

THE INFLUENCE OF SCHOLASTICISM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THEOLOGY IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM

ORIGIN OF SCHOLASTICISM

Scholasticism refers to the reception of texts of the philosophers of antiquity (Greeks and Romans) and their interpretation of faith, theology and understanding of the world. This interpretation was done according to logical steps which were specified by the philosophers of antiquity.

These logical steps include the following aspects:

- a) To capture the meaning of the text (*sententia*)
- b) To question the proposition of the text (*quaestio*)
- c) From the understanding of the text and its questioning arises the line of reasoning (*disputatio*) for or against this proposition

The problem with theology during the scholastic period developed especially from the assumption that philosophy itself, from logical considerations, is infallible, since it is a God-given wisdom which can train the intellect of man to understand and explain „everything“, provided that the right philosophy and the correct logic is applied.

In early Judaism and in the early church the philosophical approach

of Plato served as the basis for theological debate. Later, during the rise of Islam and then in Christianity and Judaism of the Middle Ages, Platonic philosophy was replaced by Aristotle because rational questions could be answered more conveniently.

This phase, during which the Aristotelian philosophy formed the basis of theological and scientific debate and determined its impact on law and medicine in life and society, is understood as the actual period of scholasticism. It started after the rise of Islam in the 9th century in the Orient and was operative until the end of the Middle Ages in Europe – the eve of the Reformation.

However, the Aristotelian approach to theology and science eventually reached its limits, which ultimately lead to the schism (conflict/division) at the end of the 15th century between church and state. The uprising of the people against the strict theological and philosophical teaching of the church (church-dogma) eventually led to the rift between the one-sided religious-theological scholasticism and the sciences in general, which increasingly understood itself as autonomous and obliged solely to human reason.

During the Reformation – and certainly in the Age of Enlightenment after-

wards – scholasticism dissolved more and more into its component parts. Theology, philosophy, medicine and finally the empirical sciences were reduced to individual disciplines which could be taught in various ways.

Therefore it was not the fault of the scholastic method itself that scholasticism failed, but rather its bondage to the teaching of the church from which the church derived its legitimation to determine and control all aspects of society. This claim ultimately caused the abuse of power both in the Curia and in society.

This failure was also due to the fact that scholasticism was simply not able to explain all aspects of life, such as the relationship between God and man, or of man and his neighbor. For this relationship does not only have an intellectual quality but also contains a “spiritual” dimension which is not “intellectually” tangible.¹ Such issues within scholasticism finally became deadlocked, leading to endless disputations.²

BEGINNINGS OF SCHOLASTICISM IN THE MODERN AGE

When migration in Europe ended in the late 8th century and Charlemagne was crowned Holy Roman Emperor, Islam at that time had already been established for more than 200 years in the Orient and was at the peak of its cultural expansion. By the beginning of the 9th century Islam had already conquered the whole Middle East and North Africa and spread out up to the Indus. In Europe Islam had also built a flourishing culture on the Iberian peninsula.

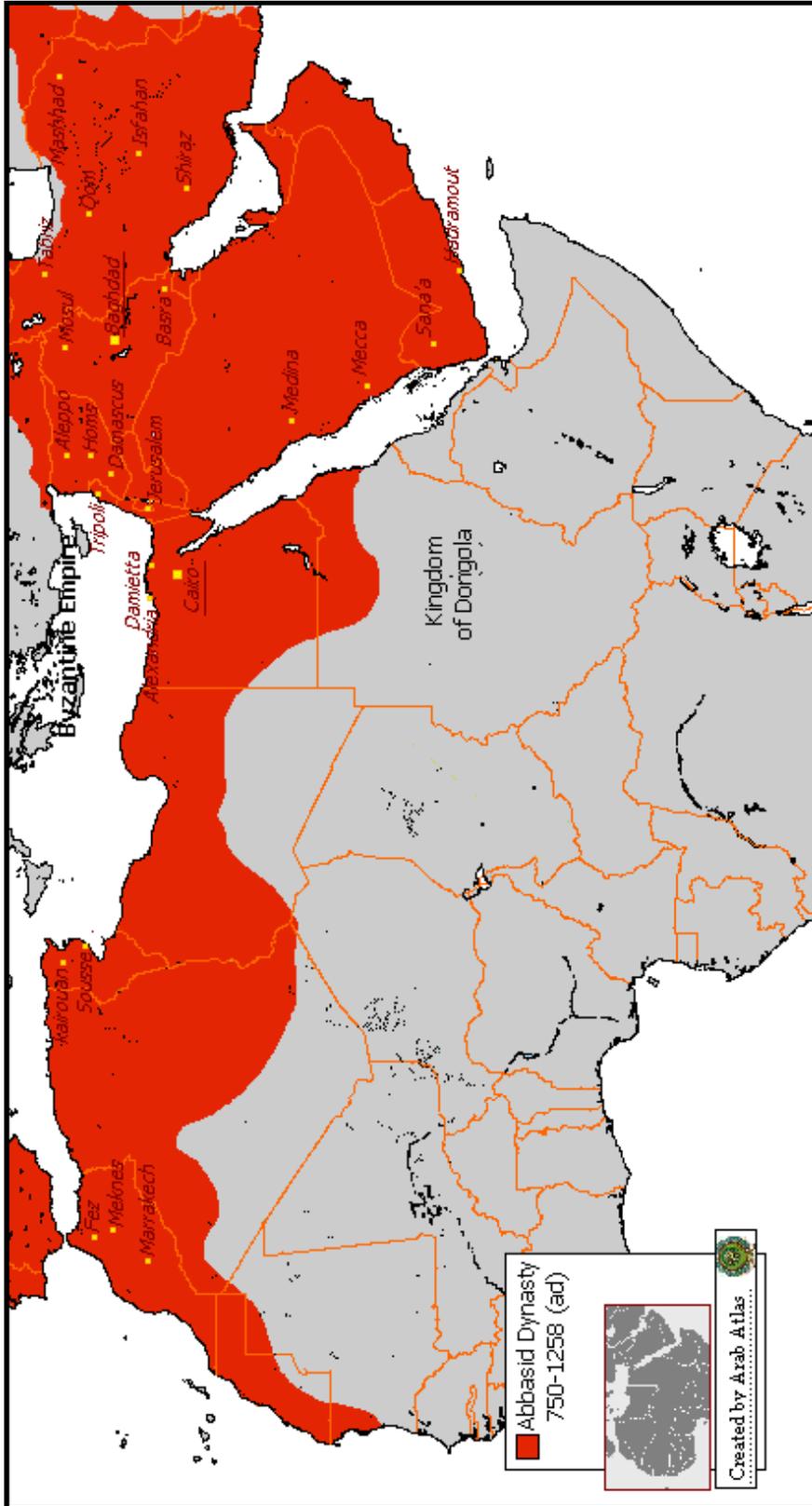
This provided immense wealth and resources for Islam which allowed the Muslim caliphs and principals to initiate a cultural and intellectual development in the Middle East. Under the progressive Caliphs of Baghdad, Harun al Rashid and, later on, his son al Ma'mun, a cultural revolution in the Islamic world was started which extended well into the 13th century.

This revolution made sure that the so-called “scholastic” science, based on the philosophy of antiquity, was further absorbed and interpreted. The Caliphs of Baghdad favoured the philosophers and scientists of their time by building the renowned library “*beit ul hikmat*” (engl. “*House of Wisdom*”)³ in Baghdad, establishing schools and providing the city with medical clinics – both of which were a novelty at that time. Thus the scholars of that epoch were attracted by the „world city” Baghdad.

In Byzantium, however, after the ecclesial struggles against the heresies of Arius, and later the Nestorians, in the 3rd and 4th century correspondingly, the experiment with philosophy had failed and the state church of Byzantium had no interest to continue its interaction with philosophy any more. Therefore many philosophers and scientists of that time saw their opportunity in the Arab world where cultural development was in full swing.

The scientists and translators were at first no other than the Christians in the Middle East and in Byzantium, Orthodox as well as Nestorians, who practiced their religion and culture mainly in the Greek language. In particular, the Christians of Antioch and Edessa, today's southern Turkey, made their way to Baghdad in order to teach

The Abbasid Empire



cc Wikipedia

Greek philosophy and to translate the relevant literature into the Arabic language. It was them who laid the foundation for the great scientists of the 9th, 10th and 11th century.

This era saw many scientists arise in the Islamic world who contributed lasting works in science which reverberate up to our present time. They include, inter alia:

- Al-Farabi (870-950), the founder of Aristotelism of Modern Age⁴,
- Avicenna (980-1037), the great dialectician and physician

This important period in history in which the universal sciences (i.e. the relationship of complex questions towards each other: God, man, creation, medicine, jurisprudence, astronomy, etc.) emerged, led to the founding of the universities. It is noteworthy that the first universities were established in the 9th and 10th century in the Islamic world, and not in Europe, as is often falsely represented. These included:

- The vast library of Baghdad
- The University of Qairawan in today's Tunisia, and
- The Al-Azhar University in Cairo.

Centuries later the universities of Bologna, Paris and Oxford were established (between the 11th and 13th century).

SUDDEN DEMISE OF SCHOLASTICISM IN THE ISLAMIC ERA

However, during the era of Islamic awakening, the course was soon set which brought the scientific revolution in Islam to an abrupt halt and ended in

the dark orthodoxy of the Sharia. While the sciences flourished in Baghdad and elsewhere in the Islamic world, a withdrawal from scholasticism with its speculative questions regarding God, his existence and his creation occurred among the al-Ash'aria. Thus, these new advocates of religion eliminated all discipline of philosophy and science dealing with these issues on theological grounds.

This restrictive theological school spread out in parallel with the blossoming sciences in the Islamic world and received great resonance from the emerging rulers of the dynasties who were fighting each other, such as the Fatimids, Mamluks and Mongols. They made "orthodoxy" to be the legal basis for their state in order to appear as "loyal" supporters of Islam and thus legitimize their political rule over the Islamic "umma" (kingdom, society). Over the centuries, all sciences in schools and universities which dealt with philosophy and logic were abolished step by step, and finally, prohibited.

Great scientists and dialectics such as al-Ghazali, also gave way to Islamic orthodoxy and even became their supporters by using the methods of logic in order to fight science itself. In his writing *Tahafut al-Falasifa* („The Failure of the Philosophers"), any attempt to question Allah dialectically, was sharply criticised.⁵ Through these developments the flourishing science in the Islamic world came to an abrupt end at the end of the 11th century, from which it could not recover.

One last flash sustained itself in remote Andalusia where an Islamic multi-cultural society, far away from the Islamic heartland and orthodoxy in the Middle

East, continued to pursue the freedom of science reaching its peak a century later with Ibn Rushd (Averroes). With his critical writing *Tahafut al-Tahafut* („The Failure of the Failing“), which was addressed against al-Ghazali's book, he attempted to question and combat the denial of philosophy in the Islamic world. However, this initiative remained without impact on the theological development in Islam, because orthodoxy had already strongly rooted itself in the Islamic world. When, later on, Spain was entirely conquered by the Christians in the wake of the reconquest waves in Europe, the light of free science and freedom of opinion in Islam was completely extinguished.

SCHOLASTICISM IN THE OCCIDENT

But this Andalusia would turn out to be a „bridge“ for scholasticism and science, from where this knowledge was attained by the cultures and peoples of the Occident through the Arabic language.

The first ones to devote themselves to the sciences were the Jewish scholars who, after having been driven out by Islam again and again over the centuries, found places of refuge in Andalusia and North-Africa. So in late Judaism the first scientists showed up in Andalusia (some of whom continued to work in Egypt later on) and became the bearers of scholasticism. Two of these outstanding scholars were Ibn Gabirol in the 11th century and Maimonides⁶ in the 12th century. It is interesting to note here that the books of these Jewish scientists, although they were written primarily for Jews, were written in the Arabic language. This shows somewhat how the Arabic-Islamic cul-

ture at that time was the bearer of the sciences before Islamic orthodoxy prohibited the scientific „questioning“, turning Islam into a fatalistic religion of „predestination“⁷.

While orthodoxy systematically extinguished scholasticism and science in the Islamic world, the Occident was just on the move. This was facilitated, on the one hand, through Christianity which had spread rapidly in Europe, and on the other hand, through the crusade which began in the 11th century, making sure to awaken the interest in Europe for new cultures and sciences.

Through monasticism, which accompanied Christianization, education spread equally throughout all of Europe. Thus the monasteries became centers of education and research in the Occident. This led to a review of the Church Fathers in the Orient and North Africa and their interaction with the ancient world and philosophy. Writings and manuscripts of these Church Fathers, which were written in Latin and Greek, were received and commented. However, since many writings of antiquity which were referred to by the Church Fathers in their presentations were not available in the Occident, the Spain of the 11th and 12th century became a „treasure trove“ for such writings. Many philosophical and scientific papers thus found their way into the Christian Occident.

In the late 11th century Western theologians began to publish their own scientific treatises on philosophy and theology, which led to the birth of scholasticism in the Occident. These include, inter alia, Anselm of Canterbury with his writing „The Ontological

Proof of God", or Peter Abelard with his commentary on Aristotle. In doing so, the language of the Church of Rome, Latin, became the basis for this science. So it came to be that scholasticism found its way from the Greek to the Arabic language and then unto the Latin language, thus becoming the basis for science in the coming centuries.

Scholasticism culminated in the Occident in the 13th century with Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, who both produced massive scientific works dealing with the theological theme of the Church in a systematic and comprehensive way. The „Summa Theologiae" of Thomas covered all the theological creeds of the church and has been used ever since as the supreme authority of its dogma in the Catholic Church.

THE BREAK WITH SCHOLASTICISM

But Europe also experienced a gradual movement against scholasticism. While the scientific aspect of scholasticism treated many intellectual questions and seemed to meticulously determine the „knowledge" of that time, many other traits of society remained neglected, such as the freedom of man or the independence of scientific opinion from the church. Above all, knowledge was reserved to the elite convent schools and the few universities, which resulted in the church claiming the monopoly of knowledge for itself with the purpose of controlling it. So scholasticism, which was intended to serve the education of man and to liberate him, became an instrument of the church to limit science or even to suppress it.

In addition, scholasticism contained structural weaknesses which did not permit it to be developed further. Theologically, there was the problem that only a certain perspective of the Word of God (hermeneutical approach) was permitted, that is to say, predetermined. Scholasticism was not able to change this. The limitation of scholasticism toward the church and its abuse ultimately resulted in the disintegration of the high cathedral of scholastic science in the Occident.

There were theologians like John Wycliff in Oxford or Jan Hus in Prague, who gradually brought about the downfall of the fabric of scholasticism and the related ecclesiastical power. Wycliff massively attacked the theological and unnecessary excesses of the church, such as the veneration of relics or the celibacy of the priests, and he taught a faith which is directly related to God, according to Scripture. Jan Hus taught the freedom of conscience which is above all earthly power and which must only be held accountable by God alone.

The outcome of this decay is well-known to us: the Reformation took place, the church power broke down and the science in Europe went its own way of autonomous reason. Only in the age of Enlightenment did the Occident experience a similar unfolding of science as in the time of scholasticism. This unfolding of knowledge was based not least on the liberation of man from church power, which led to a personal freedom of conscience. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the related renewal of man from within, the responsibility of the individual person towards God and his neighbour was able to develop.

Chronological Development of Philosophy and Theology from Antiquity until Reformation:

Period	Year / Ruler	Antiquity	Judaism	Place	Christianity	Events	Islam	Events
Persian	400	Artaxerxes I						
		Socrates Plato Aristotle	Book of Daniel	Persia				
Hellenism	300	Darius III Alex. the Gr.						
	200	Diadochs	Septuagint	Alexandria				
Roman	100		Maccabee	Jerusalem				
	0	Julius C. Augustus						
Christianity	100	Nero	Philo of Alex	Alexandria	Jesus of N.			
	200	Hadrian	End of Temple Kabbalah	Jerusalem Orient	Paul Gnosticism Sectarians Cl. of Alex. Origen Eusebe	Gospels Epistels Sectarians Apologetics compar. Studies with Phil. History of the Apostles		
Barbarians	300	Constantin			Arianism Nestorianism Augustin	Dog. disputes Dog. disputes Apologetics		
	400	Vandals						
Fall of Rome	500							End of Antiquity
Islamic	600						Mohammad	Beginnings of the Qur'an
	700	Mu'awiya			Joh. Of Dam.	Apologetics Christians translate gr. phil. Texts into Arabic	Omayyads	Al Aqsa Mosque, Jerusalem Conquest of North Africa Rationalism Library of Bagdad
Frankonian	800	Charlemagne			Antioch Haran		Mutazila Abassids	
	900				Abu Bishr Matta Joh. b. Haylan		Al Kindi Al Razi Al Farabi	Al Ash'aria Qairawan Univ Philosophy
Holy R. E.	1000	Otto the Gr.					Fatimids Ibn Sina Al Ghazali	al Azhar Univ Avicenna/Medicine Orthodoxy/Sharia
Crusades	1100		Ibn Gabirol	Andalusia	Anselm of C. Abaelard	Bologna Univ.	Mamluks	Saladin
	1200	Fredric II	Maimonides	Andalusia	Joh. of Salisb. Albertus M. Thomas A. John D. Scot. Wycliff, Huss	Francis of Assisi Paris Univ. Oxford Univ.	Ibn Rushd Mongols	Averroes/Andalusia Destr. Of the Arab. Sciences
Schism	1300		Kabbalah	Europe				
	1400	Konstanz 14:14-18	expulsion	Europe			Ottomans	
Reformation		Execution of Joh. Huss			Reform. Movement		1453 Fall of Constantinople	in the Orient

DIFFERENT REVELATIONS AND WORLD VIEWS

This shows that the Biblical revolution of the Reformation did not lead into a fatalistic orthodoxy, as Islam, but into the freedom of man. It is therefore evident that each revelation influences society in a different way. The Gospel led from the timidity of scholasticism into the freedom of opinion, since man, according to Scripture, acts self-responsibly toward God. In Islam, however, scholasticism led to orthodoxy since, according to the Qur'an, man "may not" act self-responsibly as his life is predestined by God. These are two diametrically opposite ways of looking at the relationship between God and man which are due to the structural differences in understanding existence from the perspective of each revelation.

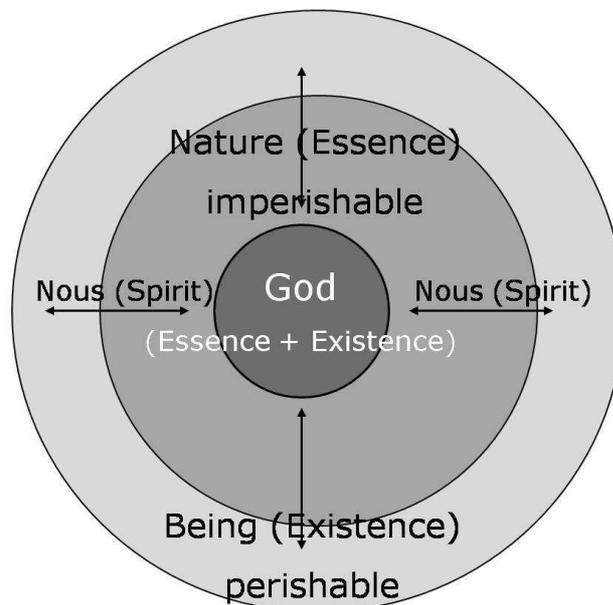
If one follows the history of scholasticism, one can perceive that the dif-

ferent contents of revelation in the respective holy books was the root cause for the conflicts in the various epochs and cultural spheres, thus leading to the different world views which we have today. Philosophy, on the one hand, attempts to explain the questions of existence on the basis of logic. Religions, on the other hand, must follow the revelation in their respective books. Therefore, this discrepancy between „logic“ and „revelation“ has always been the reason for any epoch to break apart from scholasticism.

With the help of some graphics, the views of different revelations will be explained in relationship with the classical philosophical concepts. Specifically, two topics have been chosen:

- a) The World View: the relationship between creator and creation
- b) The Image of Man: the relationship between body, soul and salvation

World View of Plato



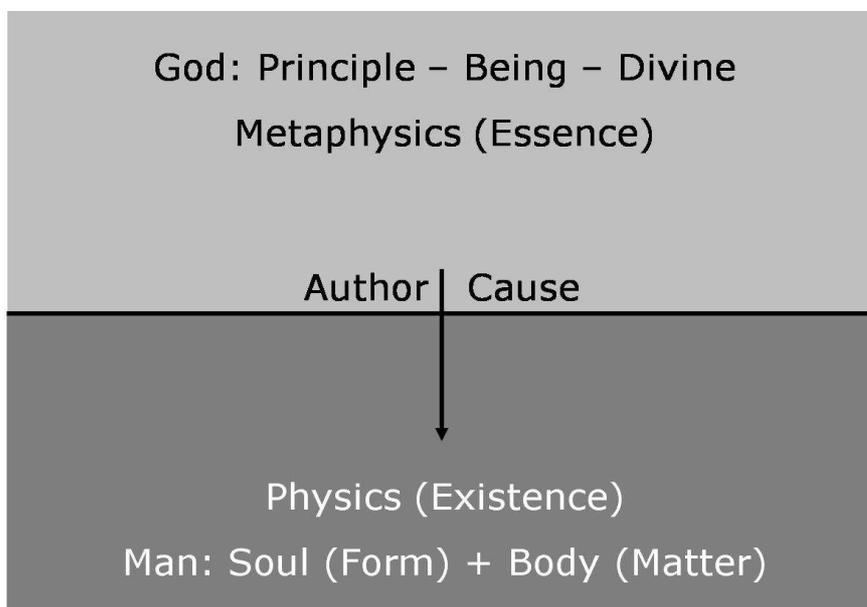
World View of Plato (picture p. 104):
Plato divides the universe into three essential parts (a threefold division):

- In the centre of all being is God himself.
- Without God there is neither being-as-such (*essence*) nor being-there (*existence*).
- Therefore God is the necessary cause for all being-as-such and being-there.
- Being-as-such (*essence*) is invisible and imperishable (e.g. the soul).
- Being-there (*existence*) is visible and perishable (e.g. the body).
- As the author of all being, God permeates all being (*immanence*).
- The immanence of God takes place through his spirit⁸ (*gr. nous/lat. intellectus*).
- Since God is the author of all being, everything aims to return back to him (this is the origin of Gnosticism and other esoteric concepts).

World View of Aristotle (picture p. 105):
Aristotle simplifies this picture and distinguishes between two aspects only (twofold division):

- Metaphysics, which comprises everything invisible, and
- Physics, which defines everything visible.
- Metaphysics is invisible and is the nature (*essence*) of the universe.
- Physics (*existence*) is visible and derives its origin from Metaphysics.
- Metaphysics is imperishable, Physics, however, perishable.
- God is understood to be in the Metaphysics and is the necessary origin (*principle*) of all being.
- Man is to be seen in the realm of Physics (*existence*).
- He consists of soul (*form*) and body (*matter*). Body and soul are perishable whereas the *intellectiva* part of the soul is partially immortal (cf. p. 110).

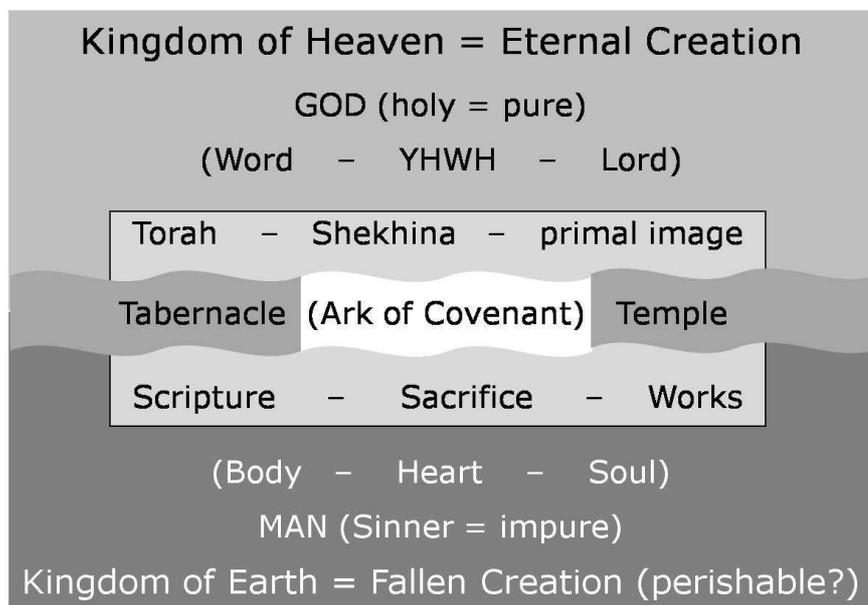
World View of Aristotle



Old Testament World View (picture p. 106): Similar to Aristotelism, the Bible divides the universe into two parts:

- God is the creator of heaven and earth and the origin of all creatures.
- Heaven is the invisible (*Hosts*) and earth the visible creation.
- The kingdom of God is in heaven. It is the primal image of creation and imperishable.
- The kingdom of this world was also originally a part of the Kingdom of God but has become perishable through the fall of man.
- Before the fall, the fellowship between God and man took place in the Garden of Eden.
- After the fall, the fellowship between God, the holy and immortal, and man, who has become unholy and mortal, can only take place according to the Torah which was revealed to Moses.
- This fellowship requires that man is expiated through the blood of a sacrifice.
- The location of this expiation is in the Tabernacle (Temple) where the Ark of the Covenant is retained (Old Covenant).
- On top of the Ark of the Covenant (precisely: on top of the Cherubim of the Ark of the Covenant) the Throne of Grace is located.
- Through the expiation at the Throne of Grace, God can dwell among his people (*Shekhina*).
- This fellowship with God, however, is limited and can be performed only once a year and only by the High Priest.
- The people of Israel have to remain outside and do not have direct access to this holy fellowship.
- Since the act of expiation has to be renewed every year, this fellowship does not have eternal quality.

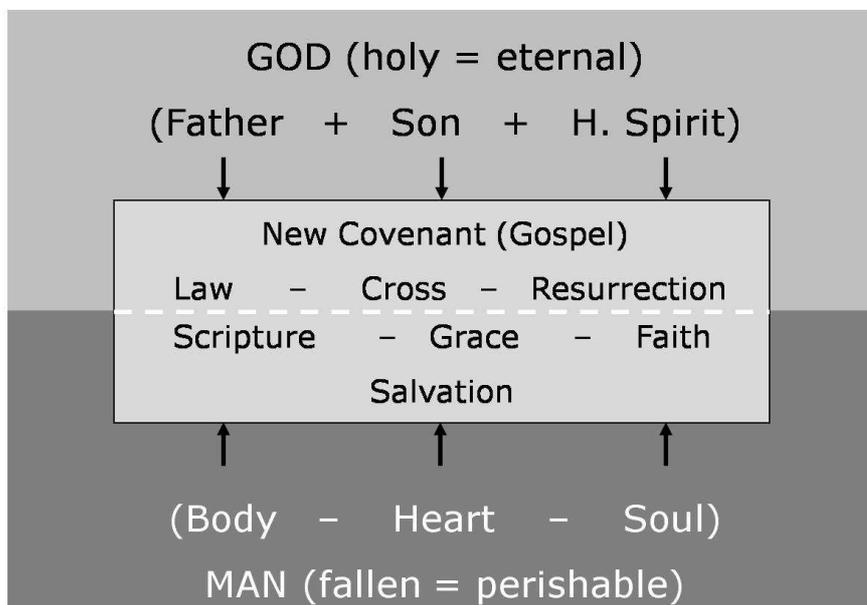
World View of the Bible (OT)



World View of the Reformation (picture p. 107): Similar to the OT (and Aristotelism), the Reformation divides the universe into two parts, which can be explained as follows:

- The kingdom of heaven which is imperishable and the kingdom of earth which is perishable.
- Basically, the Reformation follows the OT regarding sin and the separation of man from God.
- From the NT, however, the Reformation obtains a new picture of the fellowship between God and man.
- This fellowship is also constituted through sacrifice (according to the OT), however, not through the blood of an animal but through the blood of Jesus of Nazareth (cross).
- However, because Jesus was raised from the dead, he has become immortal. Hence, his blood has eternal authority (grace).
- Jesus has seated himself at the right hand of God. Hence, he is the steward of the Throne of Grace (New Covenant) in heaven. Therefore the Throne of Grace / New Covenant is imperishable.
- The fellowship between God and man is given through faith (sola fide) in Jesus Christ, who has achieved the grace of God (sola gratia) according to the Scripture (sola scriptura).
- Through this faith, man receives the Holy Spirit who comes from God, the Father.
- The power of the Holy Spirit gives man participation in eternal life.
- It leads man out of the kingdom of the world, which is a mortal life, into the kingdom of heaven, which provides immortality.
- Our immortality is invisible now, but will be revealed at the return of Christ.

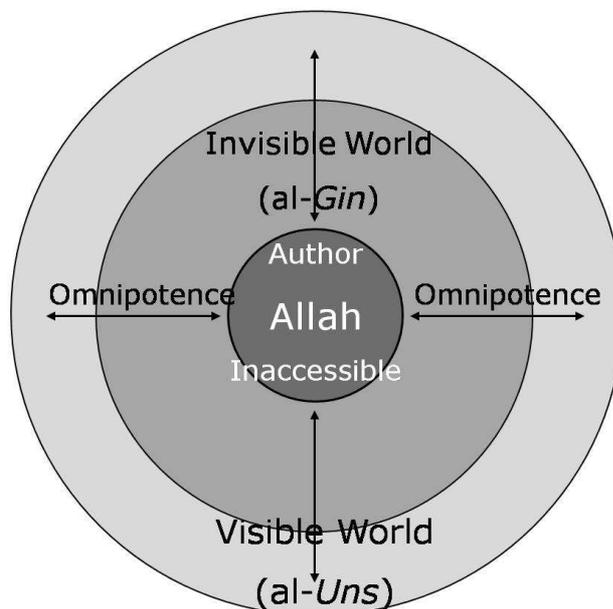
World View of the Reformation (NT)



World View and View of Man in Islam (picture p. 108): The world view and the image of man in Islam are ambiguous. Different propositions of the Qur'an and in Islamic tradition communicate diverse concepts:

- Allah is at the centre of all thought and being. There is nothing which has not been predetermined by Allah. He is unapproachable (*akbar*)⁹.
- Allah has created the spirits (*al-gin*) and man (*al-uns*) with equal rights (Sura 51:56). Both are subject to his authority.
- After death, man returns back to Allah (Formula of mourning: *'ina lilaa-hi, wa 'ina 'ileihi raaji'un*). Whether or not this includes the spirits as well, is not clearly substantiated.
- These three axioms convey a Platonic world view where Allah is the necessary author of everything invisible (*essence = al-Gin*) and visible (*existence = al-Uns*).
- This is possibly the reason for the fact that Sufism, despite its esoteric structure, is accepted in orthodox Islam.
- The image of man in Islam partially follows the concept of the Old Testament:
 - Through disobedience, man has descended to a lower status.
 - In the Qur'an, however, no law is revealed which can abrogate sin.
 - Therefore Islamic Law partially relies on Mosaic Law for its legislation.
 - Redemption from sin (blood of pure animals) and the indwelling of God among his people (*Shekhina*), however, are not known.
 - Therefore the problem of salvation of man remains an unanswered question in Islam.
 - It remains subjected to the undetermined will of Allah: "He forgives whom he wants and punishes whom he wants" (Sura 48:14).

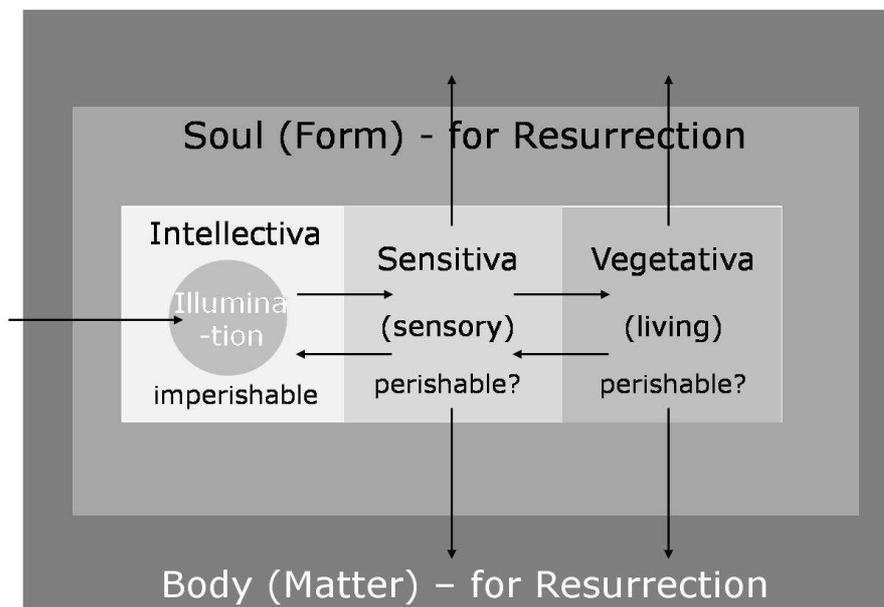
World View in Islam (Orthodoxy)



Man and Salvation in Scholasticism (picture p. 109): Through the connection of Biblical doctrine with Aristotelian philosophy, scholasticism developed a peculiar image of man and his salvation.

- The image of man in scholasticism essentially consists of soul (*form*) and body (*matter*).
- The body consists of different parts: skin, muscles, nerves and organs.
- Similar to the body, the soul also consists of various parts.
- In identifying the different parts of the soul, scholasticism follows Aristotle (cf. Thomas Aquinas)¹⁰:
- As such, the soul contains a „perceptive“ (*intellectiva*), a „sensory“ (*sensitiva*) and a „living“ (*vegetativa*) part.
- The Holy Spirit enlightens the part of the soul which can perceive the Spirit (*intellectiva*).
- Through „knowledge“ provided by the Holy Spirit, the „enlightened“ (partial)-soul can develop in the direction of faith.
- The soul which perceives the Spirit (*intellectiva*) in turn will affect the other two parts of the soul (*sensitiva and vegetativa*).
- The two latter parts of the soul in turn will have their impact on the limbs of the body and enable them to do good works.
- Invoked through this illumination, the body must bring forth works of righteousness by itself.
- The problem with this interpretation of salvation is the fact that the Holy Spirit has no power to save man completely,
- rather, it is only a capacity that influences man „intellectually“ (indirectly) in order to achieve his salvation through his own efforts (e.g. through chastity, good works).

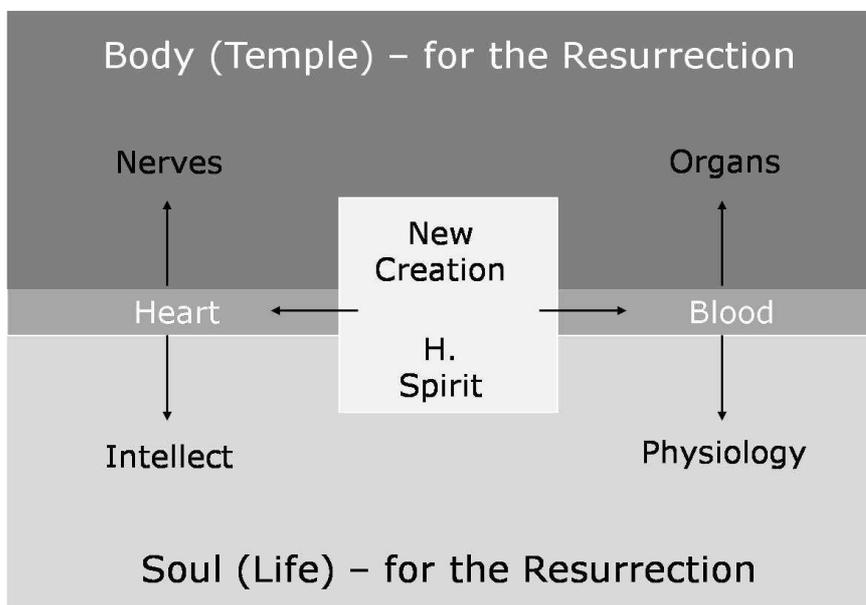
Salvation in Scholasticism



Man and Salvation in the Bible (picture p. 110): In contrast to scholasticism, the Bible gives us a different image of man which essentially has been taken up by the Reformation.

- According to Biblical view, man consists of two parts:
- the body which has been taken from earth, and the soul which has been given through the breath of God.
- Soul and body are two equal dimensions of man.
- The body is the visible dimension of man, whereas the soul resides invisibly in the blood (cf. Deut. 12:23).
- Therefore the seat of the soul is in the heart of man, the main organ responsible for the circulation of the blood.
- Through sin, man has fallen away from the holy communion with God (pure) and is doomed to death (impure) ever since.
- Through sin, both the body and the soul are doomed to death: the body at the time of the physical death, the soul at the time of resurrection.
- By faith in Jesus Christ, man receives expiation for his sins which has made both, body and soul, impure.
- Through expiation, man becomes pure (holy) and God provides the indwelling of his Holy Spirit in the believer (new creation).
- This new spirit acts directly upon the soul as well as on the body because it is located intrinsically in the realm of the heart-blood-circulation.
- Therefore both the soul and the body will experience resurrection:
- today through the „change of mind“ and „healing from diseases“,
- on the day of resurrection through the complete transformation into an immortal being.

Salvation in the Bible



ENDNOTES

¹ The terms „intellectual” and „spiritual” in the German language can easily be confused with each other. “Intellectual” is, following the “Anima intellectus”, according to Aristotle, the intellectual part of the soul which can “grasp” and “understand”. “Spiritual”, however, is to be understood biblically, in terms of knowledge which is perceived through the Holy Spirit who dwells by faith through Jesus Christ in man.

² In the Orient, a pointless discussion is often dismissed as a “Byzantine disputation” in analogy to endless and hair-splitting arguments in scholasticism which often only revolve around a terminological understanding but not a continuative fact.

³ The “House of Wisdom” recruited a number of teachers from the legendary Academy of Gondeshapur whose teachers were mainly Christians. Thereby the teaching methods of the academy were adopted to become the standard of teaching in the Islamic World.

⁴ Al Farabi is referred to as the „second” greatest teacher of the dialectical philosophy after Aristotle.

⁵ Al Ghazali is the founder of one of the four main schools of Islamic Shari‘a (law) because he produced a reference work for the Qur’anic interpretation and its significance for the law, which used the methodology of scholastic argumentation but not their logic.

⁶ Two major works of Maimonides are:

a) *Mischneh Torah* („repetition of the law”): the interpretation of the Mosaic laws according to strictly

logically organised aspects (Aristotelism). It is still valid today in the Jewish *Halacha* („halakic literature”), which governs the way of life of a Jew under the Law of Moses.

b) *Dalalat al-Hairin* („teacher of the undecided”), in which an attempt is made to harmonize the philosophy with the revelation of God in the OT.

⁷ Islam lapsed since the quasi-Platonic theology, which sees everything as solely emanating from God and which has manifested itself „literally” in the Qur‘an (immanence).

⁸ The terminology “Spirit” does not mean the Holy Spirit, as we understand it from a biblical perspective, but rather the “mind” on an intellectual basis.

⁹ See Martin Goldsmith's article in STT Band I (2006): Die Bedeutung der Dreieinigkeit im nicht-trinitarischen Kontext von Islam und Judentum, p. 15, with the sub-title: Im nicht-trinitarischen Monotheismus ist es nicht so, wie im Islam. Goldsmith deals here with the question of God's „Akbarkeit“ (*engl. akbarism*) in Islam in comparison with our trinitarian faith.

¹⁰ Thomas Aquinas: *Unitate Intellectus*, 215.-221.

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*May their hearts
be encouraged,
being knit together
in love,
to reach all the riches
of full assurance
of understanding
and the knowledge
of God's mystery,
which is Christ,
in whom are hidden
all the treasures
of wisdom
and knowledge.*

(Col. 2:2-3)