

Herder, Religion and the Orient

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Johann Gottfried Herder was born in Mohrungen on 25-8-1744 and died in Weimar on 18-12-1803. He studied medicine and philosophy of Kant, Hamann, Shaftsbury and Rousseau. He was acquainted with Lessing, Claudius and Wieland and distanced himself from Goethe. His life coincided with literary movements of the enlightenment, storm and stress, classicism and romanticism.

Herder was a philosopher, historian, theologian, aesthetician and a pedagogue. He concentrated on the study of folk poetry and studied classical and modern national literatures. He was the first German, who could feel the cultural decline in the west and saw salvation and renewal of the mankind coming from the east.

Among the greatest literatures of time, Herder is the one, who is not read anymore, wrote George Gadamer in 1942. Some of the aspects of Herder's works have been highlighted; the others have been ignored altogether. Different sections of experts limited Herder to their own studies. The Germanists found a critic in him. The Lutheran ethnologists dealt with his theological writings and Herder's impact on thinking and scholarship in the humanities, social sciences and theology have been almost ignored.¹

For Herder basic units of mankind are people or nations formed within a particular physical environment by a gradually evolving way of life, which expressed itself in customs and beliefs. Each of these people is distinguished by its language and everything in its life is connected with everything else. These separate peoples cannot be reduced to each other or even beyond a certain point, compared with each other.

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Herder attempted to look at different cultures, societies and the religions which had played a major part in framing them.

He tried to place them all within the framework of general view of the history of mankind.² The historical view enables Herder to appreciate the individuality of the religious expression of any culture.

Herder's Religion

Herder's historical perspective on religion can be found throughout and in all periods of his career. The historical perspective shapes his approach towards religions. He examines all texts in relation to their historical contexts investigating not only their immediate historical setting but also the broader influence of other ancient religions and traditions on them. For example, he encourages his readers to study Bible not only the immediate historical contexts of specific works but also the geography, literature, history and languages of Ancient Near Eastern cultures. Concerning religions he expresses a desire to write a history of religion and feels that religion should be studied historically, as religions have played a political role. He appreciates primitive religions and says that we have to learn much from them.³ Myths can also be used to learn about the people's thought and culture. For Herder religion of people emerges in relation to the deepest traits of the people's character.

Herder sees religion intrinsic to man and as a means, together with reason, towards the attainment of his ultimate goal. Religion is "the highest humanity the noblest blossom of human soul" and its true practice a "childlike service of God, an imitation of the highest and most beautiful in the human image, therefore the most heartfelt contentment, the most effective kindness as love of man."⁴

Herder appreciates the individuality of each work, refusing to judge texts according to foreign standards or to compare

them to one another. In speaking of the Hebrew Bible prophets, for example, he says that each has a particular spirit, history and language. Even the various parts of one prophet's writing should be treated individually because they arise out of different circumstances.⁵ In same way, he claims that the Gospels are highly individual, for each reflects the unique interests and gifts of the authors and their particular audiences. He uncovers this individuality both through empathy with the author and through rigorous historical and philological investigation.

In his writings about God and religion, Herder discusses the complex nature of religious language. He believes that language about God is diverse. He claims that it differs according to a people's language, tradition, historical circumstances,⁶ concepts, needs and even geographic location. There is no absolute religious language that can be used universally. In [National religions] he says every people have its own religious language because it springs from that people's distinctive character, tradition, language and way of thinking and feeling.

Herder views religion as the highest human morality of man. The most preferred gift of God seen as the result of cause and effect⁷.

The real religion is a child like service of God, an imitation of the highest and most beautiful in the view of man, which gives satisfaction of the most effective goodness and love of humanity.⁸ In all religions of the earth more or less the simplicity of man with God is found in which either man raises himself to God or God reveals himself in the form of man⁹.

In the first dialogue concerning national religions (1802), Herder emphasizes that religions develop within particular contexts and thereby reflect and inform the culture, language and spirit of a people. He explains that the religion of people emerges in relation to the deepest traits of that people's character. Although one member of Herder's dialogue treasures

Christianity as the highest expression of Jesus' "religions of humanity," the essay clearly urges readers not to compare or judge religions in relation to one another. Herder closes his dialogue with a vision in which the unique and diverse religions of the world are respected and religious tyranny no longer exists.

Herder believes that religion affects one's entire being. On the one hand religions engage the mind. Human beings search for causes, and where they see no vision in nature they seek it in invisible ones. On the other hand, religion is also an exercise of the heart. It engages human feelings, emotions and convictions. Religion is tightly interwoven into a person's way of ordering and experiencing the world and thereby informs a culture's value, language, morals and entire character. Herder insists that religion is "a matter of our entire being, or our innermost consciousness. It is the innermost consciousness of what we are as human beings and what we ought to be and so as human beings."¹⁰ He believes religion arises from the feeling of adoration or wonder in the presence of a mighty "spirit" whose power is witnessed in nature. Even among the most primitive peoples, a sublime poetry and sensibility exist that are created by the "all-pervading feeling of this great, invisible spirit"¹¹

Herder's God

Herder rejects several popular conceptions of God: the distant God of the Deists, the moral God of Kant and of the rationalists, the naively personal God of the Pietists, and the pantheist equation of God and the world. Herder speaks of God in terms of being (*Dasein*) and in terms of a power or energy (*Kraft*) that moves through all things. God is the source of all existence and the dynamic power that orders and unites it¹².

Nature reflects this ordering activity of God. The laws of nature are expressive symbols of the divine¹³. All parts of nature

are also interrelated because they are guided by and are expressions of the wise and good ordering power of God. Further, nature is a dynamic, unified complex of forces. Matter is not “dead” but rather systems of active forces that change and form a whole. This view of nature as a dynamic, living organism stands in contrast to the mechanistic, static view of the world that was common during the Enlightenment¹⁴.

This understanding of God and nature affects Herder’s view of revelation. Although Herder emphasizes the Bible as God’s revelation, his view of revelation is much more encompassing. In his *Briefe, das Studium der Theologie betreffend*, he calls revelation the: “education of human race”. He believes that God has acted in and through history in diverse ways to help guide human understanding. Thus, revelation cannot be limited to the Bible. Nature, too, is a form of God’s revelation.

Although Herder is enthusiastic about diverse ways of speaking about God, he does not say that all ways are meaningful. His writings imply three specific criteria for meaningful discourse about God. First, words about God are meaningful if they point beyond themselves to God as the ground of being and as the active power that unites and orders all existence. Second, meaningful discourse about God engages both thought and feeling. In other words, it is both cognitive emotive, reflective and affective. Finally meaningful language about God should have a relation to the tradition it addresses, otherwise it will be intelligible to the people. For example, Herder criticizes the Jesuit missionaries in South America and especially those in China for not understanding the traditions of these peoples and thereby failing to proclaim the Christian message to them in a meaningful way¹⁵.

Herder says that God is more than His creation as he is not commensurable spatially, because He coexists with nothing that “is like Himself”.¹⁶ In the *Ideen*, Herder seeks to find God

in nature and even admits that man conceives God anthropomorphically.¹⁷

God for Herder lives where pure thought lives and there is no boundary and sky abounds everywhere and God is either in everything above time, space and in eternity. It contains everything, flows with all and does everything that takes place in the world.¹⁸ Herder believes that all the works of God have their stability in themselves and in their beautiful consistency.

Herder published his treatise on God in 1787 and it was only a few years before Hegel, Fichte, Schleiermecher, Lichtenberg, Novalis, Hölderin and Goethe openly admitted their admiration for antinational Spinoza¹⁹. A very strong antinational current which found its expression in the religious life of the German people and in the works of Hamann and Jacobi. Hamann opposed the rational trends of the Enlightenment from the very beginning. His attack on rationalists was that they were making reason independent of experience and were undermining faith. As against his contemporaries who saw in Socrates the ultimate example of the excellence and the capacities of human reason, Hamann through *Sokratische Denkwürdigkeiten* (1759) liked to make it clear that Socrates was a prototype of a great human personality, who drew the valor from the mysterious depth of quasi-divine origin and from the inexplicable forces of nature and this is how Hamann liked to ridicule the notion of his contemporaries, who have seen Socrates as an ultimate example of the capabilities of human reason. Hamann gave irrational and personal explanations and for him God became alive and active in man through his faith and feeling. Everything irrational in the world, Hamann sanctified as a divine revelation.²⁰

Herder also followed this current and it was in line with Leibnitz's philosophy, which he admired and described him the greatest man Germany ever possessed²¹. He was impressed by the Leibnitz's interpretation of history as a "continuous process

of development, energized by human striving²² and for him the coherence of powers and forms is neither in the retreat nor in status quo, but in marching forward. This has an effect an organ of godly power as an activated Idea of infinitely effective design of creation and thus the powers must always increase. The highest good has the power to give the weak a push to follow the path. So nothing stands still. Everything strives and marches on.²³ This is in line with Islamic thinking and this is what Iqbal²⁴ has propounded. Iqbal, under the influence of Nietzsche, came to believe that only by self-affirmation, self-expression and self-development can Muslims in the world become strong and free. This idea of self is expounded mainly in his *Asrar-i-Khudi (The Secrets of the Self)*²⁵, which, according to K.A. Hakim was written- under Nietzschean influence.²⁶ Nietzsche considered reality as a continuous flux, or a strife and struggle, and maintained that man has to struggle in order to structure reality and to keep up with it. Accordingly, he considered peace as a temporary recreative phase in one's life and vehemently argued: "You should love peace as the means to new wars and the short peace more than the long".²⁷ For him struggle is an essential part of life and there is no end to the struggle. In the process of the struggle, according to Nietzsche, higher individuals create something better than them and allow the weak to perish. Such is the process of 'eternal recurrence', in which a higher individual always aspires to ascend higher and higher, and leaves the diseased parts to wither away. The 'will to power', according to Nietzsche, expresses only in contradictions and seeks one which contradicts it so as to overpower it.²⁸ The 'will to power' is strengthened by contradicting each failure and disaster and for this a power to dislike and contradict is necessary. This is exactly what Iqbal has reproduced in *The Secrets of the Self*: "By the self the seed of opposition is sown in the world; it imagines itself to be other than itself" (Self-194). Life meets resistance from the instincts,

which it has developed. The human beings have to struggle against the exaggerated demands of the instincts in order to satisfy their urge for beauty and perfection, which is a characteristic of self-conscious being. (*Iqbal Review*,8). The resistance that life meets from itself, however, does not retard in the direction of its goal. On the contrary, impediments stimulate its efforts and quicken the progress (*Ibid.*). It is just like a river, which flows hardest when it has to pass through a narrow gorge in the mountain.

The most important proof that Leibnitz gives about the existence of God is the harmony, beauty and order manifest in nature and he believes that the perfect harmony of so many substances, which have no communication with each other can come from a common cause.²⁹

Herder's God Some Conversations (1787) was the precipitate of conversations with Goethe about the philosophy of Baruch Spinoza and also about contemporary currents in the interpretation of Spinoza. This book appeared immediately after publication of Part III of *Ideen*.

Herder's thought was shaped by his study of Spinoza's philosophy and he declared himself to be a Spinozist in 1787(letter to Gleim)³⁰. On 6 February 1784 Herder wrote to Jacobi that he had for the last seven years or more got parallel with 3 men: Spinoza, Shaftbury and Leibnitz and has not come in terms with them. He also confesses to Jacobi that he is happy with this philosophy and enjoys it to the maximum. A year before he had written to Gleim that he could hear against Jacobi, but not against Spinoza and accepts that he was a Spinozist and finds in him his spiritual brother. He also had proximity with Lessing. According to Jacobi, Lessing confessed his disappointment with the orthodox conception of God and that he knew nothing other than *hen kai pan*.³¹ Herder has received Spinoza's thought with immense profit, but without loss of his independence. To Jacobi he wrote in 1784 that he has

understood the philosophy of Lessing which is totally in agreement with Spinoza and he admits that this philosophy makes him lucky. Spinoza had talked of God having an infinite number of attributes, two of *which* time and space are discernible to man.

According to Haym, Herder got to know Spinoza in 1775 and mentioned him in the "Erläuterungen zum neuen Testament":

I invite you to one, what I introduce only as Moral of a man, who definitely was not a dreamer and a Christ to hold to Spinoza. One would see that it is the highest moral of the reason that he finds one with the Christianity³².

Haym also mentions Herder's letter to Gleim suggesting him Spinoza's 'moral'. Herder had given Spinoza "Ethik" to read.³³

In the first conversation the Pro-Spinozistic Theophron sets out to convince the auto Spinozistic Philolaus of the incorrectness of Pierre Bayle's identification of Spinoza as an atheist. Philolaus, the anti-Spinozist, allowed to take the position of Kant and say, "It cannot be provided either that a God exists or that he does not exist. One must believe the former."³⁴

Both in the *God* and *Ideen*, God and nature are intimately related, although in the case of *Ideen*, there is less talk of *God* and more of nature, but Herder sees God immanent in Nature. In *God* there is less stress on nature and focus on God, religion and man's reverence for God and his laws and in *Ideen* Spinozistic conception of God, applied to society³⁵.

In the preface, Herder makes nature, God and force synonymous and later links the resulting concept specifically with man. He refers to the force which thinks in him and which is an eternal as the force which holds the universe together. And even though the implement or body may wear out, the individual will not perish but will continue to be "a force in the

system of all forces, a being in the immeasurable harmony of one world of God".³⁶

In the order of the world times and life the extent of God by intentions is more than moral and it makes no insertion to the human race or fate of an individual, but the human training could take some betterment from this idea and Herder lives in the present and suggests to train yourself and others in this life³⁷. "Be with your Nature, with your powers throughout your life, what you can be and should be. Thus you have not lived in the other form and you can then die. You are in the hands of God. This is for every person, the voice of humanity and religion. This is the principle of Palingenesie — the approach with which the Jewish and Christian Language makes the revelations.

Herder speaks of God's force as an attribute, which man can see and know. He appealed to man's intellect to discover the goodness, wisdom and beauty according to which God's force works in all creatures and things and to seek the divine and internal intelligence in the workings of nature. When the laws which govern the working of God's force in the universe have been discovered, the individual is filled with wonderful admiration, love and worship of God. Man's reaction to the discovery of God's immanence in the world appeals to the emotions, but this comes after the intellectual effort.

Herder's appreciations of Spinoza is based in the former's conception of the function of the soul. Herder views the soul as a link between creature and creator and it responds to the various sense impressions and unifies them.

The first conversation makes life and style of Spinoza known. It becomes clear that Herder ignores the charge of Christian dogmatic view point (God some Conversations) refuted the major changes of theism, which had been leveled against Spinoza and has shown that it is based on misunderstanding, heresy and religious tradition.

In the 2nd conversation, Philolaus already convinced that

Spinoza is no atheist, agrees that for the pantheist no thought or reason is conceivable without the idea of God. The second conversation concentrates on the various interpretation of Spinoza's concept of substance; it attempts to make it more acceptable by endowing it with force. Matter and substance, God and world are compared and decisive distinction is introduced between the infinite and the indefinite or endless. This distinction is used to show that the Spinoza was not a pantheist, since an infinite God simply cannot be identified with an endless but, nevertheless, limited universe³⁸. But the idea of God because of its all inclusiveness on the one hand and its purely symbolic nature on the other is according to Philolaus and the new philosophy "incapable of demonstration, being capable only of belief. "And I for my part "replies Theophron," would maintain that without the conception of God there would be no reason, much less a demonstration". The conversation ends with a variety of literary quotations, which describe the union between the God, nature and man. The next part of the conversation tries to determine whether Spinoza considered God and world to be identical i.e. whether he was a pantheist as he had been charged to be. This part interprets Spinoza's concept of extension and Leibnitz's theory of substantial forces. Herder rejects Spinoza's concept of extension as an attribute of God. Since extension to him should be only a "symbolic image of eternity," and since it cannot adequately describe the "absolute infinite of the invisible."³⁹ Herder substitutes force for Spinoza's attributes of time and extension and gives Leibnitz as the source of this modification. He failed to point out that Leibnitz had distinguished clearly between extension and time and had been talking about a plurality of individual substances or morals when he endowed them with force. No mention is made that Leibnitz forces, unlike Herder's don't interact. Finally for Leibnitz Pre-established harmony between body and soul, Herder substitutes a harmony between forces. The

conversation ends very appropriately, with literary quotations from the Bible and the poetry of Sadi⁴⁰ in which man is depicted as marveling at God's majesty, while being unable to fully comprehend or describe it.

The third conversation concentrates on the natural science of the 18th century and stresses Spinoza's compatibility with the science of the day, while seeking to overcome the charge that in Spinoza's system, God does not act freely but out of blind necessity. This conversation concludes with a critique of Leibnitz's system which is found to be less consistent than Spinoza's. For Herder the universe is not "governed by blind power and arbitrariness but by "wisest necessity"⁴¹. There is no need for fear, since God, "with His wisdom and goodness is present in his totality" and working... "With His undivided and indivisible divine power"⁴². He can, therefore, be better understood through careful study of the universe and the laws of nature governing it. Herder rejects the free will in favour of laws of nature, which govern both the universe and the affairs of man. The first part of *Ideen* progresses from astronomy and geology and zoology, before determining man's place on this earth. Herder declares that "man too, is a part of creation and in his wildest excesses and passions must follow laws which are no less beautiful and admirable than those according to which all celestial and terrestrial bodies move"⁴³. This is a part of Herder's trend whereby natural science and history are replacing metaphysical and theological speculations and considerations; as the *Ideen* progress.⁴⁴ Religion and science are not compatible but supplement each other.

Herder maintained that by following in Spinoza's footsteps, man can know and experience God in the world. This completes the apotheosis of Spinoza and his philosophy.

Herder and Christianity

Herder has criticized Christianity as an institution and not

the religious belief of an individual⁴⁵ and it is a criticism to Catholic Church. He calls Pope, the "triple crowned great Lama in Rome"⁴⁶ and also rejects the celibacy of priests and the veneration of saints. He also speaks against narrow mindedness, bigotry and religious persecution, all of which stand in the way of true religious progress. He also deplores Constantine's conversion which led to a long history of troubled relations between the Christian Church and the Christian state and in the case of Constantine pole an undesirable state of Christianity, which inevitably led to decline in the arts and science and eventually, historical ruin.⁴⁷ This Christianity-conversion by force or elimination of cultural tradition of an entire people- is a far cry from the religion instituted by Christ.

Herder and Islam

Islam in Herder's view was an expression of the Arabian spirit. Arabs, he believed, from the remotest times have fostered sublime conceptions. They were for the most part solitary romantic men. Arabs of the desert as noble men- Carsten Niehuhr, who saw Bedouin as having preserved the natural goodness of mankind: Liberty, independence and simplicity.

In Herder's views Muhammad (SAAS) brought to birth what was already latent in Arabia, with the help of such Christian and Jewish ideas as he knew. The movement which he began showed the strength and the weakness which are typical of such movements. He was created and upheld by the virtues of the desert, courage and fidelity. It raised men out of their worship of the powers of nature and made them worshippers of one God and it raised them from the savage state to a middle degree of civilization. When the virtues of the desert grew weak the Arabian civilization ceased to grow further, but it left something behind it: the Arabic language, 'their noblest legacy' not the inheritance of the Arabs only, but a bond of intercourse between nations such as had never before existed.⁴⁸ Herder was writing

when Arabic was *Lingua Franca* of greatest part of the civilized world.

Zoroastrian Religion

Herder calls a philosophic system which could pass for an original tradition if it was not intermingled with fables of other sects. He gives great importance to this religion and describes it as follows:

The great mountain Albordy appears again in the centre of the Earth, and with its neighboring mountains stretches round it. About it the Sun revolves: from it the rivers flow, and seas and lands are distributed. The forms of things existed first in prototypes, in germs: and as in all the other mythologies of higher Asia the primitive world abounds with monsters', this too has the great bull Cayamort, from the carcase of which issued all creatures of the Earth. On the top of this mountain, as on that of the Iahs, is paradise the feat of bluffed spirits and enlightened men, and the primary source of rivers, the water of life. For the rest, the light, that divides dissipates and overcomes darkness, that fructifies the earth, and animates all creatures, is evidently the first physical principle of the whole fire-worship of the Parsees; which simple idea they have applied theologically, morally and politically, in a thousand ways.

Herder and Orient

Herder rejects the attempt of a united Europe to erect itself into a despot and her... is not a proud thought of this kind treason against the mighty nature.⁴⁹ He liked to associate himself with the "real past" and find the way of realization after experiencing it. Herder wishes to put on rails the decayed totality of German literature by comparing the original poetry of the orient with "total bookish language" of the German

literature and would activate the German literature by poetry in which unity of Nature and art, Idea and reality are unbroken.

One of the reasons Haym gives for Herder's interest in orient is his deep religiousness and the intensive occupation with the Bible and this is a psychological reason for interest in orient. Haym also lists the influences of Hamann, Foster and Michael on Herder, which led to the orientation of Herder towards the east. According to Dubbek, Herder's association to orient is a necessary occurrence, the reasons for which can be found in Herder's own spiritual conceptions.⁵⁰

Herder groups all the oriental cultures together as 'the childhood of man', 'the patriarchal age' and the 'golden age of childhood of humanity.'⁵¹ He regarded Hebrew language as a later form of some 'Urorientalishe' language. He also included Boulanger's *Despotisme Orientale* in the range of his fire. The dominant idea of oriental despotism, he contends derives from empires of much later times. The original oriental despotism was rather an idyllic, undifferentiated simplicity, a patriarchal 'constitution' in which wisdom rather than science, fear of God rather than wisdom, filial love rather than preciosity were the order of the life.⁵²

In the sixth book of ideas Herder deals with organization of beautifully built people of the part of the earth (Asia) and at the outset deals with India. He describes the land and way of living and writes:

The Hindus are the gentle human beings. They do not harm any living being. They respect what life brings forth and feed on the simplest food, milk, rice, fruits, healthy herbs that their mother land provides⁵³.

The most anciently cultivated languages are found in Asia.⁵⁴ The countries beyond the Ganges, Tibet and China, Pegu, Ava, Arracan and Brema, Tonguin, Loas, Cochin-China, Cambodia and Siam, converse in simple uninflected

monosyllables. It is probable, the early rules of their language and writing fixed this; for in this corner of Asia, the most ancient institution have remained in almost all things unchanged. Would you have languages, the extreme and almost superabundant copiousness of which is connected with a very few roots, so that they combine richness and poverty with a singular regularity and the almost childish art of expressing a new idea by a trifling change of the radical word; observe the south of Asia, from India to Syria, Arabia and Ethiopia. The languages of Bengal have fever hundred roots, the elements of reason as it were from which nouns, verbs and all the other parts of speech are formed.

Herder is conversant with old traditions of Hindus and considers it a treasure of mysteries of Brahma which are extinguished by the followers of Vishnu and Shiva. We possess in what has hitherto been brought to Europe of their mysteries, evidently modern fables alone, being only a popular mythology or an explanatory system of the philosophers. These two divaricate after the manner of fables according to different provinces, so that we have probably long to wait for the true Vedas of the Hindus, as well as for the proper Sanskrit language; and even in them we can expect little of their most ancient traditions, as they themselves deem the first part lost. The mark of the cultivation of the language is how ancient the writing is:

To Asia alone belonged the art of writing and this too in the most ancient times. The earliest polished nation of Europe, the Greeks, borrowed an alphabet from the east; and Buettner's tables show that all the rest of the alphabetical characters used in Europe were borrowed or altered, from those of the Greeks.

Along with the ancient civilization in Asia, the sciences were also cultivated. That arts and sciences were cultivated in Asia and in the adjacent country of Egypt, requires no elaborate proof. Ancient monuments and the history of nations, affirm it;

and the testimonies adduced by Goguet⁵⁵ are in every hand. In this part of the world both the useful and fine arts have been pursued very early, in some place or other but everywhere in the marked Asiatic taste; as the ruins of Persepolis and the Hindu temples, the pyramids of Egypt and many other works, of which there are still remains or of which accounts are handed down to us sufficiently prove: for almost all of these were prior to the civilization of Europe, and in Africa and America there is nothing to compare with them.

Commenting on the existence of China Herder writes:

The remotest people of Asia, who boast of the highest antiquity, the Chinese, have no authentic history prior to the year 722 before our era. The reigns of Fohi and Hoangti are mythological; and what precedes Fohi, the ages of sprits, or of the elements personified is considered as allegorical fiction by the Chinese themselves.

After China, Herder writes about Tibet, where we find the position of the earth round a lofty central mountain still more perspicuous; for the whole mythology of this ecclesiastical empire is founded on it. It's height and circumferences are tremendously depicted: monsters and giants are its guards: seven seas and seven mountains of gold surround it.

Herder and Oriental Poetry

In Nantes, Herder read the translation from Islamic oriental languages particularly the Persian⁵⁶. This was the time when Europe looked towards the east with lot of interest. They became acquainted with the east through trade tours and crusades. Herder considers necessity the mother of poetry and religion among the first conditions which made its invention necessary.⁵⁷ Vividity of the biblical Language is a quality of the oriental poetry and he tried to explain it from the Nature of the orient.

The oriental poetry is the Ursprung (Origin) of the "*erste*

schaffende urgeist in der Sprache". Herder believes that real poetry should be associated with the spirit of the Nation and this is how Herder's Idea of the Vorbildlichkeit of the oriental poetry developed. He wishes to enrich the poetry of the German language by imitating the Foreign Poetry and this quest was fulfilled by Latin, Greek and Oriental language. He believed that the old languages have like old nations more characteristics in comparison to the new. The oriental poetry (Bible) possesses the sign of *Ursprunglichkeit* as the unbroken unity of an *Idee-und-Realität*. This is the second nature the unity between man and God. Nature and art leads to the holy poetry and this is what is to be imitated.

Herder considers Bible as the "*Alteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*" but the oldest Mythology und Poetik is the "*Philosophie über Naturgesetz*". Bible at the same time is a work of oriental Genesis which has come to fore in orient. Since the original thought comes from the orient, so Herder is lead on this path and he thought that all the qualities of natural, original and primary poetry are given in oriental Literature.

With his intensive engagement with the Bible the interest in orient and its poetry was aroused, though without the explication of the Bible and its functions as a poetical work, engagement with Klopstock and Hamann; Herder's connection with orient is not imaginable.

In the *Humanitätsbriefe* (letter 84) Herder gives a brief historical and descriptive account of provincial poetry but is opposed to the idea that the origin of rhyme in European poetry could be traced back through the Troubadours to the Arabs. Herder wrote at first that there has been a lot of conflict about the origin of the Rhyme and searched it among Northern Lands, Arabs, Monks, Greeks and Romans. About it a children's Rhyme with the motto, "All that can rhyme, rhymes" can be played. He minimizes the Arabic Elements in provincial poetry and stresses the indigenous growth of the *gaya ciencia* stimulated

by the contact with Arabs, but developed along its own lives. But later he attributes much greater significance to the contribution of the Arabs. Even in the matter of the rhyme he modifies his opinion.

Herder deems that the Arabic influence was first as great on the context as on the forms of the Troubadours works. He admits that there were certain elements which the European could not absorb as for example "Mahomed's Lehre" was as alien to them as Homer and Greek mythology to the Arabs". What was adopted was the "Genius of the work" that is the Arabic thought and life forms.

References and Notes

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21. J. G. Herder, *Sämmtliche werke*, Hrg. Bernhard Suphan 33. Bände, Berlin, 1877-99, 30 : 135, 1967 will be hereafter referred as *Suphan* with volume no.
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24. Sir Muhammad Iqbal was a poet and philosopher of Pakistan.
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27. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, 1: 10.
28. Nietzsche, *Nachlass* (NL 12 2 (148).
29. Friedrich S.J. Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, Vol. 4: *Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Leibnitz*, Garden City, N.Y. Doubleday, Image Books, 1963, p. 37.
30. Alexander Gillies, *Modern Language Studies*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1945, p. 93.
31. Greek for one and all that is God and all that exists are one.
32. *Suphan*, 7:374
33. *Haym* I 669.
34. *Suphan*, 16:419.
35. Roy Pascal, *The German Strum und Drag*, Manchester: Manchester in Press, 1967, p. 225.
36. *Suphan*, 14 – Preface.
37. Herder Biefe am Moses Mendelsohn. Riga early April 1769.
38. *Ibid.*, p. 345
39. Herder, *Sämtliche wrke*-16.456
40. Sadi Shirazi – A Persian poet.
41. *Suphan*, 16 : 471-72
42. *Ibid.*, p. 472
43. *Suphan*, 14:207
44. *Suphan*, 13/14 – conclusion – P. 678
45. *Suphan*, 13 : 375 : 87
46. *Ibid.*, 14 : 339.
47. *Ibid.*, 14 : 330.
48. J. G. Herder, *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, Riga/Leipzig, 1781-91, Vol I, pp. 336-541.
49. *Ibid.*, Vol II, p. 206, Eng Translation, *Reflections on the Philosophy of History of Mankind*, Chicago, 1968, pp. 116-118.
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57. *Suphan.*, 32:104.