his own writings.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, p. 131-154.

“ Think not of those who are killed in the Way of God as dead. Nay, they are alive, with their Lord, and they have provision. They rejoice in what God has bestowed upon them of His Bounty and rejoice for the sake of those who have not yet joined them, but are left behind (not yet martyred) that on them no fear shall come, nor shall they grieve”. [al Imran:169-170 ]

It is more correct to say that death means the separation of the spirit from the body and it's leaving the body, because in this case the spirit too tastes death. And if one says that the spirit perishes and disappears, this means that it does not die but that it lives in bliss or punishment.<sup>57</sup> There are many hadith which prove that the spirit leaves the body upon death, and that they return to them in order to have them live in bliss or punishment in the grave. This has been researched by Ibn al-Qayyim,<sup>58</sup> but we cannot enter such discussions here. Even the great philosopher Ibn Sina has pointed out the separation of the spirit from the body at death: “*Death is the separation of the spirit from the body.*”<sup>59</sup> In fact, the spirit<sup>60</sup> is an independent entity, but we do not know anything about its constitution. As the Qur'anic verse has pointed out decisively:

﴿ وَيَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ الرُّوحِ فَقُلِ الرُّوحُ مِنْ أَمْرِ رَبِّي وَمَا أُوتِيتُمْ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ إِلَّا قَلِيلًا ﴾ [الإسراء: 85]

“*And they ask you concerning the Spirit; Say: "The Spirit is one of the things, the knowledge of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you have been given only a little."* [al Isra':85 ]

## ii) His view on the rain

In the same meeting with the clerics, the question of the rain formation and falling arose. Those present stated that it is God who sends down rain as a mercy for His servants. However, Hasan Tahsin Efendi replied that: “*The phenomenon of rain is the same as other natural phenomena, and it is a product of natural laws*”.<sup>61</sup> Then he went on to explain the formation of rain, snow, hail, and dew. He argued his claims with a simple experiment in the room where the discussion took place. After heating an amount of water, and

<sup>57</sup> Ibn Kayyim Al-Xheuzij, al-Ruh, ed. Sayyid Jamili, Dar al-kitab al-arabi, Beirut, 1st ed., 1994, pp. 70-71.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, pp. 97-98.

<sup>59</sup> Ali Iljazi, *Kur'ani dhe shkenca bashkëkohore*, Gjakovë, 2000; 455.

<sup>60</sup> On the issue of the spirit see: Ali Muhammad Shafi'i, *Hashiyat al-imam al-Bayjuri ala jawharat al-tawhid al-musamma tuhfat al-murid ala jawharat al-tawhid*, al-Azhar University, Dar al-Salam, 1st. ed., 2002, pp. 266-9.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, the paper presented by Ibrahim Daut Hoxha, p. 131.

letting the vapours liquefy on the roof, wherefrom they fell on the heads of some of those present as water drops. At this, people started seeking protection and shelter from God, by saying: “*O God, protect us from the misguided Hasan Tahsin who misguides others too, and who is a murtad (apostate), may God curse him!*” Meanwhile Hasan Tahsini smiled with those who enjoyed the experiment.<sup>62</sup>

This claim and this theory of Hasan Tahsin disprove many clear verses of the Qur’an, where it is said that the falling of rain is from the Mercy of God the Exalted, who sends down rain when and where He wishes, on whomever He wishes:

﴿ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عِنْدَهُ عِلْمُ السَّاعَةِ وَيُنزِلُ الْغَيْثَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْأَرْحَامِ يَوْمًا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ مَّاذَا تَكْسِبُ غَدًا يَوْمًا تَدْرِي نَفْسٌ بِأَيِّ أَرْضٍ تَمُوتُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾ [ لقمان: 34 ]

“*Verily God, with Him is the knowledge of the Hour, He sends down the rain, and knows that which is in the wombs. No person knows what he will earn tomorrow, and no person knows in what land he will die. Verily, God is All-Knower, All-Aware* “. [Luqman:34 ]

The Qur’anic verses prove the very opposite of the remarks of Hasan Tahsin on rain, thunder, and lightning as natural phenomena:

﴿ وَيُسَبِّحُ الرَّعْدُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَالْمَلَائِكَةُ مِنْ خِيفَتِهِ وَيُرْسِلُ الصَّوَاعِقَ فَيُصِيبُ بِهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُمْ يُجَادِلُونَ فِي اللَّهِ وَهُوَ شَدِيدُ الْمِحَالِ ﴾ [ الرعد: 13 ]

“*And thunder glorifies and praises Him, and so do the angels because of His Awe. He sends the thunderbolts, and therewith He strikes whom He wills, yet they dispute about God. And He is Mighty in strength and Severe in punishment*” [al Ara’d:13 ]

﴿ وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا ﴾ [ الفرقان: 48 – 49 ]

“*And it is He who sends the winds as heralds of glad tidings, going before His Mercy; and We send down pure water from the sky. That We may give life thereby to a dead land, and We give to drink thereof many of the cattle and men that We had created* “. [al Furqan:48-49 ]

These verses prove the following points:

1. God, the Most Glorious, by his Power and Will manifests thunderbolts for us, and this is something which ultimately comes from Him.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, p. 132.



2. God, the Most Exalted, and not nature, sends thunder by His Power and Majesty, because He specifically mentions this in the Qur'an.

3. Lightning strikes by the order of God, whomever He wills:

﴿ أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يُزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيُنَزِّلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقِهِ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ يَلْبَسُ اللَّهُ اللَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَعِبْرَةً لَأُولِي الْأَبْصَارِ ﴾ [النور: 43-44]

*“See you not that God drives the clouds gently, then joins them together, then makes them into a heap of layers, and you see the rain comes forth from between them; and He sends down from the sky hail (like) mountains, and strikes there with whom He wills, and averts it from whom He wills. The vivid flash of its (clouds) lightning nearly blinds the sight. God causes the night and the day to succeed each other. Truly, in this is indeed a lesson for those who have insight “. [al Nur:43-44 ]*

4. God the Glorious is He who sends down rain, not nature as Hasan Tahsin Efendi and his like-minded people believed.

We believe that these verses prove very clearly the opposite of what Hasan Tahsin said on this issue and other similar ones, which go against the revealed sources of Islam.

### **iii) His view on the formation of thunder**

One day Hasan Tahsin Efendi was present in an Albanian village, where suddenly a severe storm started, with heavy rain and thunder. The villagers started praying to God to remove this bad weather from them, out of fear that God was punishing them for their sins. They also seemed to think that thunder was a melting iron, or blazing stones falling from the sky, and when Hasan Tahsin Efendi saw them praying to God to remove the storm from them, he asked them: “Why do you pray to God?” They replied that God would remove that evil from them, at which Tahsin Efendi said: “What will make God to do what you ask of Him?” They said that no one could make Him, but that He would do it out of His mercy. At which, Hasan Efendi retorted: “God neither sends nor removes thunder from you!” When they asked him who could remove it, beside God, he replied: “The natural causes bring about thunder, and they are the source of it.” They were very dismayed by these words, and told him: “Woe unto you, O Hasan Efendi, what are ye saying?!” Then he said: “Today I will prove what I mean.” There was a saddled donkey nearby, and pointing towards it, Hasan Efendi said: “Do you

see that donkey? Just watch how I will kill him with thunder.” One of the villagers dared him to do that, and so Hasan Efendi tied a piece of metal against the saddle, and when the donkey was made to go out in the rain again thunder struck it, killing it on the spot. At that moment Hasan Efendi said, addressing the villagers: “Are you convinced now that it is not God who sends the thunder?” People left in shock from his behaviour, just as we are shocked by this account!<sup>63</sup>

#### iv) His view on the Arabic script

Hasan Tahsin Efendi vehemently opposed the use of Arabic script, just like he opposed the use of Latin alphabet. He had created a special alphabet for Albanians, which was deemed unsuitable for several reasons by his friends. The contemporary Albanian scholar of Orthodox Christian descent, Jani Vreto, writes that Hasan Tahsin argued his opposition to the adoption of the Arabic alphabet for Albanian in the following way:

*“Our Prophet was an Arab who spoke in Arabic, and the Qur’an was revealed in Arabic. I learned Arabic and have studied Qur’an continuously, and here it is me right now. It says that God the Magnificent sent every people a messenger who spoke in the language of that people,<sup>64</sup> and it also says that God sent to every people a messenger from among themselves.<sup>65</sup> The Qur’an also says them among God’s signs are the heavens, the earth, the different languages, and colours.<sup>66</sup> Besides, the sacred books preceding the Noble Qur’an, such as the Old Testament, were written in Hebrew, and the New Testament in Greek. They are still venerated, appreciated, and considered sacred by people. Here is the Qur’an before you, and here are the verses and*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid*, p. 132-3. This story is related by the historian Ibrahim Daut Hoxha from Hasan Efendi’s contemporaries.

<sup>64</sup> Probably a reference to the verse:

(وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ..) ( إبراهيم:4)

*“And We sent not a Messenger except with the language of his people, in order that he might make (the Message) clear for them...” (Ibrahim, 4).*

<sup>65</sup> Probably a reference to the verse:

(إِنَّا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ بِالْحَقِّ بَشِيرًا وَنَذِيرًا وَإِنْ مِنْ أُمَّةٍ إِلَّا خَلَا فِيهَا نَذِيرٌ..) ( فاطر: 24)

*“Verily We have sent you with the truth, a bearer of glad tidings and a warner. And there never was a nation but a warner had passed among them”.* (Fatir, 24).

<sup>66</sup> A reference to the verse:

(وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّلْعَالَمِينَ) (الروم: ٢٢)

*“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the difference of your languages and colors. Verily, in that are indeed signs for men of sound knowledge “.* (al-Rum, 22)

*the chapters which speak about what I said, let whoever speaks Arabic verify the truth of my words. The Qur'an considers all languages as equal, and their alphabets are respected and appreciated. Muslims are obligated to learn Arabic in order to read the Noble Qur'an in its original language, and then they are obligated to translate it for those who do not speak or understand Arabic".<sup>67</sup>*

#### **v) The author's opinion on this issue**

We mentioned earlier that despite the great international colonialist political pressure for the substitution of the Arabic script with the Latin script, Albanian ulama accepted the idea of a Latin alphabet based on Qur'anic verses, as in the case with Hasan Tahsin Efendi as well in the case of another Albanian famous reformist scholar Hfz. Ali Korça whose attitude on the matter is conveyed in the following beautiful poetry on rational arguments:

*“ Shkronjat ngjyrë feje s'kanë- vegla për të shkruar janë;*

**Letters have no religious colouring - rather they are writing tools**

*Gjuha me çdo shkronja shkruhet - kjo hallall kjo haram s'tuhet*

**Language is written in any script - and is not subject to legal norms**

*Kot e bëni vegël fenë- na turbulloni atdhenë... ”*

**No use in making religion a tool in hand - for thus you only unsettle our homeland ”.**

Our opinion is that despite their views and attitudes on this issue, which was a very sensitive matter in their time, one must not lose sight of the fact that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an and of the Prophet Muhammad (*peace be upon him*), and that it has a greater value than other languages and scripts in the world. This is not to deprecate any other language, because God has created languages as a means of communication and mutual knowing of peoples. The Arabic language enjoys authority, but this does not mean that the Arabs are worthier than others:

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴾

[ الحجرات: 13 ] ﴿

*“ O mankind! We have created you from a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another. Verily, the most*

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<sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, p. 75-76.

*honourable of you with God is that who has piety. Verily, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware” . [al Hujurat:13 ]*

In this context al Imam Ibn Taymiyah has an important statement about this matter saying:

“ What makes [the Arabs] worthy, and God know best, is the fact that God gave them a language, morals, and good works. Besides, one’s worth is related to one’s knowledge and good deeds. Knowledge has priority, and it consists in the power of the intellect to understand and remember, whereas the power of logic consists in the ability to express oneself, and their language is the most perfect, and most rich.

A good work is based on the good morals, i.e. the instincts created in the soul, and their instincts are more pious than those of the others.

They are closer to generosity, bounty, courage, and trustworthiness than others. Before the advent of Islam they were lovers of goodness, but doers of evil, because they had no access to revealed knowledge or a Divine law, and they did not know any science, although there were people among them who had revealed books, words of prophets, but they strayed because of their weak hearts and base instincts. The knowledge of the Arabs, consisted in superb poetry and speeches, knowledge of the past days, and the practical knowledge for their everyday needs and for their orientation by the stars, and fighting skills. When God sent the Prophet (*peace be upon him*) with guidance after a difficult path, He transformed them from the period of ignorance which had covered their hearts, with a new period of purity and guidance. Thus, they were perfected with a perfection which was sent down by God the Glorious. He made the barren land fertile, after it had been filthy with hogs and wild animals. Thus, the Immigrants (*al Muhajirun wa al Ansar*) and the Helpers became the worthiest creatures after the Prophets (*peace be upon him*), and they are the best generation of all until the Day of Resurrection, both among the Arabs and non-Arabs. *God knows best and praise belongs to Him. May God bless our Prophet and his Family!... ”*<sup>68</sup>

These are the words of Ibn Taymiyah on the issue, and we must emphasize that judging people according to their nationality or language is not a part of Islam. The bounties and the merits of a people are determined by their level of practicing the Islamic Shari‘ah.

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<sup>68</sup> Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya, Abdulhalim Abu Abbas, *Jami al-Rasa’il*, ed. Muhammad Rashad Rafiq Salim, Egypt, n.d., vol. 1, p. 287; Mustafa Sabri, *Mukhtasar mawqif al-aql wa al-ilm wa al-alam min Rabbil-alamin wa rusulih*; entitled: “Al-kaulul-faslu bayn al-ladhine yu’minune bil-ghaybi wa al-ladhine la yu’minun”, Dar al-Salam, Mektebetun-Nur, 1186 A.H., pp. 115, 117.

# Kultura Islame

E PËRMOJSHME

FETARE / LETRARE / DITUNORE / ARTISTIKE

ORGANI  
KOMUNITETIT  
MUSLIMAN  
SHQIPTAR

Drejtor përsjegjes: S. Bega / Redaktor: Sh. Putra

DREJTORI: KULTURA ISLAME - TIRANË

VITI III - Kalliuor-Shkurt-Mars 1942-KX - Dhjetor-Muhareem-Seter 1361 - N. 5 6-7

41

KULTURA ISLAME

ELETA E TËPSIRIT

## Vejsiri i Kuranit

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
من أجل ذلك كتبنا على بني إسرائيل أنه من قتل نفساً بغير نفس أو فسد في الأرض  
فكأنما قتل الناس جميعاً ومن أحياها فكأنما أحيا الناس جميعاً ولقد جاءتهم رسالتنا بالبينات  
فمن أنكرها من بعد ذلك في الأرض لسوف نؤذيهم عذاباً شديداً

Për këtë arsye vendosim për Bijt e Izraelit "Për një sjetim ka bërë një punë të mirë si kur  
këto dhapiste".  
"Kushdo që vret një njeri pa qazë ndonjë paktë ardhë edhe Profetë me urrekëllë, për"

مُحَمَّدٌ هُوَ خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ  
Muhammedi është  
Profeti i All-llahut

# Zani i Naltë

VITI XIII. DHETOR 1938 SHEVVAL 1357 Nr. 12

## Ç' Urdhënon Kur-ani? (Nga Vazi i Z. Qazim Hoxhës \*)

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
قُلْ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ وَاتَّبَعْتُمْ وَحْيَهُ وَتُرِيدُونَ الْجَنَّةَ الَّتِي كُنتُمْ تُوعَدُونَ فَمُؤْتُوا مَتَاعَكُمْ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ لَعَلَّكُمْ تُرْحَمُونَ  
(سورة التوبة: ٥٤)

*Vëllazën muslimanë!*

Do t'ua kemi mbajtur mend se edhe vjet këtë ajet  
e parës fillim. Kështu kësht vjet do t'ua vazhdojmë këtë  
ajet të naltë, me qeror se jast përmbledhë tzi pika  
shum me rëndësi që janë: a) Me dashje: Z e t i n e

مُحَمَّدٌ هُوَ خَاتَمُ النَّبِيِّينَ  
Muhammedi është  
Profeti i All-llahut

# Zani i Naltë

VITI XIV. MAJ 1939 - REBIYL-EVEL-REBIYLAHAR 1357 Nr. 5

## Ç' urdhënon Kur-ani? Nga Vazi i Z. QAZIM HOXHËS

أعوذ بالله من الشيطان الرجيم بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم  
قُلْ إِنْ كُنتُمْ تُحِبُّونَ اللَّهَ فَاتَّبِعُونِي يُحْبِبْكُمُ اللَّهُ وَيَغْفِرْ لَكُمْ ذُنُوبَكُمْ وَاللَّهُ غَفُورٌ  
رَحِيمٌ . قُلِ اطِيعُوا اللَّهَ وَاطِيعُوا الرَّسُولَ فَإِن تَوَلَّوْا فَإِنَّمَا إِلَهُكُمُ اللَّهُ الْمَنَّانُ .  
القرآن ٣ : ٣١

*Samples of the most popular Albanian Islamic monthly periodics published  
by the Muslim Community of Albanian in 1938 &1942*

## vi) CONCLUSION

What has been said and discussed earlier in this study have shown clearly that our great scholar, Muslim cleric, scientist, astronomer, geography professor, mathematician, chemistry professor was heavily affected by the idea of deism and its rational dimensions on many qur'anic phenomena on many qur'anic issues, such as spirit, rain, death, thunder etc. It is not worthy to repeat his views again at this conclusion. What we explained were the main views of this Westernized cleric with Enlightenment-deistic ideas. In the analysis of some religious and scientific phenomena, we clearly saw his half-atheistic philosophical orientation and doctrine. This philosophical doctrine is rather dangerous, because it opposes Revelation to the intellect and denies the Attributes of God, namely the Lordship (*al Rububiyyah*) of God, who creates and provides for His creatures.

This is the meaning of the fact that Allah is the Lord of all people, Who, regulates their matters and improves their situation. When He created the creatures, God did not leave their fate at the hands of nature and its laws:

﴿ الَّذِي أَحْسَنَ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقَهُ عَوْدًا خَلَقَ الْإِنْسَانَ مِنْ طِينٍ ﴾ [ السجدة: 7 ]

“ *Who made everything He has created good and He began the creation of man from clay* “. [ *al Sajdah:7* ]

﴿ سَبَّحَ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَى الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى ﴾ [ الأعلى: 3 ]

“ *And Who has measured out; and then guided* “. [ *al A'la:3* ]

In the conversation between Moses and the Pharaoh, it is said:

﴿ قَالَ فَمَا بَالُ الْقُرُونِ الْأُولَى قَالَ عَلَّمَهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي فِي كِتَابٍ لَّا يَضِلُّ رَبِّي وَلَا يَنْسَى لَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّى ﴾ [ طه : 51-53 ]

“(Pharaoh) said: "What about the generations of old?" Moses said: "The knowledge thereof is with my Lord, in a Record. My Lord neither errs nor He forgets." Who has made earth for you like a bed; and has opened roads for you therein, and has sent down water from the sky. And We have brought forth with it various kinds of vegetation”. [ *Taha:51-53* ]

On the distribution of provision, God says in the Qur'an:

﴿ وَمَا مِنْ دَابَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِلَّا عَلَى اللَّهِ رِزْقُهَا وَيَعْلَمُ مُسْتَقَرَّهَا وَمُسْتَوْدَعَهَا ۗ كُلٌّ فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴾ [ هود : 6 ]

“And no moving creature is there on earth but its provision is due from God. And He knows its dwelling place and its deposit. All is in a Clear Book (Al-Lauh Al-Mahfuz)” [Hud:6 ]

How can someone embrace a doctrine which says that God the Almighty is the Creator of everything, and then cuts Him off from nature, in order for the nature to go on according to the special biological laws, when it is known that God says:

﴿ وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَا تَأْتِينَا السَّاعَةُ قُلْ بَلَىٰ وَرَبِّي لَتَأْتِيَنَّكُمْ عَالِمِ الْغَيْبِ ۗ لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا أَصْغَرَ مِنْ ذَلِكَ وَلَا أَكْبَرَ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿ [ السبأ : 3 ]

“ But those who disbelieve say, "The Hour will not come to us." Say, "Yes, by my Lord, it will surely come to you. [Allah is] the Knower of the unseen." Not absent from Him is an atom's weight within the heavens or within the earth or [what is] smaller than that or greater, except that it is in a clear register “ [ al Saba’:3 ]

How can one say that nature has its own specific laws of development and motion outside of the Knowledge, the Power, and the Will of God? God says:

﴿ وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يُعَلِّمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ ۗ وَمَا تَسْقُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُّبِينٍ ﴿ [ الأنعام : 59 ]

“And He knows whatever there is in the land and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darkness of the earth, nor anything fresh or dry, but is written in a Clear Record”. [al An’am:59 ]

Who revives the barren earth and the dry foliage with rain? Does it happen by itself? Do trees bear fruits without the intervention of any other factor, namely the power of God the Almighty?! The answer to these and similar questions is found in the Qur’an:

﴿ وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْتَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ ۗ إِنَّ الَّذِي أَحْيَاهَا لَمُحْيِي الْمَوْتَىٰ ۗ إِنَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿ [ فصلت : 39 ]

“And among His Signs is that you see the earth barren; but when We send down water to it, it is stirred to life and growth. Verily, He Who gives it life, surely, is Able to give life to the dead. Indeed He is Able to do all things ”. [ Fussilat:39 ]

﴿ يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ ۚ إِنَّ كُنْتُمْ فِي رَيْبٍ مِمَّنْ بَعَثَ فَإِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِّنْ تُرَابٍ ۗ ثُمَّ مِن نُّطْفَةٍ ۗ ثُمَّ مِن عَلَقَةٍ ۗ ثُمَّ مِن مُّضْغَةٍ مُّخَلَّقَةٍ وَغَيْرِ مُخَلَّقَةٍ لِّنَبِّئَنَّكُمْ ۗ وَنُقَرِّ فِي الْأَرْحَامِ مَا نَشَاءُ إِلَىٰ أَجَلٍ مُّسَمًّى ۗ ثُمَّ نُخْرِجُكُمْ طِفْلًا ۗ ثُمَّ لِنَبْلُغُنَّ أَشَدَّهُمْ ۗ وَمِنْكُمْ مَّن يُرَدُّ



إِلَىٰ أَرْذَلِ الْعُمُرِ لِكَيْلَا يَعْلَمَ مِنْ بَعْدِ عِلْمٍ شَيْئًا ۚ وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأُنبِتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ زَوْجٍ بَهِيجٍ ﴿٥﴾ [ الحج: 5 ]

*“O People, if you should be in doubt about the Resurrection, then [consider that] indeed, We created you from dust, then from a sperm-drop, then from a clinging clot, and then from a lump of flesh, formed and unformed - that We may show you. And We settle in the wombs whom We will for a specified term, then We bring you out as a child, and then [We develop you] that you may reach your [time of] maturity. And among you is he who is taken in [early] death, and among you is he who is returned to the most decrepit [old] age so that he knows, after [once having] knowledge, nothing. And you see the earth barren, but when We send down upon it rain, it quivers and swells and grows [something] of every beautiful kind “. [al Haj:5 ]*

﴿ وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطْعٌ مُّتَجَاوِرَاتٌ وَجَنَّاتٌ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَزُرُوعٌ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَعَيْرٌ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَىٰ بِمَاءٍ وَاحِدٍ وَنُفِصِلُ بَعْضَهَا عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ فِي الْأُكُلِ ۚ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿٤﴾ [ الرعد: 4 ]

*“And in the earth are neighbouring tracts, and gardens of vines, and green crops, and date-palms, growing into two or three from a single stem root, or otherwise, watered with the same water; yet some of them We make more excellent than others to eat. Verily, in these things there are signs for those who understand” [ al Ara’d:4 ]*

The claim that lifeless nature regulates itself is therefore totally absurd. We do not have space to quote other Qur’anic verses here which disprove such deviated ideas. Our aim is only to present the thoughts of the main proponent of this doctrine among the Albanians, which is absolutely incompatible with the Qur’anic truths.

It is noteworthy to mention that there were other Albanian Muslim thinkers with a Western educational background, who did not succumb to these ideas. One such personality is the well-known Albanian orientalist Haki Sharofi, who lived during the twentieth century. He wrote:

*"The study of the natural sciences is not prohibited in the Qur’an, on the contrary, it is obligatory, because he who knows God through the signs and proofs existing in the universe is more worthy and respected than he who knows Him through imitation ".<sup>69</sup>*

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<sup>69</sup> See the papers presented at the International Conference commemorating Haki Sharofi: *Haki Sharofi dhe veprat e tij: Kumtesa, shkrime origjinale dhe përkthime*, A.I.I.T.C., Tirana, 2000, p. 40.

The well-known Albanian orientalist<sup>70</sup> Ferit Vokopola speaks about reformist ideas too, such as the emancipation of woman, but he never refers to deviated doctrines, and he was never under the spell of the Western civilization. For example, he writes: *"My belief in Islam is a source and promoter of civilization, well-being, and bliss, a guide to mankind, a leader of progress and development, a supporter and encouraging element for seeking knowledge, a pillar of ethics and morals, a destroyer of ignorance and darkness!... We seek the improvement and the correct use of this world, just as we seek improvement of our deeds to achieve eternal bliss "*.<sup>71</sup>

Such orientalist lived in the same period and were faced with the same dilemmas as Hasan Tahsin, but their thought was not marked by deviated Western philosophical ideas, and the Almighty God knows the best.



Ibrahim Daut Hoxha, 2<sup>nd</sup> from the left & Dr. Ramiz Zekaj (1<sup>st</sup> from the right)

(Courtesy of Albanian Orientalist Ermal Bega)



*Some of the rare published books of Hoxha Hasan Tahsin Efendi*

<sup>70</sup> We use the term “orientalism” or “Albanian orientalist” not in reference to the Western study of the Orient, but to those Albanian scholars who study, translate and edit Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literary works. These studies have nothing in common with the “critical” study of the Qur’an and Sunnah by Western scholars.

<sup>71</sup> *Haki Sharofi dhe Vepra e tij*, pp. 58-9.