abstracted from any thing which he had been acquainted with before; and that he was furnished with other Notions altogether independent upon matter, and of too noble a nature to be any way attributed to the Natural Life, but were peculiar to the Blessed, and which upon that account we may call Divine Proprieties, which God (whose Name be praised) bestows upon such of his Servants as he pleases.

Now this degree which this Author mentions, is attainable by Speculative Knowledge, (not is it to be doubted but that he had reach’d it himself;) but not that which we have just now mention’d, which notwithstanding is not so much different from it in kind as in degree: for in that which I mention’d there are no Discoveries made which contradict those which this Author means; but the difference consists in this, viz. that in our way there is a greater degree of Clearness and Perfidiosity than there is in the other: for in this we apprehend things by the help of something, which we cannot properly call a Power; nor indeed will any of those words, which are either us’d in common discourse, or occur in the Writings of the Learned, serve to express That, by which this fort of Perception do’s apprehend.

This degree, which I have already mention’d, (and which perhaps I should never have have had any taste of, if your request had not put me upon a farther search) is the very same thing which Avicenna means, where he says; Then when a Man’s desires are rais’d to a good pitch, and he is competently well exercis’d in that way, there will appear to him some small glimmerings of the Truth, as it were flashes of Lightning, very delightful, which fast shine upon him, and then go out: Then the more he exercises himself, the oftner he’ll perceive them, till at last he’ll become so well acquainted with them, that they will occur to him spontaneously, without any exercise at all; and then, as soon as he perceives any thing, he applies himself to the Divine Essence, so as to retain some impression of it; then something occurs to him on a sudden, whereby he begins to discern the Truth in every thing; till, through frequent exercise, he at last attains to a perfect Tranquility; and that which was to appear to him only by fits and starts, becomes habitual; and that which was only a glimmering before, a constant Light; and he obtains a constant and steady Knowledge. Thus far Avicenna. Besides, he has given an account of those several steps and degrees by which a Man is brought to this perfection; till his Soul is like a polished Looking-glass, in which he beholds the Truth: and then he swims in pleasure, and rejoices exceedingly in his Mind, because of the impressions of Truth which he perceives.
ceives in it. When he is once attain'd thus far, the next thing which employs him is, that he sometimes looks towards Truth, and sometimes towards himself; and thus he fluctuates between both, till he retires from himself wholly, and looks only toward the Divine Essence; and if he do's at any time look towards his own Soul, the only reason is, because that looks towards God; and from thence arises a perfect Conjunction [with God.]

And according to this manner which he has describ'd, he do's by no means allow that this Taste is attain'd by way of Speculation or Deduction of Consequences. And that you may the more clearly apprehend the difference between the perception of these sort of Men, and those other; I shall propose you a familiar instance. Suppose a Man born Blind, but of quick Parts, and a good Capacity, a tenacious Memory, and solid Judgment, who had liv'd in the place of his Nativity, till he had by the help of the rest of his Senses, contracted an acquaintance with a great many in the Neighbourhood, and learnt the several kinds of Animals, and Things inanimate, and the Streets and Houses of the Town, so as to go any where about it without a Guide, and to know such people as he met, and call them by their names; and knew the names of *Colours, and the difference of them by their descriptions and definitions; and after he and learnt all this, should have his Eyes open'd: Why, this Man, when he walk'd about the Town, would find every thing to be exactly agreeable to those notions which he had before; and that Colours were such as he had before conceiv'd them to be, by those descriptions he had receiv'd: so that the difference between his apprehensions when blind, and those which he would have now his Eyes were opened, would consist only in these two great Things, one of which is a concomitant of the other, viz. a greater Clearness, and extreme Delight. From whence 'tis plain, that the condition of those Contemplators, who have not yet attain'd to the UNION [with God] is exactly like that of the Blind Man; and the Notion which a Blind Man has of Colours, by their description, answers to those things which Appearance said were of too noble a nature to be any ways attributed to the Natural Life, and, which God befoes upon such his Servants as he pleases. But the condition of those who have attain'd to the UNION, to whom God has given that which

* This instance will serve to explain the meaning of the Author, yet 'tis very improper, because 'tis utterly impossible to give a Man that is born Blind, the least notion or Idea of Light or Colours.
Abu Jaaphar Ebn Tophail's

I told you could not be properly express'd by the word POWER, is that second State of the Blind-man cur'd. Take notice by the way, that our Similitude is not exactly applicable in every case; for there is very seldom any one found that is born with his Eyes open, that can attain to these things without any help of Contemplation.

Now (my Dear Friend) I do not here, when I speak of the Ideas of the Contemplative, mean what they learn from the Study of Phyſicks; nor by the notions of those who have attain'd to the UNION, what they learn from the Study of Metaphyſicks (for these two ways of learning are vastly different, and must by no means be confounded.) But what I mean by the Ideas of the Contemplative is, what is attain'd by the Study of Metaphyſicks, of which kind is that which Avenpace understand'd; and in the apprehension of these things, this condition is necessarily requir'd, viz. that it be manifestly and clearly true; and then there is a middle fort of Speculation, between that, and those who have attain'd to the UNION, who employ themselves in these things with greater perspicuity and delight.

Now

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Now Avenpace blames all those that make any mention of this pleasure which is enjoy'd in the UNION, before the Vulgar; besides he said, that it belonged to the imaginative Faculty; and promised to write a Book about it, in which he design'd to give an account of the whole matter, and describe the condition of those who were so happy as to attain it clearly and perspicuously; but we may answer him with the Old Proverb, viz. Don't say a thing is sweet before you taste on't; for he never was so good as his word, nor perform'd any thing like it. But 'tis probable that the reason why he did not, was either because he was frighten'd for Time, being taken up with his Journey to Wahran; or else, because he was sensibler, that if he should undertake to give a description of that State, the Nature of such a kind of Discourse, would unavoidably have put him upon a necessity of speaking some things, which would manifestly have reproach'd his own manner of living, and contradicted those Principals which he himself had elsewhere laid down; in which he encourages Men to heap up Riches, and proposes several ways and means in order to the acquiring them.

We have in this Discourse (as necessity requir'd) diverfe'd something from the main
main Design of what you defir'd; it ap-
pears from what has been already said, that you must either mean, 1. That I
should describe to you, what they see and
taste, who are so happy as to enjoy the
UNION, (which is impossible to be de-
scribed as it really is;) and when any
one goes about to express it, either by Speech or Writing, he quite alters
the thing, and sinks into the specula-
tive way. For when you once come to
loath it with Letters and Words, it comes
nearer to the corporeal World, and does
by no means remain in the same State that
it was in before; and the Significations
of these Words, which are used in the explain-
ing it, are quite alter'd; so that it oc-
casions a great many real Mistakes to some,
and makes others believe, that they are
mistaken, when indeed they are not;
and the reason of this is, because it is a
thing of infinite Extent, comprehending
all things in it self, but not comprehended
by any.) Or else the meaning of your Re-
quest must be this, that I should shew you
after what manner they proceed, who
give themselves to Contemplation. And
this (my good Friend) is a thing which is
capable of being express'd both by Speech
and Writing; but 'tis as scarce as old Gold,
especially in this part of the World where
we live; for 'tis so rare, that there's hard-
ly one of a thousand gets so much as a sma-
tering of it; and of those few, scarce any,
have communicated any thing of what they
knew in that kind, but only by obscure
Hints, and Innuendo's. Indeed the \* Ha-
nifstich Sect, and the Mahometan Religion,
doe forbid Men to dive too far into this
matter. Nor would I have you think,
that the Philosophy which we find in the
Books of Aristotle, and \* Alpharabius, and

\* The Hanifstich Sect, and the Mahometan Religion.] That
is, not only the Hanifstich sect, but even the Mahometan Reli-
gion too, of which that sect is a Branch, does forbid the over
curious enquiring into the difficult Matters. This Sect was a
very early one among the Mahometans, for it had its Name from
Abu Hanifah Al Nooman, who was born in the 80 year of Reli-
gion, or according to others in the 70. I must confess
that I love something odd, that he should mention that Sect first,
and then the Mahometan Religion which includes it, and if it
had been for the word Alhbariato, which, if I mistake not,
is never used to express any particular Sect, but signifies a Religion,
or Law of God, I should have understo its Words of the
Sect of Mahomet Ebn Edris Alphabent. See Dr. Pocock's
Specimen, p. 395. Or else the Hanifstich Sect and the Maho-
etan Religion may signify the same thing; because Abraham,
(whoe Religion the Mahometans pretend to follow) is called in
the Hebrew Hunit, Dr. Sike.

\* Alpharabius.] Without Exception, the greatest of all the
Mahometan Philosophers, resided by some very near equal to
Aristotle himself, Maimonides, in the Epistle which I just
now mention'd, commends him highly: and he allows A-
vicenna a great share of Learning and Acumen; yet praises
Alpharabius before him. Nay, Avicenna himself confesses, that
when he had read over Aristotle's Metaphysics forty times, and
gotten them by heart; that he never understood them till he
have happened upon Alpharabius's Exposition of them. He wrote Books
of Rhetoric, Music, Logick, and all parts of Philosophy; and
his Writings have been much esteemed, not only by Mahometans,
but Jews and Christians too. He was a Person of singular Ab-

in
in Avicenna’s Book, which he calls Alshaph, does answer the end which you aim at, nor have any of the Spanish Philosophers writ fully and satisfactorily about it. Because those Scholars who were bred in Spain, before the Knowledge of Logick and Philosophy was broach’d amongst them, spent their whole Lives in Mathematicks, in which it must be allow’d, they made a great Progress; but went no farther. After them came a Generation of Men, who apply’d themselves more to the Art of Reasoning, in which they excell’d their Predecessors, yet not so as to attain to true Perfection. So that one of them said,

’Tis hard the kinds of Knowledge are but two,
The One erroneous, the Other true.
The former profits nothing when ’tis gain’d,
The other’s difficult to be attain’d.

[1. Senecian and Continence.] and a Delphier of the things of this World. He is called Alphabasius from Farkh, the place of his Birth, which according to Alabaphes (who reckon his Longitude not from the Fortunate Islands, but from the extremity of the Western Continent of Africa) has 33 deg. 30 min. of Longitude and 44 deg. of Northern Latitude. He died at Damascus in the Year of the Hegira 339, that is, about the Year of Christ 950, when he was about 40 Years Old.

[2. The Spanish Philosophers.] This is not to be understood of any Christian in Spain, but Mahometans; for the Moors Conquered a great part of Spain in the Ninety Fifth Year of the Hegira, which answers partly to the Year of our Lord 710. Afterwards, as Learning grew up amongst the Eastern Mahometans, it increased proportionally among the Western too, and they had a great many Learned Men in Toledo and other Places. The Author of this Book was a Spaniard, as appears from an Expression towards the end of this Preface.

After

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After these came others, who still advanced further, and made nearer approaches to the Truth; among whom there was one that had a sharper Wit, or truer notions of things than Avenpace, but he was too much taken up with Worldly Business, and Died before he had time to open the Treasury of his Knowledge, so that most of those pieces of his which are extant, are imperfect; particularly his Book about the Soul, and his Tâbârî’l-ımotawâbbid, i.e. How a Man ought to manage himself that leads a Solitary Life. So are his Logicks and Physicks. Those Pieces of his which are complete, are only short Tracts and some occasional Letters. Nay, in his Epistle concerning the UNION, he himself confesses that he had wrote nothing complete, where he says, That it would require a great deal of trouble and pains to express that clearly which he had undertakon to prove; and, that the method which he had made use of in explaining himself, was not in many places to exact as it might have been; and, that he designd, if he had time, to alter it. So much for Avenpace, I for my part never saw him, and as for his Contemporaries, they were far inferior to him, nor did I ever see any of their Works. Those who are now alive are either such as are still advancing forwards, or else such as have left off, without attaining to perfection; if there
there are any other, I know nothing of them.

As to those Works of Alpharabius which are extant, they are most of them Logick. There are a great many things very dubious in his Philosophical Works; for in his Metaphadalablah, i.e. The most excellent Sect, he affords expressly, that the Souls of Wicked Men shall suffer everlasting Punishment; and yet says as positively in his Politicks that they shall be dissolved and annihilated, and that the Souls of the Perfect shall remain for ever. And then in his Ethicks, speaking concerning the Happiness of Man, he says, that it is only in this Life, and then adds, that whatsoever People talk of besides, is meer Whimsey and old Wives Fables: A principle, which if believed would make all Men despe are of the Mercy of God, and puts the Good and Evil both upon the same Level, in that it makes annihilation the common end to them both. This is an Error not to be pardon'd by any means, or made amends for. Besides all this, he had a mean Opinion of the Gift of Prophecy, and said that in his Judgment it did belong to the faculty of Imagination, and that he prefer'd Philosophy before it; with a great many other things of the like nature, not necessary to be mention'd here.

As for the Books of Aristotle, Avicenna's Exposition of them in his Alshbepa [i.e. Health] supplies their Room, for he trod in the same steps and was of the same Sect. In the beginning of that Book, says, that the Truth was in his opinion different from what he had there deliver'd, that he had written that Book according to the Philosophy of the Peripatetics; but those that would know the Truth clearly, and without Obscurity, he refers to his Book, Of the Eastern Philosophy. Now he that takes the pains to compare his Alshbepa with what Aristotle has written, will find they agree in most things, tho' in the Alshbepa there are a great many things which are not extant in any of those pieces which we have of Aristotle. But if the Reader, take the literary Sense only, either of the Alshbepa or Aristotle, with out penetrating into the hidden Sense, he will never attain to perfection, as Avicenna himself observs in the Alshbepa. *

* As for Alghazzi, he often contradicts himself, denying in one place what he affirm'd in another. He taxes the Philo-

* Alghazzi. He was an Eminent Philosopher, Born at Thus, a Famous City of Chorasan, in the Year of the Hegira 440. of Christ 1058. He died in the Year of the Hegira 505. of Christ 1111. Dr. Pocock's Elenchus Scriptor.
Abu Jaaphar Ebn Tophail's Sophers with + Hereby, in his Book which he calls Altephul, i.e. Destructt, because they deny the Resurrection of the Body, and hold that Rewards and Punishments in a Future State belong to the Soul only. Then in the beginning of his Almizân, i.e. The Balance, he affirms positively, that this is the Doctrine of the * Sophians, and that he was convince'd of the truth of it, after a great deal of Study and Search. There are a great many such

† Hereby.] In Arabick the word Kâfara, signifies to be an Inidel, but they use it commonly as we do the word Hereby, viz. when a Person holds any thing erroneous in Fundamental, the Orthodox in other points.

* The Doctrine of the Sophians.] The Sophians are an Enthusiastic Sect among the Mahometans something like Quakers; they set up a strict Law of Discipline, and pretended to great Abstinence and Conformity of the World, and also to a greater Familiarity and Friend Union with God than others; they used a great many strange and extravagant Affections and utter Dishonest Expressions. Al Hufair Al Hallâgi was eminent amongst them about the Year of the Hegira 300. 'Twas he that wrote in one of his Epistles, Blessed is he that possest the Shining Light, &c. and pretended that God dwelt in him. The Learned amongst the Arabinians are not agreed, about the derivation of the Word Suffix, Sophian. It seems not to be known among them till about the 300 Year of the Hegira. The most probable interpretation of it is from the Arabick word Saphîh, which signifies Soul, because those that followed this Sect related to wear Silk, and Cloathed themselves only with Wool. Dr. Porroet and Golius follow this interpretation; tho' the latter in his Lexicon seems to doubt whether it is deriv'd from the Greek word or from the Arabick Saphîh. The Sultan of Perâia is often call'd the Sophy, because himself the first Sultan of that Family now in Perâia who began to reign in the 603 Year of the Hegira, that is of our Lord the 1553 was of this Sect, viz. Sufi, a Sophian.

Contradictions as these interfers'd in his Works; which he himself begs Pardon for in the end of his Mizân Almanâl [The Balance of Mens Actions]; where he says, that there are Three sorts of Opinions; 1. Such as are common to the Vulgar, and agreeable to their Notions of things. 2. Such as we commonly make use of in answerring Questions propos'd to us. 3. Such private as a Man has to himself, which none understand but those who think just as he does. And then he adds, that tho' there were no more in what he had written than only this, viz. That it made a Man doubt of those things which he had imbib'd at first, and help'd him to remove the prejudices of Education, that even that were sufficient; because, he that never doubts will never weigh things aright, and he that does not do that will never fee, but remain in Blindness and Confusion.

Believe your Eyes, but still suspect your Ears: You'll find no Star-light, when the day appears.

The word which I have here rendred Star-light, is Zohâil in Arabick, which signifies Saturn. 'Tis a common way with the Arabian Authors, when they intend to shew a vast disproportion between things, to compare the greater to the Sun and the lesser to Saturn. The meaning of this Disproportion is, that there is as much difference between what a Man knows by hearsay, or what notions he imbibes in his Education, and what he knows when he comes to examine things to the bottom, and know them experimentally, as there is between Twilight and Noonday.
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Those Books which are come to our hands are not those incommunicable ones which he means. Some have fancy'd that there were some great matters contained in that discourse of his, which is at the end of his Meṣḥāl [i.e. Cæsenn] (which Belief of theirs, has plung'd them into incutiable Difficulties) where speaking of the several sorts of those who are kept from nearer Approaches, by the Brightness of the radiation of the Divine light, and then of those who had attain'd to the UNION, he says of these latter, That they apprehended such Attributes to belong to the Divine Essence as were destructive of its Unity; from whence it appear'd to them that he believed a sort of Multiplicity in the Godhead, which is horrid Blasphemy. Now I make no Question but that the worthy Doctor Algażâli was one of those which attain'd to the utmost degree of Happiness, and to those heights which are proper to those who enjoy the UNION; but as for his secret or incommunicable Books, which contain the manner of Revelation, they never came to my hands: and that pitch of knowledge which I have attain'd to, is owing to his other works and to Aviceanna, which I read and compar'd with the Opinions of the present Philosophers, till at length I came to the Knowledge of the Truth. At first indeed, by way of
Enquiry and Contemplation; but afterwards I came to have a perfect sense, and then I found that I could say something which I could call my own. Now I was resolv’d that you should be the first, to whom I would Communicate what I knew about these matters, both upon the account of the Intimacy of our Friendship, and your Candor and Integrity. Only observe, that my discovering to you the Ends which I attain’d in this way, without proving the Principles to you first, by which those Ends are attain’d, will do you no more Service, than any other Story which you receive by tradition, or any thing told you in general, of which you don’t know how to make a particular application. Presuming that you will accept it kindly, not for any merit of the Author, but upon the account of our Friendship and Acquaintance; and I heartily desire that you mayn’t stop here, but aspire to a loftier degree: for this is so far from being able to bring you to those heights, that is not sufficient to save you. Now I would lead you by the same paths which I have walk’d in before you, and make you freer by the same Compass, till you arrive at the same Point, and see with your own Eyes what I have seen before you, so as not to take it on trust any longer from me, but to experience it your self. But this is a matter which will not only require considerable Time, but also that you are free and disingag’d from all manner of Business, and follow it close with great Application. And if you are really in earnest, and set about it heartily, you will rejoice as one that has Travelled all Night do’s when the Sun rises upon him, and will receive a Blessing for your Labour, and take delight in your Lord, and he will delight in you. And for my own part, you will find me, according to your own Hearts desire, just such an one as you could wish; and I hope that I shall lead you in the right way, free from Evils and Dangers: and really I perceive some Glimmerings now, by the help of which I shall inflame your Desire, and put you upon entering this way, by telling you the Story of Hat Ebne Toldhan, and Islal, and Salaman (as Avicenna calls them) in which, those that understand themselves right will find matter of Improvement, and worthy their Imitation.
THE HISTORY

OF

Hai Ebn Yokdhon.

1. O U R Ancestors, of Happy Memory, tell us, that there is an Island in the Indian Ocean, situate under the Equinoctial, where Men come into the world spontaneously without the help of Father and Mother. This Island it seems, is blest with such a due Influence of the Sun, as to be the most temperate and perfect of all places in the Creation; tho' it must be confess'd that such an Assertion is contrary to the Opinion of the most celebrated Philosophers and Physicians, who affirm that the fourth Climate is the most Temperate. Now if the reason which they give for this Assertion, viz. That these parts situate under the Equinoctial are not habitable; were drawn from any Impediment from the Earth, it is allow'd that it would appear more probable;