The Divine Comedy and its Relevance to the Islamic Sources

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Abstract

Divine Comedy is composed by Dante (an Italian poet: 1265-1331), circa 1307 AD. This religious epic contains one hundred odes in three parts: Hell, Cleaner, terrestrial and celestial paradise. Each part has a component of thirty-three anthem. It is unique in its artistic features. The theme is a journey to another unseen world, where Dante tries to make that world near to our world explaining the characters and their morals describing also the real characters of the medieval ages. Dante was influenced by Virgil in Aeneid (Aeneis), Ibn `Arabi in "Conquests of Mecca" and the story of Muhammad's midnight journey.


1. Introduction: (The Poetic Epics)

The epic is a literary genre, a poetic simulation at Aristotle. (ʿAḥmad Kamāl Zaki (Dr.): Studies in literary criticism, p: 20, house of Al-Andalusia, Beirut, Lebanon) The poetry of old epics has flourished at the dawn of the humanity that tells the events of the battles, championship and heroes in a simple way, away from the mental and technical complexities. The epic also contains the acts of wonder and extraordinary incidents (Some chosen aspects in Comparative Literature, p: 37), but it is not only a narration about the heroism, scenes of the wars, symbolic signals of heroes and their heroic attitudes, but also it is a presentation of the doctrines of a nation, its ideas, culture, hopes, pains, dreams, ideals, morals and wishes. (The story in Persian literature, p: 99)

One of the most important elements in the epic is the description with the dialogue, images of the characters and speeches. But the second most important element is the story taking care of the digressions and secondary incidents. The epic is completely different to the play and the story. (Some chosen aspects in Comparative Literature, p: 37)

The epic is counted a great incident as being an artistic unit, although it has many sub events, battles, fighting of the heroes, this huge incident is considered as a string, which is organized by each of these events such as the beads of the chain are organized in its string, as the story begins, develops and worsens, then walks towards a final solution in the end.

2. The Religious Epics
A. Iliad and Odyssey

These are two epics composed by Homer from Greek. The first tells about the siege of the city of Troy by Greeks and their inability to open the city by the force, but in the end or ten years later they tried to enter the city by a means of the deception through a hollow wooden horse known as a Trojan horse, they put the champions of Greece inside its stomach. The factors of the war were purely personal: Paris son of the king of Troy abducted Helen a beautiful wife of the king of Sparta, so the people from Sparta and their allies from other Greek cities stormed and declared this war for the revenge. The second tells about the
risks were taken by the hero Odysseus King of Ithaca and one of the heroes of the Trojan War in the way of his return to his homeland, this is only an appendix to the Iliad. (ʿAmin ʿAbdul Majeed Badawi (Dr.): A Round in Shahnameh by Firdausi, p: 20 Library of Egyptian Renaissance)

Whereas the Iliad and Odyssey to Homer has a technical organic unity, the meaning of the epic and its characteristics distinguished is determined on the basis of the characteristics of the Iliad.

Despite the fact that the dozens of poets in all European literature had written afterwards some long poems divided into the chapters and songs in various subjects later and they wanted to call it epics, but this attempt did not succeed after the features of the epic that had become fixed specifically by the genius of the blind poet Homer in Iliad and Odyssey, then in Epic "Aeneid" by the Roman poet Virgil (October 15, 70 BC – September 21, 19 BC).

B. Aeneid
Its theme is related to the Iliad of Homer and its hero (Ines) one of allies Troy, travelled in a group of his people, until he reached Italy, where he was honored by the king Lalinos and married his daughter then he became the caliph of the kingdom, and Romlos was in his generations -as it is reported- who was the founder of the city Rome. (ʿAhmad Shayib: Origins of the literary criticism, p: 311)

In the sixteenth century the Great French poet Ronsar had written also a long poem called Epic (Frenchad), as well as in Italy in the early European Renaissance the greatest poet Dante wrote a long poem which consists on three large volumes called: (The Divine Comedy) -as we will see soon as this is the topic of this article- as well as there are some other long poems that have been written since the age of European Renaissance until today such as "the Paradise lost" written by English poet Milton, (Henriad): Song of the King Henry by Wolter and (Legend of the centuries) by Victor Hugo, all of these poems are also called sometimes "Epics" though they are not in fact as well, because they do not have the artistic and spiritual characteristics seen in the art of epics. (Muḥammad Mandūr (Dr.): The literature and its arts, p: 44-45)

C. Ramayana and Mahabharata
The ancient nations of the East also had some epics such as: (Ramayana) and (Mahabharata) composed by the priests of Hindus. These are two long poems contain two hundred thousand betas. This is a story about the competition among the children generated by Bharat, who competed for the Kingdom and fought for eighteen days in ancient times. In the ends of the story one of the two fighter houses was destroyed and the princes of the second house decided to leave the world and start a journey to the heaven (Indra). (ʿAhmad Shāyib: Origins of the literary criticism, Library of the Egyptian Renaissance, 1973, p. 311)

D. Shahnameh
As well as the epic (Shahnameh) composed by the great Persian poet Firdausi containing sixty thousand betas according to the well-known sayings. It is a story of the tragedy of the Father (Rustam) with his son (Suhrab). It is the only one epic as being the epic of the whole Persian nation. The forefront of this epic consist on 237 beta, then the story begins containing the history of Persian kings, which represents the part of the era of the united kingdom, the era in which the world was ruled by the one king was undisputed and obeyed by the mankind, jinn and animals alike. (ʿAbdul Majeed Badawi (Dr.): A Round in SHAHNAMEH of Firdausi, pp. 20-21)

If the reader wants more details about this story, he has to study the entrance of the Shahnameh translated by ʿAbdul Wahhāb ʿAzzām where he can find a good study of this great art.

So "Ramayana, Mahabharata and Shahnameh" these three epics have the same characteristics that shall be characterized by the poetic epics, that are available in the poetry Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, thus these three poems deserve to be called epics in its strict sense. While we can not use this term which
is specified only for the epics, on those long historical poems written by some Arab poets in modern times, such as the long poems of ʿAbd al-Muʔammad Shawqī and ʿAbd al-Muḥarram in the history of Arabs and Islam, and other similar long poems, because the art of epics has been extinct with the primitive mental extinction. (Muḥammad Mandūr (Dr.): The literature and its arts, p: 51)

3. The Divine Comedy and Its Relevance to the Islamic Culture

The eastern and western studies have banded together cooperating each other to discover the influence of Islamic culture in the epic (the divine comedy) composed by the great Italian poet Dante. Here it will be better to mention the opinions of researchers and critics on this topic before we take up the issue of relevance and impact to shed some light on some of the notable studies on the subject.

Among those researches and studies there is a scientific lecture delivered by a Spanish Orientalist Miguel Asin Palacios in front of the Spanish Academy about (the impact of Islam on the divine comedy) and then Asin published a book in Spanish about (Islamic science after the life in Divine Comedy) in the year 1919, then professor Harold Sutherland put his summary in Spanish translated into English entitled: (Islam and the divine comedy) in London in 1926, and proved in this book –after having been studying this subject since twenty years- that Dante in his great poem (the divine comedy) was influenced by the Islamic heritage. (Tāhā Nīdā (Dr.): Comparative Literature, House of the knowledge, Egypt, 1980, p. 145)

A. Asin Placios

We see Books by Miguel Asin Palacios: "When first published in 1926 this book aroused much controversy. The theory expounded in the book was that the Islamic sources in general and the writings of Ibn Ṭarabī in particular, formed the basis of Dante’s poem Divine Comedy, the poem which symbolised the whole culture of medieval Christianity... (Harold Sutherland): (The translator)". "Miguel Asin Placios (1871-1944) was a Spanish scholar of the Islamic studies and Arabic language, and a Roman Catholic priest. He was primarily known for suggesting Muslim sources for ideas and motifs present in Dante's Divine Comedy, which he discussed in his book: La Escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia (1919). He wrote on medieval Islam, extensively on al-Ghazālī. A major book "El Islam cristianizado", (1931) presents a study of Sufism through the works of Muḥyuddīn Ibn ʿArabi of Murcia in Andalusia (medieval Al-Andalusia). Asin also published other comparative articles regarding certain Islamic influences on Christianity and on mysticism in Spain".

It has been shown for this Orientalist Asin Palacios that there is a close resemblance between what is mentioned in some Islamic sources, such as the story of midnight journey of Prophet Muḥammad, and (The Message of the Forgiveness) by ʾAbu Al-ʾEla Al-Maʿarri, and (Conquests of Mecca) by Muḥyuddīn Ibn ʿArabi, and what is mentioned in the divine comedy by the poet Dante. (Muḥammad Saʿeed Jamāl al-Din (Dr.): A Message of the Immortality, p. 49) Perhaps Asin as being a Spanish Scientist in the affairs of Arab world was the first of those researchers who recognized and accepted this fact.

When the opinions of Asin in (the divine comedy) published in the form of a book, raised eyebrows, wonder and despair in the hearts of readers, because those bold opinions and conclusions that were included by Asin in his book had a deep impact on the general literary opinion. Those views have raised some violent controversies and discussions clashed between their supporters and opponents or between a team who were specialized in the study of Dante's literature and a team of Orientalists. Especially during the ceremony held on the occasion of the centenary on the death of the poet Dante. Those violent controversies echoed in all parts of the world, especially in Italy. So the comparative studies about the divine comedy were started by the writers and critics from both teams.

The Italian poet Dante had used to see by the telescope only used by the fanatic zealots, not by the Orientalists in their consideration, a telescope of the severe intolerance against prospects and new ideas
contrary to their religious beliefs, customs, traditions, culture and language, but this Spanish critic Asin managed to dispel its covering and detected its marks, because he knew the original truth that his theories had raised the opposition, especially in the scientific community in Italy, and the reasons for the opposition were not the phenomenon of mental lethargy or fear of new ideas or literary funk only, which usually appears in the front of unfamiliar new ideas, but it was - generally - a result of what we may call the intolerance of National Heritage or the desire to defend the national heritage and the protection of its originality, the price of protection has no matter against any attempt to undermine the validity of affiliation with or exposure to the authenticity or minimize its grandeur and splendor, that were subjects taken into the account at the time, Although Asin accepted in the last chapters of his book that the recognition of the close and essential adoption on other sources which was continued by Dante will not reduce the popularity of the poet, nor the greatness of his poetry and the importance of his poem, because he believed that it was easy to feel a deep similarity between the world of the afterlife described by Dante in his epic (the divine comedy) and the same world as described in the Islamic sources, ie in the story of (midnight journey of Muhammad the prophet), but the boldness of Asin in these views and his recognition that the poet had depended on Islamic sources was disliked by the Italian people, who saw that his feelings and dignity had become scratched by the doubts and suspicions raised by the author Asin against the authenticity of attribution of this poem: (the divine comedy) and its national originality. In fact the opinion of Asin in this regard indicates that his views caused a wide reaction among the Italian scientists, writers and thinkers.

One of those who supported this new opinion in France was Andre Bellsort and the other one was Louis Gillet who (the second writer) said in the book of Asin Palacios: "It is the most important book authored in the literature of Dante, which is the only book made us to be forward one step in identifying the poet…".

One of those researchers who were reserved in accepting this influence was an Italian Orientalist (Gabrieli), who raised in his booklet two objections were also repeated by many researchers latter: First, the similarity -between the epic of Dante on the one hand and the story of (Midnight Journey of Muhammad the Prophet) and Arab sources on the other hand- is a superficial similarity. Second, Dante was not fluent in Arabic, to know those Islamic sources mentioned by Asin. The second objection really had a strongest pillar of the opposition to reject that Dante was influenced by the Arabic sources.

B. Questionnaire

Now the questions that come to the mind are as follows:

1. Whether Dante was fluent in Arabic?
2. Whether he was able -on this basis- to get that knowledge, scientific information and materials that was detected by ASIN studying the subject in Dante's epic divine comedy?
3. Then whether Dante could identify the Arab and Muslim world?
4. Whether his knowledge about the affairs of Arab and Muslim world was a broader and wider than any one of his contemporaries?
5. How he could get the way to Arab sources, such as the books of ’Abu Al-’Ela Al-Ma'arri and Muhuyuddin Ibn 'Arabi?
6. Is there any evidence can indicate that such books had been translated to any Western language?

It is true that these are pure historical questions rooted from the sources of cultural history. We need some conclusive evidences to answer these questions, as there is a need to the comparative studies conducted by Asin to prove a link between the Islamic sources and ideas woven Dante's fabric, means (The Divine Comedy).
Asin has answered to these questions altogether, saying that it was possible that Dante learnt only a simple Arabic, but simple familiarity was not enough to solve the symbols in the writings of 'Abu Al-El'a Al-Ma'arri and Muhuyuddin Ibn 'Arabi to the scientists of Arabic language, so we find in the opinion of Muḥammad Ghunaimy Hilāl that "(Asin) was unable to determine the historic way that let Dante to be influenced by Arab sources by that way specifically." (Muḥammad Ghunaimy Hilāl (Dr.): Comparative Literature, p: 154)

Asin draw the attention to the fact that we see easily the great attention to Islamic history and civilization in the literature of Dante indicating in the end that it is possible that Dante had some knowledge about some Islamic sources through one of the translations that made its way to him, but the situation that let Dante to get the needed information from the Islamic sources remained somewhat ambiguous for a specific period, but Asin has managed by his broad intelligence and culture to discover the missing link in the chain of research imperceptibly proving the relation of influence and impact between Spain which was under the Jewish and Christian Arab influence in the thirteenth century and Italy in the fourteenth century. (Culture of India: monthly cultural magazine, March 1955, p: 84)

Today the missing link in the search string has discovered, but how? Muhammad Ghunaimy Hilāl tells us the whole trustable story which makes us to find the answer to this question, as well as we find the answer to the question posed in an article entitled: "What was borrowed by Dante from Islam?" published by the magazine: The culture of India, March 1955 AD. First, we go back to Ghunaimy Hilāl who writes in his book: (Comparative Literature) saying: "It was the end of all opposition and all suspicion against this influence in front of researchers by the attempts done by two orientalists (from the scholars of the West). One of them was Italian named Chiroly in his long detailed book entitled: "The midnight Journey of Muḥammad and the issue of the Arabic-Spanish source of the divine comedy". Second of them was Spanish who was the Orientalist Munoz Sndino in his book entitled: "The midnight Journey of Muḥammad", each of them has made his search individually, -ie each of them not aware of the existence of the other- but each of them published his book separately at one time nearly in the year 1949 and the results of their research agreed, despite the fact that one of them did not call the other. They both discovered the source of Dante in an Arab manuscript originally, with the theme: "Midnight Journey of the Messenger". (Muḥammad Ghunaimy Hilāl (Dr.): Comparative Literature, p: 154), where they were able to put the translation of a copy in Spain into Latin and French about the story of Midnight Journey of Muḥammad, it was proved that this story was well-known in Italy in the fourteenth century, which had raised some new lights on this subject: link of Dante to Islam.

There is what can be proved that the investigator from Israel Ibrahim Vaqim who was the translator of Ibn Hishām and Zarkali before the year 1264 AD who translated the story "Midnight Journey of the Messenger" from Arabic into Latin. The fact that the Italian scholar Bnventora according to the desire of the King Alfonso, who was called Alfonso Hakim Alfonso -el- Sabio had also developed two opposite translation of the story of Midnight Journey of Muḥammad, one of them in French and other in Latin, depending on the translation lost. French version is kept in Oxford, while the Latin version is deposited in Paris and Vatican. These two versions published in Italy and Spain at the same time at the hands of Elsinore Enrico Chiroly and Elsinore Jose Monaz. In addition to the introduction in a full detail set by the author Bnventora Dasina who explained the sources and factors of this translation that led to its development, we find in our hands an honest manner translation by an Arab author was known at that time which likely lost its original version, but it was widespread in Spain during the thirteenth century.

We can say that the original copy must be related to the oral texts that were transferred or summarized by Asin in his book.

Those facts that were included reportedly in the story of "Midnight Journey of the Messenger" are as follows:

- Landing of Angle Gabriel to the Prophet Muḥammad and beginning of the Journey from the Sacred Mosque to Al-Aqsa Mosque riding the holy Buraq: a creature on which the prophet made
His ascension to the seven heavens as it is stated in the Holy Quran "God who is beyond every definition, managed for His servant a midnight Journey from the Sacred Mosque to the Al-Aqṣa Mosque, who blessed around it to let him see some of our signs".

- His riding on the back of a creature named (Al-Buraq), on which the prophet visited the seven heavens, where he saw the angels in their different colors and forms, where Azrael was amongst them, and his meeting was held with one of the prophets on each of the seven heavens.
- His entering the paradise, and enjoying with its features, and receiving the board set, accepting the number of prayers granted and fasting period.
- His rising towards the hell, passing its seven divisions, watching what happened to its people who were suffering kinds of the torment, and enjoying with the Gabriel's talk and explaining the Hereafter whole the time of the journey.
- Then his falling to the ground, trying without any response to convince the men of Quraish, telling them what he had seen was a real vision, and writing those events immediately by 'Abu Bakr and Ibn 'Abbas, certificating its truth.

These facts indicate that the translator has proved that he was honest and master in maintaining the spirit of the original script in the translation, but we do not have the space for the details of the translation here more than we have mentioned.

Perhaps the factor of translation of this book into three languages - at least - is a cultural curiosity in that period of time, and the other factor is the jealous of King Alfonso and his interest in the defense of Christianity, until it became with its contents and material in every hand in the Christian West, and spread soon widely, because it is used as a reference in the multiple citations in Spanish, French and Italian documents and manuscripts.

As well as it can be derived from the writing of Italian author Chiroly that the scholar San Pedro baskowal had drawn and inspired the details of his description from the story of (Isrā and Miʿrāj): (the midnight journey) which was content of his writing known by the title: (Super Estia Mohammedan). Asin prefers that Dante in describing the Divine Comedy had been depended directly on this writing. The three translations developed by Bventora are attributed historically to the early fourteenth century, and some fixed clues and reasonable conclusions show that the Latin translation leaked to Britiny which is reserved currently in Paris. The French translation leaked to Britain, which is preserved in Oxford, and the third, which is in Italian, leaked to Parvans and stored in the Vatican. This information indicates directory that the story of (Miʿrāj): (The Midnight Journey of Muhammad) did not wait too long to pass Mountains Beranez. (The culture of India, March 1955, p: 86)

However, the quotations by Italians and their citations in a full form from this book show that it was speed in Italy and was well-known in the middle of the fourth century or the late fifteenth century ie in the same time when the books of Frensikanian Father Roberto Krasselo were published in the defense of Christianity. This author who published his book known by Aspigiodlavid during the period of Erajonezhi which came with a summary of the book called by Turks (Helmirj), which is known to the Arabs by the story (Miʿrāj): (The midnight Journey of Muḥammad). There is no doubt that this book is a copy of what is intended in the Latin version. On this basis, we are very near to the era of Dante. To make the distance of time nearer we mention that the Tuscan poet Opertti circa 1350 AD who evidenced from the story (Miʿrāj), as he described (Mohammedan Paradise) in his famous book known by Ditamndo. The great investigator Asin did not spare any effort in obtaining the material of this book based on Islamic sources. (The culture of India, March, 1955)

These evidences that we have mentioned are sufficient to indicate that a comprehensive and fair translation of the story of (Isrā and Miʿrāj) was provided to Western Europe and Italy in the fourteenth
century, which was in a position to any person can get knowledge in these three languages: French, Italian and Latin without a knowledge of Arabic at all.

Muḥammad Ghunaimy Hilāl also has dealt with these historical facts briefly. He confirmed that it is one of the facts proved that Dante had a lot of knowledge collected from other cultures that were available to him. It is impossible that a conversant person like Dante did not knew about what was translated from Islamic civilization in the Middle Ages in Europe, which was the contemporary civilization had the superiority and control on the minds and kingdoms together. In the divine comedy itself, there is what can prove that Dante had a knowledge about Islamic culture, yet he remained arch-enemy of Islam -because he was under control of the devotion to his faith, he was representing the mentality of the Middle Ages and Crusades- he mentions confirming that he appreciates Islamic Philosophy and its philosophers. He mentioned Ibn Sinā and Ibn Rushd the wise men who helped on the progress of human thought, but they had been deprived from the grace of the true faith in his mind, so both of them were in the first ranks of the hell: (Limbo) where neither punishment nor tears, but the moan and sorrows, so they both understood with Virgil code of the mind and poetic wisdom. (Muḥammad Ghunaimy Hilāl (Dr.): Comparative Literature, p: 155)

On the basis of these historical facts Ghuniamy Hilāl decided without any hesitation that that Dante was influenced by Islamic literature and this influence can not be said a coincidence or confluence of thoughts. Due to the provisions of the points of agreement and similarities in the idea and theme between the comedy divine and Islamic sources of the story (Miʿrāj), Asin and other critics of the West decided without any doubt that Dante was influenced by the Islamic sources, because all the individual elements that make up the story (Miʿrāj) and that are available in all Arab sources Asin has collected and studied them.

4. Impact of Islamic Sources on the Divine Comedy

Now the question is that what extent of the impact of this fixed contact to Islamic sources has caused in the simulation of this epic? Does this similarity as the idea and its technical template indicate an absolute impact of Arabic sources on what was imagined by the Italian poet in his description of the Occult world or the world of resurrection after death?

In fact, this area is considered more accurate than the other aspects of the subject. A historian named Scenior Monz has responded to these questions. He sees that "the link between the story (Miʿrāj) and The divine comedy is related to the transcription and translation with some additional improvements that added the literary and spiritual beauty wider, but the direct originality in the version stayed without any ambiguity, as it was not possible to be seen and come out to the world of light and existence without the presence of the original image.

The scientist Chiroly who was known by an investigator had studied and analyzed the topic: the relation between Dante and Islamic texts, at the end of his researches that identified how Christian historians were influenced by the texts of other Islamic sources beyond the (Miʿrāj) Story? But the results that were found by him were very complicated. They were not only for the defense of Christianity in a trivial image reflected in his description of the heaven as it is described in Qur’an, and despite the fact that the writers of Christianity could not also describe the hell as it is characterized by the Islamic teachings. He could not deny those efforts made by Islamic thinkers to dye the paradise and hell in the world of resurrection after death, with the spiritual color and to reconcile between the prevailing tradition and new theories of the resurrection after death.

The total attempts of historians and scientists in the Christian world in the field of interpretation and analysis reached the peak by the emergence of a team of the scientists of Oxford who tried very carefully to put those efforts and attempts done by Ibn Sinā and Ibn Rushd to reconcile between the Qur’anic texts and what was mentioned in the philosophical reflections and other attempts done by Rmando Lulu who was the best writer of Islamic heritage in the third century, who drunk from the
original sources and references, even managed to provide his contemporaries as the fullest and most comprehensive real picture of Islamic Thought.

This author lived in the comprehensive research which is enough to highlight what is the importance of Chiroly's books in explaining the direct link between Dante and Islam as a prelude to estimate the range of the impact of the story (Mi‘rāj) on the divine comedy. We are at this point of the research in the knowledge of Dante about the religion and Islamic civilization we must not ignore the importance of what is narrated by Muhammad the Prophet mentioned in the chapter twenty-eighth about the hell in the divine comedy, because Dante does not differ in this chapter from what is narrated by the Prophet. It is noted that Dante rarely had cited directly from the authors of Islamic thought, like Al-Ghazālī, Ibn Sinā and Ibn Rushd, if he had a link to them that link was through their writings transferred to Latin.

In fact, the knowledge of Dante about the Arab and Muslim World was not less than the knowledge of any other person among his contemporary intellectuals, because it was not possible for Dante as being a well-known thinker in his time and having a high culture that he was not benefited by the other works in the philosophy, literature and Islamic ideas had been leaked to him, such as the theory of Ibn Sinā in the light, which is mentioned specially by the author Konfivuo and the other paragraphs that were mentioned in the series of (Tolitana), which talked about the distinguishing mark which is put on the forehead of the blessed slaves by God, which is remove by the angels at their entering these gardens of bliss. Such as this description brings to the memory that was mentioned in the epic of Dante. Dante mentioned that the tags characterize the sin and then the divine comedy talks also about removing and wiping them off the forehead of Dante as he prepares for his journey to the sky.

Chiroly sees that the knowledge of Dante about the story (Mi‘rāj) and his readings have considered one of the other factors to compare between the sanctity of texts of the divine comedy, where are the facts spin around a trip to the world of the afterlife, and there is in addressing this topic a High power of faith and the beauty of art which made the story (Mi‘rāj) more beautiful, having some pictures came from the gardens of the paradise and houses of the hell. Dante brought his theory known by (Vianov) means the new life taking it out to the world of existence. This idea revolves around the eternal love.

As the general impacts we can see the link between this poem and Islamic sources in that character drawn by the poet in the role of a kind guide, who answers to the questions removing all the doubts and suspicions, which is seen in the person (Virgil) in relation to his sweetheart (Beatrice) in Dante's poem, and the angel Gabriel in relation to the Prophet Muhammad in (Mi‘rāj) story. We can see the link between two narrated stories in those multiple questions that go on in the dialogue between (Pluto) and (Nmbroca) in the divine comedy, which reminds us some of the phrases contained in the Italian translation of (Mi‘rāj) story.

In this regard (the comparison) it is better to emphasize that the link between the elements of the divine comedy and Islamic sources, etc was not a direct link, although each case was related to the other sources of inspiration that were available more directly in the imagination of Dante and his cultural configure. If the importance is given to the different sources that were used by Dante, that were related to his spiritual trends, whether those were Christian or classical or evangelical references, it is not reasonable to say that Dante had no any familiarity with the Arab-Muslim world, because those sources mentioned above can provide for Dante the same motivations and the same Islamic ideas to deal with the same topics that were explained in the full detail in his epic, that can be returned to the story of (Mi‘rāj). The truth of this view becomes more clear in the picture of the humanity drawn by Dante in the heavens (Goff) so that it becomes possible to combine between this picture and the picture of a bird painted by the Islamic story of (Mi‘rāj) as the size of its body extends in the seven heavens, while its head was prostrating under the throne of God to praise. In the same way, the image of the stair bounded with the
astronomy in the sky, - which was made by the gold with its transparent rays - it is impossible to say that it is not inspired by the (Mi’rāj) story.

Chiroly sees that the text which was narrated about "the straight path" which can not be crossed only by those the Paradise is written for them, and then the homes of the hell that situated underneath "the straight path", all of these had photographed and painted through his experiences, that were passed by Dante before his reaching to the sky, so all of these -as the whole- can be said that were by the Islamic influences on the widest level.

No one also can deny that the description of paradise mentioned in the story (Mi’rāj) is also inspired by the Islamic influences. In spite of all this we can not say it was only the distinctive factor in the inspirations of Dante, because any attempt to limit his inspirations on the Islamic influences only will be considered an excessive in controversy, due to the presence of other competing elements and factors in the thinking of the poet necessarily.

5. Conclusion

Thus, after summarizing these adequate examples adapted from the comparative studies carried out by a group of investigators recently we say that these two Western authors Asin and Chiroly who studied the story (Mi’rāj) had arrived to the fullest extent of the agreement and understanding in their conclusions, even the way and condition to study the text was also similar. On this basis, we must leave the critic to decide himself freely whether he will be satisfied to the opinion of this historian or that, depending on his critical qualifications and his logical sense. I see that there is no way of the comparison between the two, because it is a matter belongs to the personal knowledge about the content of the divine comedy as the materials, Dante's thinking and its technical aspects. All these were combined in the personality of the critic Asin, where he stood, declaring that the Islamic references that were collected for the study and analysis from the different sources of Arab literature are no longer hidden from the curious writers in the Latin Christian world, although it was behind the curtain of a different foreign language and civilization. Asin tracked to the maximum extent of leaking this Arab Eastern heritage to the western Roman world, beating all barriers and obstacles strongly by the power of his faith to watch how does the heritage flourish and thrive again wonderfully in the greatest technical feats of the West.

The first of those bridges that were passed by the Eastern Arab heritage to reach the western world represents the Crusades that played a great role in the transfer of Muslim civilization to Europe. The Island of Sicily was the second bridge to transfer the Muslim civilization to Europe. Andalusia was the third for the dissemination of Islamic culture as a key center for the spread of Islamic civilization in Europe. Ottoman Turks also played a noteworthy role in this regard.

We must acknowledge here that Arab literary works of Muslim and Arab intellectuals, such as al-Ghazali, Ibn Sinā, Ibn ‘Arabi, Ibn Rushd and others alone were not in the hands of Dante, but the product of the masterpieces of Arab Thought as the whole, which had arrived to him or to the cultural environment, which was Surrounded him, because of the curiosity, through the translations, that were developed according to the order given by King Alfonso.

As for the impact of (The message of forgiveness) to Abu al-‘Elā al-Ma’arri on his epic (The divine comedy), there is only the superficial similarity between them, which prompted some researchers to say: "that Dante had been looked at "the message of forgiveness", so his great epic (comedy divine) was influenced by this message", and that is because of the lake of the conclusive evidences indicate the presence of any link between them. (Ṭahā Nidā (Dr.): Comparative Literature, p. 145)

At the end we note that a team believes that the link between the divine comedy and Islamic sources is the best proof of the existence of the influence of Islamic culture in the epic Dante. While another team is committed to some reservations in its comparative studies between the divine comedy and Islamic sources, accepting the existence of Islamic influence, but as far as it considers some individual
images and different motives inspired by Dante completely different to what was inspired from the Islamic sources.

At the end of our conclusion we thank those efforts made by the two Western historians, one Hispanic and the other Italian to unveil Islamic influence in the divine comedy, where they did not recognize the barriers and curtains of language and moral and material distances. By this way that beautiful Semitic flower was found, which grew in Arab-Muslim soil, and its beautiful smell spread out from the Islamic world to the Christian world, and especially to the Spanish territories that were Forum of Muslim Christian civilizations met and mixed together and live friendly in a wonderful atmosphere of the harmony. The divine comedy or holy epic represents that flower, which is considered the greatest technical feats of the West, which is created by a contribution from the both: the earth and the heavens. This historical fact is sufficient for the bold declaration of the migration of cultural currents from East to West by the distant divergent distances and in different periods of the time.
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