THE ZUHDIYĀT OF ABU'L-'ATĀHIYA

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SUMMARY OF THESIS

After a brief résumé of previous work on the poet Abu'l-'Atāhiya, the first chapter contains a biography of him. A survey is then made of the various sects of Islam during the period (750-850 A.D.) covered by the poet's life (chapter II), and there follows a discussion of the religious beliefs attributed to Abu'l-'Atāhiya by the traditions recorded about him in the 10th century Kitāb al-Aghānī (chapter III). This is an attempt to assess what were believed to be the poet's religious ideas in the period shortly after his death. There then follows an extended study (chapters IV-VI) of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's religious beliefs as these are attested in his religious poems (Zuhdiyāt). In chapter IV, the theology of the Zuhdiyāt is expounded, that is the doctrines of God, man and the world, the teaching on death, resurrection, the last judgment and the life after death. The following chapter (V) expounds the religious philosophy of the Zuhdiyāt. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's diagnosis of the failings of man and of the world are offset by the advice which he proffers to his contemporaries on how to live their lives. The sermon-like nature of the Zuhdiyāt is noted. In chapter VI, the various questions raised and left unresolved in chapter III are answered in the light of the Zuhdiyāt, and the conclusion is reached that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was a perfectly orthodox Muslim but was associated with an early ascetic movement which later developed into ṣūfī mysticism. The final chapter (VII) examines the Zuhdiyāt as poetry with particular reference to his metrical usage and the range of imagery which he employs. In the Conclusion, an attempt

is made to set him in perspective as one of the major poets of the early ʿAbbāsid period and to indicate some further lines of study which appear to be necessary.

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SYSTEM OF TRANSCRIPTION

The system of transcription employed in the present thesis is that of the Second Edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam with the following modifications:-

ج - j (not dj)

ڤ - q (not ḳ)

ـيّ - īy (not iyy)

CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION

Abu'l-'Atāhiya is one of those poets who figure prominently in histories of Arabic literature as one of the major poets of the early 'Abbāsid period. He is even recommended in a recent elementary grammar as one who, because of the simplicity of his style and language, is the easiest for a comparative beginner to tackle[1]. He is a poet, however, who appears never to have been studied in any depth. There are brief articles on him in the two editions of the Encyclopaedia of Islam, both of which contain a brief biography and an equally brief appraisal of his poetry[2]. There are also a few articles on Abu'l-'Atāhiya in learned journals[3]. That by Krachkovsky deals with those poems which are not zuhdiyāt, that is with the satires, elegies, love poems etc. The article by Léon is largely biographical and includes translations of many of the poems; that by Nagwin is a presentation of the more notable among the Zuhdiyāt together with a brief introduction. None of these articles studies any of the problems raised by Abu'l-'Atāhiya's religious poetry in any detail, and it is the aim of this thesis to concentrate on the Zuhdiyāt and on the religious ideas contained therein.

Since beginning work on Abu'l-'Atāhiya, I have discovered three other theses devoted to the poet. One, in Paris, I have not seen, although it bears the same title as my own[4]. The one by Mrs Attar is a fairly general study of the poet[5], while that by Dr El-Kafrawy is a rather unbalanced work which seems to be trying to depict Abu'l-'Atāhiya as an early Communist[6]. Neither of the two British theses deals specifically with the poet's religious ideas which is the aim of the present work.

A major difficulty in attempting any study of Abu'l-'Atāhiya is the lack of any critical edition of his poetry. According to Guillaume, his poetic output was so enormous that it was never collected in its entirety[7]. Only the Zuhdiyāt were the subject of a systematic collection by the Spanish scholar Ibn 'Abd al-Barr[8]. The earliest printed edition was by the Jesuit (Catholic) Press in Beirut in 1887, an edition which Brockelmann castigates as being 'in tendenziöser Auswahl'[9] and which Guillaume describes as 'partial'[10]. This first edition of 1887 is the only Catholic Press edition which I have seen, and it is to this edition that references are given in my notes. In 1914, Nallino reviewed what is referred to as 'the third edition', and the publication date is given as 1909[11]. It was from this edition that he made his translation of the Zuhdiyāt in 1920[12]. Magnin, in his article, refers to what he calls 'an abridged edition' published by the Catholic Press in 1914[13], but since this bears exactly the same title as the 1887 edition[14], we can probably assume that it is merely a reprint. No editor's name is mentioned on the title page of the 1887 edition beyond the fact that it was 'one of the Jesuit fathers'. It is usually assumed that the person concerned was Louis Cheikho. Nothing is said in this edition about which manuscripts were used in preparing it, and Nallino, in his review of the 1909 edition (or reprint, perhaps?), presumes that the editor used a Damascus manuscript and a Beirut one[15]. He suggests that in future editions (i.e., post-1909) use should also be made of manuscripts in Berlin and St. Petersburg. The lay-out of the 1887 edition, and presumably also of the subsequent

editions (or reprints) from the Catholic Press, is as follows: a Preface (pp.3-4); a Biography of Abu'l-'Atāhiya based on the Aghānī, Ibn Khallikān and al-Mas'ūdī (pp.5-14); the Zuhdiyāt ranged alphabetically in the order of the rhyme letters (pp.1-305); the remainder of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry divided into chapters according to type, e.g. eulogy, elegy, satire, etc. (pp.309-348); a glossary of supposedly unusual words (pp.349-373) and a list of errata (pp.374-378). It will be seen from this that the bulk of the so-called Dīwān is, in fact, made up of the Zuhdiyāt. The remainder of his poetry is what was never systematically collected and is simply a compilation from later anthologies and encyclopaedias. This smaller group of poems is not our concern here; they have been studied by Krachkovsky[16].

The only other edition of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry which I know was published, again in Beirut but this time by the Dār Ṣādir press, in 1964. Again no editor's name appears on the title page, but the Introduction (largely biographical; pp.5-10) appears over the name Karīm al-Bustānī whom one presumes to have been editorially responsible for the volume. Again there is no indication as to manuscript sources or even earlier printed editions, and there are no references whatever even to variant readings. The footnotes in this edition fulfil the role of the 1887 glossary. The main difference between the 1964 edition and the 1887 edition is that those non-Zuhdiyāt-type poems which were grouped separately in the latter are now inserted in their proper alphabetical order, but usually together at the end of each alphabetic chapter. There are sometimes textual variants between the two editions, and

where these are of significance in poems to which I refer, I have noted them. There are also some poems in the 1964 edition which are not in the 1887 edition (but which, on the evidence of Rescher's translation, appear to have figured in the 1909 edition) and where I have cited these poems, the reference is given to the 1964 edition. The latter concludes with a list of the opening words of each poem in precisely the same order in which they are printed in the Dīwān, that is listed alphabetically in the order of their rhyme letter.[17]

Ewald Wagner begins his admirable study of Abū Nuwās by stating that the poet's own Dīwān is the only really authentic source from which a biography of the poet can be reconstructed[18]. This is obviously the ideal situation, but in the case of the extant poetry of Abu'l-'Atāhiya there are few poems which are of any help in constructing a biography of the poet. We are, therefore, forced back on secondary sources such as the works of Abu'l-Faraj, Ibn Khallikān, al-Mas'ūdī and the like. It is on these sources that I have drawn for the life of the poet in chapter I, though I have tried as far as possible to be cautious in my use of them. The fullest source is Abu'l-Faraj's great Kitāb al-Aghānī. There are two principal editions of this work, the Būlāq edition of 1868 in 20 volumes, an edition which was incomplete and needs to be supplemented by a twenty-first volume edited by Brünow at Leiden in 1887, and the Dār al-Kutub edition (Cairo, 1923 ff.). It is to this latter edition that references are given, the akhbār of Abu'l-'Atāhiya figuring in Vol. IV, pp. 1-112. This edition has the great value of being eminently clear and well-

printed, and the pagination of the Būlāq edition is given in the margin. Only the first ten volumes of this edition were available to me, so references to the later parts of the Aghānī are given to the Būlāq edition.

After attempting to reconstruct the life of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, I have endeavoured to sketch the religious background against which he is set by describing in outline the various Islamic sects during the period 750-850 A.D. This is a subject which has been largely neglected, and it alone could provide material for several theses. I have not attempted in this chapter to go to original sources but have drawn largely on the recent work of Professor W. Montgomery Watt who has devoted a number of books and articles to this subject. In chapter III I have examined the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atāhiya as they are recorded in the Kitāb al-Aghānī. It is useful to note what the generation or two after Abu'l-'Atāhiya thought were his religious beliefs and thus to have a yardstick with which to approach the Zuhdiyāt which alone can provide a true appraisal of the actual nature of those beliefs. In the following two chapters I have attempted an analysis and synthesis of the religious doctrines contained in the Zuhdiyāt, in the first trying to restrict myself to what are his comparatively objective views on God, man, the world, life after death and judgment, that is to what one might call his 'theology', and in the second endeavouring to see what kind of advice he proferred to men for leading a religious life as he sought to fulfil the role of preacher to his contemporaries, that is to examine what one might call his 'religious philosophy'. In chapter VI I have tried

to answer those questions which were raised in earlier chapters, particularly in chapter III, and which were at that stage of necessity left unresolved. The Zuhdiyāt are not, of course, primarily theological treatises, although my main concern has been with the religious ideas contained in them, and chapter VII is a brief examination of them as poetry, with special regard to questions of form and style. In the Conclusion I have attempted to set Abu'l-'Atāhiya in perspective as one of the major poets of the early 'Abbāsid period and to indicate along what lines future study of his life and work and influence might lie.

CHAPTER I

THE LIFE OF ABU'L-'ATĀHIYA

The poet Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim b. Suwaid b. Kaisān was brought up in al-Kūfa, a city which was originally a military camp built by the Caliph 'Umar in 638. No date of birth is given by al-Iṣfahānī, but Ibn Khallikān and Baghdādī both give it as 748 A.D.[1], that is, two years before the final overthrow of the Umayyad dynasty. One source tries to link Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Ibrāhīm al-Mauṣilī from their origins[2] (as does another source with the date of their death[3]) and suggests that both came from al-Madhār, a town between Wāsiṭ and Basra about four days' journey from the latter, in the marshland at the mouth of the Tigris-Euphrates[4]. From al-Madhār they both went to Baghdād where Ibrāhīm al-Mauṣilī remained. Abu'l-'Atāhiya settled in al-Ḥīra and from there his father removed him to al-Kūfa. There is some doubt as to the exact place of his birth. Ibn Khallikān[5] says his birth-place was 'Ain al-Tamr. He gives various identifications of this place, suggesting that it lay in the Ḥijāz near Medina or in the Euphrates valley. He also quotes the Mushtarik of Yāqūt al-Hamawī as saying that it lay near al-Anbār, that is, again on the Euphrates, about forty miles north-west of Baghdād. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī[6] says that his place of origin (*'aṣluhu*) was 'Ain al-Tamr, but this expression is ambiguous. It could mean his birth-place (though *mawlid* would be the obvious word to use if that is what he meant), but it could also simply mean the place from which his family sprang. This last is the more likely view, and in support of it we might adduce a reference in the Aghānī[7] which indicates that 'Ain al-Tamr was the

place of origin of Kaisān, Abu'l-'Atāhiya's great-grandfather. This story refers, also, to a raid on 'Ain al-Tamr by Khālid b. al-Walīd during the caliphate of Abu Bakr. This would suggest that 'Ain al-Tamr was not in the neighbourhood of Medina, since the military activities on which we know Khālid to have been engaged were directed against 'Irāq and Syria. We know that in 634 he was in 'Irāq and that al-Hīra had surrendered to him. Hitti[8] says in this connection: ''Ain al-Tamr, a fortified place in the desert north-west of al-Kūfah, had also been captured just before the famous march on Syria.' He gives no source reference for this statement, but the story reported by Abu'l-Faraj would seem to support him[9]. 'Ain al-Tamr lies, then, north-west of al-Kūfa and south-west of al-Anbār and would seem to have been the place of origin of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's ancestor Kaisān. Al-Baghdādī[10] remarks that the place where Abu'l-'Atāhiya grew up and was reared (*mangha'uhu*[11]) was al-Kūfa, and many of the references to Abu'l-'Atāhiya in the *Aghānī* call him 'the Kūfan'. Abu'l-Faraj[12] uses the same word (*mangha'uhu*) with reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya and al-Kūfa and elsewhere, reporting a tradition of Haimūn b. Hārūn, says that 'his town was al-Kūfa, as it was the town of his fathers, and there he was born and reared and brought up'[13]. We can conclude that 'Ain al-Tamr was the village from which his family originally came, but that the poet himself was, in all likelihood, born in al-Kūfa, where he was certainly brought up and spent his early life.

Our sources are silent about Abu'l-'Atāhiya's father, except to tell us that he was a cupper (*hajjām*)[14], in other words some kind of medical practitioner, possibly even a

barber. His mother, we are told, was Umm Zaid, the daughter of Ziyād al-Muḥāribī[15]. The poet's clientage seems to have been more important than his ancestry (possibly because the latter was comparatively undistinguished), and much more is made of it in the sources. On his father's side, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was a client of the tribe of 'Anaza[16]. The latter were an ancient Arab tribe whose original home was in al-Yamāma, in the centre of the Arabian peninsula. There are traces of 'Anaza elements in the Euphrates valley as early as the second half of the sixth century A.D., and some of them settled in al-Kūfa[17]. The story in the Aghānī to which we have already referred in connection with Abu'l-'Atāhiya's ancestor Kaisān[18], tells how the latter, at the time of Khālid b. al-Walīd's capture of 'Ain al-Tamr, was an orphan under the care of a relative from the 'Anaza. When Khālid returned to Abu Bakr with his captives, Kaisān amongst them, and Abu Bakr asked about their origins, Kaisān replied that he was of the 'Anaza. With Abu Bakr on this occasion was 'Abbād b. Rifā'a, an 'Anazite, and he immediately asked for Kaisān in a gift, and the Caliph granted his request. Kaisān, given his freedom, became a client of the tribe of his liberator, and, in due course, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was born a client of the tribe of 'Anaza. On his mother's side, the poet could claim clientage with the Banu Zuhra[19]. Clientage was no empty formality, but rather a matter of close personal relationship between a man and his adoptive tribe, as the following story would indicate[20]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya came one day to two 'Anazite brothers, Mandal b. 'Alī and Hayyān b. 'Alī, complaining that he had been attacked and beaten and accused of being a Nabatean. The

brothers refer to the poet as 'our brother, the son of our mother and our client' (although there was no actual blood tie) and would not rest until Abu'l-'Atāhiya's rights had been defended.

The only other member of his family of whom we have any knowledge is Abu'l-'Atāhiya's brother, Zaid. The fact that his mother is known as Umm Zaid would indicate that Zaid was the elder of the two sons. Together with Zaid, Abu'l-'Atāhiya, in his younger days, ran a pottery manufacturing business in al-Kūfa[21]. When the poet was asked about this later in life, he replied that he was 'the potter of rhymes', that is the poet, and his brother was 'the potter of commerce', that is, Zaid continued the business after Abu'l-'Atāhiya had made a name for himself as a poet and had devoted himself entirely to poetry.

The poet's real name was Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim b. Suwaid b. Kaisān, and his kunya was Abu Ishāq. He had, however, another kunya, more in the nature of a nickname, and it is by this that he was most widely known in his own day and by this that he is still best known today. Abu'l-'Atāhiya means 'father of oraziness' and in the Aghānī we find two accounts of how he acquired it. One account suggests that he was given his nickname because he loved 'notoriety and jesting and playing the idiot'[22]. The other suggests that it was given him by the Caliph al-Mahdī who said to him one day, 'You are a man who shows skill as an idiot'[23].

As to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's appearance, we are told that he was slender with a pale complexion and long, thick, black, curly hair. He had a fair countenance and was elegant in dress[24]. However, the Aghānī also mentions his description

in a bare two words at a later point, when it refers to him as 'ugly-looking'[25]. We should note, in passing, that this description is from the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd and that the setting, with people crowding round the poet telling him of their difficulties and trials in life, suggests that Abu'l-'Atāhiya must, by this time, have been known not only as a sympathetic listener to such recitals but also as one who was able to dispense a certain amount of comfort. We might well suppose that, on this occasion, we have before us Abu'l-'Atāhiya the ascetic, the religious - no longer the young poet who loved jesting and playing the idiot, but the poet who saw it as his task to remind men of the serious side of life. There is a line of verse quoted in the Aghānī:

Then put on the silk with which you used to clothe people,
And leave off the self-mortification and the ugliness.[26]

which would suggest that self-mortification and ugliness were part and parcel of the same thing and that the phrase 'ugly-looking' was a reference, not so much to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's physical features as to his outward appearance, to the general impression of an ascetic. We might note that Rosenthor translates the phrase as 'schlecht gekleideter Mann'[27]. Al-Mas'ūdī also suggests that he was ugly, when he says that Abu'l-'Atāhiya had an ugly face, gracious gestures and a pleasant voice[28].

Abu'l-Faraj says, at the beginning of his account of the akhbār of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, that, to begin with, the poet was effeminate and 'used to carry the provision bag of the effeminate'[29]. There seems to have been quite a recognised effeminate group who affected feminine habits and manners, and one of the most outstanding members of this group was Wālība b. al-Hubāb. He spent most of his life at al-Kūfa,

where Abu'l-'Atāhiya could have come into contact with him, and he was the teacher of Abu Nuwās[30]. On the whole, the connection between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Wālība seems not to have been a very close one. Abu'l-Faraj relates only accounts which are woven round reciprocally satirical verse[31]. That there was, however, some connection on the part of Abu'l-'Atāhiya with what Guillaume[32] calls 'the profligate circle of poets grouped around Wālība b. al-Ḥubāb', is borne out by various passing references in the Aghānī to the poet as 'effeminate'[33]. On one occasion, Abu'l-'Atāhiya, reproached by Abu'l-Shamaqmaq for the company he keeps, replies that he simply wanted to learn their ways and their manner of speech[34]. The suggestion is that the poet frequented this particular group not so much out of personal predilection as out of the artist's (even, perhaps, the preacher's ?) desire to have experienced all things in life. The terms of Abu'l-Shamaqmaq's reproach are interesting. He says, 'Should a man like you, at your age, with your poetry and your standing, put himself in this position?' The implication is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya has already won for himself a reputation as a poet and is no longer a particularly young man. As we shall see, Abu'l-'Atāhiya must have been about thirty when he went to Baghdād, no younger than twenty-seven and no older than thirty-seven, and it would seem most likely that any association with the effeminate circle of Wālība b. al-Ḥubāb would be before he left al-Kūfa. What more likely than that a budding poet, one with a swiftly growing reputation, should associate with other poets in the same city, whatever the morals of the latter group might be? We can deduce that by the time he left al-Kūfa, somewhere about the age of thirty, Abu'l-'Atāhiya already had a considerable

reputation as a poet.

We know that in his younger days Abu'l-'Atāhiya worked as a potter and that he was sometimes known as 'the potter' even when he had ceased to work at that trade[35]. To begin with, it must have been a hard life, and we hear of the poet walking the streets of al-Kūfa with a basket of pottery on his back selling it[36]. But the business would appear to have flourished, for another account informs us that Abu'l-'Atāhiya and his brother Zaid had a factory in which they employed Sudanese slaves to do the work for them[37]. The selling was entrusted to another slave, Abu 'Ibād al-Yazīdī. Gradually, Abu'l-'Atāhiya appears to have opted out of the business to devote himself more and more to poetry[38]. But even while he was engaged full-time in the pottery business, his poetic talents were already beginning to flower. The account which tells of him selling his wares from a basket slung on his back mentions also how he came across a group of young men reciting poetry. Abu'l-'Atāhiya laid a wager with them that he would give them half a line of poetry and that they should complete it in a given time. They failed to do so, and Abu'l-'Atāhiya completed it for them. The narrator of this particular tradition adds the comment that it was one of his long qasīdas. The verses in question are as follows:-

O inhabitants of the graves!
You were like us only yesterday.
I should like to know what you have done.
Have you won (sc. Paradise) or have you lost (sc. your life in Hell) ? [39]

Then, too, we are told, cultured young men used to come to him at the factory and he would recite his poetry to them[40]. An interesting side-light is thrown on customs of the time by

the fact that we are told that the young man used to write his poems on pieces of broken pottery which they would find lying about them on the factory floor.

Another incident from Abu'l-'Atāhiya's youth of which we hear, though only from the Aghānī, is a love affair which he had with Su'dā, a wailing woman from al-Ḥīra[41]. 'Abdullah b. Ma'n was also in love with her, and this resulted in strained relations between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and the b. Ma'n family[42]. 'Abdullah, who seems to have been a person in a position of authority according to the sources[43], forbids Abu'l-'Atāhiya to see Su'dā and threatens him and frightens him[44]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya, however, has the stronger weapon, the power of words and poetry, and he composes satirical verse against 'Abdullah b. Ma'n. There are several stories telling how 'Abdullah sought revenge. One tells how he tricked Abu'l-'Atāhiya into being captured and given a hundred lashes[45]. Another tells how 'Abdullah sent for him and then ordered his slaves to commit indecency with Abu'l-'Atāhiya[46]. The poet, on the latter occasion, was given the chance of making peace there and then or of continuing the fight, and Abu'l-'Atāhiya chose to make peace, perhaps sure in the knowledge that his satirical verse would last longer than any revenge of 'Abdullah's, and that the final victory would be his in any case. 'Abdullah's brother, Yazīd, also attempted to defend the family honour and threatened Abu'l-'Atāhiya for having satirised his brother, but Abu'l-'Atāhiya simply satirised him too[47]. Another attempt at peace-making between them, though at what stage in the proceedings it is not easy to say, was when the B. Ma'n brothers asked Mandal b. 'Alī and his brother Ḥayyān (the two 'Anazite brothers who had championed Abu'l-'Atāhiya at an earlier stage[48]) to

bring about a reconciliation[49]. This they did, though people reproached Abu'l-'Atāhiya for having made peace so easily. However, Abu'l-'Atāhiya must have been sure that the final victory was his through his verse, and this is borne out by a story which tells how, ever afterwards, whenever 'Abdullah b. Ma'n saw anyone looking at him he could not help thinking that they were remembering the satirical words which Abu'l-'Atāhiya had composed against him[50]. It is unlikely that throughout this quarrel Abu'l-'Atāhiya's love for Su'dā was still at stake, for he had, at one point in all this, suspected her of lesbianism and had written a poem against her[51]. The quarrel with 'Abdullah b. Ma'n and his brother Yazīd seems to have passed beyond one of rival lovers to one of personal honour. The feud did not affect Abu'l-'Atāhiya's relations with the whole family, however, for we read of a third brother, Zā'ida b. Ma'n, who did not side with his brothers against Abu'l-'Atāhiya but remained friendly with him. The satires against the two brothers are counterbalanced by an elegy which the poet composed when Zā'ida died[52].

Abu'l-'Atāhiya had one son, Muhammad, who followed in his father's footsteps as a poet[53], though not with the same success as Ishāq the famous son of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's friend Ibrāhīm al-Mausilī. He is, however, the direct source for many of the anecdotes about his father's life[54]. There were also two daughters in the family, Lillāh and Billāh[55]. Mansūr b. al-Mahdī asked for Lillāh's hand in marriage, but her father refused him on the grounds that he wanted her simply as the daughter of a famous father and not for her own sake. Abu'l-'Atāhiya foresaw that a marriage

entered upon for such a reason would be unlikely to last, and, should he find himself with a divorced daughter on his hands, he would be unlikely to find a good second match for her. He would, rather, choose for her a wealthy man.

The Aghānī has a reference to another daughter called Ruqayya[56] whom Abu'l-'Atāhiya, during his last illness, asks to mourn for him in the following lines:-

Destruction has played with my guide-posts and my traces,
And I am buried alive beneath the refuse of my cares.
Destruction has cleaved to my body and has weakened my strength.
Indeed, destruction has fed upon cleaving to me.

Whether Ruqayya is to be identified with Lilīāh or Bilīāh, or whether she is another daughter altogether is impossible to say. She is mentioned only here in the Aghānī and the fact that the giving of her name is fairly incidental might lead us to accept its authenticity. The name is certainly a more probable one than the names of the other two daughters, and there is no reason to query it. The only reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's wife which we find in our sources is in an account of a time when the poet was imprisoned by Hārūn al-Rashīd for refusing to compose love poetry when the Caliph wished[57]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya took a vow not to speak for a year, except for the reading of the Qur'ān and the reciting of the Confession of Faith (shahāda). The situation was saved when, at the end of the year, Abu'l-'Atāhiya presented some verses which he had composed to his wife. In this way he complied with the Caliph's request for love poetry while maintaining his own position in that, being written for his wife, the verses in question were not love poetry in the generally accepted sense of that term.

According to the sources at our disposal, the first reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya in Baghdād and connected with court life mentions him in conjunction with al-Mahdī. The latter reigned from 775 to 785, so somewhere between these two dates we must place the arrival of Abu'l-'Atāhiya in Baghdād. The problem is to decide when exactly this move took place. Of the various stories which are placed by the Aghānī during the caliphate of al-Mahdī, several speak of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's relationship with Yazīd b. Mansūr, the maternal uncle of al-Mahdī[58]. Ṭabarī[59] tells us that Yazīd b. Mansūr was governor of al-Kūfa in the year 161 A.H., that is 777/8 A.D. The Aghānī tells us of Yazīd's affection for Abu'l-'Atāhiya because the poet celebrated his Yemenite branch of the family in his poetry[60]. It would appear, according to this story, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya adopted a Yemenite clientage during Yazīd's lifetime, and only after the latter's death (which he mourned in an elegy) did he revert to his original 'Anazite clientage. It is perhaps not too extravagant to suppose that Abu'l-'Atāhiya first came to know Yazīd b. Mansūr after the latter's appointment as governor of the poet's native city. It may be that Yazīd was favourably impressed with Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry, either for aesthetic reasons or for personal reasons, and encouraged the poet to try his luck in the capital. This would place Abu'l-'Atāhiya's move to the capital in 778 or soon after it, that is when the poet was thirty. We have, of course, no definite proof that things happened in this way, and the most that we can say with certainty is that the move took place sometime between 775 and 785, that is when the poet was between the ages of twenty-seven and thirty-seven.

From the kind of stories which our sources for the poet's life provide,we can deduce next to nothing about the day to day activities of that life and very little even about outstanding events in it. The latter,indeed,is generally possible only when there is a connection with some known and datcable historical event. There is nothing during the caliphate of al-Mahdī which allows even of that. The most that we can describe is something of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's role and function as a poet attached to the caliphal court. The poet's function was to provide poetry whenever the Caliph might wish it and to act as companion,providing often,certainly in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's case,moral and religious reprimand whenever the poet,or,more safely,the Caliph, thought he was in need of it.

One day Abu'l-'Atāhiya was out hunting with al-Mahdī, and the two of them became separated from the rest of the party and lost themselves in rain and mist. They eventually found refuge in a ferryman's hut,and although the latter was kind enough to lend his cloak to al-Mahdī,who was almost dying of cold,he tells them in no uncertain terms how stupid they are to be out hunting in such weather. Once home,al-Mahdī realises how right the ferryman was and how stupid they were to be out hunting. He accordingly asks Abu'l-'Atāhiya to satirise him,and it is only at the third attempt on the poet's part that al-Mahdī is satisfied at the severity of the satire against himself[61].

On another occasion we see Abu'l-'Atāhiya pleading with the Caliph on behalf of someone he has imprisoned. Al-Mahdī was angry on a certain occasion with Abu 'Ubaidallah, and he has him imprisoned. But he is pleased with some

verses of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's pleading for the prisoner's release, and Abu 'Ubaidallah is freed[62].

Another aspect of the court poet's function, that of relieving his master's grief, is seen on the occasion when a daughter of al-Mahdī's died. The father was naturally grief-stricken and refused all food and drink. But some words from Abu'l-'Atāhiya helped to lighten his grief and let him see the death of his daughter in its true perspective. 'Only patience,' said al-Mahdī, 'can meet that from which there is no escape. If we forget those whom we have lost, then may those who lose us, forget us. Night and day do not come upon anything which they do not wear out.' Abu'l-'Atāhiya improvised the following verses:-

How is it that day and night, as they revolve, are never
worn out,
While everything that is fresh and new in them is
worn out?
You who console yourself over a loved one after his death,
How many will also console themselves over you after
your death!
It is as though every pleasant thing, which you enjoy
of life's pleasures, were like a fleeting mirage.
May the world not sport with you, and may you see
As many changes of fortune and parables in it as you wish.
The only way to outwit death is always to act righteously.
If not, then there is no way for the crafty to outwit
it either.

This time the Caliph rewarded him because he had reached what had been in al-Mahdī's soul, he had preached (w'ẓ) and been brief[63]. And here we see what is, perhaps, the first indication of what is to become a major part of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's role in the future, that of preacher both to Caliph and to commoner. The root w'ẓ we shall encounter again.

The life of a court poet was not always, however, all rewards and praise. Sometimes he could find himself skating on the thin ice of his master's changeable favour. A story is told of how Baghshar b. Burd and Aghja' were together with Abu'l-'Atāhiya at an audience of al-Mahdī's and Abu'l-'Atāhiya was asked to recite before the other two, much to Baghshar's chagrin. Abu'l-'Atāhiya recited, and Baghshar did not know which of the two facts was the more astonishing, the weakness of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's verse or the fact that he celebrated in it, not the Caliph as might have been expected, but the Caliph's slave-girl. However, Abu'l-'Atāhiya must have seen that al-Mahdī was displeased at not having been mentioned in this poem, and he deftly changed it into a eulogy of the Caliph[64].

To incur the Caliph's displeasure was a dangerous thing, and it would appear that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was imprisoned during the caliphate of al-Mahdī. The references to the imprisonment in the Aghānī are oblique. One story says that when he was released from al-Mahdī's prison he had to attend a doctor for an eye complaint[65]. The only other reference is to his friend Yazīd b. Mansūr pleading successfully with the Caliph for the poet's release[66]. The Aghānī is silent, in both of these accounts, as to the reason for the imprisonment. There are other 'imprisonment' stories in the Aghānī, but all of them are not in the time of Hārūn al-Rashīd. One of them[67], in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya meets, in prison, a follower of a certain 'Īsā b. Zaid, is, however, placed by Ibn Khallikān[68] in the time of al-Mahdī. De Slane, in his notes to his translation of Ibn Khallikān, states that no such person as 'Īsā b. Zaid is known to the historiographers as having lived in the reign of al-Mahdī[69].

but Ṭabarī[70] states that 'Īsā b. Zaid died in 167 A.H., that is 783/4 A.D., during the caliphate of al-Mahdī. This would seem definitely to indicate that the imprisonment in question took place during the caliphate of al-Mahdī, since Hārūn al-Rashīd would be unlikely to be executing followers of 'Īsā b. Zaid for refusing to divulge his whereabouts several years, at least, after the man's death. If we accept, then, that this term of imprisonment did, in fact, occur during al-Mahdī's reign, we are left to ask the reason for it. Both the Aghānī and Ibn Khallikān state that it was because Abu'l-'Atāhiya gave up composing poetry[71]. Why should this have been? The only other reference in the Aghānī to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's having renounced the composition of poetry places the incident in the caliphate of al-Rashīd and is quite specific as to the kind of poetry which is renounced, namely love poetry[72]. The renunciation of love poetry is here linked with his becoming an ascetic and donning the ṣūfī woollen garb, but there is no mention of these last two factors in the imprisonment story of al-Mahdī's reign. The consensus of opinion in our sources is, in any case, in favour of his adoption of asceticism having taken place in the time of al-Rashīd. We can conclude, therefore, that the cause of his imprisonment during the caliphate of al-Mahdī was not connected with his becoming an ascetic, nor with his refusal to compose love poetry as such. In any case, our two sources, the Aghānī and Ibn Khallikān, both imply a total, if temporary, renunciation of poetry. We must, therefore, look for the cause of this renunciation elsewhere than in his religious convictions of a later period.

The main event of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's life, or so one might suppose from the source material available for a reconstruction of it, was the episode of his unrequited love for 'Utba[73]. Reading through the various sources which describe this love for 'Utba, one gets the distinct impression that much of the material is due to the romantic imagination of later generations. The available facts are few. Most authorities are agreed as to who she was, the slave of al-Mahdī's wife Rayṭa[74]. It seems fairly certain that Abu'l-'Atāhiya met her only after his arrival in Baghdad. Khaṭīb gives two accounts of how this meeting came about, the first purporting to be an account by Abu'l-'Atāhiya himself, the second by his son[75]. The first account is a rather fanciful one and would seem to indicate that the whole affair started more as a joke to while away the long days immediately after his arrival in Baghdad when the hoped for success as a poet in the capital was not at once forthcoming. So much is probable and, indeed, there is a verse quoted in the Aghānī, in the course of a recital of his love poetry given by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to Muslim b. al-Walīd, which seems to bear out this interpretation:-

I suffered a misfortune, and a joke was the beginning of my misfortune.
Then I loved truly; but misfortune always has a beginning.[76]

But the rest of the story, as put in the mouth of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, with its tale of the poet disguising himself as a monk to gain access to his beloved, smacks of that imaginative excess which colours so much of the 'Utba legend. The other account, given by Abu'l-'Atāhiya's son, sounds much more likely, and is not in disharmony with the verse which we

have quoted from the Aghānī. It suggests that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was not, at first, entirely successful in his attempts to win the Caliph's ear when he arrived in Baghdad from al-Kūfa. He decided, therefore, that in order that the Caliph might know of his existence, he should try to win some kind of fame or notoriety. He saw 'Utba riding in a train of servants one day. What better, then, than a love affair with a slave of the Caliph's wife? So he busied himself in composing love poetry about her, in presenting himself to her on every occasion, in speaking only of her in his poetry and in showing the intensity of his love for her. By means of all this, he hoped to win his way through to the attention of the Caliph and to make himself acceptable at court. While this procedure can not exactly be called a 'joke', yet it would be true to say that it was begun without seriousness. The Aghānī verse would imply this, as well as the poet's own version of the beginning of the affair. The Aghānī verse implies, further, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya actually grew to love 'Utba. The 'misfortune' would refer to the fact, agreed upon by all the sources, that his love for 'Utba was unrequited.

To return to the point from which we commenced this brief discussion of the 'Utba episode, many of the sources are agreed that, at some time or other during this affair, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was imprisoned by al-Mahdī, the latter being angry at the attentions paid to one of his wife's slaves[77]. Ibn al-Mu'tazz says that, on this occasion, Yazīd b. Manṣūr spoke in favour of the poet and brought about his release, and this ties up, as we have seen, with one of the Aghānī accounts of his imprisonment at this period[78]. But, as we

have also seen, Ibn Khallikān's account of the meeting with 'Īsā b. Zaid in al-Mahdī's prison[79] would suggest that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was imprisoned for having given up the composition of poetry, and this scarcely tallies with the suggestion that the poet's imprisonment by al-Mahdī was because of the latter's anger at the attentions paid by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to his wife's slave girl. We have to conclude, therefore, that there was one occasion of imprisonment in the time of al-Mahdī and that Ibn Khallikān is wrong in suggesting that it was because of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's refusal to compose poetry. On this view, the Aghānī is correct in placing an imprisonment for such a reason in al-Rashīd's reign when, as we have seen, the reason for his imprisonment at that time was, in fact, the renunciation of, specifically, love poetry for religious reasons. The Aghānī is wrong, however, in placing in that period the meeting with the follower of 'Īsā b. Zaid. The reason for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imprisonment during the caliphate of al-Mahdī was because of the latter's anger at the poet's expression of love for 'Utba, as Ibn Qutaiba and Ibn al-Mu'tazz suggest. The only other possible point of view is that there were, in fact, two occasions of imprisonment during al-Mahdī's reign, the first because of the Caliph's anger and the second, perhaps, when Abu'l-'Atāhiya became aware that his love for 'Utba would never come to fruition and when, possibly in a fit of pique or suffering from unrequited love, he refused, temporarily at least, to continue with the composition of poetry in any shape or form, such a refusal presumably running counter to a specific command from the Caliph himself. The nature of our sources does not permit us to

say with certainty which of these two views is the correct one, nor does it allow us to decide on which occasion, if there were two occasions, Yazīd b. Manṣūr interceded on the poet's behalf.

When Mūsā al-Hādī succeeded his father as Caliph in 785, Abu'l-'Atāhiya had to win his place at court. During al-Mahdī's caliphate, Abu'l-'Atāhiya had been more attached to the Caliph's younger and more brilliant son Hārūn. It was Hārūn who had been the favourite with both father and people, and he it was who had led a successful campaign against the Byzantines in 782, thereby winning for himself the title of al-Rashīd, 'the follower of the right path'. Shortly before his death, al-Mahdī, who had designated his sons Mūsā and Hārūn as his successors in that order, tried to have Hārūn made his immediate successor, thus superseding his brother. But this plan came to nothing since al-Mahdī was killed in a hunting accident before he could even try to implement it. So, on al-Hādī's accession to the throne, Abu'l-'Atāhiya composed a special eulogy set to music by Abu 'Īsā b. al-Rashīd in an attempt to gain the favour of the new Caliph. Al-Hādī admitted Abu'l-'Atāhiya to an audience, and the poet took the opportunity to recite more laudatory verses. So al-Hādī was pleased with him and bestowed his favour on him[80]. There are several other stories relating this displeasure of al-Hādī with Abu'l-'Atāhiya because he had been more preoccupied with his brother Hārūn. One day al-Hādī ordered Abu'l-'Atāhiya to go with him to al-Rayy, one of the chief towns of the al-Jibāl province, later Persian 'Irāq, on some unspecified expedition, and Abu'l-'Atāhiya refused. Naturally the poet was frightened at the possible consequences of this refusal to obey the

Caliph's orders, so he composed some verses in an attempt to conciliate al-Hādī[81]. Again, on the very day on which Mūsā al-Hādī succeeded to the caliphate a child was born to him, and Abu'l-'Atāhiya is said to have composed some verses of congratulation and praise. Al-Hādī was pleased on this occasion too and ordered the poet to be rewarded with gifts of money and perfume[82]. What was perhaps more important for the poet, however, was the fact that the Caliph's favour had been won. We are told again at the end of this particular story that al-Hādī had been angry with him, but, as a result of his poem, he forgave him, forgave, presumably, his former concern with his brother Hārūn.

Not all of these stories can, of course, be historically true, since al-Hādī can not have kept on bestowing his favour on Abu'l-'Atāhiya and then be represented at the beginning of the next story as still displeased with the poet for the same reason. The most that we can deduce from them is that, during the latter part of the caliphate of al-Mahdī at least, Abu'l-'Atāhiya had cultivated the friendship of Hārūn al-Rashīd, no doubt in common with many others, to the neglect of Mūsā al-Hādī. On the latter's accession Abu'l-'Atāhiya found himself in disfavour at court and had to win his position. How exactly this was achieved we can not say, but that it was achieved seems certain. The enjoyment of the position, once won, must have been shortlived, since al-Hādī died soon after he became Caliph.

When Hārūn al-Rashīd succeeded his brother in 786, there began the most brilliant reign of the whole 'Abbāsid dynasty. Al-Rashīd became for the Arabs what Hitti calls 'the beau idéal of Islamic kingship'[83], and although the

Aghānī and similar encyclopaedic works contain stories which are obviously tinged with romantic overlays, it is not hard to see that there must be some nucleus of truth in their descriptions of fantastic luxury and wealth. With regard to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's life at this time, again we see little of day to day events. The most we can gather is a few glimpses of his role and function as a poet attached to the caliphal court.

He was not, of course, alone as court poet, for we can gather that the Caliph had several poets in his entourage and even had special audiences for the poets alone. According to the Aghānī, on one occasion when the poets were admitted to the presence of the Caliph, Abu'l-'Atāhiya is the only one who recites to the satisfaction of al-Rashīd[64]. Again, when al-Rashīd wishes some lines of verse in praise of a favourite horse, he asks 'the poets', who appear to have accompanied him on his horse-racing expedition, to provide something. Again, it is Abu'l-'Atāhiya who is said to have been successful[65]. Whether or not we can trust these accounts of the supremacy of Abu'l-'Atāhiya over all the others is not in question here. The point is that as a poet attached to or attendant on the Caliph, he was not alone, but was one of a group.

The court poet, if we may use these words, with reservations, to describe Abu'l-'Atāhiya in so far as he was attendant on Hārūn al-Rashīd and in so far as a poet was dependent for his livelihood on the gifts he received from the Caliph himself, from members of his family and from high court officials - the court poet was expected to be available to compose poetry to order. The Aghānī tells

how Abu'l-'Atāhiya was asked to compose a poem for the sailors to sing as they worked the boat on which al-Rashīd liked to travel[86]. Al-Rashīd liked to hear their singing but disliked the words and music which they sang, so he gave orders that one of his poets should compose something suitable for them. Apparently Abu'l-'Atāhiya was the most suitable for such a commission, and he was asked to provide the requested verses.

Again, the court poet was expected to comment suitably on the political events of the day, and we find Abu'l-'Atāhiya composing such suitable comment on the occasion when al-Rashīd designated his three sons, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'tamin, as his successors[87]. One role which Abu'l-'Atāhiya filled at the court of al-Rashīd was one which was probably peculiar to him in view of his particular religious propensities, that of 'preacher' to the Caliph. The Aghānī, in a tradition which stems from Abu'l-'Atāhiya's son, tells us how one day al-Rashīd asked the poet to preach to him (the Arabic verb is wa'aẓa). Abu'l-'Atāhiya hesitated at first, afraid to incur the Caliph's displeasure, but al-Rashīd assured him that he was safe. His recital of the following verses moved al-Rashīd to tears:-

Do not think you are safe from death at any time in your life,
Even though you are guarded by door-keepers and guards.
And know that the arrows of death always hit the mark,
Even when a man is armoured and shielded against them.
You hope for salvation, yet do not go the way that leads to it.
The ship can not sail on dry land.[88]

The Aghānī gives us a certain amount of evidence as to the popularity of Abu'l-'Atāhiya and his poetry at this

period. We hear of al-Rashīd being delighted at his verse[89], and there is even one story of how his fame had spread to Constantinople and of how the Byzantine Emperor wished to have Abu'l-'Atāhiya sent to him. The poet refused to go, and al-Rashīd heard later that the Emperor in question[90] had two verses of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's inscribed on the doors of his audience chamber[91]. Perhaps more significantly, two of the Aghānī stories give some indication of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's popularity with the common people. One tells how 'Alī b. 'Īsā b. Ja'far, when a boy at the court of al-Rashīd, saw an old man reciting verses with a crowd round him. The old man was Abu'l-'Atāhiya[92]. The other tells how an ugly-looking old man rode up one day to the gate of al-Rashīd's palace. When he stopped, a crowd immediately surrounded him, and people began to present their complaints to him. Again, the old man with the sympathetic ear was Abu'l-'Atāhiya[93]. He would appear to have been known as a sympathetic listener to the troubles of others.

The majority of the stories in the Aghānī concerning Abu'l-'Atāhiya during the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd speak of the poet's imprisonment and/or his adoption of the ascetic life, and, since these two events are connected in many of the stories, we shall deal with them together. Two of them we can dismiss at the beginning as of doubtful historical worth. The first we have already dealt with when discussing Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imprisonment during the reign of al-Mahdī, the story which tells of the poet's encounter with a follower of the Shī'ite 'Īsā b. Zaid[94]. As we have already noted, 'Īsā b. Zaid died in 783/4 A.D.[95], that is while al-Mahdī was still on the throne. It would

seem, then, that the tradition reported by Abu'l-Faraj in the Aghānī has placed this incident in the wrong historical period. The other is an elaborate story of how Abu'l-'Atāhiya took the final step to asceticism[96]. But this story shows Abu'l-'Atāhiya up in such a bad light, depicting him wearing two date-baskets in place of shirt and trousers as a sign of his renunciation of the pleasures and comforts of life, that we are probably justified in regarding it as an attempt to pour scorn on his asceticism. There were those who doubted Abu'l-'Atāhiya's sincerity in this regard, and this story may well have been circulated by those of such an opinion in an attempt to discredit the poet. In the story, indeed, Mukhāriq, who was present on this occasion, is said to have laughed at the sight of Abu'l-'Atāhiya thus dressed[97].

When we turn to the other imprisonment stories of the time of al-Rashīd, the obvious questions to be asked are why he was imprisoned and when this happened. One story suggests that when al-Hādī died, that is, at the very beginning of al-Rashīd's reign, the latter ordered Abu'l-'Atāhiya to compose love poetry. The poet is said to have refused (as Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī is said to have refused to sing), saying that after al-Hādī he would never compose poetry again. The implication is that the poet (and the singer) is so grief-stricken by the death of al-Hādī that he feels himself unable to compose. Accordingly, al-Rashīd imprisons both poet and singer. They are freed only when Abu'l-'Atāhiya composes a special poem in praise of al-Rashīd, which Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī sets to music[98]. Our interest in this story is, of course, in the reason given for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imprisonment, and this, we are told,

was because he refused to comply with a caliphal order to compose love poetry on a given occasion. This is, indeed, a very likely reason for his imprisonment, but when we go behind that to the reason for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's refusal, we must ask ourselves whether this is quite so likely. He is reputed to have said that after al-Hādī's death he will never compose poetry again, implying, we presume, that he was so grief-stricken by that death that he felt that his inspiration had deserted him. But when we remember that before al-Mahdī's death, Abu'l-'Atāhiya had been much more friendly with al-Rashīd than with al-Hādī and that he had had to make special efforts to win the Caliph's favour when al-Hādī succeeded to the throne, we must wonder whether he could have become so attached to al-Hādī during the latter's short reign that the Caliph's death would have affected him to such an extent. It is, of course, possible, but, on the face of it, not probable. It is perhaps relevant to note that one source links Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī from their origins[99], while another source suggests that both died on the same day[100]. It is, perhaps, just possible that the story under discussion here, linking, as it does, Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī in prison in the caliphate of Hārūn al-Rashīd for precisely the same motives, is part of an Abu'l-'Atāhiya - Ibrāhīm al-Mawsilī cycle which connects the two at various points in their lives. Whatever the possibility of a cycle of this kind, and while we can not say dogmatically that the reason given here for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's refusal to compose poetry is wrong, on balance it would seem to be unlikely and we must, therefore, look for a more probable reason elsewhere.

Four further stories about Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imprisonment

at this time can be dealt with here briefly together. One mentions that al-Rashīd had imprisoned Abu'l-'Atāhiya and swore not to set him free until he had composed some verse[101]. We are not told explicitly why the poet was imprisoned, but it would seem to be implicit in the account that it was because of a refusal to compose poetry. This, as we have seen, is more than likely, but, since the narrative does not go beyond that to the reason for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's refusal, it takes us no further. The same can be said of another account which is slightly more explicit in that it states that al-Rashīd imprisoned Abu'l-'Atāhiya until he would once more compose love poetry. The poet is released only after he has recited one of his poems about 'Utba[102]. The account, however, does not take us behind the refusal to a reason for it and it, too, takes us no further. Two other accounts simply mention the fact of the imprisonment without giving any reason whatsoever for it[103].

Two further accounts of this episode in the life of Abu'l-'Atāhiya do go behind the refusal to compose love poetry and give us some indication as to why the poet persisted in his refusal to the point of imprisonment. Both give the same reason, which is a much more likely one than grief at the death of al-Hādī. The first of these accounts[104] tells us that after Abu'l-'Atāhiya had donned the woollen cloak of a ṣūfī, al-Rashīd ordered him to compose love poetry and he refused. The Caliph accordingly had him beaten and imprisoned until such times as Abu'l-'Atāhiya should comply with his request. There follows a long account of how the poet took a vow of silence for a year and of how, at the end of the year, he did comply with al-Rashīd's

request by presenting him with a love poem addressed to his (Abu'l-'Atāhiya's) wife. The other account is similar[105]. It tells how Abu'l-'Atāhiya put on the ṣūfī cloak and robe and vowed that he would never compose love poetry again. So al-Rashīd ordered him to be imprisoned. There is no mention here of the Caliph's having specifically requested him to compose love poetry, but we can assume that this must have happened and that the poet refused. So we move behind the surface refusal to compose love poetry to the reason for such a refusal, namely that Abu'l-'Atāhiya had donned the cloak of white, undyed wool worn by Islamic mystics, as a sign of his having turned from the luxury and licentiousness of life at court to a life of renunciation and asceticism. We can say no more about the nature of his asceticism at this point, since a full discussion of this will be possible only after we have examined his religious poetry, the Zuhdiyāt. Suffice it to say that at this point in his life he underwent some kind of religious experience which involved him in a renunciation of the frivolity of court life, a frivolity of which love poetry and its composition is but an outward symbol. This religious experience is certainly a very feasible explanation of his refusal to compose love poetry to the order of the Caliph and is a reason of sufficient depth to explain his persistence in refusing to the point of imprisonment. We shall find this reason confirmed in another source below, but we shall hold it provisionally as a decided possibility and turn now, briefly, to ask when this happened.

There is one story[106] which tells of how al-Rashīd, having recited two lines of poetry on one occasion, asked Ja'far b. Yahya, the Barmakid, to find someone to complete

them for him. Ja'far suggests that only Abu'l-'Atāhiya would be capable of this, and he writes to the poet who is in prison. Eventually al-Rashīd ordered Abu'l-'Atāhiya to be released from prison, and the poet says, 'Now writing poetry is pleasant.' There is no suggestion of locale in this narrative, but in many respects it appears to be a doublet of the immediately preceding story in the Aghānī[107] where it is said that al-Rashīd and Ja'far b. Yahya are in al-Raqqa and Abu'l-'Atāhiya in prison in Baghdād. This would, perhaps, account for Ja'far's having written to Abu'l-'Atāhiya with the request to complete the Caliph's poem instead of paying him a personal visit. The fact that the poet is eventually freed on the intervention of Ja'far b. Yahya would give us a terminus ante quem for the imprisonment of Abu'l-'Atāhiya by placing it at least before the death of Ja'far b. Yahya in 803 A.D.[108]. However, the reference to the presence of al-Rashīd in al-Raqqa suggests the possibility of a more precise dating of the event, if once we can determine when al-Rashīd was in al-Raqqa. The latter was al-Rashīd's favourite town of residence, and it lay about 350 miles north-west of Baghdād, near the source of the Euphrates. Al-Rashīd seems to have spent a great deal of time there and it is, therefore, difficult to determine which of his many visits to al-Raqqa coincided with Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imprisonment in Baghdād. The earliest visit of al-Rashīd to al-Raqqa which is mentioned by Tabarī, is in the year 186 A.H.[109]. Tabarī mentions that al-Rashīd returned by boat to Baghdād from al-Raqqa in Jumādā'l-Ākhira 184, that is May or June 800 A.D. But al-Rashīd had been on the throne for fourteen years by that time, and it would seem unlikely that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conversion and imprisonment

took place so far on in al-Rashīd's reign or, indeed, that this was, in fact, the first time that al-Rashīd had been in al-Raqqa. We have no evidence that Abu'l-'Atāhiya composed love poetry at all in al-Rashīd's caliphate, at least our sources suggest that the main event of al-Rashīd's reign, as far as our poet was concerned, was the latter's renunciation of the world. If we were to accept the year 800 as a terminus a quo, and if we take 803 as the terminus ante quem, then Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conversion and imprisonment will have taken place somewhere between these two dates, that is when the poet was between the ages of fifty-two and fifty-five. However, in view of the reservations about taking 800 as a terminus a quo, the dating of this event in the poet's life ought perhaps to be pushed further back in al-Rashīd's reign.

Of all the accounts given in our sources, perhaps the most succinct and the most convincing is a tradition which stems from Abu'l-'Atāhiya's son Muhammad[110]. He tells us that when al-Rashīd went to al-Raqqa, Abu'l-'Atāhiya donned the woollen cloak of the ṣūfīs, became an ascetic and gave up attending drinking parties and composing love poetry. Al-Rashīd therefore ordered him to be imprisoned. Here we have enumerated for us both the refusal to compose love poetry, which seems to have been the outward manifestation of the poet's new state of mind and heart which initially attracted the Caliph's displeasure, and the reason for this refusal in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's adoption of an ascetic way of life, with his donning of the woollen cloak of the Islamic mystics as another outward manifestation of this new Weltanschauung. We have been unable to date this change of

heart in Abu'l-'Atāhiya with any great precision, except that it might possibly have taken place between 800 and 803, although it might, perhaps more plausibly, have occurred earlier in al-Rashīd's reign.

Like most 'conversion' experiences, that of Abu'l-'Atāhiya did not occur out of the blue. There is a tradition reported by Abu'l-Faraj, one which we shall discuss more fully in chapter III, which tells how, when Abu'l-'Atāhiya was sought for interview by Hamduwaih, an inquisitor connected with the official persecution of zandaqa between 780 and 786, in connection with the poet's supposed heretical inclinations, he 'remained a cupper', that is he practised for a time his father's medical occupation[111]. Other traditions in the Aghānī[112] suggest that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's adoption of his father's occupation was simply a means on the poet's part of acquiring self-abasement and self-humiliation. He practised it on the poor and would appear to have had little skill in it. Yahya b. Khālid even wonders why he did not find sufficient self-humiliation as a potter without having to resort to cupping. If we can place this practice sometime in the later years of al-Mahdī's reign, as the connection with Hamduwaih suggests, we can see that, even before the time of al-Rashīd, when his new way of life seems first to have become a firm resolution, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was already finding a certain amount of dissatisfaction with the kind of life he was living and was probably already trying to find for himself a philosophy more in keeping with the realities of life as he knew them.

As we have already said, we must leave a full discussion of the nature of the religious change until we have examined the poems which sprang from it (or perhaps, in

some cases,heralded it),but we can try at this point to indicate,tentatively at least,what drove Abu'l-'Atāhiya along the road of asceticism.

In his article on Ṣūfism in the first edition of the Encyclopaedia of Islam[113],Louis Massignon has said,'The mystic call is,as a rule,the result of an inner rebellion of the conscience against social injustices,not only those of others,but primarily and particularly against one's own faults; with a desire intensified by inner purification to find God at any price.' It is certain that Abu'l-'Atāhiya came from humble origins and had a far from easy time in his youth. While it is true that the pottery business run by himself and his brother Zaid grew to be a flourishing concern in which they employed others to do the hard and menial tasks,we must also remember that in the earlier days the poet and his brother did these tasks themselves, the former having the job of selling their wares in the streets of al-Kūfa. From his own early life,he must have been aware of 'social injustices',and even although his circumstances later improved immeasurably he can never have forgotten the early struggles of his youth. His son Muḥammad tells us[114] that Abu'l-'Atāhiya enjoyed a yearly pension of 50,000 dirhams from al-Rashīd,and the Aghānī is full of stories recounting the enormous sums of money which he received from various caliphs and high officials for reciting even only a few lines of poetry. But all this wealth was very precarious,dependent as it was on the whim of those to whom the poet recited his verse. It would hardly have instilled in Abu'l-'Atāhiya a sense of security. This very insecurity,coupled with his own early experiences of life and with the knowledge that thousands of his

fellow Muslims were living hard, impoverished lives even as he himself had done - all this, contrasted with the extravagant luxury of 'Abbāsid court life in Baghdād, must have spoken to Abu'l-'Atāhiya of the transience of the things of this world and of the certainty of one thing only in life for all men, namely death. From this it would be but a short step to thinking of those virtues which prepare a man for death. The transience of this world, the inevitability of death, how to prepare our hearts to meet death - these are the things towards which he turned definitively at this period in his life, and these are to be the themes of the Zuhdiyāt.

The political situation after the death of Hārūn al-Rashīd in 809 A.D. was a confusing one. In 809, al-Rashīd was in Khurāsān leading an expedition against the rebel Rāfi' b. al-Laith, and while he was there he died suddenly. Three sons were to succeed al-Rashīd in turn, al-Amīn, al-Ma'mūn and al-Mu'tamin: al-Amīn was nominated governor of Syria and 'Irāq; al-Ma'mūn of Khurāsān; and al-Mu'tamin of Jazīra and the Byzantine border territories. These positions were largely nominal, but it appears that al-Ma'mūn accompanied his father east in 809 and was in the Khurāsānian capital of Merv when his father died. A struggle for power ensued between al-Amīn and al-Ma'mūn. Al-Amīn was very largely under the influence of al-Fadl b. al-Rabī', who had held offices under al-Rashīd and had been the arch-enemy of the Barmakids. Al-Fadl persuaded al-Amīn to designate his own son Mūsā as his successor, in place of his brother al-Ma'mūn and in defiance of his father's wishes. Al-Ma'mūn, guided by his adviser, al-Fadl b. Sahl,

decided to fight for his rights, but it was not until 813 that Baghdād finally fell to him and he was proclaimed Caliph, though not entering the capital himself until 819.

It appears from the Aghānī that Abu'l-'Atāhiya had at one time enjoyed the favour of al-Fadl b. al-Rabī'[114], but that about this time (the text says, 'when al-Fadl b. al-Rabī' returned from Khurāsān after the death of al-Rashīd') the poet recited some verses in which he mentioned the Barmakids. When al-Fadl heard his former enemies mentioned, his face clouded over and Abu'l-'Atāhiya never enjoyed al-Fadl's favour again. The opposing camp were quick to take advantage of this, and when Abu'l-'Atāhiya recounted this incident to Ibn al-Hasan b. Sahl, a member of al-Ma'mūn's vizieral family, b. Sahl quickly seized the opportunity of 'employing' the poet, assuring him of a monthly pension of 3,000 dirhams as long as he lived. This disfavour with al-Amīn's vizier and his subsequent 'employment' by the family who advised al-Ma'mūn explain the absence of any reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya at court during the short reign of al-Amīn. In any case, perhaps, the notorious loose living of the latter probably made him an uncongenial companion for the ascetic poet who would feel himself out of tune with a milieu in which, for example, a recognised class of youths, ghilmān, were kept for the practice of unnatural sexual relations[115].

That Abu'l-'Atāhiya probably remained in Baghdād, though not associated with the court, is suggested by one of the few anecdotes related by Abu'l-Faraj which we can safely date to this period[116]. The narrator, a Kūfan shaikh, sees an old man standing in the principal mosque in Baghdād, the masjid al-madīna, with a crowd standing round him,

reciting a poem with the tears streaming down his cheeks. The old man, he is told, is Abu'l-'Atāhiya. The poem in question, though not officially included among the Zuhdiyāt, is of the zuhdiyāt type, bemoaning the passing of youth and hoping for the gift of eternity. Here we have a glimpse of Abu'l-'Atāhiya speaking to the ordinary man of the things which tough the common life, of the passing of youth and the approach of death. This is a note which he strikes over and over again in his poetry.

By the end of 813, al-Ma'mūn was officially recognised as Caliph, though not without further trouble in Baghdād itself, trouble which did not finally cease until al-Ma'mūn entered his capital in person in 819. Once more we find Abu'l-'Atāhiya on friendly terms with the reigning monarch, and there are several stories in the Aghānī testifying to the poet's renewed prestige at court. We find, for example, the Caliph pleased with some lines of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's in praise of al-Ma'mūn's army[117], and there is also an account of how al-Ma'mūn felt free to criticise the poet's efforts and suggest that he improve on them[118]. On yet another occasion we are told how al-Ma'mūn was seen to be busy with an old man with a fine beard, his clothes dyed very white and wearing a small cap on his head[119]. The description fits our conception of Abu'l-'Atāhiya as an ascetic, and we are told that the old man was in fact Abu'l-'Atāhiya. Al-Ma'mūn asks the poet to recite the finest of his poems on death, and Abu'l-'Atāhiya complies with the poem which begins:-

Your life has made you forget death
And you have sought permanence in this world.[120]

We have already referred to the part played by al-Fadl

b. al-Rabī', the chief minister and adviser of al-Amīn, in the plan to have the caliphate devolve on al-Amīn's son instead of on al-Ma'mūn after his brother's death[121]. When al-Ma'mūn defeated his brother and became Caliph in his own right, al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī' was not put to death, as one might have expected, and eventually he succeeded, if only partially, in winning a place at court again. That place can have been only a very precarious one, but, according to one of the Aghānī accounts of this period, we find him, together with Abu'l-'Atāhiya, at the court of al-Ma'mūn[122]. We are told that he and Abu'l-'Atāhiya shared the same position in the presence of al-Ma'mūn. The Arabic word used here, manzila, means a step of a ladder, a degree and, secondarily, a couch or cushion. It would seem that the manzila was a seat of honour in the Caliph's audience and that its proximity to the Caliph depended on the amount of favour one enjoyed. Apparently, however, al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī''s position was on the wane, and we are told that he openly admired some of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's verses simply in order to try to promote himself in the Caliph's favour, for others seemed to be being preferred to him. We can deduce from this that Abu'l-'Atāhiya enjoyed a fair degree of al-Ma'mūn's favour at this time if al-Faḍl admires his poetry in order to win for himself a higher position.

Another two stories from this period indicate that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was regular in his performance of the annual pilgrimage to Mecca. In one of them it is simply noted that a certain Rajā' b. Salama saw Abu'l-'Atāhiya at Mecca during the pilgrimage[123]. In the other we are told that Abu'l-'Atāhiya used to go on the pilgrimage every year and used to bring back gifts for al-Ma'mūn[124]. We also have

earlier references to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's having been to Mecca. We hear, for example, of his arrival at al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī''s with the gift of a sandal with some verses inscribed on it, a gift from Mecca. Al-Faḍl thinks that the description of the weaver fits the Caliph better than himself, so he takes it to al-Amīn who is pleased and rewards Abu'l-'Atāhiya[125]. We should note that there is no direct connection between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and al-Amīn here and that the gift is originally intended for al-Faḍl b. al-Rabī', presumably before the breach which occurred between them in the very early days of the caliphate of al-Amīn. Al-Rashīd died on the 14th Ramaḍhān, 193 A.H., and Abu'l-'Atāhiya could have taken part in the pilgrimage of the following Dhu'l-Ḥijja. This would make his return from pilgrimage with his gift for al-Faḍl only about four months after the accession of al-Amīn, that is, sufficiently early in al-Amīn's reign to make it before his breach with al-Faḍl. It may also be, of course, that the breach occurred before Abu'l-'Atāhiya's departure on the pilgrimage (we are told that the breach took place when al-Faḍl returned from Khurāsān after the death of al-Rashīd[126]) and that the gift was an attempt on Abu'l-'Atāhiya's part to regain al-Faḍl's favour. If this last is the case, we are not told whether or not it was successful.

It was during the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn that Abu'l-'Atāhiya died. There are several stories in the Aghānī connected with his death. We are told, for example, that his last wish was that his friend Mukhāriq, the singer, should sing to him some of his own verses[127]. We are told of the last verses which he composed during his final illness, a moving poem in which he asks God for forgiveness

for the sins of his life[128]. He appears not only to have asked his daughter Ruqayya to mourn him in verse which he composes for her[129], but also to have composed his own epitaph[130]. His son Muḥammad, when asked about this question of his father having composed his own epitaph, used to deny the fact. But another says that he has seen the verses in question inscribed on Abu'l-'Atāhiya's tomb.

When we turn to try to ascertain the date of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's death, we find a great confusion of conflicting dates given us, ranging over a period of eighteen years. The earliest, 205 A.H. (820/1 A.D.), is given by Ibn Qutaiba and by him alone[131]. The next one is 209 A.H. (824/5 A.D.), and this is reported by Abu'l-Faraj in a tradition which states that Abu'l-'Atāhiya, Raghīd al-Khammāq and Haghīma al-Khammāra all died on the same day in that year[132]. The following year, 210 A.H. (825/6 A.D.), is the one suggested by Abu'l-'Atāhiya's son Muḥammad[133]. Although we have found him on previous occasions to be a fairly reliable authority, he is the only one who gives this date. The year 211 A.H. (826/7 A.D.) is given by no fewer than five sources[134], of which three, the Aghānī, Ibn Khallikān and al-Baghdādī, give specific dates within that year. Mas'ūdī and Ṭabarī simply give the year with no further specification.

When we examine these specific dates in detail, we find that they all suggest that the day of the week on which Abu'l-'Atāhiya died was a Monday. This fact is not borne out, however, by a still closer examination of the dates which they give. Abu'l-Faraj's date is 8th Jumādā'l Ūlā 211, that is Thursday 16th August 826. Ibn Khallikān suggests 8th or 3rd Jumādā'l-Ākhira, that is Saturday 15th or Monday 10th September 826. Al-Baghdādī gives 8th Jumādā

'l-Ākhira, that is Saturday 15th September, again 826. Only Ibn Khallikān is correct, then, with Monday, since the other suggested dates were not, in fact, Mondays. In view of the agreement as to the month between Ibn Khallikān and al-Baghdādī, we are probably safe to assume that Abu'l-Faraj's month is wrong.

The next date suggested by the sources is the year 213 A.H. (828/9 A.D.)[135]. Neither the Aghānī nor al-Baghdādī gives a specific date in that year, though it may be that Ibn Khallikān does. His text reads thus: 'And he died on Monday the 8th or the 3rd of Jumādā'l-Ākhira in the year 211 (and it is said 213) in Baghdād.' If we substitute 213 for 211 in the given dates, then Ibn Khallikān suggests as a possibility Wednesday 19th August 828 or Monday 24th August 828. Again we have the agreement with the day of the week, but it is not clear from the text whether, in fact, Ibn Khallikān intends that the complete date should be read with 213 substituted for 211 or whether he is simply adding the additional tradition that the year 213, with no specification of date, is also mentioned as the possible year of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's death.

The only other suggested date is well away from those years around 210-213 A.H. In the poem which Abu'l-'Atāhiya composes to be inscribed on his tomb, we find the third line saying that he has lived for ninety years[136]. If we accept the year 748 A.D. as the year of the poet's birth, this would suggest that he died in the year 838A.D. But this is so far away from the other dates given that, although we presume it to be from the poet's own hand, we can not lay too much emphasis on it. Occurring, as it does, in a poem, we should not seek to find in it a date of historical

accuracy. It is much more likely to be simply a round figure, an age which a very old man would use of himself (supposing, in any case, that he could remember, or even knew, his date of birth). The choice of the figure ninety might also have been dictated by the exigencies of rhythm and metre, rather than by any passion for historical accuracy.

If we must choose between so many conflicting dates, we might be inclined to choose the year 211 A.H., since this is attested by more sources than any other. Again, if we lay store by the fact that those who give a specific date all suggest that the poet died on a Monday, then we might accept Ibn Khallikān's date of the 3rd of Jumādā'l-Ākhira 211, that is Monday 10th September, 826. Abu'l-'Atāhiya would, therefore, be about seventy-eight years of age when he died, sufficiently old for ninety not to be too improbable a round figure for him to use of himself as he stood at the end of his life.

CHAPTER II

ISLAMIC SECTS IN THE PERIOD 750-850 A.D.

In the course of the *akhbār* of Abu'l-'Atāhiya given in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Abu'l-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī, reference is made to the connection of the poet with three specific sects. At the end of a brief account of the religious and philosophical beliefs of the poet, which Abu'l-Faraj takes from al-Ṣūlī, we find the comment that Abu'l-'Atāhiya made common cause with the teaching of the heretical Kharijite sect of the *Zaidiya*[1]. This seems to have been a modified acceptance of this particular branch of the *zaidiya*, for the note is added that, although he never spoke ill of any of them (sc. the Zaidites), yet he did not approve of revolt against the state[2]. In the same place it is also recorded that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was *mujbir*, that is he agreed with the opinions of the sect known as the *Jabariya*. On another occasion he is informed that the Imām of the mosque in which he is in the habit of praying is reputed to be a *mushabbih*, but Abu'l-'Atāhiya finds no difficulty in continuing to pray with such a man as the leader of the prayers. The poet's touchstone for religious orthodoxy in this case is the belief in the unity of God, and there is no doubt that the man in question accepts that doctrine[3].

Apart from these three specific references to the *zaidiya*, the *jabariya* and the *mushabbiha*, there are other indications in the *akhbār* that Abu'l-'Atāhiya became involved in discussions about other articles of belief and other religious problems which were current in his day. There is, for example, the record of a debate with Thumāma

b. Ashras on the question of the responsibility of a man for his own actions[4], and this points towards the Mu'tazilite doctrine of tawallud. Yet again, when asked whether the Qur'ān was created or not, Abu'l-'Atāhiya gives an ambiguous answer[5]. But it is clear from another source[6] that he in fact held that the Qur'ān was uncreated and eternal. Whatever his beliefs, the question as to the createdness or uncreatedness of the Qur'ān is very much a current one in the poet's day and is of importance for the Mu'tazilite attempt at compromise in both the religious and the political spheres.

On several occasions during his lifetime, Abu'l-'Atāhiya had to meet a charge of zandaqa. The accusation of being a zindīq is brought against him for various reasons. Sometimes it is because, in his poetry, he makes light of the conception of Paradise and compares the Hurīs of Paradise to human women[7]. Sometimes he is accused of rejecting the doctrine of the unity of God, at least it is with a renewed affirmation of that doctrine that he counters the charge of zandaqa brought against him[8]. He is accused, also, of thinking that he could compose verse which was finer than the words of the Qur'ān itself[9], and on one occasion a neighbour who sees him at prayer thinks he is addressing the moon and sends for the authorities to see for themselves[10].

During the latter part of his life, too, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was known as an ascetic[11] and is reputed to have worn the woollen cloak of the ṣūfīs[12]. The question of the poet's conversion to asceticism has already been discussed in the preceding chapter[13].

It will be clear from the above that before we can

begin the study of the Zundiyat of Abu'l-'Atahiya or come to any conclusions about his religious and philosophical beliefs, we shall need to have some understanding of the religious discussions current in his day and make some attempt to see the general picture of the various Islamic sects in the period from about 750 A.D. to 850 A.D.

In the Kitab al-Milal wa'l-Nihal, al-Shahrastani discusses the jabariya and the mushabbiha immediately after the section dealing with the mu'tazila[14], thereby implying that there was some kind of affinity between the jabariya and the mushabbiha on the one hand and the mu'tazila on the other. We have seen, too, that in several respects some of the discussions in which Abu'l-'Atahiya became involved touch upon Mu'tazilite doctrines. The zaidiya are placed by al-Shahrastani in the section which deals with the shi'a[15] and, as we shall see, the mushabbiha too have certain affinities, at least, with the shi'a. We have to take into account, too, the accusations of zandaqa levelled at Abu'l-'Atahiya and the fact that his undoubted asceticism points to some form of what is generally known as Sufism. We have, then, four headings under which we can range our study of the religious background of the period, namely the mu'tazila, the shi'a, zandaqa and sufiya.

I. MU'TAZILA[16]

H.S.Nyberg has drawn attention to the pre-Islamic meaning of the word i'tizal, the word from which the term mu'tazila comes[17]. It apparently meant withdrawing from a conflict and remaining neutral, and in the early part of the Islamic period it appears to have retained something

of its original meaning. Nyberg goes on to propound a theory of the political attitude of the mu'tazila which is as follows. He holds that, during the latter part of the Umayyad period, the Mu'tazilites were actively working for the 'Abbāsid cause, so much so, according to Nyberg, that 'the theology of Wāṣil and of the original mu'tazila represents the official theology of the 'Abbāsid movement'[18]. It is certain that there was indeed some connection between the mu'tazila and the 'Abbāsids, if not before the latter's rise to power, then at a later point in their history. During the caliphate of al-Ma'mūn, there was propounded the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, as opposed to the orthodox view that it is the identical reproduction of a heavenly original, and there followed a vigorous persecution of those who would not agree with this official view. From the date of the promulgation of this decree, 827 A.D., until the time when it was finally revoked by al-Mutawakkil in 848, men of Mu'tazilite persuasion were to be found in positions of highest authority and in the closest connection with the court in Baghdād. But it remains doubtful whether such a close connection between the mu'tazila and the 'Abbāsid party was anything like a reality in the days when that party was struggling for power. That there was some connection, however, seems clear, and that connection might best be seen if we revert for a moment to the basic concept behind the name mu'tazila, namely neutralism.

In the latter years of the Umayyad dynasty, the popular antipathy towards it increased steadily. The Shī'ites never forgave the Umayyads for what they had done to the house of 'Alī in the slaying of al-Ḥusayn at Karbalā'. The

old Persian nobility of al-'Iraq were discontented with rule from Syria and felt that their nationality was being swamped. The descendants of the Prophet's uncle, al-'Abbas, were determined to win the caliphate for themselves, and in order to do so they became all things to all men. By a subtle propaganda movement they won the sympathy and the support of all who were discontented with Umayyad rule. Their eventual success depended on their holding a balance of interests between those whose support they needed. They themselves pretended to be disinterested, desiring only the righting of the wrongs endured by those they were addressing for the time. After they had won the caliphate, the strength of their empire depended to a very large extent on the continuing balance of power. According to Watt's analysis of the situation[19], there were two power blocks within the empire. One, what he calls the 'autocratic' block, was predominant in the eastern part of the empire and would have consisted mostly of the secretary or civil servant class, made up largely of the old Persian nobility and to a great extent Shi'ite in sympathy. From a religious point of view, this 'autocratic' block would include those who tended to look to a charismatic leader for salvation and security and whose politics were affected by this desire. The opposite, or 'constitutionalist', block would be those who, from the religious point of view, were looking for a charismatic community rather than a charismatic leader. They are called 'constitutionalists' because, in their conception, the power of the caliph and of those involved in the processes of government would be limited by the *shari'a*, or Islamic Law, and as a result of this they were among the foremost to develop the Islamic sciences of

jurisprudence and Qur'ānic exegesis. It was from them that the 'ulamā' sprang in the course of time.

It was between these two opposing groups that the 'Abbāsids had to achieve a balance of power if their empire was to remain stable, and from the religious point of view the murji'a was the almost exact equivalent. Again we must emphasise the danger of over-stressing the connection between the two in the early stages of both of them. It was probably not until the reign of al-Ma'mūn that the 'Abbāsids took full opportunity of the dogmatic position of the murji'a. If we may describe the policies of the 'Abbāsids at the height of their power as the attempt to win greater support for their régime by means of compromise and the balance of different interests, then it is clear that a similar policy of compromise is suggested by the Murji'ite doctrine of the 'intermediate position'. The discussion of contemporary political problems in this period was nearly always clothed in historical guise[20]. The main topic of past history which occupied them all was a discussion as to who was right and who was wrong at the Battle of the Camel, the battle between 'Alī on the one hand and Talha and al-Zubayr on the other. Two cases in point are those of Abu'l-Hudhayl, whose main work was done probably in the period between 795 and 825 A.D., and of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir whose period of greatest activity is probably to be thought of as ten or fifteen years before that of Abu'l-Hudhayl[21]. With regard to the Battle of the Camel, Abu'l-Hudhayl said that one side was right and the other wrong, but he did not know which, and he 'associated with' both. Bishr said that 'Alī was right and Talha wrong, 'Alī being especially in the right in arranging

the arbitration, though the arbiters were wrong in not judging according to the Book, that is the Qur'ān. Both of these apparently historical statements show elements of compromise when applied, as they were most surely meant to be, to the contemporary political and religious situations. In the first instance, Abu'l-Hudhayl was coming out against the Shī'ites in so far as he would not give entire agreement to their claim that 'Alī was completely in the right. Thus he opposes the idea of a divinely guided Imām and does not insist that the rightful caliph must be such. On the other hand, however, he does not go all the way with the opponents of 'Alī either, in that he held the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, in opposition to what was coming more and more to be the orthodox position, namely that the Qur'ān was uncreated. Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir achieves his compromise at a different point. He agrees with the Shī'ites that 'Alī was right, and in so doing he would appear to be in agreement with the theory that the true caliph must be divinely guided. But he counters this with the assertion that the arbiters at the Battle of the Camel were wrong in not judging according to the Book, and in making this assertion he is emphasizing the importance of the divinely given law. Scripture and Imām are both important for Bishr, but neither could be the basis of the Islamic community to the total exclusion of the other. Here, then, is the main compromise which the <u>mu'tazila</u> had to bring to the help of the political situations of the day. In their theology they had views to please both the 'autocratic' block and the 'constitutionalist' block. They had the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān to please the Shī'ites and only a modified recognition of 'Alī to please

the Sunnites. In the long run, of course, the compromise pleased neither side. The Shī'ites disliked it because the mu'tazila did not accept the designation by Muḥammad of 'Alī as his heir, and the Sunnites disliked the doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān because they saw in it the first step towards the undermining of the truly Islamic character of the community. But whether or not the compromise was a success in the long run, compromise it was, and it provided an at least temporary solution to the current political difficulties of the 'Abbāsids.

Reference was made earlier to the tradition concerning the debate between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Thumāma b. Ashras on the question of the responsibility of a man for his own actions[22]. Thumāma b. Ashras[23] was a liberal theologian of the early 'Abbāsid period whose main contribution to speculative theology was his view on the consequences (mutawallidāt) of human actions which he regarded as being produced neither by man himself (or else he would have the creative power of bringing into existence new realities, a power which is reserved solely for God) nor by God (for he would then be in a position of creating sin and would also be dependent on the will of his creatures). Thumāma regarded these 'consequences' as subjectless actions without a prime cause. He was considered as an opponent to be feared in dispute, which may explain why Abu'l-'Atāhiya emerges from the encounter with him in a rather bad light.

Thumāma b. Ashras was a pupil of Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir[24], and it was the latter who first propounded the doctrine of the 'engendered act' (tawlīd), a doctrine which was an attempt to clarify the problem of moral responsibility and

to explain the nature of an action which is not a direct emanation of a decision of the will. By way of illustration we might quote the example cited by Nader[25]. We suppose, first of all, an act of will on the part of a man to turn a key in a lock. This act of will gives rise to a further act, namely the movement of the hand in turning the key. The third and final act in the sequence, the movement of the key which turns the tongue of the lock, is an 'engendered act' in that it does not itself emanate directly from a decision of the will. Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir taught that man is responsible for all acts initiated by himself, whether directly or 'engendered', in so far as he is aware of all their consequences. It was from that point that Thumama b. Ashras went further to teach that the only true act of a man was his will and that everything beyond a man's act of will happens without an originator and is ascribed to man by metaphor only.

It is convenient at this point to take up the reference to the fact that Abu'l-'Atahiya was *mudbir*[26]. This adjective connects him with a sect which is variously known as *jabariya* and *mudbira*[27]. Al-Shahrastani, as we have already noted[28], discusses the *jabariya* immediately after his section on the *mu'tazila*, and according to him the *jabariya* may be divided into various classes[29]. As a whole, they denied that there was any human influence, in any independent sense, in a man's actions. Pure Jabaritos denied all possibility of human action; more moderate Jabaritos allowed man a certain possibility of action, but qualified that by saying that such a possibility was fundamentally without influence on human action. Those who allowed that there was such a possibility of influence

on a man's actions are not, says al-Shahrastānī, true Jabaritos, although the Mu'tazilites class them as such. Watt[30] says, 'The doctrine of *jabr* was originally a doctrine held by the orthodox (though they did not give it that name themselves), and only at a later date did it become heresy.' Without going into the details of the move of the term *jabr* from orthodoxy to heresy, it is sufficient for us to note here that while the true Mu'tazilite position with regard to human action is that of free will, the Jabarite doctrine which ascribes all human action, good or evil, to God, is more in line with the orthodox Muslim doctrine of predestination.

We might also include at this point the sect known as *al-mushabbiha* since it follows fairly closely, in al-Shahrastānī, on the section which deals with *al-Jabriya*[31]. Although this section on the *mushabbiha* again follows the first main section of the *Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Nihal* on the *mu'tazila*[32], al-Shahrastānī does refer to *mushabbiha'l-shī'a*[33], which he says he will deal with in the appropriate place[34]. It would appear, then, that *mushabbiha* is not so much a distinctive sect on its own, but a heresy which is found in different sects. Its main characteristic was that those who accepted this heresy claimed that God was a corporeal being who could be felt and touched and that if one's *īmān* were sufficiently pure then one could embrace God not only in the next world but even in this one[35]. One adherent of this heresy, Dā'ūd al-Jawārī, even went so far as to say that God had curly, black hair[36]. For our present purposes there is no need for further detail on the *mushabbiha*. It is sufficient to note that it is a thorough-

going anthropomorphic heresy which accepts literally those references to God in the Qur'ān which are of an anthropomorphic tendency.

As we look back on a movement such as the mu'tazila we tend to assume that it was always defined by the acceptance of the famous five principles[37]. The first, that of the assertion of unity (tawḥīd) or the denial that any of the usual attributes of God had any kind of independent existence, probably grew out of the discussions as to whether or not the Qur'ān was the Word of God. The second, that of justice ('adl), gave expression to the conception of the freedom of the human will. By his revelation, God had shown men what to do in order to attain Paradise and had then left them to do it or not as they wished. Paradise was the reward for obedience and Hell the punishment for disobedience. In the third principle, that of the promise and the threat (al-wa'd wa'l-wa'īd), similar problems are raised, especially the question of the difference between a slight sin and a grave one. The fourth one, that of the intermediate position (al-manzila bayn al-manzilatayn), is mainly a political one, as is the fifth, commanding the good and forbidding the evil (al-amr bi'l-ma'rūf wa'l-nahy 'an al-munkar), in so far as it gives permission to interfere, by force if necessary, in order to enforce the observance of the sharī'a. Such were the five principles of Mu'tazilite doctrine, but as far as it is possible to judge, there can have been no clearly defined body of Mu'tazilites much before 800 A.D. and probably not even before 850. To begin with, these doctrines were formulated gradually by individual thinkers, prominent among

whom were Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir and Abu'l-Hudhayl, rather than by a clearly delimited group known as the mu'tazila. In the early stages they were part of a larger 'Traditionist'[38] group, a group which later produced the 'ulama' and the Sunnites. Towards the end of the 8th century, part of that 'Traditionist' group grew interested in philosophical speculation, and it was from that interest that there grew the later Mu'tazilite doctrinal position as embodied in the five principles.

The name mu'tazila was originally applied to anyone who discussed religious questions philosophically and speculatively, and to begin with at least, to be a Mu'tazilite could have meant little more. The doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān was an important one, though not a distinctive one. Others, besides those whom we might, by later standards, call Mu'tazilites, accepted this doctrine, and it is not included in the later formulation of Mu'tazilite doctrine known as the five principles. They maintained a modified acceptance of 'Alī, but this might also be described as simply a very moderate Shī'ite position. If we remember that the first of the five principles is that of unity, we might agree with a suggestion made by Vajda[39] that the early Mu'tazilites might be regarded, from a certain point of view, as the defenders of the faith of Islam against those who opposed the unity of God. Those most guilty of such an attack were the Manicheans. Manichaeism, as we shall see later, was a Persian religion whose main characteristic was dualism and which made extensive use of the symbols of light and darkness. In the Islamic community, it seems to have been adopted largely by the secretary class, most of whom were

of Persian extraction, and was the intellectual expression of the insecurity which such people must have felt at the growing power and importance of the 'ulamā'. In compensation for such a feeling of insecurity they reverted to a religion which had its roots in their native country. The 'Traditionists' were hostile to Manichaeism, and the early Mu'tazilites shared that hostility. The theology of the founder of the mu'tazila, Abu'l-Hudhayl, was mostly polemical, and he was *the* apologist of Islam in the face of other religions[40].

We have already briefly referred to the connection between the mu'tazila, with its acceptance, though in modified form, of the claims of 'Alī to the caliphate, and the shī'a, and we shall return below to the very close connection which existed between the mu'tazila and that Zaidite branch of the shī'a with which Abu'l-'Atāhiya was reputed to be connected.

II. SHĪ'A[41]

If we read the standard heresiographers to try to get some idea of the Shī'ite movement, or indeed of any movement, we always have the impression of one great single movement with but one purpose. But before we take that at its face value, we must remember that most of the principal books on the sects were written anything from three hundred to four hundred years after the period presently under consideration. These works have little sense of historical perspective, and they have to be used with caution for the Umayyad and early 'Abbāsid periods.

The earlier Shī'ite sources themselves do not give the impression of any unanimity in the movement until

817 A.D., when al-Ma'mūn designated 'Alī al-Ridā, the head of the descendants of 'Alī at the time, as his successor[42]. It was only from that date that the pro-'Alids began to envisage the possibility that any claims they might have to the caliphate could in fact become a reality. Before that, the movement seems to have been less an organised whole than the efforts of individual men and groups[43]. And since the politics of most of them were highly suspect, both under the Umayyads and the 'Abbāsids, it is likely that much of the activity took place in secret and will, therefore, be unrecorded at all.

There were, however, Shī'ites who were active in Baghdād about the year 800. They were respectable theologians who moved easily and freely in the court circles. Their politics were in no wise suspect, and they enjoyed freedom of movement and speech and joined to the full in all the intellectual life of the city[44]. They were called Rāfiḍites (='deserters') by their opponents, and they were the branch of the Shī'ites who later developed into the 'Twelvers'. They held that from the beginning 'Alī was the rightful successor to Muḥammad and that therefore 'Umar and Abū Bakr were usurpers. They believed that the rightful Imām was divinely preserved from error, and this belief led, of course, to a very autocratic conception of government and of the caliphate. Since they held that 'Alī had been designated by the Prophet himself as his successor, the Companions of the Prophet must have disobeyed his commands, and they were, therefore, scarcely reliable as transmitters of traditions about him. This, in its turn, led to an undermining of the traditions and of the position of the traditionists and the jurists, a class which was

then beginning to grow in power and influence.

Since these Rāfiḍites enjoyed freedom of movement and speech, they can scarcely have been plotting the overthrow of the government by means of revolt, nor can they have ardently desired a caliph from their own family and party, a descendant of 'Alī himself. There were, of course, always the extremists, and these must have been in evidence even from the earliest days. But on the whole, the men we know as Rāfiḍites, the moderate Shī'ites, can have done little more than teach a doctrine of government which inculcated a very autocratic view of the caliphate, with the caliph as divinely guided and preserved from error. The caliph, and not the Qur'ān or the Traditions, was the source of law and justice. It was from the caliph that all guidance and instruction came, not only in matters of politics and government, but also in questions of religion and faith, and not from any book or any collection of stories about the life of the Prophet. These Rāfiḍites seem to have supported the 'Abbāsids, and in this connection we must remember that the 'Abbāsids claimed descent from al-'Abbās, the Prophet's uncle, and so in a sense had that divine right which the Rāfiḍites demanded, though not perhaps in a form that would satisfy the more extreme members of the shī'a as a whole.

Just as the moderate Shī'ites of this period, at least, did not desire an 'Alid revolt, so it can also be said that the Zaidites were not those who planned revolt under a member of the family of Zaid[45]. It was, indeed, from such a revolt that the Zaidite movement is said to have sprung. Zaid b. 'Alī was the great-grandson of 'Alī, and he led a revolt in al-Kūfa in the year 740 A.D. Zaid was killed in

the revolt, but it seems clear that he himself did not organise it and was simply press-ganged into leading it, no doubt because of his descent which would lend to the revolt some measure of respectability. It even appears that at one stage he wanted to withdraw from the whole business. The revolt was a failure, largely because those who took part in it were too heterogeneous. Not even all those in al-Kūfa who sympathised with the 'Alid cause rallied to the flag. Those who did take part in it were simply 'a mass of discontented opponents of the government'[46]. It was from this Zaid that the Zaiditos took their name, but there seems to be little else to connect them with the historical occurrence in al-Kūfa in 740.

It is said that Zaid was a pupil of Wāṣil b. 'Aṭā', one of the founders of the mu'tazila, and from this it may be deduced that the Zaiditos took up a doctrinal position midway between the shī'a proper and the other sects, particularly the mu'tazila[47]. It would appear that the connections between the Zaiditos and the mu'tazila were particularly close, and there is, indeed, a work extant which is the orthodox Muslim refutation of a joint Zaidito-Mu'tazilite text[48]. From some points of view at least, the Zaiditos were identical with a section of the mu'tazila, though conversions from the zaidīya to the mu'tazila are not unknown[49]. It is probably not without the bounds of possibility that a man could be something of both.

From the politico-religious point of view, the Zaiditos recognised Abu Bakr and 'Umar as lawful imāms, although they held that 'Alī was the best Muslim and had the clearest right to the imāmate. This was the source

of the doctrine that the less excellent might be imām (imāmat al-mafḍūl)[50]. This was the particular tenet of the Butriyya or Batarite branch of the Zaidiyya with which Abu'l-'Atāhiya is said to have been connected[51]. They recognised the first two imāms and maintained that 'Alī was the most excellent of men who had given up his position to the others of his own free will. In addition, they taught that it was a duty to rise in revolt with any descendant of 'Alī and that any such insurgent was the rightful imām.

We have already noted something of the connection between the Zaidite branch of the shī'a and the mu'tazila, and it is of interest that A.S.Tritton notes a tradition reported by Ibn Qutaiba that it was an early Shī'ite, Ḥayān b. Sim'ān al-Tamīmī (ob. 737 A.D.), who was the first to say that the Qur'ān was created[52]. We have seen how this was a point in common between the Shī'ites and the Mu'tazilites[53]. Vajda points also to a question which he suggests needs further study, namely that of the relationships between shī'a and zandaqa[54]. He sees this as a possibility because, of the people accused of zandaqa whom he has studied, he is able to call only one unreservedly Manichean. The others seem to have belonged to Shī'ite sects, either extremist or moderate[55]. Here again we have an indication of the great state of flux between the different sects in the early period of Islam, and this serves to reinforce the view that at this time there were no clearly defined sects, as we might be led to believe by the heresiographers and as there certainly were at a later stage, but that rather there were individual men, or small groups comprising teacher and disciples, men and groups who held views in common and who overlapped

to a very great extent in the doctrines which they held and taught.

XII. ZANDAQA[56]

The term *zindīq* is used in Muslim criminal law to describe the heretic whose teaching becomes a danger to the state[57]. It was a term borrowed in the first instance from al-'Irāq where it was used among the Mazdaeans to designate the Manichaeans, the followers of Mani, and, in a more restricted sense, the followers of the Manichaean schismatic Mazdak. The term appears for the first time in Arabic in 742 A.D. to describe a certain Ja'd b. Dirham, put to death by the Umayyad Caliph Hishām (724-743 A.D.) for teaching that the Qur'ān was created. It reappears with slightly different meaning between the years 780 and 786 when al-Mahdī and his successor al-Hādī instigated a full-scale persecution of people known as *zanādiqa*.

During this persecution of 780-786, special inquisitors, known as *ṣāḥib al-zanādiqa*[58], were appointed, and it was the inquisitor's job to follow up any rumours of suspicious activities which might come to his ears and then to report his findings to the caliph who decided what action to take. If a man was arrested on a charge of *zandaqa* he would first have to undergo an interrogation on his beliefs. If he confessed that he was a *zindīq*, he would be invited to recant. If he abjured his faith he was released, but if he adhered to it he was beheaded.

From the tests which were imposed upon the suspects, especially spitting on a portrait of Mani[59], it would appear likely that those who were persecuted under the name of *zindīq* were in fact Manichaeans. This is borne out by a

text given by Ṭabarī which describes the persecuted sect, whose adherents he calls aṣḥābu mānī, in the following terms:

> It invites people to external actions that are honourable, for example to avoid impurity, practise asceticism, work for the future life. From there it leads them to abstain from meat, practise ritual washing, not to kill animals, all under pretext of avoiding sin and vice. From there it leads them to the worship of two principles - light and darkness. Then it allows them to marry their sisters and daughters, to wash themselves with urine, to steal children on the roads to save them from being led astray by the darkness and to lead them on the right road to light.[60]

This description, as Vajda observes[61], is a fairly exact one of Manichaeism, except for the accusations of incest and immorality, charges which were often brought against sects condemned to a secret existence, and the washing with urine which was a characteristic of the Mandeans but not of the Manicheans.

At a later period, the term zindīq was used by the conservative polemicists to designate anyone whose external profession of Islam did not seem to them to be sufficiently sincere. Such an evolution of the term is conditioned by the fact that the term zandaqa always 'brands the heresy which imperils the Muslim state'[62]. At different times such danger was seen to come from different heresies. In the period 780-786 the danger would appear to have come largely from the Manicheans, and in that period it is they who are referred to by the term zindīq. In later periods the danger came from different sources, and so the term zindīq came to be differently applied. In every case, therefore, where we come across a charge of zandaqa, we must

always try to ascertain exactly what is meant by the term.

Vajda[63] has examined the list of *zanādiqa* which is given in the *Fihrist*[64], a list which Massignon has described as 'a very heterogeneous list of *zanādiqa* (the value of which is sometimes overstated, it is rather imaginative...)'[65], and of the men listed there he can call only one Manichean without reservation[66]. Most of them are seen to belong to some Shī'ite sect or other, either extremist or moderate[67].

From Vajda's study, several characteristics of these *zanādiqa* emerge. For example, the impiety of which a poet like Bashshār b. Burd was accused consisted in his denying the resurrection and the last judgment[68], and we shall note that a similar charge was brought against Abu'l-'Atāhiya[69]. We should note, also, that Manichaeism was an ascetic religion[70], and we should beware of a possible confusion between a thorough-going Manichaeism and an incipient Sufism, especially in cases where accounts of individual men are not as full as we might wish them to be. Where we do not have full accounts of the religious beliefs of an individual it is easy to mistake one characteristic for a complete religious doctrine. Among other signs of the *zandaqa* of which those listed in the *Fihrist* were accused Vajda has noted the following[71]:- the negligence of the principal religious obligations such as prayer, fasting and the pilgrimage; the claim to surpass the literary beauties of the Qur'ān; an equivocal attitude *vis-à-vis* the unity of God; and doubt with regard to everything which is not verifiable by the senses.

Zanādiqa were found fairly extensively throughout the Islamic empire[72], but perhaps most especially at al-Kūfa and Basra. These towns were centres of famous

libertine circles, and indeed many of those given in the Fihrist list were simply libertines. It is at al-Kūfa and Baṣra that we find ourselves at the meeting point of several civilisations and of ideas of very different kinds. It is not without significance that, although the birth-place of Abu'l-'Atāhiya is not absolutely certain[73], there is no doubt that he was brought up and lived for most of his early life, indeed until he went to Baghdād during the caliphate of al-Mahdī, in al-Kūfa.

IV. ṢŪFIYA[74]

Until the 9th century A.D., the wearing of the cloak of wool (ṣūf) seems to have been the sign of an individual vow of penitence rather than a regular monastic uniform[75]. In his Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane, Louis Massignon gives a series of useful terminal a que. The first three recorded uses of the individual name ṣūfī connect it with al-Kūfa. The first person to bear the name[76] died about 776, and another early ṣūfī was a certain Jābir b. Ḥayyān, an alchemist in al-Kūfa during the second half of the 8th century, when Abu'l-'Atāhiya would be growing up in that very city.

The collective name ṣūfiyya was not used of the corporation of the mystics of Baghdād until about 900. To begin with, and already as early as about 800, it was used to designate a certain group among the ascetics of al-Kūfa[77]. Massignon would even go so far as to say that the Kūfans most prone to mysticism were, in fact, the Zaidites[78]. This is another interesting indication of the flux between the sects in the early period of Islam. We have already noted

the supposed connection between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and the Zaiditos[79], who were in turn, as we have also noted, closely connected with the mu'tazila[80], and, because of this historical connection, it would seem that al-Kūfa may well have been the centre of the zaidīya as well as of the early stages of ṣūfīya.

Sufism may have had its roots in al-Kūfa but, like everything else, when the new 'Abbāsid capital was founded in 762 A.D., it soon gravitated to the centre of political and intellectual life. Not long after the founding of Baghdād, shacks and huts, the dwelling places of hermits, began to appear on the outskirts of the city[81], and the attraction of the new centre for the Arab colonies of al-Kūfa soon placed the ascetics of Baghdād under the influence of masters from al-Kūfa[82]. Baghdād became the meeting place of many traditionists and men of letters who were sympathetic to asceticism and mysticism[83]. We have only to think of a poet as libertine as Abu Nuwās and of how he, too, for a time composed zuhdiyāt[84], to realise how widespread sympathy for this kind of life must have been. It was to Baghdād, too, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya came from al-Kūfa.

There appear to be two strands in Sufism, an ascetic one and a speculative and ecstatic one[85]. Mysticism, in one form or another, is found in Islam from the earliest times, but to begin with, as we have noted, there are isolated occurrences of it rather than anything formal or organised. The ascetic strain seems to have arisen first, probably becoming fairly prevalent about the beginning of the 'Abbāsid period[86]. The ecstatic side began to emerge only about the beginning of the 9th century. Sufism in its later

development was very much a full-time occupation which only the recluse could practise, but in its earlier days, throughout the 8th century, the characteristic of Muslim asceticism was not to be separated from the daily life of the community[87]. Asceticism was something that could be put into practice by the ordinary man living a full, normal life. In Baṣra, the 8th century was the period of the sermonizers, the qussāṣ, who preached to inflame and inspire the faith and devotion of ordinary people[88]. A famous early mystic of Baṣra, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, had as his rule of life asceticism (zuhd), a total renunciation of everything perishable in the world[89].

Massignon has given the following interesting definition of the mystic call.

> The mystic call is, as a rule, the result of an inner rebellion of the conscience against social injustices, not only those of others, but primarily and particularly against one's own faults: with a desire intensified by inner purification to find God at any price.[90]

We have already discussed this quotation with reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya and suggested that his awareness of the social injustices in his own early, precarious life and in the lives of many around him may have been one of the factors which drove him along the road of asceticism[91].

We have seen, then, something of the characteristics of the more important Islamic sects which were prevalent in the period 750-850 A.D. Perhaps the main thing that has arisen from this survey is the amount of overlapping which occurs between them. Several of them have doctrines in common, for example the createdness of the Qur'ān is common to the shī'a and the mu'tazila, while the mu'tazila and the qadīriya seem to have been distinguished from each other

with difficulty. Again, *shi'a* and *sufiya* have the city of al-Kufa very much in common, and when we remember that al-Kufa was the place where Abu'l-'Atahiya was brought up, we can see the possible significance of this factor for a study of the religious development of the poet. The main conclusion of this chapter is that in this early period there were no very clearly defined bodies of thought. We are dealing with individuals and small groups rather than with the great bodies of doctrine which we find in the heresiographies.

Our starting point for this survey was the series of traditions which refer to the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atahiya given in the *akhbar* of the poet in the *Kitab al-Aghani*. We now propose to return to that starting point in order to examine those traditions in the light of the foregoing and determine, if possible, what his religious beliefs were.

CHAPTER III

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF ABU'L-'ATĀHIYA AS RECORDED IN THE KITĀB AL-AGHĀNĪ

The field of reference of this chapter is limited to an account of the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atāhiya as we find them reported in his akhbār in the Kitāb al-Aghānī. Obviously our prime source for those beliefs will be the Zuhdiyāt themselves, but it will be helpful at this stage to classify how the poet was regarded, if not always by his immediate contemporaries, at least by those who lived very soon after. If we can once determine what the generation or two following the poet thought were his religious beliefs, in other words ask ourselves what was the general impression left by the poet on those who knew his works, then we have some kind of touchstone with which to approach his religious poetry.

There is little obvious schematization of the traditions as they are reported by Abu'l-Faraj, and it will be our purpose in this chapter to try to classify and analyse those traditions which have some direct bearing on the poet's beliefs.

The first group of traditions with which we shall deal is concerned with zandaqa[1], and of this group the first two are dateable to the official persecution of zandaqa in the period 780-786 A.D.

1) Hamduwaih, the inquisitor of zandaqa, wanted to arrest Abu'l-'Atāhiya. The latter was afraid of that and remained a skipper.[2]

2) Abu'l-'Atāhiya had a woman neighbour whose house overlooked his. One night she saw him performing the qunūt. And she spread abroad the story that

> he spoke to the moon. The news reached Hamduwaih, the inquisitor of zandaqa, and he went to the woman's house and spent the night there, looking down on Abu'l-'Atāhiya, and saw him at prayer. And he went on watching him until the latter had performed his qunut and returned to bed. And Hamduwaih departed, his mission having been in vain.[3]

At the time of this official persecution, an inquisitor was appointed whose duty it was to follow up all rumours of zandaqa to see if there was any foundation in them or not and to take appropriate action. Hamduwaih was the third holder of this office, which carried the title of ṣāḥib al-zanādiqa[4]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's father had been a cupper[5], and from the other references to cupping in the poet's akhbār we can deduce that it was one of the meaner departments of the medical profession. The poet himself seems to have practised it only in an attempt to achieve self-humiliation, rather than because he had any skill at it[6]. The situation here is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya, in order to escape the clutches of the official inquisition, remained in obscurity, most probably in the poorer quarters of the city.

This first tradition about Abu'l-'Atāhiya's contact with the inquisitor gives no reason why the latter wished to arrest him. In the second tradition, however, we are given a reason for the interest which Hamduwaih shows in the poet's activities. The story is abroad that he prays to the moon, and this is enough to send the official inquisitor to see what truth there is in such an accusation. Vajda refers to a text in which Mani alludes to the purifying role of the 'two celestial vessels', that is, sun and moon[7]. Anyone thought to be offering prayers to sun or moon would

be immediately suspected of zandaqa. The charge in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's case, however, turns out to be unfounded and the inquisitor is satisfied that the poet's nocturnal devotions are harmless. This incident arises from malicious gossip spread by a neighbour, and we shall see something more of the effects of such gossip in connection with a later text[8].

The next three traditions connect Abu'l-'Atāhiya with Manṣūr b. 'Ammār (ob.c.840 A.D.), a popular preacher (qāṣṣ) in Baghdād, reputed to have been the first to introduce there the art of the popular sermon (wa'ẓ)[9]. Massignon calls him 'inculte et véhément', and he was considered by some of his contemporaries as illiterate. His sermons were mostly eschatological in content[10].

> 3) I heard Abu'l-'Atāhiya say, 'Yesterday I recited, "What do they question each other about?" (Qur'ān, Sura 78), then I composed a qaṣīda finer than it.' He (sc. the narrator) said, 'It has been said that Manṣūr b. 'Ammār reviled him for it.'[11]

> 4) When my father (i.e. Abu'l-'Atāhiya) composed the following about 'Utba:-
>
> It is as though 'Utba, as regards her beauty,
> Were a priest's statue which has tempted its priest.
> O my Lord, if you were to try to make me forget her by means of
> What is in the gardens of Paradise, I would not forget her.
>
> Manṣūr b. 'Ammār condemned him for zandaqa and said, 'He has scorned Paradise and has mentioned it in his poetry in this scornful way.' And he condemned him also for those lines:-
>
> The Sovereign Lord has indeed considered you
> The most beautiful of his creatures and has observed your beauty.
> Then he has made, in his own power,

The Hurīs of Paradise, after your likeness.
And he (Manṣūr) said, 'Does he imagine the Hurīs of Paradise are like a human woman? God has no need of models.' And this made him (Abu'l-'Atāhiya) the subject of common talk, so that trouble came to him on that account.[12]

5) When Manṣūr b. 'Ammār spoke (qaṣṣa) to the people on the place of the gnat, Abu'l-'Atāhiya said, 'Manṣūr has stolen this idea from a Kūfan.' His accusation reached Manṣūr, who said, 'Abu'l-'Atāhiya is a <u>zindīq</u>. Do you not see that in his poetry he mentions neither Paradise nor Hell but mentions only death?' When Abu'l-'Atāhiya heard this he said,
You, who preach (wā'aẓa) to people have become suspect
When you find fault with them for things you yourself commit.
It is like someone who puts on clothes to hide his nakedness,
Yet whose genitals are visible to all, however much he covers them.
The greatest sin, after idolatry, which we know of in any soul,
Which blinds it to its own evil deeds,
Is its perception of the faults of others which it sees,
And its failure to see the fault within itself.
Only a few days passed before the death of Manṣūr b. 'Ammār. And Abu'l-'Atāhiya stood at his grave and said, 'May God forgive you, Abu'l-Sarī, for what you reproached me with.'[13]

To judge from text 5), it would appear that Abu'l-'Atāhiya considered that in his poetry he could surpass the artistic and literary merits of the Qur'ān. One of the tests which appear to have been imposed on those accused of <u>zandaqa</u> at the time of the official persecution was the recital of the Qur'ān[14], implying that those who held <u>zindīq</u> views held that book in very low esteem. But the sort of thing that Abu'l-'Atāhiya is saying here was a

fairly common assertion on the part of poets[15], and a popular preacher like Manṣūr b. 'Ammār, who saw as his task the kindling of the faith of the common people, would be certain to round on men of letters who made such claims, claims which might well destroy the faith of simple folk.

The images used in the two brief poems about 'Utba (text 4)) are surely perfectly legitimate imagery. The beloved has so captivated the heart and mind of the poet that even the attractions of Paradise (and the poem would lose its point if it were not clear that the poet considered those attractions strong), even the attractions of Paradise would not be strong enough to make the poet forget her. There is a similar implication behind the second fragment. If the poet did not believe that the Hurīs of Paradise were of surpassing beauty, the compliment to the woman he loves would lose its point. But on both counts we find the popular preacher accusing the poet of making frivolous use of religious concepts and of asserting that in creating heavenly beings God made use of human likenesses. If the poems in question were theological treatises there would be some point in Manṣūr b. 'Ammār's criticisms. But they are love poems, and we need not take too seriously any accusation of *zandaqa* that is founded on such criticism. However, at the end of text 4) a significant note is added to the effect that Abu'l-'Atāhiya became the subject of common talk as the result of Manṣūr's accusations and that he had nothing but trouble thereafter. It is not specified what the trouble was, but it is certain that the poet's public image, if we can speak of such a thing at such a time, was destroyed, and no doubt people were the more willing or ready to believe the slightest malicious gossip

about him. We might recall here the fact that it was gossip spread by a neighbour which attracted the attention of Mansūr to the poet at this same period[16].

The fact that there must have been strained relations between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and Manṣūr b. 'Ammār is borne out by text 5). The verb used of Manṣūr's activity is qaṣṣa, one of whose basic meanings is 'to tell a story'. Massignon[17] points out that this was a basic duty of every ascetic in this early period of Muslim asceticism. The qāṣṣ preached to awaken the fervour of the believers, and he converted the people by telling them anecdotes in rhymed prose (saj'). In this text we not only see Manṣūr in his role of popular preacher, but we even have the theme of one of his sermons, perhaps the wonders of creation as displayed in the small, yet intricate structure of an insect[18]. The substance of the accusation of zandaqa on this occasion is that the poet mentions only death in his poetry and fails to remind men that after death there is either Paradise or Hell[19]. In his preface to the poet's akhbār, Abu'l-Faraj makes the same point. He says that Abu'l-'Atāhiya is one of the poets of his time who trace their 'ancestry' back to the philosophers who denied the resurrection[20]. Abu'l-Faraj is here reporting what is commonly accepted opinion, and we may conclude that this was a fairly commonly held opinion of Abu'l-'Atāhiya. Those who class the poet thus claim that in his poetry he mentions only death and annihilation without mentioning the resurrection and the life to come. However, on even a very cursory reading of the Zuhdiyāt, it is possible to find numerous passages where the resurrection and the future life are mentioned[21].

The following two texts also carry accusations of zandaqa.

6) It reached Abu'l-'Atāhiya that my father (i.e. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī) had, in his assembly, accused him of zandaqa and had mentioned him as a zindīq. So Abu'l-'Atāhiya sent him a reproof by the mouth of Ishāq al-Mausilī, and Ishāq transmitted the reproof to him. Then my father wrote this to him:-

Fate has indeed given you a respite, madman[22],
But death does not overlook, although your heart overlooks.
How wretched is the man of feeble age. Enforced abstinence
Turns him from his error before death.
You have been entrusted to this world and you lament on it
And bewail it, while you forgot the resurrection.
Life is sweet; death is bitter.
This world is a place of mutual boasting and vaunting.
Choose for yourself other roads than it.
Do not be stupid about it, for you are beguiled by it.
Do not let it astonish you that a talkative man should be called
Beautifully eloquent and highly honourable.
Correct an ignorant man from your heart
With which you are alone, and fear the majesty of God.
I have seen you proclaiming an asceticism
Which stands in need of examples from you.[23]

7) Abu'l-'Atāhiya came to us in our house and said, 'People are saying that I am a zindīq. By God my sole religion is unity (tawhīd).' So we said to him, 'Then compose something which we can quote as your opinion.' So he composed this:-

Is it not the case that all of us will die?
And which child of man will abide for ever?
From their Lord did they come

And to their Lord will each return.
Oh the wonder! How can a man defy God
Or how can an unbeliever disown him?
In everything he has a sign
Which points to the fact that he is One.[24]

In neither of these texts are the accusations of zandaqa made specific, and we can only deduce what they must have been. We can probably assume that the poem of Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī contains the gist of what he thought about Abu'l-'Atāhiya and probably reiterates something of the original accusation. He would appear to be making much the same point as did Manṣūr b. 'Ammār[25]. Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī is saying that Abu'l-'Atāhiya spends too much time bewailing and lamenting this present world, while all the while he forgets the resurrection. Life in this world is not quite as bad as Abu'l-'Atāhiya makes out. We have, however, already noted the fact that there is no lack of passages in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry which refer to the resurrection and the future life[26]. In the last line of his reply, Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī hints that, although Abu'l-'Atāhiya proclaims a doctrine of asceticism, his life does not always tally with what he teaches and exhorts others to do[27].

The last text which deals with the question of zandaqa, text 7), shows us the poet at pains to deny a charge that he is a zindīq. He does so by means of a few lines of verse which reaffirm the doctrine of the unity of God. The verses are intended for public circulation, and the implication is that what people generally believed was that Abu'l-'Atāhiya held a doctrine which was the opposite of the unity of God. Manichaeism, the heresy persecuted under the name of zandaqa in the period 780-786, was a

dualistic religion[28], and we shall consider the validity of an accusation of dualism in connection with a later text[29]. It will be sufficient to note here that the commonly-held view was that Abu'l-'Atāhiya, having been accused of zandaqa, feels obliged to repudiate that accusation by proclaiming the doctrine of the unity of God (tawhīd).

The two following texts touch on problems which might be classified under the general heading of the mu'tazila[30].

> 8) I said to Abu'l-'Atāhiya, 'Is the Qur'ān in your opinion created or not created?' He said, 'Have you asked me about God or something other than God?' I said, 'About something other than God.' Then he refrained (from speaking). And I repeated (the question) to him, and he gave me the same answer until he had done that several times. So I said to him, 'What is the matter with you that you will not answer me?' He said, 'I have answered you, but you are an ass.'[31]

When asked about the createdness or otherwise of the Qur'ān, Abu'l-'Atāhiya refuses to be drawn into argument. Having ascertained the standpoint of the questioner, namely that he is asking about something having an independent existence outside God, something, therefore, created by God, Abu'l-'Atāhiya refuses to be drawn further. However, we are not entirely ignorant of the poet's views on this subject. There is a tradition in which Ibn Miskawaih transmits three lines of verse in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya reprimands the qādī Ibn Abi Du'ād for having held the doctrine of a created Qur'ān.

If, in the sphere of religious thinking, you followed
orthodoxy,
And if your actions enjoyed the blessing of God,

Then the study of the Law, if you were content with it,
Would prevent you from saying that the Word of God
is created.
What is your duty? Persist in the religion which
unites men.
There is nothing in its ramifications except ignorance
and folly.[32]

In view of such condemnation we can say that Abu'l-'Atāhiya himself would appear to have held the doctrine that the Qur'ān is uncreated and eternal, and in this respect he differs from the mu'tazila.

9) Abu'l-'Atāhiya said to Thumāma in front of al-Ma'mūn (and he had often opposed him concerning his teaching on 'compulsion'), 'I am asking you about a problem.' Al-Ma'mūn said to him, 'Stick to your poetry.' Thumāma said, 'If the Commander of the Faithful saw fit to permit me (to reply) to his problem and to order him to reply to me.' So al-Ma'mūn said, 'Answer him when he questions you.' So he (Abu'l-'Atāhiya) said, 'I say, "Everything that men do, good or bad, is from God." And you deny that. Then who has set in motion this hand of mine?' And Abu'l-'Atāhiya began to set it in motion. Thumāma said to him, 'He whose mother is an adulteress has set it in motion.' He said, 'By God, he has insulted me, O Commander of the Faithful.' Thumāma said, 'By God, he who has sucked his mother's clitoris is inconsistent, O Commander of the Faithful.' Then al-Ma'mūn laughed and said to him, 'Did I not tell you that you should stick to your poetry and leave what is not your work?'

Thumāma said, 'He not so after that and said to me, "O Abu Ma'n, has the answer not been a sufficient substitute for your want of judgment?" So I said, "The most complete speech is that which cuts short argument, requites evil dealing, curbs anger and takes revenge on the ignorant."'[34]

In this text we encounter the Mu'tazilite doctrine

of tawallud[35]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's position, to judge from this text, would appear to be that God is the origin of everything in human life, be it good or bad. This is in line with what Abu'l-Faraj says elsewhere of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, when he says that the poet was a Jabarite (mujbir)[36]. This again removes Abu'l-'Atāhiya from any real connection with the mu'tazila since, as we have noted above[37], the Mu'tazilite position with regard to this question is that of free will, whereas the Jabarite doctrine espoused by Abu'l-'Atāhiya here is more in keeping with the orthodox Muslim doctrine of predestination. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's attempt, whatever his views, to enter on the domain of philosophical speculation and argument is a failure, and he ends by becoming the butt for the Caliph's laughter.

The next text is one in which we find a reference to the mushabbiha[38].

> 20) Abu'l-'Atāhiya was one of the least knowledgeable of men. I heard Bishr al-Marīsī saying to him, 'O Abu Ishaq, do not pray behind such a one who is your neighbour and the Imām of your mosque, for he is a mushabbih.' He said, 'Certainly not! Yesterday in front of us he recited in the prayer, "Say, he is one God."' And there he is thinking that the mushabbih do not recite, "Say, he is one God."[39]

There is no question here, of course, of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's being accused of accepting mushabbih doctrine. In spite of their strongly anthropomorphic views, there is no question of the mushabbiha denying the unity of God, and for Abu'l-'Atāhiya that is all that appears to matter. Though he is warned against the mushabbih Imām of his mosque, he either fails to realise the danger of the anthropomorphism which

characteriscs the mujtabbiha, or else he feels that it does not matter provided that the doctrine of the unity of God is held and preserved.

The following text is an important one since it gives in some detail a summary of the poet's religious beliefs.

> 11) The belief of Abu'l-'Atāhiya was the assertion of the unity of God and that God had created two contrary substances ex nihilo, then that he had made the world in this way out of these two, that the world was new in essence and workmanship, and that it had no other creator than God. And he used to assert that God would reduce everything to those two contrary substances before essences entirely ceased to exist. And he was of the opinion that knowledge was derived naturally from reflection and reasoning and research. And he taught eternal punishment and prohibition of profiteering. And he made common cause with the teaching of the heretical Bataribe Zaidites. He spoke ill of none of them, but for all that he did not approve of revolt against the state. And he was a Jabarite.[40]

We have already commented on the significance of the term mujbir and assessed Abu'l-'Atāhiya's position with regard to the jabariya[42]. We are not told to what extent Abu'l-'Atāhiya was in agreement with the zaidiya[42], but he certainly drew the line at rising in revolt against the state, which was the particular tenet of the butriya branch of the zaidiya. With regard to his prohibition of indulging in commercial practices for profit, it is of significance that Massignon[43], among a list of the ritual practices characteristic of early Islamic mystics, notes that of tahrīm al-makāsib, the very phrase which we have here translated as 'prohibition of profiteering'. Massignon defines this as the right of renouncing all commercial

practices, of living in perpetual pilgrimage and of begging. This concept, then, would seem to place Abu'l-'Atāhiya with the early mystics of Islam[44]. The doctrine of 'eternal punishment' would indicate a belief that man was responsible for his actions, in so far as his disobedience of the commands of God and his straying from the way of salvation which God provides for men will lead inevitably to punishment in the life hereafter[45]. He seems, too, to have a very high opinion of the human mind. Knowledge is not something which is given to man by God, but something which a man can acquire by his own efforts of thought and deduction[46]. But the most interesting facet of the text presently under discussion is the quite marked duality which it indicates in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's religious thought. There are two contrary substances forming the framework of the visible world, and the notable thing is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya sets this dualism in the context of the unity of God. Before the creation of the two contrary substances there is one God, and he alone is the creator of the two[47]. It is impossible to say, at this stage, whether the poet is a sincere monotheist who has borrowed certain expressions from a dualistic religion, probably Manichaeism, to explain the double face of existence, or whether, on the other hand, his protested monotheism is simply a veneer to cover up his dualistic convictions.

Given this material on the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atāhiya in the Kitāb al-Aghānī, what conclusions can we draw from it and what can we say for certain is, according to this secondary source, the true nature of the poet's religious beliefs?

We have seen that on several occasions Abu'l-'Atāhiya was accused of preaching only death and annihilation and of neglecting the fact of the resurrection and the life hereafter. It is certain that, although this was a widely held view in the poet's own lifetime, it can not be substantiated[48].

Abu'l-'Atāhiya himself is reputed to have claimed that he could surpass in his own poetry the literary beauties of the Qur'ān[49], but against this we have to remember that he would appear also to have had a completely orthodox view of that book, holding that it was uncreated and eternal[50]. This latter view, if it were authenticated, would lead us to range the poet in the traditionist or 'constitutionalist' camp, among those who held that the Qur'ān was the highest source of teaching on faith and life and that the Islamic community was bound by its teaching, caliph and commoner alike[51]. Against this again, however, there is his supposed connection with the Zaidite branch of Shī'ism[52], a connection which would make us range him in the opposing camp, among those who believed that all authority in the Islamic community ought to stem from a divinely guided caliph and that the Qur'ān and the traditions about the Prophet's life were only of secondary importance[53]. In so far as Abu'l-'Atāhiya would appear to have a foot in both camps, he reminds us of Hārūn b. al-Mu'tamir[54] who sympathised with the 'Alid cause but also would give a place of first importance to the Qur'ān. A divinely given book and a divinely guided caliph were both essential and neither could be the basis of the Islamic community to the total exclusion of the other.

This is the typical Mu'tazilite position of compromise and although Abu'l-'Atāhiya, on other points, would appear to exclude himself from the mu'tazila[55], yet in this he seems to be at one with them, in finding a middle way between sunna and bid'a. We should remember, too, what we have noted before, namely that at this early period of the religious history of Islam, the various sects have not yet hardened into the strict patterns known to the later heresiographers. Though, of course, the people of whom we have knowledge at this period are obviously the thinkers who led the way, the mind of people one would expect to be individualistic in any content, yet we have the impression that at the beginning of the 9th century we must speak less of 'sects' as such and more of the distinctive views of individual men.

We have seen, too, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya accepted a Jabrite view of human action, that all men's deeds, good or evil, are sent by God[56]. Against this thorough-going predestination we have to hold the fact that he taught eternal punishment which men can earn by their way of life, by their disobedience to God's commands and their straying from his way of salvation[57].

It is clear that the poet came under heavy suspicion of dualism and that this was a widely held view of him. His view of creation is a dualistic one, and yet at the back of it we see monotheism in his assertion that God is one and that that one God is the creator of the two substances which make up the world[58]. So great were public suspicions of his denial of the unity of God that he composed a special poem, intended for public circulation, in which he reasserts the view that God is one[59]. There is, too,

his encounter with the mughabbih Iman in which his sole criterion of faith would seem to be belief in the unity of God[60]. We have already noted how difficult it is to decide whether dualism or monotheism is the more fundamental of the two[62].

Although Abu'l-'Atahiya is said to have worn the white woollen cloak of the zuhhad[62], there is no hint that he was part of a wider zuhd organisation. Hasselgren has said that the wearing of this cloak in the first three centuries of the hijra was less a monastic uniform than the sign of an individual vow of penitence[63], and it would seem that this might be the case with Abu'l-'Atahiya. For 'penitence', however, in his case, we might read 'renunciation', for there is no hint of any penitence in the akhbar. From the traditions, his asceticism appears to have been a full renunciation of the pleasures of this world[64], but such renunciation scarcely seems to have been a very constructive one. We have noted an accusation of hypocrisy in his practice of asceticism by Ibrahim b. al-Mahdi[65], and other traditions mention his amassing of wealth without making any use of it to help the community at large[66]. It is impossible at this stage to resolve this apparently basic contradiction.

Can we, then, find any system in the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atahiya? It is impossible at this point to say. Certainly there are views ascribed to him which are apparently contradictory, and this is not perhaps surprising in an age when there seems to be considerable movement to and fro among the various sects and when the views of many sects and groups overlap at different points. We might quote one final text from the Aghani which underlines this

fluctuation in the poet's beliefs.

12) I heard al-'Abbās b. Rustam say, 'Abu'l-'Atāhiya was always hesitant in his beliefs. He would believe a thing firmly. Then, when he heard someone discrediting it, he would abandon his belief in it and would take up something else.'[67]

A detailed study of the Zuhdiyāt themselves will confirm or deny the conclusions which we can draw from this secondary source and will reveal whether there is any system in the poet's writings or not. It is to this study that we now turn.

CHAPTER IV

THE THEOLOGY OF THE ZUHDIYAT

This study of the theology of the Zuhdiyat will be divided into two parts. We shall deal first of all with Abu'l-'Atahiya's views on God, man and the world and on the interrelationships of these three, that is, with his views on, for example, God's relationship with man and man's relationship with the world. Then, secondly, we shall deal with his views on the inter-related concepts of death, the last judgment, the resurrection and life after death. In this chapter we shall try to confine ourselves, as far as this is possible, to studying the poet's objective views. We shall not here be concerned with, for example, Abu'l-'Atahiya's ideal of what man's relationship to God and the world should be. The study of what we might term his 'religious philosophy' will be reserved for the following chapter.

I. GOD, MAN AND THE WORLD

Basically, God is regarded as the creator both of man and of the world. A line such as

> We live in a visible creation
> Which points to an invisible creator.[1]

gives expression to this concept of God as creator, besides, of course, saying something about the hiddenness of God, an idea which is brought out also in various other places[2]. While the above quotation makes specific reference only to the belief that God created the visible world, there are other lines which refer specifically to the idea that he also created man.

He did not create man save for a purpose,
Nor did he leave man on earth neglected.[3]

O my Lord! It is you who have created me,
And you created for me and created from me.[4]

Here we have references not only to the creation of man by God, but also to his creation by him for a purpose. To this concept of the purpose or plan of God for man we shall return later. The reference to God's having created 'for' man and 'from' man would seem to be to wife ('for') and children ('from')[5]. A line such as

Praise be to you, O gracious one, who have graciously created us
And made us equal in your work of creating and making equal.[6]

also points beyond the doctrine of the creation of man by God to the additional doctrine of the equality of men to which, also, we shall return later. The basic belief which interests us at this point is that God is regarded as the creator of man and of the world in which man lives.

Several of the Zuhdiyat contain a greater or lesser number of lines in which the doctrine of God is expounded. One of the more important is the following:

As every man judges, so will he be judged.
Praise be to him of whose presence no place is empty.
Praise be to him who grants the wishes of the soul's thoughts,
Wishes to which the tongue has given no expression.
Praise be to him whose knowledge nothing hinders
And before whom all secrets lie open.
Praise be to him who never ceases to be praised,
And praise is offered to no one else.
Praise be to him whose decrees happen
As he wills - some hidden and some clearly evident.
Praise be to him who never ceases
To guarantee his provision for the worlds.

Praise be to him in thinking of whom are the ways of
contentment
As well as rest and perfume,
A noble king from whom nobility is inseparable.
When one is stricken, forgiveness may be hoped for from him;
A king to whom belong both the outside and the inside
of decrees,
The newness of whose rule time can not destroy.
A king is he - a king by whose patience
Man is stricken, in spite of his beneficence, and deceived.
The power of every ruler will pass away,
But God's power will never pass away.[7]

In these lines we find several doctrines about God enumerated. He is omnipresent and all-seeing; praise is offered to him alone, and in his power lie the destinies of men. He is the source of contentment and repose and of forgiveness. To him belongs power, and that power is indestructible and eternal.

Several other poems or parts of poems serve to confirm and amplify the doctrines discernible in the above quotation.

Praise be to God who is eternally existent
While no one else possesses eternity.
Praise be to God before whose greatness
And patience the human mind remains insignificant.
Praise be to God who never ceases
And to whose knowledge human understanding can not
aspire.[8]

There is no Lord in whom I hope like you
Since the effort of him who hopes in you is not
disappointed.
You are one who remains eternally concealed
And whose utmost limit no flight of fancy can reach.
If you do not guide us along the right path then we
go astray.
O Lord, the right path is your path.

You have perfect knowledge of each one of us;
You see us, but we do not see you.[9]

Every life has a fixed limit,
And every thing has an end.
Praise be to him who has inspired me with his praise,
Him who is the first and the last,
Him who is eternal in his rule,
Him who is the inside and the outside.
You who pass time in pleasure,
Whom no one forbids or commands,
O fool! The arrow of destruction strikes you,
And death, in its impetuosity, is victorious.
O Lord! In everything that you decree
I am your hopeful and thankful servant,
So forgive my sins - there are many of them -
And cover my faults, for you are the coverer.[10]

Every day brings a new provision
From our sovereign who is wealthy and praiseworthy,
Victorious, powerful, merciful, benevolent,
Visible, hidden, near and far.
Mysterion hide him from every eye
And yet he is familiar to every single one.
Our sufficiency is God our Lord. He is a Lord,
The best of lords, though we are bad servants.
He has created creatures for destruction,
Some are unlucky, others are lucky.
Would that I knew what your state will be
Tomorrow, O soul, between 'a driver and a witness'.
We are all of us travelling towards the king, the judge,
The Lord of lords, on the day of threat.
The blows of fate fall upon every thing,
And destruction lies in wait for everything now.[11]

On the basis of these extracts from the Zuhdiyat we can confirm, for example, that God is eternal, in Abu'l-'Atahiya's view, and, in addition, we can see that the poet regarded him as being beyond the grasp of the human mind, even in the mind's utmost flights of fancy. God is eternally

concealed, while yet making himself known to every individual. He is the guide along the right path in life, and indeed the path which he reveals is the only true path through life. He is the beginning and end of all things, the Alpha and the Omega, he is the interior and exterior of all things. Descriptive adjectives are piled up in the last of these extracts, and of them perhaps the most interesting are the ones which reveal the paradoxical nature of God, namely that he is, at one and the same time, hidden and revealed, both near and far. Although God is hidden from the human eye, yet he also reveals himself to men and is known by them.

We should take particular note of the statement that God has created men for destruction and that some men are unlucky, that is they are damned, while others are lucky and achieve a place in Paradise. A study of those poems and passages in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya speaks of God gives the impression of an almost naive trust in divine forgiveness on the part of the poet, an impression which is perhaps best illustrated in the following poem.

Exalted be a Lord who encompasses all things,
Who is one, praiseworthy and unconcealed.
He is exalted above all equal;
May he be truly exalted above all companions.
He knows the secrets and uncovers harm,
He forgives evil deeds on the day of requital.
There is no curtain before his door, but
He hears the prayers of his creatures.
Seek refuge with him, O heedless one, and hasten
That you may receive of his favour when gifts are being given.[12]

We have already seen, in earlier quotations, references to God as the forgiver[13], and here this doctrine is stated as

if the believer had nothing more to do than to ask for God's forgiveness and he would receive it. One has almost to read between the lines of the Zuhdiyat to find any note of the concept of God as a judge who does in fact condemn some men to damnation. Even when it is said that God created men for destruction[14], this is saying little more than that death (and it is simply death that is meant when Abu'l-'Atahiya uses words such as bilan and fana') comes to all men. Expressions of this type have no reference to the fate of men after death when face to face with the last judgment. The overwhelming impression we receive from the Zuhdiyat is that Abu'l-'Atahiya conceived of God as primarily benevolent towards his creatures, never refusing them anything which they might ask for. This is typified in the following lines:

Praise be to God who is benevolent towards us,
Who conceals what is evil and lets what is good appear.
His favours have scarcely ceased towards us
Before he is renewing them and doubling them.[15]

One has the impression that God is the source of goodness and benevolence only, and the corollary of such an impression might be that evil came from some other source. This would inevitably lead us to think of those dualistic religions where good and evil are apportioned to two different deities, and we have already noted from the Kitab al-Aghani that Abu'l-'Atahiya was indeed accused of zandaqa during his lifetime and that zandaqa in this period was Manichaeism, a dualistic religion[16]. However, the impression that the poet believed in a God who was the source of goodness and benevolence only can not really be maintained. No matter how few the references to God as judge and not simply as

forgiver and to God as the actual bestower of punishment may be, they do exist, and the following might serve as evidence of them.

In the sphere of religion there will be a judge on the day of judgment.
Souls will be judged on that day as they have judged.[17]

It is not so that the merciful has decreed
In his justice and mercy.
We take refuge in God the majestic and the generous
From his anger and his vengeance.[18]

The creature has no legal action against God,
And there is no escape for him from God's legal action.[19]

Praise God for his guidance!
He has decreed provisions; he gives and refuses.[20]

We take refuge in God lest he ever forsake us.
Some men are kept safe, and some are forsaken.[21]

Then fear God, for he is watching you.
It is enough that your Lord drives away (sin) and interrogates.[22]

From these quotations we can see that Abu'l-'Atāhiya did indeed conceive of God as judge on the day of judgment and as a God who could be not only benevolent and forgiving but also angry and vengeful. God could refuse men his benefits and could forsake them on the last day. It was God who brought men to account and who demanded justice on that day. But it was a justice overwhelmingly tempered with mercy and benevolence, and the impression left upon us of the poet's conception of God is that of a God whose primary function was to be benevolently disposed towards men and to forgive them their sins. It should not be forgotten that this is also the impression left upon us

of the conception of God in the Qur'ān itself. There are, it is true, references in the Qur'ān to God as judge[23], but the sense of the passages concerned is neutral and not very precise with regard to what is meant by such judgment. We find, too, references to God having destroyed the disobedient[24], but those references are to what is past, to God's past destruction of those who were disobedient and not to any future act of God's towards men on the day of judgment. Another passage[25] refers to God summoning 'the imps of hell' to take away those who have 'counted false and turned away', but some dubiety attaches to the meaning which should be attributed to the Arabic zabāniya[26], and it may be that it refers not to the guards of hell but to the angels who carry off the human soul at the hour of death. The only specific reference which we have been able to find in the Qur'ān to the idea that it is God who passes unfavourable judgment on judgment day and that it is he who consigns those worthy of punishment to hell is in 4.139 where we read, 'Verily, Allah is going to gather the Hypocrites and the unbelievers in Gehenna all together.' This is a passage whose basic form Bell[27] denotes as belonging to the second year of the hijra but as having been revised later (how much later is not specified) as an attack on the Hypocrites. Bell believed that 'judgment' was not originally part of Muhammad's message and that only at a later stage in his career did he incorporate it into his preaching[28]. At any rate, a glance at 'the ninety-nine beautiful names' reveals a preponderance of names indicative of God's benevolent rule, and one might consider that this preponderance is epitomised in that description of God which is prefixed to all but one of the Surahs of the

Qur'ān: 'In the name of Allah the Compassionate, the Merciful' where, again, the whole emphasis is on the compassionate and merciful attitude of God towards his creatures. In this respect, then, in the case of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's doctrine of God, we need not see any dualistic tendencies lurking in the background. We simply note that his doctrine is not out of line with the teaching of the Qur'ān about God, nor out of line with orthodox Muslim theology.

It will, perhaps, be appropriate at this point to deal with the doctrine of predestination which, in a sense, provides a bridge between the doctrine of God and the doctrine of man, in so far as it deals with God's attitude towards man and with God's control of human affairs. The doctrine of predestination is a consistent one throughout the Ẓuhdiyāt, and we find it referred to in the very first poem of the collection.

Praise be to God who decrees what he wills;
He is subject to no decree, and men have no free will.
Men were created for nothing other than destruction;
They perish, and only stories (about them) and (their) names remain.[29]

Here we have the doctrine expressed in succinct terms. The will of God is all-powerful, and a man has no freedom of will but is subject to the all-powerful will of God. God has decreed 'destruction' (and, again, this means no more than 'death') for all men, and to that end they journey through life[30]. The notion expressed in the second hemistich of the second line above, namely that human life is transient and leaves little behind, we shall discuss more fully at a later stage, but this life, with death as its goal, is not of unlimited length. The span of each individual

life is also measured out by God in his purpose for man.

Man has a provision for life,and he will not die,
Even though men should strive,before it is used up.[31]

His life is a series of breaths which are counted out to him,
And death is the completion of that number.[32]

Over and over again it is emphasised that man has no free will of his own and that all that he has in life is given to him by God.

I am a pawn given over to circumstances;
Wherever I am,I await the cup of destruction.[33]

Trust in the Merciful for every need which you have;
It is God who decrees and decides.
Whatever he of the throne desires for a man
Reaches him. Man has no choice of his own.[34]

The changes and chances of life are determined by fate,
And man is,in turn,raised high and brought low.[35]

Every man has a provision for life which he will use up;
It is God who provides it,not his own intelligence or stupidity.[36]

In all this we see that man's life is controlled and appointed by God. It is God who decrees and decides all things in human life,and there is no escaping from the inevitability of death which is at the end of life. Man's life span is allotted to him by God,and he is a mere plaything at the mercy of the divine decree. Predestination is,of course,a perfectly orthodox Islamic doctrine,and in this case Abu'l-'Atāhiya is again in the orthodox position. We might note at this point that in holding the orthodox doctrine of predestination he dissociates himself from the mu'tazila where the prevailing

doctrine in this respect is that of free will[37]. Although a strict doctrine of predestination appears to be a rather harsh one, the Muslim feels no injustice attaching to it, and such an attitude of acceptance towards it also finds expression in the Zuhdiyāt.

God has decreed destruction for us.
To him be grateful praise for what he has decreed.[38]

Passing now to the doctrine of man as expressed in the Zuhdiyāt, we shall try to avoid citing passages which give an ideal picture of man or a picture of man as Abu'l-'Atāhiya exhorts him to be. That topic we shall reserve for the next chapter. At this stage we shall endeavour to depict man as the poet saw him and to confine ourselves to that.

The view of man which is revealed by the Zuhdiyāt is essentially a pessimistic one. Abu'l-'Atāhiya has looked at the realities of life and of human relationships as he saw them around him, and it is almost a cynical view of man which emerges. We have noted above the view that God created man for destruction, and we have seen that by 'destruction' the poet means little more than death[39]. Primarily, then, man is the opposite of eternal.

Be patient and firm in the face of every calamity
And know that man is not eternal.[40]

Nothing remains of the bodies of those
Who enjoyed the most pleasurable life, save bones.
That which continually destroys kings has destroyed them;
It was for destruction and decay that mankind was created.[41]

Man, in his transience, is continually a prey to all kinds of desires and passions.

As long as man lives he never ceases
To have desires fluttering in his breast.[42]

The faults of man, to my knowledge, are numerous,
They come and go in error.
They are deceived by a soul which desires permanence,
But death is a reality, and that which appears permanent passes.[43]

Looked at theologically, the root cause of man's insatiable desires for that which can not be, of his restlessness and his questing, is sin, and the concept of human sin is stated several times in the Zuhdiyāt in no uncertain terms.

Man is varied in his inner nature,
And seldom is his heart pure.
Seldom is his nature pure
Or his inner and outer being clean.[44]

This concept is reiterated in expressions such as 'man's nature is basically faulty'[45] and 'there are few men whose characters are pure'[46]. This fundamental, theological conception finds its expression, of course, in the outward phenomena of human life, and amongst such phenomena Abu'l-'Atāhiya notes the self-love and self-satisfaction which characterise so many men,

I see that man is self-satisfied
And am amazed and find the fact astonishing.[47]

as well as the fact that so seldom can he find a friend who is really true.

How many a friend of mine whose love has deceived me,
Though I have not changed, nor have I deceived.[48]

Of my friends, I love those who are true
And faithful and who turn a blind eye to my faults,
Who help me in every intended good deed
And protect me in life and honour me in death.
Who can provide me with such a one? Would that I could find him!
I would share with him all the good things that I have.

I examined my friends,but there were few,
In spite of the number of them,on whom one could rely.[49]

This aspect of human friendship brings out the fact which is explicitly stated elsewhere in the Šuḫdīvāt, namely that man is not an isolated individual but is set within a social context and surrounded by other men. On this point Abu'l-'Atāhiya expresses himself in a somewhat paradoxical way,but it is a paradox which is inherent in human life. On the one hand,he states that each man is differently made and that each individual acts in accordance with his own peculiar nature.

Every man has an individual nature,
And each man's character is in accordance with that nature.[50]

On the other,he gives expression to the fact of experience that there is a sameness about human nature,a sameness which is exemplified in the way in which all men,by and large,treat their fellow human beings.

I examined mankind,but there was not a single one,
As far as I could see,who would praise another.
So that it was as if all men
Were cast from the same mould.[51]

But over and above this paradox,men are set in society, and it is within that society that they have to live out their lives.

Take men or leave them. But men are bound up with each other.
There is no escape for men,in this world,from their fellow human beings.[52]

So all-pervading is this fact of human society,that the kind of company which a man keeps provides a definite clue as to his character.

A man's friend is like him,
So ask about those who are like him (if you want to know what he is like).[53]

On the whole, however, the view of man which Abu'l-'Atāhiya presents in the Zuhdiyāt is one which is strongly coloured by the general bitterness which is to be observed in life as a whole, as the following short poem testifies.

Man hopes that he will live,
But length of life sometimes harms him.
Its pleasantness vanishes,
And there remains, after the sweetness of life, only its bitterness.
Time betrays him, so that
He sees nothing which gladdens him.[54]

One aspect of the doctrine of man which is stressed by Abu'l-'Atāhiya is that of the equality of men. This aspect is particularly stressed when men are faced with the fact of death which comes to all men irrespective of rank or wealth.

As I passed by the graves,
I saw no distinction between the slave and the master.[55]

How many royal personages are in the grave,
How many army commanders are in the grave!
How many worldly people are in the grave,
How many ascetics are in the grave![56]

Death comes indiscriminately to men,
No commoner survives and no king.
There is no harm to those who possess little,
And kings derive no profit from all that they possess.[57]

Say to those who possess much and those who possess little:
All of you must in any case die.
I see none of those who have little remaining alive,
And none of those who possess much surviving.[58]

It is clear from these quotations that often the people who are specifically addressed in such lines are kings and those in positions of authority. This is borne out by the rest of such examples from the Zuhdiyāt and, indeed, we might say that the majority of such remarks are aimed at those in authority[59]. This is not, of course, exclusively the case, and others are mentioned in this connection. Often the contrast is between king and commoner[60], sometimes between rich and poor[61] and sometimes between old and young[62]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya also has something to say about the equality of men in life generally, but here his attitude is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, we have a line such as the following, which seems to suggest that all men are created equal by God and have therefore an equal status in life.

Praise be to you, O gracious one, who have graciously created us
And made us equal in your work of creating and making equal.[63]

In view, however, of the uncertainty attaching to the meaning of the verb sawwa in this line, which we have translated by its fundamental meaning of 'make equal', but which may, particularly in view of Qur'ānic usage, simply mean 'form' or 'create'[64], we should not, perhaps, attach too much significance to this particular line. For the rest, Abu'l-'Atāhiya's point of view would seem to be that in life men are different, but that in death they are equal. The line

From one father are we created and one mother,
But with regard to possessions we are children of concubines.[65]

emphasises the similarities which basically exist between

men,but goes on to point out that in the opportunities which life presents to men and in the varying uses which men make of those opportunities,men are different. The phrase 'children of concubines' refers to children of the same father but by different wives,thus re-enforcing the idea of an underlying similarity with a quite marked surface difference. This idea is also borne out by the line

From the time that they were brought into existence men have not been equal,
God has created a varied creation.[66]

which,in speaking of the variety of God's creation, emphasises once more the differences which exist between men. The whole tenor and import of this line of thought in Abu'l-'Atāhiya,namely that men are outwardly different, having received different opportunities in life and having reacted differently to the opportunities which have been presented to them,and yet when brought face to face with the fact of death all men are equal,may be summed up in this line

Even when we have been different in our destinies,
Yet in death God has made us all completely equal.[67]

Turning now to the doctrine of the world in the Zuhdiyāt,we might begin by looking at a few lines which give us an insight into Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view of the world, an insight which,as we shall see,is by and large confirmed from the rest of the Zuhdiyāt.

The types of your destructions,O world,
Are,I swear,beyond my powers to describe.
You are an abode in which are oppression
And hostility and squandering.
You are an abode in which are anxiety
And sorrows and sadness.

You are an abode in which are faithlessness,
The spoiling of pleasures, and troubles.
You contain contradictions;
You contain a heart in eclipse.
You contain, for those who dwell in you, deceit,
Misfortunes and destruction.
Your sovereignty among them is changeable,
In accordance with the vicissitudes of fate.
It is as though you were a ball amongst them
Which is thrown to and fro.[68]

The world, in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view, is a place of sorrow and grief and deception. There is no stability or permanence in it for those who dwell in it. All in all, we have here a very gloomy and pessimistic view of the world in which men and women live out their lives. Over and over again in the Kundīvāt the same phrases and expressions with regard to the world recur, as the following selection of lines would indicate.

We are in an abode of misfortune and harm,
Of ill-luck and distress and corruption.
A place in which man can not continue
In safety except for a little.[69]

Who trusts the world, in whose sweetness
And whose bitterness I can see no constancy?[70]

Do not trust in the goodness of this world,
For her goodness is nothing but corruption.[71]

O house of harm! Your purest thing
Is full of drops.[72]

How deceptive the world is for the man whose pleasure
is in it!
How amazing the world is, and how it deceives!
The world's tricks are like claws of pleasure,
Claws which drag (men) to itself.[73]

These lines, along with those others cited in note 73, confirm the impression already received, that for Abu'l-'Atāhiya the world is a place of despair and sadness and deception. There are, in particular, two elements in his view of the world which require to be specially emphasised. The first is that human life in the world is essentially short-lived. The world is transitory, a place of passage. This has been apparent already in some of the lines cited above, but it deserves to be mentioned separately since it is an aspect of his view of the world which has repercussions on his view of human life generally and on his view of death. It is particularly clearly brought out in these lines:

Man chooses it (the world) for a home, knowing that
He will be snatched away to another home like it.[74]

Do not make the world your home, O wretch,
For your sojourn in it will be only a few days.[75]

We cultivate the world, though the world
Is for us no abiding place.[76]

The second aspect of the poet's view of the world which deserves particular mention is that the world presents a certain paradoxical appearance to men. It is, at one and the same time, both enticing and deceptive. The same is true of men's attitude to the world. Men are ardently desirous of the things of this world, knowing full well that they are deceptive and transitory. This ambivalence in men's attitude and in the world's appearance is brought out in these lines:

I have practised abstinence in the world and yet my
desire is ardent.
I see my desire mingled with my abstinence.[77]

How many men have I seen the world honour
With the honour which it has, and then scorn![78]

Do you put your trust in the world
Although you see that what it brings together it separates?[79]

It is one of the world's wonders that it prepares you for destruction,
And yet you desire lasting life in the world.[80]

Again, this element in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view of the world has been apparent in lines cited earlier, but again it deserves separate mention because it is an element which is of importance when we come to discuss the poet's advice to men as to how they should comport themselves in the world and how they should learn to live with the problems which a world of this kind presents to them. Already we see in the first of this last group of four lines the occurrence of the term 'abstinence' (root zhd), a term which is of prime importance in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's religious philosophy which we shall expound in the following chapter. It is sufficient to note at this stage, however, that his view of the world is essentially a gloomy one. The world is deceptive, and in it men can find only grief and sorrow and an imminent and inevitable death.

II. DEATH, LAST JUDGMENT, RESURRECTION AND LIFE AFTER DEATH

We turn now from the consideration of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's views on God, man and the world, to consider his views on the related themes of death, the last judgment, resurrection and life after death.

Death is a constantly recurring theme in the Zuhdiyāt,

and it is depicted in a particularly rich series of images. While we shall reserve a study of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's imagery for a later chapter, it will suffice at this point to enumerate the images in which death is described so that we may see something of what the fact of death meant for the poet. Again, we shall try to confine ourselves to looking at what death meant in the poet's view, without going on to see, at this stage, how he would advise men as to how to prepare themselves to meet death. Death is referred to as 'the destroyer of pleasures' (muhaddimu 'llaḏḏāt)[81] and as 'a cup of bitter taste'[82]. Death is equipped with weapons with which to attack men - 'notched arrows'[83], 'fatal arrows'[84] and 'lances'[85]. Death is variously described as having 'a caller who makes himself heard'[86] or itself being 'the caller of God'[87]. Death is 'sleep' (root rqd)[88] and is also described as 'the furthest absence'[89]. It is 'an illness which no remedy can cure'[90]. One of the most frequently used images for death is that of departure and journeying, for example the word raḥīl ('departure') is one that is used often as a synonym of mawt[91]. Within the same realm of thought, death is referred to as 'drover death'[92] and again as 'the drinking place from which there is no return'[93]. One of the most interesting images used of death is that of death as 'a door':

> Death is a door through which all must enter.
> Would that I knew what kind of abode lay beyond the door![94]

Here death is seen not so much as that which cuts short and terminates life, but as the prelude to some other kind of existence, or at least the prelude to something beyond itself. Nothing is said, at this stage, as to what exactly

it is that lies beyond death. The same kind of thought is also implied in the 'journey' imagery that is used of death, since the word 'journey' implies not only a point of departure, but also a point of arrival.

All in all, Abu'l-'Atāhiya sees death under three main aspects. First of all, for him death is sudden and violent.

Death takes every one by surprise.[95]

How very near death is!
It comes upon you with great violence.[96]

Secondly, it is destructive.

O fool! The arrow of destruction strikes you,
And death, in its impetuosity, is victorious.[97]

Death spoils every pleasure of life.
O people! How quickly death comes![98]

Thirdly, there is no escape from it; it is unavoidable.

You try to escape from death, from which there is no escape;
There is no way of avoiding that which is unavoidable.[99]

Man has no protector against destiny;
Death is around him and behind him.[100]

Neither sentinels nor watchmen can drive off death;
Neither jinn nor men can conquer death.[101]

There are two other important passages about death which we have not so far cited and which are of particular significance for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view of death.

Ever since there has been a soul within me I have never ceased to diminish.
Every day which passes me by, a part of me dies.[102]

I am the son of those who have already departed and I am descended from death.

How amazing! I am constantly rooted in death.[103]

Here we have the idea of death in the midst of life. For the most part he sees death as that which brings life to an end and spoils its pleasures, but there is this sense in which life is ending every single minute of the day. His life-span is diminishing and has been diminishing ever since he has had a soul, that is, ever since the day of his birth. Death is already a very real part of his life. He is very much a mortal man.

There is a phrase which is connected with the idea of death in the Zuhdiyat and which serves as a kind of transition to the study of what, for Abu'l-'Atahiya, lies beyond death. It is the expression barzakh al-mawt, an expression which refers to the period of time which elapses between a man's death and his resurrection. It occurs principally on four occasions in the Zuhdiyat[104] and indicates that the poet believed in some kind of existence after death, an existence in which men waited until the time of their resurrection.

When we turn to ask what was the type of existence after death in which Abu'l-'Atahiya believed, we find that such a study falls into two easily definable parts. We shall consider first of all the theme of resurrection and last judgment, two aspects of the question which can not easily be separated. Then, secondly, we shall go on to consider what the poet conceived of as life after death.

The word which is primarily used in the Zuhdiyat to convey the idea that at some time after death the dead are raised to life again, is the verb ba'atha and the noun ba'th. The basic meaning of this root is 'to send', with the additional meaning of 'awaken from sleep'

and the natural extension of that meaning of 'raise the dead'. This root is used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya in a neutral sense, that is, it simply gives expression to the fact that the dead are raised, without going on to say anything about why they are raised and for what purpose. This is brought out in several passages where it is clear that the idea that they are raised for judgment is expressed by some other word used alongside and in addition to ba'atha or ba'th.

The living die only to be resurrected
And to be rewarded, every single one, for what they have done.[105]

There is no escape from death and no escape from decay;
There is no escape from resurrection and no escape from judgment.[106]

If, when we died, we were left (in peace),
Then death would be the repose of every mortal.
But, when we die, we are raised to life,
And then we are asked about everything (we have done).[107]

It is clear from these quotations that Abu'l-'Atāhiya conceived of the resurrection of the dead as taking place immediately prior to, but as a separate action from, the last judgment. In all of them the fact of the resurrection happens before judgment is entered upon. The term 'resurrection' is, then, by and large a neutral term which does not of itself, without further qualification, imply judgment.

When we turn to the act of judgment itself, we find that several expressions are used, all of which tell us something about the poet's conception of the last judgment. One of these expressions, yawm al-qiyāma, would

seem, from its etymology, to imply nothing more than resurrection without the further implication of judgment. It is clear, however, from the way in which it is used, that this expression carries more weight than the bare neutrality which we have seen to be associated with the root b'th, and there is already explicit in the expression yawm al-dīnnn the idea of judgment[108]. The following are the main expressions used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya for 'the day of judgment', together with some indication of what they imply with regard to his doctrine of the last judgment.

1) yawm al-hisāb - The root ḥsb means 'to count' and the implication of this expression is that this is a day on which a reckoning is made of a man's life and actions.

2) yawm al-faṣl - The root fṣl means 'to separate' and the implication here would be that this is a day on which the wicked and the good are 'separated' from each other to their respective fates in the life after death. Another possible explanation is derived from a meaning of the noun faṣl 'decision or judicial sentence' and that this is a day on which 'sentence' is passed on men, taking account of their life and actions.

3) yawm al-wa'īd - The root w'd means both 'to promise' and 'to threaten', and it is this latter sense which leads to the use of this expression for 'the day of judgment'.

This is a day, the threat of whose advent and reality is ever over men and should serve as a warning to them as to the kind of life they should be living in this world.

4) yawm al-taghābun - The sense of form VI of the root ghbn, of which form the word taghābun is the verbal noun, is that of 'mutual deception'. Kasimirski[109] gives the explanation of the connection between that idea and the idea of last judgment as follows:- 'Jour de la déception réciproque, c.-à.-d. où les faux dieux et leurs adorateurs se verront abandonnés les uns par les autres, et où les bienheureux triompheront des reprouvés.'

5) yawm al-'arḍ - The root 'rḍ has the sense of 'to happen or take place (of an event)' and also 'to review (troops)'. It is this latter sense which leads on to the use of the expression yawm al-'arḍ in the sense of 'day of judgment', the day when men are passed in review by God.

6) ḥashr - The root ḥshr means 'to gather together or assemble' and from this sense we have the idea of the day of judgment as the day on which men are assembled for judgment before God. Sometimes the full expression yawm al-ḥashr is used, but more often in the Qurʾān simply the noun

haqīq on its own.

7) ghadan - This is the usual word in Arabic for 'tomorrow', and its frequent use to refer to the day of judgment indicates the imminence of the latter and warns men always to live with the idea of imminent and inevitable judgment in mind.

The review of those expressions which are frequently used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya when referring to the day of judgment indicates certain lines in his thought about this belief. After death, men will be resurrected for judgment. This resurrection will not happen immediately, but after a certain period of time, as the expression barzakh al-mawt indicates, a period whose length is not specified. The judgment, when it does take place, consists in a passing in review of men before God (yawm al-'ard). A reckoning is made of human life and actions (yawm al-hisāb), and the wicked and the good are separated to their respective fates in the after-life (yawm al-faṣl). The use of the expressions yawm al-wa'īd (to indicate the threat of this final judgment) and ghadan (to indicate its imminence and its inevitability) leads on to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's advice to men as to how they should conduct themselves in this life in order to prepare themselves suitably for this ultimate judgment, and this is a theme which we shall reserve for fuller treatment in the following chapter.

One image which is particularly used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to refer to the last judgment is that of 'the book', a book which is given to a man on the day of judgment, into his left hand if he is to be condemned and into his right if he has lived well.

Would that I knew whether tomorrow my book will be given
Into my left hand, for destruction, or into my right.[110]

This and the following lines serve to confirm the concepts which we have seen already from our study of the expressions used for 'day of judgment'.

Will there not be for me a day on which I shall be judged
as I have judged?
My book will reckon up the evil and the good which I
have done.[111]

What a day you have forgotten, the day of mutual encounter!
What a day you have forgotten, the day of return (to God)!
What a day, the day of standing before God,
The day of reckoning and of calling witnesses![112]

We are all travelling to the king and judge,
The Lord of lords, on the day of judgment.[113]

What will you say tomorrow when you face him
And are asked for an account of your small and great
(sins)?[114]

What will a man say, if he has sent nothing on ahead,
On the day of distress, the day of falling and slipping?[115]

A day when the earth splits apart from the people of
destruction in it,
And anger and pleasure are revealed;
The day of resurrection, a day in which the injustice
of the unjust
Will be darkened and good works will shine out.[116]

The day of resurrection, then, is a day of judgment when men are called to account for the lives which they have led and when evil is punished and goodness is rewarded. We now turn to the nature of such punishment and reward and look at how Abu'l-'Atāhiya thought of life after death.

It is clear from several examples in the Zuhdiyāt

that there was in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's thought this necessary connection between the kind of life that a man had lived in this world and the kind of life to which he was destined after death.

The meeting place of everyone who has endeavoured
To do good, is tomorrow in the house of reward.[117]

Here we note that the reward which is allotted to men for having done good in this world is a 'house', that is some kind of existence after death. The word 'house' (dār) is used to refer both to this world and to the life after death. We note also that this reward is allotted 'tomorrow', a word which, as we have already seen, is used to refer to the day of judgment. A similar line of thought is to be found in the following line:

O soul! Will you not act? We are indeed
In a house where one must act for the house of reward.[118]

The word 'reward' is not always used in quite such a positive sense as it is in these two examples just cited. In a line which we have already quoted[119], the word 'rewarded' is used in a completely neutral sense, without any specific indication being given as to the nature of the reward. It is left to be further defined.

The promise of good is Paradise,
Its shade and its pure wine.
The promise of evil is Hell,
Its burning and crackling.[120]

Here we find the necessary definition of the 'reward', namely that good is rewarded (in a positive sense) with the delights of Paradise, while evil is rewarded (in a negative sense) with the flames of Hell.

We have seen, in the previous chapter[121], how Abu'l-'Atāhiya was accused by Nāmūr b. 'Ammār of mentioning

in his poetry only death and of failing to remind men that after death there was either Paradise or Hell. While there is a sense in which the overwhelming impression left on one after reading the Zuhdiyāt is that death is such an all-pervading theme that it seems to be almost the only one, we have already pointed out that even a cursory reading of the Zuhdiyāt can not fail to find numerous passages which refer to the resurrection and life after death in terms of either Paradise or Hell. Over and over again when the after-life is mentioned, the two possibilities are presented. This is already clear from the last quotation above, and it is further borne out by the following.

Death is a door through which all must enter.
Would that I know what kind of abode lay beyond the door.
The abode is an eternal garden, if you have done
What pleases God; if you have failed, it is the fire.[122]

The outcome is Hell or the outcome is Paradise.
There is no outcome apart from these two.[123]

After today, men have a racecourse where they can wager.
The inevitable goal is either Paradise or Hell.[124]

If the terror of death had nothing after it,
Then it would be easy and trifling for us.
But there is resurrection and judgment, Paradise
And Hell, and what would take too long to recount.[125]

There is the slight suggestion, but little more than the suggestion, that the life after death is regarded solely in a positive sense (that is, Paradise) and primarily as compensation for the griefs and sorrows which men encounter in this earthly life.

You will be unable to overcome your passions
Unless you face them with patience and contentment.
Every misfortune, however great it may be,
Will vanish away when you hope for a reward for it.[126]

But this theme is not elaborated, and it would be dangerous to lay too much stress on an isolated quotation. There is another line in the Zuhdiyāt which seems to imply that the soul does not continue after death.

O soul! How near destruction is to us!
I shall shortly be without a soul.[127]

Here again, this is too slight a piece of evidence to suggest that Abu'l-'Atāhiya believed that after death the real personality remained with the body while the soul returned, as the Qur'ān teaches[128], to God. All that it can be referring to is the human body which, at death, will become separated from the soul.

One might sum up Abu'l-'Atāhiya's teaching here by saying that at some future period after death men are resurrected for judgment, and that judgment is passed in terms of Paradise for those who have done good deeds in their earthly life and of Hell for those who have done evil. Beyond expressing the concept of Hell in fairly general terms of fire and flames (there are none of the lurid Qur'ānic descriptions in the Zuhdiyāt), Abu'l-'Atāhiya is silent as to the nature of the place of punishment. With regard to a description of Paradise, he goes into remarkably little detail here either, but we might conclude this chapter on what we have called the 'theology' of the Zuhdiyāt with a brief description of 'the house of reward', the only description of it of any length in the Zuhdiyāt.

Turn your mind from the world and its shade,
For in Paradise there is shade in plenty.

In Paradiso there is recuperation,
Fine perfume, repose and Salaabīl.
Whoever enters Paradise achieves all
His desires. It is a pleasant place.[129]

CHAPTER V

THE RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHY OF THE ZUHDIYAT

We shall begin this study of the religious philosophy which is expounded in the Zuhdiyat by considering Abu'l-'Atahiya's diagnosis of the human situation as he finds it and by examining those faults which he observes in the world and in the hearts of men.

The first fault which Abu'l-'Atahiya finds in the human heart is one which we might call in English 'greed' or 'covetousness'. Of the Arabic words used to designate this particular fault, the two most frequent are hawan and munya, the latter usually in the plural, munan. Hawan is the verbal noun of the verb haviya ('to like') and has the sense of 'desire, passion'. The noun munya is related in sense to the Vth form of the root mny which has the meaning 'to desire, wish', and indeed we sometimes find that it is the verbal noun of the Vth form which is used. The noun munya means 'wish, desire' and, as we have already noted, is most frequently used in its plural form, munan. Slightly less frequently used to describe this fault of 'greed' or 'covetousness' are shahwa (plural shahwat) from shahā ('to desire ardently') with the sense of 'desire, passion' and ṭama' meaning 'desire, covetousness'. The two words hirs ('greed, covetousness') and ladhdhat ('pleasures, delights') are used but rarely.

It is impossible to cite all of the passages in the Zuhdiyat in which these expressions occur, for this is a very frequent theme on the part of Abu'l-'Atahiya, but we shall note certain prominent ideas associated with this theme. Perhaps the most frequently occurring is the idea

that the passions enslave men, so that once they become unduly preoccupied with the passions, they are no longer 'free'.

Fortify yourself against your desires,
For they are opposed to you.
Do not abandon your insight in the face of your desires.
Your insight ought, in this respect, to follow the golden mean.

Whoever pursues his desires,
Becomes the slave of his desires.[1]

I followed my desires, and they enslaved me.
If I had practised self-restraint, I would have remained free.[2]

Right guidance would have set me free, if I had followed it.
But error has made me the slave of my passions.[3]

Other examples of a similar line of thought could be quoted[4], but the above quotations are sufficient to give us an insight into the poet's thought on this subject. The main stricture is that if men follow their desires in life and take account only of what they wish from life, then the result is enslavement to those desires and wishes and a subsequent loss of freedom. We see, also, from the above quotations, that certain virtues are listed which would have saved men from this enslaving pursuit of their passions, virtues such as 'insight' (_zn'y_), 'self-restraint' (root _qn'_) and 'right guidance' (_rushd_). To these and other similar ideas we shall return in the second part of this chapter. The following additional quotations from the _Zuhdiyat_ on the subject of desire and covetousness and passion confirm and amplify what we have already noted, namely that Abu'l-'Atahiya regards this particular vice as one of the principal causes of the

human predicament as he sees it in the world around him.

Men follow their passions in life,
Yet assert that they are in the right way.[5]

Prevent your heart from being led astray by passion
And strengthen your hands with the cords of religion
and abstinence.[6]

Desires are very powerful for those who are arrogant
towards them,
And they conceal beneath themselves a deadly poison.[7]

When a man takes refuge from the temptations of his desires
With his Creator, his Creator saves him from them.[8]

I see that the passions have deceived you of old.
How many, like you, have the passions deceived![9]

By your resignation extinguish the fire of your desires,
For they have enflamed your mind.
Slay your desires when they summon you to temptation,
Slay them here (on earth) with all your might.[10]

Those who are enslaved in their passions
Produce heresies in which they then persist.[11]

A man can not be secure from his passions,
For many a passion is madness.[12]

How many a passion, at the price of giving up your religion,
Do I see that you have striven after.[13]

Desires are deceptions, errors, passions.
Perhaps a man's death is to be found in what he desires.[14]

In these quotations we see that the passions, desire and covetousness, are condemned as being deceptive and misleading, misleading, that is, from the right path through life. They enflame the mind, producing madness. They are the source of all religious heresies, and cause the death

of those who are devoted to them. Some of this is, of course, to be understood in a figurative sense, but all in all it presents a fairly comprehensive condemnation of this particular vice. Again we notice that a number of virtues are listed as means of counteracting the temptations of 'covetousness'. We note, for example, that a man may be rescued from these temptations by being 'saved' by God. The three principal virtues recommended in the above quotations are 'right guidance' (which we have already noted), 'religion' (dīn) and 'abstinence' (wara'). Again, to these we shall return later.

It might be objected, at this point, that there is a certain difference between the vice of 'covetousness' and that which might be described as 'the passions'. There is, indeed, the fact that in the language used by the mystics the word shahwa is used to mean 'sensual desire'. It would not appear, however, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya uses it in that restricted sense. What he seems to mean by shahwa and by the other words which we considered earlier is a striving after the things of this world, after those things which are of a temporary and fleeting nature, things such as wealth, possessions, power, fame. It is 'covetousness' of those things, the 'passion' to possess them, that he condemns. It might also be objected that 'desire' in itself is not an evil and that a moral judgment depends upon what it is that is desired. To this it can be stated that as far as I am aware there is only one reference in the Zuhdiyat to 'desire' in other than condemnatory terms[15]. 'Covetousness', 'desire', 'the passions' - call it what we will - is, then, one of the principal faults or vices condemned in the Zuhdiyat.

Another vice condemned by Abu'l-'Atāhiya, one which is closely connected with the one at which we have just been looking, is that of 'discontentment'. There is no single Arabic word used in this connection, it is simply a concept which we find in places in the Zuhdiyāt. It is closely connected with the vice of 'covetousness' in so far as the theme of 'discontentment' occurs for the most part along with the theme of 'desire'. The point which the poet is at pains to make is that no matter what it is that a man desires, if he achieves his desire, then he is seldom content with what he has achieved but must always be striving after more.

How many wishes has the soul obtained!
But it only strives anxiously after something more.[16]

Where is the man who has achieved something
And whose soul is not reaching out towards yet another desire?[17]

This constant, discontented striving after more and more is what is being condemned by Abu'l-'Atāhiya here. We shall see later in this chapter that one of the prominent virtues commended by the poet is that of 'contentment', possibly 'self-restraint', as we have already noted. What he is condemning here is the reverse side of that particular coin.

Another fault which is particularly strongly condemned by Abu'l-'Atāhiya is that of 'heedlessness'. This idea may be conveyed in a line such as

We gather wealth, passing and small though it be,
And we forget Him to whom we must return.[18]

by the use of the verb 'forget'; or again, in a line such as

O you who sleep long! Did you but know,
You would be dead to sleep and alive to wakefulness.[19]

by the figurative use of the verb 'sleep'. Mostly, however, the idea is conveyed by the verb ghfl and the derived noun ghefla, the verb having the significance of 'to be inattentive, careless' and the noun meaning 'carelessness, heedlessness'. It is because of their heedlessness of death that men are most often upbraided.

We are all heedless,
Though death comes at us night and day.[20]

How amazing that we are so long heedless,
Yet death is not heedless of us![21]

Men are heedless,
While death's mill goes round.[22]

Frequently, the heedlessness refers not simply to death itself but to what follows death in the shape of resurrection and judgment.

How heedless men are in the face of the day of their resurrection,
The day when, in that place, they will be bathed in sweat.[23]

How heedless I am of that for which I was created!
I am quite ignorant of my future life.[24]

There is sometimes contained in those passages where this idea occurs an element which implies that men ought to have taken heed of those things of which they are now heedless. It is implicit, for example, in a line such as

Truly, the man who finds his life pleasant
Is heedless of what the graves cover.[25]

that the dead in the graves should have provided a warning of what is to come for those who are still alive. This becomes explicit in

I am greatly amazed at the heedlessness of those who are left
That they do not heed the warning of those who have

departed.[26]

where there occurs the idea of 'warning' quite explicitly, an idea which, as we shall see shortly, is of importance for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conception of the role which he, as a poet, plays in society. Although men are most frequently upbraided for their heedlessness of death, they are also accused of being heedless of the treachery inherent in the world and in worldly things.

The world's children are heedless,
But the world's knives cut and slash![26]

In the way of God how heedless we are!
We trust the world, yet how treacherous it is![27]

One might sum up this particular fault by saying that Abu'l-'Atāhiya condemns men for the sin of heedlessness - heedlessness of the fact of death which stands at the end of life for all men and of the reality of the resurrection and the last judgment, heedlessness, too, of the treachery inherent in the world and of the frustrations and disappointments which result from a passionate pursuit of worldly things. The implication behind the use of the concept of 'heedlessness' is, of course, the idea that men could and should 'take heed', and we have already noted examples where this actually becomes explicit. There are sufficient warnings in the life that men see around them for them to realise what the true way of life should be, but to these positive recommendations on the part of Abu'l-'Atāhiya we shall return later.

One final ground of condemnation by the poet remains to be considered, namely what he refers to as 'defective reason'. The word which occurs here, for the most part, is 'aql which means 'reason, intelligence, the mind'. The

root cause of the impotence of the mind or reason, the poet sees in those desires upon whose pursuit men are bent.

Whoever persists in the pursuit of desire,
That desire destroys his reason.[28]

It is as though our certainty of death were (more) doubt.
No mind which is intent upon desire is pure.[29]

Thus Abu'l-'Atāhiya diagnoses the impure and disintegrated human mind which he observes in his fellow human beings. Having thus diagnosed the disease, he describes the effects of it upon human life generally in numerous instances.

By God! My mind is defective.
If it were not, then I would seize hold of life's opportunities.[30]

My will is like that of a madman and my mind like that of someone incapable.
If my mind were sound, then my will would be sound too.[31]

How is it that we buy life in this world at the price of eternal life?
Where is our mind and our reflection?[32]

How amazing we are in our ignorance!
Our mind is weak.
Our mind is forgetful,
Heedless and frivolous.[33]

In these examples we see something of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's analysis of the human situation which is caused by the non-functioning of the human mind. It causes men to overlook the goodness inherent in life and to fail to seize hold of all the opportunities with which life presents them. A defective mind causes a defective will,

thus rendering a man incapable of doing those things which he intuitively knows to be right. The fact that a man's mind has ceased to function properly causes him to base his life wholly on the passing things of this world to the complete neglect of those things which, even in this earthly life, possess the quality of eternity. The human mind, thus corrupted, is forgetful and heedless of those things which would lead to its true soundness and is completely lacking in seriousness.

But already behind all this diagnosis of the state in which, from his observations, Abu'l-'Atāhiya considers the human mind to be, behind his analysis of the consequences of such a sick mind, we can already be aware of the implication of this, namely that for Abu'l-'Atāhiya the human mind (*'aql*) is a factor which can lead a man to a right and true appraisal of life and can be one element at least in leading him along the right path. This is already clear from such examples as the following.

Sin is too obvious
For the man of sound mind to regard it as the right path.[34]

In those who have gone before us we have objects for
reflection and consideration
In which the man of sound mind can find an example
and guidance.[35]

If our minds were sound, when day drives away night
And night drives away day,
Then we would see in their swift passing
That men vanish without trace.[36]

I have seen that when the mind is clear
Its links with the world are few.[37]

If it were not my mind which protected my sincerity,
My honour and my religion as long as I lived, what merit would I have?[38]

You have only your mind as adviser;
You have only your mind as guide.[39]

Here Abu'l-'Atāhiya is envisaging a 'sound mind', that is, 'aql untainted by those factors which have tainted it in the majority of cases, as a primary factor in leading men along the right road in life. A man of sound mind will see sin for what it is and will refuse to be deceived by its attractions. He will know, from experience and from exercising his reflection, that the world is a transitory place and that the things of this world with which men in general are so preoccupied do not last. The sound mind can be a man's guide through life, his adviser in all the ways of the world. The sound mind can guard and protect a man from falling into insincerity and dishonour and can keep him in the way of true religion. Abu'l-'Atāhiya, then, condemns the mind which has become sick and regards such a mind as one of the main causes of the general human situation which he sees around him. But for him the human mind has a much more positive side to it and can also, when it is sound, be one of the principal means whereby a man can lead a just life.

This brings us, of course, to the positive side of the religious philosophy which is expounded in the Zuhdiyāt. But before we turn to look at that positive side in detail, let us try to see something of what Abu'l-'Atāhiya considered to be the ideal life and something of the role which the poet considered himself as playing in leading his fellow men towards that ideal life.

In trying to find the answer to the question of what Abu'l-'Atāhiya considered the ideal life to be, we must try to distinguish between what he regards as the ideal of life and what he regards as the ideal means of achieving the ideal in life. There are, indeed, few passages in the Zuhdiyāt where Abu'l-'Atāhiya actually gives a definition of what he considers the ideal in life to be, and very often it is difficult to disentangle such a definition from a list of ideal virtues in life. For the moment, however, we shall try to leave aside the latter and concentrate, in so far as this is possible, on the former. We can see something of the poet's conception of the ideal in life in the following.

The totality of what is good - if God is serious -
Resides in what God does, not in what man does.[40]

A man's best day is a day on which he has proved useful;
Doing good is the most lasting thing he can do.[41]

A man's best speech is his most truthful,
And a man's best action is his most useful.[42]

There is no good in the man who does not help others
with his surplus.
There is no good in the man who does not show a
cheerful face.[43]

The ideal life is to be found in obedience to the will of God (or, at least, in conforming to his actions rather than to one's own) and in proving oneself useful to one's fellow human beings by being friendly and cheerful towards them and helping them when they are in need with the surplus of one's own wealth and good fortune. There are two directions of orientation here, towards God and towards one's fellow men. One might almost go on to say that the

will of God is that men should be mutually helpful. Abu'l-'Atāhiya does not define how men are to ascertain the will of God, but there is no reason to suppose that he would not say that it is to be found in the Qur'ān and in the sunna.

There are several poems in the Zuhdiyāt where we find a definition of the happy man or where we find him giving advice as to how to live the ideal life, and behind these ideas we find confirmation and amplification of what we have ascertained above concerning the nature of the ideal of life.

Fill your heart with hatred of pleasures,
And remember the descent into the abode of the dead.
Let not pleasure lead you astray from the future life,
For pleasure is fleeting and brings eternal regret.
The happy man on the day of judgment is the one who has denied himself and been content
A worshipper of God in all humility.
Say your prayers at the proper time and in a state of purity,
For it is an error not to observe the proper time.
If your Lord has been generous to you, then spend
The greater part of what you have in giving alms
To both family and strangers alike,
For alms-giving is next to prayer.
Be truly neighbourly
By fulfilling your neighbour's needs.
If you have sufficient for your needs, be modest in your use of it,
And keep your soul far from the destruction which pleasure brings.[44]

Without, at the moment, saying anything about the roots zhd (self-denial) and qn' (contentment) which we shall examine in detail later, we can see in this poem amplification of what we have already noted concerning the double

orientation of the ideal life, towards God (worship and prayer) and towards one's fellow men (alms-giving, neighbourliness). These two aspects of life are treated in greater detail here than in the examples cited earlier, but they are identical with those that we have already noted. Over and over again these two themes recur. Sometimes it is good works and the fear of God which are commended[45], at other times the emphasis is laid on the one or the other[46]. If there is, in the Zuhdiyāt, no very clear definition as to what the poet meant by the ideal life, there is the sense in which 'the good life' is self-explanatory and in which, if it is not self-explanatory, it is not really the good life.

Be content with the man who thinks what is good and speaks it,
Who speaks what is good and whose actions do not belie his speech.[47]

The good is good, as its name shows,
Just as the evil is evil, as its name shows.[48]

The good life, then, is best defined by means of the actions of those who claim sincerely to be living it. The content of such a life is self-explanatory from the very name which it bears. If we insist on a definition, then it is a life which is orientated both towards God and towards one's fellow men, in worship on the one hand and in good works on the other.

In examining the role which Abu'l-'Atāhiya believed himself to be fulfilling in society, we ask first of all what he considered to be the function and role of a poet. There are at least two places in the Zuhdiyāt where the word shā'ir (poet) is virtually equated with the word

khatīb (preacher)[49]. The association of these two words is, of course, nothing new in Arabic. They were associated from pre-Islamic times, these two types of people being the 'practitioners of the art of the spoken word'[50], with khatīb being used in the sense of 'rhetorician'. Since, however, the evidence with regard to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conception of the role of the poet is cumulative, we simply note at this stage that these two words are associated in the Zuhdiyāt. Again, in the context of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's akhbār in the Kitāb al-Aghānī[51], there are at least two occurrences of the root w'ẓ in connection with the poet's activities at the caliphal court. The use of this verb, too, was not unknown with regard to other practitioners of the art of the spoken word, and Pedersen[52] quotes several instances of its use in royal circles. Once more, we simply note its occurrence with regard to Abu'l-'Atāhiya. In the Zuhdiyāt, the root w'ẓ occurs over and over again, so frequently indeed that only a few references need be given[53]. The subject of the verb wa'aza is usually 'time' (or 'fate'), the graves of the dead or the dead themselves, the passing of time and the destruction that it brings with it to those in positions of power or wealth. There is no occurrence, as far as I am aware, of Abu'l-'Atāhiya describing himself as a wā'iẓ, but once again we note the frequency of both the idea and the terminology of 'warning' in the Zuhdiyāt. There are a number of poems in the Zuhdiyāt which appear to be sermons, either from the context in which they are set in the Aghānī or from their content. There is one poem, for example, which, to judge from its akhbār-type heading in both editions of the Dīwān[54], would seem to have been

intended by the poet to be suitable as a Friday sermon, and this indication of purpose in the heading is borne out by the contents of the poem, urging men, as it does, to observe the prescribed religious practices (dīn) and to praise God for having sent them a warner (mudhir) and a preacher (khatīb) in the person of Muhammad. The same may be said of another poem[55], where again both heading and content indicate a sermon, preached this time to al-Rashīd on the transience of life and of human possessions[56]. Perhaps more important are those places in the Zuhdiyāt where Abu'l-'Atāhiya seems definitely to be implying that he fulfils a preaching role towards his fellow men. A line such as

If I speak to men about this world, they laugh;
If I speak to them about the world to come, they frown.[57]

has the distinct implication that the poet does address his contemporaries in homiletic terms. Such an implication is borne out by the content of practically the entire Zuhdiyāt. No one who reads the Zuhdiyāt can fail to be aware of the homiletic nature and tone of almost every poem. The individual poems are full of advice and warnings preferred by the poet to those in positions of wealth and power (that is, to those who were most susceptible to the misuse of their lives and their possessions) and to his fellow men in general. We might glance briefly at two fairly obvious examples, both from the very end of the collected Zuhdiyāt[58]. The first of them is a long poem[59] which begins by describing the fleeting nature of life as this is emphasised by the fact of death and ends with a section which describes for the benefit of the Caliph the social ills of the time and invokes the Caliph's

assistance in remedying them[60]. Here the tone of the poem is obviously didactic and homiletic, the homily being directed, in this instance, at the Caliph who is unnamed. The other example is the poem immediately following[61], a poem which Abu'l-'Atāhiya himself describes as his 'testament' (waṣīya). The final line of this poem is

So give heed to the affectionate advice
Which is called Abu'l-'Atāhiya.

The sense would appear to be that the advice which the poet has to give to his fellow men is that contained in his own life, that is, he himself is the advice. The important thing to note in this particular example is that the word which is used for 'advice' is nuṣḥ, a verbal noun of form I of the verb naṣaḥa, a verb which means 'to give sincere advice' and whose meaning, therefore, comes within the same range as w'ẓ, in the sense that w'ẓ is the negative aspect and nṣḥ is the positive aspect of one and same idea. The poet 'warns' of the consequences of unrepentance and 'advises' concerning the means of leading the good life.

We might sum up at this point by saying that, although there is no direct evidence that Abu'l-'Atāhiya ever called himself a wā'iẓ, we have noted that there is a very real sense in which the poet can be considered a 'preacher' to the men of his own time. There is a homiletic tone pervading the whole of the Zuhdiyāt, and there are not wanting passages in the poems where there is more than a hint that Abu'l-'Atāhiya considered himself as the provider of warning and advice, not only to those in high places but to men in general. We have already looked, in the earlier part of this chapter, at the negative aspects of what we have termed the religious

philosophy of the Zuhdiyāt, at those faults and vices which the poet condemned in men. We shall now try to evaluate the positive side of this philosophy and examine the 'advice' which Abu'l-'Atāhiya sought to provide for the men of his own age, the positive virtues which he would commend to his contemporaries.

At first sight, the virtues which we shall be looking at to begin with are not 'positive', in so far as they are the virtues of abstinence, asceticism, resignation, withdrawal from the world. These appear to be 'negative' rather than 'positive'. But they are 'positive' in the sense that they are recommended by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as means towards achieving the ideal in life. The first group of these 'positive' virtues at which we shall look can be regarded as the opposite side of the coin from those faults which we have noted in the earlier part of this chapter and which we classified under the headings of covetousness and discontentment. It is not always easy to isolate the positive virtues which we are now attempting to study, since often more than one virtue is mentioned in any given line of poetry. It is, however, convenient to classify them in this way, and we shall try to restrict ourselves to commenting only on that particular virtue which is under discussion at any given moment.

The first two virtues which we shall examine are abstinence (*wara'*) and asceticism (*zuhd*). The first of these means to abstain from all that is forbidden and unlawful, and, in the context of the Zuhdiyāt, it is used in a religious sense. The second means to be entirely free of desire for anything and to forbid oneself or deny oneself the use of it. The first (*wara'*) is, in a

sense, the means of achieving the state which is described by the second (zuhd). In seeking a definition of *wara'* in the *Zuhdiyat*, we might quote a few passages where the term occurs.

Greed is a shameful thing; so too is covetousness.
Greed and abstinence do not belong together.[62]

Prevent your heart from leading you astray to desire,
And strengthen your hand with the cords of religion and abstinence.[63]

I have set my soul sincerely upon abstinence,
But a lack (in me) kept it back from that abstinence.[64]

The fear of God has a laudable result;
The real God-fearer is the man who practises abstinence.[65]

That man is most secure in his religion
Who keeps himself in tranquillity of mind and abstinence.[66]

If a man's abstinence is pure,
Then good appears from him secretly and openly.[67]

From these quotations we can see that, for Abu'l-'Atahiya, *wara'* is the direct opposite of greed or covetousness and is associated with tranquillity of mind. There is also a close link with religion (*din*), and the practice of abstinence leads a man to the true fear of God. It is a practice which can be achieved by the direction of one's will and which a lack of moral[68] fibre in one's will can prevent one from achieving. It is the achievement of purity or sincerity in the practice of abstinence which can lead to the truly good life - good not only in its inward character but also in its outward actions. It is, as we have said, the practice of this kind of abstinence which leads a man to the state of 'asceticism'.

For all that these poems by Abu'l-'Atāhiya are known as Zuhdiyat, the word zuhd itself appears remarkably seldom in them. The following examples of its use seem conducive of some definition of the term.

There is no glory save in the fear of God and in association
And in an obedience which gives promise of Paradise.[69]

The best death is being killed in his (God's) way,
And the best life is fearing him or association.[70]

Stretch out your hands if you meet such a one.
There is no real life except in the golden mean and association.[71]

There is, in these quotations, no real attempt to define what is meant by the term zuhd, beyond the association of it with the fear of God and obedience to God's will on the one hand and with the following of a middle way in life on the other. There can be no denying, however, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya regarded the virtue of zuhd as one of the chief virtues leading to the ideal life. Perhaps the best definition of this particular virtue occurs in that line to which we have referred in note 71, a line which does not use the term zuhd at all, but which presents in succinct fashion those qualities which are summed up by the use of zuhd in the final line of the poem in which it occurs.

Who holds himself aloof from the world and its vanities,
Whom neither money nor property leads astray.[72]

It is this aloofness from the world and from all the vanities which the world contains which best sums up zuhd, and we might also associate with it the term salāma (tranquility of mind) which we have already encountered

in one of the examples referring to *zuhd*'[73]. *Zuhd* is not simply a barren conception of self-denial, but a positive state of self-containedness and security which stems from having, by means of the practice of *zuhd*, renounced one's ties with the things of this world.

This last concept leads us on to examine certain other closely related ideas which find expression in the *Zuhdiyāt* and which are also to be classified among those positive virtues which Abu'l-'Atāhiya commends to his fellow men. Those are 'renunciation' (*ya's*)[74], 'patience' (*ṣabr*), 'contentment' (*qana'*) and the idea of 'withdrawal from the world', an idea for which various expressions are used. We can see the nature of renunciation from the following examples.

Renunciation protects a man's honour,
But treacherous greed is an incurable disease.[75]

Nothing enslaves a man in the way that his greed does;
Nothing comforts him like patience and renunciation.[76]

Guard your soul from that which
Men possess, by means of renunciation.[77]

By your renunciation extinguish the fire of your desires,
For they have inflamed your mind.[78]

If you have complete renunciation with regard to
the world,
Then neither death nor your fellow men will
trouble you.[79]

True peace lies in renunciation
With regard to human society, and true wealth in
contentment.[80]

From these examples it is quite clear what significance Abu'l-'Atāhiya assigns to the word *ya's*. It is clearly

associated with the similar terms ṣabr and qana' and is equally clearly contrasted with 'greed' or 'covetousness'. The acquiral of ya's by a man brings him true peace and tranquility in the face of all that either death or his fellow men can bring. Again we return to the idea of peace of mind, of self-containedness and security which we have already seen to be characteristic of zuhd. It is this same idea which is brought out by the use of the word ya's in the context of the Zuhdiyat.

The basic meaning of the root ṣbr from which comes the noun ṣabr, 'patience', is 'to bind or tie'. The secondary sense of 'patience' would then convey the idea of self-restraint. It would appear that Abu'l-'Atahiya prized the virtue of patience highly, describing it as the ideal virtue[81], the noblest and the most exalted[82]. He associates with patience virtues such as generosity and self-denial[83] and contentment[84].

Be patient towards the world and abandon every proud man
Who pursues his desires and is dragged by them into
the wilderness.
There is no success for men of merit except in patience
Towards their passions and in putting up with
difficulties.[85]

Here, men are enjoined to be patient vis-à-vis the world and their passions. There is here almost the idea that 'patience' involves the abandonment of those things towards which patience is enjoined. But the main line of thought connected with this idea of patience in the Zuhdiyat is that 'patience' is to be acquired in order to enable men to cope with the misfortunes which life brings with it and to which men are constantly subject in life[86]. There is even the suggestion that patience is

a virtue which is increased through the experience of misfortune[87], a virtue whose ultimate perfection in the human soul is achieved only by means of a steady increase in it[88], in other words, if a man does not increase his stock of patience through contact with misfortune, then that patience would cease to be effective. Patience, then, is regarded by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as one of the cardinal virtues necessary for the successful pursuit of the business of living. It is defined as the ability to withstand all the vicissitudes of life. No matter what life might bring upon a man, he will, if he has *ṣabr*, be able still to face life with equanimity. Once a man has acquired patience, he must continue to build upon that foundation, otherwise the patience which he has acquired will go for nothing. It is, to sum up, one of the virtues which will see a man through anything that life might bring upon him.

> Patience is the best horse to saddle for salvation;
> It can cross both flat and stony ground.[89]

The root *qn'* and, to a lesser extent, the root *rḍy* (with little apparent difference in meaning) are used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to give expression to yet another highly prized virtue. *Qond'a* and its derived noun *qune'* and *qunā'a* are used to convey the idea of 'contentment with something' and *raḍiya* and its derivatives convey the same idea. This particular virtue is also commended, as was patience, as most noble and exalted[90]. It provides a hassle- and toil-free life for the man who possesses it[91]; it is the source of true happiness[92]; only in possessing it can a man be truly free[93]. There are two main lines of thought in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's description of 'contentment'.

The first is that this particular virtue is regarded as the opposite of greed or covetousness[94], in other words, men are enjoined to be content with whatever wealth or possessions they have in life and to refrain from the vain pursuit of more, especially of what they observe others to possess. This is a fairly surface definition of contentment, but the second line of thought goes somewhat deeper. According to it, men are bidden to find their contentment in God, in so far as they have knowledge of him[95]. This idea is further extended to include contentment with the divine decrees which regulate life[96]. This contentment with God and with God's decrees is, like the virtue of patience, seen as one of the paths that will lead a man to salvation:

> The soul seeks salvation, but does not
> Find it until it achieves contentment.[97]

This whole attitude and the benefits which accrue to a man from having it are summarised thus:

> Be content with life in every situation,
> And it will be well with you in the worst circumstances.[98]

No matter what may befall a man in the course of his life, if he has contentment, then his life will remain secure and unbroken. The aim and goal of contentment, be it contentment with one's own possessions in life or contentment with God and what he has decreed, is salvation (presumably for the life after death, though this is not specifically stated) and a sense of security and freedom in this world. Here again, the thought is similar to what we have observed to be the characteristic both of *suhd* and *yaʾs*, a sense of security and of peace of mind in the face of all that life entails. We might quote one final

line in which the word qana'a occurs, since it not only indicates how this virtue is to be acquired but also leads us on to the last of those positive virtues with the outwardly negative appearance at which we have been looking.

My withdrawal from you (the world) has planted in my heart
The tree of contentment. And contentment is my true wealth.[99]

We have already seen, in the previous chapter[100], that in Abu'l-'Atahiya's view the world is a deceptive place for those who live out their lives in it, a place where men find only grief and sorrow and where they are faced with an inevitable and imminent death. It is, at one and the same time, enticing and destructive. Life in a world of this kind obviously presents problems, particularly with regard to the living of a reasonably happy and secure life in the world. We have, again, already noted[101] that the term zuhd would seem to imply a certain aloofness from the world and its vanities. This advice to hold aloof from the world is amply confirmed in the Zuhdiyat as a whole, and we shall look now, briefly, at some of those passages where the poet definitely recommends withdrawal from the world as part of his advice to men for life. We have seen, in the last quoted excerpt from the Zuhdiyat, that Abu'l-'Atahiya regarded such a withdrawal as the way to achieve contentment, and, on the basis of the other places where this idea occurs, little more can be said about it. There is no single term used to convey this idea in the Zuhdiyat; the poet simply uses various verbs which all convey the idea of withdrawal or departure or sudden

flight. The main reasons for the recommendation to withdraw or flee from the world are that the world contains sorrows[102], that it leads men astray[103] and that men are subject to its sudden attacks[104]. The only way in which men can escape from these sorrows and save themselves from the deceptiveness and vindictiveness of the world is to withdraw from it. Lasting good is not to be found in the world, and men are enjoined to put themselves far from it and leave it behind them in order to achieve the true good which is 'in front of' them, that is, not in this world[105]. There is at least one poem in the Zuhdiyāt which betrays a decided disillusionment with mankind[106], and while this kind of attitude on the part of the poet may go some way towards explaining his definitely misanthropic point of view, we can not, in the case of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, leave out of consideration the religious reasons, namely that the world is characterised by deceptiveness and transience and that all that is of lasting good is to be found beyond this world. He has one poem in praise of the city of 'Abbādān, apparently a centre of asceticism, in which the inhabitants are described as having withdrawn from the world[107], but it is unlikely that it was withdrawal in this very definite sense which Abu'l-'Atāhiya was recommending to his contemporaries. It would seem much more likely that all that he was advising them to do was to set their hearts and souls free from the entanglements of the world, to make them resistant to the world's blandishments, so that they could achieve thereby that state of security from the vicissitudes of the world which he has been indicating by means of terms such as zuhd, ya's and qana'.

We have already noted Abu'l-'Atāhiya's analysis of the human mind[108], how he regards its impotence as one of the principal defects in man and of how he implies the obverse of this idea, namely that the human mind, when sound, can be one of man's principal guides to what is right in life. This positive function of the human mind is borne out elsewhere in the Zuhdiyāt in the poet's use of related terminology. Balanced judgment, for example (hilm), is something which can put an end to folly or ignorance[109]. Both the present and the past contain sufficient in the way of warning ('ibra) for the man who reflects (root fkr) and has real understanding (nuhā)[110]. The latter is even linked with the fear of God (taqwā, an expression to which we shall turn shortly), and men are bidden to acquire these two virtues as provision for the journey through life[111]. Knowledge ('ilm), too, is a highly commended virtue. The degenerate human situation is compared to an illness for which there is a cure available to the man who is knowledgeable ('ālim)[112]. The same idea, with the same imagery, is contained also in

My friend! I have experience of life,
I believe, and excellent, healing knowledge.[113]

Similarly esteemed and commended is the virtue designated by the word qasd, a word which has the sense of the middle way between two extremes and which one might translate as 'moderation'. The sense of it in the Zuhdiyāt is best explained by a line in which the word itself does not occur but where the idea is expressed by the root wst:

Hold the middle course in all your opinions,
Choosing it rather than the two extremes.[114]

Abu'l-'Atāhiya defines qasd as a means of security from

desire (hawan)[115] and as the goal on which one must have one's vision fixed if one is to escape the danger of yielding to desire[116]. Moderation is the only safe path through life[117]. That which is right (rushd) is commended as a means of becoming free of the enslavement of desire[118] and is further described as the pillars on which is founded the citadel of sincerity[119]. This last virtue, ṣidq, is defined by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as the outward manifestation of an inward faith[120]. Along with (good) works, ṣidq is the only means of salvation in life[121]. Yet another commended virtue in this same range is ḥaqq which, depending on context, might be translated as 'truth' or 'reality'. The poet is astonished at those who know what ḥaqq is and yet, in their ignorance, turn firmly aside from it[122]; truth is, after all, the most commendable path which a man can follow through life[123]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya provides no clear-cut definition of truth. For him the way to it is self-evident to those who are able to see it[124]. His high opinion of it as a guiding principle of life is brought out in this line:

> O my soul! Truth is my religion.
> So be abased and subjected.[125]

All of those concepts which we have just been examining, ḥilm, nuhā, 'ilm, qaṣd, rushd, ṣidq and ḥaqq, are concepts which can be grasped by the mind when the latter is functioning as it ought. A man of 'sound mind' will be able to see the value of these virtues and will attempt to live by them. If he does so, then he is on the way to leading the ideal kind of life as this is depicted in the Zuhdiyāt.

When we attempted to define what Abu'l-'Atāhiya meant by the ideal kind of life[126], we saw that it was a

life which was orientated both towards God and towards one's fellow men. This double orientation is evident also in the last group of commended virtues which we shall examine here. These are, on the one hand, virtues such as 'the fear of God', 'repentance' and 'practical religion' (dīn), that is, those virtues which are orientated towards God and, on the other, 'good works', a virtue which is to be seen primarily in a social or community context. It is to an examination of these virtues that we now turn.

Reference has already been made to certain elements in the Zuhdiyāt which are of a hortatory or homiletic character[127]. There are also several examples of what may be called prayers for forgiveness[128]. Behind such prayers for forgiveness, of course, there lies the implicit desire for such forgiveness and a state of repentance, and repentance is a spiritual state which Abu'l-'Atāhiya is constantly urging men to seek and find. There is an element of urgency about this, and the poet bids men repent while they are still able to do so, before it is too late[129]. The aim of repentance is to enable a man to find his way back to God's favour and grace, to be accepted anew by God[130]. Only thus will a man find true happiness[131]. By this stage in the spiritual journey, man has passed from the human state of repentance to the divine gift of forgiveness. We have already discussed forgiveness as an important element in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's doctrine of God[132]. Here let it simply be re-iterated that God is a forgiving God[133]. Repentance and God's forgiveness are not, of course, to be treated lightly:

> Let is suffice you what you have already purposely done
> And ask God for forgiveness and do not do it again.[134]

'Forgiveness' is equated with, or perhaps, rather, regarded as the necessary preliminary to what Abu'l-'Atāhiya calls 'a wholesome life and a purified character'[135]. The particular spiritual virtues of humm repentance leading to divine forgiveness are then essential forerunners of the ability on a man's part to find and lead the ideal life.

Having become the recipient of God's forgiveness, a man must now seek to live in accordance with God's will. One of the means of accomplishing this is what is described as 'the fear of God'. Various terms are used to describe this particular spiritual state, including the verbs khāfa and khashiya, both of whose basic meanings are 'fear'. The sense, in these cases, is, of course, amplified by the use of allāh as the object of the verb. The most common expression in the Zuhdiyāt, however, for 'the fear of God' is Form VIII of the root wqy which, without any further qualification, means 'to fear God', with the further senses of 'to be pious or devout'. In this latter connection we note also that this root is very often linked with the noun birr which has the basic sense of 'filial devotion' and the secondary sense of 'piety' vis-à-vis God[136]. Once again, this virtue of 'the fear of God' or 'piety' is highly commended by Abu'l-'Atāhiya. It is described as a 'shield and support'[137] and as 'a sweet-tasting, clear drink' for those who thirst for it[138]. The fear of God (tuqā) and piety (birr) are jointly regarded as the ideal investments in life[139] and, in terms of an image whose frequency we have already noted[140], the fear of God is commended as a viaticum for the journey through life to the world to come.[141] It is a

virtue which can 'enrich' even the poorest man[142], and it is yet another means whereby a man can free himself from the tyranny of his desires[143]. The fear of God will enable a man to live a life that is pure and good[144], and if a man fears God in accordance with God's will, then he has already achieved perfection[145]. It is linked with guhd, and the two virtues are described as making up the ideal in life[146]; it is linked with guhd and with obedience, and the three are commended as the only ways in which a man can achieve true glory or honour in life (fakhr)[147]. Only the fear of God can lead to a man's 'cure'[148], that is to his salvation from the sin and the vicissitudes of life in this world.

Yet another virtue connected with the God-ward orientation of a man's life is that which is described by the word dīn. The primary meaning of dīn is 'custom, habit', but there is the well-attested secondary sense of 'belief, religion', with particular regard to the outward manifestations of that belief or religion[149]. Dīn is never actually defined in terms of outward religious practices by Abu'l-'Atāhiya, but since this is the meaning generally given to the word, it seems unreasonable to deny that this is what is meant by it in the Zuhdiyāt and quite unwarranted to translate it, as Reacher, for example, so frequently does, by 'Moral'. On at least one occasion, dīn is linked with the fear of God - no one who fears God and no one who makes his religious practices the object of his care and reflection will remain in ignorance of what is right in life[150]. The only way in which we can see in what way Abu'l-'Atāhiya uses the word dīn is to examine those passages where it is used in contrast to

other concepts. In one passage

> How fine it is when religion and the world are united!
> How hateful are unbelief and poverty in man![151]

'poverty' (_faqr_) and 'the world' are contrasted, _dunyā_ obviously being used in the sense of 'worldly goods', and _dīn_ is in contrast to 'unbelief' (_kufr_). In yet another passage

> Men have become corrupt. If they see
> Someone sincere in his religion, they say he is an innovator.[152]

the implication is that the world's standards of judgment are topsy-turvy, and the man who is sincerely performing the duties and demands of his religious belief is called an 'innovator'. The sense of this latter word (_mubtadi'_) is 'someone who founds a new sect'. In this context, then, _dīn_ is the opposite of heresy and is equated with orthodox religion and religious practices. The most frequent contrast in the _Zuhdiyāt_ in this regard is that between _dīn_ and _dunyā_[153]. Here again, _dunyā_ is being used to refer to worldly possessions, and those who acquire their _dunyā_ at the price of their _dīn_ are being condemned. _Dīn_, then, is the sincere practice of orthodox Islam, a practice which can not be carried on in conjunction with the undue love of or desire for the things of this world. In three remarkable lines, Abu'l-'Atāhiya comes near to a concept of life in death.

> There are some who are dead and yet live on in the memory,
> While others are alive and well and yet, as far as men are concerned, are dead.
> The one who is dead and whose memory is still fresh
> Is the one who was outstanding in his religion.
> The one who is still alive and whose memory is dead,
> Is the fool who destroyed his religion. He is dead indeed![154]

This urgent commendation of dīn to his contemporaries is confirmed in other places in the Zuhdiyāt. Men are bidden to preserve their religion and not to cast it aside[155]. The preservation of one's religion is regarded as the best thing in life[156], and religion itself is the most meritorious practice in the world[157].

Those virtues which we have just been examining - repentance leading to forgiveness, the fear of God and the practice of one's religion - are all concerned with the God-ward orientation of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's concept of the ideal life. We turn now, briefly and finally, to consider the community or social orientation of that life in the poet's commendation of 'good works'. There is no formal definition given by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as to what exactly he means by 'good works', but there is a couplet which sheds light on this.

> The best day for you - if you would know -
> Is the day on which you are sought out and good is hoped for from you.
> Fulfil the need of him who hopes for something from you
> Before God renders your help superfluous.[158]

'Good works', if a definition of such a self-explanatory term is at all necessary, is the rendering of assistance to someone who is in need and comes seeking one's help. Men are commanded to do good to all men, and this they can do with the help of God[159]. In one poem, good works are urged upon men so that they may reach the goal in life[160], and there are several places where men are urged to do good works as an investment against the day of judgment[161]. A similar idea to this latter one is expressed by the thought of good works as a stratagem against death[162]. The doing of good works in this world, then, is regarded

as a means of ensuring entry into Paradise in the next. There is, nevertheless, the sense that good works (as we have noted already with regard to religious practices) can ensure that a man's reputation lives on after him[163]. The urgency to practise this particular virtue is impressed upon men by the single line

Hurry! Hurry to do good works
While you are still able. Hurry![164]

In this chapter we have examined first of all Abu'l-'Atāhiya's analysis of the human situation and have noted how he diagnoses in it the faults of covetousness and discontentment, of heedlessness and of defective reason. We have shown how he conceives of the ideal life as having a double orientation, towards God and towards one's fellow men. In his role as 'preacher', he goes on to give advice to his fellow men as to how they should seek to cope with the problem of life in the world as it is and endeavour to lead the ideal life, always keeping in mind the life of the world to come. We might conclude this chapter by quoting in full a poem from which we have already quoted the concluding lines, that poem which we have referred to as Abu'l-'Atāhiya's 'testament'. It is a poem which recounts the simple pleasures of life, contrasting them with the dangers and temptations inherent in positions of power and authority. The final three lines might well serve as epilogue not simply to this one poem but to the whole of the religious philosophy expounded in the Zuhdiyāt.

A loaf of dry bread
Which you eat in a corner,
A jug of cold water
Which you drink from a pure spring,

A narrow upper room
 In which you can be alone,
A place apart to pray,
 Away from men,a place aside,
Where you can read a book,
 Leaning against a pillar,
Taking warning from those who have departed,
 Those of generations past -
All this is better than an hour
 In the shade of lofty palaces,
Which bring punishment in their train
 So that you are roasted by the fire of Hell.
This,then,is my testament
 Which tells of my condition.
Happy the man who hears it!
 That,by my life,would be enough.
So give heed to the affectionate advice
 Which is called Abu'l-'Atahiya.[165]

CHAPTER VI

THE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS OF ABU'L-'ATĀHIYA ACCORDING TO THE ZUHDIYĀT

In chapter III, we examined the religious beliefs of Abu'l-'Atāhiya as we found them recorded in his akhbār in the Kitāb al-Aghānī. Of necessity, several questions were left unresolved at that point, and it is to those questions that we now return in an attempt to see whether, in the light of our study of the theological concepts and religious philosophy of the Zuhdiyāt, any answers may be found for them.

One of these questions we virtually resolved already when it was first raised, and concerning it little more needs to be said here. We noted in chapter III[1] that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was accused of zandaqa, both by Mansūr b. 'Ammār and by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, because in his poetry he mentioned only death and annihilation and failed to mention the fact of the resurrection and the life to come. We noted already in that context that there were numerous passages in the Zuhdiyāt where both the resurrection and the future life were mentioned[2]. All that we need do at this stage is to reiterate what we have already said, both in chapter III and in that part of chapter IV where we discussed the view of resurrection, last judgment and life after death which is expounded in the Zuhdiyāt[3]. There can, then, be no accusation of zandaqa on this count, for the grounds of the accusation do not stand up to examination.

Again, the question was raised as to the problem of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's holding a doctrine of predestination

and his teaching 'eternal punishment'[4]. We have discussed in chapter IV Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view of predestination[5] and, in the same chapter, have examined his conception of judgment and life after death[6]. There is the fact, however, in the Zuhdiyāt, that predestination means simply that God has decreed death as the culmination point of human life upon earth. There is no hint of the idea which is associated with this doctrine in certain schools of Christian thought, that only a decreed number of elect are saved while the rest of mankind are damned. The Islamic doctrine of predestination still leaves open the possibility for a man to earn salvation or damnation by the kind of life which he lives on earth. Certainly the view of judgment and life after death which finds expression in the Zuhdiyāt is quite explicit about the fact that at judgement an account will be taken of a man's life and that, dependent on that account, he will be 'rewarded' either with Paradise or with Hell. There is, therefore, no contradiction between a doctrine of predestination and the teaching of 'eternal punishment', since these two concepts are not so mutually exclusive as they appear to our western Christian minds.

One of the Aghānī texts which we examined in chapter III indicated the high opinion which Abu'l-'Atāhiya had of the human mind[7], and this we have seen confirmed in chapter V where we noted that knowledge ('ilm) was a virtue which the poet commended strongly and that he regarded it as one of those virtues available to the man of 'sound mind'[8]. The Aghānī text in question here gave a definition of knowledge to the effect that it was 'derived naturally from reflection (fikr) and reasoning

(istidlāl) and research (bahth)'. The noun used in the Aghānī text for 'knowledge' is ma'ārif (plural of ma'rifa). In mystic terminology the noun ma'rifa is used to mean either 'gnosticism' or, in opposition to 'ilm (which has the sense of 'acquired knowledge'), 'infused or intuitive knowledge of God'[9]. But this kind of definition of ma'rifa can not apply to its use in this Aghānī text. It is true that ma'rifa for the mystics can be cultivated[10], but it is first and foremost the direct gift of God to a man[11]. It is obviously not this divinely given knowledge which is the subject of this statement in the Aghānī; it would, rather, appear much more likely that ma'ārif is here being used as a virtual synonym of 'ilm. There are two passages in the Kitābāt where Abu'l-'Atāhiya gives a definition of 'ilm:

> That which is unknown has a witness which confirms it for the understanding.
> The sum total of knowledge is in direct and indirect awareness.[12]

> Knowledge is derived from logical reasoning,
> From appraisal and from attentiveness (to the advice of others).
> If a man tries to conceal it, it does not remain concealed,
> Like a man who lights a fire on top of a hill.[13]

The first of these quotations is somewhat difficult, but I have taken 'ayn to refer to direct observation and athar to indirect observation. It would appear that it is knowledge ('ilm) which reveals the mysteries of the invisible world (or of the future?) and that knowledge is derived both from direct observation of this world (or of the present?) and from the indirect testimony

which the invisible world imprints on this world (athar). In the second quotation, the three sources of knowledge are logical reasoning, the appraisal of the circumstances and situations of life and attentiveness to the advice of others. 'Logical reasoning' (aql) is very similar in concept to the 'reasoning' (ijtihād) which was mentioned in the Aghānī text, and the other two concepts, 'iyān and sam', are both functions of the human mind. For Abu'l-'Atāhiya, then, knowledge ('ilm or ma'rifa) was very much a product of the intellect. In no sense is it God-given or intuitive, and this concept of knowledge would place the poet outwith the speculations of early mysticism. It is perhaps of relevance to note at this stage that Vajda comes to the same conclusion with regard to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's use of the term yaqīn ('certainty') which, according to Vajda, is used in the Zuhdiyāt in the Qur'ānic sense, namely certainty of death and of the resurrection, and has nothing to do with the speculative sense which the word has in the literature of the mystics[14].

We noted in chapter XII that one of the Aghānī texts under discussion there asserted that Abu'l-'Atāhiya 'made common cause with the teaching of the heretical Qatarite Zaidites' but that, in spite of this association, he drew the line at revolt against the state[15]. We have already examined the teachings of this branch of the [illegible]ah]'s and noted that there was a considerable similarity between it and the mu'tazila[16]. We draw attention once again to the fact that it was an early Shī'ite who was reputed to have been the first to say that the Qur'ān was created[17] and to the fact that of those people accused of zandaqa during the 'Abbāsid period, Vajda found that

all but one of them appeared to belong to some Shī'ite sect or another[18]. The evidence which we have examined in these places all served to underline the fact that in the period around 800 A.D. it is virtually impossible to draw sharp lines around and between the various sects, and we noted in particular the connections between the shī'a (or certain branches of it) and the mu'tazila on the one hand and between the shī'a and zandaqa on the other. The particular characteristic of zandaqa in the period under discussion was, of course, its dualistic aspect, and we shall hold in reserve for the moment a discussion of any possible dualism in the case of Abu'l-'Atāhiya. We shall restrict our discussion at this point to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's relationship with shī'a and mu'tazila in an attempt to resolve the various questions raised earlier in this general area[19].

We have drawn attention earlier to the fact that the Rāfiḍites, an early moderate and politically respectable branch of the shī'a, had a very autocratic conception of the caliphate[20]. These Rāfiḍites were sceptical as to the reliability of the Companions as transmitters of traditions concerning the Prophet, and this attitude led to an undermining of the value of those traditions and of the growing authority of traditionists and jurists. There are at least two passages in the Zuhdiyāt where Abu'l-'Atāhiya is critical of the 'ulamā'. He criticises them for their failure to provide guidance in religious matters and for declaring false what is produced by their opponents and declaring their own errors to be right[21]. The other passage criticises them for their failure to take cognisance of the circumstances surrounding life in this

world and to give due warning of the imminence of death and judgment to those who look to them for guidance. They are self-deceived and blind in their self-deception[22]. This criticism of the 'ulamā' might seem to indicate on Abu'l-'Atāhiya's part sympathy for Rāfidite or moderate Shī'ite views, but we have to remember that this was not the sole distinguishing feature of these moderate Shī'ites. Although they do not appear to have embraced the extreme Shī'ite position of plotting to overthrow the government of the day[23], they did teach a very autocratic view of government and regarded the caliph, presumably even the 'Abbāsid caliph, as divinely guided and divinely preserved from error. With this kind of view, Abu'l-'Atāhiya can scarcely be said to have been in agreement. He was not slow to remind the caliph that he, like all men, was subject to death[24], and we have already referred to a poem in which he attempts to give a jog to the caliph's social conscience and to remind him that it is his duty to remedy the social ills of the day[25]. From even these slight examples, it would appear unlikely that Abu'l-'Atāhiya considered that any caliph was divinely guided and divinely preserved from error. Another characteristic of the moderate Shī'ite point of view, one which follows on from this autocratic view of the caliphate, is that they considered that it was the caliph and not, therefore, either the Qur'ān or the Traditions, who was the ultimate source of law and justice[26]. The comparatively low place which they would give to the Qur'ān and the Traditions is, of course, paralleled by the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, the implication of which is that the Qur'ān is not divinely inspired. It is to

Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conception of the Qur'ān that we now turn.

One of the Aghānī texts examined in chapter III claimed for Abu'l-'Atāhiya the ability to surpass in his poetry the literary beauties of the Qur'ān[27], but we noted in that context that this was a fairly common assertion on the part of some poets, especially those who were accused of zandaqa[28]. Yet another of those texts dealt explicitly with the problem of the createdness (or otherwise) of the Qur'ān, and both from it and from three lines of verse quoted by Ibn Miskawaih, we came to the conclusion that Abu'l-'Atāhiya regarded the Qur'ān as uncreated and eternal[29]. Is this conclusion confirmed in the Zuhdiyāt? There are three passages in the Zuhdiyāt where reference is made to the Qur'ān, that is, passages in which the Qur'ān is spoken about[30]. The first reference is the final line of a poem in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya speaks of the inevitability of death. The second last line is one which we have already quoted as evidence of the poet's role as preacher[31]. Then comes this final line:

How is it that I see the children of this world and their wives (act)
As though they had never studied the word of God?[32]

The second reference is also the final line of a poem, one in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya speaks of the fate of the dead and of the deceptiveness and transience of this world[33]. It ends with the line:

Such is God's word to us,
And there is no false promise in his word.[34]

The final reference is the opening line of a poem which castigates those who fail to practise what they preach.

It opens with this summons:

You who read in his book
What God has commanded, yet do not do it.[35]

The implication of all three of these passages is that God's book (or word), that is, the Qur'ān, provides authentic and reliable guidance for the proper conduct of life in this world. It will provide a warning for man in that it will remind them of the inevitability of death, of the deceptiveness and transience of this world and of the need for their lives to match up to their profession. While none of the passages states explicitly that the Qur'ān is uncreated and eternal, the author of these lines is obviously not a man who treats the book in question lightly or gives it a low place in his scale of spiritual values. We can, therefore, conclude that the evidence of the Zuhdiyāt tends to confirm what we deduced both from the Aghānī text and from the verses quoted by Ibn Miskawaih, namely that on the basis of his response to this particular question, Abu'l-'Atāhiya is to be ranged in the traditionist or 'constitutionalist' camp, that is amongst those who hold that the Qur'ān is the highest source of authority on matters pertaining to faith and life and that the whole Islamic community, caliph and commoner, is bound by its teaching. Abu'l-'Atāhiya, then, can not be associated with the Mu'tazilite doctrine of the createdness of the Qur'ān, nor can he be said to have accepted the point of view of even the early moderate Shī'ites (Rāfidites) with regard either to their view of the caliph as divinely guided and preserved from error or to their low estimate of the Qur'ān and the Traditions. In this respect, there is no need to question Abu'l-'Atāhiya's

orthodoxy.

The main characteristic of zandaqa, of which Abu'l-'Atāhiya was accused on various counts, was, if we accept its identification in the early 'Abbāsid period with Manichaeism, dualism. Two of the Aghānī texts discussed in chapter III are quite specific about accusing the poet of having a dualistic concept of God[36]. In the first of them, Abu'l-'Atāhiya counters an accusation of zandaqa by composing a special poem on the unity of God, thus implying that by zandaqa in that context, dualism was meant. In the other, whose close approximation to Manichean doctrine we have already noted[37], Abu'l-'Atāhiya is said to have held the doctrine that the one God created the visible world from two contrary substances and that before the end of time everything would be reduced to these two contrary substances, which are not more closely defined. We shall now attempt to see whether the Zuhdiyāt throw any light on the question of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's supposed dualism.

We have already noted, in an earlier chapter, the idea that the world, in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's view, was created by God[38], but there is no hint in the Zuhdiyāt of any dualism in those passages where the poet speaks of the creation of the world. There is at least one passage which would go so far as to deny that there is any evil inherent in the world at all:

> The earth is good, and all the sons
> Of Eve in it are of one origin.[39]

We have, however, noted earlier how one of the main characteristics of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's doctrine of the world is its ambivalent or paradoxical aspect from man's point

of view[40]. The world and the things of the world are outwardly attractive in man's eyes, yet in the end they are transitory and deceptive. And man, in spite of being aware of this transitoriness and deceptiveness, are passionately desirous of acquiring the things of this world. This much we have already noted, and a similar kind of paradox emerges over and over again in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's comments about life in general, of which the following might serve as examples.

Its (the world's) sweetness is mixed with bitterness,
Its rest is mixed with hardship.[41]

How amazing the world is! It has been created in such a way
That he who extols it is right and so is he who finds fault with it.[42]

Time passes ceaselessly in discontentment and pleasure,
Bringing with it now threats and now promises.[43]

Every sign which appears to the eye
Has two faces - desire and renunciation.[44]

Whenever a man has reached a position of pre-eminence,
He is, at the same time, brought near to a position of abjection.[45]

From these and many similar passages in the Zuhdiyāt, we note that for Abu'l-'Atāhiya the world and life in general could be both welcoming and hostile. There was a duality in the world and a similar duality in a man's relationship and reaction to it. This attitude of mind in the poet is perhaps also underlined by his fairly frequent use of the stylistic device of paradox[46]. Although the poet gives expression to what he feels to be a very marked duality in human existence, this does not, of course, imply that he

accepted a dualistic doctrine about the creation of the world or the nature of its creator. The fact, however, that he uses this kind of sharply contrasting vocabulary and style, may explain why some of his critics fixed on this aspect of his poetry and tried to fasten on him the heresy of dualism.

A similar kind of conclusion is reached by Vajda in his study of the terms light (nūr) and darkness (ẓulma) in the Zuhdiyāt[47]. The point of departure for his study is the identification of ẓandaqa as Manichaeism, at least during the period 780-786 A.D. He points out that the two opposing elements (out of which, according to the Aghānī, Abu'l-'Atāhiya is said to have believed the world to have been created) are identified in Manichaeism as 'light' and 'darkness'[48], and he proceeds to examine those passages in the Zuhdiyāt where nūr and ẓulma occur[49] in an attempt to see whether any expression is given to authentic Manichean beliefs. The second of the eight passages cited is of doubtful relevance, since in it nūr is used in its normal sense[50]. In the last two, the word nūr is associated with God. 'The light of God's face' is a way of expressing his grace or benevolence, and it is possible that the 'hidden light' of God is a metaphorical expression for his power (qudra) which is referred to in the following line of the poem in question. In the remainder of the examples cited by Vajda, there is a pairing of nūr with notions such as 'certainty' (yaqīn) and 'truth' (ḥaqq) and of ẓulma with 'false' (bāṭil) and 'doubt' (shakk). Vajda points out that in the Qur'ān nūr very often refers either to the revelation contained in the Qur'ān itself or in earlier sacred scriptures or to

the true direction (hudan) which is the possession of the faithful. However, in spite of its apparently orthodox origins, the nūr - zulma terminology may well have been associated by some readers with Manichaean passages of the type: 'Praised and blessed be the light! Whoever is in ignorance of it knows nothing apart from it. Whoever doubts its existence, is sure of nothing after it.'[51] There is no really very close relationship between this kind of statement and the use of nūr in the Zundīqāt. In the Manichaean text it is the knowledge of nūr which procures yaqīn, whereas Abu'l-'Atāhiya uses yaqīn in the sense of the certainty of death and of the resurrection, and such yaqīn for him is what Vajda calls 'lumineux'[52]. However, the similarities in vocabulary may well have occasioned suspicions in the minds of some readers as to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's orthodoxy.

In the light of the Zundīqāt, we can say that the accusations of zandaqa-Manichaeism which were levelled at Abu'l-'Atāhiya are explicable. We have noted the duality in his conception of life in general and of the world and man's attitude towards it in particular. We have also noted Vajda's study of the poet's use of the potentially suspect terminology nūr and ẓulma. But nowhere in the Zundīqāt have we been able to find any evidence that Abu'l-'Atāhiya actually professed a dualistic conception of God or openly embraced Manichaeism. The evidence of the Zundīqāt would suggest, on this count too, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was completely orthodox in his acceptance of the unity of God and in his view of the creation of the world. The accusations of zandaqa which were brought against him, although they are, from a certain

point of view, understandable, must be declared to be without foundation.

We noted earlier, in chapter II, several important factors concerning the early stages of the ṣūfiya[53]. There we noted the probable origins of the movement in al-Kūfa and the fact that there were two strands in it, an earlier ascetic one and a later ecstatic one, the latter beginning to emerge only about the beginning of the 9th century A.D. In chapter III, we noted that one of the Aghānī texts under discussion there connected Abu'l-'Atāhiya with the practice of taḥrīm al-makāsib, a practice which Massignon associated with early mysticism and defined as the renunciation of all commercial practices and of living in perpetual pilgrimage and of begging[54]. We also took note in the Aghānī of several references to Abu'l-'Atāhiya having worn the white woollen cloak of the ṣūfiya[55]. There was no hint in the akhbār that the poet belonged to a wider ṣūfī organisation, and the problem was also raised in chapter III as to whether the wearing of this cloak by Abu'l-'Atāhiya was a sign of a vow of penitence on his part, as Massignon seems to suggest, or whether, in the poet's case, it was merely a sign of his renunciation of the world. We shall now endeavour to see whether any of these hints in the Aghānī are borne out by the evidence of the Kuhdiyāt.

There are no explicit references in the Kuhdiyāt to the ṣūfiya or to the wearing of the ṣūfī cloak, so any evidence in this direction will of necessity be implicit or indirect. One possible link between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and the ṣūfiya might be seen in the poem in

praise of the ascetic colony of 'Abbādān to which we have already referred[56].

May God send on 'Abbādān a widespread supply of rain,
For it has merit both newly-won and from of old.
May he strengthen those who are established there as ascetics,
For I do not see any of them being willing to move from there.
When you go there you will meet only those who worship God,
Who have withdrawn from the world and invoke the name of God.
So honour those who have settled there under God's protection,
And honour 'Abbādān as an abode and a dwelling-place.[57]

It is difficult to decide whether this is simply a pièce d'occasion or whether it reflects a visit paid by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to 'Abbādān and expressing his sincere admiration for the communal life of the ascetic community of the city. If it were the latter, then this short poem might reveal a connection (how close it is not possible to say) with the ascetic community of 'Abbādān. This, however, is the only tenuous hint of any link between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and any ṣūfī organisation as such. There is, in the Zuhdiyāt, a poem which is reputed to be based on a saying of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī[58], a famous early mystic who practised as his rule of life a total renunciation of everything perishable in the world[59]. The words of Ḥasan, identical in all editions of the Zuhdiyāt, are as follows: 'O son of Adam, you are a prisoner in the world. You are content with its passing pleasures, with its transitory attractions and with its wealth which will vanish. But do not amass sins for yourself and wealth for your relatives. For when you die, you remain burdened

with your sins,but your relatives are burdened with the wealth.' Reputedly inspired by those words,Abu'l-'Atāhiya composed the following:

You have left your wealth as an inheritance for your heirs.
Would that I know what wealth has left for you!
The relatives you leave behind you are in happy circumstances,
But how will circumstances stand with you after you have left them?
They have become bored with weeping,and not a single one weeps for you now.
All that they do is talk and discuss at length the inheritance.

The connection between this poem and the words of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī is not,however,a particularly close one. Ḥasan's saying has provided perhaps the initial inspiration,but the third line,which expresses the cynical attitude of those who inherit the wealth,goes well beyond anything expressed by Ḥasan. Again,the contrast between the sins which a man takes with him after death and the wealth which he leaves behind him is less felicitously expressed in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's verse than it is in Ḥasan's prose. All in all,the poem tends towards banality,and Abu'l-'Atāhiya has expressed this kind of idea better elsewhere[60]. But even if we accept the supposed connection between this poem and the saying of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī,this does not prove a personal link between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and a follow-ascetic. According to Massignon,Ḥasan died in 728 A.D.[61], some twenty years before Abu'l-'Atāhiya was born. There is no need even to suppose a connection between the poet and a group of Ḥasan-inspired ascetics,for,again according to Massignon[62],individual sayings of Ḥasan's (logia) were

transmitted after the manner of prophetic traditions and were presumably fairly widely known, at least amongst those sympathetic to Ḥasan's ascetic teachings. Massignon mentions a later edition of his sayings shortly after 815, an editorial activity well within Abu'l-'Atāhiya's lifetime[63]. All that could be deduced from this connection, if it is authentic, is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was sympathetic to ascetic teaching, that he knew of the collected sayings of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī at least and that he was perhaps aware of entering into an ascetic heritage from the past.

So far, then, we have been unable to prove any certain connection between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and any organised ṣūfī movement, and we have noted only a possible awareness on the poet's part that he was entering into an ascetic heritage. We referred in chapter III to Massignon's suggestion that the wearing of the ṣūfī cloak in the first three centuries of the hijra was the sign of an individual vow of penitence rather than a monastic uniform[64], and we noted, on that occasion, that there was no indication of 'penitence' as such in the akhbār. We might include at this point an examination of the apparent contradiction in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's character, a contradiction which arises out of his professed asceticism on the one hand and, on the other, the accusations of hypocrisy in his practice of it which were directed at him by Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī, as well as his amassing of wealth without making any constructive use of it to help the community at large[65]. We shall examine, then, the question of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's penitence and, at the same time, consider whether or not it can be regarded as sincere.

In the preceding chapter we have already indicated the part played by repentance as the first step in a man's spiritual journey back to God[66]. It is difficult to conceive that the religious philosophy expounded in the Zuhdiyāt is not founded on some kind of personal experience of the spiritual states which it describes, and there are, indeed, a few passages which would indicate that Abu'l-'Atāhiya had a personal awareness of repentance. He expresses his longing for it in words which remind us of the situation of St. Augustine about four hundred years earlier:

I have no excuse! Old age has already arrived.
Would that I knew when I would repent.[67]

In a poem in which Abu'l-'Atāhiya expresses his awareness of the imminence of death and judgment, he ends by asking for God's forgiveness:

So be gracious to me, on the basis of a repentance
which is pleasing to you,
O thou who art exalted and gracious and beneficent.[68]

There is no reason to doubt the poet's sincerity in passages of this nature, but in spite of his sincerity he is aware of the dangers of false repentance.

You repent of your sins when you are ill,
But return to them when you recover.
When misfortune attacks you, you weep,
But you are worse than before when you are strong again.
From how many a sorrow has (God) delivered you,
And how many an affliction has he removed from you
when you were tried.
How many a sin has he covered up for you,
Although you were openly forbidden it all your life.
Do you not fear your approach to death
While you are in the toils of sin?
You forgot your Lord's generous mercy towards you,[69]
And are neither anxious nor afraid.

He is equally aware that he does not always derive the full advantage which he might from his repentance and his subsequent state of grace:

It is as though I saw my soul sent with sighs of contrition
Although I was not taking the full profit of my conversion.[70]

It may be that some people deduced from passages like the last two that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's repentance was insincere and superficial. Whatever the reason, attacks were directed against him, and of these attacks the poet was undoubtedly aware, even composing a special poem addressed to those who doubted his sincerity.

Say to him who is puzzled at
The sincerity of my return and my words:
How many a turning aside there is after love,
How many a (frivolous) passion after seriousness.
How often we have seen this,
How frequently among men.[71]

In these lines Abu'l-'Atāhiya admits that his present life may not always match up to what he would have it be. He may, at times, have turned aside from the high seriousness of his first conversion and have pursued those things which he wished to renounce. But surely that is a common state among men and should not cast doubt on the sincerity of the repentance he professed and of the conversion he claimed to have experienced. He admits a possible inconsistency between his practice and his profession, but he is not alone among men in having such an inconsistency.

It was this kind of inconsistency with which Ibrāhīm b. al-Mahdī charged him, and we noted also the inconsistency between his professed asceticism and the

numerous stories in the Aghānī of his amassing of wealth. With regard to the latter, one wonders if one can really give them much credence. There are many passages in the Zuhdiyāt where the poet speaks of the proper use of wealth and of what really comprises true wealth. The best use of wealth, he says, is to spend it and use it up in obedience to God, in other words to give it to the poor, to spend it in support of the outspread of Islam through the jihād etc.[72] He condemns those who refuse to make use of their wealth to help others in need[73]. True wealth and lasting treasure are described in various terms: they are to be found in self-denial[74], in giving away what one possesses[75] and in what one has 'sent ahead', that is good works and other meritorious deeds which will figure on the credit side of one's account on the day of judgment[76]. True wealth is a spiritual commodity[77] which comprises patience[78], contentment[79], piety[80] and placing one's hope confidently in God[81]. This may, of course, be the expression of an ideal on Abu'l-'Atāhiya's part. We have noted his admission of a possible inconsistency between his practice and his profession, and this seems to be brought out fairly sharply in

I am the one who forbids yet does what
He forbids to others, and thus acts unjustly.[82]

The poet is honest enough to set this confession in the context of a poem in which he warns men not to be thus inconsistent. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's self-awareness is likewise revealed in at least two other passages.

I have renounced the world and yet I desire it.
I am aware that my desire is mingled with my renunciation.
I have accustomed my soul to a persistent habit
Which is very difficult for me now to break.

My will is that of a madman and my reason that of
someone who is incapable.
If my reason were only in a healthy state, then
my will would be too.
If my planting were good, then its fruit would
be good too.
If that which is within me were in a healthy state, then
what appears on the surface would be too.[83]

I have tricks at my disposal for the pursuit of
all my desires.
I use them against the world and aim them at her.
I say to my soul when she complains of constraint:
It is as though she and I were already in the
constraint of the grave.
I have in me a contrariness which resists the good,
Which diverts me from it even when that is what
I intended.[84]

The first of these passages expresses once again Abu'l-'Atāhiya's awareness of an inconsistency within himself. With regard to the second, Nescher points to the contradiction between the first and the second lines[85], but seems unaware that this is a contradiction which lies within the poet's character and that it is, in a sense, explained in the third line.

From the evidence which we have been examining, it is clear that there was an inconsistency between Abu'l-'Atāhiya's profession of asceticism and his practice of it. But he was aware of that inconsistency and was careful to warn men not to follow his example in that respect. We have also noted that it would seem likely that he had a personal experience of 'penitence', and we have seen no reason to doubt the sincerity of his expression of that experience. In so far, then, as he had such an experience, we can explain his wearing of the ṣūfī cloak along the

lines suggested by Massignon, namely that in the early period of Islam the wearing of such a cloak was not a monastic uniform but the outward expression of an individual vow of penitence. In this respect, then, we can probably associate Abu'l-'Atāhiya with the early ascetic aspect of the ṣūfiya.

If we return to that expression in the Aghānī, taḥrīm al-maḥāsib which, according to Massignon, was one of the 'particularities rituelles propres aux mystiques' and which he defined as the right of renouncing earning one's living by a trade, of living in perpetual pilgrimage and of begging[86], we find that there is very little evidence in the Zuhdiyāt for or against Abu'l-'Atāhiya's actually having held that view. One should, perhaps, not place undue emphasis on the positive aspect of Massignon's definition (i.e., pilgrimage and begging) since the phrase taḥrīm al-maḥāsib is essentially negative and refers only to the prohibition of indulging in trade for profit. There are, indeed, not a few passages in the Zuhdiyāt where Abu'l-'Atāhiya appears to disapprove of begging. True zuhd comes only from a renunciation of the practice of begging[87], and begging is variously described as a loss of face[88] and humiliation[89]. It is probable, of course, that those passages refer to the importunate soliciting of gifts from those in positions of authority rather than to the asking for a means of livelihood because one has taken a vow which forbids one to earn one's living in the normal way. There is a glorification of poverty in the famous line

If you want to see the noblest man of all mankind,
Then look at a king in the guise of a poor man.[90]

We should note that the final word of this line, miskīn, has the basic sense of 'poor' and only has a possible 'begging' connotation because the man who is miskīn is so poor that he is obliged to beg. This is not the technical root for 'begging', which is s'l[91]. It is in this line that Goldziher saw a reference to the Buddha legend[92] and Guillaume a concealed attachment to the cause of the Shī'ite imāms which was strong in al-Kūfa[93]. Both of these interpretations would appear to be laying too great an emphasis on the literal meaning of the word miskīn. It is more probable that the line is little more than a glorification of poverty, that is, if you look at a miskīn, you will see someone who is as noble as a king, indeed the noblest of all mankind. If we accept that in this line Abu'l-'Atāhiya is glorifying poverty for its own sake, we can connect this idea with several other indications in the same field of thought in the Zuhdiyāt. There is, for example, his commendation of the virtue of ya's (renunciation)[94], and the logical conclusion of his attitude to wealth is that poverty with respect to worldly possessions is more desirable than riches. We have also noted in chapter I how Abu'l-'Atāhiya left the pottery business which he and his brother ran, and we suggested there that this was perhaps to give more time to his poetry[95]. It may be, however, that he did so because of his desire to renounce the earning of his living by means of a trade and to devote himself to a life of renunciation and poverty.

There is no hint in the Zuhdiyāt of mystical experiences in the normally accepted sense of that term, no hint of ecstatic trances or mystical union with God.

There is nothing in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's use of language which approaches the use made of it among the ṣūfiya. We have already noted that his concept of knowledge ('ilm) would dissociate him from them, and we have quoted Vajda's conclusion along similar lines with regard to his use of the term yaqīn[96]. All in all, there is no evidence to connect Abu'l-'Atāhiya with the ecstatic side of the ṣūfiya, but from the evidence which we have just been examining, the following conclusions seem possible. There is the possibility that Abu'l-'Atāhiya had some kind of connection (though of what kind it is not possible to say) with the ascetic community in 'Abbādān and that he was aware of having had ascetic predecessors within the Islamic community as a whole. It would seem likely that he had had at some stage in his life an experience of penitence and conversion, and although his life after that experience may not always have matched up to the ideal to which he gives expression (and the poet himself was aware of this inconsistency), there seems to be no reason to doubt the sincerity and reality of that experience. It may be that this experience of penitence would explain his wearing of the ṣūfī cloak which is attested in the Aghānī. It is possible that he glorified poverty for its own sake and that his renunciation of his share in the pottery business was connected with the prohibition taḥrīm al-makāsib which was associated with the early mystics. Our conclusion would be that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was an ascetic who renounced the world and its possessions and who wore the ṣūfī cloak as an outward symbol of his penitence and renunciation. There is no question of ecstaticism or mysticism (in the normally

accepted sense of that term) is Abu'l-'Atāhiya, and he is in no wise to be connected with the ecstatic side of mysticism such as was being practised in Baghdad at roughly this very period by a mystic like al-Muḥāsibī (781-857 A.D.). In this respect, Abu'l-'Atāhiya stands outside the main stream of the ṣufiya as that movement was to be developed through later centuries. He is primarily an ascetic and as such is to be associated with the early development of the ṣufiya, with an aspect of it which, even in his day, was already being outstripped.

There remains one final point to be considered within the field of reference of this chapter. In the chapter devoted to the life of the poet, we noted that his decision to adopt an ascetic way of life possibly occurred within the period 800-809, with the proviso that it may, more plausibly, have occurred a little earlier[97]. There we also discussed the possibility of a connection between Abu'l-'Atāhiya's conversion and the social injustices of his own early life as well as the insecurity of his life as a court poet. It remains now to see whether, on the evidence of the Zuhdiyāt, any further light can be thrown on this question. We have already examined, in chapter V, the religious philosophy of the Zuhdiyāt, what we might call the fruits of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's penitence and conversion, and we have also considered in some detail, in this present chapter, the nature of this change in the poet. There was, as we have observed, a certain inconsistency between the ideals to which he gives expression in the Zuhdiyāt and the kind of life which the poet lived even after his conversion, but we have seen no need to question the sincerity of his

repentance or the reality of his conversion. The most that we can do now will be to attempt to decide what brought about this change in his life. The impossibility of imposing any kind of chronological development on the Zuhdiyāt means that we are unable to say that certain poems preceded this event and reveal to us the poet's spiritual pilgrimage towards it and that certain poems followed it and show us something of its nature and of how it affected his subsequent life. There is, indeed, little in the Zuhdiyāt which would cause us to add anything of any substance to the possible reasons for the change which we suggested in chapter I[98]. The only point which we might adduce as a further contributory factor in his conversion is the pessimistic view of man and the world which finds expression in the Zuhdiyāt and on which we have already commented[99]. This pessimism and disillusionment with mankind and the world is expressed in perhaps its most poignant form in a poem with which we shall conclude this chapter. Added to the poet's possible awareness of social injustices in his own life and in the life of the times in which he lived[100] and to his possible sense of insecurity in the kind of life which he lived at the caliphal court in Baghdād, this disillusionment with mankind and the world, a disillusionment which one might imagine to have been a growing one, may provide sufficient explanation of his decision to lead a life of renunciation and asceticism. It is certainly the only explanation which we can offer on the basis of the evidence available to us.

I looked for a friend in God both in the west and
in the east,

But I was unable to find one in spite of the multitude of men.
So I remained alone amongst them, patient
In the face of faithlessness on their part, of boredom and of insincerity.
I see that they decide against me to their own advantage,
And that none of them look after me or take pity on me.
How many a friend have I experienced as kindly,
But when he appeared to be easily swallowed, my throat was choked with him.
I saw nothing like the world and my appraisal of its inhabitants,
But they did not reveal themselves to me as either faithful or sincere.
And I saw nothing at all in the world
More noble or exalted than patience for the truth.[101]

CHAPTER VII

THE ZUHDIYAT AS POETRY

The main concern of the present study of the Zuhdiyat of Abu'l-'Atahiya has been with the religious ideas which find expression in the Zuhdiyat and with the position of the poet vis-à-vis the religious currents and movements of his day. We can not, however, ignore the fact that the Zuhdiyat are not religious treatises, but first and foremost poems, and something must now be said, however briefly, of the Zuhdiyat as poetry.

In the course of the akhbar of Abu'l-'Atahiya as recorded in the Aghani, Abu'l-Faraj incorporates a number of traditions which deal with what one might call the 'poetics' of Abu'l-'Atahiya and with criticisms of his poetry by others. Of many of these traditions little use can be made, since some say simply that Abu'l-'Atahiya was 'the most poetic of men (or 'of men and jinn')'[1], while others select one or more lines of his poetry as being the best of his poems but provide no reasons why the choice is made of these particular lines[2]. Some of these traditions recorded by Abu'l-Faraj are, however, of some interest in so far as they mention certain criteria on which the judgments given are based. In one of them[3], which records a discussion about poetry between Abu'l-'Atahiya and Ibn Abu'l-Abyad (who claims to be the author of muhdiyat), it is stated by Abu'l-'Atahiya that if poetry is not modelled on the masters of the past or on those of the present (such as Bashshar)[4], then the poet should aim, above all, at simplicity of language. This is particularly

the case with ascetic poetry, with the poetry of zuhd, for zuhd is a way of life which is not that of those who might be skilled in penetrating the complexities of recherché language but is a way of life with appeal to more ordinary people. It is to them that the poetry of zuhd must appeal, and its language must be chosen accordingly. Two other traditions in the Aghānī also make simplicity of language one of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's main criteria for poetry. He denies that he has ever had recourse to obscure or inelegant turns of phrase in his verse[5]. When, on one occasion, Salm al-Khāsir criticises one of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poems because its language is common and everyday (sūqiya), the poet replies that it is that very factor which appeals to him in that particular poem[6]. From these traditions, then, it would appear that one of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's criteria for poetry, particularly ascetic poetry, is that the language in which it is written should be free from obscure expressions. The language should, rather, be simple and uncomplicated so that the appeal of such poetry to the common people should not be hindered. This is, indeed, the impression conveyed by a reading of the Zuhdiyāt. Seldom does one need to have recourse to the larger dictionaries in order to find the meaning of a word or expression. This is not, of course, to suggest that there are no obscurities at all in the Zuhdiyāt. Rescher, for example, professes himself to be baffled by a line from time to time, and occasionally he will suggest an emendation in order to make sense of a passage. The fact that his suggested emendations are sometimes confirmed by the text of the 1964 edition of the Dīwān, indicates that many of the comparatively few

obscurities in the Zuhdiyāt may well be due to the state of the printed text, and this underlines the need for a critical edition of the poems. It is the simplicity of language in the Zuhdiyāt which has occasioned the suggestion that with them a suitable beginning might be made in the reading of Arabic poetry by those who have completed a course of elementary grammar[7].

A similar kind of judgment is passed in yet another tradition, a tradition which, however, goes beyond the simplicity of language to say something about the construction of the poems[8]. A certain Muṣ'ab b. 'Abdallah, commenting on one of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poems[9], says, 'These verses are plain and true. There is nothing redundant in them nor anything lacking. The learned man and the unlearned man both acknowledge the truth of them.' Here, besides the simplicity of language, what is commended is both the economy of construction and the high ethico-religious content. The ethico-religious content of the Zuhdiyāt we have already discussed in earlier chapters. With regard to the economy of construction, we notice another passage in the Aghānī where the point is made that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's verse is incapable of being translated without extensive paraphrasing[10]. It will be clear from a comparison between the Arabic text of the Zuhdiyāt and some at least of the translations which we have offered in earlier chapters that this is often the case. It is clear also from Nöldeke's translation, and the places where he has most obvious resort to paraphrasing he has noted in his footnotes, either citing there a more literal translation[11] or else noting that the translation which

he offers is 'free'[12]. This is, of course, a truism which applies to the attempt to translate any poetry, where the effect is obtained by the overtones which words possess over and above their plain meaning, but it is a point which deserves to be made, in so far as it underlines the fact that the Zuhdiyat are poems in their own right and not simply source material for the study of the religious ideas of the poet. The economy of construction is also, to a certain extent, evident from the fact that the vast majority of the poems do not sum to more than ten lines in length, many of them even being of only two or three lines. Only two are as long as forty-seven lines[13]. We shall return to this theme briefly again when we examine some of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's stylistic devices.

Another point which is made in that passage from which we have taken this last comment on the economy of structure in the Zuhdiyat is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's verse has a very strong emotional appeal to the human understanding[14]. To this we shall also return towards the end of this chapter when we try to make some assessment of the Zuhdiyat. We noted earlier how many of the traditions in the Aghani simply refer to Abu'l-'Atāhiya as the most poetic of men or of men and jinn, but lest the impression is given that the Aghani traditions contain nothing but unadulterated praise, we should perhaps notice that there are at least two which seem to be aware that there are weaknesses and blemishes to be found in the Zuhdiyat as well. One of them compares Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry to the courtyard of a royal palace. In such a courtyard one can find jewels and gold, it is true, but also to be found there are earth and pieces of pottery

and fruit kernels[15]. It is just possible that this comparison refers to the contrast between recherché language and everyday language, but more likely, on balance, that it refers to the contrast between good poetry and poetry which is mundane and pedestrian. This interpretation is confirmed by the fact that there is no doubt as to the meaning intended by the second of these two traditions[16]. In it a discussion takes place as to whether Abu Nuwās or Abu'l-'Atāhiya is the greater poet. While the two protagonists fail to agree on the answer, they are both agreed that in every poem of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's there are excellent and mediocre and weak qualities. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's poetry is not of a uniform excellence throughout, but the excellent qualities in his poetry are greater or more numerous than in the poetry of anyone else. Although in neither of these two traditions do we find any examples given to show what precisely was intended by the aesthetic judgments which are being passed in them on the poetry of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, we can see, nevertheless, that Abu'l-Faraj has not simply gathered together those traditions which extol Abu'l-'Atāhiya in somewhat flowery language, but has also included some hints at least that in the generation or two after the poet's death there were those who admired him greatly and those who felt more or less critical towards his verse. We shall try in this chapter to come to some kind of balanced judgment on him.

In his study of Abu Nuwās, Ewald Wagner has a section on the metres used by the poet[17]. He notes, amongst other things, the fact that Abu Nuwās utilises fourteen different metres and points to Bräunlich's figure, for the classical

period, of an average of four to six metres for any individual poet, with a poet such as Imru'l-Qais utilising the unusually high figure of ten[18]. Abu'l-'Atāhiya has an equally wide range, making use of no fewer than thirteen different metres. Wagner has ranged the metres used by Abu Nuwās in order of frequency and has compared them with the comparative statistics given by Bräunlich for the classical period. He deduces from, for example, the fact that Abu Nuwās's favourite metre was the sarī' and that only 1% of the poems of the classical period were written in that metre, that Abu Nuwās 'hebt sich...scharf von der klassischen Dichtung ab'[19]. If such a criterion is a valid one, then Abu'l-'Atāhiya also reveals a fairly sharp break with the classical period. His favourite metre is kāmil (27.6% in the Zuhdiyāt as opposed to 9% in the classical period), followed by ṭawīl (22.1% : 41%). These are the two metres most frequently used in the Zuhdiyāt. The next two in order of preference stand close together in frequency of usage but some way behind the two favourites. They are basīṭ (11.5% : 15%) and wāfir (10.3% : 7%). Then follow khafīf (7.9% : 2.2%), munsarih (6.2% : 2.1%) and, both with equal percentages both in the Zuhdiyāt and in classical poetry, rajaz and sarī' (5.5% : 1%). Mutaqārib is used about as frequently by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as by the classical poets (3.6% : 4%) and the last four metres do not occur frequently at all: madīd (1.7%), hazaj (1.2%), rajaz (1.1%) and mujtath (0.8%). We can see, then, that Abu'l-'Atāhiya makes use of a wider range of metres than do the poets of the classical period, and in this sense he is far from conservative. Wagner makes the point that Abu Nuwās frequently marries a

particular metre to a particular type of poem, and the frequency counts are not uniform in the different types of poems[20]. In the case of Abu'l-'Atāhiya we find this range in only one type of poem, namely zuhdiyāt. It would have been interesting to compare the range of metric use in Abu Nuwās's zuhdiyāt, but Wagner gives no separate figures for this particular class of poetry. Abu'l-'Atāhiya's range of metric usage helps to alleviate the tendency to monotony which is inherent in his constantly recurring themes.

One of the Aghānī traditions reports Abu'l-'Atāhiya as having said on one occasion that he was greater than 'arūd, than the science of metrics[21]. This same tradition has a sentence added to it to the effect that Abu'l-'Atāhiya used metres which were not within the classical scheme of 'arūd, presumably the scheme elaborated by al-Khalīl[22]. This is also mentioned by Guillaume, who states that Abu'l-'Atāhiya was among the first to use muzdawij rhyming verse, that he invented the metre mudāri' and that he used a metre consisting of eight long syllables[23]. None of these statements have I been able to confirm from the Zuhdiyāt.

In discussing the images which occur in the Zuhdiyāt, it is obviously impossible to mention every single one or even every single example of the more significant ones. But there do seem to be certain images which are of particular interest in the case of Abu'l-'Atāhiya.

One particularly significant type of imagery, in view of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's connection with 'cupping' both through his own early practice of it and through the fact

that his father before him was also a 'cupper' (ḥajjām), is a type which makes extensive use of medical terminology. Various things are described as illnesses, most frequently death itself[24], but also greed or avarice[25], anxiety[26] and love of leadership (a power complex?)[27]. No medicament is able to ward off the fatal illness that is death[28], but the illness of anxiety (ḥamm) is curable by means of certainty (yaqīn) in so far as it is caused by lack of certainty (ẓunūn, literally 'opinions')[29]. A power complex in a man is an illness which destroys 'religion' (dīn) in him, with all that that word implies with regard both to cultic practices and to the social implications of those practices[30]. The revolting sight of a dirty scab is used to illustrate the revulsion with which the poet withdraws from the world[31]. The poet advises men to heal by means of gentleness the wounds inflicted by lack of thought and feeling[32]. He is amazed at those who wish to cure men of an illness from which they themselves are suffering, at those who, for example, advise others to fear God yet fail to do so themselves[33], and he underlines the fact that even the healthiest among us carry the germs of disease within us[34]. Linked with this last concept is the idea that no matter how much we seek to improve our character, there is always a hidden illness within us which keeps us from carrying out our resolve[35], a hidden illness which can be inflamed and exacerbated by association with people of low moral calibre[36]. The fact that Abu'l-'Atāhiya makes such extensive use of this medical imagery[37] would perhaps indicate that it came fairly readily to his mind and would also lend confirmation to what is stated in his akhbār. It would seem to be

clear that he had some kind of association with the medical profession, and there is no reason to approach with undue scepticism the facts as they are stated in the akhbār, namely that the poet's father was a 'cupper' and that he himself also at some stage practised the art of 'cupping'.

Yet another range of images may well reflect an early occupation of the poet; what we might call 'commercial' imagery may well stem from the fact that Abu'l-'Atāhiya along with his brother once ran a flourishing pottery business in al-Kūfa[38]. Worldly possessions are regarded primarily as a loan which eventually will have to be repaid[39], though there is at least one passage which describes the world (that is, almost certainly, worldly possessions) as being bought and sold in order to satisfy a man's desires[40]. A number of lines use the imagery of 'profit' and 'loss' to depict, for the most part, the two contrasting possibilities of salvation and damnation in the world to come[41]. This particular use of the 'commercial' imagery rests upon yet another use, namely the description of the practice of good works as a 'commerce' or 'trade' which is indulged in with a view to 'transferring' the profitable balance to the future life[42]. While the use of this particular class of imagery is not extensive[43], there is perhaps a possible significance in it in view of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's commercial occupation during his early life in al-Kūfa.

There is a fairly extensive series of images used in the Zuhdiyāt all of which can be connected with travel. Although there is neither the need nor the possibility of connecting this class of imagery with the personal life of the poet, we note that the Aghānī has at least one

reference to Abu'l-'Atāhiya's having been on the pilgrimage to Mecca[44]. The actual image of the 'journey' is used for the most part to describe death[45], but sometimes the 'journey' seems to be rather that time which elapses between the moment of death and the moment of judgment[46]. Death is sometimes described simply as the 'road' to somewhere else[47], and sometimes, too, it is life rather than death which is described as the 'journey'[48]. Men are likened to a 'caravan' whose resting place is the world[49]. This image involves the idea of the transitoriness of the world and of men, the lack of permanence in human relationships, in that chance has thrown men together for a brief space, like fellow travellers in a caravan, and soon they will separate once again. The image of the 'horse' is used in a variety of ways. For the most part it seems to be used to describe a man's way of life or his character[50], but sometimes it is used to refer to time[51]. There is a reference to the 'steeds of destruction'[52], and patience (ṣabr) is described as 'the best-saddled horse for salvation', coping, as it does, successfully, both with flat and with stony ground, that is with whatever difficulties life may throw up in its path[53]. One might mention as an aside at this point that, on one occasion, life (or the world) is compared to a racecourse where men can wager, the outcome being either Paradise or Hell[54]. The image of the 'drinking place' or 'watering place' is used to depict death, sometimes explicitly[55], sometimes implicitly[56]. The main concepts implied by the use of this particular image is the inevitability and abhorrent nature of death (the drinking place is unavoidable and

bitter and horrid to the taste) or also the fact that there is no return from death (there is no return or ascent from this particular drinking place once one has descended to it). There is one passage which implies that there is a return from the drinking place - the descent to the drinking place (or, perhaps, the drinking place itself - mawrid) is loathesome and tainted, and the return from it (maṣdar) is 'narrow' (ḍank)[57]. This would seem to refer to the resurrection and last judgment, implying that there are few who pass through that judgment to attain to Paradise. Closely associated with the image of the 'drinking place' is that of the 'cisterns of death' (ḥiyāḍ al-manāyā or ḥiyāḍ al-mawt). In the three passages where this expression occurs, it is used to depict the grave[58]. Although in the first of these three, the terminology of 'descent' and 'ascent' is used, we should note that such terminology is not restricted to the image of the drinking place, but is used elsewhere of the 'graves' (qubūr)[59]. Along the same line of thought, life and death are both compared to a wādī - the wādī of life is a place where there is no permanence for those who sojourn in it, while the wādī of death is thickly populated[60]. The image of the 'mirage' is used for the most part to depict the world in general and the pleasant things of life in particular[61], but it is also used to describe the desires of the human heart[62] and as an image for the emptiness and transience of kingly power[63].

A frequently used image in the Zuhdiyāt, one which is still connected with the theme of travel, is that of the viaticum or 'provisions for the journey' (verb zawwada,

noun زاد). The 'viaticum' is necessary for the 'journey' of death, the journey which leads towards God and the life beyond death[64]; it is to be acquired as provision against the 'terrors of the day of judgment'[65]. This 'viaticum' is to be acquired in the course of one's life in this world[66], and a warning is given to the effect that although one may gather one's 'viaticum' in this world, there is always the danger that one might frittor it away through a lack of seriousness[67]. There are various definitions of the 'viaticum' in the Zuhdiyat. The most frequent one is that it is the fear of God[68], but one finds it defined also as obedience to God[69] and contentment (قنوع)[70]. Wealth can be converted into a 'viaticum'[71], the implication being that if wealth is used as God would have it used, then it becomes something with which one can confidently approach the 'terrors of the day of judgment'. This is what leads to the definition of the 'viaticum' which best sums it up, namely '(good) deeds' or 'good works'[72]. The 'viaticum' most suited for the journey of death, the journey which culminates in judgment, is that which can be counted to one's credit on that day of judgment[73].

Yet another group of images falls under the general heading of what we might call rural or agricultural, three of them dealing with animals and three with plants and farming. Death, as we have already noted[74], is referred to as 'drover death'[75], where the word used, حادٍ, means 'a camel drover'. The image of 'cattle grazing on a meadow' is used to refer to men living out their life in this world. Its primary use is quite neutral, being,

in itself, neither pejorative nor commendatory[76]. By and large, however, this image acquires a largely pejorative connotation through having associated with it certain qualificatory words. Men, for example, are said to be 'grazing blindly'[77], and the pasture is a 'pasture of deception'[78] or 'pastures of error and temptation'[79]. The use of this image depicts men lulled into a false sense of security in the world, likened to cattle grazing on a peaceful, grassy meadow. The concept of 'milking a camel' is used to portray man's experience of life. The image is that of someone having 'milked the udders of time' and having found the milk bitter and impure[80]. Occasionally, however, the use of the image is different. Those who milk their camels only to keep the cream for themselves are those who are self-centred and greedy[81]. Someone who grazes a camel whose milk is bitter is a man who is preoccupied with the things of this world[82]. A curse is pronounced on the world by the words 'when the world is milked, may there be no milk'[83]. The observation that life-spans and the decrees of fate eventually run their full course is expressed by the analogy of udders which are milked dry when once the total quantity of milk which they contain has been extracted[84]. Finally, the idea that death appears in milk which has been milked from a milch camel expresses the notion that bitterness and catastrophe may well lurk beneath the surface of circumstances which appear benevolent and supremely attractive[85].

The image of the 'sowing of seed' is combined with that of 'harvest' to indicate both the fatality that lies behind life in this world and life in the hereafter

and the inevitability of a judgment based on one's actions in this life. The 'harvest' is a harvest of destruction[86] or a harvest reaped by death[87]. The inevitability of this is brought out when it is stated that seeds are sown for the harvest[88] and that the sower reaps only what he has sown[89]. The image and what it depicts becomes quite explicit in a passage where it is said that if a man sows good seed, then it grows and is productive, but that if a man sows thistles, he can never expect to gather good fruit from them[90]. The same idea is also brought out by a similar image, that of the branch and the fruit - a good plant produces good fruit, so good thoughts produce good actions[91]. Slightly different is the image of the root and the branch, where the root depicts the inner character of a man and the branch his outward actions[92]. The image of the mill depicts the unceasing, inevitable round of fate[93]. It is the 'mill of fate' or the 'mill of time' or the 'mill of death', but always the import is the same. The turning of the mill is unceasing; men are heedless in spite of the clear warnings of the mill's work in former generations.

There is a group of images which do not fall into any particular category, but most of which are used to depict death. Some of the images which we have just noted refer to death, for example, the 'journey' and the 'drover', and in an earlier chapter we enumerated the various images which are used to depict death in the Zuhdiyāt[94]. The image of the 'arrow' is used of death[95] and of time or fate with much the same significance[96]. But the 'arrow' is also used as the image of ignorance[97] and to depict the swift flashing past of warnings[98]. Death is also

depicted as having a gleaming or a drawn sword in his hand[99]. A frequent image used of death is that death has a cup from which all men must inevitably drink[100]. Obviously linked with this idea of the 'cup of death' from which men drink is the phrase 'drunkenness of death' (sakrat al-mawt). The idea of 'drunkenness' in itself is used to describe man's blindness and folly in the world (it is, indeed, the world which 'intoxicates' men)[101]. The phrase 'drunkenness of death'[102] is intended to indicate that the mental state induced in a man by the approach of death is analogous to that induced by over-indulgence in alcohol. Lane[103] defines sakrat al-mawt by means of phrases such as 'confusion of the intellect', 'deprives the sufferer of reason' and 'oppressive sensation and disturbance of the mind', and Rescher translates it, rather weakly and losing the force of the image, as 'Todesangste' or 'Todespein'[104].

Having reviewed some of the more distinctive uses of imagery in the Zuhdiyat, we might mention briefly a few of his most characteristic stylistic devices. The very nature of the Semitic languages lends itself to the use of assonance and word-play as a stylistic device. To this Arabic is no exception, and examples of this may be found on almost every page of the Zuhdiyat. A few examples will suffice. Page 48 line 17 contains an example of a play on words between dīn='religion' and dayyān='judge' (with two forms of the verb dāna='to judge' in the second half of the line). In 50.18 and 51.1 we have, in two consecutive lines of the same poem, the root hwn used in two different senses. Form IV is used in the first of them in the sense of 'despise, disdain' and form II in

the second in the sense of 'make easy'. In the 1964 edition, 97.5, we find the word 'izām used in two completely different senses, first as the plural of 'aẓīm='great' and then as the plural of 'aẓm='bone'. The examples could be multiplied.

Again there are numerous examples of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's use of repetition as a rhetorical device, and a few instances of the more extended use of it will suffice. In 22.2-6 each line of the poem begins with the words subḥāna rabbika, and the effect is heightened by the use of subḥānahu as the beginning of the second hemistich of the middle line. In 45.7-12 we find that the first line of this section of the poem begins with the word falillāh and each subsequent line with wallillāh. In 76.11-77.3 we find that each line (with two exceptions in 76.15-16) begins with the phrase ayyu yawmin (yawmu). In 229.7-13 every line (and the second hemistich of every line with the exception of the last two) begins with the words waman lumnā. The frequent use of the word mm is notable in 243.7-16, not only at the beginning of every line in the poem with the exception of the last, but also at the beginning of the second hemistich of every line with the exception of the third and the last. Lastly, in 300.17-301.4 each line of the poem begins with the words la'abkiyannu. Obviously the mere enumeration of these examples of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's use of repetition can not convey the effect which they have in context, but the mention of them indicates the use which the poet makes of them for rhetorical effect.

We have already noted the fact that in the Zuhdiyāt Abu'l-'Atāhiya makes fairly frequent use of the stylistic

device of paradox[105], and we suggested there the possibility that the use of this particular device may have had some connection with the poet's conception of a duality in the world and in man's relationship and reaction to the world. The following are some of the more notable examples of the use of paradox in the Zuhdiyat.

There are some who are dead and yet still live
in the memory,
While others are alive and well and yet, as far as men are
concerned, are already dead.[106]

You have collected worldly goods, you have gathered
and been given,
But your real possessions are what you have given
away and dispensed.[107]

O you whose decrease is your increase,
If you do not decrease, you can not increase.[108]

The defects of time are revealed and hidden,
Time has within it now a promise, now a threat.[109]

How near is death in the world and how far!
How bitter is the world's fruit and how sweet![110]

There is really no possibility of deciding whether Abu'l-'Atahiya's use of paradox has any connection with his view of duality in the world or not. But it can be noted as a stylistic device which produces some of the most memorable lines in the Zuhdiyat.

Closely linked with it is the epigrammatic quality of some of the lines in the Zuhdiyat. Many of those lines which one would classify as examples of paradox have a terseness about them which imprints them on the memory. There are other lines, too, which are not examples of paradox but which have a proverb-like depth to them.

This will be clear from many of the passages which we have cited in earlier chapters, but the following might be quoted here as examples of this characteristic type of expression in the Zuhdiyāt.

The good is the best thing you can cling to.
Evil is the worst thing you can taste.[111]

When the shepherd lays his breast on the ground,
Then the flock is entitled to stray.[112]

Loneliness is better for a man
Than an evil companion.
But a good companion is better
For a man than sitting alone.[113]

The world's sweetness will 'tomorrow'
No doubt be bitter, and its bitterness sweet.[114]

The terseness and compactness of these and other similar lines is additional evidence of the economy of construction in the Zuhdiyāt to which we have referred above.

If one were to read the Zuhdiyāt straight through from beginning to end, there can be no doubt but that the constant reiteration of the limited number of themes would pall after a very short time. The Zuhdiyāt are, rather, an anthology into which one should dip from time to time, reading only a few poems at a sitting. Only in these circumstances are their finest qualities able to emerge; only in this way is one able to appreciate the rhetorical heights to which many of them rise and the sound warnings which many of them contain. Such is the nature of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's theme, that very seldom does the poet's own personality shine through the generalities which find expression in the Zuhdiyāt. Those poems which are expressed in more personal terms are those which

stand out. The poem in 119.13-120.1, which contains a very strong note of personal sincerity and devotion, is one of these. So, too, is the poem in 124.2-125.1, a deeply moving elegy on the death of a friend who has been in a position of wealth and power. It is impossible, and indeed unnecessary, to identify the subject of this poem, but in it we are aware of the poet's deeply felt emotion.

Two of the longer poems from near the beginning of the collected Zuhdiyāt might be cited as fairly typical examples of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's style. The first (4.11-6.13) is on the theme of contentment (qu'), a concept which we have discussed earlier[115], and is one of the finest poems among the Zuhdiyāt. The second (7.7-9.12), with its effective use of repetition, is another fine poem, this time on the subject of death and of the warning contained in the fact of death for those who are still alive.

So many of the poems in the Zuhdiyāt are so short that one sometimes suspects them of being fragments of larger wholes[116]. It is only in some of the longer poems such as these last two which we have cited that the full depth and sonority of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's style can emerge. It is by means of a close acquaintance with poems like these and with poems in which the more personal note emerges that we can begin to appreciate something of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's true worth as a poet.

CONCLUSION

The principal aim of the present thesis has been to examine the religious ideas of the poet Abu'l-'Atāhiya, to set him within the context of the religious movements of his day and to attempt, on the evidence of his Zuhdiyāt, to reach some conclusions with regard to his personal religious beliefs. Those conclusions have been reached in chapter VI of the present work. By and large, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was perfectly orthodox in his religious beliefs. He was not a zindīq, if by that we mean a Manichean, and we have found little evidence of dualistic convictions in the Zuhdiyāt. He believed that the Qur'ān was uncreated and eternal and did not accept the thesis that the caliph was divinely guided and divinely preserved from error. There are no grounds, in the Zuhdiyāt, for associating him either with the mu'tazila or with the shī'a. There was little evidence to associate him with any ṣūfī organisation, but there is just the possibility that he was aware of entering into an ascetic heritage from the past. He stands outside the main stream of the ṣūfiya, but is probably to be associated with its earlier ascetic aspect, an aspect which was to pass into the background with the extraordinary flourishing of the ecstatic and mystical side of the ṣūfiya, a side which was already developing, if not even well developed, in the poet's own day. Such are the conclusions which it seems possible to draw, with regard to the poet's religious beliefs, on the basis of his religious poetry.

The appraisal of the Zuhdiyāt as poetry in chapter VII was an attempt not to overlook the fact that these religious poems are, after all, poems and not theological

treatises. Abu'l-'Atāhiya is one of the major poets of the early 'Abbāsid period, and this not merely because of the enormous volume of still extant poetry. He is a major poet of the period, and yet he stands apart from the rest of his contemporaries among the poets largely because of the content of his work. As we noted in the Introduction, the bulk of what is extant is his Zuhdiyāt, and this was all that was ever systematically collected. The remainder of his Dīwān has still to be definitively gathered together from the encyclopaedias, anthologies and dictionaries where it is found quoted, and a rounded appraisal of Abu'l-'Atāhiya as a poet will need to take this non-zuhdiyāt material into consideration.

Perhaps Abu'l-'Atāhiya's main importance, however, resides in the fact that he represents a watershed in the development of Arabic religious poetry. Gustave von Grunebaum[1] provided a sketch, but no more than a sketch, of the early development of this type of poetry in Arabic, a development which culminated in Abu'l-'Atāhiya. The filling out of this sketch would be an important and essential contribution to the history of this particular genre within Arabic literature. Von Grunebaum concludes his article with the words, 'Since the stream of religious poetry never again dried up, he (Abu'l-'Atāhiya) may justly be considered an anticipation of the future as well'[2], and elsewhere the poet has been called 'the father of Arabic religious poetry'[3]. If some scholar with a voluminous knowledge of Arabic religious poetry could provide a survey of the genre for the period after Abu'l-'Atāhiya, then it might be possible to see what later developments in the genre owe to this particular poet,

and it could be seen whether his place in the total history of the genre before and after his own day is what it is said to be, both a culmination and an anticipation.

On several occasions in the body of the thesis, I have drawn attention to the lack of a critical edition of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's Dīwān. In spite of the work of Faiqal, which came to my notice too late for me to use and which has been discussed in a footnote to the Introduction[4], it would still appear that such an edition is a desideratum. Faiqal's edition, on first perusal, seems in danger of being too subjective, it probably does not utilise all of the available manuscript material and betrays a lack of differentiation with regard to the printed editions from the Catholic Press.

Thus, there is still work to be done before Abu'l-'Atāhiya can be assigned his definitive place within Arabic literature as a whole. There is still the need for a definitive edition of the Dīwān and the need for a full study of him, taking the non-zuhdiyāt type of poetry into consideration, two tasks which need the care and the labour which Ewald Wagner, for example, has expended on Abu'l-'Atāhiya's contemporary Abu Nuwās[5]. Once Abu'l-'Atāhiya has been thus fully studied in his own right and once his true position has been assessed within the history of the specific genre of religious poetry in Arabic literature before and after his time, only then can it be hazarded that little further study needs to be done on him. My hope is that this thesis has contributed something at least, however little, towards the illumination of what Wagner has called the 'trotz aller Vorarbeiten noch auf grosse Strecken dunklen Gebiet der arabischen Literaturgeschichte'[6].

Literaturgeschichte, 6.

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N O T E S

The page and line numbers referring to the Dīwān are, except where otherwise stated, to the first edition of 1887. In calculating the line number, I have included in the reckoning the editorial headings to the individual poems and the traditions which are sometimes recorded in the Dīwān and also, on those pages where it applies, the chapter headings. This also applies to the references to the 1964 edition. The Aghānī references are, again except where otherwise stated, to the Dār al-Kutub edition and in the main to Vol. IV which contains (pp. 1-112) the akhbār of Abu'l-'Atāhiya.

INTRODUCTION

1. Haywood and Nahmad, A New Arabic Grammar, p. 509, under the heading 'Guide to Further Study'.
2. E.I.[1], Vol. I, p. 79 by J. Oestrup and E.I.[2], Vol. I, pp. 107-8 by A. Guillaume.
3. Principally Krachkovsky (in Z.V.O., 18, pp. 73-112), Léon (in I.C., 3, pp. 631-650) and Magnin (in I.B.L.A., 11, pp. 47-56). The article by Rescher (in M.S.K.M., 28, pp. 356-369) is a lengthy review article of the third edition, by the Catholic Press of Beirut in 1909, of the Dīwān.
4. Mohamed Abdessalem, Les Zuhdiyāt d'Abu'l-'Atāhiya (Thèse complémentaire for the Doctorat d'Etat, Paris, 1964).
5. Najah Attar, Abu'l-'Atāhiya: His Life and His Poetry (Edinburgh Ph.D. Thesis, 1958). This thesis has two chapters, one on the poet's life (111 pages) and the other on his Dīwān (94 pages). There are two appendices, the first dealing with the chain of narrators in the Aghānī and similar works (29 pages), the second collating the published text with the Damascus manuscript (36 pages).
6. M.A.A. El-Kafrawy, A Critical Study of the Poetry of Ismā'īl b. al-Qāsim known as Abu'l-'Atāhiya (London Ph.D. Thesis, 1951). The bulk of this thesis is concerned with attempting to show that Abu'l-'Atāhiya suffered from an inferiority complex, a split personality, mental illness and a hatred of 'the luxury and glory of the haughty aristocracy'. It is mainly concerned with the poet's life and thought and only deals specifically with his poetry in the final chapter. It is marred by an undue resort to sheer speculation.

7. E.I.^{2}, Vol. I, p.108.

8. Died 1071 A.D. On him see Brockelmann, Geschichte, I, 439f. (Supplement, I, 628f.) and Watt, History of Islamic Spain, pp.131-3.

9. Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur (1st edition), Vol. I, pp.77-8.

10. E.I.^{2}, Vol. I, p.108. This description by Guillaume applies to all the editions by the Catholic Press.

11. In W.Z.K.M., 28, pp.356-369.

12. O.Rescher, Der Diwan des Abu'l-'Atahija. The publication date is 1928, but according to the Introduction, it had occupied him for almost 15 years.

13. I.B.L.A., Vol. 11 (1948).

14. Al-Anwar al-Zahiya fi Diwan Abi'l-'Atahiya, literally 'the flowery blossoms in the Diwan of Abu'l-'Atahiya'.

15. W.Z.K.M., Vol. 28. In view, however, of the large number of variants between the printed text and the Damascus MS noted by Mrs Attar (op. cit., pp.266-301), one wonders to what extent, if any, the Damascus MS was utilised by the editor of the Catholic Press edition. From time to time in the 1887 edition, reference is made to variant readings 'in a manuscript' (fi nuskha; see, e.g., p.21; on p.20 several manuscripts are implied), but there is never any indication as to what manuscript is meant.

16. Z.V.O., Vol. 18, pp.79-112.

17. Since putting this thesis into its final form, I have come across yet another edition of Abu'l-'Atahiya's Diwan. From its title (Abu'l-'Atahiya: Ash'aruhu wa'akhbaruhu) it appears to be a critical biography of the poet, but it is, in fact, a critical edition of

the Dīwān by Dr Shukrī Faiṣal, published by the Damascus University Press in 1965. Its contents are as follows:- 1) Editor's Preface (pp.3-21); 2) Preface of Ibn 'Abd al-Barr (pp.23-38); 3) Zuhdiyyāt (pp.1-443); 4) the urjūza (pp.444-466); 5) an alphabet of the poet found at the conclusion of the Tübingen MS (pp.467-9); 6) the rest of the poet's Dīwān (pp.471-680). The volume concludes with a series of additional notes (pp.681-711), a Bibliography (pp.713-7) and a list of corrections (pp.718-720).

The edition is based principally on two manuscripts (both of which, of course, contain only the Zuhdiyyāt), one (in the Ẓāhiriyya Library of Damascus) is late and incomplete, the other (in Tübingen, formerly in Berlin) is complete and older than the Damascus one. The Tubingen MS is dated 603 A.H. (1206/7 A.D.). The editor also takes into consideration the printed edition by the Catholic Press. One presumes that he is using the first edition (which he gives as 1886), but we have already noted, on the basis of Rescher's translation, that there are variations between the text published in 1887 (which we have used here as standard) and that published in 1909 (which was the text from which Rescher made his translation). The 1966 Beirut edition is dismissed in a footnote (p.10 of the editor's preface) as being of dubious worth.

I have not, of course, been able to use this edition in the thesis, but from what I have seen of it, it seems to be a painstaking piece of work. We should perhaps note, however, that no mention is made of the St. Petersburg MS mentioned by Rescher, nor of the

Beirut one which Rescher presumes to have been, in part, the basis of the Catholic Press text. The additional point might also be made that the text of Faisal's edition is an eclectic text, i.e. he does not print one MS, noting the variants in the rest of his sources, but compiles what he, presumably, considers to be the best text drawing on his various sources by means of the exercise of his editorial judgment. By way of example of this process, one might quote the opening words of line 12 of the first poem in the Muhdiyāt. The Catholic Press text (both the 1887 version and, on the evidence of Rescher's translation, the 1909 one) and the 1964 edition read, 'How many a man who grazes on the pastures (riyāḍ) of life', and Faisal notes that the Damascus MS and the Catholic Press text both read riyāḍ. He notes that the Tübingen MS reads ẓilāl ('error'), and thus his sources are divided 2:1 in favour of riyāḍ. In his text, however, he prints ẓilāl ('shadows, shelters') without appearing to have any MS evidence or support whatever for such a reading. This smacks of editorial subjectivism, and it is doubtful whether this kind of process is likely, in the long run, to provide a really satisfactory edition. It will require a long and intimate use of this edition before it can finally be decided whether this is the critical edition for which we have been looking.

18. Ewald Wagner, Abū Nuwās, p.1.

CHAPTER I

1. Ta'rīkh Baghdād, VI, 260 - 130 A.H.=747/8 A.D., the year 130 A.H. beginning on 11th September, 747; Ibn Khallikān, I, 101.
2. Aghānī, IV, 4.
3. Ibid., IV, 110.
4. Ibid., IV, 4 note 4.
5. Wafayāt, I, 100.
6. Ta'rīkh Baghdād, VI, 250.
7. IV, 3.
8. History of the Arabs, 149.
9. Cf. article on 'Ayn al-Tamr in E.I.^{2}, I by Saleh A. El-Ali, where abundant references are given, especially to Tabarī, I, 2064.
10. Ta'rīkh Baghdād, VI, 250.
11. Cf. Ibn Khallikān, I, 100 where he says that Abu'l-'Atāhiya grew up (nasha'a) in al-Kūfa.
12. Aghānī, IV, 1.
13. Ibid., IV, 3. Note the literal translation of the last phrase: 'In it was his birth place and his place of growing up and his desert', the latter a reference, perhaps, to the fact that an Arab's education was incomplete until he had spent a period with the Bedouin of the desert.
14. Aghānī, IV, 5.
15. Ibid., IV, 1.
16. Ibid., IV, 3.
17. E.I.^{2}, I, article 'Anaza by E. Graf.
18. Aghānī, IV, 3.
19. Ibid., IV, 4.
20. Ibid., IV, 3.

21. Ibid.,IV,8-9.

22. Ibid.,IV,3.

23. Ibid.,IV,2.

24. Ibid.,IV,8.

25. Ibid.,IV,75.

26. Ibid.,IV,48.

27. Op. cit.,p.64.

28. Murūj al-Dhahab,VIII,86.

29. Aghānī,IV,1. The Arabic yalmūn zanāniat al-mukhannithīn is a strange phrase. It occurs again Aghānī,IV,7. The only meaning one can give to it is that Abu'l-'Atāhiya associated with effeminate people. These seem to have been quite a distinct group. H.G. Farmer,in The Legacy of Islam,p.362,sees the Arab minstrel of later times, with his long hair,painted face and hands and bright colours,as a relic of this mukhannithīn class.

30. Cf. Wagner,Abu Nuwās,pp.244f. His interest in Abu Nuwās was initially because the latter,his cousin, was a young boy of an age and a sex towards which Wālība was attracted.

31. Aghānī,IV,10; Aghānī (Būlāq edition),XVI,249.

32. E.I.^{2},I,article on Abu'l-'Atāhiya.

33. Aghānī,IV,47: Abu Habagh refers to Abu'l-'Atāhiya as 'This effeminate one'.

Ibid.,IV,72: Dankhūr b. Nurd,asked about the most talented poet of the time,says it is 'the effeminate one of Baghdād' meaning Abu'l-'Atāhiya.

Ibid.,IV,75: Salm al-Khāsir,commenting on a remark by al-Ma'mūn to the effect that greed destroys religion and manliness in a man,says that

the Caliph was hinting at 'the effeminate potter, the *zindīq*'.

We should note that the points of view of Abu Habash and Salm al-Khāsir are not unbiased, but are the opinions of people suffering from jealousy of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's ready proficiency and social success. The opinion of Bughshūr is interesting in that it would seem to indicate that Abu'l-'Atāhiya's reputation in this matter still clung to him after his settlement in Baghdād.

34. *Aghānī*, IV, 7.

35. *Ibid.*, IV, 75.

36. *Ibid.*, IV, 47. It is made clear that this happened when he was still comparatively unknown as a poet. Not only would the young men have recognised him and have known his poetry had he had a reputation as a poet (they even make fun of him), but the Arabic states explicitly that this happened *fī awwali amrihi*.

37. *Ibid.*, IV, 8-9.

38. *Ibid.* and cf. above p.10.

39. The verses in question are found in the *Dīwān*, p.246, not, however, as part of a long *qasīda*, but simply in the form and content in which they occur in the *Aghānī* (IV, 47).

40. *Aghānī*, IV, 9.

41. *Ibid.*, IV, 24.

42. We should, perhaps, note that, according to the *Aghānī*, the love affair with Su'dā is purely incidental to the account of the strained relations between Abu'l-'Atāhiya and members of the b. Ma'n family. The fact that Abu'l-'Atāhiya and 'Abdullah b. Ma'n both loved

her is simply the cause of the break in relations which, we presume, must have been close before this incident caused the rupture.

43. For example, he owned young male slaves (Aghānī, XV, 23) whom he orders to commit indecency with Abu'l-'Atāhiya. Mrs Attar (op.cit., p.61) states that the two brothers b. Ma'n 'represented the highest social class in the community' at al-Kūfa. She gives no source reference for this statement, and I have been unable to verify it.

44. Aghānī, XV, 24.

45. Ibid., 25.

46. Ibid., 23.

47. Ibid., 35.

48. Ibid., 3.

49. Ibid., 26.

50. Ibid., 27.

51. Ibid., 24. The phrase in question is thumma attahamahā Abu'l-'Atāhiya bi'nnisā', literally 'then Abu'l-'Atāhiya suspected her of women'. The poem is as follows:-

O you women who live far off in west and east,
Awake! Is not cohabitation more efficacious than
a great distance?
Awake! Bread with seasoning is indeed to be desired,
But bread with bread (i.e. bread alone) is not easily
swallowed in the throat.
I see you repairing patched garments with their like,
But what sensible person repairs patched garments
with patched garments?
Is the mortar of any use without its pestle
When one day it is required to do fine work?

The poem occurs again, with its accompanying story of Su'dā loved both by Abu'l-'Atāhiya and by 'Abdullah b. Ma'n, but with one significant difference in the

story, in Aghānī (Būlāq), XIV, 56. In place of the phrase indicating Abu'l-'Atāhiya's suspicion of Su'dā's lesbianism, we find the phrase 'and Abu'l-'Atāhiya was passionately fond of women (*wakāna Abu'l-'Atāhiya mughraman bi'nnisā'*)'. Working on this statement as the origin of the poem and even taking one's first impression of the poem, we might suggest that it speaks of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's feeling spurned by the woman he loves, with the imagery of the poem suggesting that things which are, at the moment, separate should normally and more desirously belong together, e.g. bread and seasoning, mortar and pestle. However, on a second reading, we discover that the poem is indeed talking about lesbianism and that the text of the story in Aghānī XV is surely the correct one. The poem is addressed, in the first instance, to more than one woman, not just to Su'dā, the supposed object of the poet's love. The images can also, more naturally, be taken to refer to lesbianism, since they imply the association of like with like - bread with bread, and patched garments being repaired with patched garments. The poem states that such practices are not natural and that what is required is something complementary - bread with seasoning, patched garments with, presumably, a proper piece of cloth. The mortar and pestle is an obvious sexual symbol, the mortar, symbol of the female sexual organ, requiring the pestle, a phallic symbol, to perform its proper function. Again, the root *shq*, which gives the words 'great distance' (line 1b) and 'patched garments' (line 3), is the one which also gives the words *musāḥaqa* and *siḥāq*, meaning 'lesbianism' and

sahiqa 'a lesbian'. Lane indicates that these meanings are 'post-classical', though what exactly he means by that is not clear. Although line 3 can not be translated other than with the meaning we have given, surely the linguistic overtones of the root are there. We might even, perhaps, translate line 4b as 'Is not normal heterosexual intercourse more efficacious than lesbianism?', although the meaning 'lesbianism' is not attested for the form of shq found there.

It is strange that the two stories in the Aghani should differ so markedly at the crucial point. Although the isnads are different, they both go back to Muhammad b. Abi'l-'Atahiya.

52. Aghani, IV, 26.

53. Ibid., 88.

54. E.g. Ibid., 3, 5, etc.

55. Ibid., 88. The names are found also in Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, 497 and in Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 105. It is perhaps significant that the editor of the Dar al-Kutub edition of the Aghani puts the names in inverted commas, as though casting doubt on their authenticity. Mrs Attar (op.cit., p.109) says, 'The names are certainly strange and it is possible that they were invented at the time when Abu'l-'Atahiya was accused of being an unbeliever. But perhaps they were in fact common names at the time.' They would certainly seem to have been given in a fit of religious fervour, but it is impossible, from our sources, to say whether they were in fact the real names of the girls or not. The fact that they occur in three separate sources would, however, suggest that Abu'l-'Atahiya had, in fact, at least these two daughters.

56. Aghānī, IV, 110.

57. Ibid., 29-31. The reference to his wife is on 30, line 17.

58. Ibid., 32, 40.

59. Annales (ed. de Goeje), XII, 491.

60. Aghānī, IV, 32.

61. Ibid., 48.

62. Ibid., 56.

63. Ibid., 72. The verses in question are in lines 13-17. They are found also in the Dīwān, among the Zuhdiyāt, p. 198.

64. Ibid., 33.

65. Ibid., 59.

66. Ibid., 40.

67. Ibid., 92.

68. Wafayāt, I, 102-3.

69. De Slane's translation of the Wafayāt, I, 210, note 22.

70. Annales, XII, 2516f.

71. Aghānī, IV, 92: lamma taraktu qawla'l-shi'r
Wafayāt, I, 102: wakāna Abu'l-'Atāhiya taraka qawla'l-shi'r.

72. Aghānī, IV, 69: wataraka...'l-qawla fī'l-ghazal. The poet was imprisoned on this occasion also. We shall discuss the exact dating of this incident later. It is said to have happened when al-Rashīd went to al-Raqqa.

73. The sources are full of it, though, mercifully, not the Aghānī. Abu'l-Faraj says in his introductory note to his account of the akhbār that the books which tell of how he celebrated her in his poems are legion. He feels that because the theme has been treated so fully elsewhere he can safely ignore it in his own work. He does say, however, that he will give an account of this famous love affair elsewhere 'if God wills'. That

promise was never fulfilled. Among the sources which deal with the subject one might mention the following:-

a) Ibn Khallikān, Wafayāt, I, 100ff.

b) al-Mas'ūdī, Murūj al-Dhahab, VI, 240-250, 333f., VII, 83ff.

c) Khaṭīb, Ta'rīkh Baghdād, VI, 254-7.

d) Ibn al-Mu'tazz, Ṭabaqāt, 106-7.

e) Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, 498.

It is, perhaps, significant that the edition of the Dīwān by the Jesuit Press of Beirut contains none of the poems on 'Utba so copiously cited in the sources.

74. Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, 498; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 105. Mas'ūdī (VI, 241) says that she was the slave of al-Khaizurān, but, on p. 248 of the same volume, suggests that she belonged to Nā'ṭa before belonging to al-Khaizurān. Ibn Khallikān (Wafayāt, I, 100) says that she belonged to al-Mahdī, but if she were his wife's slave then she could, technically speaking, be said to belong to al-Mahdī's household.

75. Ta'rīkh Baghdād, VI, 254-6.

76. Aghānī, XV, 41, line 14.

77. Thus, e.g., Ibn Qutaiba, Shi'r, 498; Ibn al-Mu'tazz, 106.

78. Aghānī, XV, 40.

79. Wafayāt, I, 102. Cf. Aghānī, XV, 92 where, as we have already noted, the Aghānī is wrong in placing this episode in al-Rashīd's reign.

80. Aghānī, XV, 60-62.

81. Ibid., 54.

82. Ibid., 55f.

83. History of the Arabs, 303.

84. Aghānī, XV, 42.

85. Ibid., 43.

86. Ibid.,102-4.

87. Ibid.,104-5.

88. Ibid.,106. With regard to al-Rashīd's weeping at this poem,we might note that in the account which tells of how Abu'l-'Atāhiya composed a song for the sailors of the Caliph's boat to sing to him,we are told that al-Rashīd wept easily when listening to a sermon or homily (Aghānī,IV,104,lines 4-5). Both editions of the Dīwān give this story (1867,p.192; 1964,p.230) but with a single line of verse which is not one of the three quoted in the Aghānī. The poem which immediately follows in both editions of the Dīwān is one of 8 lines, of which the 3 lines in the Aghānī are (with some textual variants which do not greatly alter the sense) lines 1,2 and 4.

89. Ibid.,97 is a specific mention of this fact,though most of the stories which link Abu'l-'Atāhiya with al-Rashīd reveal implicitly the high regard in which the latter held the poet.

90. The Emperor in question can have been either Constantine VI (785-797 A.D.) or Nicephorus I (802-811),the only two Emperors whose reigns overlapped that of al-Rashīd. It can hardly have been the Empress Irene who occupied the throne between 797 and 802,since the Aghānī reference implies a male. There is no indication as to which of the two it was,and it is doubtful,in any case,how much historical reliance can be placed on the Aghānī story.

91. Aghānī,IV,105.

92. Ibid.,68.

93. Ibid.,74-5.

94. Ibid.,92-3.

95. So Tabarī,Annales,III,2916f. See note 70.

96. Aghānī,IV,107-9.

97. Ibid.,109,line 1. Mukhāriq was a singer,a pupil of Ibrāhīm al-Mauṣilī. He was a slave but had been freed by Hārūn al-Rashīd at whose court he was a great favourite. He was a close friend of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's. See H.G. Farmer,A History of Arabian Music,p.121.

98. Ibid.,73-4. The poem in praise of al-Rashīd occurs again in the Aghānī (IV,68) in a fuller and slightly different form and in a context showing Abu'l-'Atāhiya reciting it,surrounded by a crowd of people. We have suggested above that this is perhaps some indication of Abu'l-'Atāhiya's popularity with ordinary people at this period,though it is interesting to note that he is reciting to the crowd,not one of his Zuhdiyāt (which might be expected to have a more popular appeal) but this poem in praise of the Caliph.

99. Ibid.,4. See above p.7.

100. Ibid.,110.

101. Ibid.,47-8.

102. Ibid.,64-5.

103. Ibid.,51 and 105-6.

104. Ibid.,29-31.

105. Ibid.,68-9.

106. Ibid.,74.

107. Ibid.,73-4. This is the story in which the reason for Abu'l-'Atāhiya's refusal to compose poetry is said to be the death of Mūsā al-Hādī. See above pp.30f.

108. Ja'far b. Yahya's execution in 803 A.D. really marked the end of Barmakid power. The rest of the family

were imprisoned. Both Yahya, the father, and his other distinguished son, al-Fadl, died in prison.

109. Annales, III, 649.

110. Aghānī, IV, 63-4.

111. Ibid., 7.

112. Ibid., 7 and 8.

113. E.I.[1], IV, 682 col.b.

114. Aghānī, IV, 89.

115. See Hitti, History of the Arabs, 341 with its reference to Tabarī, Annales, III, 950.

116. Aghānī, IV, 65-6. The text of the Aghānī has 'the year after al-Amīn Muhammad was recognised (as Caliph)', that is 810 A.D. The story is quoted, with the verses in question, in the 1963 edition of the Dīwān (p.68), and the text there has 'the year before al-Amīn Muhammad was recognised (as Caliph)', that is 808 A.D., the last year of al-Rashīd's reign. On the face of it, the Aghānī text seems the more likely way of giving a date. Had the reference been to the year 808, we should have expected it to refer to the reigning Caliph, al-Rashīd.

117. Aghānī, IV, 49-50.

118. Ibid., 52-3.

119. Ibid., 52.

120. Dīwān, pp. 53f.

121. See above p. 38.

122. Aghānī, IV, 62-3.

123. Ibid., 91.

124. Ibid., 59.

125. Ibid., 79-80.

126. Ibid., 89.

127. Ibid., 109.

128. Ibid., 109-110. See Dīwān, 269.7-14.

129. Ibid., 110. See above p.16.

130. Ibid., 111-2.

131. Shi'r, 501.

132. Aghānī, IV, 111.

133. Ibid., 111.

134. Ibid., 111; Mas'ūdī, VIII, 81; Ibn Khallikān, I, 101; al-Baghdādī, VI, 260; Tabarī, III, 1093.

135. Aghānī, IV, 110; Ibn Khallikān, I, 101; al-Baghdādī, VI, 260.

136. Aghānī, IV, 111. See Dīwān, 260.9-12.

CHAPTER IX

1. Aghānī, IV, 6.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid., 90.
4. Ibid., 6.
5. Ibid., 8.
6. Excerpta Historicorum Arabicorum, II, 547.
7. Aghānī, IV, 51.
8. Ibid., 35.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid., 102, line 4.
12. Ibid., 29, 69, 68, 76, 78. 82., 100, 52.
13. See above pp.292f.
14. The edition of the Kitāb al-Milal wa'l-Nihal by W. Cureton (London, 1846) does not indicate any systematic ordering of the whole work (cf. the Preface, p.ix), but see the table of contents in the German translation by Haarbrücker (Religionsparteien und Philosophenschulen, 2 Vols., Halle, 1850).
15. See preceding note.
16. For the mu'tazila generally, besides the works cited in the following notes, see the following:-
D.B. Macdonald, The Development of Muslim Theology etc.
A.S. Tritton, Muslim Theology
W.M. Watt, Free Will and Predestination
W.M. Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology
17. E.I.[1], III, 787b-793a.
18. Ibid., loc. cit., 789c.
19. W.M. Watt, 'Political Attitudes' in J.R.A.S., 1963, pp.38-57. See esp. p.43 with Watt's acknowledgment

with regard to the distinction of parties to Louis Massignon, Al-Hallāj, 204.

20. Cf. Watt, 'Political Attitudes', p.48.

21. On Abu'l-Hudhayl see the article by Nyberg, E.I.^{2}, I, 127b-129a. On Bishr b. al-Mu'tamir see the article by Nader in ibid., 1249a-1244a.

22. See above pp.46f. and Aghānī, IV, 6.

23. On Ḥusaīn see the article by Horten in E.I.^{1}, IV, 739b.

24. See note 21 above.

25. E.I.^{2}, I, 1245b.

26. Aghānī, IV, 6.

27. See Watt, Free Will and Predestination, pp.96-99.

28. See above p.48 and note 14 above.

29. Al-Shahrastānī, 39f. and Haarbrücker, I, 80f.

30. Free Will and Predestination, 98.

31. Al-Shahrastānī, 75ff. and Haarbrücker, I, 119ff.

32. See above p.48 and note 14.

33. Al-Shahrastānī, 77 line 1.

34. Op. cit., 138ff. See esp. p.138 line 12 where he mentions, as one of the heresies of the Shīʿa, that known as taqṭīʿ, the heresy which is characteristic of the mughāliya.

35. Al-Shahrastānī, 77.

36. Ibid.

37. For a discussion of the five principles see Watt, Islamic Philosophy and Theology, pp.63ff.

38. 'Traditionists' is a name given by Watt to the body of devout men who studied and discussed Qur'ānic interpretation and the interpretation of points of Islamic law, recognising that it is probably, strictly speaking, incorrect to call these men 'Traditionists'

before c. 850 when the sunna of the Prophet became crystallised. See 'Political Attitudes', pp. 42, 54.

39. 'Les Hadiqa en peys d'Islam' in R.E.O., XVIX, 1937, p. 282.

40. See article on Abu'l-Hudhayl cited in note 22 above.

41. On the shī'a generally see the works listed above in note 36.

42. See Hitti, History of the Arabs, 439 with his reference to al-Ya'qūbī, Ta'rīkh, II, 504-5.

43. See Watt's statement (Islamic Philosophy and Theology, 25), 'Umayyad Shī'ism is a veritable chaos of ideas and attitudes'. Cf. also ibid., 30.

44. For the following discussion see Watt, Philosophy and Theology, 52ff. and the same writer's 'The Rāfidites: a preliminary study' in Oriens (1963).

45. Cf. Watt, 'Political Attitudes', p. 48, footnote 2. Cf. the same writer's Philosophy and Theology, 99f.

46. R. Strothmann, article on Zaid b. 'Alī in E.I.[1], IV, 1193a-1194a. This statement is made on 1193b.

47. Tritton, Muslim Theology, 30.

48. M. Guidi, La Lotta fra l'Islam e il Nestorianesimo (Rome, 1927) is an edition and translation of this text. See also the discussion of this book by Nyberg in O.L., Vol. 32 (1929), cols. 429-441

49. Watt, Philosophy and Theology, 100.

50. Tritton, Muslim Theology, 30 and Watt, Philosophy and Theology, 25.

51. Aghānī, IV, 6. For the Nuṭfiya or Dateriten see Tritton, Muslim Theology, 32.

52. Muslim Theology, 23, citing 'Uyūn al-Akhbār, II, 148.

53. See above pp. 52ff.

54. Vajda, 'Les Zindiqs' in R.S.O., XVII, 222.

55. Ibid., 221

56. On zandaqa generally see the following:-
Louis Massignon, Article Zindīq, in E.I.[2], IV, 1228a-1229a
Georges Vajda, 'Les Zindiqs en pays d'Islam' in R.S.O. XVII (1937), pp. 173-229.
See Widengren, Mani and Manichaeism.

57. For this and what follows cf. Massignon, E.I.[1], IV, 1228a.

58. Aghānī, IV, 7 and 35.

59. See, e.g., the story recounted in Mas'ūdī, VII, 12-16 which is quoted in extenso by Widengren, op. cit., 190-2. See also the reference in Vajda, op. cit., 184-5 who cites a narrative of similar vein concerning Abu Nuwās, quoting as his source, O. Rescher, Abriss der arabischen Literaturgeschichte, fascicle 4, pp. 18-19. This latter story is also found in Wagner, Abu Nuwās, 112-3.

60. Tabarī, Annales, III, 580, lines 9-15. Cited and translated by Vajda, op. cit., 190.

61. Op. cit., 190-1.

62. Massignon in E.I.[1], IV, 1228b.

63. It is the examination of this list which is the principle object of Vajda's article, see p. 174 of the article in question.

64. Fihrist, 394. In his article, Vajda has translated additional material as well, material found in the Fihrist, 394, 397. See Vajda, op. cit., 175-182.

65. Massignon in E.I.[1], IV, 1228b.

66. The person in question was 'Abd al-Karīm b. Abi'l-'Awjā. For the discussion concerning him see Vajda, op. cit., 193-6.

67. Vajda, *op. cit.*, 221.

68. *Ibid.*, 199.

69. *Aghānī*, XV, 34 where Mansūr b. 'Ammār accuses Abu'l-'Atāhiya of being a *zindīq* because in his poetry he fails to mention Paradise or Hell and mentions only death. As we shall see in the following chapter, this accusation is without foundation.

70. So Vajda, *op. cit.*, 202: 'Sa (Bahshar) vie dissolue nous interdit d'admettre qu'il ait pu avoir des relations sérieuses avec une religion aussi ascétique que le manichéisme.' The ecclesiastical organisation of Manichaeism was a two-fold one, believers being divided into two categories - the 'righteous' and the 'hearers'. The 'righteous' were the inner circle, and a fairly rigorous and ascetic discipline was imposed on them (see Widengren, *op. cit.*, 96ff.). The 'hearers', on the other hand, led completely normal lives, being required to observe only one fast day in the week (cf. Widengren, *op. cit.*, 98). There was, however, an undoubted ascetic tendency in Manichaeism, and Widengren (*op. cit.*, 25), having indicated that Mani was brought up within a Mandaean community in southern Babylonia, goes on to say, 'So Mandaism evidently had a trend which very forcibly enjoined an ascetic, continent life, and these were the circumstances in which Mani was bred.'

71. *Op. cit.*, 221. It should be noted that these indications are those of which the various people in the *Fihrist* list were most frequently accused. While it was these characterisation which caused the term *zindīq* to be applied to those theologians and poets, they are not

all of them characteristic of Manichaeism.

72. For this and what follows see Vajda, *op. cit.*, 221f.

73. See above pp.7f.

74. On Sufism generally, besides the general works already cited, see especially the two works by Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane* and *Le Passion d'al-Hallâj, martyre mystique de l'Islam*. There is also a discussion on the ascetic aspect of Sufism in Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam*, pp. 139-200.

75. Massignon, *Essai*, 131.

76. Abû Hâshim 'Uthmân b. Sharîq al-Kûfî al-Ṣûfî. See *Essai*, 132f. For a list of occurrences of 'le surnom individuel "al ṣoûfi" durant les trois premiers siècles'. See also Massignon's article *taṣawwuf* in *E.I.*[1], IV, 681b-685a, especially 681b: 'The name *ṣûfî*... is at first clearly confined to Kûfa.'

77. Massignon, *Essai*, 133.

78. See *Essai*, 147 where, under the general heading 'Ascètes de Koûfah', he gives the sub-heading 'Mystiques shî'ites (zoïdites)'.

79. See above p.46 and *Aghânî*, IV, 6.

80. See above p.61.

81. Massignon, *Essai*, 206.

82. *Ibid.*, 207.

83. *Ibid.*, 209.

84. For an admirable study of Abu Nuwâs, see the biography of him by Ewald Wagner. The *ghuddiyât* of Abu Nuwâs are discussed on pp.110-133 of that book.

85. See on this Goldziher's chapter entitled 'Askotismus

and Süfisme' in Vorlesungen,139-200.

86. See Essai,141: 'De l'an 40/660 à l'an 110/728,les cas d'ascèse se multiplient' and Ibid.,143: 'De l'année 80/699 à l'année 160/796,l'ascétisme musulman devient plus vigoureux et touffu'.

87. Essai,143.

88. Essai,144. For a study of these early preachers see Pedersen,'The Islamic Preacher' in Ignaz Goldziher Memorial Volume,Part I,pp.226-251.

89. Essai,169. On Hasan al-Basri generally,see the full treatment of him by Massignon,Essai,152-179.

90. Article tasawwuf in E.I.[1],IV,682b.

91. See above pp.37f.

CHAPTER XIX

1. For a discussion of zandaqa see above pp.63-66.
2. Aghānī, IV, 7.
3. Ibid., 35.
4. Cf. Vajda, op. cit., 183. Besides this reference to Hamdawaih in the Aghānī (IV, 7 and 35), one might also mention the reference to him in Ṭabarī, Annales, III, 522, where we are told that he was appointed ṣāḥib al-zanādiqa in the year 168 A.H. (784/5 A.D.).
5. See above p.8.
6. Aghānī, IV, 7-8.
7. Vajda, op. cit., 216, footnote 2. See also Widengren, Mani and Manichaeism, 55.
8. See below pp.74f.
9. Massignon, Essai, 208.
10. Ibid. Massignon refers to the Fihrist (ed. Flügel), p.184 (foot) where the titles of a number of his sermons (majālis) are listed. We should, perhaps, note that if the date which Massignon gives for his death, namely c. 840 A.D., is correct, then the end of text 5), which depicts Abu'l-'Atāhiya standing over Manṣūr's grave, is historically impossible, since, as we have seen above (p.45), the poet died in 826 A.D. The date 840 is also cited by de Slane in his translation of Ibn Khallikān (Vol.II, p.545, footnote 3). His source is 'Mirāt az-Zamān, MS No. 640, fol. 115 Nujūm'.
11. Aghānī, IV, 34.
12. Ibid., 51.
13. Ibid., 34-5.
14. Cf. Vajda, op. cit., 188.
15. Cf. Abid., 199 for a similar charge brought against

Baghshūr b. Burd.

16. See above p.72.

17. Essai,144. Massignon defines the qussāṣ as 'sermonnaires attaquant l'imagination par des descriptions eschatologiques'(loc. cit.). Pedersen (op. cit.) outlines the development of the term qāṣṣ especially pp.231f.

18. The title of this madīḥ by Manṣūr b. 'Ammār might be added to those listed in the Fihrist (p.184). The subject of it is 'the gnat'(al-ba'ūḍa) and this word actually occurs in one of the Zuhdiyāt:-

> In God's sight the world is not worth a gnat's wing
> Nor the value of the amount which a bird can swallow.
> (Dīwān,102,line 1).

It is unlikely that there is any connection between this line of verse and Manṣūr's sermon. In his translation of the Zuhdiyāt,Nesselhof indicates in a footnote (p.89) that this reference to a 'Mückenflügel' is 'ein Hadīth'. The ḥadīth 'In God's sight it is not worth a gnat's wing (in yazinu 'inda'llāh janāḥa ba'ūḍatin)' is cited by al-Bukhārī,Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Muslim b. Ḥajjāj and others. See Wensinck,Concordance, sub. voc. ba'ūḍa.

19. For a similar kind of charge brought against Baghshūr b. Burd,see Vajda,op. cit.,199.

20. Aghānī,IV,2 line 4. On this,cf. Vajda,op. cit.,217 footnote 3 where he says,'Il n'est pas inutile de faire observer ici que les critiques littéraires arabes se complaisaient à retrouver ces filiations reliant les éléments moraux ou didactiques de la poésie aux paroles des anciens sages...' This is with

particular regard to the tradition recorded in the Aghānī, IV, 44 where Abu'l-'Atāhiya is said to have borrowed certain ideas from the words pronounced by the philosophers over the coffin of Alexander the Great. Vajda's remarks on that passage are, to some extent, also relevant here.

21. See, for example, Dīwān, 3.1; 15.8-9; 16.6-7; 24.9,15; 29.15; 30.5,11; etc.

22. This is, of course, a direct reference to the poet's kunya, Abu'l-'Atāhiya, meaning 'father of craziness'. The word which we have translated as 'madman' here is 'atāhi.

23. Aghānī, IV, 101-2.

24. Ibid., 35. The version of this poem cited in the Dīwān (69.12-70.2) has an additional line between lines 3 and 4, namely, 'In every movement and in every rest, God has a witness.' The version in the Aghānī ends annahu wāhidu ('that he is One'), while the version in the Dīwān ends annahu'l-wāhidu ('that he is the Unique One').

25. See above text 5).

26. See above note 21.

27. For this apparently basic contradiction see below p.85. We might also note at this stage that, on the evidence of the Zuhdiyāt themselves, Abu'l-'Atāhiya was aware of this inconsistency between his preaching and his practice, of this dichotomy in his life. See Dīwān, 50.6:-

I have shown disdain towards the world, and yet my passions are strong;
I see that passion is mingled with my disdain.

28. See above pp.63-66.

29. See below on text 11),pp.81f.

30. On the mu'tazila see above pp.48-58.

31. Aghānī,IV,8.

32. Fragmenta Historicorum Arabicorum,II,547.

33. See above p.52 where we have noted that the doctrine that the Qur'ān was uncreated came gradually to be the orthodox position.

34. Aghānī,IV,6.

35. For a discussion of this doctrine and especially of the position of Thumāma b. Ashras see above pp.53f.

36. Aghānī,IV,6,a passage translated and discussed below as text 11). For a discussion of the term mujbir and the sect known as jabriyya see above pp.54f.

37. P.55.

38. For a discussion of mushabbiha see above pp.55f.

39. Aghānī,IV,80.

40. Ibid.,5-6.

41. On this see above p.80 and note 36.

42. For the zaidiyya see above pp.60-62 and for the butriyya branch of the zaidiyya,especially p.62.

43. Massignon,Al-Hallāj,780.

44. We shall return to this theme later.

45. This idea is found over and over again in the Zuhdiyāt and we shall return to it below. Cf. also the Mu'tazilite 'principle' of 'adl as discussed above p.56.

46. We shall discuss Abu'l-'Atāhiya's concept of knowledge ('ilm) in greater detail below. It is sufficient at this stage to indicate,for example,Dīwān,115.5 and 158.11-12,the latter a two-line poem defining 'ilm.

47. This is, of course, very similar to Manichean doctrine, which did not recognise the existence of two gods, teaching, rather, that there were two primary elements, God and Matter, cf. Widengren, op. cit., 43f. With regard to the Manichean teaching on the end of the world, cf. Widengren, op. cit., 68f., where he refers to the doctrine of the 'reinstatement of the two natures', with the point being made that the world of darkness will no longer be able to attack the world of light. Those two principles would continue their separate existences. This is very similar to what is said above of Abu'l-'Atāhiya, 'He used to assert that God would reduce everything to those two contrary substances before essences entirely ceased to exist.'

48. See above p.75 and the references to the Zuhdiyāt for the refutation of this charge contained in note 21.

49. See above text 3) and the discussion of it on pp.73f.

50. See above pp.76f.

51. See above pp.59f.

52. See above p.81.

53. See above p.50.

54. On Bishr and his views in this respect cf. above pp.51f.

55. E.g. in his view of the Qur'ān, for which see above pp.78f. and in his belief in predestination, for which see above pp.79f.

56. See above pp.79f.

57. See above p.82, a position which, as we have remarked in note 45, is verging towards the Mu'tazilite principle of *'adl*.

58. See above p.82.

59. See above pp.76f.

60. See above pp.80f.

61. See above p.82.

62. Aghānī, IV, 29, 52, 63, 68, 76, 78.

63. Massignon, Passed, 131.

64. Aghānī, IV, 63, 101.

65. See above text 6) and the discussion of it on p.77 and note 27.

66. Aghānī, IV, 16, 17, 95, 96, 99.

67. Ibid., 6.

CHAPTER IV

1. Dīwān, 3.11.
2. 15.4; 30.6.
3. 211.13.
4. 270.11
5. Cf. Rescher's translation and the accompanying footnote, p.250.
6. 47.11.
7. 258.7-17.
8. 245.15-17.
9. 181.15-182.2.
10. 119.13-120.1.
11. 85.7-14, reading in line 12 sa'ūn, as in Qur'ān 50.20, instead of sabūn. Cf. also 70.9-12.
12. 1964 edition, 16.2-6.
13. Cf. above.
14. Cf. above.
15. 264.13-14.
16. See above pp.63-66 and pp.70-78.
17. 48.17.
18. 55.7-8.
19. 62.16.
20. 151.10.
21. 193.12.
22. 216.9.
23. Cf. 7.85 and 95.8.
24. Cf. 59.51-55.
25. Cf. 96.14-17.
26. Cf. Bell, The Qur'ān, Vol. II, p.668, footnote 3.
27. Op. cit., Vol. I, pp.86f.
28. Op. cit., Vol. II, introduction to and notes on Surah

95,pp.665f. See also Bell,Introduction to the Qur'ān, pp.155ff. and,to a lesser extent,Tritton,Muslim Theology,pp.7-9. On the place of 'judgment' in Muhammad's early preaching see Watt,Muhammad at Mecca, pp.64ff.

29. 1.7. The second of the two lines quoted is not found in the text of the 1887 edition,but it follows the first in the 1964 edition,p.11,line 8.

30. The image of the 'journey' is frequently used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya to refer to the departure of man from this world. For reference and a fuller discussion of the image see pp.187f. below.

31. 5.9. The word zād (provision for life,viaticum) is another frequent image in the Zuhdiyāt,where,however, the word more often used is zād,and will also be discussed below. See pp.188f.

32. 56.15. Cf. also,for the identical thought,78.3; 81.4.

33. 51.13. For the image of the cup see below p.192.

34. 102.10-11.

35. 137.11.

36. 179.8. On zād see note 31 above.

37. See above,on this topic,p.55.

38. 139.13.

39. See above p.92.

40. 84.17.

41. 1964 edition,405.5-6.

42. 62.9.

43. 97.11-12.

44. 122.5-6.

45. 152.15b.

46. 172.5b.

47. 27.2.

48. 54.12.

49. 32.18-33.3.

50. 145.11.

51. 73.1-2.

52. 132.15.

53. 232.2.

54. 120.3-5.

55. 4.18.

56. 77.4-5.

57. 186.7-8.

58. 219.4-5.

59. Besides the examples already quoted, see also 41.16-17; 42.8,13; 62.18-63.1; 71.14,16-17; 116.12; 122.11 (the 1964 edition reads jundubum instead of ghirratuhum as in the 1887 edition; a footnote in the 1887 edition gives as yet another reading 'izzuhum); 173.7; 210.15-211.1; 214.1.

60. Besides the reference in 186.7 quoted above, see also 128.15.

61. 111.8, as well as 186.8 and 219.4-5 quoted above.

62. 72.5-6; 112.5; 121.3.

63. 47.11. It is, of course, difficult to know just how much weight to place on the meaning of the verb anwa. Nöldeke, in a footnote in his translation (p.42), refers to the Qur'ānic usage of the verb and cites two passages where it occurs. It does, in fact, occur 13 times in the Qur'ān (Flügel, Concordantiae, p.99, lists 14 occurrences, but one of them is wrong), and in all but 4 of them it is used in close proximity to the verb khalaqa, as it is in this verse from the

Zuhdiyāt. In those 9 cases (and in one of the 4), the sense seems to be that of 'create' or 'form', in other words, ansha is virtually a synonym of khalaqa, especially where it occurs in close proximity to the latter. In view of this, the verse which we have just cited might be better rendered as

Praise be to thee, O gracious one, who best graciously created us
And formed us in thy work of creating and forming.

There is, of course, no particular reason why ansha in this verse must reflect Qur'ānic usage even although it is used in close proximity to khalaqa.

64. See preceding note.

65. 236.6, vocalising the last word in the line 'alla as in the 1964 edition, instead of 'illa (excuse; sickness; defectiveness) as in the 1887 edition.

66. 99.11.

67. 256.12.

68. 168.5-12.

69. 39.6-7.

70. 49.6.

71. 1964 edition, 198.4.

72. 91.3.

73. 95.8-9. One could continue to quote lines of similar content. It will suffice to list some of them here:- 97.14; 105.8-11; 113.7-9; 114.8; 122.8; 125.5-6; 159.16; 245.2.

74. 148.18.

75. 241.11.

76. 251.9.

77. 50.6.

78. 50.18.

79. 53.9.

80. 83.13.

81. 41.11.

82. 125.9. Cf. also the frequent expression 'cup of death', e.g. 49.15.

83. 43.17.

84. 73.7.

85. 146.3.

86. 46.8.

87. 49.7.

88. 57.3. Cf. also 1964 edition,138.6.

89. 45.2. Cf. also the description of death as 'the farthest path',81.6.

90. 145.2. Cf. also the line

> Awake to death,O you upon whom
> The malediee of death have thrown their dice,

153.11. Cf. also 1964 edition 349.7.

91. Cf.,e.g.,49.16; 58.1; 66.10; 84.17; and frequently.

92. 52.6.

93. 84.12.

94. 96.5.

95. 44.8a.

96. 82.6.

97. 119.17.

98. 1964 edition,475.8.

99. 84.4.

100. 93.17.

101. 128.14. The theme of the inescapability of death is a frequent one in the Rubáiyát. Cf. also,e.g., 87.6; 93.9; 106.5; 192.1; 133.2; 145.1; 259.9; 1964 edition,475.10.

102. 140.2.

103. 185.2. One should, perhaps, note that in not all of the passages cited above does the word mawt itself occur. There are a certain number of words which in certain contexts are used by Abu'l-'Atāhiya as synonyms of mawt. The chief among them are manāyā (plural of manīya) which has the sense of 'fate', dahr and zamān, both meaning 'time', and rudan meaning 'destruction'.

104. 37.8; 75.12; 80.14; 302.17.

105. 50.2.

106. 99.18.

107. 1964 edition, 483.6-7.

108. Cf., e.g., 69.8;-

O fool, have you then no justification
Which you can bring forward yawm al-qiyāma.

Here the fact that 'justification' (hujja) is required on 'the day of resurrection' implies that the expression yawm al-qiyāma has already passed beyond the neutrality of 'resurrection' pure and simple to the idea of 'judgment'.

109. Kazimirski, Dictionnaire, Vol. II, p. 434a.

110. 269.1. Cf. also 281.9.

111. 51.4.

112. 76.17-77.1.

113. 85.13. Note the 'journey' image here which we have already seen used in connection with the idea of death.

114. 216.10.

115. 224.14.

116. 259.7-8.

117. 24.9.

118. 30.11.

119. See above p.209 and note 105.

120. 177.14-15.

121. Cf. above p.72.

122. 96.5-6.

123. 103.1.

124. 106.9. Note that the phrase 'after today' means 'tomorrow' and that the reference is, therefore, to the day of judgment.

125. 111.10-11.

126. 15.8-9.

127. 225.1.

128. Cf. Qur'ān 39.43.

129. 202.16-203.1.

CHAPTER V

1. 81.14-16.
2. 95.17.
3. 302.17.
4. Cf.,e.g.,99.15; 150.12; 184.6; 188.9; 189.11; 285.12.
5. 89.10. Instead of fī'l-ḥayy ('in life'), the 1964 edition, 152.2, reads fī'l-ghayy ('in error'). Rescher, in his translation, has 'in ihrer Verirrung' (p.79), thus appearing also to read fī'l-ghayy, and this reading is probably to be preferred, particularly since it provides a more satisfactory contrast to rashida in the second half of the line.
6. 149.7.
7. 158.5.
8. 176.11.
9. 187.14.
10. 200.9-10.
11. 245.12. Cf., with regard to this line, the expression ahl al-ahwā' (or aṣḥāb al-ahwā') which, strictly speaking, means 'people devoted to a life of sensuality' but comes to be used of 'sectarians, dissenters'. It is to this usage in the latter sense that this line refers.
12. 276.6.
13. 291.15.
14. 292.15.
15. 184.1

    I see you chasing after wealth,
    But if you practised self-restraint, then you would
    achieve your desires.

16. 49.18.

17. 144.11. Cf. also,on this theme,135.3; 175.15.

18. 152.12.

19. 77.12.

20. 66.14.

21. 269.8.

22. 285.16. Cf. also 81.4; 81.8; 137.10; 219.10; 282.12; 299.12.

23. 173.19. The literal meaning of the second half of this line is 'the day when,in that place (i.e. in the place where the resurrection occurs) sweat will bridle them'. The sense appears to be that the sweat will be in their mouths,thus acting as a bridle and preventing them from speaking. See Rescher's translation,p.157 and footnote there.

24. 203.5.

25. 118.17.

26. 116.1.

27. 125.15. Cf. also 89.7; 162.3; 179.4; 208.13.

28. 49.5. The verb which we have translated as 'destroy' (tuqaṭṭiʿu) really has the sense of 'cut asunder, separate'. The implied fragmentation of a man's mind or reason is equivalent to its destruction or,at the very least,to its becoming ineffectual.

29. 188.8. It should,perhaps,be noted that in this example and in the preceding one,the word which has been translated 'desire' is shahwa. We have already referred to the fact that this is the word which is used by the mystics to mean 'sensual desire' (cf. above p.121). As we have already remarked,however,Abu'l-'Atāhiya does not seem to be using the word in this restricted sense.

30. 46.9.

31. 50.6.

32. 239.10.

33. 303.12-13.

34. 82.9. The translation 'man of sound mind' renders the Arabic dhu'l-'aql which says only 'the one who is possessed of 'aql'. But it is clear that here Abu'l-'Atāhiya is referring to the mind or intelligence which is not defective. Cf. the passages cited above at notes 29,30,31 where the verbs waka (in the negative), tamma and sahha (both in conditional clauses) are used to refer to 'aql.

35. 83.2.

36. 99.9-10.

37. 176.2.

38. 204.1.

39. 204.16.

40. 132.9. The Arabic word which has to be examined in connection with the ideal in life is al-khayr, 'the good'. It occurs in this line. Rescher (p.116) translates the verb sanna'a as 'will', i.e. 'in what God wills, not in what man wills'. This certainly makes good sense of the line, namely that the ideal in life is the carrying out by man of the will of God and not of his own will. This is also, of course, the direct opposite of what we have seen to be one of the major faults in man condemned by Abu'l-'Atāhiya, the fault of 'desire'. Whether 'will' is a correct translation of sana'a is, of course, another matter.

41. 150.16.

42. 162.7.

43. 170.9.

44. 43.5-12.

45. 44.11,15. Cf. also 65.3-10.

46. On 'good works' cf.,e.g.,62.4-5; 77.15-16. On 'fear of God' cf.,e.g.,47.17; 120.9-10; 158.9.

47. 236.2.

48. 249.16.

49. 19.4; 40.15.

50. Pedersen,'The Islamic Preacher' in Goldziher Memorial Volume,Part I,p.226.

51. IV,72,during the reign of al-Mahdī,cf. above p.19, and IV,106,during the reign of al-Rashīd,cf. above p.28.

52. Op. cit.,pp.229ff.,where Pedersen renders the imperative 'Amnī as 'give me an admonition'.

53. Cf.,e.g.,31.3; 44.7; 52.14; etc. Sometimes the root w'ẓ is varied by the use of form VIII of 'br and the corresponding noun 'ibra,cf.,e.g.,53.12 etc. Between the two roots,I have counted over sixty occurrences of this idea in the Zuhdiyāt,and this count would make no claims to completeness.

54. 67.10-68.2; 1964 edition,118. The heading does not appear to be from the Aghānī.

55. 92.2-11.

56. Cf.,similarly,132.16-19. The heading,in this case,is from the Aghānī (IV,106 foot),but the poetry quoted there is not the single verse given in the Dīwān,but lines 1,2 (with considerable variation) and 4 of the following poem (133.2,3,5). Cf. also 198.8-12. The accompanying narrative (following the poem in the 1887 edition,preceding it in the 1964 edition,p.328)

is,in this case,again from the Aghānī (IV,72). Those are the two occurrences,referred to above (note 51), of the root w'ẓ in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's akhbār.

57. 129.9.

58. Their position in the collected Zuhdiyāt is not,of course,an indication that they are among the poet's last compositions. They are placed where they are simply because their rhyme letter is yā',since the Zuhdiyāt are arranged alphabetically by order of rhyme letter.

59. 302.6-304.15.

60. 304.1-15. We might note,in this connection,the editorial heading (302.6),'He describes the evils (dawā'ir) of the time and summons the Caliph to remedy them'. This heading is differently worded in the 1964 edition (hence my description of it as 'editorial'),'He describes the vicissitudes (ṣurūf) of the time and asks the Caliph's help',but the gist of the two version is the same.

61. 304.17-305.9.

62. 147.9.

63. 149.7.

64. 151.11.

65. 152.17.

66. 155.17.

67. 274.2. The fact that the majority of these examples occur within a few pages of each other is conditioned by the fact that waṣf has a greater probability of appearing among those poems whose rhyme letter is 'ayn.

68. In Rescher's translation of the line in question (151.11),he adds the adjective 'moralisch' before the

noun 'Mongol' (*op. cit.*, p.134), and it would appear from the context that it is the lack of moral fibre in a man's character which is intended.

69. 69.8.

70. 74.12. The reference to 'his way' is connected with the common phrase *fī sabīl al-lāh*, an expression which commonly refers to the practice of the *jihād* or Holy War.

71. 80.4. The phrase 'such a one' refers to the 'ideal man' who has been depicted in the earlier lines of the poem. The expression 'golden mean' (*qaṣd*) we shall examine in detail shortly. As a definition of what is meant by *zuhd* in this poem, one might draw attention to the third line of the poem (79.15):-

> Who holds himself aloof from the world and its vanities,
> Whom neither money nor property leads astray.

72. 79.15. See previous note.

73. 155.17.

74. The dictionaries define the verb *ya'sa* as 'to despair' (see Lane, Hava, Kazimirski *ad. loc.*). But this sense is quite unsuitable to the contexts in which the word is found in the *Zuhdiyāt*. The definition given by Wehr (*ad loc.*) is much more helpful: 'to renounce, forego something' with the preposition *min* introducing that which is renounced. On the first occurrence of the word in the *Zuhdiyāt*, Reschor defines it in his translation as 'der freiwillige Verzicht' (*op. cit.*, p.4). This is in line with Wehr's definition of the noun *ya's* as 'renunciation, resignation'. There is, of course, a certain semantic connection between 'renounce' and 'despair', a connection which is clearly

indicated by Wehr's second meaning of form I,'to give up all hope',of form IV,'to deprive of hope' and of the noun 'hopelessness,desperation'.

Towards the end of his article on ya'asu,Lane quotes the following sentence in which he translates ya'isa=to know' (cf. also Hava,Kazimirski):-

qad ya'istu annaka rajulu ṣidqin = I have known that thou art a good man. His explanation of this is interesting for our purpose; 'because with eager desire is restlessness and with the cessation thereof is quiet and tranquillity; wherefore it is said al-ya'su ahadu 'l-rāhatayni.' He translates this last quotation as 'despair is one of the two states of rest',whereas it would make much more sense to render it 'resignation is one of the two states of rest', keeping in mind the possibility that ya's=quiet and tranquillity'.

The necessity for this discussion underlines the unsatisfactory nature of Arabic-English dictionaries,and the amazing fact that for meanings of words in 9th century Arabic poetry one finds more insight in dictionaries which specifically claim to be of 'modern written Arabic' than in those which purport to deal with the classical language.

75. 4.4.

76. 130.15. There appears to be some dubiety as to the reading in the final word of the line. Reuther (op. cit., p.114,footnote) says,'Lies ya's (wie richtig i. Aufgabe)',implying that the text from which he is translating reads something else. According to the title page of his translation,the text he is using

was printed in Beirut, at the Catholic Press, in 1909. In his review of that edition in K.Z.K.M., 28, he suggests a list of errata (pp.363-367), but this particular point is not raised. The 1964 edition reads ba'a (courage, strength). Without consulting the MSS, one can make only a subjective judgment and would read, as in the 1887 edition, ya'a.

77. 131.11.

78. 200.9.

79. 132.7.

80. 161.13.

81. 117.7.

82. 171.5.

83. 166.14.

84. 237.7.

85. 287.5,6.

86. This is a very frequent idea; cf., e.g., 118.10; 148.1,4; 185.10; 197.10; 208.6; 210.2; 215.4; 253.8.

87. 119.10.

88. 176.18.

89. 275.18.

90. 4.16.

91. 17.15.

92. 152.16.

93. 99.15; 95.17.

94. There are many examples of this; cf., e.g., 149.9; 184.1; 237.7.

95. 118.4. Cf. also 300.2.

96. 138.6; 138.17; 299.2.

97. 198.15.

98. 184.17, literally, 'You will be wide in it even if it

to narrow'.

99. 199.9.

100. P.105.

101. P.196.

102. 189.2.

103. 217.7.

104. 274.14.

105. 240.8.

106. 170.15-171.5.

107. 218.16-219.2. According to Massignon (Essai,135), 'Abbādān was one of the smallest centres where mystics lived in community. It is reputed to have been built c. 767 A.D. and destroyed c. 873/4. The mystics of 'Abbādān lived,again according to Massignon, in a ribāṭ,which he defines as a 'couvent avec enceinte défensive'. Cf. also the article by Lockhart in E.I.^{2},I,5.

108. See above pp.124ff.

109. 41.3a.

110. 201.10.

111. 10:13. The verb (form V of ʾadda) means 'to provide oneself with the wherewithal of sustenance on a journey'. This viaticum image is a frequent one in the Zuhdiyāt.

112. 1.6.

113. 167.7.

114. 289.3.

115. 165.8.

116. 82.25.

117. 204.12.

118. 301.17.

119. 250.8.

120. 259.13. Cf. also 176.4.

121. 1964 edition,349.6.

122. 147.16.

123. 149.4.

124. 262.17.

125. 277.5.

126. See above pp.128ff.

127. See above pp.131ff.

128. 119.18-120.1,the last two lines of a seven-line poem, very definitely a prayer for forgiveness. In 204.2-3 we again find the final two lines of an eight-line poem in the form of a prayer for forgiveness. In the case of 263.7-14 we find that the whole poem (again of eight lines) is a similar type of prayer.

129. 31.10; 1964 edition,198.6; 1964 edition,153.5.

130. 1964 edition,49.6; 211.11.

131. 292.11.

132. See above pp.91f.

133. 1964 edition,96.5; 115.10.

134. 80.15.

135. 58.6.

136. Cf.,o.c.,62.14; 109.3.

137. 7.1.

138. 200.18.

139. 109.3. Cf. 31.14. Cf. also 185.9 where again tuqa and bixr are linked,and where the point is made that a failure to 'deal' in these two commodities involves a man in a 'loss' with regard to salvation and in a 'profit' with regard to damnation. This 'profit and loss' imagery is fairly common in the Zuhdiyat

and may well have its point of origin in Abu'l-'Atāhiya's early commercial ventures in the pottery business. See above p.19 and below p.186.

140. See above,note 111.

141. 155.19; 291.9; 293.6; 297.4.

142. 182.7. It is just possible that in this context the word <u>qu'lūk</u>,which means 'beggar',is being used in the technical mystic sense of 'a <u>sūfī</u> beggar'. Cf. Margaret Smith,<u>An Early Mystic of Baghdad</u>, references in index of technical terms <u>sub voc.</u>

143. 188.9. Cf. above p.144 on <u>rushd</u>.

144. 21.1.

145. 220.18.

146. 74.12.

147. 69.8.

148. 69.13.

149. See,e.g.,Kasimirski <u>s.v.</u>: 'croyance,religion,<u>on con.</u>, culte extérieur'.

150. 104.8.

151. 205.11.

152. 159.10.

153. 205.11; 262.18; 266.5; 292.12.

154. 40.12-14.

155. 67.14.

156. 149.3.

157. 200.5.

158. 184.18-185.1.

159. 157.14.

160. 44.11.

161. 110.8,literally: 'Send ahead for yourself,for a man only has what he sends ahead,not what he leaves

behind'. The implication is that it is 'good works' or some such meritorious action which is sent ahead. Man 'leaves behind' his worldly goods. Similarly 160.2. The idea is explicit in 232.13. Cf. also 224.3 where 'good works' are regarded as a viaticum for the final journey of life to the next world ('a house for which I was created').

162. 198.12; 225.15.

163. 259.16.

164. 1964 edition, 200.8.

165. 304.17-305.9.

CHAPTER VI

1. See above pp.72ff.
2. See note 21 to chapter III.
3. See above pp.108ff.,especially pp.114f. where this point is raised again. Cf. also p.92,where the point is made that when Abu'l-'Atāhiya uses words such as _bilan_ and _fana'_,he means nothing more than death and is not referring to some kind of ultimate destruction of the human personality.
4. See above p.84 and the references there to the relevant texts from the Aghānī.
5. See above pp.95ff.
6. See above pp.109ff.
7. See above p.82.
8. See above pp.143f.
9. Cf. Smith,_An early Mystic of Baghdad_,e.g.,pp.22 and especially 101ff. where she contrasts _'ilm_ and _ma'rifa_. But contrast p.98 where the two terms seem to be equated. Cf. also Massignon,_Passi_,201f.,where _ma'rifa_ is defined as 'une connaissance de Dieu qui ne soit plus la simple affirmation de sa réalité par la foi, mais la sagesse expérimentale de ceux qui obtiennent de Lui directement réponse; elle seule donne le bonheur.'
10. Cf. Smith,_op. cit._,289 where,writing of Raymond Lull, a Spanish Christian mystic who possibly owed something to the influence of al-Muhāsibī,she says,'The infused knowledge (_ma'rifa_) comes from the will,from prayer and devotion,and acquired knowledge (_'ilm_) from study and understanding.'
11. Cf. Smith,_op. cit._,101: 'Ma'rifa...is the greatest of God's gifts...that inner intuition or insight

which deals with reality - that is,with God - without the mediation of sense-experience or intellectual process.' Notice that an early disciple of al-Muḥāsibī, Aḥmad b. Masrūq,writes,'The tree of the knowledge of God (ma'rifa again) is nourished by the water of reflection','reflection' being one of the sources of ma'ārif for Abu'l-'Atāhiya according to our Aghānī text.

12. 115.5.

13. 150.11-12. The second of those three sources of 'ilm is described by the word 'iyār,the verbal noun of form XII of 'yr,a form which means 'to adjust (balances etc.),to assay (gold)'. The sense here would seem to be that of weighing up the pros and cons of a situation and coming to a conclusion as the result of such 'appraisal'. The third term (samā') would refer to listening to and acting upon the experience and advice of others. Rescher (op. cit.,p.142; cf. also p.101) rather arbitrarily emends 'iyār to 'iyān ('direct personal observation').

14. Vajda,Les Zindiqs,p.228,footnote 3.

15. See above p.81.

16. See above pp.60ff.

17. See above p.62.

18. Ibid.

19. See above pp.83f.

20. See above pp.59f.

21. 11.3-5.

22. 37.5-6.

23. They seem,in fact,actually to have supported the 'Abbāsids. See above p.60.

24. Cf., e.g., the story and verses in 92.2-11, verses reputedly recited to al-Rashīd and in which the Caliph is said to be 'in error' (fī ghurūr) in failing to realise that he, like all men, is subject to death. Roschor (op. cit., p.177, footnote *) suggests that the long poem 194.13-197.10 is really a criticism of al-Nahdī who had given the poet a promise which he had failed to keep.

25. See above pp.132f. and the reference to the poem in note 60 to chapter V. For poems addressed both to rulers and others in positions of power and authority, see the discussion, above pp.100ff., on the equality of men in the face of death and the poems referred to in notes 55ff. of chapter IV.

26. See above p.60.

27. See above pp.78ff.

28. See note 15 of chapter III.

29. See above pp.78f.

30. This does not, of course, include passages where Abu'l-'Atāhiya appears to be quoting from the Qur'ān or alluding to Qur'ānic phraseology. I have counted about 50 passages where Qur'ānic quotations of a more or less direct nature would seem probable. This type of quotation proves little about the poet's estimation of the Qur'ān, since the speech of any Muslim, then as now, is inevitably steeped in Qur'ānic allusions.

31. See above p.132 and note 57 there.

32. 129.10. The expression 'word of God' (kalām al-lāh) is a synonym for the Qur'ān.

33. For the section concerning the world, see above pp.102ff.

and note 68 there.

34. 169.2. The expression here is qawl al-lāh ('speech of God'), again a synonym for the Qur'ān.

35. 197.18. The expression 'in his book' is actually plural in Arabic (fī kutubihi in the 1887 edition; fī kutubihi in the 1964 edition; kutub and kutb are both plural formations of kitāb). But this plural can have no literal significance in the context, and the reference must surely be again to the Qur'ān.

36. See above pp.77f. re text 7) and pp.81f. re text 11).

37. See note 47 of chapter III.

38. See above p.87.

39. 35.2.

40. See above pp.104f.

41. 2.4.

42. 35.11. Cf. also the immediately following poem (35.13-36.1) where several mutually exclusive concepts are paradoxically employed in a description of the world.

43. 49.8.

44. 131.4.

45. 200.2. Cf. also those examples cited by Vajda, op. cit., p.219.

46. E.g., 40.12-14; 46.11-14; 52.16; 59.9; 60.2; 64.9-11; 70.16; and frequently throughout the Zuhdiyāt.

47. Op. cit., Appendix B), pp.225-228.

48. Op. cit., pp.219f. Cf. Widengren, op. cit., pp.43ff.

49. 1.11-12; 11.7-12; 35.7; 107.16; 116.13-14; 172.7; 253.12-254.3; 262.7.

50. The idea is that of 'light' illuminating the surrounding 'darkness'. There are no symbolic overtones here.

though Vajda does notice that the passage in which the terms occur is a quasi-philosophical one which expresses a relationship between two things: light and darkness - root of a plant and branches, flower and fruit - act and agent - name of an object and the object designated.

51. Guidi, La lotta tra l'Islam e il Manicheismo, p.11 of the Arabic text and p.20 of the Italian translation. Cited by Vajda, op. cit., p.228.

52. Op. Cit., p.228. Cf. also above p.155 for Vajda's conclusion about Abu'l-'Atāhiyn's use of yaqīn.

53. See above pp.661f.

54. See above pp.81f.

55. See above p.65.

56. See above p.142 and note 107.

57. 218.16-219.2. The word murābit (translated 'ascetic') is really a participle (of form III) meaning 'zealous'. It would appear, however, that it is being used in this context as a synonym for murbut which denotes someone who has devoted himself to the ascetic life. The second hemistich of the second line is difficult. It seems to mean that the poet does not think that any of those who are established there would be willing to change their place of residence.

58. 217.3-5. The anecdote immediately preceding the poem gives the words of Hasan. It appears both in the 1887 edition and in the 1964 edition without indication of source. It is not, as far as I am aware, found in the Aghānī.

59. On Hasan al-Basrī see above p.68 and the references to Massignon's treatment of him in note 89 of chapter II.

60. Cf., e.g., 213.15.

61. Ibid., 154.

62. Ibid., 156.

63. Ibid., 157.

64. See above p.85.

65. Ibid.

66. See above pp.145f.

67. 1964 edition, 38.6. Cf. St. Augustine, Confessions, pp.202, 216. This is not, of course, to suggest that Abu'l-'Atāhiya knew The Confessions (written c. 400 A.D.) or was even aware that someone called Augustine had ever lived. It simply indicates a spiritual state which is not uncommon.

68. 254.3.

69. 1964 edition, 96.2-7.

70. 45.9. The second homotich is literally: 'When my conversion was of no profit to me.' Both editions of the Zuhdiyāt read inābati, the verbal noun of form IV of nwb, meaning 'repentance' or 'conversion'. The 1887 edition notes in a footnote that the Aghānī reads nadāmati, 'repentance' or 'contrition'.

71. 205.13-15.

72. 175.17.

73. 117.2-4.

74. 166.7.

75. 191.11 and frequently. For a similar idea cf. 231.4.

76. 302.5. This is a fairly common idea in the Zuhdiyāt.

77. 3.10; 32.4; 55.4.

78. 58.3; 237.7.

79. 7.1; 55.4; 237.7.

80. 232.7.

81. 262.6.

82. 198.4.

83. 50.6-9.

84. 58.9-11.

85. Op. cit., p.52, footnote **).

86. Massignon, Al-Hallaj, 780. See above pp.61f.

87. 108.14.

88. 201.3; 226.16.

89. 226.16; 237.6.

90. 274.10.

91. The word faqīr is sometimes regarded as a synonym of miskīn, but the latter describes someone who is poor through force of circumstances, whereas faqīr is someone who has voluntarily given himself to a life of poverty. Cf. Kasimirski, Dictionnaire, s.v. faqīr.

92. Transactions of the Ninth Congress of Orientalists, Vol. II, p.114.

93. E.I.^{2}, I, 108.

94. See above pp.137f.

95. See above pp.10, 13.

96. See above pp.153ff.

97. See above pp.34f.

98. See above pp.37f.

99. See above pp.97f., 102f.

100. Cf., e.g., 304.1-15 and see above pp.132f.

101. 170.15-171.5. In the first line of the poem the 1887 edition reads fa'a'wadhnanī which makes no sense in the context. The 1964 edition (and presumably also the 1909 edition, since Roesher makes no comment on it but translates what appears in the 1964 edition) reads fa'a'wasanī. The 1887 text must be a misprint.

CHAPTER VII

1. Cf., e.g., Aghānī, IV, 12f., 15.7f., 100f.
2. Cf., e.g., Ibid., 11, 19, 39, 46, 51f., 98.
3. Ibid., 70f.
4. For the 'Abbāsid poets, the 'classical' poets were not only those of the Jāhiliya but also those of the early Umayyad period. See Hitti, History of the Arabs, p.405. A similar criticism is passed by Abu'l-'Atāhiya on the poetry of Ibn Munādhir, namely that it is modelled neither on the masters of the past nor on the masters of the present - Aghānī, IV, 90.
5. Ibid., 80. In the sequel, it is suggested that this is because Abu'l-'Atāhiya always uses easy rhymes. The poet invites the suggestion of a difficult rhyme, and his challenger suggests he provide a poem with balāgh as the rhyme word of the first line. The resultant poem is the only one among the Zuhdiyāt which uses ghayn as a rhyme letter.
6. Ibid., 94f. The poem in question, with Salm al-Khāsir's criticism and Abu'l-'Atāhiya's reply, is in the Dīwān, 11.14-12.4 where it is listed in the chapter of those poems whose rhyme letter is alif. Rescher's translation (p.277) places it among the poems whose rhyme letter is hā', so there must have been this difference, at least, between the editions of 1887 and 1909. The 1964 edition also has it listed as rhyming in hā' (p.475), but curiously enough it gives the final two lines of the same poem on p.31, implying that the rhyme is in alif. In neither place does the 1964 edition give the Aghānī story.
7. See Haywood and Nahmad, A New Arabic Grammar, p.509, under

the heading 'Guide to Further Study'.

8. Aghānī, IV, 102.

9. Dīwān, 213.2-6.

10. Aghānī, IV, 36, a passage to which we shall return shortly in connection with a different point.

11. Twice on p.1, twice on p.2, three times on p.3, etc.

12. Cf., e.g., p.19, footnote ††) and frequently.

13. Dīwān, 194.13-197.10; 302.7-304.15.

14. Aghānī, IV, 36.

15. Ibid., 40.

16. Ibid., 107.

17. Wagner, Abu Nuwās, 215-221.

18. Ibid., 219, citing Bräunlich, 'Versuch einer literar-geschichtlichen Betrachtungsweise altarabischer Poesie' in Der Islam, 24 (1937), pp.201-269, especially pp.249-250. In the course of this article, Bräunlich gives a series of valuable statistics on the frequency of metres used by the classical poets.

19. Op. cit., p.217.

20. Op. cit., 217.219. The rajaz metre is almost exclusively confined in Abu Nuwās to the hunting poems. They are composed almost in their entirety in rajaz, while rajaz is used in only 3% of the remainder of the Dīwān.

21. Aghānī, IV, 13.

22. For a masterly exposition of al-Khalīl's metrics, see the article 'arūḍ by Gotthold Weil in E.I.^{2}, I, 667-677.

23. E.I.^{2}, I, 108.

24. 145.2; 1964 edition, 349.7; 223.1.

25. 217.17; 269.9, this last by implication, in that the hope is expressed that God will 'cure' the avarice

of the soul. Cf. also 4.4.

26. 262.4.

27. 280.2.

28. 9.6; 145.2; 1964 edition,349.7. Cf. also 10.2.

29. 262.4.

30. 280.2.

31. 26.9.

32. 171.17.

33. 242.5.

34. 248.3.

35. 250.10.

36. 266.2.

37. I have not,of course,cited every instance of its use in the Zuhdiyāt. I have counted approximately thirty occurrences of such imagery,with no claim that such a count is exhaustive.

38. See above p.13.

39. 93.3; 106.6-7,16.

40. 291.16.

41. 83.12; 84.7,10; 155.10; 185.9.

42. 177.6. The connection between this idea and the 'profit and loss' imagery is made explicit in 185.9.

43. Approximately sixteen occurrences in the Zuhdiyāt. See the savant already mentioned in note 37.

44. Aghānī,XV,83.

45. 174.13; 193.14; 199.4; 202.11; 204.11; 208.17; 222.5; 224.3; 225.3; 299.10.

46. This is the period which is referred to as barzakh al-mawtā. See above p.108. This actual phrase is nowhere used along with the idea of 'journey',but the idea seems implied in e.g.,204.5; 222.5; 301.4.

where the moment of death is described as the 'departure' and the 'journey' itself comes after the departure.

47. 231.6.

48. 226.3; 293.6.

49. 105.15; 173.2; 226.3; 259.10; 260.3; 279.9.

50. 100.5; 107.4; 170.5; 194.13.

51. 126.15; 268.11.

52. 193.14.

53. 275.18.

54. 106.9.

55. 33.6; 87.15; 102.17; 159.12; 178.13; 229.15; 267.9.

56. 84.12; 86.6; 100.14; 104.5. The image of the drinking place is implied in these passages by the use of 'descent' and/or 'ascent', terminology which is found in several of the examples cited in the preceding note.

57. 267.9. In his translation (p.247), Rescher seems to indicate that madar means 'the descent to the drinking place' and mawrid the 'return' from it. This is surely wrong.

58. 76.6; 101.10; 299.12.

59. See, e.g., 94.16.

60. 194.2.

61. 14.13; 24.7; 28.12; 105.10; 117.11; 198.10=223.11. 198.9-11=229.10-12. It would seem that these lines have been accidentally repeated, at some stage in their transmission, from one poem to another. There is little help from the respective contexts to decide to which poem they originally belonged. Rescher, pp. 183 and 205, notes the identity only of the last of

the three lines.

62. 155.3.

63. 214.1.

64. 111.14; 202.11; 208.17.

65. 152.1; 155.14.

66. 80.14; 101.6 (blêm); 155.13; 170.5; 187.12; 189.3; 291.9; 271.9.

67. 190.13 (wizz).

68. 155.13; 291.9; 293.6; 297.4 (this last with the addition of 'seeking refuge with God').

69. 157.10.

70. 139.17.

71. 111.14.

72. 190.2; 224.3.

73. In his translation, Rosehor frequently inserts after the word 'Provient' (his rendering of gad) the explanatory gloss 'd.h. guto werke'. Cf., e.g., pp. 70,153 etc. I have counted twenty-two occurrences of this image.

74. See above p.106.

75. 52.6. Cf. also 268.15, 'drovor sato'.

76. D.g., 1.13; 193.5.

77. 159.9.

78. 250.17.

79. 279.6.

80. 34.16; 147.12 (a rhetorical question, the implied answer to which is in the negative); 159.15.

81. 16.12.

82. 26.5.

83. 38.2.

84. 153.18.

89. 275.17. Cf. also 224.9 where the identical thought is expressed by a different image, that of the cause of death being found (even) in butter and honey.

86. 41.5.

87. 147.17.

88. 153.6; 154.2.

89. 150.18; 160.4; 162.9.

90. 181.4-5.

91. 50.9.

92. 154.1; 177.2; 235.8; 304.14.

93. 107.5; 184.11; 267.4; 285.16; 291.17; 1964 edition, 488.14.

94. See above pp.106f.

95. 133.3; 210.8.

96. 43.17; 214.2; 234.1-2; 235.16.

97. 208.7.

98. 244.4.

99. 194.4; 195.5.

100. 43.15; 51.13 ('cup of destruction'); 107.8; 130.11-12, 17; 132.3 (here, by implication, the 'cup' is 'destruction'); 149.15; 159.10 ('cup of fate'); 176.8 (death's drink); 263.3-4.

101. 118.17; 133.6; 256.2-4; 257.3.

102. 41.4; 180.12-13; 292.17.

103. Lexicon, s.v. sakrat al-maut.

104. Op. cit., pp.95, 163f., 273.

105. See above p.161 and the references in note 46 to chapter VI.

106. 40.12. This neat paradox is somewhat pedantically explained in the two following lines.

107. 46.11.

108. 70.16. The reference would seem to be that a decrease in one's life span goes hand in hand with an increase in one's age.

109. 83.17.

110. 293.7. Cf. also 231.2; 234.13; 259.4.

111. 44.5.

112. 1964 edition,153.7.

113. 1964 edition,154.8-9.

114. 297.15. The word ghadan ('tomorrow') refers,of course, to the day of judgment.

115. See above pp.139ff.

116. There are,indeed,frequent examples of the Aghani quoting a few lines as if they were a complete poem, but we can see from the collected Zuhdiyat that they are indeed only parts of a whole. In view of the way in which the Zuhdiyat have been collected, one suspects that many of the poems cited in the collection are still only fragments.

CONCLUSION

1. 'The Early Development of Islamic Religious Poetry' in Journal of the American Oriental Society, 60 (1940), pp.23-29.
2. Ibid., p.29.
3. H.A.R. Gibb, Arabic Literature, pp.42-43.
4. See Introduction, Footnote 17.
5. Wagner, Abu Nuwās and Abu Nuwās, Der Dīwān, herausgegeben von Ewald Wagner (Teil 1, Wiesbaden, 1958).
6. Abu Nuwās, Vorwort, p.v.