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The Concept of Substance in the Philosophy

of

Ya'qūb al-Kindī and Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā)

by

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B.A. (Libya), M.A. (Chicago)

Thesis submitted to the Faculty
of Arts in the University of
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ABSTRACT

The Muslim philosophers al-Kindī and Avicenna founded their metaphysical system largely on concepts that they inherited from Aristotle. Of primary importance among these concepts is that of substance, which the Muslim philosophers defined as that which exists by itself. Thus it may be seen that a substance is always a self-subsisting entity. Opposed to this view is the concept of accident, or property which may accrue to a substance at any one moment, and which does not affect its substantial existence.

In as much as the concept of substance is fundamental to al-Kindī and Avicenna, so their definitions and classifications of it are important. For, 'substance' embraces material objects, souls, and intellects.

On the definition of the material substance al-Kindī and Avicenna differed widely. They were, however, agreed in applying the term 'substance' to every material body, and their disagreement is seen to be merely a technical one.

Al-Kindī and Avicenna believed in the existence of the soul, and attempted to prove its substantiality. More difficult to discern is their view of the faculties of the soul. Other problems to be raised are whether the soul may transmigrate, and whether all souls may be united into one soul after death.

The intellect is also a candidate for consideration as a substance. Some intellects are merely a faculty of soul, and neither thinker regards these as substances. Each, however, considers there to be substantial intellects: one only for al-Kindī, but many for Avicenna, which he called pure intellects.

The substantiality of God is a religious question, and one of importance since Plato. The attributes of God are limited to a few Neo-platonic concepts in the eyes of Muslim philosophers, and neither the Aristotelian substance, nor the Neo-Platonic hypostasis comes among these. Thus on religious issues they are finally compelled to reject Aristotelianism which supplied the foundations of their metaphysics.

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TRANSLITERATIONS

ا	'	ط	t
ب	b	ظ	z
ت	t	ع	'
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	h	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	و	w - ū
ش	sh	ي	y
ص	s̄	أ	aw - au
ض	d̄	آ	ā

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of substance has its historical origins almost entirely in the works of Aristotle. Of these, the first to give us general information on this subject is Categories, which is comprised of three parts. Chapters 1-4 deal mainly with language and terms of predication; chapters 5-9, with the description and properties of each of the ten categories, and the remainder of the book examines the meanings of terms such as 'prior', 'simultaneous', and 'motion'. It is in chapter 5 of Categories that there appears the fundamental distinction between primary substances, as individuals, and secondary substances, as species and genus.

Also, Aristotle devoted his Metaphysics to a wide-ranging discussion of the problems of substance and being. In the first six books, he introduces his formulations of this question, and in the seventh and eighth books takes his discussion of substance to a deeper level than in Categories.

In Metaphysics VII Aristotle raises the difficulty of finding an adequate definition of 'substance', which he feels to be a fundamental philosophical problem.¹ He gives also a summary showing how the issue was treated by his predecessors. He states explicitly that the term 'substance' may be applied to four main objects, (1) the essence, (2) the universal, (3) the genus and (4) the substrate.

Metaphysics VII and VIII are devoted to the question of inseparable substances and their number, and book IX considers potentiality and actuality. Book X deals with unity and multiplicity which, Aristotle claims, are not capable of being described as substances.

While book XI contributes little to the subject at hand, it appears that book XII is of the greatest importance. In this text, Aristotle attempts to prove the existence of an eternal substance, which he identifies with God. Books XIII and XIV examine former philosophers' views of immaterial substances: the Platonist 'forms',

1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics VII, 1, p.784.

and the Pythagorean 'mathematical numbers'.

In De Anima, the problem of the substantiality of the soul is not treated at length, yet it appears that Aristotle did not consider the soul to be a separable substance. No account is given of the substantiality of the intellect, when it is discussed in book III. It is, however, important to note that Aristotle admitted only one of his two postulated intellects to be eternal and immortal.

It seems that al-Kindī and Avicenna were well acquainted with the above works of Aristotle. For example, al-Kindī listed the most important Aristotelian works in a letter entitled Fī kammiyyat kutub Aristūṭālīs, and Avicenna admitted to having read Aristotle's Metaphysics forty times.¹ He also wrote commentaries on various other works,² including Metaphysics XII and De Anima. Thus, they both were able to adopt Aristotelian terminology in their own investigations into the problem of substance.

1. Ibn Abī Uṣaibi'a, 'uyūnah-anbā' fī ṭabaqāt al-aṭṭibā'', (Cairo 1882) II, p.3.

2. It appears that Avicenna also wrote a commentary on Categories, although the evidence here is not entirely conclusive: Ibid, II, p.5.

Moreover, they were also influenced by the Neo-Platonist concept of substance. In a Neo-Platonic work entitled Aristotle's Theology¹ the term 'substance' is employed as a name for the body, soul, and intellect. God, too, is given the name of substance in this text.² Both al-Kindī and Avicenna were familiar with this work, the former having corrected its text, the latter having made a commentary upon it.³ Neither appears to accept this book as a genuine Aristotelian work; it is not included in al-Kindī's list of the writings of Aristotle, and Avicenna declared that it is problematic.⁴

In another Neo-Platonic work, Proclus' The Elements of Theology, the nature and the definition of substance are treated at length. It is possible that from these and from other Neo-Platonic works al-Kindī and Avicenna have taken

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1. Aflūṭīn'ind al'arab, ed. by Badawī (Cairo, 1947) p.37.
 2. See below, chapter 6.
 3. Avicenna's commentary of this text is published in Aristū'ind al'arab, ed. by A. Badawī (Cairo 1947) p.37.
 4. Avicenna, Kitāb al-mabāḥith, Ibid. p. 121.

philosophical concepts such as 'one', 'the first', 'unity', and 'simple'. It is also clear that the Neo-Platonic theory of emanation of intellect was of considerable importance to the latter philosopher.

The term 'substance' is generally assumed to have been first introduced into Islamic thought by the early Muslim theologians,¹ who used it as an attribute of what they called the "indivisible particle" (al-juz' alladhī lā yatajazzā'). They believed that: "there exists nothing but substance and accident, and the physical forms of things belong to the class of accidents."² Also they held: "the creator is incapable of creating a substance devoid of an accident, for it is impossible."³ They meant that every substance (atom) created by God should have an accident, such as motion, colour, or taste, but not quantity, for being indivisible, it has no magnitude.

1. S. Pines, Madhhab adh-dharrah 'ind al-muslimīn, translated by Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1946) pp.4, 5.

2. Guide of the perplexed of Maimonides, translated by M. Friedlander (London 1881) I, p.329.

3. Ibid., p.321.

This view of minute indivisible particles is the first of those basic differences between the theologians and philosophers, who believed that every body has magnitude and divisibility. The theologians considered the soul as an accident existing in one of the atoms,¹ while the philosophers believed it to be a substance and offered proof to this effect. Lastly the theologians do not appear to have regarded the intellect as a substance, but rather as an accidental attribute "joined to one of the atoms which constitute the whole of the intelligent being".² Al-Kindī and Avicenna accept the substantiality of the intellect.

In his book Aquinas, Copleston recognises the importance of Aristotelian thought in the Islamic theories of substance and accident.³ He holds it to be a defensible view that the Islamic philosophers follow this doctrine because it is

1. Ibid., p.320.

2. Ibid., p.321.

3. F. C. Copleston, Aquinas (Harmondsworth 1965) p.88.

Aristotle's, but, equally, he stresses that they also consider it to be true. Considerable attention, therefore, has been paid in the following pages both to the comparison of al-Kindī and Avicenna with each other, and also with Aristotle.

CHAPTER I

The Definition of Substance

The purpose of this chapter is to attempt a classification of al-Kindī's and Avicenna's definitions of 'substance'. It deals with al-Kindī's definition first and this will be followed by that of Avicenna.

Al-Kindī in Risālah fī ḥudūd al-ashyā' wa rusūmihā¹ (Aya Sofiya 4832) defines 'substance' as follows.

"Substance," he says, "is that which is self-subsistent. It is a bearer of the accidents without any change affecting its essence. It is qualified by the other categories, without any qualification of them being possible on its part.

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū-Rīdah (Cairo, 1950) I, p.166.

الجوهر هو القائم بنفسه ، وهو حامل للأعراض لم تتغير
ذاتيته ، موصوف لا واصف ، ويقال : هو غير قابل للتكوين
والفساد وللأشياء التي تزيد لكل واحد من الأشياء
التي مثل الكون والفساد في خاص جوهره .

Also it is said that it is neither creatable nor destructible, and nothing that may happen to creatable or destructible objects applies to it essentially."¹

In a British Museum manuscript which contains a considerable number of al-Kindī's definitions and philosophical terms, the same definition is quoted in this way: "substance is that which is self-subsistent, and the bearer of the accidents."² The remainder of the previous definition is omitted from the British Museum manuscript, the only other difference being the use of "wa'l-ḥāmil li'il a'rāq" in this latter, and of the "wa huwa ḥāmil li'il-
a'rāq" in the former.

Al-Kindī in his definition of 'substance' tries to distinguish between two kinds of being (mawjūdāt), substantial and accidental. He calls the former 'substance' (jawhar) and the latter 'accident' ('a raq). For al-Kindī, since substance exists of itself (al-qā'im bi-nafsih), it may bear the accidents.

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū-Rīdah (Cairo, 1950) I, p.166.

2. British Museum (Add.7433); and S.M.Stern, note on al-Kindī's treatise on Definition; Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (London 1959, 1960) p.33.

(yaḥmil al-a'rād) without sustaining any kind of change or alteration in respect of its essence (lam tataghayyar dhātiyyatuh). That is to say, whenever the substance bears the accidents, it bears them as something that does not belong to itself essentially. Consequently the accident (al'arād), for al-Kindī varies from bearer to bearer (min ḥāmil 'ilā ḥāmil), that is to say from subject to subject (min mawḍū' 'ilā mawḍū').

Substance, as it appears from the previous definition of al-Kindī, is supposed to be described or qualified by means of the other categories without being able to be used as a means of their description (mawsūf lā wāsif). But it is not made clear in al-Kindī's definition what kind of description he means here, and how the other categories may be employed in the description of substance. This question will be considered in conjunction with the second of al-Kindī's definitions.

It appears that al-Kindī, when in the previous definition he says that "it is said that

it is neither creatable nor destructible (ghair gābil lil-takwīn wa al-fasād) tries to differentiate between what Aristotle calls substance as a 'formula' and what he calls substance as a 'concrete thing'. Substance as a 'formula' (mithāl), which is form and matter as such, (and this is as true for al-Kindī as it is for Aristotle), is neither capable of generation, nor of destruction. Substance as a concrete thing, e.g., material body, is always capable of generation and destruction. Aristotle says "since substance is of two kinds, the concrete thing and the formula (I mean that one kind of substance is the formula in its generality), substances in the former sense are capable of destruction (for they are capable also of generation), but there is no destruction of the formula, in the sense that it is ever in the course of being destroyed."¹

Therefore it would appear that al-Kindī tries to differentiate between form and matter

1. The basic works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York, 1941) *Metaphysics VII*, 15; p.807.

(al-sūrah wa al-mādah) as separable substances, and form and matter as two elements of one composite body. For the body is capable of dissolution, while form and matter, of which it is composed, can neither be destroyed nor lose their substantiality.

The second of al-Kindī's definitions of substance should be quoted as follows from his letter Fī annahu tūjadu jawāhir lā ajsām.¹ He says:

"The essential attributes of substance which distinguish it from other things are these: substance, which is self-subsistent, does not depend upon any other thing for its existence. Substance is the bearer of opposites (hot and cold, etc.). It never changes in its essence. Substance is capable of being qualified by the rest of the categories either univocally or derivatively. The univocal description (al-nna't al-mutawāṭī') consists in giving the name and the definition to the qualified object. The derivative description which gives the thing described neither its name (directly) nor its definition;

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū-Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.266.

and if it does give it its name, it does so by derivation (bi-l'ishtiḡāq)."¹

There is no need for further consideration in the cases of substance as being self-subsistent (al-qā'im bi-dhātih), the bearer of opposites (al-hāmil li'l-ikhtilāfāt), and unchanging in its essence (wa huwa fī 'ainihi lam yatabaddal), for they have been already explained. By the statement that substance "does not depend upon any other thing for its existence" al-Kindī tries to explain that substance is always prior to the accident in existence.

Let us proceed to the consideration of what al-Kindī calls the univocal (al-mutawāṭī') and the derivative (al-mutashābih) descriptions. Probably by the univocal description (al-nna'at al-mutawāṭī') al-Kindī means any adequate representation of a subject, which is able to give both the name and the essential attributes of the qualification to the subject qualified. It seems that al-Kindī uses the concept of the univocal description

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.266.

in an Aristotelian sense. Aristotle in the Categories (Chapter I) says that "on the other hand, things are said to be named 'univocally' which have both the name and the definition answering to the name in common. A man and an ox are both 'animal', and these are univocally so named."¹ It may be, however, that al-Kindī's view of the univocal description is better explained as follows. If A is said of B, not only A's name, but also its definition is predicable of B.

As for the derivative description (al-nna't al-mutashābih), it seems that this type of description, for al-Kindī, though it may give a name to the subject described, by derivation, is yet unable to determine by that name what the subject is in its essence. For instance, a man may be musical, and he derives this name from the word 'music', but neither the name nor the definition of 'music' applies to the man as a whole. Probably al-Kindī in the definition under consideration holds the view that if A is said of B, neither A's name (except by derivation), nor its definition

1. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1955) Categories I. See Mantiq Aristū, ed. Badawi (Cairo 1948) p.3.

is predicable of B. Aristotle has expressed the same view. He says, "things are said to be named 'derivatively', which derive their name from some other name, but differ from it in termination. Thus the grammarian derives his name from the word 'grammar'."¹

In the preceding definition al-Kindī says explicitly how the categories are predicable of substance. According to al-Kindī, some of the categories are predicable of substance univocally (bi-l-tawāṭu'), the other predicable of substance derivatively (bi-l-tashā buh). The categories of genus (al-jins), species (al-naw'), individual (al-shakhṣ), and differentia (al-faṣl) are predicable of substance univocally. In these categories not only the name but also the definition applies to the substance.² From al-Kindī's point of view there is no substantial distinction between them and the substance which they are predicable of.

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1. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1955) Categories I.
 2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.267.

The categories of quality (al-kaif), quantity (al-kam), etc. are only predicable of substance derivatively. They are only able to qualify the substance by recounting the accidental attributes it possesses, therefore, according to al-Kindī, there is no essential correlation between them and the substance of which they are predicable.¹ Thus, while these latter categories are themselves not to be thought of as substances, those which are predicable univocally are in fact substances.

It has been explained in the first definition what substance is for al-Kindī, and in the second definition what he means by univocal and derivative descriptions. Still, it seems, there is another definition of al-Kindī's that needs to be considered, which may help to illuminate his line of thought on this matter. Al-Kindī in his book Fī al-falsafash al-ūlā,² says, "there are two kinds of substances; one is called 'collective' (jāmi') and the other is

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.267.

2. Ibid., p.97.

called 'differential' (mufarriq). The collective substance is predicable univocally, either of individuals (e.g. the term 'man' as a general expression¹ is predicable of every individual of the human species) or ~~it is predicable~~ of many species, and this is what is called genus.

The differential substance (al-jawhar al-mufarriq) is that which differentiates between the definitions of things, like the expression 'rational' ('āqil) which differentiates man from other kinds of animals, and this is what is called a differentia."²

It seems that the term 'collective' (jāmi') for al-Kindī means grouping one term under another in a series from genus to individual. Therefore al-Kindī has grouped genus (al-jins), species (al-naw'), and individual (al-shakhṣ) under the concept of 'collective substance' (al-jawhar al-jāmi'). The term 'differential' (al-mufarriq) for al-Kindī means being able to distinguish one thing from another. For instance,

1. i.e. a form of speech.

2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.125.

the expression 'rational' ('āqil) is capable of differentiating man from beast, essentially. Probably it is in this sense that al-Kindī has considered the differentia (al-faṣl) to be a differential substance (jawhar mufarriq).

It appears that al-Kindī, in his classification of substance into 'collective' (jāmi') and differential (mufarriq), does not follow Aristotle's distinction of substance into primary (jawhar awwal) and secondary substance (jawhar thāni).¹ Aristotle holds that primary substance is the individual, and that nothing except species and genus is a secondary substance. Aristotle says, "when we exclude primary substances, we concede to species and genera alone the name 'secondary substances', for these of all predicates convey knowledge of primary substance."² Although Aristotle has recognised the differentia (al-faṣl) as a substance, for he says, "it is also the case

1. W. D. Ross, Aristotle (New York 1962) p.28.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York 1941) p.10.

that the differentiae cannot be present in a subject,"¹ yet he does not say what kind of substance the differentia is.

It is probable that al-Kindī has made here some development of Aristotle's classification of substances. It seems that al-Kindī is grouping what Aristotle calls primary and secondary substance, into one class of substance which he calls the 'collective substance' (al-jawhar al-jāmi'), and has applied to the differentia the term 'differential substance' (al-jawhar al-mufarriq).

There is an additional point of difference between Aristotle and al-Kindī that needs to be noticed. Aristotle has considered substance as something simple (basīṭ) and as one by nature (wāḥid bi'l-ṭabī'ah).² Al-Kindī does not appear to agree with Aristotle on this particular point.

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1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York 1941) p.10.
 2. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W.D.Ross (Oxford 1955) I, the Categories V; and The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics V, 6; p.760.

For al-Kindī neither the collective substance (al-jawhar al-jāmi') nor the differential substance (al-jawhar al-mufarriq) is simple nor does it have an essential unity. More information concerning al-Kindī's view of the non-simplicity of substance, and the inapplicability of this term as an attribute of God will be considered in the sixth chapter of this thesis.

No consideration of the meaning of 'substance' would be complete without a mention of the meaning of 'accident' also. To conclude our discussion of al-Kindī's concept of substance, therefore, we must consider in brief, what 'accident' (al-'araḍ) means to al-Kindī. In the passage from which the previous definition of 'substance' is quoted, al-Kindī defines 'accident' (al-'araḍ) as follows. He says: "That which is not essential should not be self-subsistent. It is always present in a substance, without being capable of existence apart from it. That is why the non-essential is called accident." And he continues: "The accident may either be present in one subject, attached to it as a peculiar

property, like laughing for a human being, and braying for a donkey. Each is peculiar to one individual as belonging to that alone. This sort of accident is called property (khāṣṣah); or it may be present in many things, as white which is present in every white object like cotton and paper. This is the general accident."¹

Accident (al-'araḍ), in the previous definition of al-Kindī, is not self-subsistent. It always exists in something else. This something else is what al-Kindī calls subject (mawḍū'). Therefore the accident is always present in a subject. Al-Kindī in his definition of 'accident' is very near to Aristotle's line of thought, which is that accident is "both predicable of subject and present in a subject."² As is clear, al-Kindī distinguishes between property (al-khāṣṣah) and general accident (al-'araḍ al-'āmm).

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, pp.126, 126.

2. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1955) I, The Categories 2.

Let us proceed now to a discussion of Avicenna's definition of 'substance'. The first of Avicenna's definitions will be quoted from his letter Fī'l-ḥudūd.¹ He says, "substance is a common name; one speaks of substance with reference to essence in the case of anything whatever, such as man and whiteness. The term 'substance' is also predicable of every being which exists in itself, because, in order to realise this actual existence, it needs to join itself to some other essence. This is what they mean by substance as a self-subsistent entity.

Everything in this state, whose character it is to receive opposites when they are consequent upon it, can be called substance. And the term 'substance' can be used with reference to any essence which does not dwell in the receptacle of substance (kulī dhāt laisat fī maḥall jawhar).² And it can be said of any essence which does not

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1. Avicenna. Tis' rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt. (Constantinople 1298) p.60.
 2. i.e. which does not dwell in matter. See Avicenna al-Najah (Cairo 1938) p.200.

exist in a subject.¹ Upon this, ancient philosophers have agreed from ^{the time of} Aristotle. They mean by that which is not in a subject, that which exists subsisting of itself, unconnected with matter, though it could, we will grant, be in matter, for matter could not be something in actuality without it.

Therefore every existence such as whiteness, heat, and movement, is a substance according to the first meaning. The first principle² (al-mabdā' al-awwal) is a substance according to the

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1. Avicenna's use of the term 'essence' (dhāt) seems to be identical with his use elsewhere of the term 'quiddity' (māhiyyah) e.g. he says "There are four substances, quiddity without matter, matter without form, form without matter, and that which is compound of matter and form." Avicenna, 'uyūn al-ḥikmah, ed. Badawi (Cairo 1954) p.48.
 2. Aristotle in Metaphysics XII, 7, uses this concept. He says, "The first mover, then, exists of necessity, and in so far as it exists by necessity, its mode of being is good, and it is in this sense a first principle." See The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon (New York 1941) p.880. For Avicenna, it appears that the first principle is a pure intellect ('aql maḥd). He says, "The first principle is an intellect totally abstracted from matter ... And its existence is a first existence to be emanated from the First Being." Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt. (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

second, fourth, and the fifth meaning, and it is not substance according to the third meaning. Matter is a substance according to the fourth and the fifth meaning, and it is not substance according to the second and the third meaning. The form is a substance according to the fifth meaning, and it is not a substance according to the second, third, and the fourth meaning."¹

The first meaning of the preceding definition, of Avicenna, shows that the term 'substance' is predicable of anything that exists, such as whiteness and heat, when referring to them in their essence. What Avicenna has in mind is that everything which is of the nature of whiteness and heat, for example, in so far as it is an abstract existence, may be called substance.

According to the second meaning of Avicenna's definition, the term 'substance' is predicable of every being which exists in itself (li-kulli mawjūd li-dhātih). That is to say, every being which is self-subsistent (qā'im bi-dhātih) can

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt. (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

be called substance in relation to its essence. For according to Avicenna every self-subsisting being, in so far as it is a substance, should derive its existence from an essence (dhāt). This second meaning of Avicenna's definition gives an impression that, if there is no essence, there will be no substantial existence. Also it gives a further impression that substance goes beyond its essence for its actual existence, as a self-subsisting being.¹ For substance as it appears in the previous definition needs to "join another essence to realize its actual existence."²

The third meaning of Avicenna's definition of substance explains that, while substance is that which is in itself (al-qā'im bi-dhātih), it is capable of admitting contrary qualities. For instance, Zaid is an individual substance; he is at one time white, and at another black; at one time warm, at another cold; at one time good, and another bad. But Zaid himself, being an

1. I will deal more fully with this issue in a later chapter.

2. Avicenna. Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt (Constantinople 1298) pp60.

individual substance, stays as he is.

According to the fourth meaning of Avicenna's definition, the term 'substance' is predicable of every essence whose existence is neither in the sense of a form nor in the sense of an accident in matter (kull dhāt laisat fī maḥall jawhar).¹

Avicenna in this part of the definition probably has in mind unformed matter (al-māddat al-ghair muṣawwarah). Matter itself devoid of form, shape, and dimensions, and of all sensible qualities, when it is considered in itself, is a substance.

According to the fifth meaning of Avicenna's definition, the term 'substance' is predicable of every essence that does not exist in a subject (kull dhāt laisat fī mawḍū'). Avicenna in al-Najāh says that "Every essence which does not exist in a subject is a substance, and every essence which is present in a subject is an accident."² It seems that, for Avicenna, only that essence which is not

1. Avicenna uses the term (maḥall) in the sense of of matter. See Avicenna, al-Najāh (Cairo 1938) p.200.

2. Ibid.

present in a subject is capable of being considered as a substance. Probably Avicenna has in mind the form (al-šūrah). The form itself, devoid of matter, is a substance.¹

Avicenna has concluded his definition by classifying substance into matter (māddah), form (šūrah), and the first principle (al-mabda' al-awwal). In terms of the definition under consideration, matter is a substance from the point of view of the fourth, and the fifth meanings of the definition. Form is a substance in terms of the fifth meaning of the definition. The first principle (al-mabda' al-awwal) is a substance in terms of the second, the fourth, and the fifth meanings of the definition.

It seems that Avicenna in this definition is presenting an Aristotelian line of thought. Aristotle in the Metaphysics VII has explained the case in which the term 'substance' is predicable.

1. Aristotle defines form as a substance without matter. He says, "by form, I mean the essence of each thing and its primary substance." The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics VII, 7, p.792.

of the substratum (form, matter, and the compound of both),¹ and the essence. He says, "we have now discussed two things which are commonly held to be substance, substratum and essence."² Even the term "first principle" (al-mabda' al-awwal) which Avicenna uses in this definition is of Aristotelian origin. Aristotle in *Metaphysics* XII says that "the first principle or primary being is not movable either in itself or accidentally, but produces the primary, eternal and single movement."³

We must now leave the definitions of Fi'l-hudūd, and proceed to consider a second concept of substance found in Avicenna's writings, though this is not claimed to be a complete definition. In a passage of his book al-Shifā', Avicenna gives the following statement concerning the characteristics of substance. He says, "The existence in a thing may be either by essence, as the existence of man as a man, or by the accident as the existence of Zaid as a white object... The former

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1. For Aristotle the substratum is a substance, and this in one sense matter, and in the other the form and third the complex of these two. Ibid. *Metaphysics* VII, 1, p.812.
 2. Aristotle *Metaphysics*, edited and translated by John Warrington (London 1966) p.196.
 3. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. R. McKeon (New York 1941) *Metaphysics* XII, 7, p.881.

which is the substance is never present in a subject. The latter which is the accident is always present in a subject, by being present in a subject, one does not mean as parts are in a whole, but being incapable of existence apart from what it is in.¹

Avicenna in the preceding passage is intending to distinguish substance from accident. For, according to him, the accident is always present in a subject, which may be either a substance or sometimes another accident, just as speed is in movement,² while the substance can never be present in a subject. For substance exists independently, while the accident does not, and so, for Avicenna, substance is always prior to accident. Therefore the same thing cannot be both a substance and accident at the same time.³

After separating substance from accident, Avicenna, in his same article from al-Shifā, goes on to classify substance into body (jism), the

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. G. C. Qanwātī and S. Zāyyed (Cairo, 1960) I, p.57.

2. Ibid., p.58.

3. Ibid.

elements of body (ajzā' jism), soul (nafs), and intellect ('aql). He does not appear to include God in this classification, but says, "Every substance is either a body, or it is not a body. If it is not a body it will be either an element of a body, or it is not an element of a body, that is to say separated completely from bodies. And if it is an element of a body, it will be either the form of the body or its matter. And if it is separable without being an element of a body, it will either have a sort of control over bodies by moving them, and in this case it will be a soul, or it will have no connection with bodies, and in this case, it will be called intellect."¹

Having given an outline of Avicenna's definition of 'substance', it is proposed next to examine in brief his definition of 'accident'. Avicenna's main conception of the accident falls into two parts. First he says, "The term 'accident' is predicable of everything which either dwells in

1. Avicenna, al-shifā, eds. G. C. Qanwātī and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960), I, p.60.

matter, or is present in a subject."¹ This reveals that Avicenna uses the term 'accident' (al-'araḍ) as the opposite of 'substance'. Therefore the accident is always to be found in matter or in a subject, and never as existing in its own right. Secondly, he says, "The term 'accident' applies to the simple universal expression, which is predicable of many things though not essentially."² This means that accidents are able to qualify things only externally. That is, they do not qualify essentially. In other words, 'accident' is opposed to 'essence'.

In conclusion to the present chapter, we would notice that when al-Kindī and Avicenna asked the question, what is the definition of substance, they were facing an eternal problem. For it appears that Aristotle before them had faced the same problem. He says in the Metaphysics, "and indeed the question which was raised of old and is raised now and always, and is always the subject of doubt, i.e. what being

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt (Constantinople 1298) p.60.

2. Ibid.

is, is just the question, what is substance?"¹
Indeed, they have inherited this traditional problem, from Aristotle, and it was often to Aristotle that they turned for their methods and their material. Several Arabic translations of Aristotle were available,² and great interest, as it appears from the previous discussion of the definition of substance, is displayed by both al-Kindī and Avicenna in the Categories and the Metaphysics.

Because of the difficulties of definition, it seems, it became conventional to follow each definition of substance with a classification of substances. One curious feature is that God is not included in these classifications. When the substantiality of body, soul, and intellect have been examined, it will finally be explained how al-Kindī and Avicenna tackle the problem "Is God a substance?"

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1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics VII,1, pp.783, 784.
 2. Richard Walzer, Greek into Arabic, (Oxford 1963) pp.6, 7; and De Lacy O'Leary, How Greek Science passed to the Arabs, (London 1948) p.159.

CHAPTER 2

The Material Substance

In this chapter it is intended to consider al-Kindī's and Avicenna's concepts of the material substance (al-jawhar al-māddī). The discussion will start with al-Kindī's, and then it will be followed by Avicenna's concept of the material substance.¹ In dealing with al-Kindī's material substance, the discussion will be considering his book Fī al-jawāhir al-khams. As is known the Arabic version of this text is missing. There is only the Latin translation,² which has been retranslated into Arabic by Professor Abū Rīdah.³

Although this book seems a simple one compared to the other writings of al-Kindī, it needs much effort and consideration before al-Kindī's reasoning can be understood correctly. To avoid

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1. The heavenly bodies, though material, will not be discussed here, but in the context of the intellect.
 2. Albino Nagy published the Latin version of this book with other letters of al-Kindī under the title Die Philosophischen Abhandlungen Ja'Qūb Ben Ishag al-Kindī, (Munster 1897).
 3. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.8.

any confusion, or any misinterpretation, this book should be considered alongside his other works, which are relevant to this subject.

The first problem to be faced in this book, in dealing with the material substance (al-jawhar al-māddī), is that al-Kindī here talks about the five substances (al-jawāhir al-khams) "de quinque essentüs".¹ These so-called substances are matter (al-māddah), form (al-šūrah), place (al-makān), movement (al-harakah), and time (al-zamān). Two of these, matter and form, are universally acknowledged as substances. But movement, place, and time, when they are considered with regard to al-Kindī's definition of 'substance' fail to qualify as substances.

Let us state and explain what al-Kindī means by the material substance. He says, briefly, that every material body which is a substance, should be a compound of five things: matter, form, place, movement, and time. That is to say, every material

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.9.

substance, should have matter which is its basic constituent and a certain form to make it visible and distinguishable from other objects; it should be in a place, because without being in a place, it will have no certain limit. Also it should have a movement (ḥarakah) which is a cause of its generation (takwīn), related to its essence in place and time. Therefore, every material substance should have matter and form, and should also be moved in place and time.¹ Once it has ceased to possess any one of these five elements the compound material substance is dissolved and ceases to exist.

These five elements (al'anāsir al-khams) which are found in the material substance (al-jawhar al-māddī) can be explained by the following example.² One can refer to a ship as a material substance having these five elements as basic constituents. Matter, in relation to this ship, will be the iron and the wood of which it has been made. Form in relation to this ship will be the corners, the angles

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.14.

2. Ibid.

and the shape it has. Also this ship should be in some place, where it can move during a period of time.¹ Accordingly, as al-Kindī says, these five things, when they have been considered together in relation to this ship, as a material substance, may be each considered at this stage as a substance. In this case each of these things, according to his text, is given the name 'substance'. But does he really mean that each one should be regarded as a substance, having the same attributes that substances should have?

A proper interpretation of al-Kindī's theory of the material substance would seem to be as follows. When al-Kindī talks about movement, space, and time, by giving them the name 'substance', he does not mean they are really substances in the full sense of the term. They are only substantial elements, when they are considered in relation to the material substance. That is to say, besides form and matter, there are still some other basic elements which need to be added

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) pp.14, 15.

in order that the material substance can be constituted; namely, movement, place, and time. Thus the creation and the generation of the material substance as a perceptible object, depend entirely on these five essential things.

However, this is only so in relation to the material object as a compound substance (jawhar murakkab) having all of these attributes at the same time. Further, if these five things have been considered separately, two of them should be taken as substances, in the full sense of the meaning of the word 'substance'. These are form and matter (al-šūrah wa al-māddah). Whereas the other three, movement (al-ḥarakah), place (al-makān), and time (al-zamān) cannot, as individuals, be substances. This interpretation is supported by the following evidence.

Firstly, in his book, Fī al-falsafat al-ūlā,¹ he says, "when a totality of elements together form one compound thing, it is possible for each of these

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.150.

elements to be given the substantial name and the definition of this newly compound thing."¹ That is to say, that when A, B, and C together establish one object, and this object has the name S as its attribute, then each of A, B, and C can be given the name S. This appears to constitute an implicit reference to movement, place and time as substances as such. Yet al-Kindī does not seem to be characterising them thus, but only as basic elements without which no material substance can be generated. A reason for doubting whether al-Kindī regards movement, place and time as substances as such, i.e. as substances in the strict sense of this term, is that in none of his writings has he referred to any of these three elements by the word 'substance'. Full investigation and careful studies have been made in all of his works, which are known to us, and no signs have been found of his regarding movement, place, and time as substances.

Secondly it would seem unlikely that al-Kindī regards time, movement, and place as being self-subsistent, because they are all present in a subject.

Clearly, one should not regard them as substances in the absence of any evidence to support that view.

Al-Kindī's theory of the material substance can be further interpreted by distinguishing the attribute that any material substance should have into primary attributes (ṣifāt awwaliyyah) and secondary attributes (ṣifāt thānawiyah). The primary attributes are of a kind which is essential for the constitution of any material substance, i.e. without which no material substance can exist; while the secondary attributes are of a kind which is not essential for the generation of the material body. Therefore, matter, form, movement, place, and time should be considered as primary attributes. They are inevitably connected with every material body, while colour, taste, smell, and weight should be considered as secondary attributes.

It is hoped that the interpretation that has been put forward in this chapter will eliminate any inconsistency or contradiction that may be found in al-Kindī's doctrine of substance. It seems that he

takes an empirical position with regard to the existence of the material substance. For him, the material substance is a matter of fact because it moves from one place to another during a period of time. It can be seen and can be experienced at any time.¹

It is indicative of this empirical approach that in dealing with these five essential attributes separately, al-Kindī gives priority to matter, by considering it before the other four in his book FI al-jawāhir al-khamsah.² It should also be said that al-Kindī, unlike Aristotle,³ considers matter even before form. His justification is that, since matter is the receiver of the form, it should be considered before the form which is received. Although his reason may not be convincing, yet as he chooses to examine matter first, so it is necessary for us to adhere to his order.

For al-Kindī matter cannot be known through its definition, it is knowable only through its characteristics. His justification is that matter is a

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950), I, p.107.

2. Ibid., II, p.16.

3. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics VII, 3, pp.785, 786.

Common genus; definition is applicable only to compound objects that have both genus (jins) and differentia (faṣl). Matter can have no genus more universal than itself, nor is it a compound object, thus it cannot be known by its definition. Therefore it is only apprehended through its characteristics.

Enumerating briefly the characteristics that matter has, he says: (1) It is the bearer of opposites. (2) It receives form and qualities when they have been attached to it, while it itself is unable to be 'received'. (3) It is its nature not to be affected by the alteration of the qualities it has received. (4) Basically, matter is the origin of all material objects that exist in the physical world. (5) Epistemologically, matter has no definition at all, and is known only through its characteristics.¹

Historically speaking, al-Kindī was facing the same problem that had faced Aristotle before him, and that afterwards faced some of the seventeenth century philosophers, including John Locke. In the case of

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953), II, p.18.

Aristotle this problem remained without a final solution.¹ Many interpretations have been made by his commentators of, for instance, the distinction of matter into primary and secondary matter. But, for Aristotle, matter, although it is the principle of individuation, it is unknowable. Similarly John Locke said it is impossible to have empirical knowledge of the essence of matter.² Al-Kindī, however, believes that it is possible to know the essence of matter through its characteristics, although this knowledge could not be a certain and adequate one.

The second of the five primary attributes to be considered is the form. Al-Kindī distinguishes between two concepts of form, the sensible form (al-šūrah al-latī taqa' tahta al-ḥiss), and the rational form³ (al-šūrah al-latī taqa' tahta al-jins). Sensible form, which is the object of the present discussion, al-Kindī defines as follows, usually

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1. Joseph Owens, Matter and Predication, in Aristotle a Collection of Critical Essays (London 1968) pp. 191 to 214.
 2. John Locke, Essay concerning Human Understanding, Book III, 8.
 3. The rational form will be discussed in connection with the substantiality of the soul.

considering it as the dimensions of the material object. He says, "The first, primary, simple substances which constitute the material body are matter and form ... It is a material body, because it is composed of matter and dimensions, which are its form."¹ Moreover, he says "what I mean by the form is that in the case of the form of al-dīnār, when the form has been printed on the gold, al-dīnār has been formed."² Al-Kindī means by the form, the shape that pure matter takes, when it has been moulded in three dimensions. For instance, molten iron cannot become a distinct perceptible object until it has been cast in some definite three-dimensional form.

The perceptible form or the material form (al-šūrah al-māddiyah) has been considered by al-Kindī as a power which exists in unqualified matter, which he has called simple matter (al-māddah al-basīṭah). For him, there is in simple matter, i.e. unqualified

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.150.

2. Ibid., p.217.

matter, a power (quwwah) which allows the material object to be generated from it. In this case, does al-Kindī mean that form exists potentially within matter itself without having any external existence? As far as one can say, it seems that he did mean that. For he gives the following example to explain what he means by saying that form is a power which exists in the simple matter. He says that heat and dryness, which are in simple matter cause a fire when they come together. Fire, at this stage, as a form of these two simple elements, is merely a power that exists potentially in heat and dryness.¹ However, al-Kindī does not present good evidence in support of his view that form is a mere power that exists in simple matter.

The third of the five primary attributes of al-Kindī's material substance is movement (al-ḥarakah). Al-Kindī defines movement in his letter Fi ḥudūd al-ashyā' wa rusūmihā as follows. "Movement

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīda (Cairo 1953) II, p.25.

is the alteration of the mode of the essence."¹ Change or the alteration of the mode of the essence (ḥāl al-dhāt), seems to take place externally or internally.

The external change is a kind of alteration which occurs to the external qualities of the object, while the internal change is a kind of alteration which increases or decreases the quantity or qualitative aspects of the object. It seems here that al-Kindī's definition of 'movement' is not an Aristotelian one, because Aristotle defines 'movement' as follows.

"The fulfilment of what exists potentially, in so far as it exists potentially."² While there appears to be a considerable difference between the definitions of al-Kindī and of Aristotle, both consider motion as something not extending to infinity. For, Aristotle postulates his unmoved mover (al-muḥarrrik al-ladhī lā yataḥarr^Ark) as the only answer to an infinite regression, while al-Kindī's change in the modes of the essence does not imply any necessary continuity of motion.

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.167.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Physics III, I, p.254.

As for the types of movement, there is no basic difference between al-Kindī and Aristotle.¹ Al-Kindī is considering the kinds of movement as follows (as Aristotle did). They are (1) locomotion (al-nuqlah), (2) increasing movement (al-rubū'), (3) decreasing movement (al-'idmihlāl), (4) movement of alteration (al-'istiḥālah), (5) movement of creation (al-kawn), (6) movement of degeneration (al-fabād).² Locomotion pertains to that which can be carried from one place to another, without any alteration affecting its dimensions, or any quality it has. The increasing movement will extend the dimensions of the body, while the decreasing movement will shorten its limits. Therefore the increasing and the decreasing movements always apply to the category of quantity. The category of substance is not subject to any of these kinds of movement.³

The movement of alteration (al-'istiḥālah) is that kind of change which happens to some of the

1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Physics III, I, p.254.

2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.22. For more knowledge of al-Kindī concept of motion see Ibid., I, pp.259 - 204 - 217 - 258 - 117.

3. Ibid., II, p.24.

external aspects of the changed object. But no effective change could be suffered by the substantial constitution of the object itself. For instance, al-Kindī says, when a particular man is in good health he has a different appearance from when he is not well or weary after a long journey. One may admit a slight change like that, but there will be no substantial change. Therefore this kind of movement is always applicable to the category of quality, but not to the category of substance.¹

The creative and degenerative (al-kawn wa al-fasād) movement is supposed to change the object from the state of being to the state of not-being, or vice versa. It always occurs to the compound substances, i.e. individual substance. For instance, al-Kindī says that heat and cold are present in the human matter, and may change this matter into a living being. This is the creative motion, from which a living being has been produced. The degenerative motion is the dissolution of the parts, and as a result the object will pass out of the state

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.24.

of being. Therefore movement of creation and degeneration always happen to the compound substance.¹ As it appears, al-Kindī does not add anything considerable to Aristotle's view of the movement of creation and degeneration.²

The degree and the speed of movement differ from one body to another. Large and compound bodies need more effort than simple and small bodies in order to be set in motion. Motion should be communicated from large and compound objects to that which is smaller and more simple, while no body can affect what is larger than itself.

The fourth of the five primary attributes to be considered is place. Al-Kindī asserts the actual existence of place, and in so doing he may be grouped amongst those philosophers known as Realists. Thus place is necessary, because without it bodies cannot move to inter-communicate their motion. For any change by increase or diminution, as well as the

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1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.24.
 2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Physics III,1, p.254. See Averroes, Kitab al-samā' al-tabī'i (Haidarabād/1365) pp. 22, 23.

other kinds of movement, must take place in an environment wider than the object moved. Therefore place has been defined as "the container of the moving body".¹ Al-Kindī's definition of 'place' is similar to Aristotle's, which is "The innermost motionless boundary of what contains is place".² No intrinsic difference can be found between the two definitions.

Al-Kindī rejects entirely any consideration of place as a body. He holds that if place is a body, which accepts another body, then the real body will be in another body. In this case it would be possible for any body to be immersed in any other, and an infinite regression would be involved, whereby one body contains another, which in turn contains yet another, and so on without end. Therefore it should be admitted that place is not a body. Al-Kindī is just repeating the same argument that Aristotle³ has raised against

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafīyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.28.

2. The Basic works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Physics IV, 4, p.278.

3. Ibid., p.272.

Plato, who appears to suggest that place is a body.¹

It is interesting that al-Kindī regards place as something two-dimensional, or as coming from that kind of matter which is of two dimensions, that is to say from surfaces.² Thus place differs from body which is always of three dimensions,³ and it cannot fulfil the criterion of bodily substance.

Al-Kindī believes that there is a necessary connection between place (makān) and the located object (al-mutamakkin). That is to say if there is a place, it is necessary that there will be a located object filling that place. Moreover, if there is a located object (mutamakkin) it is necessary that there will be a place (makān) surrounding it. Therefore, according to al-Kindī's

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1. Plato in the Timaeus compares his receptacle with a mass of plastic material, and hence may be understood to mean that a bodily substance is receiving other bodies. Francis M. Cornford, Plato's cosmology (New York 1957) pp. 181, 183.
 2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.30.
 3. In his letter Fi al-hudūd, he defines body as "that which has three dimension." Ibid., I, p.165.

concept of place, there is no void. Every place should be occupied with a body located in it. Moreover, place is not infinite, for that would merely be infinite space which has no real existence.

We may now deal with time as the fifth of the primary attributes to be considered in relation to the material substance. Al-Kindī defines 'time' as follows: "time is a duration measured by movement, and it has no fixed parts."¹ Moreover, he says, "There could be no corporeal body which does not exist in time, because time is the number of movement, which means that it is a duration measured by movement. Therefore if there is a movement there will be a time and if there is no movement there will be no time."² This indicates that time, for al-Kindī, should have a beginning and an end. Its beginning is the beginning of the motion of the material substance, and its end should be the end of that motion.

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.167.

2. Ibid., p.117.

Moreover, al-Kindī is considering time as continuous quantity (al-‘adad al-muttasīl), which connects past events with future events. He considers the present duration of any time as the centre of the connexion, because it is the end of the past events and the beginning of the future. The present time, which he calls 'now' (al-‘ān),¹ is no more than a connecting relation which is bridging the gap between the past and the future. In this case 'time' is capable of being given a second definition: "Time is an imaginary instant, which is used to connect the antecedent and consequent events of the past and the future."²

It remains to be said that al-Kindī is considering movement, place, and time, as three objects in coexistence, in the sense that no one of them comes before or after the other. Thus any material body should be moved in a place during a period of time. It is clearly stated by al-Kindī in many places in his writings that neither body nor

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1953) II, p.

2. Ibid., I, p.122.

movement, nor time, is prior to nor posterior to any other.¹

Having shown the nature of the material body and the essential conditions of its existence, according to al-Kindī, we may proceed to discuss Avicenna's view on this subject.

It is probable that Avicenna is an opponent of the traditional definition, which regards the material body as a substance by virtue of the three dimensions: length (al-ṭūl), breadth (al'arḍ), and height (al-'irtifā').² For Avicenna, the material body is not a substance because of its dimensions, nor because it moves in space during a period of time. Therefore he rejects al-Kindī's interpretation of the material substance which has been reproduced in the first part of this chapter.

In refuting al-Kindī's view of the material substance Avicenna says that it is not necessary for every body to have a linear extension ('imtidād)

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Ridāh (Cairo 1950) I, pp. 120, 197, 117.

2. Avicenna, al-shifā', eds. Qanawāti and S. Zāyied (Cairo 1960) I, 2; p.71.

(any one of the three dimensions) in order that it should be a material body. For instance, he says that the ball has no actual line at all, and its axis (mihwar) cannot be determined unless it moves, even though the ball is a material substance. Therefore the ball is a body for some other reason, prior to its being subject to movement and before any linear extension can be apprehended.¹

Moreover, the material body is not a substance because of the surfaces which enclose it. That is to say that the material body in order to be a substance, does not necessarily have to have a real surface.² For the surfaces are not necessarily required for the establishment of the material body. The surface in relation to the material substance, as it is considered by Avicenna, is a quantity applied to the limits of the body (nihāyat al-jism). For the substantiality of the material body does not relate to its surfaces, since, as he says, the ball is a body and it has only one surface. Surfaces,

1. Ibid., I, p.62.

2. Ibid., I, p.62.

according to Avicenna, should be considered as something only capable of being supposed in the material substance. In other words, for him, the surface is something that we suppose the body to have, while the substantiality of the body does not relate to its surfaces. Therefore the supposition of the three dimensions or the surfaces does not imply the surfaces within the material substance, as is in al-Kindī's view.

Unlike al-Kindī, Avicenna does not believe that the material body is a substance because it has a place in the physical world. The substantiality of the material body should not be derived from being in a place "under the heavens".¹ Therefore the material body is neither a substance, nor has the name 'substance' specifically because it has three dimensions and exists in a place as an object of our direct sense experience. Not at all, it is a substance because of some other factor.

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. Qanawātī and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) I,2, p.62.

There is no doubt that Avicenna is here adopting a sceptical attitude towards Aristotle's,¹ and al-Kindī's, doctrines of the material substance, with regard to the dimensions and the external existence that the material substance has. It may be noticed that in insisting that the material substance should not be defined with regard to consequentials such as movement, space, and time, he is developing his own doctrine of the material substance.

As far as Avicenna's definition of the material substance is concerned, he prefers to define it as follows: the material body is a substance which is compounded of form and matter and having three dimensions, which are capable of being supposed in it.² Moreover, he says that the true corporeality (al-jismiyyah fī al-ḥaqīqah) of the material body does not lie in its dimensions, but it is that form

1. Aristotle considers the three dimensions as to be found primarily in the material substance. He says, "But substance is rather that to which these belong primarily. But when length and breadth and depth are taken away we see nothing left unless there is something ~~is~~ bounded by these."

The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics VII,3; p.785.

2. Avicenna, al-shifā, eds. Qanawāti and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) I, p.63.

of composition which we may suppose to accept the three dimensions.¹ Then he says, "If a piece of wax has been modelled in a certain manner, let us suppose that it has dimensions that have been surely and accurately measured and ascertained. Now if that design is changed, none of those dimensions remains as it is. There will be new dimensions different in measurement."²

Avicenna uses the passage above as a justification for the non-identification of the material substance with its dimensions. For, firstly, they are different in quantity from one body to another and, secondly, they are classified under the category of quantity. It is a substance because its matter is always ready to accept a corporeal form (sūrah jismiyyāh) to make one single material substance. The substantiality of the material body neither relates to its matter as a substance, nor to the form as a substance. It relates to the

1. Ibid., I, p.64.

2. Ibid., I, p.64; and Avicenna, Tis'rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭbī'iyāt (Constantinople, 1298) p.60.

readiness (isti'dād)¹ of matter to be moulded into a simple entity and also relates to the readiness of a form to join matter to make this a coherent substance. This impulse to combine is known by Avicenna as a 'quiddity' (māhiyyah). As a result, that by which a material body is a substance, is the 'quiddity'.²

To be precise, it should be noticed that there is a difference between the corporeality of the body (al-jismiyyah) and its dimensions. For Avicenna, the dimensions, as has been said before, are always subject to many changes, while the corporeality, which is the readiness of matter to be fashioned into a particular body is something always permanent in matter. So when it is said that the material body is a substance by its corporeality, that means, by a power (quwwah), i.e. its quiddity. This does not involve the dimensions necessarily included in the definition of the material substance as was the case for al-Kindī. For this reason Avicenna says

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. Qanawāti and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) I, pp.72, 77.

2. Ibid., I, p.61.

that "when a particular body (such as a piece of wax) has been frozen or heated, the amount of its corporeality (the dimensions) will be changed from one case to another, but the corporeality itself, as we have mentioned, stays as it is without any change."¹

The term 'corporeality' in this quotation, is used by Avicenna to refer to something essential in matter, which is the quiddity of the material body, whereas the term 'dimensions' is used to refer to the external shape or features that matter takes when it is subject to change from a particular state to another. These external features or shape enable us to distinguish easily between the individual substances.

There are two alternative interpretations of his view with regard to the definition of the material substance. It may be said that he is simply trying to give another explanation of Aristotle's concept of matter and form in relation to the material substance, an explanation which

1. Ibid., I, p.64.

takes into consideration the need to avoid defining the material substance by the dimensions. The other interpretation is that the material body is a substance because of its permanent quiddity, and that the term 'quiddity' (māhiyyah) i.e. 'corporeality' (al-jismiyyah) is used to refer to the readiness (isti'dād) of matter and form to combine.¹ Therefore the material substance is a substance by reason of its quiddity. The quiddity in the material substance belongs neither to form alone nor to matter alone, but to that which is composed of both.² St. Thomas Aquinas gives the same interpretation of Avicenna's standpoint with regard to the quiddity (essence) of composite substances. He says, "Avicenna, too, declares that the quiddity of composite substances is the composition itself of form and matter."³ This implies that every material substance in this case should have one quiddity. No two quiddities can be found in one single substance.

1. Ibid., I, pp. 67, 68, 73.

2. Ibid., I, p. 76.

3. Saint Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Essence, Translated by Armand Mourer (Toronto 1949) p. 31.

Comparison with Descartes may prove useful at this point, and one should notice particularly a similarity between his view and that of Avicenna. Both use the example of wax to show that the dimensions and qualities are irrelevant to the essence or quiddity of a material substance.

Descartes says, "Take for example, this piece of wax, it is quite fresh ... Let it be placed near the fire - what remained of taste exhales, the evaporated, the colour changes, its figure is destroyed, its size increases, it becomes liquid, it grows hot ... Does the same wax still remain after this change? It must be admitted that it does remain; no one doubts it or judges otherwise."¹

When Avicenna says dimensions are something capable of supposition in the material substance, he is possibly trying to avoid the confusion between the state of appearance and the state of reality, to which many ancient philosophers have

1. Descartes, The second Meditation. The Rationalists, trans. John Veith (New York ?) pp. 123, 124.

succumbed. For him, there will be no distinction between certainty and appearance if the material object has been defined in terms of its dimensions. For the same material object many times appears to have different measurements and different qualities, for instance, the same tower from a short distance and from a greater distance in each case appears to have a different size and shape. Avicenna refuses to deny the certain existence of the material object, so he is opposed to any definition of the material object in terms of its dimensions, because such a definition may cause illusion.

With reference to the characteristics of the material substance, Avicenna considers every material substance, whether simple or compound, as capable of division. He opposes those Muslim theologians (al-mutaklimūn) who have believed that there are very small, indivisible, natural substances which they have called the indivisible particles (al-jawāhir al-farāḍah). Because these small individual bodies are of the same nature, having neither shape nor size, and being invisible, they are prevented for

all of these reasons from being subject to any kind of divisibility.¹ These small, atomic, natural bodies can neither be dissolved into small pieces because of their hardness, nor even be imagined or supposed to be divisible, nor can be divided into parts.² Avicenna opposes this doctrine, believing that every material body is divisible.³

Avicenna distinguishes four kinds of divisibility in the nature of the material body. For him, every material object is subject to one or two kinds of divisibility. Either it is easily breakable, or another tool can be used to help in separating that object into small parts. Also it can be imagined to be divisible into small parts. Moreover, it can be supposed to have such divisibility. Therefore, every material body is subject to the divisibility of destruction or cutting, or the divisibility of imagination, or of supposition.⁴

1. Al-Rāzi, al-mabāhith al-mashrīqiyyah (Haidarabād 1343) II, p.10.

2. Ibid., II, pp.2-25; and al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb nihāyatu al-iq-dām fī 'ilm al-kalam, ed. Alfred Guillaume (Oxford 1934) p.505.

3. Avicenna, al-shifā, eds. Qanawāti and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) I, p.61.

4. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1948) II, pp.13-21.

Three aspects of this doctrine remain to be noticed, firstly that any of the four above-mentioned kinds of divisibility should distinguish each divided subject into measurable parts, sharing equally the total volume of the divided object. Each part of these divisions should have matter and form. Secondly, any divisibility whatsoever, whether it is imaginable, supposable or real, should be based on a finite measure. Thirdly, Avicenna considers divisibility as a basic characteristic of the material substance.¹

Avicenna does not refer to extension (al-
imtidād) as a basic characteristic of the material substance. For him, it is possible to conceive a material body without its having any extension. But it is unlikely that one would perceive or conceive any material object without its having same one or more of the stated kinds of divisibility. For divisibility is naturally to be found as a characteristic of the corporeality of the material

1. Avicenna, al-shifā, eds. Qanawāti and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) I, p.66.

substance. Therefore, divisibility should be considered as characteristic of every material substance as such. But extension which is considered by Avicenna as a dimension, is capable of being supposed only in the material substance, whether that substance is really extended or not.

Furthermore, when Avicenna says that divisibility is the basic characteristic of the material substance he tries to differentiate between the material and the spiritual substances. Such a differentiation is based upon the observable divisibility of the material substance and upon the indivisibility of spiritual substances, which will be explained in the next chapter. For instance, the same piece of wax used as an example of a material substance, can be divided into many parts and each part separately can be considered as a substance. But, in the case of the spiritual substance, no kind of divisibility can apply to it, nor can any human soul be supposed

to be extended in space during a period of time.¹

Our discussion of the presentation of Avicenna's view of the material substance will be followed by the consideration of movement, time, and place as the consequentials of the material substance. In dealing with movement, as the first of the three consequentials, Avicenna identifies it as follows:

"Movement is a first perfection of that which is potential as such, in the sense that it is the gradual actualization of that which is potential."²

To compare Avicenna's definition with that of Aristotle,³ we find that Avicenna considers that the act of actualization follows step by step. No rapid actualization may occur to that which is potential as such. Therefore the motions of creation

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1. Avicenna here may be compared with Descartes 6th Meditation. "... There is a vast difference between mind and body, in respect that body, from its nature, is always divisible, and mind is entirely indivisible." The Rationalists (New York ?) pp.171, 172.
 2. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī' - iyāt (Constantinople/1298) p.63.
 3. "The fulfilment of what exists potentially, in so far as it exists potentially, is motion." The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Physics III, 1; p.254.

and degeneration which always happen rapidly do not appear to be considered by Avicenna as a kind of movement.¹

Movement for Avicenna which is the gradual change of the permanent condition of the body, is either qualitative (kaif) and quantitative (kam) or of situation and place (makān). Movement affects only the external features of the body. It relates only to the following categories: quality, quantity, situation, and place. But the category of substance, being abstracted from any accidental attachment, is not subject to any kind of movement.

It is with regard to movement that Avicenna defines 'time'. He says, "Time is the amount of movement in respect of the antecedent and the consequent."² He also says, "Time is the amount of the circular movement in respect of the antecedent and the consequent not in respect of

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabī' - lyāt, (Constantinople/1298) p.4.

2. Ibid., p.63.

the distance."¹ Avicenna's definition of 'time' is similar to the following definition of Aristotle's "Time is the number of movement in respect of before and after."² Both discriminate the more and less by number, and the more and less of movement by time. Therefore time is the measure of the quantity of change. Time, then, "is a kind of number."³

It must be pointed out that, for Avicenna, time is posterior to the movement. As the mover is the cause of movement, it is also, and secondly, the cause of time.⁴ By regarding time as posterior to movement, Avicenna is forced to depart from al-Kindī's concept of the coexistence of movement, place, and time. Time is not eternal because it has a beginning and end. Its beginning is the beginning of motion, and its end is the end of motion. Clearly time is considered by Avicenna, as by al-Kindī, as a connecting relation anterior and posterior. In this respect no measure of difference can be detected

1. A.M. Goichon, Lexique de la langue philosophique d'Ibn Sina, (Paris 1938) p.147.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) p.292.

3. Ibid., p.292.

4. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabī' - iyāt, (Constantinople/1298) p.12. And Avicenna, ʿayūn al-hikmah, ed. Badawi (Cairo 1954) p.28.

between Avicenna's and al-Kindī's concepts of time and Aristotle's.

To consider place as the last of the consequentials of the material substance, there is likewise no difference between Avicenna's and Aristotle's concepts of place. Both believe that place is neither form, nor matter, nor body, nor the dimensions of the body. It is the boundary of the containing body. It is the inner limits of the container that touch the external limits of the contained body.¹ Avicenna is, here just repeating Aristotle's concept of place, and there is no need to consider this matter further.²

We may conclude that there are both similarities and differences between the Muslim philosophers in the matter of material substance. Upon the definition of 'substance' and related matters they differ widely, but in many details they appear to agree

1. Avicenna, al-Najah, (Cairo 1930) p.124.

2. For further details of Aristotle's view of place I refer to Sir David Ross, Aristotle (London 1968) p.85.

both with each other and with Aristotle. It seems it was the more original definition of Avicenna's that became popular with later Muslim philosophers, such as al-Rāzi in his book al-mabāhith al-mashrīqiyyah,¹ and al-Ghazālī in Maqāsid al-falāsifah.² Both adhere to Avicenna's definition rather than to that of al-Kindī.

1. F. al-Rāzi, al-mabāhith al-mashrīqiyyah, Haidarabād/1343) II, pp.4, 5.

2. Al-Ghazālī, Maqāsid al-falāsifah, (Cairo 1936) II, pp. 10, 11, 12.

CHAPTER 3

The substantiality of the soul

It is not only material bodies that can be termed 'substances' according to al-Kindī and Avicenna, but soul too is regarded as a substance of a different kind. The primary topics to be raised in connexion with soul as a substance are as follows: (1) The definition of the soul. (2) Proofs ^{of} about the substantiality of the soul. (3) The faculties of the soul. (4) The relation between the soul and the body, as two different substances. (5) The relation between human souls as separable substances. The first two of these problems will be the subject matter of this chapter. The other three problems will be considered in the next chapter.

Al-Kindī, in his letter Fī ḥudūd al-ashyā' wa rusūmihā¹ divided soul into three kinds, nutritive

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.165. And S. M. Stern, "Note on Al-Kindī's Treatise on Definitions and Description of Things", The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, (1959-1960) p.33.

(al-ghādhīyah), perceptive (al-hisīyyah), and rational ('āqilah). The nutritive soul is defined as "The perfection (kamāl) of a natural body having an organism which receives life." But this is not sufficient to define the perceptive and the rational souls. Further qualification is required to make the definition suitable to embrace the perceptive and the rational souls. Therefore the complete definition is as follows: "The soul is a first perfection (kamāl awwal) of a natural body having life potentially."¹

In differentiating rational soul (al-nafs al-'āqilah) from perceptive soul (al-nafs al-hāssah), he says: "And it is also said that the soul is a rational substance having self-movement according to a ^{harmonic} composite number."² Soul with regard to this

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafīyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.165.

2. Ibid., I, p.165. It may be that al-Kindī in the last part of the definition refers to the powers of the soul which he has mentioned in his letters, "FI māhiyat al-naum wa al-ru'yyah", ibid. p.294, and "FI al-jawāhir al-khams", ibid., II, p.9.

Notice: Al-Kindī does not explain what he means by the term "according to a composite number" (Bi'adad mu'allaf). The grandson of Plato, Xenocrates, defined soul as a self-moving number. R. Heinze, Xenocrates (Leipzig 1892) Fragments 60-65.

definition is a substance with two functions. The first function is as the origin of any reasoning which occurs in rational human beings. The second function is as the origin of the movement of the living body, whether or not that movement is deliberate, perceptive, or rational. Also al-Kindī defines the soul as the origin of life of the human body. He says: "The essence of life of the human body is that which we call soul, therefore it is necessary to investigate whether it is a substance or an accident."¹ Soul here is not considered to be life itself, but rather it is the cause of the life of the human body.

Lastly, al-Kindī defines the soul as the "rational form of the living"² (šūrat al-hayy al-'aqliyyah). We have explained in the previous chapter that he distinguishes between two kinds of forms, one sensible (šūrah taqa' taht al-hiss) and the other rational (šūrah taqa' taht al-jins).³

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.266.

2. Ibid., I, p.267.

3. Ibid., II, p.20.

The former al-Kindī regards as the external features or sensible shape of the body, while the latter is the universal, i.e. genus and species. When he defines 'soul' as a rational form, he means that it is the "form of the species" (al-šūrah al-anaw'iyah). This is separable from the body, beyond the perceptible features, having neither shape nor size nor quality.

When Avicenna examines the matter of the definition of the soul, he differs considerably from al-Kindī. For Avicenna is anxious to prove the existence of the soul before making any attempt to define it. For this reason Avicenna says: "The first thing we have to do is to prove what we call soul, and then we will speak about what comes after that."¹ Moreover, he says: "He who wants to describe something has to prove its existence before giving any description!",² whereas al-Kindī does not

1. Avicenna, De Anima I,1, pp. 9, 10. These references are ^{of} the discourses, chapter, and pages of Jan Bokaš (ed.), Psychologie d'Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) d'après son oeuvre al-sifā (Prague 1950).

2. Avicenna, Hadiyat al-ra'īs, mabthath'an al-quwa' al-mafsāniyah, au kitāb fī al-nafs 'alā sunnat al-ikhtisār, ed. E. Van Dyeck (Cairo 1325) p.20.

mention whether the definition of the soul comes before the proof or vice versa. It is possible that Avicenna here follows Plato in the first Alcibiades,¹ where he was taking into consideration the existence of the soul before its definition.²

In dealing with the soul, from Avicenna's point of view, we shall tackle the problem in what he considered to be the appropriate order. Therefore, it is necessary to refer to some of his proofs of the existence of the soul, before we are able to consider his definition. The first of Avicenna's proofs to be mentioned here, is based on the analysis of self-perception. His demonstration shows that the self or the soul cannot be perceived through the senses ('an ṭarīq al-ḥawāss), nor through the mind (al-'aql), nor through any of the other members of the body, like the heart and the brain. His refusal to identify sense, mind, and the other members of the body

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1. Numerous Arabic translations of Plato were available, and although not influenced by Plato to the extent that al-Farābī was, Avicenna would probably have read many of Plato's works, especially the Timaeus, Republic, Alcibiades I. Ibn al-Nadīm, Kitāb al-fihrist (Leipzig 1872) p.246.
 2. Plato, Alcibiades I 130 ff. And Mahmūd Qāsim, fī al-nafs wa al-'aql li falāsifat al-'ighrīq wa al-'islām (Cairo 1954) p.77.

as the origin of self-perception is based upon the following grounds. Since the senses deal with things which exist outside ourselves, they cannot be the instrument of self-perception. Nor can the mind (al-'aql) be the means of self-perception, because the mind forms knowledge through demonstration, and no demonstration can be given without the employment of a middle term.¹ Moreover, self-perception cannot depend on the other members of the body like the heart and the brain, because these faculties do not perceive directly but only through some other intermediary. Therefore, the principle of self-perception is what Avicenna calls "soul".²

A proof similar to this is given in al-Shifā, where Avicenna asks his reader to imagine himself created as a complete adult, floating blind-folded in space, unable to touch anything, not even his own limbs which are kept separate from each other. All

1. By demonstration is meant here a syllogistic proposition e.g. if B is predicable of A, and C is predicable of B, then C is predicable of A. Knowledge of this sort of reasoning cannot be received immediately without the employment of a middle term. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1955) *Analytica priora* I,4.

2. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā, (Cairo 1949) II, pp.305 to 324.

he may do is to meditate upon his own existence, and it is his essence (dhātuh) alone of which he will be aware. As he can conceive of no dimension when in this state, this essence will be abstracted from all length, breadth, and height. Thus it is something different from his body: it is the soul.¹

Many more proofs of the existence of the soul are scattered throughout Avicenna's works, but it is soul as a substance with which we are now concerned, and for this purpose it is necessary to examine the definition of the soul. The first definition of the soul for Avicenna is quoted from his book al-Najāh (II,5) where he refers to three kinds of soul. They are the vegetable soul, which is "The first perfection of a natural body which is an organism in so far as it reproduces, grows, and is nourished." The animal soul, which is "The first perfection of a natural body which is an organism in so far as it perceives individual things and moves by volition." The human soul (al-nafs al-insāniyyah) is "The first

1. Avicenna, De Anima, I,1, p.18.

perfection (kamāl) of a natural body which is an organism in so far as it performs acts of a rational choice and deduction through opinion and in so far as it perceives universal matter."¹

Although Avicenna agrees to define all souls by the term "first perfection" (kamāl awwal), according to the above definition, he refuses to refer to the human soul by any term that implies its being^a power of a body or its form. For him, as ~~is~~ is explained in his De Anima², the human soul can be called neither faculty nor form, in the Aristotelian sense. For Avicenna these terms ("faculty" and "form") as they are used by Aristotle are only applicable to the vegetable and animal souls.³

Probably the basic difference between Aristotle's and Avicenna's definitions of the soul is that Aristotle considers every soul as a substance in the

1. Avicenna, al-Najah (? 1357/1938) p.158; and F. Rahman, Avicenna's Psychology (London 1952) p.25.

2. Avicenna, De Anima, I,1, pp.9-11.

3. Sir David Ross, Aristotle (London 1968) p.134.

sense of the form of the body. Aristotle says: "Hence the soul must be a substance in the sense of the form of a natural body having life potentially within it. But substance is an actuality, and the soul is the actuality of a body as above characterized."¹

Avicenna refused such an Aristotelian definition because it does not distinguish the human soul from other souls, and because Aristotle's definition relates the matter of the substantiality of the human soul to its being a form. Avicenna says: "If anyone calls the soul 'substance' in the sense that it is a form, without considering it as having a meaning more general than the term 'form', i.e. in the sense that the idea that the soul is a substance is equivalent to the idea that it is a form, (this is what certain people said), there is no place for discussion and controversy with him. For the sense of his expression: the soul is a substance, as it is a form, is similar to his expression the form is a substance. In this case, it will be as if he were to say the form is a form, or shape, and man is a man, or a human being, and this is nonsense."²

1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) On the soul, II,1, p.555.

2. Avicenna, De Anima I,1, pp.12, 13.

Thus it is clear that Avicenna regards the statement that soul is substance because it is form, as a tautology that does not even merit debate.

The second definition of Avicenna's will be quoted from his letter Fi'l hudūd. He says: "'soul' is a common name having two meanings. The first defines it as a first perfection of a natural body which is an organism having life potentially in it. This meaning has been allocated as a common definition to the human, the animal, and the vegetable souls. Whereas the second meaning of the term 'soul', which is employed to define the human (al-nafs al-insāniyyah) and the angelic soul (al-nafs al-malakiyyah), is the following. Soul which is not a material substance, is a first perfection of voluntarily moved body, which it moves actually or potentially according to a rational principle. The intellect which is potential is a property of the human soul, and that which is actual is a property of the universal angelic soul. And it is said that just as there exists both the intellect in the universal sense (al-'aql al-kullī), and the intellect

of the universe ('aql al-kull) i.e. world-intellect, so also the soul in the universal sense (al-nafs al-kullī), and the soul of the universe (nafs al-kull) i.e. world-soul, are referred to."¹

The first part of the above definition has been explained in the last pages, and there is no need to consider it further. The second part of the definition is complex. It has been devoted to defining two kinds of souls, which are respectively the 'human' (al-nafs al-insāniyyah) and the 'angelic' (al-nafs al-malakiyyah). Each soul has to be considered as a non-material substance, as well as the principle of voluntary rational movement, ^hwether _i that movement is potential or actual. When Avicenna says this, he distinguishes between the movement of souls, which is a pure rational movement having no material involvement, and the movement of the material substance which is held to be in place and time. He also distinguishes between the human soul (al-nafs al-insāniyyah), whose rational movement is

1. Avicenna, Tis'rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabī'īyyāt (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

potential, and the angelic soul (al-nafs al-malakiyyah), whose rational movement is actual. The human and the angelic souls are considered to be substances in the sense that they are perfections (kamālāt), because they are the principle or the origin of the intellectual knowledge of their bodies, whether human or angelic.¹

In this definition Avicenna also uses 'soul' (1) as a universal term (al-nafs al-kullī) and (2) in the sense of 'soul of the universe' (nafs al-kull). These two senses of 'soul' are distinguished in the same manner as those of 'intellect' (1) as a universal term (al-'aql al-kullī) and (2) in the sense of 'intellect of the universe' ('aql al-kull). The intellect in the universal sense (al-'aql al-kullī) for Avicenna is a general concept which embraces every human intellect, and is a nominal not a real concept. For he says: "The intellect in the universal sense is a rational concept predicable of many intellects, belonging to many individuals of the human species. This term does not exist as an actual fact, but is rather an abstract concept."²

1. The angelic bodies, i.e. heavenly bodies, will be considered in conjunction with the substantiality of the intellect.

2. Avicenna, Tis'rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'īyyāt (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

In the same manner the soul in the universal sense (al-nafs al-kullī) is no more than a general concept, which embraces the soul of every living being. For instance the soul of mankind embraces every human soul. Avicenna explains this as follows: "The soul in the universal sense (al-nafs al-kullī) is a general concept which is applied to many individual entities and each of these entities belongs to an individual person."¹

However, the intellect of the universe ('aql al-kull) and the soul of the universe (nafs al-kull) are both self-existing entities. It seems that Avicenna here follows Plato's Timaeus² in presupposing a single soul which is responsible for the movement of the world as a whole, and a world-intellect that is placed in this soul.³ In Avicenna's case, the intellect of the universe seems to be regarded as the totality of the pure intellects. He says: "The intellect of the

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-Ṭabī'iyat (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

2. Francis M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (New York 1957) p.33 (30 B).

3. Plato says: "In virtue of this reasoning, when he framed the universe, he fashioned reason within soul and soul within body." Ibid. p.33.

universe is the totality of the separable entities which have no concern with matter in any manner."¹ While he regards the soul of the universe (nafs al-kull), or world-soul, as the sum of the souls of the celestial bodies. For he says: "The soul of the universe is the totality of the immaterial substances, which are the perfections of the celestial bodies, which they move according to rational choice!"²

Yet in spite of the great difference between the soul of the universe (world-soul) and the soul in the universal sense (al-nafs al-kullī), Avicenna regards them both as substances, just as in the case of each individual soul.

Having considered the definition of the soul, we must now move on to the proofs of its substantiality. In dealing with al-Kindī's view concerning the substantiality of the soul, we are confronted with a lack of any detailed proof in the works which we possess.³

1. Avicenna, Tis'rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt (Constantinople 1298) p.56.

2. Ibid., p.57.

3. George N. Atiyeh in his book Al-Kindī says: "The writings of al-Kindī on the soul are neither numerous nor comprehensive."
George N. Atiyeh, Al-Kindī (Rawalpindi 1966) p.99.

Therefore we depend entirely on fragments from various works of his.

Al-Kindī gives the following analysis which may be taken as an indication of the substantiality of the soul. He says: "God has created all the universe from substances. And these substances are either simple, which is neither form nor matter, or compound substance. The compound substance which is shaped matter, is distinguishable into non-living and living substances. The non-living substance which is not soul (or has no soul), is the four elements. The living substance is also distinguishable into two which are the non-rational and the rational substance. The non-rational living compound substance, either has only the ability of growth as its property like the plant, or has the ability of sensation like the animal. The compound living rational substance is either concerned with the human or the higher individuals (al-ashkhās al-‘āliyah) (celestial bodies). The latter which concerns the higher individuals is not subject to destruction, whereas with the former, which concerns the human individuals, each of its individuals is subject to dissolution."¹

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, pp. 257, 258.

Although al-Kindī in the previous passage does not give a detailed argument to prove that the soul is a substance, it may be admitted that he is considering it as one of the substances that exist in the universe. For it may be identified with the simple substance which is neither form nor matter, as al-Kindī constantly refers to soul as a simple substance. For instance he says: "The soul is a simple substance ... Its essence is of divine origin."¹

It is not clear how and in what manner al-Kindī, in the previous passage, considers every living compound body as substance. For we do not know whether the term 'substance' is given to it because it is composed of form and matter, or whether it has been given to the principle of life (the soul) which is in it. If it has been given to the principle of life, we should like to know whether this term has been given to every soul, animal and vegetable alike.

It may also be asked what al-Kindī means by the term 'higher individuals' (al-ashkhāṣ al-‘āliyah).

1. Ibid., I, p.273.

2. Ibid., I, p.258.

This question is explained in his letter Fī al-'illah al-latī lahā yabrud a'lā al-jau wa yaskhun mā qarub min al-arḡ.¹ He means by this term the celestial bodies, sun, moon, and planets, all of which he seems to consider as compound rational bodies.² They are differentiated from all other living compound bodies by their being indestructible.

It seems that al-Kindī in his letter Fī annahu tūjadu jawāhir lā ajsām, has the intention of demonstrating the matter of the proof of the substantiality of the soul. For he says: "It is necessary to investigate whether the soul is a substance or an accident; and if it is proved as a substance, we should enquire also whether it is a body or not."³ As it appears from the letter under consideration, his reasoning lacks coherence and consistency.

As for al-Kindī's proof of the substantiality of the soul, he says: "soul is the rational form of the individual living being in the sense that it is

1. Ibid., II, pp.91-98.

2. Ibid., I, p.258.

3. Ibid., I, p.266.

its species. Since the individual living being is a substance, then its species is also a substance. Therefore the soul which is described as a species, is also a substance in the sense that it is not a body."¹ Al-Kindī here just repeats a traditional view which distinguishes between rational form (al-ṣūrah al-‘aqliyyah) and a perceptible form.

Even though the manner of demonstration (which is the synthetic method) and the terminology employed in this letter are Aristotelian, the purpose of demonstration, which is the proof of the substantiality of the soul, is not. For Aristotle, as it appears, gives no clue whether the human soul is capable of being proved as a substance or not.²

As far as al-Kindī's proof of the substantiality of the soul is concerned, it is difficult to say more in this context than to mention the following statement. He says: "Things are either corporeal or non-corporeal; the non-corporeal things are either

1. Ibid., I, p.266.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) De Anima, II,1, p.555.

substances or accidents. Man consists of body, soul and accidents. Soul is a substance, not a body."¹
We are left to decide for ourselves why it is a substance. One may surmise that al-Kindī desired to emphasise the substantiality of the soul, but that he did not fulfil all his aims in this field. It is left for Avicenna to tackle the subject later, and to state clearly the case for the soul's substantiality.

To consider this matter from Avicenna's point of view, it seems that it has been given special consideration in his letter Fī al-sa'ādah wa'l-ḥujaj al'ashrah 'alā ann al-nafs al'insāniyyah jawhar² where Avicenna gives ten arguments³ which have been summarised and translated into English, as follows.⁴

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1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.173; and S. M. Stern Isaac Israeli (Oxford 1958) p.28.
 2. Avicenna, Risālah fī al-sa'ādah wa'l-ḥujaj al'ashrah 'alā anna al-nafs al'insāniyyah jawhar (Haidarabad 1354/1935) p.5.
 3. In al-Najah (Cairo 1938) pp.177-180, one will find another representation of the arguments I, II, V, VIII, X. In his work, Hadiyat al-ra'is ... Mabhath 'an al-quwa al-nafsāniyyah, au kitāb fī al-nafs 'ala sunnati al'ikhtisār, ed. E. Van Dyck (Cairo 1325/1907) pp.67-72, one will find a similar representation of the arguments I, II, III, IV, V, VIII.
 4. The above are not translations of Avicenna's arguments, but are paraphrases of them.

I. Argument:

Avicenna starts his first argument by assuming that there are innate universal ideas written somewhere in a place, i.e. bearer (ḥāmīl) of the human body.¹ These ideas may be exemplified by the following propositions. (1) The all is more than the part. (2) The same thing cannot be true and false at the same time. Now, if the place (the recipient) of these ideas is not an immaterial substance, let the received ideas be accidents. Yet, it is known, in terms of the definition of 'substance', that the accident cannot exist by itself, because for such an existence it needs a bearer (ḥāmīl). Therefore the bearer of the idea is a substance.

It is still to be known whether the receiver (bearer) of the universal ideas is the body or a substance different from the body. According to Avicenna the place of the universal ideas is not a

1. The first part of this argument may be used also as a proof of the innateness of the ideas. Averroës in his De Anima refutes Avicenna's view of the innate ideas. Averroës, De Anima, (Haidarabad 1366/1940) p.81.

body; ^{if it were} ~~then~~ the universal ideas should be divisible together with the body.¹ Since no idea is subject to divisibility and destruction, the body is not the place (the recipient) of the universal ideas.

Moreover, neither is the corporeal form which is subject to divisibility along with its body, the recipient for which we are searching. Nor does the form of the species (al-šūrah al-ḥawā'iyah) which is a general concept and refers to individuals in abstraction without being located in any body, act as the place of the universal ideas. Therefore, the place of the universal ideas in relation to the human body is a substance of a different nature.²

II. Argument:

In this argument the proof of the substantiality of the soul has been considered in the light of the function of the parts of the body as tools of sense perception, and the function of the soul as the

1. Divisibility is the basic characteristic of the material body, see above, Chapter II, pp.61-63.

2. Avicenna, Risālah fī al-sa'ādah wa'l-ḥujaj al-'ashrah 'alā anna al-nafs al-'insāniyyah jawhar, (Haidarabad, 1354/1935) p.5; and al-Najāh (Cairo, 1938) pp.174-177.

origin of thinking and rational knowledge. It says: "None of the bodies is the place of wisdom, because no human body can receive wisdom (al-ḥikmah) directly without the help of something else, say a power, or form, or meaning. None of these 'faculties' (al-quwā) is able to carry out the function of perceiving without the help of the body which is their instrument. Also it is observable that the strong impression which is produced in these faculties through the sense organ is able to destroy the weak impression. Furthermore, when the faculties of perception have stopped using the other faculties of the body and are engaged with that strong impression, in this case they are unable to perceive or even to reflect upon the weak impression. But no such thing occurs to the substance which is the place of wisdom. For it is observable that whenever its knowledge increases, its power of thinking (quwwat al-ta'āqqul) increases as a result, and it is able to reflect upon all the knowledge it has, even without the help of the faculties of the body. Therefore, if the place of wisdom is a body, then the

result will be of a different kind. Thus the substance which the human being uses for reasoning is not a body but a substance of a different nature."¹

III. Argument:

This argument tries logically to prove that the soul is a substance, by the use of the law of contradiction as applied to the mind, not to the body. It says that if there were some rational knowledge located in the body, then it would be unable to conceive the opposites together in a single impression. Since the opposites are supposed to be grasped rationally in a single act of cognition, then the receiver (the place) of rational knowledge is not a material substance. It is a substance different from the body.²

IV. Argument:

The matter of substantiality of the soul in this argument has been considered with reference to the kind of action that the body and the soul

1. Ibid., pp.7-8.

2. Ibid., p.9.

would produce, when each is considered as the place of wisdom. It says: "If the body is the place of wisdom, the acceptance of wisdom should relate to it in a passive way. For, in fact, any body is supposed to receive the forms, whatsoever they may be, in a passive manner. But the substance which is actually reasoning the results, is supposed to conceive knowledge, through ~~the~~ deduction and the analysis of the ideas which are innate in its essence, in an active way. Therefore the substance which is the origin of the active action of thinking is not a body, but a substance different from the body."¹

V. Argument:

This argument takes into consideration the proof of the soul as a immaterial substance in terms of the biological changes that may occur to a human body during life. It says: "It is observed that the human bodies and their faculties begin to deteriorate when they have reached old age. Now if the place of wisdom and knowledge is the body, or any of its

1. Ibid., p.9.

faculties, in a manner such that the perfection of the place of wisdom and knowledge relates to the perfection of the body and its faculties, then old age should hinder the rational substance from conceiving knowledge and wisdom. But in fact there are many people who have reached a very old age, and in spite of the deterioration of their bodies, are still able to make rational distinctions in a perfect manner. Now, if the place of wisdom and knowledge is the body, then no such rational distinction could be made by them. Therefore, as a result, the place of wisdom is not the body but a substance of different nature."¹

VI
27. Argument:

The proof of the substantiality of the soul has been argued here in terms of the harmony that has been naturally established among the elements of physical bodies. It says: "It is observable in physics (natural science) that the human body has been composed in a perfect harmony, where no hindrance or disobedience can be noticed among its

1. Ibid., p.9.

elements in their actions and reactions, in the sense that it does not reject or resist any action that is supposed to originate from different elements of the same body. Now if the place of wisdom and the origin of rational thinking is the body, then there should be the same sort of harmony between it and the faculties of the actualisation of thoughts into deeds. But in fact whenever the reason wants to commit any action, it faces many objections from the other faculties of the body, which it has to overcome in order to commit that action. Consequently the origin of thinking and of man's will is not the body, but a substance of a different nature."¹

VII. Argument:

In this argument the proof of the soul as a substance is considered together with the fact that ~~the~~ material objects are supposed to move in a place whereas the soul is not. It says: "When ~~the~~ bodies act upon each other, the body which reacts passively ~~cannot~~ cannot get rid of or stop the action which is produced in it, unless it leaves its place

1. Ibid., pp.9-10.

and is separated from the active body. But the substance which is the origin of thinking, however it may be affected by the other faculties of the body, does not need to move in place in order to stop the action of those faculties. Therefore the substance which is the origin of knowledge is not a body but a substance of different nature."¹

VIII. Argument:

In this argument the proof of the soul as an immaterial substance is considered from the point of view of the divisibility of ~~the~~ material bodies, and the indivisibility of ~~the~~ infinite immaterial objects. It says: "The geometrical and the numerical forms are infinite (and indivisible) in their essence. Yet the human power of reasoning is able to conceive all these forms, however many they may be. Consequently the human power of reasoning is infinite, and since all that is divisible is finite, this power is also indivisible.

Now, with regard to the fact that the faculties of the body are divisible with their bodies, and

1. Ibid. p.10.

the human power of rational thinking is indivisible, then the place of wisdom is not the body but a substance of a different nature."¹

IX. Argument:

In this argument the proof of the substantiality of the soul has been drawn from the ability of the soul and inability of the body to conceive, to form, and to remember knowledge. It says: "If knowledge is an accident located in the body, then knowledge cannot be repeated or remembered, when it has been forgotten. But it is noticeable that one can repeat knowledge and reflect upon it, even after it has been forgotten, without the help of the faculties of the body. Therefore, the place of wisdom is not a body, but a substance of a different nature. This immaterial substance has as its attribute the ability to receive different abstract forms of knowledge, keep them potentially, and reflect on them any time it wishes. But the material substance is neither able to accept more than one corporeal form, nor can it receive any sort of knowledge. Therefore,

1. Ibid., p.10.

that which knows and remembers is not the body but a substance of a different kind."¹

X. Argument:

In this argument, self-perception is used to prove that the soul is an immaterial substance. It says: "The tool that man uses for reasoning is not a body but a rational power in the human body. This rational power can conceive itself through itself without the help of any external intermediary. It is known (in terms of the definition of 'substance'), that everything that is able to conceive itself through itself is a substance. In this regard the rational power of self-perception is a substance."²

Concluding Avicenna's arguments for the substantiality of the soul, we should like to make the following observations. In these ten detailed arguments Avicenna is attacking the problem of the substantiality of the soul from different points of view, using different evidence in each case.

1. Ibid., p.11.

2. Ibid., pp. 11, 12.

Furthermore, many other arguments of a similar kind appear in other places in his works.¹ Although many of his arguments are subject to controversy and discussion, there is still a sound basis of reasoning to be found in them, and they represent the first step forward by an Islamic philosopher in a field that was later to become the subject of considerable debate.²

Yet, however convincing Avicenna's arguments for the substantiality of the soul might be, even he, just as al-Kindī before him, was unable to clarify the question of the soul's essential nature and characteristics. Neither their proof of its existence nor their proof of its substantiality could enlighten their readers as to what the soul really is. Our consideration of these proofs shows

1. See footnote 3 below, p.88.

2. I refer to Averroes, Tahāfut at tahāfut. (Beirut 1930) pp.543-575, where this matter is a subject of controversy between al-Ghazālī and Averroes. But, it should be noticed, even though al-Ghazālī attacks most of Avicenna's proofs of the substantiality of the soul, al-Ghazālī himself uses the same proofs for the existence of the soul.

that the Muslim philosophers are not content to accept Aristotle's doctrine of the human soul, particularly with regard to its substantiality and separability. Indeed, in many ways Avicenna appears rather to follow Plato in his dialogue Alcibiades,¹ where Socrates is seen to prove the existence of the soul as a separable substance using a similar argumentation.

We might ask why the Muslim philosophers devote all this effort to proving that besides the material substance there is spiritual substance. Do they argue against some of the materialists of their time? This may be one of the main reasons, although there does not seem to be any positive evidence to justify this claim.² Probably, two factors are involved here, one philosophical, the other religious. In a philosophical context, the Muslim philosophers who are arguing for the separability from the body of the soul, as a substance, have to

1. Plato, Alcibiades I, 130 ff.

2. Mahmūd Qāsim, Fī al-Nafs wa al'aql, (Cairo 1954) p.78.

justify their demonstration on rational grounds. Consequently they devote much effort to reaching that goal. With regard to the religious aspect, it seems that al-Kindī and Avicenna are justifying their position as philosophers. For philosophy was associated with Aristotle, and Aristotle's views on the soul were considered atheistic. They would have been regarded as non-believers if they had not drawn the essential distinction between the human soul and the human body. The philosophical doctrine to which they adhere seems capable of reconciling the philosopher with the man of religion by emphasising this very distinction.

CHAPTER 4

The Faculties of the Soul
and its Relationships

In the previous chapter we examined the questions of the definition and the substantiality of the soul, and we shall now proceed to discuss three aspects of its nature: firstly, its separate faculties; secondly, its relation to the body; and, lastly, the relation existing between individual souls.

The number and nature of the soul's faculties are basic to any discussion of the circumstances of its existence. In this connection, it is essential to refer to al-Kindī's letter Fi māhiyyat al-anawm wa al-ru'ayyah.¹ In this text he refers to the soul as having three, distinct, main powers. They are, respectively, the 'sensation' (al-quwwat al-hāssah), the 'formative power' (al-quwwat al-muṣawwirah), and the 'rational power' (al-quwwat al-'aqliyyah).

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.293.

In addition one must mention that al-Kindī, in his book Fī al-jawāhir al-khams,¹ refers to his earlier book Fī al-maḡūlāt,² where he has distinguished the power of the soul into 'sensation' and 'mind'. However, the latter book is untraceable, so our investigation of his concept of the faculties of soul will be restricted (primarily) to the book Fī māhiyyat al-ḥnawm wa al-ru'yah.

It seems that al-Kindī follows Aristotle's classification of the powers of the soul by putting the faculty of sensation (al-quwwat al-hāssah) at the beginning and the faculty of reasoning (al-quwwat al-'āqilah) at the end of any epistemological operation. For Aristotle, every man is born with the faculty of sensation, and from this faculty, memory (al-dhākirah) is produced, from memory experience (al-khibrah), and, lastly, from experience theoretical and practical

1. Ibid., II, p.9.

2. Ibid., II, p.9; and Ibn al-Nadīm, al-Fihrist. (Leipzig 1872) p.256.

knowledge.¹ Al-Kindī considers the path to rational knowledge as consisting of three steps only: 'sensation'; the 'formative power' (al-muṣawwirah); and the 'intellect' (al-'aql). Perhaps al-Kindī includes Aristotle's 'memory' and 'experience' under the single heading of 'formative power', and the 'practical' and the 'theoretical' powers under the 'intellect'.

Thus the powers of the soul for al-Kindī would become three only. Two of these faculties will be considered here, whereas the 'intellect' as a faculty will be dealt with in the next chapter.

According to al-Kindī's text Fī māhiyyat al-ḥanawm wa al-ru'yah, the 'sensation' is supposed to perceive the sensible forms which are immanent in the objects perceived. On the other hand, the 'formative power' is supposed to deal with the forms of things in abstraction, having no connection with the external world. That is to say, that

1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) *Metaphysics* I,1, p.689.

'formative power' is sometimes a kind of a mental reflection, and sometimes a kind of introspection, where the soul does not use its external senses at all.¹

There is a very important problem with regard to the theory of knowledge, raised by al-Kindī in his letter Fī māhiyyat al-~~ḥ~~nawm wa al-ru'yah, concerning the direction of the soul towards the object of thinking, whether that object is real or fictitious. He says: "It may happen that we find in the awakened person, whose soul is using, in the normal way, some of his faculties of sense, that the forms of those things which are the object of his thinking, are represented to him as though he was actually perceiving them. The more his mind is reflecting upon the object of thinking without the use of the senses, the more it appears as if he is perceiving it by his sensation. Moreover there are many cases in which one is indulging in deep thinking where one is using neither sight

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.295.

nor hearing when it often happens that the thinker does not answer any one who calls him. He is even unaware of things which are in front of his eyes. When this thinker has been asked, after he has ceased from this deep thinking, about certain objects that were in front of his eyes, he does not recognise them."¹

Although this letter is primarily concerned with sleep and dreaming, his epistemology is sufficiently consistent for us to include it in our present discussion of al-Kindī's conception of the operation of thinking. He gives the impression that the first stage is the direction of the power of 'sensation' towards the perceived object. In this stage, the soul can grasp sensible forms that have been perceived directly from a material object. The second stage is that the soul directs the 'formative power' towards the 'sensible forms' which have been reproduced in the soul through the senses. Then, as a third

1. Ibid., I, pp.295, 296.

stage, when the 'formative power' directs its operation towards these reproductions or impressions for forming rational concepts, these rational concepts become the object of the intellect, which is a faculty in the soul.¹

Let us now consider in more detail the distinction between the 'sensation' and the 'formative faculty'. The primary difference is that the 'formative power' is not supposed to perceive the material substances, or any quality they may have, as has been mentioned before.

The second difference is that the sensation represents the external objects as they are. But the 'formative power' when it represents any imaginary object, is able to perceive it as it wishes. Therefore the scope of the formative power is wider than the scope of the sensation. For the formative power can perceive an imaginary human being with his body covered with feathers, or with horns on his head. But no such imaginary object can be perceived by sensation.²

1. Ibid., I, pp.300-302.

2. Ibid., I, pp.299,300.

The third difference is that the 'sensation' is passive, while the 'formative power' is active. The work of 'sensation' is no more than to make copies and pictures of the external objects.¹ But the work of the 'formative power' is wider than receiving copies of the corporeal forms abstracted from their matter. The 'formative power' can arrange, classify, and suggest any alteration it wishes to the forms of knowledge which it receives. There is a kind of a subjective interference that is exercised by the 'formative power' upon the object of thinking, but no such interference of sense perception can originate from the sensation.²

The fourth difference is that the 'sensation' is subject to any decay or disability that may occur to any of the sense organs. But such a decay and disability has no effect upon the 'formative power'.³

Moving on to Avicenna's view of the faculties of the soul, one finds that he distinguishes the

1. Ibid., I, p.299.

2. Ibid., I, p.299.

3. Ibid., I, p.298.

powers of the soul into 'perceptive' (idrākiyyah) and 'intellectual' ('aqliyyah).¹ The perceptive powers may be further distinguished into the external and the internal powers.²

The external powers are the usual five senses, sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste. There is no basic difference between Avicenna and al-Kindī on the point of the number and the function of the five senses, except that, while Avicenna attempts at length to refute the Platonic theory of sight as proposed in Timaeus,³ and accepts an Aristotelian explanation,⁴ this question is not considered by al-Kindī.

The powers of 'internal perception' (quwwā al-hiss al-bāṭinah) for Avicenna are: common sense (al-hiss al'āmm), representation (al-muṣawwirah), estimation (al-mufakkirah),⁵ and memory (al-mutadhakkir). The 'common sense' receives the

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1. The intellectual powers will be considered in the next chapter.
 2. Avicenna, De Anima, I,5, p.4.
 3. Plato, Timaeus, 45 B, 67 C.
 4. Sir David Ross, Aristotle (London 1968) pp.136-139.
 5. This faculty, when it appears in animal, appears to be known as imagination (al-mukhayyalah). De Anima IV,1, p.160.

corporeal forms, which are copied by the five senses and transmitted to it from them. The function of the faculty of representation is to preserve what the common sense has received from the five senses, even in the absence of the material object; that of the estimative power is to perceive the non-sensible implication that exists in the individual substances; and, finally, that of the retentive faculty (memory) is to retain what the estimative power perceives.¹

To conclude the discussion of the faculties of soul, it seems necessary to point out that neither al-Kindī nor Avicenna regards the faculties of soul as substances. They are merely the instruments of the soul, which it uses in order to acquire knowledge. Even the intellect, as a faculty of the soul, cannot be considered to be a substance, as will be explained in the following chapter. It is interesting to note the implication that the soul must exist in a body in order to use these faculties.

1. For a more detailed account of these faculties see, Avicenna De Anima, IV, pp.157-163.

This brings us on to the relation between the soul as a substance and its body. There is no doubt, as noted above, that the Muslim philosophers appose Aristotle's claim that the relation between the human soul and its body is no more than that of two elements in one single substance. It would be useful to examine what arguments they have advanced against such a claim.

We will first present al-Kindī's view as expressed in his letter al-Qawl fī al-nafs al-mukhtaṣar min kitāb Aristū wa Aflāṭin wa sā'ir al-falāsifah.¹ Here, he is claiming to summarize Aristotle's view on the soul, yet his summary owes much to Plato and the Pythagoreans. Although Aristotle's De Anima is supposed to be the object of interpretation,² al-Kindī shows himself more sympathetic towards these other philosophers.

Al-Kindī neither in the text under consideration, nor in his other writings which are known to

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.272.

2. Ibid., I, p.273.

us, refers to a relation of coexistence between the body and the soul, as two different substances, even though this is the view of Aristotle.¹ However, it is difficult to be certain that al-Kindī believes in the pre-existence of the soul before the creation of its body, as Plato did. The relation between the soul and the body during the process of generation may be one either of coexistence, or of the soul's pre-existence; there seems to be no other alternative.

The duty of the soul during the earthly life, in al-Kindī's previous text, is to direct the body in the right way, by not allowing it to regard sensual pleasures as the only aim and end. Such an interpretation seems to be Platonic in character, for, to depict the relationship between body and soul, al-Kindī has recourse to a metaphor in which the body is an untamed horse and the soul, its rider.² This bears a similarity to Plato's analogy in the Phaedrus, where the body is likened to a chariot,

1. David Ross, Aristotle (London 1968) p.132.

2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. by Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.273.

of which the rational soul is the rider and the other powers of the soul are the horses.¹ Al-Kindī's metaphor owes a debt also to another Platonic conception, that of the body as a ship in which the soul resides as a pilot.²

In the same treatise of al-Kindī's the soul and the body are said to be two different substances which temporarily share a common existence during earthly life. For they are not once and forever tied together in such a way that no separation at all can take place; the soul is supposed to leave the body after death and return to the other world.³

Like Plato,⁴ al-Kindī is considering the body as a prison for the soul, from which the soul, during their common life, is always continuously striving to escape and return to the divine world. The soul in its turn is unwilling to leave the divine world, for when it descends to the material

1. Plato, Phaedrus, 246 A.

2. Ibid., 247 C.7.

3. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.277.

4. Plato, Phaedrus, 62 B.

world it comes into contact with the body, so to speak, and suffers earthly evils.

Thus, the relation of soul to body would seem above all to be a temporal connexion, in which the soul acts as guide, the body following. Coexistence is not mentioned by al-Kindī and it would seem that he departs from an Aristotelian doctrine of soul. Perhaps Aristotle's interpretation of the soul and the body as two elements in a single substance¹ does not allow the notion of superiority of the human soul over the body. For such a superiority cannot be achieved unless the soul is first considered as a substance of different nature. This may well be the reason for al-Kindī's tendency towards a Platonic interpretation of the relation between body and soul.

We turn now to Avicenna, who argues strongly against any view which does not recognise the separability of the soul from the body. Any Aristotelian interpretation of the connexion between

1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) De Anima p.556. Aristotle says: "From this it indubitably follows that the soul is inseparable from its body."

the soul and the body is rejected.¹ To refute such opinions he produces a series of arguments in the De Anima (V,2). However, there seems to be little that is new in these arguments, for they merely follow the pattern of those which were adduced to prove the soul's substantiality, and which were discussed above. To discuss them here would be merely to repeat what has been said already.

Avicenna does not admit any relation of essential attachment between soul and body for the following reasons. Firstly, because there is no relation of essential interdependence between the soul and the body. He argues as follows: if soul and body were essentially interdependent upon each other, they would lose their substantiality and become two elements in a single substance. This means that neither the soul nor the body would be able to be qualified as a substance. But as they are two substances of different natures,

1. Ibid. p.556, and Metaphysics VII,11, p.801, and VII,3, p.815.

they are not mutually dependent upon each other. Therefore there is no essential attachment between soul and body, but rather an accidental one.¹

Secondly, if soul and body were essentially interdependent upon each other, then soul would perish by the destruction of the body. In this case the existence of the soul would depend upon the existence of the body. Thus soul would be posterior to the body, which would in this case be the cause of its existence. In this context, the body would be either efficient (fā'ilah), or material (mādiyyah), or formal (šūriyyah), or final (tamāmiyyah) cause. Since it appears to be unable to fulfil any of these roles,² there is no relation of essential attachment (ittisāl dhātī) between soul and body.³

For Avicenna, there is only an accidental relation of attachment (ittisāl 'araqī) between the soul and the body. He considers the body as

1. Avicenna, De Anima, V,4, p.224.

2. Ibid. p.224.

3. Ibid. p.226.

the accidental cause of the existence of the soul. He says: "The truth is that the body and the temperament are an accidental cause of the soul."¹ He also explains how this accidental attachment between soul and body takes place from the very beginning of life. He says: "When the matter of a body suitable to become the instrument of the soul and its proper subject comes into existence, the separate causes bring into being the individual soul, and that is how the soul originates from them."²

The rejection of an essential attachment of soul and body allows the possibility of their separation. It should be noticed that the separation of the soul from the body, for al-Kindī and Avicenna, happens once only, at the end of this life.³ Only when a person dies is his soul separated from the body. By no means can the soul leave the body during sleep, or when the person is under the influence of intoxicants.

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1. F. Rahman, Avicenna's Psychology, (Oxford 1952) p.59.
 2. Ibid., p.59.
 3. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.277.

A discussion of the relationship between the soul and the body would not be complete if it failed to raise the question, "Is a soul able to be related to more than one body?" In other words, "Is the soul able to transmigrate to another body after the destruction of the previous one?" Al-Kindī gives no detailed arguments concerning this matter, and we are forced to rely upon some minor passages to discover how he would have answered our question.

Let us examine his definition of 'reckoning' (al-ḥisāb).¹ He says, "(Al-ḥisāb) is the retribution exacted from the particular soul for its action while it had its affection for the sensible world and stayed with the body." Al-Kindī here refers to the soul as having a relation only with one body. If he had believed in the transmigration (tanāsukh) of the human soul, he would probably have used in this definition the term 'bodies' (al-ajsād) instead of 'body' (al-jasad). However,

1. S. M. Stern, "Notes on al-Kindī's treatise on definitions", The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1959-1960) p.32.

it does not seem possible to offer any more than a tentative interpretation here.

Al-Kindī also gives the impression that he does not favour the notion of transmigration of the soul from one body to another, in his text known as Kalām lil-Kindī fī al-nafs mukhtaṣar wajīz. He says: "Plato does not mean by his definition [of 'soul'], 'united with the heavenly body through which its actions appear in the bodies', that it is united with the heavenly body, but only means to say that it acts in the bodies by the intermediacy of the heavenly body which is the sphere; not that it puts on a heavenly body by which it enters into a body and by which it leaves it. Such a view is manifestly erroneous, and this would have been realized by one even of much lower standing than Plato."¹ Though al-Kindī is certainly not arguing against transmigration here, it would seem that he is rejecting the idea of the soul passing into a human body from some celestial body. Does this mean

1. S. M. Stern, Isaac Igraēli, (Oxford 1958) p.43.

that the soul cannot pass from one body to another in the case of human bodies also? This appears to be implied by what follows in the passage quoted above.¹ Again, no conclusive interpretation seems possible.

This problem has been treated at greater length by Avicenna. In his text Risālah aḥḥawīya fī amr al-ma'ād he gives a summary of different theories of transmigration against which he intends to argue. Some, he says, believe that souls can migrate to all living bodies, others that they migrate only to animal bodies; and others again that they can only pass to human bodies.² All these theories are rejected by Avicenna, who believes that, once the soul has left the body at death, it can never return to any body whatsoever.³

He also rejects the concept of transmigration in the De Anima (V,4) where he says the following:

1. Ibid., p.42.

2. Avicenna, Risālah aḥḥawīya fī amr al-ma'ād, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1949) pp.41, 81-93.

3. Ibid., p.89.

"If we suppose that many bodies have been inhabited by one soul, whereas each of these bodies has its own soul, which was created especially for it, then in this case every body may have two souls. As we have said the relationship between the soul and the body is not in the sense that the soul is imprinted in the body. It is only in the sense that the soul is occupied with the ruling of the body, and the body in its turn is passively affected by the actions of the soul. In fact every rational animal feels that he has no more than one soul, which is actually occupying and ruling his body. So if there is another soul of which the rational animal neither knows, nor feels to be occupied with his body, then such a soul has no relationship with his body, for the relationship only exists in this way. Consequently there is no transmigration in any sense."¹

From this quotation it is clear that Avicenna accepted no relation of transmigration between the human soul and a multiplicity of human bodies. Also,

1. Avicenna, De Anima V,4, pp.230, 231. And F.Rahman, Avicenna's Psychology (Oxford 1952) p.64.

he tries to say that the 'soul' is always the subject which refers to one's 'essence', and can neither accept another soul to share the same body, nor when it is separated from its body can it serve as a new 'essence' or 'soul' for another person.

The final question to be considered in this chapter is the relationship between human souls as individual separate substances. For it is necessary to investigate whether al-Kindī and Avicenna believe in an essential unity of human souls in one soul.

Al-Kindī's view on this matter is particularly difficult to discern. Our first source is the British Museum manuscript (add. 7473) where about twenty-nine definitions have been recorded.¹ In the definition of 'return' (al-ma'ād) he says: "'return' is the passage of the particular soul to the universal soul, when it is not enticed by the desire of

1. Thirteen of these definitions, which are translated into English and have been studied by ~~Professor Dr~~ Stern, were not mentioned in the (Aya Sufya) manuscript (4832). See S. M. Stern, "Notes on al-Kindī's treatise on definitions", The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (1959-1960) p.32.

nature."¹ And in the definition of 'the assembly', (al-ḥashru) he says: "'The assembly' is the gathering of the particular souls at the universal soul and the intellect's glance at them."² Also in the definition of 'the road' (al-ṣirāṭu) he says: "'The road' is the straight way which leads the particular souls to the universal soul."³

In these three definitions al-Kindī uses the terms 'universal soul' (al-naḥs al-kulliyah) and 'particular soul' (al-naḥs al-juz'iyah), but he does not define 'universal soul', nor does he state its relation to the particular souls. The essential unity of all human souls in one soul does not seem to be implied here.

When one turns to his work al-Qawl fī al-naḥs al-mukhtaṣar min kitāb Aristū wa Aflāṭin wa sā'ir al-falāsifah, one finds that he speaks in terms of a

1. Ibid., p.35.

المعاد تحول النفس الجزئية إلى النفس الكلية ما لم تنشبت بشهوة الطبيعة.

2. Ibid., p.35.

المشرحة النفوس الجزئية لدى النفس الكلية وإطلاع العقل عليها.

3. Ibid., p.35.

الصراط الطريق القاصد بالنفوس الجزئية إلى النفس الكلية.

plurality of souls in the after life: "When the soul attains the utmost degree of purity ... it will be able to converse with those souls that have already separated from their bodies."¹ This passage implies that the souls maintain their individual identity, and that they are able to converse with each other, which would scarcely be possible if they were united to become one soul.

He also says: "This earth is only a bridge to the nobler heavenly world, where the souls make their permanent abode in proximity to their creator, and where they see him intellectually but not sensibly."² Once again, al-Kindī clearly envisages that separate existence of particular souls which maintain their identity after death.

Nor can it be said that Avicenna believes or suggests any essential unity among the human souls; although they emanate from the same source, yet

1. George N. Atiyeh, Al-Kindī (Karachi, 1966) p.101.

2. Ibid., p.102. And Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.277.

they should, as individuals, differ in essence from one another.¹ For instance, he says, the soul of one baby is different from the soul of another baby; similarly the soul of an ancient man differs essentially from that of a modern man. For it is impossible for souls in all bodies to be the same. His justification of this statement is that if the souls are the same in all bodies, then every body knows what all the others know. That is to say, if the souls are just the same, then, in spite of the differences of time and the intellectual capacity of the individuals, there should be a universal agreement over every knowable subject among all the human race.² Since this is not the case, human souls are neither essentially the same, nor are they able to be united together after death to form one single substance.

This conclusion is reached in a different manner in al-Najāh.³ He says: "But after their separation

1. Avicenna, De Anima, V,3, p.222.

2. Ibid., pp.222, 223.

3. Avicenna, al-Najāh (Cairo 1938) p.184.

from their bodies the souls remain individual owing to the different matters in which they had been, and owing to the times of their birth and their different dispositions due to their bodies, which necessarily differ of their peculiar conditions."¹ Here we see that Avicenna regards the circumstances that the soul had experienced in the body as pertaining to it even after death, so as to distinguish it from all other immortal souls.

Although Avicenna believes that souls are related to each other after death,² it seems probable that he did not regard this connexion as one of essential unity. It would have been impossible for him to distinguish between the souls of sinners and of just men after death,³ if he had done so; only one soul could be punished or rewarded after death.

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1. F. Rahman, Avicenna's Psychology (Oxford 1952), p.58.
 2. Avicenna, Hadiyat al-rā'is... mabḥath'an al-quwa al-nafsāniyyah, ed. E. van Dyck (Cairo 1325)p.76.
 3. Avicenna classifies souls after death into those which are perfect and just (nufūs kāmilah wa munazāhah), and those which are perfect but not just, and those which are not perfect but just, and lastly those which are neither perfect nor just. Avicenna, Risālah aḥwābiyyah fī amr al-ma'ād, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1949) pp.120,121.

It seems, moreover, that if all souls were a unity, he would be forced to acknowledge both pre-existence (of the soul, prior to the body) and transmigration, as every soul would be born from, and return to, that unity; whereas, in fact, he rejects these theories.

Here we may conclude that, for Avicenna, even though the human souls after the corruption of their bodies return to the Higher world (al-‘ālam al-mufāriq) and remain there, they do not join together, without any exception, to form one single universal substance. This reflects a tradition among the Muslim philosophers, namely, a refusal to allow that two or more substances may combine in such a way as to create from themselves one united substance. Either the original parts would be incomplete and therefore fail to qualify as a substance or the resulting 'unity' would be accidental and not substantial.

Hence al-Kindī and Avicenna argue against Aristotle who does not acknowledge the soul and the

body to be two different substances in relation to the living being. Hence also they reject the Platonic view¹ that individual souls can be united in one world-soul. This may be regarded as a principal difference between Muslim philosophers, on the one hand, and the Platonic and Aristotelian traditions, on the other.

1. Plato, Philebus, 30 a-b.

CHAPTER 5

The intellect as a substance

In this chapter it is proposed, firstly, to consider how al-Kindī and Avicenna define the intellect and prove its substantiality; and secondly, to estimate the extent to which they agree in this matter.

Al-Kindī in Risālah fī ḥudūd al-ashyā' wa rusūmihā defines 'intellect' as follows: "The intellect is a simple substance, which conceives things as they are in their reality."¹ The intellect here has been described as having three essential properties: (1) It is supposed to have a substantial existence; (2) having been allowed such a substantial existence, it is excluded from being considered a compound body, or an individual substance; (3) it is in its nature to conceive the essence of things, this being its main function.

1. العقل جوهر بسيط مدرك للأشياء بحقائقها. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950). I, p.165. See Abū Haiyān al-Tauḥīdī, al-Muqābasāt, ed. H. al-Sandūbī (Cairo 1929/1347) Muqābasah 91, p.317. In this muqābasah there is a passage similar to al-Kindī's definition: "The intellect is a simple substance which is able to conceive the essence of things in their reality without the interference of time."

In al-Kindī's works the intellect is supposed to conceive the intelligible forms (al-šūwar al-ma'qūlah), which may be described as rational concepts. For he says in the text Risālah fī al-'aql:¹ "There are two kinds of forms: firstly, the material form which is the object of sense perception, and secondly immaterial form, which is the object of the intellect and which is the specificity of things (the species of things) (naḥw'iiyyat al-ashyā') and that which is above it [i.e. the genus, which is a universal higher than the species]."² Therefore, it appears that the intellect is regarded as a substance, because the objects which it is used to apprehend or to describe, i.e. species and genus, are themselves qualified as substances.³ Just as they exist substantially by themselves, the intellect also has been defined as having substantial existence, and just as they have been declared to be substances, the intellect also has been called 'substance'.

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.354.

2. A. Altman and S. M. Stern, Isaac Israeli (Oxford 1958), p.38.

3. See Chapter I: definition of 'substance'.

It is necessary to discover which kind of intellect al-Kindī has intended to define as a substance in his letter Fi'l-ḥudūd, for he holds the existence of four kinds of intellect, as we shall see.

The following passage seems to indicate which kind of intellect is being referred to by al-Kindī. He says, in his book Fi al-falsafah al-ūlāā, "Everything which has been brought from potentiality into actuality must be produced by some other thing which is always in actuality. The universals are supposed to be those things which have brought the soul from the state of potentiality to that of rational actuality. That is to say, the universals, which are the species and the genus, when they have been united with the soul, render the soul rational, or rather enable the soul to possess an intellect. In other words, the soul becomes receptive of the 'universals of things'¹ (kulliyāt al-ashyā'). Therefore when the universals are united with the soul, the soul will be brought from potentiality into

1. i.e. species and genus.

actuality; in this case the soul comes to possess an acquired intellect, which it used to have only in potentiality. Thus the universals are the intellect which is always in actuality, which has awakened the soul from potentiality into actuality."¹

In the previous passage, many of the concepts employed appear to be synonymous. They are: (1) That which actualises knowledge. (2) That which is always in actuality (al-ladhi huwa dā'iman bi'l-fī'l). (3) The universals of things (kulliyāt al-ashyā'). (4) The species and genus as universals. (5) The intellect which is always in actuality.² Although al-Kindī does not say so explicitly, all of these concepts appear to have been used synonymously as names for that intellect which has been defined as a substance.

Al-Kindī was probably faced with the problem of coining a technical term for that kind of intellect which has been defined as a substance. It does not

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.155.

2. Ibid., p.155.

seem that he is willing to call it the "active intellect" (al-'aql al-fa'āl), in an Aristotelian sense;¹ for there is no indication of any such usage in the works of al-Kindī still extant. One possibility is that he was unfamiliar with this concept. Yet again, he may have felt inclined to exclude the concept from his account of this type of intellect, in the light of the problematic explanation of the latter given by Alexander of Aphrodisias.² This point will be dealt with later.

It is possible to conclude that when al-Kindī defines the intellect as substance, he means the 'first intellect'³ (al-'aql al-awwal) i.e. the intellect which is always in actuality, as it has been described in his letter FI al-'aql.⁴

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1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) De Anima III, 5, p.592.
 2. For a further account of Alexander's view of the active intellect see Et. Gilson, "Les sources Gréco-Arabes De L'Augustinisme Avicennisant", Archive d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen-âge (Paris 1929), IV, p.19. Aristotle's De Anima, ed. by Badawī (Cairo 1954), pp. 74, 75.
 3. It seems none of the other intellects, which are parts of the human soul, are able to be considered as substance. Therefore they would not qualify for such a definition.
 4. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.353.

This may be equated with the 'universal intellect' (al'aql al-kullī), since it is supposed to be the species of things (specificity of things).¹

We must now consider Avicenna's views on the applicability of the concept of substance to the intellect. Our investigation will proceed partly by considering some definitions which are applied to the intellect, and partly by considering some passages which serve as additional evidence. Avicenna's views on the substantiality of the intellect cannot be traced to a single philosophical tradition, but have rather to be investigated, as far as is possible, with reference to all the schools of philosophy by which Avicenna is influenced, e.g. Aristotelian, Neo-Platonic.

None of the following types of intellect, in *the* way that Avicenna has defined them, should be

1. Al-Kindī in the British Museum manuscript (Add. 7473) says العقل الكلي هو نوعية الأشياء Stern translated this passage as follows: "The universal intellect is the specificity of things." A. Altman and S. M. Stern, Isaac Israeli (Oxford 1958) pp. 37, 38.

qualified as a substance. (1) The material intellect (al-'aql al-hayūlānī), defined as: "... a power (quwwah) in the soul prepared to receive the quiddities of things abstracted from their matter."¹ (2) The habitual intellect (al-'aql bi'l-malakah), defined as: "... a perfection that occurs to the previous power (the material intellect) bringing it to the point where it has nearly become intellect in act."² (3) The intellect in act (al-'aql bi'l-fi'l) defined as: "... a perfection which occurs to the soul, making it able to think adequately, and producing in actuality the forms of knowledge within it, whenever it wishes."³ So far, none of the previous types of intellect has been defined as a substance, nor, as it seems, would it be justifiable to do so.⁴

Moreover, as it appears, the term 'substance' cannot be used of the 'acquired intellect' (al-'aql

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabi'iyat (Constantinople 1298) p.55.

العقل الهولاني وهي قوة للنفس مستعدة لقبول ماهيات الأشياء مجردة عن موادها.

2. Ibid., p.55.

العقل بالملكة هو استكمال هذه القوة حتى تصير قوة قريبة من الفعل.

3. Ibid., p.55.

العقل بالفعل وهو استكمال النفس في صورة ما أو صورة معقولة حتى يشاء عقليها وأحضرها بالفعل.

4. It is not only in these definitions that Avicenna declines to refer to these types of intellect as substances, but also in his other psychological works, e.g. De Anima, I,2 and al-Najah, II,6.

al-mustafād) nor of the 'holy intellect' (al-'aql al-
qudusi). Avicenna defines the former as follows:
"The acquired intellect is an abstract quiddity deep-
rooted in the soul, since it has been imbibed from
outside."¹ In fact, even though he has referred to
this intellect as an abstract quiddity (māhiyyah
mujarradah), he has admitted that this quiddity
should be part of, i.e. a higher faculty in, the
human soul. Therefore, we may conclude that Avicenna
does not consider this type of intellect as a
substance.

The 'holy intellect', which remains undefined
in Avicenna's letter Fī'l-ḥudūd may not be charac-
terized as a substance, as it appears from his De
Anima. Avicenna considers this type of intellect
rather as a higher rational capacity, in the sense
of a faculty or power that belongs to the human soul,
which he also calls 'intuition' (al-ḥadṣ). He says:

1. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt
(Constantinople, 1298) p.55.

العقل المستفاد وهو ماهية مجردة عن المادة مرتسخة في النفس على سبيل الحصول
من الخارج .

"The holy intellect, or the intuitive power, is so strong in certain people that they do not need great effort, or instruction and actualisation, in order to make contact with the 'active intellect'."¹

It appears that the term 'substance', according to Avicenna, is applicable only to the intellects which are known as the 'active'² and 'pure' intellects (al'ugūl al-mahḍah). The following passage seems to provide us with the grounds on which 'the active intellect' may be identified as a substance: "The active intellect, as it is supposed to be an intellect, that is to say, in the sense of a pure intellect, is a formal substance whose essence in itself is an abstract quiddity (māhiyyah mujarradah) which has no material involvement. It is the basic origin of the essence of every existing being. As for its being an 'active intellect', it is a substance, whose

1. Avicenna, De Anima V,6, pp.244, 45. And F. Rahman, Avicenna's Psychology (Oxford 1952) p.35.

2. Gilson says: "The active intellect, which is a separable substance, for the Arabs is distinguishable from God and the human intellect." — Et. Gilson, "Les sources Gréco-Arabes de l'Augustinisme Avicennisant", Archive d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge, (Paris 1929), IV, p.19.

character is to actualize, by the act of illuminating the material intellect.¹

The 'active intellect' seems to have been given the name 'substance' for the following reasons. Firstly, it is a transcendental entity having no connection with the material bodies. Secondly, such an entity is self-subsisting. Thirdly, it is assumed to be the direct source of the essences (souls) of human beings. Fourthly, it has the power of actualising the material intellect. Neither the material, nor the habitual, nor the acquired, nor the holy intellects, which may be grouped together as human intellects, are claimed to conform to these criteria. It is on this basis that the 'active intellect' may (while these intellects may not) be regarded as a substance.

We may now pass on to the substantiality of the pure intellects (al-'uqūl al-maḥḍah). Here, the following quotation seems to be relevant. In

1. (فقد العقل الفعال) أما من جهة ما هو عقل فهو لأنه جوهر صوري ذاته ماهية مجردة في ذاتها لا يتغير بغيرها عن المادة وعن علائق المادة، هي ماهية كل موجود وأما من جهة ما هو عقل فعال فهو أنه جوهر بالصفة المذكورة من شأنه أن يخرج العقل الهيولاني من القوة إلى الفعل بإشراقه عليه.

Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt (Constantinople 1298), p.55.

al-Ishārāt Avicenna says: "It has been understood that the necessary being (wājib al-wujūd) is neither allowed to be the immediate origin of two intellects together without one of these intellects being used as intermediary, nor can he be the direct origin of bodies. Therefore the 'first caused' (al-ma'lūl al-awwal),¹ which is one of these intellectual substances, must be an individual entity which has been emanated directly from him (God). Meanwhile the other intellectual substances must be issued by the intermediacy of that individual entity, just as it is the case that the heavenly beings (that is to say the souls of the heavenly bodies) must be emanated by the intermediary of these intellects (that is to say the pure intellects)."²

Briefly, on the basis of the previous passage, one may arrive at an integral account of Avicenna's

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1. For a further account of the 'first caused' (al-ma'lūl al-awwal) see Henry Corbin, Avicenna and the visionary Recital. English translation (London 1960), p. 57.
 2. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-ta'ribhāt, ed. Sulaimān Dunyā (Cairo 1949) III, p. 190. And Naṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzi, their commentaries on al-Ishārāt (Cairo 1325) II, p. 44. And A. M. Goichon, Lexique de la Langue Philosophique d'Ibn Sinā (Avicenna), (Paris 1938), p. 234.

view, which recognises a multiplicity of transcendental intellects, which are called substances. Although there is some categorisation of the transcendental intellects, putting the 'first caused' as an intermediary between the 'Necessary Being', and the other transcendental intellects, Avicenna does not go so far as to restrict the applicability of the concept of substance to one specific instance, or even to a specific group, of these intellects. Therefore, it seems that the term 'substance', without any exception, has been ascribed to each of the transcendental intellects, regardless of their hierarchical standing, in accordance with the theory of emanation.

Moreover, elsewhere in al-Ishārāt, Avicenna says: "The First (al-awwal) who is really the Innovator (al-mubdi'), innovates (creates without any intermediary)¹ an intellectual substance. Then

1. In the Commentaries of al-Ishārāt (Cairo 1325), II, pp.50, 51, al-Rāzī says, "Innovation (al-'ibdā') means to bring into being the thing without the intermediary of a tool, or matter, or time, or any other object." Also Avicenna in one of his works which is al-Risālah al-nairūziyyah distinguishes between (1) (al-'Ibdā'), (2) (al-Khalq), (3) (al-takwīn), as follows: al-'Ibdā' concerns the intellects, al-Khalq concerns the physical objects, al-takwīn concerns things which are in the state of coming to be and passing away. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-ḥikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyat (Constantinople 1298) p.94.

by the mediation of this innovated intellectual substance, the First (the Necessary Being) creates another intellectual substance, and celestial body (jirm samāwī). In this manner the creation goes on, until it reaches the point where all the celestial bodies have been issued, at that stage there will be an intellectual substance (the active intellect), but from this no celestial body can be issued."¹

Here, we may understand Avicenna to be considering the innovation of the transcendental intellects from the standpoint of immediate creation. First of all 'God' or 'the Necessary Being' (wājib al-wujūd) innovates an intellectual substance (jawhar 'aqli), which Avicenna sometimes calls 'the first cause' (al-ma'lūl al-awwal) or the 'primordial originated'² (al-mubda' al-awwal), and sometimes 'the first intellect' (al-'aql al-awwal).³

1. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-ta'bīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1949), p. 192.

2. Henry Corbin, Avicenna and the Visionary Recital. (English translation) (London 1960), p. 57.

3. E.g. Avicenna says: "Since the first thing to emanate from God was not a body, it follows that it was an abstract substance, namely, the First Intelligence." Arberry, Avicenna on Theology, (London 1951), p. 36.

Secondly, by the intermediacy of the 'first intellect' (al-ma'lūl al-awwal), the 'Necessary Being' innovates another intellectual substance and a spherical body (jirm samāwī). Thirdly, in the same manner 'the Necessary Being' innovates another intellectual substance and a spherical body. Lastly comes the innovation of the active intellect, which is the immediate origin of the human souls, and 'material physical bodies' (al-ajsām al-mādiyyah).¹

Therefore, in the light of the previous passage, it may be assumed that Avicenna has included the transcendental intellects under the concept of substance, partly on account of their being separable entities (māhiyyāt mujarradah) having no relation whatsoever to material bodies; and partly because of the creative and active task that each of these intellects takes in the process of emanation. Neither of these criteria is satisfied by the human intellects, i.e. those intellects which are considered as passive powers in the human soul. It is precisely this

1. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, their commentaries on al-Ishārāt (Cairo 1325), II, pp. 50, 51.

passivity that precludes the applicability of the term 'substance' to the human intellects.

It is possible, therefore, in this case, to assume that Avicenna is presenting us with a traditional Neo-Platonic view.¹ It is true that in some of his works Proclus distinguishes between primary intellects (al-'uqūl al-awā'il)² in the sense of transcendental intellects (al-'uqūl al-mufāriqah), which he terms 'substances', and secondary intellects (al-'uqūl al-thawānī),³ in the sense of human intellects. Avicenna, however, does not refer to God as a substance, whereas such a description is used by Proclus, as will be shown in the next chapter.

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1. Aflūṭīn 'ind al-'arab, ed. by A. Badawi (Cairo 1955), pp. 134-135 and 158-164. A. Badawi has ^{mentioned} shown that the Theology of Aristotle, wrongly ascribed to Aristotle, was the work of Plotinus.
 2. Al-Aflātūniyyah al-muḥdathah 'ind al-'arab, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1955), pp. 7 (al-'idāh fī al-khair al-maḥḍ). And Proclus, The Elements of Theology, ed. by E. R. Dodds (Oxford 1963), p. 157.
 3. Ibid., p. 7.

The meanings of the terms 'innovation' (al-'ibdā') and 'celestial body' (al-jirm), which appeared in the passages quoted above, are somewhat different for al-Kindī. With respect to the term al-'ibdā', al-Kindī says: "Innovation (al-'ibdā') is to bring into existence the thing which does not exist before."¹ Also he says: "al-'ibdā' is the creation of the thing from nothing."² Moreover, he says: "We explain what action (fi'l) is and in which senses it is used. The first kind of action in the proper sense is making existent existences from the non-existent does not belong to any body except Him. To this kind of action belongs properly the name 'innovation' (al-'ibdā')."³

Therefore, the name 'innovation' (al-'ibdā') for al-Kindī, is not to be used in connection with the transcendental intellects, as it is for Avicenna.⁴ For al-Kindī, the term 'innovation' (al-'ibdā') is applicable to all created beings which exist in the

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah, (Cairo 1950) I, p. 165.

2. S. M. Stern, "Notes on al-Kindī's treatise on definition", The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society (London, 1959-1960), p.33.

3. A. Altman and S. M. Stern, Isaac Israeli (Oxford 1958) p. 68.

4. For Avicenna's usage here see below page 140, n. 1.

universe, whether 'God' is their direct cause or not. Moreover this term is applicable to the universe as something not eternal, as it is innovated, i.e. brought into being by 'God'.¹ For Avicenna, on the other hand, the reference of this term is restricted to the transcendental intellects, as explained previously. However, al-Kindī does not use the term in the Neo-Platonic sense which is implicit in Avicenna's usage.

The philosophical usage of the term jirm, as it seems from those passages from Avicenna quoted earlier, is that it applies to 'celestial bodies' (al-ajrām al-samāwiyyah). But no usage such as this is adopted by al-Kindī, who is ready to employ the term for both material bodies (as we may gather from his definition of 'material substance')² and celestial bodies. For instance, he says: "Also the planet is a jirm, and every jirm is either living or not living."³ But in general al-Kindī prefers to refer to the

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. by Abū Riḍāh (Cairo 1950), II, p.63.

2. Ibid., I, pp.165, 204-205.

3. Ibid., I, p.247.

celestial bodies by the term 'higher individuals'
(al-ashkhās al-'āliyyah).¹

However, in most respects al-Kindī and Avicenna are in agreement about the nature of the heavenly bodies. Both regard them as living beings, without the lower faculties of soul such as the nutritive (al-ghādiyyah), perceptive (al-ḥāssah), emotional (al-ghaḍabīyyah), and appetitive (al-shahwāniyyah) powers, but possessing only the rational power (al-quwwat al-'āqilah). Both consider them not to reproduce, but to be created once and destroyed once. They also agree that the celestial bodies are the cause of the existence of the individual earthly creatures to which creation and destruction appertain.²

Let us now examine the proof of the substantia-
lity of the intellect. The extant works of al-Kindī

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1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed., by Abū Rīdah (Cairo 19), I, pp. 225-227.
 2. For al-Kindī's view of the nature of the celestial bodies, see *Ibid.*, I, pp. 248-256, and II, pp. 61, 62, 63. And for Avicenna's view see Avicenna, Risālah fī al-sa'ādah, (Haidarabad 1353) pp. 13, 14, 15.

suggest no argument dealing exclusively and directly with this matter. Even though al-Kindī has defined the universal intellect as a substance, he omits to advance any proof of the substantiality of the transcendental intellect. Perhaps, for him, the latter was self-evident.

In examining Avicenna's view of this issue one discovers that even though he has considered the matter of the proof of the substantiality of the transcendental intellects, his proof does not include a variety of arguments as was the case both with the proof of the substantiality of the soul and with the proof of the existence of the transcendental intellects.¹ The following is a brief summary of Avicenna's argument. "There is a self-evident knowledge which exists in the mind without being learned. In looking for the origin of this knowledge, it seems there are two possibilities. Either sense-experience is its origin or it has been produced in the mind through the divine emanation. Let us now

1. For the proof of the existence of the transcendental intellects see Avicenna, al-Najāh (Cairo 1938/1357), pp. 278-280.

take into consideration the first possibility, which is the occurrence of this knowledge through sense-experience. As it is known that sense-experience does not give self-evident knowledge, e.g. that the whole is greater than its part, or that two things which are equal to a third one, are equal to each other, consequently this knowledge must be attributed to some cause different in nature from sense-experience.

It remains then, that this self-evident knowledge has been imprinted on the mind through the divine emanation. That is to say, when the divine emanation and the rational soul are united, the former will produce (imprint) necessary knowledge in the latter. Now, if the divine emanation does not presuppose in its essence such a self-evident knowledge, i.e. the forms of rationality, it will not be able to produce them, or to print them on the rational soul. As it is known (at least in terms of the previous arguments of the substantiality of the human soul) that every entity possessing essentially the forms of rational

knowledge is a substance, and not in the corporeal sense, thus, as a result the 'divine emanation' (al-faiḍ al-'ilāhī) with which the rational soul comes into contact during the process of emanation, is an intellectual substance. This intellectual substance is neither a body, nor in a body, and its relation to the human soul is similar to the relation of light to sight."¹

Although the previous proof was directed towards establishing the substantiality of the active intellect, it could (at least analogically) be used to establish the substantiality of the other transcendental intellects. For the 'active intellect' is regarded, by definition, as the last phase of the emanation of the intellects. ^{From} the characterisation as substances of these transcendental intellects comes the implication that other intellects may be so characterised, in as much as they share the same nature.

1. Avicenna, Hadiyat al-rā'īs ... mabḥath 'an al-quwā al-nafsāniyyah, aw kitāb fī al-nafs 'alā sunnat al-ikhtisār, ed. E. van Duck (Cairo 1325) pp. 74, 75.

We may now commence a more detailed examination of the extent to which al-Kindī and Avicenna agree on the issue of the human and transcendental intellects. In this connection, it may be helpful to outline their differences in a tabular form:

Al-Kindī

Avicenna

Al-Kindī does not have any primary or transcendental intellect above the universal intellect (in the sense of substance)

Avicenna has three primary intellects, or transcendental intellects, above the active intellect (in the sense of substance)

1. The first intellect or the universal intellect, or the intellect which is always in actuality, defined as a substance.

1. This intellect is known as the active intellect.

The human intellects
Secondary intellects

The human intellects
Secondary intellects

2. The intellect which is in potentiality

2. The material or the potential intellect.

3. The intellect which has passed in the soul from potentiality into actuality.

3. The habitual intellect.

4. The intellect called apparent.

4. The acquired intellect.

5. _____

5. The holy intellect.

It appears that al-Kindī and Avicenna with regard to the transcendental intellects agree on one point only.

They agree in not allowing the 'first intellect' (for al-Kindī) or the 'active intellect' (for Avicenna) to be understood as God. Such a view had been held by Alexander of Aphrodisias.¹

There are fundamental disagreements, however. They differ, firstly, on the number of the transcendental intellects. Al-Kindī assumes that there is only one primary universal intellect (in the sense of substance), whereas Avicenna believes firmly in a multiplicity of transcendental intellects.

Secondly, although al-Kindī does not seem to put forward a clear interpretation of how "the intellect which is always in actuality", is able to produce knowledge from potentiality to actuality, he does not assume that there is some power which emanates from "the first intellect" and proceeds to the object of imagination which are potential intelligibles, and makes them actual intelligibles. Such a view, which is adopted by Avicenna, is neither mentioned by al-Kindī in any of his works that deal with the

1. According to Ross, "Alexander identifies the active reason with God", David Ross, Aristotle (London 1968), p. 152. See Et. Gilson, "Les sources greco-arabes de l'Augustinisme avicennisant", Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge (Paris 1929) iv, p. 19.

intellect, nor did he introduce it into Islamic philosophy. We may note in passing that the view in question probably found its way into Islamic philosophy through the works of al-Fārābī, such as his book al-Madīnat al-fāḍilah,¹ and his letter Fī ma'ānī al-'aql,² before it became an Avicennian view.

There appears to be little difference between al-Kindī's and Avicenna's concept of potential intellect, except that al-Kindī does not describe this intellect as 'material'. But we may draw a contrast between al-Kindī's third intellect and Avicenna's 'habitual intellect', which shows that al-Kindī considers this type of intellect as a valuable property that the rational soul possesses, and which he calls ḡunyah.³ This property is merely a mental power or a rational faculty, which the soul can employ at will. Al-Kindī does not allow this third kind of intellect to be referred to as an 'habitual intellect'; here he is either

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1. Al-Fārābī, Arā'ahl al-madīnat al-fāḍilah (? 1907) pp. 62, 66.
 2. Al-Fārābī, al-Jam' bain ra'yai al-ḥakīmain (Cairo 1907), p.5.
 3. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950), I, pp.357-358.

presenting his own view on the matter, or conveying his understanding of Aristotle's position. Aristotle himself, however, does not use the term 'habitual intellect'.¹

The fourth of al-Kindī's kinds of intellect, 'the intellect that is called apparent' (al-'aql al-ẓāhir), which is last on the table above, is, despite its name,² very similar to the acquired intellect (al-'aql al-mustafād) in Avicenna.³ Of Avicenna's holy intellect (al-'aql al-quḍus),⁴ however, we may discover no analogue either in al-Kindī's list of intellects, or elsewhere in his extant works. Furthermore, this concept does not appear to be Aristotelian in origin.

It is important to notice that both philosophers agree in not regarding the secondary intellect (the human intellects) as substances, nor do they

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1. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York 1941), *De Anima*, III.
 2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. by Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950), I, p. 258.
 3. Avicenna, De Anima, p. 50.
 4. Ibid., pp. 245-46. And F. Raḥman, Avicenna's Psychology, (Oxford 1952) pp. 35-36.

grant any of these intellects a substantial existence as such. It may be that their view of the secondary intellects as psychological entities having no substantial existence is in line with their more general doctrine of substance.

There appears to be a certain similarity between Avicenna's and Alexander of Aphrodisias' concept of intellect, especially with regard to the terminology which they use. Nevertheless, as it seems, it is very hard to find any correlation between Alexander's view and that of al-Kindī. Firstly, Alexander, as many commentators note, referred to only three kinds of intellect. They are, the material intellect, the habitual intellect, and the active intellect; whereas al-Kindī's list of intellects comprises four kinds. Secondly, al-Kindī does not appear to apply to the intellect any of the terms used by Alexander.¹

We may conclude that al-Kindī was not influenced by Alexander's account of the intellect; on the other

1. Aristotle's "De Anima", ed. Badawi (Cairo 1950)
p. 358.

hand, it seems possible that Avicenna was, although such a conclusion would have to be supported by further evidence. However, we do not intend to argue such a conclusion here, as it seems to be of purely historical significance.¹

1. For further discussion of the historical importance of this question see Et. Gilson, "Les sources Gréco-Arabes de l'Augustinisme Avicennisant", Archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du moyen âge (Paris 1929), IV, pp. 5-75.

CHAPTER 6

Can the term 'Substance'
be applied to God?

The purpose of this chapter is twofold; first, a short historical sketch will show how the problem of the substantiality of God was treated before al-Kindī and Avicenna. Then follows a section dealing with their controversial arguments on this subject, in which we shall attempt to explain why al-Kindī and Avicenna did not consider God as a substance.

It is not clear whether or not Plato considered the question of the use of the term 'substance' as a description of God. If one may regard his "Idea of the good" in Republic¹ as a divinity, then Plato is quite explicit that it is above all substance, being rather, the cause of substance. But, firstly, it is never made plain whether the "Idea of the Good" may be identified with the creator-God of Timaeus though there are certain indications² that it should be; and, secondly, it is uncertain whether the term used in

1. Plato, Republic 509 B.

2. e.g. Republic 507 C, Timaeus 29 E.

Republic (509 B) may best be translated as 'substance', since other senses are also possible.

While, in Timaeus, the creator-God is not to be identified with either of the two substances mentioned 35 A,¹ there is never any explicit denial of the substantiality of God. Even in Laws X which is devoted to theology and the existence of God,² Plato neither says that God is an eternal substance, nor gives any reason why he may not be so considered.

It seems that Aristotle was the first ancient philosopher to arrive at the concept of one God in the sense of an eternal substance.³ For him, God as an eternal and unmovable substance must be one in number and in definition. It is probable that the main purpose of Metaphysics XII, is to prove that, besides the primary and the secondary substances there is another one, which is eternal. In this respect

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1. Here too we need not employ the term 'substance': see Francis M. Cornford, Plato's Cosmology (New York 1957) pp.33 to 58. But contrast al-Fārābi, Jawāmi' kitāb Tīmāus fī al'ilm al-ṭabī'ī, eds. Paulus Kraus and Richardus Walzer (London 1951) p.4.
 2. A. E. Taylor, Plato the Man and His Work, (New York 1960) pp.490-95.
 3. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) pp. 872-888. See Averroes, Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī' (Beirut, 1949), III, p.1688.

Aristotle says: "Since there were three kinds of substance, two of them physical and one unmovable, regarding the latter we must assert that it is necessary that there should be an eternal and unmovable substance."¹

For Aristotle not only the objects to which motion is imparted, nor only the "moved movers" but also the "prime mover" should be called "substance". He says: "And since that which is moved and moves, is intermediate, there is something which moves without being moved, being eternal substance and actuality."²

Therefore, it follows that God, in Aristotle's view, can be defined in the same way as any other object. Moreover, any definition given of God must take into consideration that God is a substance which is eternal and unmovable, and separable from sensible substances.³ From this it follows, too, that this substance cannot have any magnitude, but is without

1. Ibid., p.877. See Aristū 'inda al-'arab, ed. Badawi (Cairo 1947) p.3.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics XII,7, p.879.

3. Ibid., p.879.

parts and indivisible. However, it should be noticed that Aristotle believed in the eternity, and the non-multiplicity, of the world and the eternal substance.

In commentaries on Aristotle's Metaphysics XII,¹ and articles published in Aristū 'inda al-'arab,² Alexander of Aphrodisias does not seem to raise any objection to Aristotelian doctrine with regard to the applicability of the term 'substance' to God. For instance, he says: "That unmovable substance is God's intelligence which is eternal;"³ and: "We intend in this polemic to talk about the substance which is unmovable, and to explain what our predecessors imagine it to be."⁴ In this respect, Alexander, unlike al-Kindī and Avicenna, would appear to see no reason why God cannot be called "substance".

Plotinus' concept of God, is complicated, for us, by problems of terminology and translation. For

1. Averroes, Tafsir mā ba'da al-ṭabī'ah, (Beirut 1948), III, pp.1392-1626.

2. Aristū 'inda al-'arab, ed. Badawī (Cairo 1947) I, p.7.

3. Ibid., p.272.

4. Ibid., p.332.

Plotinus, in so far as he follows Plato and identifies the Platonic Good with his one God,¹ holds that God is hyperousios,² that is to say above all substance in the Aristotelian sense, that is, ousia.

However, Plotinus used another term for God which has been translated into Arabic by the term 'substance' (jawhar). This term is hypostasis, which may be translated into the Latin term substantia, that is, something that stands beneath the surface. Just as the Latin substantia has been used to translate both Aristotle's ousia and Plotinus' hypostasis, so the Arabic word (al-jawhar) is used in both cases.

Consequently Muslim philosophers believed that Plotinus considered God to be a substance. For instance, one translation says: "one should not be amazed at the creative ability of the supreme substance."³ Plotinus' "God" is translated as

1. Plotinus, Enneads, V,6, line 35, p.117 in the edition of E. Brehier (Paris 1956-64).

2. Ibid., lines 30-31. Also V,5,6, lines 5-10, p.97 (Brehier).

3. Aflūtīn 'inda al-'arab, ed. Badawī (Cairo 1955), p.161.

"complete supreme substance"¹ (al-jawhar al-tāmm al-fādil al-sharīf), a substance which is of transcendent origin and the first cause of all things.

It would appear that Proclus also regarded God as substantial: "The substance of every God is a supra-existential excellence"²; "All that is divine has a substance which is goodness..."³; "Every God embraces in his substance the function of exercising providence towards the universe..."⁴. What is, perhaps, more important for our purposes is that his Arabic translators rendered his text thus.⁵ It is these translations with which we may suppose al-Kindī and Avicenna to have been familiar.

In relation to the substantiality of God we may mention the belief of certain followers of the Eastern Church.⁶ Although it is outside the scope of our present

1. Ibid., p.162, and pp.172, 175.

2. Proclus, The Elements of Theology, ed. E. R. Dodds (Oxford 1963) prop.119, p.105.

3. Ibid., prop.121, p.105.

4. Ibid., prop.120, p.105.

5. Al-Iflātūniyyah al-muḥdatha 'ind al-'arab, ed. Badawi (Cairo 1955) pp.25-33, and pp.248-256.

6. Ibn Ḥazm, al-fiṣal fī al-milal wa al-ahwā wa al-nihal, (Cairo 1317), V, p.48.

discussion to give an adequate explanation of how the term 'substance' found its way into the theology of the Eastern Church, it seems possible to conjecture that such a usage is of Greek (Aristotelian) origin.¹

It appears that the Jacobites, Nestorians, and Melikites, sects in the Eastern Church, had begun to consider God a supreme substance.² Al-Bāqillānī in At-Tamhīd,³ and al-Juwainī in Al-Irshād⁴ mention arguments which these sects employ to prove the substantiality of God; for example, that everything that exists in the universe is either a substance or an accident. Since there appear to be similarities between the attributes of God and those of substance,

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1. Ibn al-'Assāl, a 13th century Christian theologian, describes how the followers of the Eastern Church applied the term 'substance' to God, but not in a material sense. He believed that this term had been inherited from the ancient philosophers, probably meaning Aristotle. Vingt Traités Philosophiques et Apologetiques d'Auteurs Arabes Chrétiens du IX au XIV siècle, ed. by P. Paul Sabath (Cairo 1929), pp.111-122.
 2. J. W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology (London 1955) part two, I, pp.20-32.
 3. Al-Bāqillānī, Kitāb at-tamhīd, ed. by Richard McCarthy (Beirut, 1957) pp.75-79.
 4. Al-Juwainī, al-Irshād, eds. M. Y. Mūsa and A. M. 'Abdal Hamīd (Cairo 1950), pp.46-51.

because both are self-subsisting and both are creative powers, then it seems inevitable that God should be called "substance".

It may be noticed that the proofs of the substantiality of God, of the three persons, and of the relation between the supreme substance and the three hypostases, were a matter of debate and controversy between the previous Christian sects and the Muslim theologians.¹ Among the early apologists defending Christianity against Islam were John of Damascus, Theodore Abu Qurra (9th century), Yaḥyā bn 'Adi (979), Hunain bn Ishāq (873);² al-Bāqillānī and al-Juwainī were among the defenders of Islam.

Most of the Muslim sects (al-Firaq al-Islāmiyyah) refused to consider God as a substance with the exception of the sect al-Firaq al-Karāmiyyah. In this respect al-Rāzi in his book I'tiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn

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1. A. Abel. "La Polémique Damascenièenne et son influence sur les origines de la theologie Musulmane", L'Elaboration de L'Islam (Paris 1961) pp.61-85.
 2. J. W. Sweetman, Islam and Christian Theology, (London 1945) part one, I, p.60.

wa al-Mushrikīn, speaks as follows: "All the followers of Firaq al-Karāmiyyah believe that God is a body, substance, and receptacle of creation."¹ Also al-Shahrastānī in al-milal wa al-niḥal, confirms that the al-Karāmiyyah sect hold that there must be one God of one essence and one substance.²

It would seem that, in the view of 'Ilm al-Kalām, the claim of al-Karāmiyyah, that one may call God a body and a substance, may be refuted in two ways.³ Firstly, God cannot be called a body, because bodies are always compound, and they are liable to be seen, or at least to be located, in some one place. The denial of this could be justified neither on rational nor on religious grounds.⁴ Secondly, God cannot be defined as 'substance', because the majority of Muslim theologians use the term substance in a material

1. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, I'tiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa al-Mushrikīn (Cairo 1938/1356), p.67.

2. Al-Shahrastānī, al-Milal wa al-niḥal (Cairo 1948/1368), p.159.

3. Al-Bāqillānī, Kitāb at-tamhīd, ed. by Richard McCarthy (Beirut 1953), pp.191-196. See al-Juwainī, Kitāb al-Irshād, eds. M. Y. Mūsa and A. M. 'Abdal Ḥamīd (Cairo 1950) pp.42-44.

4. The Theology of al-Ash'arī, ed. and trans. by Richard McCarthy (Beirut 1953) pp.9-10 (Question 12).

sense, considering that there is one substance only, to which they used to refer as the 'indivisible particle'¹ (al-juz' alladhī lā yatajazza').

Having given an historical outline of the problem, we shall now consider the basis on which al-Kindī and Avicenna refused to apply the term 'substance' to God. First, we shall examine al-Kindī's arguments, beginning with a comparison between Aristotle's and al-Kindī's view of the applicability of the term 'one' or 'unity' (wāḥid aw waḥdah) to the categories.

Aristotle in Metaphysics (V,6) distinguishes between what is one by accident,² and what is one of its own nature.³ Accidental unity is a unity in the sense, for example, that the same person may be a painter and a musician. Both of these (painter and musician) are called one by virtue of an accidental similarity, because musical and artistic ability are accidents of one substance (i.e. the man).⁴

1. al-Shahrastānī, Kitāb nihāyatū 'l-Iqdām fī 'Ilmi 'l Kalām, ed. and trans. by Alfred Guillaume (Oxford 1934) p.505.

2. This term is known in Arabic as (wāḥid bi-'l-'arad).

3. i.e. (wāḥid bi-'l-ṭabī'ā).

4. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. by Richard McKeon (New York) Metaphysics V,6, p.757. See also Averroes, Tafsīr mā ba'd al-ṭabī'ā, ed. by Maurice Bouyges (Beirut 1942), II, pp.523-26.

Aristotle in the Metaphysics regards four kinds of object as being "one by their own nature." (1) The things which are naturally continuous. (2) That which is a whole. (3) The individual object which is indivisible in number. (4) The universal which is indivisible in intelligibility and in knowledge.¹ Al-Kindī opposes vigorously such a distinction. He is considering one, or unity as something that relates to created beings in an accidental manner (bi-ṭarīqah 'araḍiyyah). For al-Kindī "one in a real sense" (al-wāḥid bi-ḥaqīqah) is not predicable of the following categories, "genus, species, individual, differentia, property, common accident, universal (genera), element, whole, and part."²

A further problem concerns the manner in which al-Kindī arrived at the view that 'one' or unity in created beings (al-waḥdah fī al-maḥūlāt) cannot be distinguished into real and accidental unity. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider all the arguments that al-Kindī produced to prove that one in

1. Ibid., Metaphysics X,1, p.835, and V,6, p.758.

2. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.128.

a real sense (al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq) is not predicable of any of the previous categories,¹ but we must mention those categories that he recognises as substances: genus, species, and individual as collective substances (jawāhir jāmi'ah), and differentia as a differential substance (jawhar mufarriq). Through an examination of the substantiality of these categories, we shall endeavour to gain an understanding of the reason for al-Kindī's refusal to consider God as a substance.

Al-Kindī's view of the individual, or the primary substance (al-shakhṣ), is different from that of Aristotle in the categories (ch.5).² For al-Kindī, it is neither a 'real one' (al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq), nor has it a real unity. It is one only in location (wāḥid bi-'l-waḍ'). Because the individual may be analysed into form and matter, it fails to satisfy the criteria of simplicity, and hence it is not a real one. Although al-Kindī's argument here is not well formulated, it would seem to imply that one or unity is not

1. On unity and oneness in al-Kindī see M. E. Marmura and J. M. Rist, "al-Kindī's Discussion of Divine Existence and Oneness." Mediaeval Studies 25 (1963) pp.338-354.

2. The Works of Aristotle, ed. W. D. Ross (Oxford 1955), I, Categories, chapter 5; and Mantiq Aristū, ed. Badawī (Cairo 1948), I, p.11.

found in the individual as an essential attribute. It is only a product of an act of another cause that exists outside the individual. Therefore, unity or one should be ascribed to the individual accidentally.¹

Unity of genus and species (Aristotle's secondary substances) do not represent, for al-Kindī, a real unity (one by its own nature), in opposition to Aristotle's view in Metaphysics (V,6).² Al-Kindī's view is that unity of genus is not a real unity (waḥdah ḥaqīqiyyah). Since genus is predicable of many beings, then it is divisible into many species. Therefore, genus, in this sense, is a compound object (murakkab), not a simple one (basīṭ). Furthermore each of the species which the genus contains may be analysed into many individuals, each self-subsisting. Therefore, al-Kindī arrived at the conclusion that one or unity in a real sense (al-wāḥid aw al-waḥdah al-ḥaqīqiyyah) does not belong to the genus as an essential attribute. It is only to be found as an accident in it, that is to say, as the product of an external cause.³

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.128.

2. The Basic Works of Aristotle, ed. Richard McKeon (New York 1941) Metaphysics, V,6, p.760 and V,28, p.776.

3. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950), I, p.129.

Further, he argued that species lacks real unity in two respects: (1) Although it is one in location, species is not a simple concept; for example, in the definition of the human species two things have to be included, animal which is its genus, and rationality which is its differentia. Therefore species in terms of the definition is a compound concept. (2) The species, moreover, in relation to the individual which it embraces, is not one, nor is it a simple unity, but rather multiplex and compound.¹

The differentia is predicable of both the species and the individuals. Therefore it is one neither in relation to the species nor to the individuals which it is supposed to qualify, for both have already been explained as multiplex. Consequently unity in the differentia is accidental rather than essential.²

We may conclude that al-Kindī considers unity in the previous categories (genus, species, individual,

1. Ibid., p.128.

2. Ibid., p.128.

and differentia) to be an effect of another, external cause (athar min mu'aththir). This explains why unity in any substance, whether it be collective (jāmi'), or differential (mufarrig), does not relate to its internal reality, and also why unity (one), in al-Kindī's view, is predicable of the categories only in a metaphorical sense (bi'l-majāz). On the other hand, he held that unicity, or oneness, of the real one (al-wāḥid al-ḥaqq) does not relate to a cause other than himself. Unicity of God is simple in the sense that his Oneness is neither separable into form and matter (ṣūrat wa māddat), nor into unity (waḥdah) and identity (huwīyyah), nor into genera and compound elements.¹ Therefore the real one, for al-Kindī, is "The first, the Creator from nothing, who maintains in existence what he has created from nothing."²

We may summarise as follows al-Kindī's reasons for not regarding God as a substance: (1) The act

1. Ibid., p.207.

2. Richard Walzer, Greek into Arabic (London 1963) p.188.

of unity in substance comes from beyond its own identity, but God's Oneness, as al-Kindī understood it, is inseparable from his identity. (2) Unicity or Oneness of God is something absolutely real, but one or unity in substance is an accidental attribute, and predicable of it only in a metaphorical sense.

There seems to be a third reason for this refusal to call God 'substance', but here we can do no more than conjecture. Al-Kindī probably held that, if God is regarded as a substance, then He is either an object or predicable of a subject. The implication is that God is definable, as is substance, and is also liable to partake of the same qualities and attributes as substance. Moreover, this would constitute a decisive objection to the original hypothesis; as al-Kindī says: "The real one (the eternal), who is one in essence, is neither many nor subject to any kind of divisibility, either in relation to his essence or in relation to others. The real one (God) is neither a time nor a place. He is

neither an object, nor predicable of a subject, nor a genus, nor an element, nor a substance, nor an accident."¹

Finally, we may mention al-Kindī's debates with Christian apologists, on the question of whether the term 'substance' is to be applied to God. Notable amongst these philosophers was Yahyā bn 'Adī; who, in a brief Apology, considered some of the arguments that al-Kindī advanced against the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.² The main topic of debate would appear to be that al-Kindī understood genus, species, individual and accident as compound objects (as we have seen already) in his argument against this doctrine. Briefly, his view was that any substance must be either genus, or species, or individual; which, being compound, cannot be eternal. If God is regarded as a substance, as in the doctrine of the trinity, then He would not be eternal, which is absurd. However, Yahyā bn 'Adī pointed out, although

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) I, p.161.

2. See: A. Perier, "Un Traité de Yahyā bin 'Adī en defence du dogme de la trinite contre les objections d'al-Kindī." Revue de l'Orient Chretien, ii (XXII), 1920.

Christians have the notion of three persons sharing a single substance, they do not necessarily regard this substance in any of the senses of genus, species or individual.

We shall now examine Avicenna's views on the applicability of the term 'substance' to God. It appears that al-Kindī's 'real one' (al-wāhid al-ḥaqq) was adopted by Avicenna as the 'Necessary Being by himself' (wājib al-wujūd bī 'l-dhāt). Just as the real one was not predicable of any of the categories, nor is the Necessary Being by himself thus predicable, as Avicenna says: "You should understand that the Necessary Being by himself is not predicable of the well-known categories like genus."¹

The application of the term 'Necessary Being by himself', is restricted to God alone and has nothing in common with those categories known as substances. He says: "Necessary Being by himself

1. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. by Sulaiman Dunyā (Cairo 1948) III, p.74.

shares nothing in common with the quiddity of anything, because every quiddity, of anything other than himself is contingent... Therefore Necessary Being does not share a generic or a specific idea with any other being, hence it does not need to be differentiated by an idea of difference, specific or accidental."¹ But the term 'substance', for Avicenna (as we have explained) is predicable not only of the above mentioned categories, but also of those beings, which are either of self-subsisting quiddities, e.g. the pure intellects and human souls, or of quiddities like compound bodies.

It is plausible to suppose that Avicenna avoided calling God 'substance' for the following reasons. Firstly, because the Necessary Being by himself has no quiddity (lā māhiyyat lahu), and because those beings which have quiddities and are known as substances, have originated from him, according to Avicenna: "The first has no quiddity, and as for

1. Ibid., pp.70, 71. See A. M. Goichon, "On the Philosophy of Being". Avicenna Commemoration Volume, (Calcutta 1956), p.113.

those beings which have quiddities, their existence emanated from him. He is always being in such a way that non-being and other qualities all relate to him negatively. Moreover the things which have quiddities are contingent because their existence has originated from him."¹

Secondly, those beings which have quiddities and are known as substances (for instance, the material body) are either composite or capable of being treated as compound objects. The Necessary Being by himself is neither composite nor considered as a compound. Avicenna says: "The Necessary Being by himself should not be treated in the sense of compound,"² and: "When it is said that he is neither a body nor in a body, it implies that there is no comparison between bodies and the First innovator, the Necessary Being, who is far exalted from being a substance, or a body, or an accident, or among the pure substances."³ Avicenna was probably arguing

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussā, S. Duniyā, and Sa'īd Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) II, p.347.

2. Ibid., p. 345.

3. Avicenna, Tis' rasā'il fī al-hikmah wa al-ṭabī'iyāt (Cairo 1328/1908), p.45.

against the doctrine of God as a body and substance, which we find in Firaq al-Karāmiyya.

Thirdly, the Necessary Being by himself is an absolute reality (ḥaqīqah muṭlaqah), because he depends upon no cause for his existence. Avicenna says: "Since the absolute existence which is by himself has no cause, then it remains that the Necessary Being by himself must be absolute reality."¹ But substance, for Avicenna, as a 'necessary being by another' (wājib al-wujūd bi 'l-ghair), must derive its existence either from a quiddity, or from another cause. This means that substances in relation to God are relative and contingent (nisbī wa muḥtamal). Hence Avicenna avoided applying the term 'substance' to God.

Moreover, he held that the act of existing in the created pure substances (human souls and the pure intellects) is distinct from their quiddity, although their quiddity is immaterial.² Because

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussā, S. Dunyā, Sa'īd Zayyēd (Cairo 1960) II, p.347.

2. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1948) III, pp.191-192. See St. Thomas Aquinas, On Being and Essence, trans. by Armond Mourer (Toronto 1949) pp.50-54.

the quiddities in these substances are not identical with their existences, they belong to the category of substance. But the essence of the Necessary Being by himself, as Avicenna maintains, is indistinguishable from his existence.¹ That is to say, his essence is not other than his act of existing. From this it follows that the Necessary Being by himself is not a substance, and belongs to no category of substance. Avicenna says: "Since it is established that he has no efficient cause, it follows in this respect that his essence is not other than his real existence, or in other words, not other than his being. He is neither a substance nor an accident."²

The following question remains to be answered: since the Necessary Being by himself is not substance as such, is it possible at all for him to be given the description that is used of the separable substances? The point is put by Avicenna himself:

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, II, p.344.

2. Avicenna on Theology, trans. by A. J. Arberry, (London 1951), p.27. And Majmū' rasā'il al-Shaikh al-ra'īs (Haidarabād 1354) al-risālat al-'arshiyā p.4.

"It may be that someone says that even if you have avoided calling God substance, it seems that you have not avoided giving him the meaning which is attached to the substance that you have considered as a genus, because the Necessary Being by himself does not seem to be existing in a subject."¹ We must consider whether he regarded the Necessary Being as not being in a subject.

The answer seems clearly to be in the negative: "It is wrong, if it is thought that the meaning, that which is not in a subject, as a description of substance, applies to of the First (God) as well."² He held that, in saying "that which is not in a subject", it is meant only that self-subsisting quiddity, which is neither in a body, nor a faculty in the soul, i.e. pure intellect.³ But God is not self subsisting quiddity, therefore God cannot be given the description "that which is not in a subject." For Avicenna, it is improper to describe

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussā, S. Duniyā, and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) II, 348.

2. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Duniyā (Cairo 1948) III, pp.72-73.

3. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. S. Duniyā, M. Y. Moussa, and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) II, p.348.

the Necessary Being by himself in any way that substance may be described.

Moreover, Avicenna is explicit that the use of the expression "not in a subject" (lais fī mawḍū') does not determine exactly whether that which it is supposed to describe has real existence or not. He says: "In the way that when one knows that Zaid in himself is a substance, one knows that he always exists in addition to any qualities he may have."¹ Thus it would appear that, for Avicenna, not only the term 'substance', but also any criterion or description relating to this term, is excluded from being one of the attributes of God.

What then are the attributes that can be ascribed to God? Avicenna's view is the following: the first attribute of the Necessary Being is that he is existent. The other attributes have this specific meaning with some additional quality either in the negative or in the positive, or in both senses, without their multiplicity coming to destroy his unicity or contradict

1. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1948) III, p.73.

the fact that he is the Necessary Being by himself.¹
Examples of such positive attributes are: "his being
Creator, Originator, and all the Attributes of Action;"²
and of the compound of both: "his being Willing and
Omnipotent, for these attributes are compounded of
knowledge and creativeness."³

As for the negative attributes Avicenna says:
"The negative attributes are such as when someone
does not avoid calling the First 'substance', in
which case one does not mean more than that the first
is existence, and this implies the denial that his
being is in a subject. And when it is said that he
is one, this means that his existence does not suffer
any division in quantity and that he has no partner..."⁴
Yet it seems that some commentators have taken this
passage to mean that Avicenna is considering God as
a substance.⁵

1. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussā, S. Dunyā, and
S. Zāyēd (Cairo 1960) II, p.367.

2. Arthur J. Arberry, Avicenna on Theology (London 1951)
p.32.

3. Ibid., pp.32, 33.

4. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussa, S. Dunyā and
S. Zāyēd (Cairo 1960) II, p.367.

5. See for example Soheil M. Afnan, Avicenna his life
and works (London 1950) p.174: "As a pure substance,
he is simple and unlike possible beings, his
essence and existence are one."

Here, Avicenna appears to express two views. First we may suppose that Avicenna himself thought it best to avoid calling God 'substance'; secondly, he seems to argue that, if anyone fails to avoid denoting the First by the term 'substance', he cannot be understood to mean anything positive thereby. That is, the description merely reveals and implies only that the First is existent, i.e. not non-existent. A consideration of this sort, however, does not imply the possibility of the existence of two Necessary Beings by themselves.

Additional evidence for Avicenna's view on this subject is to be found in an unpublished work At-Tamjīd.¹ Here he maintains that God is not substance, since he cannot support accidents; nor is he an accident, since his existence does not presuppose that of any substance. He himself is the creator of all substances, he is one, simple, and indivisible, impossible to imagine or to define. He has no beginning and no end, and is beyond all temporal existence.

1. British Museum (Add.16,659).

Therefore, we may conclude finally that al-Kindī and Avicenna share the same view that God should not be considered as a substance. Further, Avicenna seems to have been influenced by al-Kindī's views on this problem, as we may gather from the above discussion. Not only did Avicenna use some of al-Kindī's terminology, such as 'the First', 'the Eternal' (al-azalī) and 'that whose unicity is not other than his identity' (which is expressed by Avicenna as 'that whose essence is not other than his existence') but also, in al-Ishārāt,¹ al-Najāh,² and al-Shifā,³ Avicenna adopted the views expressed by al-Kindī at the end of his treatise Fī al-falsafah al-ūlā. For example, in al-Shifā, we find the following: "It has appeared that, the First has no genus, no quiddity, no quantity, no situation (place), no equivalent, no partner, and no contrary. He has neither a definition, nor a proof. He is self-evident."⁴ In

1. Avicenna, al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt, ed. S. Dunyā (Cairo 1948) III, p.77.

2. Avicenna, al-Najāh (? 1357/1938), pp.251-252.

3. Avicenna, al-Shifā, eds. M. Y. Moussa, S. Dunyā, and S. Zāyyed (Cairo 1960) II, p.354.

4. Ibid., p. 354.

addition to agreeing with al-Kindī that God is not a substance, he further agrees with him in denying explicitly the application of these attributes to God.¹

In denying the applicability of such terms to God, they may both have been influenced to some extent by Neo-Platonism. For Plotinus regarded God as being without quiddity and without quality,² neither resting nor moving, neither finite or infinite.³ He is ineffable,⁴ without form,⁵ and above all beings.

Yet al-Kindī and Avicenna were more vigorous than Plotinus in their refusal to use any term of God that might imply that he was substantial. Equally, they rejected the Neo-Platonic theory of the three hypostases, which had influenced the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Such a theory, in their eyes, was in conflict with strict monotheism, in that it implied the divisibility of God. Thus, their somewhat unorthodox metaphysical conception of God is, at

1. Rasā'il al-Kindī al-falsafiyah, ed. Abū Rīdah (Cairo 1950) II, pp.160-161.

2. Plotinus, Enneads, ed. E. Brehier (Paris 1956-64) V, 5, 6, l.22-23, p.98.

3. Ibid., V, 5, 10, l.16-20, pp.102-103.

4. Ibid., V, 5, 6, l.24, p.98.

5. Ibid., V, 5, 6, l.5, p.97.

the same time, an affirmation of a fundamental tenet of religious belief. We may conjecture that, for them, once God is conceived to be a substance, then it is possible to ask whether there is more than one God. It is this possibility that they would vigorously have denied.

Conclusion

It will have become clear from the discussion above that al-Kindī and Avicenna were familiar with Aristotle's view of substance. Furthermore, they appear to have been able to offer many interpretations of his philosophical opinions. Those comparisons that have been drawn between the Muslim philosophers and their predecessors reveal that their debt to him is not that of disciples to their teacher; their acceptance of his doctrines is critical and they did not hesitate to reject what they regarded as false.

Especially significant in our evaluation of this relationship is the fact that the Muslim philosophers adopt the methods of Aristotle, thereby revealing the importance of his method of investigation. This is so with regard both to the employment of genus and differentia in the process of definition, and to the division of the philosophical sciences into physical, mathematical, and metaphysical.

They disagreed with Aristotle on the substantiality of the soul, however. It is, perhaps, for religious motives that they inclined toward a Platonic teaching, and accepted the immortality of the soul and, consequently, its substantiality. Here they were prepared to defend their own opinions against those of Aristotle. They agreed also that Aristotle had been mistaken in applying the term 'substance' both to the Creator and to created beings.

Thus, it would not be possible to adhere to the view that al-Kindī and Avicenna adopted Aristotle's theory of substance and accidents as a matter of course, simply because it is Aristotle's; they clearly believed it to be correct. In adopting the theory, however, they nevertheless retained within their writings a sense of their own personalities as philosophers.

On the question of the measure of agreement between al-Kindī and Avicenna, it must be concluded

that the latter did not follow the former in his classification of substance. Al-Kindī, unlike Avicenna, distinguished between collective and differential substances, yet the latter enlarged upon the definition of substance by applying the term to every essence that exists by itself, considering the essence as something that precedes the existence. Al-Kindī is silent upon this question and is apt to avoid raising such problems and thinking in such terms as essence or quiddity; it seems that Arabic philosophical language had not yet reached the maturity that is to be found in Avicenna.

In the case of the material substance al-Kindī has shown himself to take the conservative view, defining it in terms of the three dimensions. Although we may refer in a loose sense to his concept of "the five substances", we have seen that he does not genuinely wish to regard movement, place, and time as true substances. Avicenna has rejected all definition of material

substance that refers to its dimension, and uses the concept of quiddity by which to define it. This quiddity in the material substance is neither the form nor the matter, but rather the compound of both. Al-Kindī is once again silent on the question of quiddity; and while Avicenna regards divisibility as the basic characteristic of the material substance, al-Kindī does not seem to recognise the importance of this feature, regarding the concept of dimensions as basic. With regard to movement, space, and time, al-Kindī may be seen to differ from Avicenna who holds that movement precedes time.

In respect of their writings on the soul, al-Kindī is apparently content to define it, assuming its existence to be a fact, while Avicenna is anxious to establish the existence of the soul before attempting to define it. Al-Kindī appears to have the intention of proving the substantiality of the soul, although he has not left a great deal of evidence on this question. Avicenna, on the other hand, has

produced many arguments to demonstrate that the soul is a substance. Both agree that the soul is a substance of a different kind from the body, and of a different nature. There is no essential unity between the soul and body or between separate souls; these philosophers appear to believe that no two substances may be united to form another. They appear to agree that the theory of transmigration is incorrect, and also that the faculties of the soul are not substances. In general, we find that Avicenna was more imaginative than al-Kindī in his ideas on the soul, and that his debt to Neo-Platonism on this subject was greater than his predecessor's.

Al-Kindī refers to only one intellect, in the sense of substance, while Avicenna holds a number of them to be substantial. Neither agree that those intellects which are faculties in the soul should be called substances. Al-Kindī does not use the Aristotelian concept of an active intellect,

and though Avicenna does so, he does not regard it as a God. Once again Avicenna shows signs of having been influenced more strongly by the Neo-Platonists.

Both are agreed that the term 'substance' is not applicable to God. Terms inapplicable to substance may not be applied to God. In general, Avicenna is in agreement with al-Kindī on the nature of those terms, e.g. genus, species, definition, etc., and both use terms reminiscent of Neo-Platonism by which to describe God, e.g. One, the First, the Innovator; but they will not take from Neo-Platonism any term which suggests God may be a substance.

The translation into Latin of many of their works, both philosophical and medical, made their thought accessible to their European contemporaries. St. Thomas Aquinas noted Avicenna's views and, even if he did not wholly agree with them, he evidently found him worthy of discussion. Descartes seems

often to have been influenced by Avicenna, for example, over the questions of the quiddity of material bodies; of the priority of essence to existence, and of the difference between the natures of body and soul.

An important point of difference between the Muslim philosophers and the European tradition of thought, however, lies in their refusal to use the term 'substance' of God. This is in contrast to both Aristotle and Descartes, who seem to have thought God, above all, must be an ens per se. It remained only for Spinoza completely to restrict the applicability of the term 'substance' to God alone, thus reversing totally the view of al-Kindī and Avicenna. Yet this may not be as paradoxical as it seems, in view of Spinoza's undoubted acquaintance with Avicenna. The latter's criticism of the equivocal sense of 'substance' in Aristotle might well have provided Spinoza with food for thought.

Thus, we have seen how al-Kindī and Avicenna stand, as it were, between two Western philosophical traditions. Their philosophical influence has been felt at various points in the history of the subject, from the early Scholastics to the Rationalists. In saying this, we indicate further avenues of research into the work of the Muslim philosophers and here conclude our discussion of their concept of substance.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE

(all dates are approximate)

Abū 'Isā al-Warrāq	active until	247/861
Ya'qūb al-Kindī (known as the Philosopher of the Arabs)	active until	247/861 or 255/868 A.D.
Ḥunain bn Ishāq	active until	260/873 A.D.
Thābit, bn qurrah	" "	288/900 A.D.
Muḥammad bn Zakariyā al-Rāzī	" "	311/923 or 320/932 A.D.
Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī	" "	324/935 A.D.
Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī	" "	339/950 A.D.
Yaḥyā bn 'Adī	" "	364/974 A.D.
Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī	" "	403/1012 A.D.
Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā), Abū 'Alī al-Ḥuṣān	" "	428/1036 A.D.
Ibn Ḥazm	" "	456/1063 A.D.
Abū al-Ma'ālī al-Juwainī	" "	478/1085 A.D.

Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālī	active until	505/1111 A.D.
Muḥammad al-Shhristānī	" "	548/1153 A.D.
Averroes (Ibn Rushd), Abū al-Walīd	" "	595/1198 A.D.
Ibn Maimūn	" "	601/1204 A.D.
Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī	" "	606/1209 A.D.
Ibn al-ʿAssāl	" "	the middle of the 13th century.

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