

The Island of Enlightenment: An Eco-critical Analysis of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*

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Abstract:

Ibn Tufayl's novel *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* is considered one of the earliest literary attempts to tackle the issue of man vs. nature. On the island, Hayy does not only preoccupy himself with overcoming the different challenges life in the wilderness poses, but also he rises to the level in which he comes to realize that there is an interconnectedness between man and nature and which it all depends on the willingness of ridding oneself of the philosophy of consumerism and practically start a philosophy of protecting one's ecosystem.

The present article attempts to analyze *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* from an Eco critical viewpoint. Then, the researcher will prove how Hayy came to understand how the universe operates all through the power of reason alone. Finally, the researcher will culminate with the possibility of reaching enlightenment by achieving the full merge between man and nature.

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Nature, Island, Ecosystem, Enlightenment.

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1. INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades environment has become one of the daily first-page news, to the extent that many today believe that an inevitable apocalypse shall take place sooner or later on the evidence that the symptoms of this alleged apocalypse have already started to take place in the shape of Tsunamis and wildfires.

News like deforestation, global warming, climate change as well as the various challenges depicted in the daily excessive exploitation of man to his environment have extensively been released, such news have been occurring on our newspapers so often to the degree that many of us don't even bother to care for our environment which we may lose at any moment.

Nonetheless, environment issues are not only caused by human beings alone, in many occasions nature proved to have tried to drown itself through Tsunamis, burn itself through volcanos and wildfires as well as freeze itself through severe waves of frost, especially in the recent years tremendously severe waves of frost have hit many parts of west Europe and north America wherein many people have succumbed to the terribly low temperatures. All this and more, the violent hurricanes that harvest so many lives almost every season in the south of the United States for instance. Here nature presents itself as the upper-hand and that it does not like to be messed with by human beings. And thus, whatever disaster takes place in our world only human beings are to blame.

Public concern about environment have taken various forms, these concerns were embodied in the fields of law, literature, politics, religion...etc. However, all these studies had not taken any official form until, precisely the last decade of the 20th century where these studies were collected and thus, the study of Ecocriticism was heralded by the publication of two seminal works, *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (University of Georgia Press, 1996), edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination*, by Lawrence Buell. Cheryl Glotfelty through her essays started an institution for environmentalist and natural writers called ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and Environment) in 1992. ASLE has its own house journal; it publishes a journal- Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE). Therefore, environmental studies were already proliferating in America by the beginning of 1990s.

The term environmental studies has such other terms that many environmentalists tend to use often, such as; green studies, Eco poetics, and environmental literary criticism. But, there is one more term which is much more general and which is widely used by the experts in the field that is known as Eco criticism.

Hayy Ibn Yaqzan is an early Arabic novel written by Ibn Tufayl, a Muslim Moorish physician as well as philosopher in early 12th century *Andalus*. *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Alive son of Awake, best demonstrates the relationship of man with nature. It also depicts man as an essential living element in his quest in trying to figure out nature to finally make it his comfortable shelter.

The story of Hayy is well-known; a lonely child who was cast ashore an equatorial island inside a box by his own mother in fear of her brother, a cruel king for he opposed her marriage with one of her relatives Yaqzan, the mother in fear for her child of merciless death she decides to send Hayy away to his fate in the vast ocean. The little Hayy is eventually found by a gazelle who herself had lost her child, her motherhood and longing for her lost child made her ears sensitive to

the cries of the little Hayy. She eventually embraces Hayy as her own child; unfortunately the mother gazelle has grown old and has to die; nature's code.

Though Hayy had never yet been taught any human manners, he learns to lament his mother gazelle who has apparently left him alone. Hayy now learns that there are powers far beyond him though he cannot fathom them now at this early stage, he discovers that there is an organ inside his mother gazelle after which he held an autopsy on the gazelle's body and which has now stopped and which apparently has caused his mother gazelle to be deceased. From here it becomes apparent that Hayy has something which his mother gazelle had not and which is reason, and it is up to this reason that Hayy was born with but had to develop it by himself that he would eventually culminate to fathom nature.

2. Literature Review:

Ibn Tufayl's story *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* was quite derivative both in its title and mostly the characters namely Absal and Salaman. It is quite known that Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* was inspired by Ibn Sina's story (*Avicenna*), so, basically Ibn Tufayl rephrased the fable trying to prove alternative ideas, mainly philosophical as well as religious. And, thus the name of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* became related to the name of Ibn Tufayl.

When talking of *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, several other works that came later occur here. Take for instance Daniel Defoe's famous story *Robinson Crusoe*; though, literally it has never been proven that Defoe had ever read Ibn Tufayl's story, yet many critics declare that given his voracious nature to literary works, Defoe must have encountered the story somewhere before he decided to write his masterpiece *Robinson Crusoe*.

In the second chapter of his book entitled *The World of Ibn Tufayl: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Hayy Ibn Yaqzān* (1996), Lawrence I. Conrad resembles Hayy Ibn Yaqzan as a male utopia:

To characterize *Hayy ibn Yaqzan* as a male utopia is to call attention to the problem of gender, to the play of male and female, in Ibn Tufayl's text. The burgeoning field of gender-conscious criticism has already shown the ubiquity of such fundamental mental structures. More important, scholars have extended the examination beyond the traditional area of the image of women to the reexamination of the western cultural corpus as a whole (p. 54).

In fact, Ibn Tufayl's work did not influence only Defoe's writing, the stories of *Sindbad*, the *Sailor* from the famous *One thousand, and one nights* fall in the same literary tradition. In a far more scale of antiquity, we find Plato's reference to the idea of solitude astonishingly similar to the case of Hayy Ibn Yaqzan.

As some may argue that from psychologists and behaviorists' perspective the possibility of a feral child surviving all alone on a deserted island seems quite far from reason, and thus it is claimed that such fables are only meant for fun and entertainment. But, even if we take such claims into consideration, it remains essential the effect Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* has brought upon the western writings, and it is worth to mention here two main works, that is Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* and Rudyard Kipling's *Mowgli* (in *The Jungle Book*, p.1894).

Starting with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, this famous Genevan thinker and philosopher as well as musician. In his somewhat parallel tale, *Émile, or On Education* (1779), Rousseau declares:

A man abandoned to himself in the midst of other men from birth would be the most disfigured of

all. Prejudices, authority, necessity, example, all the social institutions in which we find ourselves submerged would stifle nature in him and put nothing in its place. Nature there would be like a shrub that chance had caused to be born in the middle of a path and that the passers-by soon cause to perish by bumping into it from all sides and bending it in every direction (p. 37).

By his declaration Rousseau made it clear that he is in favor of Defoe's version of the tale. According to Rousseau, Ibn Tufayl's tale somewhat lacks logic. In other words, according to Rousseau in order for a child to grow normal and productive he should have an attentive mother whose job beside nourishing and nurturing him is to teach him certain behaviors and traits that would qualify her child to live in a society, and this according to Rousseau is personified in the character of Crusoe, for he did not leave his parents' house until he was about nineteen years old.

Moreover, in his review entitled, *Ibn Tufayl's Hayy Ibn Yaqzan: A Philosophical Tale*, Israel Drazin (2010) states: "But what is most interesting in his parable is his view, a restatement, in clear dramatic fashion that wise people, philosophers, and religious leaders, must refrain from telling what they understand to the general population."

According to Israel Drazin Ibn Tufayl was audacious in bringing up such a critical topic, especially in a society that is unlikely to be tolerant when it comes to religion. In his review Drazin argues how Ibn Tufayl was in favor of simplifying religious matters especially to the masses that's why Ibn Tufayl chose the setting for his hero to be a deserted island, far from the hypocrisies of society, and especially religious leaders. That's why "the true religion [Islam]" was said to be on another island; that is far from society. Ibn Tufayl further declares in his novel, "Organized religion, as understood by the masses, is necessary for the masses, but wrong for people with understanding because it is not true."

In his book *Reading Hayy Ibn-Yaqzān: A Cross-Cultural History of Autodidacticism*, Avner Ben-Zaken (2011) argues that the story's setting was chosen on purpose by Ibn Tufayl in a sense that Ibn Tufayl meant to reconcile Sufism's focus on empirical reason: "Ibn- Tufayl's use of the parable of the nursing gazelle (rather than of a goat, a wolf, or any other mammal) encodes al-Ghazzālī's name ("gazelle") into the very fabric of his treatise. Hayy takes nourishment from al-Ghazzālī as a starting point from which he tries to synthesize the logical and mathematical tradition of the Maghrib with Eastern theories of knowledge and mysticism" (p. 22). Avner Ben-Zaken further argues that Hayy Ibn Yaqzan exceeds the entertainment role that it, seemingly is supposed to play, to a political one.

Later on, still in the first chapter, Avner mentions Hayy Ibn Yaqzan in relation to what happened later in the fourteenth century, when a group of Jewish leaders in Spain protested against the increasing practice of teaching secular philosophy to young people. Then, alarmed at the possible harm which these Jewish leaders could inflict upon those whom they sought ought to be punished, Moses Narbonni (c.1300 - c.1362) took it on himself to both compose a translation and a commentary study to *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, he then entitled his commentary on the book of Ibn Tufayl as *Yehiel Ben-Uriel*, and by doing this he renamed the protagonist Yehiel after Asher Ben Yehiel (1250–1327), a powerful Jewish who strongly opposed teaching philosophy to young people (p. 42).

Thus, *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* and after so many years during the fourteenth century was employed and for the first time in political conflict. Avner later argues that scholars in Barcelona lost their

pedagogical campaign: “[Narbonni] had to escape the city. He returned to Cervera, where he completed his commentary, entitling it *Yehiel Ben-‘Uriel*, and attached to it a commentary on Avempace’s *The Regime of Solitude*. The introductory paragraph to *Yehiel Ben-‘Uriel* says that the community of Perpignan stirred him to write the commentary and to make its arguments accessible to everybody so as “to wake up those who are asleep” (p. 46).

In brief, Avner implies in the first chapter of his book that Ibn Tufayl's *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan* came as a response to certain political malaise at his time and by doing so Avner invites philosophers and scholars of the field especially Islamic ones to reassess their previous interpretations of the story.

Lawrence Conrad (1996) draws the reader’s attention to a further study or more interpretations to *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*. He argues as many others do that Ibn Tufayl wrote his only record of philosophy in order to reconcile the principles of Sufism or mysticism, in particular al-Ghazali's empirical mysticism, he later states:

The path of the mystical union comprises three stages which each correspond to a part of the human totality, namely, the corporeal body (*al-badan* [body]), the animating spirit (*al-ruh al-hayawani* [the soul]), and the divine spark (*al-dhat/ al-amr al-rabbani/ al-ilahi* [divine soul]). Each part has respective sphere of activity, the earth, the heavens, and God. The mystical path requires that each part be assimilated or in harmony with its respective sphere. (p.168).

According to Conrad, Ibn Tufayl divided his story in three main parts; the body, the human spirit and the divine soul; and this in order to attain what Conrad coined as 'mystical union.'

3. First Encounter with the Island:

Behold the infant: like a shipwrecked sailor,
Cast ashore by the fury of the billows, the poor,
Child lies naked on the ground, bereft of all means
For existence, after nature has dragged him in pain
From his mother's womb. With plaintive wailing he
Filleth the place of his birth, and he is right, for
Many evils await him in life (Lucretius, De Rerum Natura).

This image of man's trials in Lucretius's *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Thing*) inaugurates Hayy’s early long encounter with the island. After reading the novel one learns that the "infant" was driven to the remote corners of earth by laws of nature. Hayy's life is a miraculous survival story. He grows up in a confined island yet rich in resources, the fact which helped him attain his self-made ultimate survival.

The ordeal of the "infant" does not lie in that his confined space scrimped him any good; it rather lies in his own self. That is to say being a man at the apex of his environment provided him with almost an unlimited power to exhort the best out of his natural space, and there seemed no power was capable of stopping his insatiability except that of God himself.

Like a prisoner who is caught in order to be shown the path of salvation, the subjective experience of an individual in confinement is marked by solitude and it usually leads to an ultimate understanding of one's true existence. This sudden awareness causes the individual to reevaluate and reassess his thinking by which he survives.

Through his novel Ibn Tufayl reconsiders the notion of religion in a world created by

himself to serve one purpose, religious awakening. And thus, the author agrees to send his hero into a remote, unknown island where he would spend the time necessary to find the true God away from the many voices blurring his ears from hearing the truth.

Clearly, the main persona, Hayy, shares more than what floats on the surface; where he is pushed over to a confined space of nature by rough means. In addition, he has to deal with estrangement, the necessity to survive, entrapment, solitude and the question of salvation.

3.1. The Hospitable Welcoming to the Infant:

OUR virtuous Ancestors (may God be gracious to them!) tell us, that there is an Indian Island, situate under the Equinoctial, where Men come into the world spontaneously without the help of Father and Mother. For this Island enjoys the most equable and perfect Temperature of all Places on the Earth, because it receives its Light from the highest possible Point in the Heavens..." (HBY, p.1).

This image so vividly delineated at the beginning of Tufayl's Hayy Bin Yaqzan prepares the perfect setting for the coming "infant" "where men come into the world spontaneously without the help of father and mother." The picture resembles exactly a story in the Holy Qur'an, where the infant Prophet Moses was sent by his mother in a wooden ark made by her own hands into the ocean in fear he might be killed by the great pharaoh, she kisses him goodbye and prays God to protect her son and deliver him safely. Similarly, Hayy's mother makes a wooden ark and sends it to the vast ocean with the infant Hayy in it, in fear that her cruel brother king learns of her secret marriage to Yaqzan and kills them both together with their new-born Hayy:

She took him in the Evening, and when she had suckled him she put him into a little Ark which she closed up fast, and so conveys him to the Sea shore, with some of her Servants and friends as she could trust; and there with an Heart equally affected with Love and Fear, she takes her last leave of him in these Words: " O God, thou form'dst this child out of nothing, and didst cherish him in The dark Recess of my Womb, till he was Compleat in all his parts; I, fearing the cruelty of this proud and unjust King, commit him to Thy Goodness, hoping that thou who art in-Finitely merciful, will be pleas'd to protect him, And never leave him destitute of thy care" (HBY, p. 43).

Hayy's nature is peaceful, his mother "conveys him to the sea shore," and "set him afloat." We learn later that Hayy's journey on the sea and his arrival on the island were perfectly set, almost as Prophet Moses being carried by providential care. Hayy was not nearly swallowed up by a violent breaker. After his mother "set him afloat" "that very night" and "the strong tide carried him ashore."

The water, being high, carried the ark a great way on shore, farther than it would have done at another time (for it rises so high but once a year) and cast the ark into a grove, thick set with trees, a pleasant place, shielded from wind and rain and veiled from the sun, which could not penetrate there neither when it rose nor when it set..., and the wind rising blew an heap of sand together between the ark and the sea, sufficient to secure him from any future danger of such another flood" (HBY, p.44).

Therefore, nature here plays differently. In the one hand, it is most caring for the infant child, whereas in the other hand it plays the role of a violent entity. Thus, nature seems to play the role of the arbitrary of human character and acts accordingly. Moreover, through his story, Ibn Tufayl attempts to present his idea of the advent of life. By setting the perfect stage on an island which can never exist in our world with its earthly dimensional space of time. It clearly states that

this island is a heavenly place, at the beginning of his story Ibn Tufayl states "our virtuous ancestor" tell us that there is an island "where men come into the world spontaneously without the help of father and mother." This image refers to how God creates human beings, a mass of clay mixed with water, after it is fermented with its ability to transform into a human embryo.

Thus, one can infer that the island Hayy was carried to was special. Hence, for the sake of creating balance in our vast cosmos, though the land of which Hayy now became an inhabitant is fertile and thus able to produce all forms of life. Yet, Hayy is afflicted with his very basic knowledge and primitive dependency makes him virtually vulnerable and prone to destitution.

Nonetheless, though the island onto which Hayy was carried was described to be heavenly and abundant, yet we learn later that Hayy's very survival depends on the abundance of his island. However, the island would not bring the food and shelter to where Hayy stands; rather Hayy's own survival requires him to make an effort even the tiniest. Upon his arrival on the island, "the child (Hayy) being very hungry wept and cry'd for help and struggled." And thus, even for the little infant the weakest form of making an effort to survive (cry) was required by the island, then "it happened that a roe which had lost her fawn, heard the child cry..." (HBY, p.44).

3.2. Environment in Favor of Good Reason:

Indeed, human life is such a one which is situated at the apex of nature. If we are to take in such a claim we also have to submit to the fact that nothing happens at random. When we learn of human calamities throughout the history of mankind, indeed we might get the sense that nature or its creator "God" is unjust and merciless. However, like the soldier who is sent to battle is equipped with the necessary arms with which to bring about a change on the ground of the battle, human beings are similarly equipped with a much greater weapon of all, reason. And, if we go back to the famous calamities of mankind throughout history which we have just mentioned, we shall find that victory, or should I say environment was always in favor of those who could use the most out of their minds in the most critical moments of their lives.

Humans seem to be equipped with the power of reason in order to protect them from animality life, especially that history tells that many seamen those who were marooned in the vast sea would go insane and lose the power of reasoning and eventually perish to the unknown. The fact that Ibn Tufayl described his island as being heavenly and of "equable and perfect temperature," gives us a strong hint that not anyone is qualified to even discover his island, let go living one's whole life on it. Thus, presumably, anyone who is decidedly apt to live on the island is someone of special and pure readiness of character.

Indeed, Hayy's Character is one which is marked by an unusual inclination towards achieving remarkable human wonders. We know that since his first arrival to the island Hayy received no human education whatsoever. In fact, Hayy had never seen a human being in his whole life until in the last stages of his life. Therefore, what is the explanation of his self-made education which would lead later to spirituality in its highest forms?

The answer lies in his pure innate mind, Hayy actually opened his very first eyes on the heavenly island. In fact, Ibn Tufayl does not only want to entertain his readers through his story which is quite entertaining till the very end of it, nor he only wants to tell a story where the plot takes place on some remote heavenly island which can never exist in our world.

Beside entertainment, Ibn Tufayl wants to transmit a coded message to his readers. He

wants to revolutionize the whole religious and philosophic system to finally be able to see the "true religion" (Islam), and this according to Ibn Tufayl can only be done through going back to one's innate nature in which God has created everyone, and by meditating inquiring not by listening to the many voices out there and especially of those who claim themselves to be learned men.

Ibn Tufayl presents human innate reason as a shield that would eventually protect Hayy from reverting to his lukewarm animality. And it is due to this innate reason that Hayy did not lose his sanity for instance, which many other would do in his situation. History tells that many seamen who were marooned turned to be insane and lost the strongest of their faculties, their reason. Although, these men were usually equipped with the tools with which to embark the vast seas, but because their innate reason was already tarnished and messed with all that artificial equipment could not replace the equipment of good reason.

Later on in the story, Ibn Tufayl decides that his hero is now ready to meet outsiders, after his good reason could not be tarnished in anyhow. For now Hayy is old enough to affect outsiders and not be affected at all. Though Hayy was blessed by the power of innate untarnished reason, he still had to discover and develop it on his own. Despite his complete lack of neither the proper tools nor the knowledge with which to make them in order to complete his daily tasks and chores. Yet, Hayy still follows the human tradition to improvise.

Hayy depended in improvising the tools on the power of observation. Thus, at the beginning (about the age of twenty-one) he started comparing himself with the other animals surrounding him:

Thus far had his observations brought him about the end of third seventh year of his age, viz. when he was one and twenty years old. In which time he had made abundance of pretty contrivances...he learn'd the art of building from the observations he made upon the swallows nests...and so, partly by the help of the fire, and partly of sharp edg'd stones, he so fitted them that they serv'd instead of so many spears...all this pains he took to furnish himself with artificial weapons, because he found himself destitute of natural ones" (HBY, p. 72).

Going back earlier in his life at about the age of seven, Hayy's want to have horns, fangs and claws made him so uneasy, this uneasiness propelled the power of his innate reason to improvise:"...and was now near seven years old, he despair'd utterly of having those things grow upon him, the want of which made him so uneasy" (HBY, p. 54).

This feeling of uneasiness instigates him to control the competition he had received from the other animals by employing his strongest faculty of mind, reason. And feeling his own mind at work, Hayy "...began a little to know his own powers, and perceiv'd that his hands were better than their fore-feet..." (HBY, p. 55).

4. Reasons behind Hayy's Entrapment:

4.1. Finding Hayy's True Identity:

It is well known that Hayy was absconded by his sorrowful mother at night in fear of her cruel brother king if he was to learn of her secret marriage with Yaqzan, father of Hayy, and whom her brother king had refused to consent: "... she took him in the evening, and when she had suckled him, she put him into a little ark which she closed up fast, and so conveys him to the sea shore ... " (HBY, p. 43).

Since Hayy's identity was endangered by the threat that his uncle would exterminate him if he would learn about his existence. It was likely for Hayy to be cast away on some remote island where no one would know its whereabouts, and thus he would be able to find his true identity and preserve it.

However, Hayy never saw any human being like himself since the very first minute he opened his eyes, nature even substituted his human parentage with an animal one. Therefore, provided him with the most important elements for an infant, both for protection as well as sustenance. Nature played the biggest part in bringing Hayy's true identity into surface, for as we see Hayy's existence depended on nature's generosity lying within the tremendous abundance it provided.

If we look at the title of his novel, Ibn Tufayl used Hayy Bin Yaqzan. Here, Bin stands for 'son of,' and thus a literal interpretation of the title into English would be, Alive son of Awake. In the Arabic tradition names are chosen quite carefully for they often refer to parental lineage, this is done in an attempt to show one's respectful consanguinity, which is something of great value to the Arabs. The Arabs believe that this is to protect the individual's identity and long line of lineage. Ibn Tufayl follows the same tradition in his book, by doing this he is trying to tell his readers that, basically Hayy was brought up by an animal parent, yet his lineage is well known for he is Alive son of Awake.

4.2. Hayy's Ark with his Mother's Blessing's in it:

“... She put him into a little ark...with an heart equally affected with love and fear ...
“(HBY, p. 43).

Clearly, with Hayy's mother's broken heart by the time of leaving her only child whom she carried with the man she clearly loved, by marrying him against her brother king's will. She did not only protect her new-born child from certain death, but also before "she closed [the ark] up fast," she put in it all the love she could give, and this would be Hayy's provision to keep him alive during his long journey on the vast sea. Not only this, before she set her child free to the vast ocean, Hayy's mother prays God to protect him with his providential care, and to deliver her helpless child to safety and provide him with his providential care: "O God, thou form'dst this child out of nothing ... commit him to thy goodness, hoping that thou who art infinitely merciful, will be pleas'd to protect him, and never leave him destitute of thy care" (HBY, p.43).

God's reply indeed came down very fast. This was demonstrated in Hayy's unusual journey on the vast sea. History tells us that while the most experienced seamen lost their track on the vast seas and either perished or got insane. Hayy, the infant who could not even feed himself made safe to a remote island where, clearly no one had heard of at the time. The only explanation to this is that Hayy was being watched over by providential care, and which was prompted by Hayy's mother's blessings, love and her motherly constant prayers to protect her son and deliver him into safety: "... and cast the ark into a grove, thick set with trees, a pleasant place, shielded from wind and rain and veiled from the sun...to secure him from any future danger of such another flood" (HBY, p. 44).

4.3. Hayy's Safe Deliverance as Similar to Moses's:

Moses's story was related in the Quran quite often. According to the holy Quran, Moses was both a prophet as well as a messenger of Allah. Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) was mentioned in the holy Quran more than any other prophet. He was mentioned in a hundred and seventeen occasions in the holy Quran. Thus, given Ibn Tufayl's Islamic background, I, well believe that Ibn Tufayl deliberately chose his hero, Hayy to be delivered in a similar way as Prophet Moses was delivered.

In the holy Quran, when Prophet Moses was born Egyptian's greatest Pharaoh commanded that every male boy is to be drowned in the river Nile, for he received a prophecy telling him that a young Israelite man would eventually appear and endanger his great kingdom by overthrowing him. Moses's mother (Jochebed) was commanded by Allah to put the infant Moses in an ark and cast him in the sea, and thus leaving him completely to the will of Allah. Eventually, the Pharaoh's wife (Asiya), and not his daughter as is related in the version of the Christian bible, found him afloat on the river Nile and convinced the Pharaoh to adopt him as their son, for they had no children.

When Moses grew up to be a man, he received a revelation from Allah to go to Pharaoh, who had declared himself to be the greatest God, and try to convert him to worship the only God, the greatest of off, Allah. An instance of the story of Prophet Moses and his meeting with Pharaoh is:

Fir'aun (Pharaoh) said: "O chiefs! I know not that you have an *ilâh* (a god) other than me. So kindle for me (a fire), O Hâmân, to bake (bricks out of) clay, and set up for me a *Sarh* (a lofty tower, or palace) in order that I may look at (or look for) the *Ilâh* (God) of Mûsâ (Moses); and verily, I think that he [Mûsâ (Moses)] is one of the liars (Quran 28: 38).

In order to have the complete attention of his readers, Ibn Tufayl referred to the story of Moses in relation to the story of his hero, Hayy. In doing so, his readers would better understand what he is trying to tell, for not only Prophet Moses is well revered and his story is well known to even the most common people, but also the idea of making a reference to the Holy Quran is something which makes all ears listen.

Ibn Tufayl intelligently utilized a religious miraculous story that happened to an infant, who would be a great Prophet later, to strengthen the plot of his story and thus make his hero a particular person who is as well prepared to attain spirituality in its highest forms, depending on that on the power of reason and imagination.

By doing this, Ibn Tufayl would not only create an abrupt turbulence in a society which used to burn books which were perceived as enlightening, thus threatening societal structure. But also, Ibn Tufayl clearly challenged and criticized openly the so-called 'learned scholars' who, according to Ibn Tufayl, had veiled the complete truth from common people. Thus, came his choice to write his somewhat critical view in a beautiful tale which would later inspire the writing of many other similar European tales.

5. The Island beyond Frontiers:

5.1. Importance of Language in Exchanging Thoughts:

It is amazing how Hayy could manage not to utter a word in his whole life until the coming of Asal, who would be his faithful friend later. So far, Hayy had been talking, analyzing and expostulating all by and inside him. When Asal comes to Hayy's island and meets him, "he teaches Hayy language and is astonished to discover that the pure truth to which Hayy has attained is the same as that symbolized by the religion which he himself professes" (HBY, p. 16).

It is now and here, that Hayy possess a great tool to share his thoughts, which he amazingly has built relying only on the power of reason, observation as well as imagination. "He reaches manhood, and by ceaseless observation and reflection gradually acquires a knowledge of the physical world" (HBY, p. 15). Upon his first meeting with Hayy, Asâl is quite frightened at the sight of Hayy whose "own hair [was] so long as to cover a great part of his body" (HBY, p. 162).

Seeing that "Hayy Ibn Yaqzân did not one word he said, nor knew anything of his meaning," (HBY, p. 162) Asâl's attempt "to pacify and entreat him [Hayy]" (HBY, p. 162) appeared to be useless. However, despite his frightening appearance to Asâl, Hayy "shew'd kindness to him [Asâl], and express'd a great deal of gladness and joy; till at last Asâl's fear was laid aside, and he knew that he meant him no harm" (HBY, p. 162).

5.2. Hayy's Treatment to Asâl as a Faithful Companion:

The faithful companionship of Hayy with Asâl had started first with some difficulty and pain in terms of the means of communication. For, although Asâl "had studied most languages, and was well skill'd in them ... he began to speak to Hayy Ibn Yaqzân in all the languages which he understood ... but all in vain, for Hayy Ibn Yaqzân stood all the while wondering at what he heard, and did not know what was the meaning of it" (HBY, p. 163).

However, Asâl "took pains to make him understand him," (HBY, p. 163) thus, "he began ... to teach him how to speak; first, by shewing him particular things, and pronouncing their names, and repeating them often, and perswading [persuading] him to speak them ... thus he continued till he had taught him all the nouns, and so improv'd him by degrees, that he could speak in a very short time" (HBY, p. 165). By bringing Hayy and Asâl together, Ibn Tufayl is bringing reason and tradition (the tradition of teaching and learning Islam) together. Thus, proving that 'the true religion (Islam)' can as well be learnt through pure reasoning.

When Hayy tells Asâl his story and "by what degrees he advanc'd in knowledge, till he attain'd the union with God ... the eyes of his [Asâl's] heart were opened, the fire of his mind was kindled, and he found that the teaching of reason and tradition did exactly agree together ... thenceforth he look'd upon Hayy Ibn Yaqzân with admiration and respect" (HBY, pp. 165-66).

As a result, Hayy would not only break his solitude by finally indulging in the company of a human being, but also this strange man (Asâl), besides being a faithful companion he possesses a great knowledge which Hayy would learn a lot from it, such learning how to speak after a long period of silence; "... For both he (Hayy) and his friend Asâl ... sought for an opportunity of returning to their island ... and Asâl followed his steps ... and thus they continu'd serving God in this island till they died [as faithful companions]" (HBY, pp. 176-77).

Clearly, before Hayy could learn the use of language, his first encounter with Asâl did not go very well for "he [Hayy] did not understand one word he [Asâl] said" (HBY, p. 162).

However, Hayy intelligently learns the language which Asâl teaches him and dexterously employs it to convince him to go to the “inhabited island,” the one which Asâl had come from. Not only this, through the power of language Asâl also learns of Hayy’s marvelous story upon which later he (Asâl) decides to spend the remainder of his days on Hayy’s island until they died.

5.3. Hayy’s Risking Attempt to Correct People’s ‘True Religion:’

“On learning the condition of the people on the other island, Hayy is moved with compassion and determines to go to them and offers them the benefits of his knowledge” (HBY, p. 17).

After Hayy is well acquainted with this other creature which had the same shape of his (Asâl), and after he learns how to communicate with him, he does not hesitate to further share his thoughts with more people from where Asâl had come. The two crossed the sea together and “went into the city [Asâl’s]; and Asâl’s friends came all about him, and he gave’em an account of Hayy Ibn Yaqzân, and his manner of living; so that people flock’d to him from every side, and admir’d and reverenc’d him” (HBY, p. 171).

However, Hayy’s sudden excitement –especially that he now found a means whereof he could transmit his thoughts and the knowledge he, long, had acquired by himself. After he meets with Asâl’s friend Salâmân, Hayy begins “to teach them [Asâl and Salâmân], and explain the mysteries of wisdom to them; but so soon as e’er he began to raise his discourse above external things a little, and to inculcate that, the contrary whereof had been settled in their minds; they began to withdraw themselves from him, and their minds had an abhorrence for what he spake [spoke].” (HBY, pp. 171-72).

Due to the fact that he had not been accustomed yet with dealing with other people, Hayy’s risking attempt of bringing a sudden change to people’s most sacred thing which is their religion, he is nearly burnt by the fire of their anger, were it not “both because he [Hayy] was a stranger, and out of the observance which they thought due to their friend Asâl” (HBY, p. 172). Still, realizing how serious the situation he was in now, Hayy “continu’d reasoning with them mildly night and day, and teaching them the truth, both in private and publick [public]” (HBY, p. 172).

Nevertheless, Hayy’s attempts “only increas’d their hatred towards him, and made them avoid his company” (HBY, p. 172). Ibn Tufayl later assures to his readers that those people “were lovers of goodness and desirous of truth ... however, through the defect of their nature, they did not pursue it by the right path ... but sought the knowledge of it after the common way, like the rest of the world” (HBY, p. 172). Thus, not only did Hayy risk his welfare by bringing such ‘heresy,’ to their (people) good religion, but also by doing this Ibn Tufayl himself is creating a big wave in a society notorious for taking such matters (religious) quite seriously.

6. To Live Deliberately or Conquer an Island of Despair:

6.1. Hayy’s Volitional Choice:

After Hayy finally discovers that the world stretches far out beyond his island which he only knew his whole life until he met with Asâl. Surprisingly, Hayy does not seem to be fond of the life beyond his island nor the fashion by which the people beyond his island seem to live. Instead, he resolves upon a risky plan to go out and try to correct what seemed to him a wrong way to live by the people in Asâl’s island.

Hayy concludes that the only way to attain true happiness is by reclining back to his original island where he had learnt by innate reason the ‘true religion’: “So [he] took [his] leave and left

them, and sought an opportunity of returning to [his] island ... and Hayy Ibn Yaqzân endeavour'd to attain to his lofty station by the same means he had sought it at first, till he recover'd it ... and thus [he] continu'd serving God in this island till [he] died" (HBY, p. 177).

Hayy's resolution upon reclining back to his island especially after he realized that there are other islands like his and many other people like himself, the fact which could end his unbearable solitude, can only be explained by the fact that these other people living beyond his island have been misled by some allegedly learned scholars:

They [people] were lovers of goodness and desirous of truth. However, through the defect of their nature, they did not pursue it by the right path, nor ask for it at the right door, nor take it in the right manner; but sought the knowledge of it after the common way, like the rest of the world." (HBY, p. 172).

6.2. Religious Scholars' Hypocrisies:

And the reason which did the more easily persuade us to divulge this secret, and tear the veil, was, because of the corrupt notions which some pretenders to philosophy in our age have broach'd and scatter'd, so that they are diffus'd through several countries, and the mischief which arises from thence is become epidemical (HBY, p. 177-78).

Clearly, Hayy puts all the blame on the misleading scholars of religion and philosophy. However, partial blame, according to Hayy should also be put on those who do not wish to hear the truth, and those who do not seek the truth at the right path. Through his hero, Ibn Tufayl opened fire against all those well-known scholars and philosophers, whom did not only possess great knowledge but also had good reputations among the commoners as well as among their peer scholars of their age. Ibn Tufayl's attempt to disgrace such great scholars openly is a brave one, not only that but it is a risky one too, knowing that religious matters are quite sensitive to common people. Ibn Tufayl openly criticized scholars like Al-Ghazzālī, and accuses them of veiling the complete truth from the common people who have the right to know everything about their religion.

In fear of his religion and that he might as well be misled; Hayy decides to go recourse to his previous island to continue his practice of mysticism together with a faithful friend named Asâl. By going back to his island Hayy also realizes how badly the infection is in people's understanding of their religion, that they no more want to hear the truth. Hayy, therefore is helpless and sees no way out for those who choose not to open their eyes and understand their religion beyond the rigid scripture, 'and the performance of external rites.'

Hayy, then sees no other way for seeking the truth than from the source teaching brought by the messengers of God through direct revelations, anything which has been added, according to Hayy is fraudulent and therefore should be banished from teaching to common people:

and when he understood the condition of mankind, and that the greatest part of them were like brute beasts, he knew that all wisdom, direction and good success, consisted in what the messengers of God had spoken, and the divine law deliver'd; and that there was no other way besides this, and that there could be nothing added to it ... (HBY, p. 175).

Ibn Tufayl culminates his narrative by clearing out any obscurity which might be deduced by some critics. He confesses that he had only done so for the sake of unveiling the truth and conveying the knowledge he had learnt:

And I desire of those my brethren who shall see this discourse, that they would excuse my for

being so careless in my exposition and so free in my demonstration; seeing I had not done so, if I had not been elevated to such heights as transcend the reach of human sights, and wish'd to express the matter in easie terms, that I might dispose men and raise a desire in them to enter into the right way (HBY, p. 178-79).

6.3. Nature, an Ideal Planet for True Enlightenment:

During his habitation in nature, Hayy develops his moral as well spiritual enlightenment. This development is truly embodied in Hayy, since he spent most of his life if not all in contemplating as well as empowering his spirituality to the point that he attained the very highest forms of enlightenment where he could see the pure truth all by himself.

Hayy was nurtured by nature, thus Ibn Tufayl presents it as to be an ideal planet for one to find the ultimate truth which most of people are blind to see it. Hayy, thus is a model for intrinsic excellence. Far being a mere refuge, Hayy's island resembles an ideal place wherein, only, he can be safe and protected.

Hayy's faithful friend, Asâl who was a well-learned man, finally realized that his knowledge can never be complete, nor his soul can be salvaged unless he would go back to nature; to his pure state in which every human being is created. It was also on the island where Hayy meets with Asâl, and on the very same island the two faithful companions spend the rest of their lives together worshipping God and journeying even deeper in the stages of enlightenment.

Moreover, Hayy chooses to refer back to his surrounding to better understand it, knowing that coming to understand his environment would definitely culminate in better understanding the true reasons behind his existence beside the existence of everything on earth. It cannot be said that Hayy did not try to master his environment, for every human being is in constant conflict with his surrounding environment for the sake of survival and betterment of one's life.

However, early on in his narrative Ibn Tufayl makes it known that Hayy was not like any other human being, for Hayy was born on and nurtured by his island, thus making him part of his environment. And as Ibn Khaldun said in his *Muqaddimah*, man's character is determined by the physical-environment habitat, climate, as well as soil. Therefore, and since Hayy grew up on his island, it was easy for him to interact peacefully and prove himself to be the outcome of his environment who achieved what Hayy called 'pretenders to philosophy' could not achieve in their whole life.

7. Conclusion:

As a conclusion, Ibn Tufayl aimed through his novel at separating his hero from all temptations of the material world, in order for an appropriate relationship with God, the soul as well as the natural environment to be formed. Clearly the author attempted to form a religious foundation to be the basis for his novel; the starting point of man's redemption with his God towards his environment. The author also used his religious background to support the idea that man was created in the image of God, thus it is unlikely for man to be left alone to his fate without providential help to give man a second chance and bring him back into the right path, especially in terms of his relation to his environment.

In *Hayy Ibn Yaqzan*, Ibn Tufayl refers back to a *Hādīth* of the prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon him) which explains how man was created, "God created Adam in his own Image" (HBY, p. 47). Similarly, Christianity argues as well that man "is made in God's image." Therefore, it was

sought an essential matter for Ibn Tufayl to make constant references to religion as well as make religion a guide tool for his hero in order to find his long-lost-but-now-found path.

In an early description of his island, Ibn Tufayl emphasized on the possibility of a place where men could be born without the help of neither father nor mother; in which men existed spontaneously without the help of neither father nor mother, "... where men come into the world spontaneously without the help of father and mother" (HBY, p. 39).

While spending a long time on his island, Hayy goes through a radical transformation both physically as well as spiritually. It would be, absolutely impossible for anyone who would go through what our hero has gone through without experiencing a tremendous change. But, this is not the point. The main point here is what impact does this transformation bring about on the very life of Hayy?

The answer to this question requires the reader to go through a somewhat detailed scan of the thoughts and the reactions embodied in the behaviors of the main persona; Hayy. As it has been argued already that Hayy was ascetic and philosopher type of a person; the fact which helped him survived on an island all alone and by himself.

In his peaceful manner of living Hayy also sought to form a strong bond with his environment, because deep inside himself he knew that he would not make it alive when he first came to the island were it not for nature's generosity, neither could he ever have achieved what he achieved were it not for the ideal environment he was surrounded with. Hayy sought to understand his environment. He stopped at every stone and each plant. He questioned the existence of everything he could see and think of. Therefore, he sought not to cause any physical damage, but was content with observation.

Hayy's endurance is quite remarkable. He never refrained from questioning and developing himself until he reached a high level of spirituality, seeking a method of self-improvement without any external source of encouragement. Therefore, Ibn Tufayl agreed upon equipping his leading character with unstoppable perseverance and endurance in order to for him to be able to finish the task of surviving and eventually achieving a reconciliation with his natural world.

Finally, Hayy could have acquired the desired knowledge which entails a harmonious relation between man and his natural world, and it is up to this knowledge that Hayy begins to sense both the security and confidence in his environment, the fact which enables him to improvise further tools in order for the bond with his environment to last forever.

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