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| RESEARCH ARTICLE

## The Innate Journey of Knowing God and His Graces in Hayy Ibn Yaqzan's Novel

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| ABSTRACT

The innate journey of knowing God is through the mind itself, without the help of any other human being. This study examines the innate journey of knowing God and His graces through an analysis of the novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* by Ibn Tufail. This fact can be seen in how the novel's character, Ibn Yaqzan, is able to distinguish himself from the natural animal existence surrounding him, whereby his levels of awareness rise from sensory perception through contacting and dealing with things to mental awareness through mental consideration. According to this concept, in this case, we find a person who is not connected to society and does not grow up in a social environment. The development and improvement of Ibn Yaqzan's mind and his senses, the improvement of his methods in dealing with others, and his acquiring civilised and cultural characteristics show that he is a primitive person who has not reached a stage of complete humanity. The main hypothesis of this research paper is that anyone can discover God by himself/herself and that the human soul has the ability to realise its value and develop an awareness of its difference and distinction. It demonstrates that solitude is required for the exercise of this awareness. Moreover, it shows that man is capable of acquiring all human virtues without necessarily being a part of society.

| KEYWORDS

Innate journey, God, grace, animal existence, humanity

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### 1. Introduction

Being aware of God and His blessings is an innate knowledge. It is possible for any sane person to realise that this universe has a great creator who runs the entire universe by His will. This research focuses on Ibn Yaqzan's intellectual journey, during which he relies solely on reason and introspection to learn numerous truths about himself, the universe, and God. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan was written by Muḥammad Ibn Abd Al-Malik Ibn Ṭufayl, an Andalusian philosopher. He makes an effort to demonstrate how natural reason alone can produce morality and universe-related knowledge that is in line with revelation. The story concerns a child who is reared by a doe on an equatorial island. This child grows up to learn the truth about the universe and his own place in it without the aid of society, language, or tradition, and also without being hindered by them. The novel shows how man alone is able to reach the level of a complete human being by observing and contemplating nature without any education from other human beings. Furthermore, it demonstrates how an individual's access to information consists of absolute facts and that any human being is capable of achieving this. The author also poured into this story his opinions manifested in the absence of conflict between reason and Sharia (Islamic Sharia) or between philosophy and religion in the form of a narrative. This is due to the fact that the story represents the human mind, which is immersed in the light of the upper world and reaches the realities of the universe and existence by instinct and contemplation after man has received them through prophecy. Therefore, Ibn Yaqzan's story emphasises the importance of subjective experience as part of the wider intellectual and religious experience. Through this story, the writer emphasises the need to ward off the contradiction between rational knowledge that comes through rational consideration and the legal knowledge derived from revelation. This study looks at how Ibn Yaqzan discovers much about the graces of God. The

novel depicts a gradual narrative that takes into account the logical sequence for obtaining knowledge and how this knowledge is obtained through experience and mental consideration.

Goodman has said that the novel describes how man needs companions but also how he needs to learn how to uncover truth and beauty on his own in order to live with himself (Goodman, 2009: p.90). The story is centred around a human child who lives on an island where there are no other human beings. Instead, an animal nurses him, and nature becomes his shelter. When he grew up strong, and his mind matured, he meditated on the universe; this led him to the inevitable conclusion that there was a creator of this universe. This fact is expressed by Militz when he explains how "God is your sufficiency and the source of all riches" (Militz, 1913: pp. 71-72). Thus, the story represents the human mind, which is immersed in the light of the upper world and reaches the realities of the universe and existence by instinct and contemplation.

Regarding the methodology used in this research, Fairclough's model of critical discourse analysis has been utilised to examine the novel. Fairclough's approach to analysis incorporates text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and social analysis (explanation). A careful examination of the plot has been carried out, looking specifically at the presentation of themes. Ultimate conclusions regarding the themes of the novel are presented following a thorough analysis of character and action so that a comprehensive point of view has been attained by the researcher.

## **2. Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: General Background**

The author provides the reader with the choice between two different tales that begin with Ibn Yaqzan's birth. The first details how Ibn Yaqzan would have been created from clay that was fermenting on a barren island. In order to show the feasibility of spontaneous human generation without the necessity of a mother and father, the author emphasises the significance of the island's ideal geographic location and climate (Ockley, 1708: pp.25-26). In the second, Ibn Yaqzan is deemed to be the illegitimate child of a princess and the daughter of the ruler of a sizeable inhabited island nearby. Ockley describes how Ibn Yaqzan's mother places him in a box and sets him afloat on the waves, saving him from certain death should they be found, while the arid island receives it overnight from the tides (Ockley, 1708: p.28-29). She prays to God to save her son, as the king would have killed the child. The story then commences with the baby alone on the island. While the baby is floating on the surface of the sea, everything he encounters helps him to stay alive. Some fish and calm waves help the baby to arrive at the island. A roe then observes the baby and begins to help him. When Ibn Yaqzan starts crying, the roe suckles him. She becomes a mother figure as she helps him to continue his life. She persists in suckling him and expresses love towards him. The existence of a modest climate, plentiful fruit, and no predators aids him in living safely on the island (Goodman, 2009: p.8). Ibn Yaqzan watches how the animals protect themselves. He does not have a natural covering to protect his body as the animals do. He feels ashamed because the animals are covered by hair, fur and feathers, leading him to feel alone and isolated. A description of Ibn Yaqzan's self-education is then provided by the author. When he first arrived on the island, "the Roe which had loft [sic] her Fawn heard him," so she rushed to his wailing (Ockley, 1708: p.37). The roe takes him in and feeds and raises him until he is past the age of seven. When this intelligent young child reaches adulthood, he starts to take an interest in the natural world and the animals around him. He picks up the skills necessary to dress himself, build a shelter, and raise domesticated animals in order to meet his requirements (Ibid). At this early age, he learns to imitate other animals' speech and covers parts of his body with leaves after noticing the same parts being covered with hair or feathers on the animals around him (Ben-Zaken, 2011: p.2). He starts making tools to help him fight those animals whom he considers dangerous and to collect and supply food for himself more efficiently. He has mastered the skills of self-preservation and self-subsistence (Ibid: p.3).

When Ibn Yaqzan grows up, he wonders whether the gazelle is his mother or not because she does not like him. Goodman states that when Ibn Yaqzan was seven years old, he started to behave like the animals around him, but he ultimately failed to be like them (Goodman, 2009: p.42). The animals begin to harass and attack him. Annoyed at this, he lifts a piece of wood and hits the ground, causing some animals to fall (Ibid, 2009: p.65). Subsequently, he realises that his hands are the source of his strength, and he begins to use them properly. This leads him to look at the ways in which the birds gather grass to build their nests. He then combines grass to build a bed to sleep in. When the roe gives birth, he looks at the baby and realises that he is not like him. It is then that he understands that the deer is not his mother; however, he still loves her.

After this, Ibn Yaqzan decides to swim and finds that he floats in the water. He recognises that there is air in his chest and that he will not sink (Goodman, 2009: p.103). He has a deep admiration for the birds and wants to fly as they do. He sees the body of an angel, and he tries to use his wings to fly, but he fails (Ibid: p.109). When the deer becomes sick, he finds that he cannot carry her to the water but tries to bring her water by using broken eggs as a vessel. He wonders why the deer's son does not come and take care of her. This leads him to discover that the animals do not tend to be sad and that he is different from them. Therefore, he continues to think about the deer. After her death, he touches her body and finds that it is cold (Goodman, 2009: p.116). This leads to a series of realisations. When he covers his eyes, he comprehends that he does not see. Also, when he closes his ears, he realises that he does not hear. Then, he identifies that something like that happened to his mother. He discovers that there is an organ in the human body controlling movement. He notes that the animals' body temperature was constant as long as they were alive, but

they became cold after death (Goodman, 2009: p.116). His central aim is to learn why the deer's body is cold and does not move. Hashim and Qadous assert that this led him to realise that the constant application of reason in this life is necessary for the soul to be perfect (p.44).

This is why, without using reason, a person's spirit will disappear after death. Ibn Yaqzan decides to bury the deer when he finds that other animals bury their dead. Goodman claims that Ibn Yaqzan learns the act of burying from the birds when he sees them burying their fellow species (Goodman, 2009: p.65). Hashim and Qadous also argue that when Ibn Yaqzan reached 35 years old, his thoughts were solely focused on the idea of a creator and a Perfect Being existing. Ibn Yaqzan was interested in how he first met him (p.43).

### 3. The Innate Knowing of God

Knowing God is the basis of everything because humans know God through creatures, and animals and plants are part of this. In the novel, Ibn Yaqzan discovers God and many other things through animals, plants and nature from his fitrah. As mentioned in the Quran in Romans verse 30: "the natural Way of Allah which He has instilled in all people. Let there be no change in this creation of Allah. That is the Straight Way, but most people do not know". As Goodman argues, the universe's nature, the truth about existence, the truth about himself and, most importantly, the truth about God are all things that Ibn Yaqzan is taught. Ibn Yaqzan is completely self-sufficient in this. Since no human thought can fully express the fullness of this, assistance would indeed be a hindrance (Goodman, 2009: p.177). In fact, if a person did not follow the beliefs of their family or their people, he/she would still know and discover God through their own instinct without the help of anyone else. In the novel, we realise that Ibn Yaqzan discovered the key elements of life, such as passion, anger, love, death, and old age, and he realised that there was a great or mighty person running the universe. In his book Prophet Mohamed, Berg argues that "Every Child is Born in A State of Fitrah" (Berg, 2003: p.74). In addition to this, Goodman explains how "it is that Ibn Yaqzan's soul itself is breathed into him by God, that is to say, the endowment of his fitrah is a mode of the divine" (Goodman, 2009: p.16). As a result, Ibn Yaqzan first understands God as the essential activator of forms, without whom no development is possible. He also understands that animals would not be able to utilise their limbs unless God had taught them. For instance, when the roe weans Ibn Yaqzan, he follows the roe and learns to eat some fruits.

The first attempt whereby Ibn Yaqzan tries to discover God is through discovering the soul and death. This can be seen when the roe becomes sick. Goodman emphasises how Ibn Yaqzan decided to slit her chest and look at what it contained; thus, he took stones and a dry butcher knife and used them to cut between her ribs. He searched her chest until he found the heart and saw that it was wrapped in a strong membrane with tight ties. This anatomical process led him to the animal's soul, and he considered the body. He found that it had numerous organs and mastered its senses and movements. He found that it was at one with the soul whose principle stems from a single decision (Goodman, 2009: p.122, p.113). Thus, he discovered that an animal's spirit is the first element of a living being and that whenever it is separated from the animal, the animal dies. His central aim was to learn why the roe's body is cold and does not move. Here, he discovers the soul and death.

The second way in which Ibn Yaqzan attempts to learn more about God is through his realising the superiority of his own body in terms of its features and uniqueness. However, he nevertheless experiences distress due to the multiplicity of its parts and the diversity of its motor and perceptual functions. This led him to conduct an anatomical experiment on the body of the roe after her death. Goodman argues that this death was a significant event in the life of Ibn Yaqzan, as it motivated him further to complete the process of his self-discovery, examining his existence and understanding what happened to the roe so that he can cure her and return her to what she was (Goodman, 2009: p.141, p.143).

Moreover, Ibn Yaqzan exerts efforts to discover God through meditating on the universe and what exists around it. He realises that this universe must have a maker, as everything must have a creator. Goodman argues that when the matter of this subject became apparent to him, he eagerly wanted to understand it in detail (Goodman, 2009: p.131). Thus, he scanned all the bodies that were around him and developed the idea that they were all formed at one time and corrupted at another. He could not see any aspect of them that was innocent of occurrence and lacked a chosen agent, so he put them all aside, and his thinking moved to heavenly bodies. It is at this point in the novel that an important shift occurs, as Ibn Yaqzan moves between being vigilant and contemplative of his earthly surroundings to looking at the sky and the universe in the hope of getting to know the Creator and Innovator of this universe.

Thus, all of the attempts outlined above led to a very significant turning point in Ibn Yaqzan's life. This can be seen when Ibn Yaqzan's wisdom begins as he approaches thirty-five and when he starts to relate to God not merely by knowledge but also by love (Goodman, 2009: p.11). Accordingly, God becomes a passion for him that absorbs all of his attention and distracts him from everything else (Ibid). His soul recognises itself as being non-material and comes to see its sole task as being the active seeking of God (Ibid). As a result, he realises that his well-being, happiness and self-fulfilment lie in promoting these resemblances. The physical

needs of his animal soul are necessary encumbrances. Beyond them, he must heighten his resemblance to the stars: he must be clean and kind, graceful in his movements, and ascetic in his habits. Just as the spiritualisation of practical reason marked the two-stage transition from adolescence to young manhood, the spiritualisation of his wisdom and its rise from exercise to experience marks the end of tutelage, the beginning of maturity and the fulfilment of self-awareness in himself.

#### **4. Graces of God**

Three words sum up one of the most well-known definitions of grace: "God's unmerited favor" (MacArthur, 2012: p.3). However, grace is all of this and more. MacArthur argues how grace appears even to bad people (Ibid: p.4). Grace is not just an undeserved blessing; rather, doing good to enemies is the spirit of grace. The purpose of the appearance of God's grace is to bring salvation (Ibid). All that prevents human wickedness from being fully expressed is common grace. God has kindly endowed us with a conscience that allows us to distinguish between good and wrong (Ibid: p.7). MacArthur describes how God's use of grace is entirely under his complete sovereignty; he is not controlled by human volition: "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. So, it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy'" (MacArthur, 2012: p.12). For Piper, all of God's works of grace are also acts of mercy, and all of his merciful acts are considered to be acts of grace because sin always results in misery, and misery is something that sinners always experience (Piper, 2012: p.75). In the novel, grace is assured for Ibn Yaqzan. Goodman asserts that when Ibn Yaqzan sees the doe, he feels assured of love, as when the gazelle observed him as a baby on the ocean and helped him (Goodman, 2009: p.8). When Ibn Yaqzan starts crying, the gazelle suckles him, and she becomes the same as his mother because she helps him to continue his life (Ibid). So, Roe always suckles him and expresses love for him. The existence of a modest climate, all fruits, and no predators aid him to live in the island.

From the perspective of human experience, the creation of the universe and God's gift to mankind marked the start of grace. Stanley argues that sunset and sunrise are there for human beings (Stanley, 2011: p.8). The variety of fruits and vegetables we have enjoyed our whole life is there for humankind. All of the following are also for the use of human beings: beaches, mountains, lakes, streams, woods, and plains. Stanley further adds that, in terms of another positive aspect, the rule of sowing and reaping does have another form of exception (Ibid: p.34). This does not come about as a result of the damage brought on by sin. The fruit of God's kindness and love is this exception. Because of grace, we sometimes do not receive the punishments we deserve (Ibid). Moreover, Evans discusses the eternal tenderness of God; if we think that God's blessing on us today is wonderful, in eternity, it will be even greater (Evans, 2004: p.30). In the novel, Ibn Yaqzan learns about the nature of the universe and the truth of his existence. Above all, he acquired knowledge regarding the nature of God's existence. In fact, Goodman explains how Ibn Yaqzan does not need help to know all of these things and that help would actually have been a hindrance (Goodman, 2009: p.177). No human imagination can adequately convey what Ibn Yaqzan has learned. Through reason, Ibn Yaqzan has been able to follow the progress of man from semi-non-existence to the height of human perfection without the help of society (Ibid: p.219). All of the graces of God, such as food, water, air, help, and passion, are directly discovered by Ibn Yaqzan.

Furthermore, another type of grace is explained by Case. This is the grace from God that enables us to appreciate his creation via the sense of touch. By utilising nerve endings in the skin, particularly in our hands and feet, the sense of touch or feeling is possible. Nerve impulses that are sent from our fingers to our brain in a split second after we touch anything tell our brain whether the object is hot, cold, prickly, soft, moist, dry, smooth, etc. We can fully appreciate nature because God endowed us with the sense of touch. By touching, we can actually feel emotions. We do not get the same emotion when we feel the softness of grass or a cat's velvety fur compared to the experience of touching a tree's bark (Case, 2007: p.11). Goodman argues that, in the novel, Ibn Yaqzan's physiology teaches him that each organ has its own power to affect its characteristic action. This is similar to the natural boldness with which God formed Ibn Yaqzan's nature, which enabled him to try to grasp the concept of fire for the first time (Goodman, 2009: p.65). As discussed earlier in this paper, the first power that Ibn Yaqzan discovered was his hands, which were the source of his strength. However, the second power he identifies occurs when he sees smoke rising, and at first, he does not understand what he sees. As Goodman argues, by the time Ibn Yaqzan discovers the fire, he realises that it has greater significance to him than just providing the practical purposes of warmth, light, and cooking. (Goodman, 2009: p.9). When he tries to touch the fire, he is burned. He uses stone to ignite the fire. Here, Ibn Yaqzan discovered the softness of the skin and the tenderness of the body.

Thus, Ibn Yaqzan became sure of the sense of touch and how to keep his body safe so that it did not touch the fire. Ibn Yaqzan discovers that each organ has its own strength, such as "the natural boldness" with which God shaped his nature, and this enables him to try to catch fire for the first time (Goodman, 2009: p.65). According to Case, we possibly receive more emotions from touch than from any other sense. Even a sense of belonging may be provided by it (Ibid: p.11). In the novel, Ibn Yaqzan reveals the emotion which he derives from the roe as he considers her to be his mother. Furthermore, Ibn Yaqzan discovers the love that God gives to all human beings both through his instinct and through the roe and how she takes care of him. As Goodman emphasises, as a baby, Ibn Yaqzan follows the gazelle and learns from her how to eat and drink (Ibid: p.8). Moreover, he begins to mimic the sounds of the other animals and always watches how the animals protect themselves. As previously mentioned, Ibn Yaqzan does not have anything

to protect his body, unlike the animals who are covered by hair, fur and feathers, and he feels ashamed. However, people differ from animals in that they are created in God's image (Shewan & Bristley, 1999: p.127). In addition to this, humans differ from animals because God endowed them with a sense of right and wrong. Animals do not understand what is right and wrong, but humans do (Ibid). This means that human beings are created in His best form, and God has given them the greatness of mind.

When he was young, Ibn Yaqzan's main duty was to help the animals and take care of the plants on the island. As a result, he independently discovers how to manage fire, construct a shelter, domesticate animals, and create tools. After this, he becomes a doctor, astronomer, and philosopher solely on the basis of further experimentation and reason. Eventually, he was able to reason his way to understanding the world and even the presence of God. Towards the end of the novel, Ibn Yaqzan becomes exposed to the outer world. However, he found it to be utterly repugnant as its people lived their lives based on doctrine rather than on reason and experimentation. As a result, he quickly left this society and went back to his island.

## 5. Conclusion

There are several points that can be concluded from an analysis of the novel *Ibn Yaqzan* by Ibn Tufail. It was found that there were two particularly dominant processes that Ibn Yaqzan went through on his journey, namely the innate knowing of God and acknowledging the graces of God. With limited space, Ibn Yaqzan is able to reveal God and many other aspects through animals, plants and nature from his fitrah. This research has concluded that man is able to discover God without the help of humans. Moreover, it was found that the mature mind reaches completion through age, and this leads to the discovery of many facts through nature and organisms such as plants and animals. As Ibn Yaqzan grows up, his life passes through seven stages. The first is being breastfed, nursed and cared for by the doe until the age of seven. The next stage is the death of the doe and its dissection by Ibn Yaqzan to find out the cause of death; here, he also begins to form knowledge through his senses and experience. The third stage was the discovery of fire. In the fourth stage, he looked at all of the bodies that were present around him; thus, he discovered unity and multiplicity in the body and soul. He also discovered the similarity of beings in terms of matter and their differences in relation to image. The fifth stage was the discovery of space, and this encouraged him to reason and observe that the world was old, as was its origins. When he reached the age of thirty-five, Ibn Yaqzan commenced his sixth stage, which was the conclusion of his thinking. He established that the soul is separate from the body and that it longs for the necessary Being. Finally, Ibn Yaqzan insists, in the seventh stage, that his happiness lies in the permanence of watching this necessary existence and in his desire to remain within a life that he has drawn for himself. The second important point concluded from the research is the graces of God. Through the novel, we see that Ibn Yaqzan realises most of God's graces. The research concluded that, through this, Ibn Yaqzan discovered death, the soul, love, hate, help, power and the functions of the various parts of his body. As for the recommendations for future research, the researcher recommends that a comparison between Ibn Tufail's *Hay Ibn Yaqzan* and Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* will be a great choice since the main characters of both novels are the ones who lived on an island.

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