CULTURAL HERITAGE AND CONTEMPORARY CHANGE
SERIES II A, ISLAM, VOLUME 14

PHILOSOPHY of the MUSLIM WORLD

AUTHORS AND PRINCIPAL THEMES

by

JOSEPH KENNY

The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy

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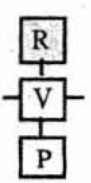

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INTRODUCTION

The sudden burst of Greco-Arab philosophy into the Western world in the thirteenth century irreversibly altered the course of European thought and continues to reverberate in world history.

The philosophy of the Arab-Muslim world began as a discovery of an ancient heritage, and moved on in its own original way. Freely delving into every topic of human interest, it came up with theories that had serious consequences on religion, society and the individual. The questions raised then are still discussed today, and it is worthwhile to see how they were approached in a different time and culture.

It is not easy to define the focus of a book like this. On the one hand, philosophy at that time included all of science.[1] Here only certain major themes are reviewed, touching on the destiny of man and religion, such as the existence of God, human freedom before the omnipotence of God (with the question of evil), the immortality of the human soul, and the relationship between philosophy and revelation.

Again, while we may expect to look at the major players, such as al-Kindî, al-Fârâbî, Ibn-Sînâ et Ibn-Rushd, we must avoid focusing strictly on the Arab or Muslim world. Some of the great philosophers of this world were non-Arabs or non-Muslims. Nor can we leave out Latin Averroism and the reply of Thomas Aquinas. It was one intellectual world debating the same questions with the same philosophical tools.

A new résumé of the thought of the Muslim philosophers is particularly called for now because of the vast number of publications of the works of these philosophers over the past thirty years. Even though more specialized work remains to be done, a new synthesis of the thought of these philosophers is called for.

Presupposing a general knowledge of the history of philosophy

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[1] Apart from what will be discussed below, see Ibn-Bâjja, *Risâla al-wadâ`*, p. 120.

and a familiarity with the fundamental notions of Aristotelian and neo-Platonic philosophy, I first present a historical survey, then devote a chapter to each of five main themes.

I designed this book primarily as a course textbook such as can cross-fertilize a general program of philosophy. It should at the same time serve as a reference book on the subject.

Joseph Kenny

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL SURVEY

1.1 The foundations of Islamic thought

1.1.1 At the time of the Medinan caliphs[1]

When Muḥammad died he left no instructions for his succession. At an emergency meeting convened to decide what to do, the senior men were divided until `Umar got up and clasped the hands of Abû-Bakr; the rest followed suite. The choice was a compromise, since Abû-Bakr (632-634) was an old man.

Abû-Bakr's first job was to send his general, Khâlid ibn-al-Walîd, against the Arab nomads to force them to accept his authority. Once the Arabs were united as one *umma*, since Muslims may not fight Muslims, their armies turned to lands of the north. These were exhausted by a protracted struggle between the Byzantine and Persian empires, the super-powers of the time, and the Arabs easily overran them.

During the caliphate of `Umar (634-644) the Muslim *umma* experience a real booty boom. The Arab soldiers were inspired by a strong faith that assured them of a heavenly reward if they died in battle, and an earthly reward if they did not. As these men sent back to Medina the fortunes they had gathered, other men of lesser faith now rushed to join the army. But they found little pickings left in Syria, Palestine, Egypt, Iraq and the whole Persian empire.

Boom times had become doom times, and the blame was laid at the feet of the new caliph, `Uthmân (644-656). Mutinous troops demanded his resignation. He refused and they stabbed him to death, installing `Alî (656-661) in his place.

Mu`âwiya, the governor of Damascus and a relative of `Uthmân,

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[1]Cf. L.V. Vaglieri, "The patriarchal and Umayyad caliphates", pp. 57-103.

refused to recognize `Alî, and a civil war broke out. Various battles and negotiations took place, and in the end Mu`âwiya won out, founding the Umayyad dynasty, which lasted almost a century.

1.1.2 The Umayyad period

During the lifetime of Muḥammad a radical change of attitude took place in the Arab world. Everyone, including opponents of Islamic rule, found themselves incapable of thinking or of expressing themselves in other than Qur'ânic categories.[2]

During the caliphate of Abû-Bakr some apostates presented themselves as rival prophets, with revelations patterned after the Qur'ân. During the Umayyad period, however, any rebel had to claim that he was a better Muslim than his adversary.

This transformation of the public mentality was not the result of interior conversion involving intellectual conviction and change of life. We have to distinguish conversion from joining a movement. The vast majority of new Muslims joined Islam because it was a winning movement launched by a man who had full confidence in his authority and mission as the last prophet. "You are the best community raised up among men; you command what is good and forbid what is evil and believe in God. If those who have Scripture had believed it would have been better for them..." (Qur'ân 3:110).

It became impossible to escape Qur'ânic ideology, which was the orthodoxy of the society, since membership in that society was a necessity for survival. Qur'ânic rules of living, however, were simple, practical and adaptable to the still evolving condition of Islam at that time, and provided a rallying point for a society in transition.

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[2]Cf. W.M. Watt, *The majesty that was Islam*, p. 58.

1.1.3 The `Abbâsid period (750-)

Throughout the Umayyad period the Muslim community, by force of circumstances, adopted a vast amount of new regulative norms not contained in the Qur'ân. These became enshrined in tradition, or Ḥadîth literature, which claimed the authority of the companions of Muḥammad and eventually the authority of Muḥammad himself. Under the influence of ash-Shâfi`î (d. 825), Ḥadîth became another source of revelation alongside the Qur'ân. As ash-Shâfi`î put it, Muḥammad, the "seal of the prophets" was divinely ordained as the perfect man, impeccable, infallible, the model and exemplar for all mankind. Although Ḥadîth was not dictated by God like the Qur'ân, all the actions and words that they relate are taken as another form of revelation.[3]

How, we must now ask, could a philosophical movement flourish in a milieu so dominated by Islamic religious thought?

1.2 The philosophical movement in the land of Islam

The philosophical movement caught on with the Muslims by contact with Greek philosophy which their Christian subjects cultivated in Egypt, Syria and Iraq. There was also some Jewish influence with regard to the method of *qiyâs*, or analogical reasoning in law.

The Fathers of the early Church took an interest in philosophy when they came into contact with the Greek community of Alexandria, which had an old and well established school of philosophy. The Greeks of Alexandria embraced Christianity in the second century, as Christian apologetes presented Christ to them as Wisdom incarnate.

Since the native Egyptian Copts were not well represented in this school, it closed when the Arabs conquered Egypt and the Greek elite left Egypt. Around 718 the school was re-

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[3]Cf. J. Burton, *The collection of the Qur'ân*, chs. 2 & 3.

established at Antioch in Syria and later moved to Iraq. Teaching was conducted in the Syriac (= Aramaic) language. At Gondeshapur, in Iraq, the major works of Greek philosophy were translated into Syriac and many original works were composed. By and large, neo-Platonism dominated the thought of this school.

When the Arabs conquered these Christian territories, they mostly avoided the schools and educational system that was there because they mistrusted anything that was not Arab. Their attitude was that it was either anti-Islamic or useless, since everything worth knowing is contained in the Qur'ân. In spite of this general attitude, a few Muslims took an interest in philosophy, for the following reasons:

1. At times Muslims engaged in debates with Christians and found themselves on the defensive when the Christians used philosophical arguments to defend their positions. These Muslims then decided to learn philosophy so as to have better answers to the Christians.

2. The caliphs and other influential Muslims were interested in philosophy for its practical advantages. Philosophy, we must remember, was a single package that included all the human sciences: astronomy, mathematics, medicine and technology, as well as metaphysics.

3. The caliphs also had a political reason for supporting the philosophers. That was because the philosophers, along with the Persian civil servants, did not share the Arabs' disdain for all that was not Arabic or Islamic. They were a convenient support for the caliph when he did not want to be hemmed in by religious scholars insisting on their narrow interpretation of Sharî`a.

The caliph al-Ma`mûn (813-833) then established at Baghdad the Bayt al-Ḥikma (House of Wisdom), a center dedicated to translation of philosophical works into Arabic and original research. Muslim and non-Muslim scholars freely mixed in this

institute, and Iraq became the intellectual center of the Muslim world.

Some of the better know translators of philosophical works from Greek to Arabic were Qustâ ibn-Lûqâ (m.c. 913), Ḥunayn ibn-Isḥâq (808-873), his son Isḥâq ibn-Ḥunayn (m. 910), his nephew Ḥubaysh, and Abû-Bishr Mattâ (d. 940). As these names indicate, the work of translation was largely a Christian affair. These men were not only translators, but also wrote important original works of their own.

Which new branches of learning were thereby introduced to the Muslim world? According to al-Fârâbî[4] or Ibn-Sînâ,[5] they included:

1. logic, following Aristotle's treatises on reasoning along with rhetoric and poetry,
2. mathematics, with physical applications such as music and astronomy,
3. natural science in all its branches, particularly the study of man and the practical science of medicine,
4. the moral sciences such as ethics and politics,
5. and finally metaphysics or natural theology.

1.3 Conflict between philosophers, Ash`arites, Mu`tazilites, and Ḥanbalites

Al-Ma'mûn favored the Mu`tazilites theological school which defended certain positions by means of philosophical methods which the Ḥanbalites opposed, because they disregarded a literal interpretation of the Qur'ân. For example, the Mu`tazilites taught the freedom of human choice as opposed to divine predetermination, and the absolute unity of God and all his attributes, except for his word, the Qur'ân, which they held was created–thereby countering Christian teaching on the *Logos* and

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[4] *Iḥṣâ' al-`ulûm.*

[5] *Aqsâm al-ḥikma*; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 169-172.

a foundation of Ash`arite determinism.

The scholar and Tradition master, Aḥmad ibn-Ḥanbal, was persecuted by the `Abbâsids for refusing to subscribe to the Mu`tazilite thesis that the Qur'ân was created. But his popular following in Baghdad reacted, and in 849 their hostility forced the caliph al-Mutawakkil to expel the Mu`tazilites and philosophers from his court. Both groups, however, continued to study and write elsewhere.[6]

The more traditional Ash`arite school took their place. Named after Abû-l-Ḥasan al-Ash`arî, an ex-Mu`tazilite, this school continued to use the rational methods and philosophical concepts of the Mu`tazilites, but the theses they defended were traditional and conservative. In spite of that, Ibn-Ḥanbal and his followers opposed al-Ash`arî, rejecting all rational or philosophical discussion and insisting on the Qur'ân and Tradition alone.

Although philosophy and rational theology both flourished after 849, each went its own way without mutual influence until the time of al-Ghazâlî. Theologians continued to use the philosophical concepts introduced into theology before 849, and the philosophers developed teachings that sometimes contradicted Islamic faith.

In the meantime, Spain, never subject to the `Abbâsids, continued to harbor philosophers for some time, especially under Umayyad rule. After this dynasty declined, Spain broke up into small principalities until the Murâbiṭ conquest in 1090. The Murâbiṭs encouraged the study of Mâlikî law and, like the Ḥanbalites, banished systematic theology *(kalâm)*. Yet they tolerated philosophy, maybe because the philosophers were more cautious and did not publicize their opinions.

The Muwaḥḥids overthrew Murâbiṭ power in 1147 and

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[6]Cf. J. Kenny, "The sources of radical movements in Islam", 135-140.

introduced *kalâm*, with the works of al-Ghazâlî. The Muwaḥḥids were intolerant, especially of Christians, but the prince Abû-Ya`qûb (1163-84) was interested in philosophy, even though he dared not show it publicly. Among his friends were Ibn-Bâjja and Ibn-Ṭufayl.

1.4 The principal philosophers[7]

Al-Kindî (c. 800-866)

During the regime of al-Ma`mûn, the political and intellectual climate permitted the rise of the first philosopher of Arab blood, al-Kindî. He had a large library and mastered all the Greek sciences he could come across. Yet he was far from the free thinking of later philosophers, holding firmly to the dogmas of Islamic faith, although he thought that neo-Platonic thought was harmonized with it, with some corrections, such as creation from nothing instead of natural emanation, the need for prophecy and the possibility of miracles. Al-Kindî influenced the Mu`tazilites, the first philosophical theologians.

We have at least fifty-three works of al-Kindî. As an Arab writer, he had a very beautiful and clear style which can be read without much difficulty.

Ar-Râzî (c. 865-925 or 932)

Muḥammad ar-Râzî lived in the difficult period following al-Kindî. He was most famous as a medical doctor, but also wrote on ethics and metaphysics. For him philosophy took the place of religion. He thought that a philosopher should keep out of politics and devote himself to contemplative and scientific activity. We will see later how he deviated from Islam on several points. Yet we must keep in mind that the works where

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[7]For the lives of these philosophers, see M.M. Sharif (ed.), *A history of Muslim philosophy*; `Abdarraḥman Badawi, *Histoire de la philosophie en Islam*, M. Fakhry, *A history of Islamic philosophy*, and the articles on each in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. For the works of each philosopher, see my "Bibliography of the works of the philosophers of the Muslim world."

he expresses these ideas are lost, and we only have descriptions of his positions written by his critics.

Ibn-Masarra (883-931)

Born in Cordoba, he had to take refuge in the mountains because of persecution by Mâlikî jurists. His works present neoplatonic ideas in the form of a highly allegorical exegesis of the Qur'ân. Only two short treatises of his have survived.

Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân Isrâ'îlî (c. 855-955)

Known in medieval Europe as Isaac ben Solomon Israeli (c. 855-955, born in Egypt, wrote in Qayrawân), Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân was most famous for his medical works. He is also considered the father of Jewish Neoplatonism. Of his few known works, his *Kitâb al-ḥudûd wa-r-rusûm* was known in Europe as *Liber de definitionibus*.

Al-Fârâbî (875-950)

Living in the `Abbâsid heartlands, Al-Fârâbî (Alfarabius), the real founder of Arab neo-Platonism, held everything emanates from God in a hierarchical order. Thus he theorized about a heavenly hierarchy of spirits and an earthly hierarchy led by a philosopher-king. In the context of the time of al-Fârâbî, this could mean a Shî`ite imâm.

At least sixty-three authentic works of his are known. Most of these are published. Some works attributed to him really belong to Ibn-Sînâ. Although he was not an Arab, his style is very clear and simple.

Miskawayh (932-1030)

Miskawayh was an important predecessor of Ibn-Sînâ. Very little is known of his life, except that he worked in the service of the Bûyids. His writings are mainly about ethics, but he also

touches on some important theoretical questions.[8]

Ibn-Sînâ (980-1037)

Ibn-Sînâ, known in Latin Europe as Avicenna, was the greatest representative of Arab neo-Platonism. Of Persian or maybe Turkish stock, he studied all existing branches of learning and was particularly renowned in medicine. He read Aristotle's *Metaphysics* forty times without being able to understand it until he came across a commentary of al-Fârâbî.[9] Having mastered all these sciences by the age of 18, he said that his knowledge continued to mature but he learned nothing new.

His father tried to get him to accept Shî`ism, but he refused. For this reason we see little speculation in his works about the earthly hierarchy. Ibn-Sînâ served as a medical doctor to various princes that ruled fragments of the caliphate. He spent his nights writing or teaching, but when he got tired he drank wine or indulged in sex. The latter addiction is said to have accelerated his death.

George Anawati,[10] following manuscript catalogues, lists 276 titles attributed to Ibn-Sîna, many of which are duplications or doubtful; Yaḥyâ Mahdavi[11] reduced them to 132. Cataloguing the works of Ibn-Sînâ is complicated because of erroneous attribution of some of his works to Al-Fârâbî and of some of his students works to himself, and because parts of some of his works were re-published under another title, sometimes mixed with other material.

More than one hundred and ninety works of Ibn-Sînâ have been

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[8]Cf. Mohammed Arkoun, *Deux épitres*, introduction.

[9]*Maqâla fî aghrâḍ mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a.*

[10]*Mu'allafât Ibn-Sînâ.*

[11]*Fihrist-i muṣannafât-i Ibn-i Sînâ.*

published, many of them small treatises. Noteworthy are his great *Qânûn fî ṭ-ṭibb*, on medicine, and the monumental *Shifâ'*, a suuma of all branches of philosophy. Yet in his small works he often expresses himself more openly on controversial questions. Ibn-Sînâ's style is rather simple, but often unclear, with pronouns having no definite antecedent and unexplained changes of person or gender. Nevertheless the context brings out the meaning of such passages. Once Ibn-Sînâ was accused of having a bad knowledge of Arabic; this led him to a deep study of the language and afterwards he wrote a few tracts in a very elaborate and difficult style.

Ibn-Sînâ had to endure some opposition during his life, which he complains of in his *Risâla fî l-intifâ' `am-mâ nusib ilay-hi* (without mentioning the accusations made against him) and in *Risâla ilâ `Alâ'addîn ibn-Kâkawiyya*, where he complains that his patron abandoned him.

Ibn-Gabirol (c. 1021-1058)

A Spanish Jewish philosopher, Ibn-Gabirol (Avicebron/Avicebrol) is known mainly for his *Fountain of life*, written originally in Arabic, but suviving only in Hebrew and Latin translations. In it he develops neoplatonic thought, yet without transgressing Jewish dogma.

Al-Ghazâlî, a theologian opposed to philosophy (1058-1111)

The chief opponent of the philosophers was al-Ghazâlî (Algazel). At an early age he was initiated into Ṣûfism and mastered the study of theology and law. In 1091 he was appointed professor at the Niẓâmiyya college in Baghdad, where he became famous. Meanwhile he read the works of al-Fârâbî and Ibn-Sînâ. This study resulted in two works: *Maqâṣid al-falâsifa*, a summary of the principal teachings of these philosophers, and *Tahâfut al-falâsifa* (Incoherence of the philosophers), a polemic attack on these teachings. Only the first of these works was known in medieval Europe under the

title of *Metaphysica.*

Then, as a result of psychological tensions and fear of Hell fire, he had a nervous breakdown affecting his ability to talk; so he had to abandon his teaching. He retired to the life of a Ṣûfî, where he regained his peace and health, and soon attracted a group of friends around him. In 1106, at the beginning of the 6th Islamic century, these friends proclaimed him the *mujaddid* or "renewer of religion" who, according to some traditions, was expected at the beginning of every century. Persuaded to return to his teaching, he resumed writing and composed his major work, *Iḥyâ' `ulûm ad-dîn* (Revival of religious sciences).

Al-Ghazâlî's previous study of philosophy resulted in the absorption of many new concepts into theology, especially a good dose of Aristotelian syllogistic logic. This meant an enrichment of systematic theology or *kalâm*, but his attacks on philosophy led to the near total eclipse of philosophy as an independent study, at least in the Muslim East.

Ibn-Bâjja (?-1138)

Abû-Bakr Muḥammad ibn-Yaḥyâ ibn-aṣ-Ṣâ'igh, known as Ibn-Bâjja (Avempace), was born towards the end of the 11th century. He wrote some good commentaries on Aristotle, but is known more from his works on ethics, where he also discuss the human soul and intellect. After complaining about the quality of philosophy in Spain before the introduction of logic, Ibn-Ṭufayl says of him:

> Among recent thinkers, there is no one sharper, more penetrating and more true in his thinking than Abû-Bakr ibn-aṣ-Ṣâ'igh, except for the fact that he was engaged in worldly affairs to the day of his death and could not show the treasures of his knowledge or publish the secrets of his wisdom. Most of his writings were not

completed.[12]

Ibn-Ṭufayl (1105?-1186)

Ibn-Ṭufayl left us a single work, the novel *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân*, about a lost child brought up on an island by a gazelle. He shows how Ḥayy mastered all sciences, came to a knowledge of God and a direct experience of him. This work, with an esoteric, philosophical-ṣûfic slant, also discusses other important questions.

Ibn-Rushd (1126-1198)

The great Ibn-Rushd (Averroes), already renowned as a medical doctor, was introduced to the Muwaḥḥid emir, Abû-Ya`qûb, by Ibn-Ṭufayl. When the prince asked him his opinion on the eternity of the world, Ibn-Rushd shook, but the prince calmed him down and encouraged him to speak freely. Afterwards the prince gave him some money, a robe and a horse, asking him to continue his studies and to make an understandable summary of the works of Aristotle.

Ibn-Rushd set about this immense task, and wrote commentaries of three different sizes on almost every book of Aristotle. Ibn-Rushd began with the small commentaries, which are summaries of the thought of al-Fârâbî. Then he did the medium ones to synthesize the most important points Aristotle was making.[13]

Towards 1178, since he was much disturbed by the growing anti-philosophical influence of al-Ghazâlî in Spain, Ibn-Rushd wrote *aḍ-Ḍamîma* and *Faṣl al-maqâl* on the relationship between philosophy and revelation. Then came his *al-Kashf `an manâhij al-adilla fî `aqâ'id al-milla*, and a long refutation of al-Ghazâlî's *Tahâfut al-falâsifa*, his own called *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut*

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[12] *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân*, pp. 111-112.

[13] For the chronology ofthe works of Ibn-Rushd, see `Abdarraḥmân al-`Alawî, *al-Matn ar-Rushdî* (Dâr al-Bayḍâ', 1986) and J. Kenny, "The chronology of the works of Ibn-Rushd" (http://nig.op.org/kenny/rushchron.htm).

(Incoherence of the Incoherence).

After these apologetic works, Ibn-Rushd began his large commentaries on Aristotle, and lastly made revisions of his small and middle commentaries, often in the form of separate little treatises (*maqâlât*). Then he turned his attention to medicine, and wrote commentaries on Galen's to correct them in the light of his own physical theory.

Abû-Ya`qûb, however, could not suppress the strong opposition to philosophy coming from the Mâlikî jurists, and after his death, from 1195, Abû-Yûsuf Ya`qûb al-Manṣûr, persecuted the philosophers and ordered the books of Ibn-Rushd and other philosophers to be burned. Banished from Cordoba, Ibn-Rushd wrote an article on the 7th & 8th books of the *Physics*, on the first mover. The same year he died in Morocco.

About 104 works of Ibn-Rushd are known. Most of his important commentaries on Aristotle, except that on the *Metaphysics*, are lost in Arabic, having been burned by his enemies, but they are preserved in Latin or Hebrew translation, thanks to the Jewish and European fascination with his thought at the beginning of the 13th century.

Moshe ben Maimon[14]

Moshe ben Maimon, better known as Maimonides, was born at Cordoba in 1138. Because of the Muwaḥḥid conquest of Spain, he had to flee to Fez in 1160. There he wrote his *Letter of consolation* for Jews forced to accept Islam, showing them how to pray and do good deeds while remaining Jews in secret. In 1165 he fled to Acre, in Syria, and five months later to Fusṭâṭ, next to Cairo. In 1171 he became the leader of the Jews in Egypt. He held this post for five years; twenty years later he held this post again until his death in 1204. He served as a medical doctor to al-Faḍl, the *wazîr* of Salâḥaddîn, but was

[14]Cf. Colette Sirat, *La philosophie juive médiévale en terre d'Islam*, pp. 179-237.

especially known as a jurist in Jewish law. He wrote his *Mishna Tora* in 1180 and the famous *Dalâ'il al-ḥâ'irîn* (Guide of the wandering) in 1190.

He wrote all his works in Arabic and they were later translated into Hebrew and other languages. An admirer of al-Fârâbî, Ibn-Bajja and Ibn-Rushd, he concealed his ideas as they did for political reasons and to avoid disturbing the faith of simple people.

His philosophical teaching is of interest particularly with regard to the nature and destiny of the human soul. This will be discussed in Chapter 4.

1.5 The influence of these thinkers in Christian Europe[15]

Through Spanish translators, Ibn-Rushd, like Ibn-Sînâ, had an enormous influence on European thought. The scientific works of Aristotle were first translated into Latin at the beginning of the 13th century: the *Nicomachaean Ethics, Metaphysics, Physics, De Caelo, De Anima* etc. Seeing these as a subversive of Christian belief, Church authorities forbade the teaching of Aristotle's philosophy of nature at the Faculty of Arts at Paris in 1210. This ban was repeated in the University statues of 1215, 1231, 1245 and 1263. But the Faculty of Theology continued to study Aristotle and developed systematic theology which from 1230 became a major field of study alongside the longstanding exegesis of Sacred Scripture.

Meanwhile the Arab commentators of Aristotle, particularly Ibn-Rushd, were translated. This work was done swiftly by Michael Scot in Sicily from 1228 to 1235, but it took a longer time before these works were understood. The heterodoxy of the "Commentator" was spotted only around the middle of the 13th century. Earlier Philip the Chancellor, William of

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[15]Cf. G. Quadri, *La philosophie arabe dans l'Europe médiévale*; A.-M. Goichon, *La philosophie d'Avicenne et son influence en Europe médiévale*; and especially Zdzislaw Kuksewicz, *De Siger de Brabant à Jacques de Plaisance*, ch. 1.

Auvergne, and Albert the Great quoted him without noticing any problem.

Bonaventure was the first to criticize Ibn-Rushd, in his *Sentences*, then Albert the Great in his *De unitate intellectus*.

The Pope set up a commission to find out what was valuable in Aristotle and his commentators and eliminate the errors, but it accomplished nothing. The job was then entrusted to Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Thomas Aquinas, in his *Summa Contra Gentiles*, made the first systematic and in-depth critique of Ibn-Rushd. Then, particularly in his philosophical commentaries, he assimilated the best of Aristotle and laid down permanent principles for the reconciliation of philosophy and theology, or of science and religion.

Meanwhile Ibn-Rushd appeared in a Latin Averroism whose chief leader was Siger de Brabant. He taught at the Faculty of Arts in Paris from 1260 to 1277, but his heterodox teaching on the human intellect was noticed for the first time in 1266. Bonaventure criticized him in 1268, then Albert the Grand in his *De quindecim problematibus* and Thomas Aquinas in his *De unitate intellectus*, both in 1270. On 10 December 1270 Etienne Tempier, Archbishop of Paris, condemned some Averroist theses, then on 18 February 1277 enlarged his condemnation and banished the Averroists. Siger de Brabant then fled to the Papal court at Orivetto, where he was assassinated shortly before 1284, by a mad clerk.

1.6 Later developments

In the Muslim world the philosophers failed to gain acceptance. Philosophy, including scientific and technological research, died as an independent study, and only those elements which theology absorbed survived.

In the East, a mystical philosophical movement developed, under the inspiration of Ibn-Sînâ. It was known as the "illumination (*ishrâq*) school", and was represented especially

by Suhrawardî (m. 1191).[16] There was also the pantheistic existentialism of ash-Shîrâzî (= Mullâ Ṣadrâ, 1571-1640) and his school of wisdom (*ḥikma*).[17] These movements were a continuation of Avicennian Neoplatonisme with a theosophic mixture of Zoroastrianism, Pythagorean numerology, Ṣûfism and some metaphysical notions. They were very far from ancient and modern scientific tradition.[18]

Such was the situation of the Muslim world until contact with Europe in the 19th century stimulated a revival.

[16]Cf. Seyyed H. Nasr, "The significance of Persian philosophical works in the tradition of Islamic philosophy", p.70.; L. Gardet, "A propos de l'ishrâq de Suhrawardi".

[17]Cfr. Toshihiko Izutzu, *The concept and reality of existence*; Fazlur Rahman, "The God-world relationship in Mulla Ṣadrâ", pp. 238-259.

[18]Cfr. M. Fakhry, ch.10, qui regarde ces mouvements plus positivement que moi.

CHAPTER 2

GOD AND THE WORLD

2.1 The existence of God, and creation

2.1.1 Al-Kindî: "The first cause and the true One"

In his *Kitâb al-falsafa al-ûlâ*, after an introduction on the meaning of philosophy, al-Kindî, begins by arguing that all time, motion and bodies are necessarily finite. This premise leads him to argue for a first cause, which must be perfectly and entirely one, as opposed to any other cause.

This argument is presented more fully and clearly in his *Risâla fî îḍâḥ tanâhî jirm al-`âlam* and his *Risâla fî mâ'iyya mâ lâ yumkin an yakûn lâ nihâya la-hu wa-mâ llâdhî yuqâl "lâ nihâya"*, where al-Kindî anticipates the argument of later *mutakallimûn* for the existence of God from the supposed impossibility of the eternity of the world. While the *mutakallimûn* based their argument on the temporal origin (*ḥudûth*) of all things, al-Kindî bases his argument on the impossibility of arriving at the present moment after crossing an infinite past time.

2.1.2 Muḥammad ar-Râzî

As a Platonist, ar-Râzî did not hold the world to be eternal, but said that it was made of pre-existent matter that is eternal. No reason can be found in God or matter for the creation of the world in time, but this decision is attributed to an eternal soul made by God, which desired to be united to matter. For ar-Râzî, God, matter, the soul, absolute space and absolute time are five eternal principles.[1]

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[1] *Al-qawl fî l-qudamâ' al-khamsa; al-qawl fî l-hayûlâ; al-qawl fî n-nafs wa-l-`âlam.* Cf. Aḥmad ibn-`Abdallâh al-Kirmânî, *Kitâb al-aqwâl adh-dhahabiyya fî ṭ-ṭibb an-nafsânî*, section 5; Abû-Ḥâtim ar-Râzî, *Munâẓarât.*

2.1.3 Ibn-Masarra

In his *Risâla al-i`tibâr* Ibn-Masarra begins with the observation that the nature of the elements cannot explain why water rises in a plant. His mind then turns to the heavenly bodies as an explanation. From there he turns to the world of heavenly souls, then intelligences, and finally God, the king of all.[2] Ibn-Masarra then outlined a hierarchical universe, where God first created his throne *(al-`arsh)*, then his chair *(al-kursî)*, then the seven heavens. The highest sphere is the "soul sphere" *(fulk an-nafs)* or "animal spirit", which is subject to a superior intelligence, which in turn is subject to God.[3]

Ibn-Masarra speaks often of different categories of angels, and comes back to "the universal intellect" *(al-`aql al-kullî)* and "the great soul" *(an-nafs al-kubrâ)*, from which come revelation *(dhikr)* and "Be" *(kun)* in this world, which is surrounded by "universal space" *(al-makân al-kullî)* and "universal time" *(az-zamân al-kullî)*.[4]

Ibn-Masarra also observes that nothing below God subsists by itself, but is contingent *(yaqûm bi-ghayri-hi)*, depending on superior beings. Yet Ibn-Masarra speaks of intermediate contingency, not immediate dependence on God.[5]

God himself, not being contained in any genus, can be known only *a posteriori*.[6] In his *Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf* Ibn-Masarra says that we cannot have a comprehensive knowledge of God, but only a general or comparative knowledge. There are three ways of knowing God, first by metaphysics *(rubûbiyya)*, then by prophetic revelation *(an-nubuwwa)* and finally by the test *(al-*

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[2]Pp. 64-69

[3]*Risâla al-i`tibâr*, 67-70; cf. *Khawaṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, 80.

[4]*Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf.*, p. 109.

[5]*Risâla al-i`tibâr*, 71-72.

[6]*Ibid.*

miḥna) found in his laws, threats and promises.[7] The best way to know God is to consider his names and attributes mentioned in the Qur'ân.[8] These are many, but each one implies all the others.[9] Meditation on the names of God, particularly his "greatest name" is not an esoteric *(makhfî)* but a privileged *(khuṣûṣî)* avenue to wisdom.[10] God is both revealed and hidden by his creatures, whether spiritual *(al-ghayb)* or material *(ash-shahâda)*.[11]

2.1.4 Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân al-Isrâ'îlî

To define "creation", Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân says that it is making things to exist from non-being. He then describes "non-being" as a kind of privation, but has no clear idea of what privation is.

2.1.5 Al-Fârâbî: the argument from contingency

When speaking of God, al-Fârâbî nearly always avoids the name "Allâh.[12] Nor does he use the famous expression, "the Necessarily Existent" *(wâjib al-wujûd)* of Ibn-Sînâ and later Ash`arite theologians. His point of departure is rather, "the First Existent" (*al-mawjûd al-awwal*).[13] In his *Mabâdi' ârâ' ahl al-madîna al-fâdila* and *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, instead of trying to prove the existence of such a reality, al-Fârâbî merely presents an outline of a Plotinian emanation universe: first the First Cause, from which all other existing things emanate. In his *Ta`lîqât* he says that knowledge of the First Necessarily Existent is something we know innately (*awwaliyya*), and does not come

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[7] *Khwâṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, 76-77.

[8] Pp. 76-78.

[9] *Risâla al-i`tibâr*, p. 72.

[10] *Khawaṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, 77-81.

[11] Pp. 87, 92.

[12] An exception is in *Iḥṣâ' al-`ulûm*, ch. 4, p. 132.

[13] At the beginning of his principal works: *Mabâdi' ârâ' ahl al-madîna al-fâdila* and *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*.

by learning (*min ghayr iktisâb*).[14]

Nevertheless, in his *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, al-Fârâbî repeats the argument of Aristotle for a First Mover.[15] And at the beginning of his *Zaynûn al-kabîr al-yûnânî* and his *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya*, he presents the argument from contingency, saying that every possible being depends and flows from a necessary being whose essence and existence are identical.[16]

As for the unity of God, al-Fârâbî, like every Muslim, says that God is one, without rival or contrary.[17] But he also insists on the simplicity of God, saying that he is absolutely indivisible; in particular, his essence is at the same time an intelligence which understands and is understood.[18] This position implicitly denies the distinction of the Ash`arites between the attributes and the essence of God, but al-Fârâbî, on this question as on others, only states the principles without drawing the conclusion.

For al-Fârâbî, creation is a necessary effect of the existence of God, and the existence of creatures comes from him by way of emanation (*fayd*).[19] In spite of this necessity, al-Fârâbî insists that God is self-sufficient, having no need of his creatures and gaining nothing from them.[20]

If creation is necessary, it follows that the universe must be eternal, but al-Fârâbî avoids drawing this logical conclusion, except in some smaller works.[21] He does discuss the question

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[14] *Ta`lîqât*, n. 7.

[15] *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, n. 33-34.

[16] Cf. J. Kenny, "Al-Fârâbî and the contingency argument for God's existence: a study of *Risâla Zaynûn al-kabîr al-yûnânî*.

[17] *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 2-3, *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 43:10.

[18] *As-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 44:6; cf. *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 4-5; *Zaynûn al-kabîr al-yûnânî*, 2; *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya* etc.

[19] *Mabâdi' ârâ*, 7, and *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 52:5; *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya* etc.

[20] *Loc. cit.*

[21] Like *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya*.

explicitly, comparing the opinions of Plato and Aristotle but, in a rather vague conclusion, he refers the reader to the sources of divine revelation. This is undoubtedly and attitude of political prudence.[22]

As for the manner of creation, al-Fârâbî adopts the Plotinian principle that the One can produce only one effect.[23] Thus, the First Cause directly creates only the supreme intellect of the cosmos. By contemplating itself, this intellect creates the first sphere of fixed stars and the soul of this sphere. By contemplating its Creator, it creates a lesser intellect which creates the next lower sphere etc., all the way down to the intellect that rules the sub-lunar world; this last intellect is the "Agent Intellect".[24] The heavenly bodies produce prime matter and its ability to receive forms.[25]

This is a hierarchical universe, where each species occupies a definite rung on a ladder of superiority or inferiority.[26] In spite of such statements as, "He is the First Existent who effects the existence of all things outside Himself,"[27] the creation and preservation of existing things is not the immediate work of God, but everything is made through the mediation of the first intelligence and other heavenly spirits.

2.1.6 Miskawayh

To prove the existence of God, in his *al-Fawz al-aṣghar* Miskawayh presents an argument from motion, but without explicit reference to any cosmic system. He says that everything that is in motion *(mutaḥarrik)* has a mover *(muḥarrik)*, but finds it difficult to explain this principle. For natural motion he says

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[22]*Jam bayn ra'yay al-hakîmayn Aflâtûn al-ilâhî wa-Aristûtâlis*, 22:4-26:12.

[23]Cf. *Sharḥ risâla Zaynûn al-kabîr al-yunânî*, ch. 3 and elsewhere.

[24]*Ibid.*, 10. See also *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 52:5-53:10; *Risâla fî l-`aql*, 50-53.

[25]*As-siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 55:3.

[26]Cf. *Iḥsâ' al-`ulûm*, ch. 5, p. 121; and elsewhere.

[27]*Iḥsâ' al-`ulûm*, ch. 4, p. 122.

(like Ibn-Sînâ) that "the nature" of the thing moves it,[28] just as the soul is the extrinsic mover of the body and God is the extrinsic mover of heavenly bodies.[29]

In any case, our knowledge of God is more negative than positive.[30] If natural things have matter and form, and intellects are pure form, then God is neither form nor matter.[31]

In *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, after an explanation of instrumental causality, Miskawayh presents God as the first non-caused cause of a chain of causes.[32]But then he insists that knowledge of the existence of God "is a primordial judgement that has no need of proof." And he quotes imâms who say, "God is not known through something, but all things are known through him."[33] Later he explains how one goes from knowledge of natural things to knowledge of divine things, then to knowledge of God himself. "And one can arrive at this point only by this way, that is, by the fact that there must be a cause [for all that]."[34]

He accepts the principle that from one there can only come one thing, and thus proposes that the first creature is the Agent Intellect, by which he creates the soul and the body of the first heavenly sphere.[35]

It is significant that Miskawayh anticipates Ibn-Sînâ in presenting God as the Necessary Existent *(wâjib al-wujûd)*, saying that existence is only an accident *(`araḍ)* for every other

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[28]Pp. 44-48.

[29]*Risâla fi jawhar an-nafs*, p. 197.

[30]*Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 96-97.

[31]*Fî ithbât aṣ-ṣuwar ar-rûḥâniyya fi l-`ulla al-ûlâ*, p. 202.

[32]Pp. 38-32 (sic).

[33]*Ibid.*, p. 29.

[34]*Ibid.*, p. 23.

[35]*Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 55.

thing, and that in this way everything emanates *(yafiḍ)* and depends immediately on him.[36]

We have explained that existence belongs to every other thing by accident, but it belongs to the Creator by essence... All levels of existing thing are what they are by God the Most High. His outpouring existence and flowing power are what preserves the order of the universe. If one could imagine that the Creator stopped this outpouring of existence, nothing in the world would exist, and everything would be annihilated in an instant.[37]

Regarding the eternity of the world, Miskawayh affirms that God created everything from non-existence *(al-`adam)*, but explains that this is true of every change. If an animal is made of sperm, and sperm from blood, blood from food, food from plants and plants from simple elements, these elements have only prime matter and form and can only come from non-existence *(`adam)*.

Miskawayh's ambiguous use of the term *`adam*, a translation of Aristotle's "privation", could apply equally well to "nothing" or to privation in a pre-existing subject.[38] In *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql* he is clearer:

The absolute First is He whom we call eternal *(azalî)*. That is clear from the fact that what does not cease to exist cannot be composed or multiplied in any way, since a multitude is compose of units... But the world in its existence is necessarily composed. Since it is composed of simple things that precede it, it necessarily needs a Composer.[39]

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[36] *Ibid.*, pp. 47-47, 54-57.

[37] *Ibid.*, p. 54-56.

[38] *Ibid.*, p. 60.

[39] P. 41.

2.1.7 Ibn-Sînâ

The argument from contingency

For Ibn-Sînâ the argument from contingency, that of the metaphysicians (*ilâhiyyûn* = theologians) and the third way of Saint Thomas, is the preferred way to demonstrate the existence of God.[40] "If it were possible to know the reality *(ḥaqîqa)* of the First, 'necessity of existence' *(wujûb al-wujûd)* would be the meaning of this reality.[41] Ibn-Sînâ then develops very clearly the distinction between the "necessarily Existent" and "possible existents" to explain the difference between God and every other thing, as well as the unity of God.[42] A simple presentation of this distinction is found at the beginning of his *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*:

> Whatever exists either has a cause of its existence or it does not. If it has a cause, it is possible, both before it exists, when we suppose its existence in our imagination, and in its state of existence, since what possibly exists does not lose this possibility when it begins to exist. But if a thing has no cause whatsoever of its existence, it exists necessarily.[43]

In his *Ta`lîqât* Ibn-Sînâ insists that this distinction is the right way to show the existence of God. One should not proceed, as some do, by arguing that bodily things are inseparable from accidents that come and go *(muḥdatha)*.[44] In the *Shifâ'* he bases the distinction between essence and existence on their real non-identification or distinction of essence (*dhât*) and existence

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[40] *Ta`lîqât*, p. 62.

[41] *Ta`lîqât*, p. 36.

[42] Cf. *`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 3-5; *Risâla ajwiba `an `ashar masâ'il*, n. 5, p. 80; *Risâla tafsîr aṣ-ṣamadiyya* (sûra 112), pp. 16-17; *Risâla az-ziyâra wa-d-du`â'*, p. 33; *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, 161-165; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 28, 162-163, 176-179.

[43] P. 2.

[44] P. 37.

(*anniyya*).[45] In his short work, *Fusûs al-hikma*,[46] Ibn-Sînâ bases it on a distinction between the abstract (*mâhiyya*) or concrete essence (*huwiyya*); this seems sufficient to distinguish God from creatures which are multiple within a species,[47] but it does not apply to spiritual creatures, in which–as Saint Thomas remarks–the abstract and concrete essence are the same.

The *Ta`lîqât* makes a distinction between what is possible absolutely, that is, things which exist after non-existence, and what is possible in essence, because its existence derives from another, but it has always existed.[48]

In his *Tafsîr âya an-nûr*, Ibn-Sînâ explains the consequences of the contingency of created things:

> Every possible thing and every seed which exists is illuminated by the light of the Most High's existence and not by a separation of something from its existence, as some imagine–which is an error and a deviation–but by a bond *(irtibât)* to its essence. Thus, if some possible thing were to be separated from this bond for an instant, it would be annihilated.[49]

By way of conclusion to this argument, Ibn-Sînâ says in his *Ta`lîqât*:

> The First is entirely pure act *(fi`l maḥḍ)*; he exists necessarily by his essence, which is his existence. He is not tied to anything. There is no potency in him.[50]

Yet we should realize that the real distinction between essence

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[45] *Al-ilâhiyyât, maqâla* 8, *faṣl* 4.

[46] Section 1.

[47] He makes the same distinction in *Risâla tafsîr aṣ-ṣamadiyya* (sûra 112), p. 22.

[48] P. 28.

[49] P. 86.

[50] P. 150.

and existence in creatures, as Ibn-Sînâ presents it, is not the same as that proposed by Thomas Aquinas, which is based on a relationship between potency and act. Ibn-Sînâ denies that an essence can be possible purely on a logical level, involving no internal contradition, but says that it must be found in an existing (and eternal) subject, such as matter or the very substance of separated intelligences which are always in act. Speaking of these, he says:

> In a word, if the possibility of such a substance to exist is not realized, it cannot exist. But if it exists and subsists by its essence, it exists as a substance. And if it is a substance, it has a quiddity which does not contain additives, since a substance cannot have additives to its essence. But any additive must be accidental to it. Thus this substance which subsists by its essence has an existence distinct from the possibility of its existence, and this existence is added to it.[51]

> In a word, everything that begins to exist after not having existed necessarily has matter, because everything that begins to exist must, before it comes into existence, be possible to exist, since if it were of itself impossible to exist it would not exist at all. And its possibility of existing does not consist in the fact that an agent has power over it; rather, an agent would have no power over it if it were not possible in itself.[52]

These are the passages that Ibn-Rushd and Thomas Aquinas criticize for making existence into an accident.

The argument from movement

Ibn-Sînâ also presents an argument for the existence of God

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[51] *Ash-Shifâ', al-ilâhiyyât, maqâla* 4, *faṣl* 2, pp. 177-178.

[52] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

from the masters of natural science *(ṭabâ`iyyûn)*,[53] which is the first way of Saint Thomas, starting from motion.[54] In this way he has a place for divine titles such as "First Mover" *(al-muḥarrik al-awwal)*,[55] and "First Principle" *(al-mabda' al-awwal)*.[56]

The argument from degrees of perfection

We can also note the fourth way of Saint Thomas in the *Ta`lîqât*, where Ibn-Sinâ compares the different levels of perfection of things to show their essential (not existential) finitude and imperfection and thus their dependence on an infinitely perfect being.[57]

The argument from causality

The *Ta`lîqât* also presents the second way of Saint Thomas in its essentials, arguing that a series of causes must necessarily end in a first non-caused cause. This argument, as with Saint Thomas, is not an independent argument, but could be applied to either motion or existence.[58]

The argument from individuation of material things

In his *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, Ibn-Sînâ presents an argument that the individuation of bodily things cannot come from their essence, which is common, but must come from an incorporeal external cause which specifies these things in their individuality. "That points to the existence of the Creator."[59]

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[53] *Ta`lîqât*, p. 62.

[54] Cf. *Kalimât aṣ-ṣufiyya*, 166.

[55] *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 24 ff.

[56] *Ibid.*, 50.

[57] P. 32.

[58] Pp. 39-40.

[59] P. 155.

The unity and simplicity of God

For the unity of God, Ibn-Sînâ presents the usual arguments for fact that the Necessary Existent cannot be multiple.[60]

As for the simplicity of God, Ibn-Sînâ does not hesitate to take the explicit position, so provocative to the Ash`arites, that there is no real distinction between God and his attributes and among the attributes themselves.[61] He refutes the Ash`arite position by saying:

> If someone says that his attribute is not additional to his essence, but intrinsic to the make-up of his essence, and his essence cannot be conceived without these attributes, the consequence is that his essence is composed and his unity is destroyed.[62]

The simplicity of God, as Ibn-Sînâ says elsewhere, excludes from him a quiddity *(mâhiyya)* or a substance *(jawhar)*; one can affirm only the fact of his existence *(anniyya)* and that he is an individual *(shakhṣ)*.[63]

Creation

In the question of creation, Ibn-Sînâ keeps the idea of Plotinus and al-Fârâbî that the One and the First can directly create only one thing.[64] From the intellect which is the first creature, emanate the other intellects, the souls of the heavenly bodies and

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[60]E.g. *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, p. 3; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 37, 61, 181.

[61]*Fusûs al-hikma*, 55; *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 51 ff.; *Risâla tafsîr aṣ-ṣamadiyya* (sûra 112), p. 19; *Risâla al-`arshiyya*, pp. 5-6; *Risâla fî mâhiyya al-`ishq*, p. 7; *Risâla fî tazkiya an-nafs*, p. 392; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 49.

[62]*Ar-Risâla al-`irshiyya*, p. 6.

[63]*Ta`lîqât*, pp. 70, 80.

[64]Cf. *`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 7; *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, 163-164; *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, p. 15; the principal is quoted to distinguish the internal senses *Risâla fî bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, p. 402; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 54, 99-101, 182-184.

the rest of material creation.[65] Thus God is the indirect Creator of everything outside the first intellect.[66]

Following the cosmological system of al-Fârâbî, Ibn-Sînâ holds that the first intellect creates the soul and the body of the highest sphere of fixed stars and also a separated intellect corresponding to the next sphere. This emanation continues in the same way down to the sphere of the moon.[67] The throne of God, often mentioned in the Qur'ân, is the sphere of the fixed stars, over which God presides, but not by way of indwelling *(ḥulûl)* as the theologians say.[68]

It is Ibn-Sînâ who introduced into Arab philosophy the notion of creation from nothing,[69] an idea that is not contrary to an eternal universe whose existence always derives from God. The heavenly bodies have always been in motion and that means that time likewise has always existed.[70] Ibn-Sînâ answers the objection that an infinitude of revolutions is impossible by saying that what is past no longer exists.[71]

Elsewhere Ibn-Sînâ reasons that God must always create, because otherwise he would have to change from potency to act.[72] Insisting that the will of God is unchangeable, he rejects

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[65] *Risâla fî ma`rifa an-nafs an-nâṭiqa wa-aḥwâli-hâ, khâtima*; *Risâla fî l-kalâm `alâ n-nafs an-nâṭiqa*; on the life status of heavenly bodies, see *Risâla ajwiba `an `ashar masâ'il*, n. 4, p. 79.

[66] Therefore I consider unauthentic the *Risâla fî l-ajrâm al-`alawiyya*, which says that God creates all souls (even vegetative and animal) without any intermediary (p. 44). This work diverges from the teaching of Ibn-Sînâ on other points as well, accusing philosophers of irreligion *(ilḥâd)* for holding the pre-eternity of the world (p. 44), and saying that the circular motion of the heavenly bodies is natural (p. 45).

[67] See especially *ash-Shifâ', al-ilâhiyyât, al-maqâla 9, al-faṣl 4*, pp. 402-409; *an-Najât*, pp. 302-303; *Taqlîqât*, pp. 97-98, 152-156, 192-193.

[68] *Risâla fî ithbât an-nubuwwât*, p. 53.

[69] Cf. *`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 6.

[70] *Risâla ajwiba `an `ashar masâ'il*, n. 5, p. 80.

[71] *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 166.

[72] *Ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, p. 14; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 113.

the Mu`tazilite position that divine power *(qudra)* is the possibility *(imkân)* to do something.[73] Ibn-Sînâ dodges the objection that there are always new things in the world, which would require new acts of creation, by the thesis that God creates only one thing, the first intellect.

Towards the end of *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, where there is a refutation of a series of heresies, we find a surprising statement on pre-eternity:

> Since you know that the world needs a Creator and that it is in potency to its existence and needs a cause of its existence, it is unimaginable that it could have always existed *(qadîm)*, since nothing has always existed except Him who exists necessarily, the Most High and Holy.[74]

This passage seems to go against everything that Ibn-Sînâ says elsewhere, but in his *Risâla fî l-ḥudûd* he distinguishes between what pre-eternal in time, "which has existed for an infinite past", and what is pre-eternal in essence, "which has no principle to its existence"; only God is pre-eternal in the latter sense.[75] In the same way he distinguishes "to cause to exist" *(iḥdâth)* in a temporal sense of making a thing exist after a non-existence and a non-temporal sense of giving something existence which is not part of its essence, and that without any restriction as to time.[76] He criticizes the Mu`tazilites who made God the cause of the becoming *(ḥudûth)* of things and not of their being *(wujûd)*; both require a cause.[77]

Just as God is the First, the efficient cause of everything, so also is he the Last, the end of the whole universe. Thus created things cannot be objectives *(aghrâḍ)* or ends for him, but there

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[73] *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 50-57.

[74] P. 172.

[75] P. 82.

[76] *Ibid.*, p. 81-82; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 85, 131.

[77] *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 84-86, 131-132.

are simply *lawâzim*, that is, dependant on him.[78] Ibn-Sînâ explains that this dependance does not imply any necessity on the part of God, because the existence of things comes from his knowledge *(`ilm)* and they are not like natural effects.[79] Nevertheless Ibn-Sînâ applies the term emanation *(fayḍ)* to the process of creation coming from God and from the separated intellects, because it "is the act of an actor always in act"[80]

As we have seen, Ibn-Sînâ admits secondary or natural causality, with the principle that every motion requires a mover. Following Aristotle, he says that in living bodies one part moves another; in non living things, as in the case of gravitational motion, the "giver of forms" which brought the body into being is the mover. But Ibn-Sînâ adds on his own part that the generator moves through the instrumentality of the form of the body, which is the immediate mover.[81] But this attribution of an efficient causality to the form was not accepted by Ibn-Rushd nor by Thomas Aquinas.

2.1.8 Ibn-Gabirol

Man's knowledge of God and of other spiritual things comes, according to Ibn-Gabirol's Plotinian line of thought, from the mind's progressive abstraction of the metaphysical from the physical.[82] God's first creation is the *Logos*, more commonly called the Will *(raṣôn)*, which is without temporal beginning or end *(dahrî)*, then an Intellect, which has a beginning but no end, then a universal Soul, and then universal matter. All things apart from God, including the Will and the Intellect, are composed of matter, but in lower things matter is denser and heavier. The differentiation of things in a hierarchy of superiority and

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[78] *Ta`lîqât*, 62, 54, 80, 121, 180.

[79] *Ibid.*, p. 66-67, 103, 149 etc.

[80] *Ibid.*, p. 81, 100.

[81] *Ash-Shifâ', as-Samâ` aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 330-331; cf. *an-Najât*, p. 146.

[82] *Maqôr ḥayyîm*, 3:3:37-38; 5:27,39.

inferiority comes from form. Complex things have multiple substantial forms, the most basic being that of a body.[83]

> It is impossible to define the the Will, but it can be described. It is a faculty or power *(koḥ)* of God, which makes matter and form and puts them together. It penetrates everything from top to bottom, just as the soul penetrates the body and is spread in throughout it. It moves and leads everything.[84]

> The Will can be compared to a writer; form is like the writing he produces, and matter that supports the writing is like a tablet or paper.[85]

Different forms are the result of the differences of matter's disposition to receive. Matter is related to form as substance to an attribute. The potentiality of matter is only its ability to receive a form from the Will.[86]

2.1.9 Ibn-Bâjja

Ibn-Bâjja presents God as the First Mover of the universe, although he admits a multiplicity of first movers, each in a limited sphere, such as the souls of animals which move their bodies through the instrumentality of physical forces; thus Ibn-Bâjja retains the idea of Ibn-Sînâ that the form is the moving cause of matter.[87]

In his "metaphysical" treatises, our cautious retainer neither affirms nor denies the eternity of motion or of the world. A reference to "continuous and infinite non-existence *(`adam)* before God created the world" is proposed simply as one of

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[83] *Ibid.*, Books 1 and 2, 3:39; book 4.

[84] *Ibid.*, 5:60.

[85] *Ibid.*, 5:62.

[86] *Ibid.*, 5:63-68.

[87] *Risâla al-wadâ`*, pp. 115-116; *Min kalâmi-hi fi-mâ yata`allaq bi-n-nuzû`iyya*, p. 132-133.

several examples of the definition of continuity.[88] Yet in his commentaries on Aristotle he follows his Master's teaching on this point without question.[89]

2.1.10 Ibn-Ṭufayl

After mastering natural science and learning the distinction between material and formal causes, Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân turns to the efficient cause *(fâ`il)*.[90] Then he sees that the whole universe is like a single animal, whose stomach is the world of generation and corruption. He finds it hard to decide whether the universe has a beginning or not, but in either case it needs an efficient cause. If it has a beginning, that is obvious, but if it has always existed (and the arguments for that seem more weighty) it needs an eternal immovable mover.[91] Then Ḥayy contemplates the beauty of the world, and this becomes an argument from design. The section concludes with a few remarks on negative theology.[92] Later there is a statement that there is no real difference between the essence of God and his attributes.[93]

Towards the end Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân, after a ṣûfic experience, says that there is no difference between him and God. He explains himself by proposing a comprehensive monism, saying that all things are only like the light of the sun.[94] This unicity applies also to heavenly spirits (who animate heavenly bodies and are always in act[95]), but one cannot strictly say that these spirits are many, because multiplicity and unity are attributes of bodies.[96]

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[88] *Risâla al-wadâ`*, p. 129.

[89] Cf. *Sharḥ as-samâ` aṭ-ṭabî`î*.

[90] *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân*, pp. 164-165.

[91] *Ibid.*, pp. 170-175.

[92] *Ibid.*, pp. 176-177.

[93] P. 201.

[94] P. 207.

[95] Pp. 184-185.

[96] Pp. 208-212.

2.1.11 Ibn-Rushd

The pre-eternity of the world

The pre-eternity of the world was the first thesis attacked by al-Ghazâlî in his *Tahâfut al-falâsifa*, where he tried to refute the arguments for the necessity of this pre-eternity and even establish its impossibility. Ibn-Rushd's reply, in his *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut* was to refute the arguments for the impossibility of the pre-eternity of the world and to establish its necessity. His principal argument for its necessity was:

that there is an eternal Principle of the motion of the world [accepting Aristotle's argument for a Prime Mover] without beginning and without end, and his act cannot be posterior to his existence. Consequently his act cannot have a beginning, just as his existence cannot. Otherwise his act would be possible and not necessary and he would not be he First Principle. Thus the acts of an Agent which has no beginning to his existence have no beginning, any more than his existence.[97]

The problem that Ibn-Rushd had in mind was that a temporal creation would require a change in the will and action of God.[98] His position, in a word, is that there is no beginning in the past, but there is a First who is master of the past, present and future. Whatever has a beginning must have an end; whatever has no beginning has no end.[99]

Against the objection that time, just like the universe, cannot be infinite, Ibn-Rushd distinguishes carefully between an infinity of the extent of the universe, which he says is impossible, and a infinity of its time, or of heavenly revolutions and of generation in the lower world; these are infinite by accident *(bi-l-`arad)*.[100]

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[97]I, p. 83; the same argument, less developed, is found in *Talkhîṣ mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 124-125.

[98]*Manâhij al-adilla*, p. 120.

[99]*Tahâfut*, I, pp. 217-220.

[100]I, pp. 128, 156-7, 223.

Thus he accepts (with al-Ghazâlî) that something temporal *(ḥâdith)* can come from something eternal *(qadîm)*, not as temporal, but as belonging to a series that is specifically eternal.[101] Heavenly bodies resemble the eternity of God in the duration of their being, but in their revolutions they resemble the temporal things of which they are the causes.[102]In speaking of these infinite revolutions one cannot use the word "totality" *(kull)*, but totality applies only to a definite number of revolutions.[103] To deny the possibility of an eternal act of God is to deny the eternity of his existence; the Ash`arites misunderstood the meaning of the "becoming" *(ḥudûth)* of the world in the Qur'ân, which simply refers to the fact that the world has a cause.[104] Putting the Ash`arites on the defensive, Ibn-Rushd says:

> Whoever says that every body had began to exist *(muḥdath)* in the sense that the beginning of existence *(ḥudûth)* is creation from something non-existent, that is nothing *(al-`adam)*, is proposing a kind of beginning of existence which he has never observed. And that necessarily requires a proof.[105]

The world is *ḥâdith* in the sense that it has a cause; it is *qadîm* in the sense that it has always existed. Only God is *qadîm* in the sense that he has no cause.[106] Ibn-Rush loves to quote Aristotle that what has always existed cannot cease to exist, what has begun to exist must have an end to its existence.[107] The eternal motion of the heavenly bodies is the point of departure for the

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[101]I, p. 130.

[102]I, pp. 135-137.

[103]I, p. 218.

[104]I, p. 222.

[105]II, p. 631.

[106]*Faṣl al-maqâl*, pp. 49-51.

[107]*Jawâmi` as-Samâ` a aṭ-ṭabî`î*, p. 41; *Talkhîṣ as-samâ` wa-l-`âlam*, pp. 85-88, 161-190.

proof for the existence of God.[108]

To support the necessity for the pre-eternity of the world, Ibn-Rushd proposes another argument starting from Aristotle's definition of time as "the number of motion according to before and after".[109] Thus he denies the "now" *(al-ân)* can, like the point of a line, be a beginning of what is ahead without being at the same time the end of what went before.[110]

Ibn-Rushd tries to prove the same thesis from the definition of what is possible. One cannot talk about the active power of God without reference to the passive power of what is going to become. He insists that passive possibility must be found in an already existing subject. Nothing can come from nothing; so the world must have always existed.

> The position of the Ash`arites that the nature of the possible is created and begins to exist from nothing *(mukhtara`a wa-ḥâditha min ghayr shay')* is contrary to the position of the Philosophers.[111]

On the other hand, Ibn-Rushd loves to quote the statement of Aristotle, "What is possible in primordial things *(awwaliyya)* is necessary."[112] That is, the possibility of the world can only have been always actualized. One can even say that the existence of the world is not possible but necessary, because possibility implies privation, which disappears with actual existence.[113] Coming back to the active power of God, Ibn-Rushd says:

> There is something that demands the possibility that the

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[108] *Jawâmi` as-Samâ` a aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 129-136.

[109] *Physics*, IV, 11, 219b, 1-2.

[110] *Tahâfut*, I, pp. 158-162; cf. *Talkhîṣ mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 125; *Jawâmi` as-Samâ` a aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 42, 63.

[111] II, p. 605.

[112] *Physics*, IV, 4, 203b, 30.

[113] I, pp. 125, 177-8, 189-193, 195.

> world and time are eternal. That is the fact that God the Most High is always able to act. And there is nothing to impede the correspondence of his act with the duration of his existence...[114]
>
> We say that the First cannot omit a better act and do something inferior, because that would be a defect *(naqṣ)*. And what defect is greater than an eternal act which is supposed to be finite and limited, like making a temporal world.[115]

He goes on to say that if there were a delay in the act of a free agent, it is because he is constrained *(muḍṭarr)* by circumstances out of his control, which would imply a defect in the [116] To the objection that the heavenly bodies can undergo changes and corruption that are not yet perceived, Ibn-Rushd insists that such changes cannot escape observation; besides, they are against the divine order *(an-niẓâm al-ilâhî)* of things.[117]

God is the moving and final cause of everything

In any case, the existence of God is established by the fact that the motion of the heavenly spheres requires a mover or pusher. He explains that this is the meaning of creation and the continual preservation of the world.[118]

Just as God is the efficient cause *(fâ`il)* of the world, in the sense that he is its mover, he is also the final cause *(ghâya)* which moves as the object of desire *(mushtahâ)*.[119] Since he is absolutely unmovable,[120] he is perfectly self-sufficient and

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[114]I, pp. 182-183.

[115]I, p. 184.

[116]I, 184-185.

[117]I, 226-229.

[118]I, p. 259; II, pp. 617-618.

[119]*Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabi`a*, p. 1592.

[120]*Ibid.*, pp. 1607-1613.

happy.[121]

As for the action of God, Ibn-Rushd defends himself against the accusations of al-Ghazâlî by insisting that God does not act by the blind instinct of nature, nor by a will similar to the human will, but "in a superior way that only he knows".[122]

All attributes of God are one reality

As he defends the unicity of God,[123] Ibn-Rushd defends also his simplicity, taking the position of the Mu`tazilites against the Ash`arites who, in distinguishing the attributes of God, put in him a composition "of a defective essence and of attributes to this essence".[124] The reason that there is no distinction between essence and attributes in God is because he is pure act, without any potency *(quwwa)*; this excludes all matter, since he is pure intelligibility and intelligence.[125] Ibn-Rushd does not accept the accusation of al-Ghazâlî that according to the Philosophers God has no quiddity *(mâhiyya)* or essence; he has, but in a completely simple and non-caused existence.[126]

As for anthropomorphisms, although Ibn-Rushd recognizes that God is absolutely incorporeal, he attacks the Ash`arite arguments for the incorporeality of God, and praises the Qur'ân for the efficacy of its teaching in using corporeal images.[127]

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[121] *Ibid.*, pp. 1613-1624.

[122] II, p. 682.

[123] *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 70-76.

[124] *Tahâfut*, I, p. 372, 477, 494, 515; *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 84-86; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1620-1623.

[125] II, 556-557.

[126] II, pp. 605-608.

[127] *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 89-90.

God is only the mover, through intermediaries, of things in the world

Concerning creation, in *Talkhîṣ mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a* Ibn-Rushd accepts the principle that from one thing only one thing can come, and he makes ingenious attempts to show how the complicated motions of the planets agree with this principle. This work presents an emanationist view of the universe, in which each heavenly creature creates its immediate inferior, down to the sub-lunar world of generation and corruption.[128]

> These movers not only give movement to the heavenly bodies, but also their forms by which they are what they are... Thus they are efficient causes also in the sense that they give things their substance. This action can be interrupted or last forever *(dâ'iman)*; it is more perfect when it is forever.[129]

Later, in the *Tahâfut*, Ibn-Rushd says that al-Fârâbî and Ibn-Sînâ were wrong to insist that from one thing only one can come; this position is not Aristotelian, and besides there is already a plurality in the first created intellect. From the First Principle anything can come.[130] In his *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a* Ibn-Rushd refers to this dubious principle as the foundation of the erroneous supposition (of Ibn-Sînâ) of the necessity of a separated substance above the soul of the first sphere.[131]

With this denial of the fundamental principal of a system of creation by intermediaries we might expect that Ibn-Rushd would propose a continual creation with direct dependence of everything on God. But, still in the *Tahâfut*, he proceeds to deny Ibn-Sînâ's distinction between essence and existence implied in the distinction between what is "necessarily existent by its

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[128]Pp. 149-154.

[129]P. 137.

[130]I, pp. 294-299, 400-413.

[131]*Tafsîr mâ ba`d at-tab`iyya*, p. 1648.

essence or by another," accusing Ibn-Sînâ of making existence an accident and of confusing it with the being of a logical judgement.[132] "The fact that something is existing does not add any meaning *(ma`nâ)* additional to *(zâ'id `alâ)* its substance."[133] "Existence is not an attribute added to substance."[134] Then he says: "If the world were pre-eternal, always existing but not in motion... it would not have an efficient cause *(fâ`il)* in any way."[135] "Apart from the fact that the world is subtantially in motion, it would have no need of a Creator once it is existing."[136] Just as a building after its construction has no more need of a builder, so the world needs only a mover *(muḥarrik)* and not a cause of its existence,[137] even though Ibn-Sînâ and the Mu`tazilites say the contrary.[138]

Thus, denying Ibn-Sînâ's distinction of creatures into what is "possible" *(mumkin)*–the earthly world–and what is "necessary by another" *(wâjib bi-ghayr-hi)*–the heavenly world, Ibn-Rushd agrees with the Mu`tazilites in saying that everything that is below the First Principle is "possible", but the heavenly world is "necessary" *(ḍurûrî)* in as much as its substance is incorruptible, but it is "possible" in as much as it is subject to local motion.[139] The implication is that the substance of the world is not the work of God and it does not receive its existence from him, but only its motion. But Ibn-Rushd seeks to avoid this conclusion by saying that motion is necessary for the existence of the world, and that if the mover ceased

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[132]*Tahâfut*, I, pp. 277, 281, 283, 330-332, 388; II, pp. 480-483, 516-17, 567-570, 572, 587-590, 602-604, 608; *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 57-58.

[133]I, p. 330; cfr. p. 418.

[134]II, p. 517.

[135]I, p. 275.

[136]I, p. 284.

[137]I, p. 279.

[138]II, p. 444-446.

[139]II, pp. 448-451, 504-505, 602-604, 635-636, 640-641; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1632-1633.

operating the world would be destroyed *(la-baṭal al-`âlam)*[140]–Ibn-Rushd does not explain whether this destruction would be an annihilation or a change into an inert chaos.

If Ibn-Rushd denies, in Ibn-Sîna's system, continuous creation through intermediaries, he does not deny all hierarchical structure of the universe. If God is absolutely simple, "what comes after the First is understood as having composition, the second being more simple than the third."[141] If for Ibn-Rushd there is no composition between essence and existence, what composition is there in separated substances? Ibn-Rushd does not explain, and, against the objection of al-Ghazâlî that the Philosophers cannot distinguish between the simplicity of angels and that of God, he simply says that God and each of the separated intellects do not fall into any genus, but are beings analogous to one another, in a ladder of different degrees of perfection, each intellect depending on its superior,[142] and acting in turn on its inferiors in a chain of active influence. This influence is on the level of operation, not being, because the receiving intellects do not have passive power *(quwwa)* and cannot undergo any essential transformation from an efficient cause *(fâ`il)*; this excludes the Ibn-Sînâ's notion of creation by intermediaries.[143]

The heavenly bodies and their souls

Ibn-Rushd is also in disagreement with Ibn-Sînâ's opinion that the heavenly bodies are composed of form and matter;[144] Ibn-Rushd insists that they are simple, with an immaterial corporeality, although there is a sort of composition between them and their cause, and between their potencies and their

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[140]II, pp. 428-429, 640-642.

[141]*Tahâfut*, I, p. 335.

[142]II, 592-594; cf. pp. 529-530, 568-569; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1633, 1649-1651.

[143]II, pp. 581-582; cf. *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1652-1653.

[144]I, p. 392, 409; II, pp. 437-438; *De substantia orbis*, ch. 6.

acts.[145]

The universe has an order and harmony like a city under a king and his different officials, or like an animal with its different members, and in this order of obedience, the superiors are often at the service of inferiors, an indication of "a belonging to God in their very beings" *(milk la-hu fî `ayn wujûd-hâ)*.[146]

> It is unavoidable that there is here a spiritual power running through all the parts of the universe, just as this is found in all the parts of a single animal, a power which joins all the parts together and distinguishes each from the next.[147]

Later Ibn-Rushd clarifies his position that the principal aim of the motion of heavenly bodies is to resemble God *(at-tashabbuh bi-llâh)* and the secondary aim is to assure life here below.[148] Ibn-Rushd believes that the heavenly bodies are animated because they have motions that are not uniform, as is the case in natural motion.[149] He explains that these bodies do not seek relocation as such, but that "motion is better for a body than remaining immobile."[150] Ibn-Rushd's cosmic system has no place for separated intelligences corresponding to each heavenly soul, but God is the final cause which directs all heavenly motions.[151] Each soul-intellect is at the same time a mover or efficient cause *(fâ`il)* and a final cause *(ghâya)* of the movement of its own heavenly body.[152]

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[145]I, pp. 334-335.

[146]I, pp. 311-322, 376-380; cf. *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 133-134, 138-139; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1709 ff.

[147]II, p. 239.

[148]II, p. 733-734; *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 127.

[149]II, p. 727-728; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1593-1598.

[150]II, p. 727-728, 735-736, 744; *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 137.

[151]*Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 128.

[152]*Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 1594.

Ibn-Rushd denies, against Ibn-Sînâ, that the souls of these bodies have an imagination or other senses but, since they have to direct the motion of their bodies, they must have a knowledge of singulars; but Ibn-Rushd says that their knowledge, like that of God, is neither universal nor singular.[153]

While the human intellect is perfected by the intelligible forms that it acquires, separated intellects are the causes of existing forms.[154] When Ibn-Rushd restricts passive potency *(qubûl)* to matter,[155] he does not ask if angelic intellects are passive. The passivity of material things does not exclude their natural activity; he does not say, as does Ibn-Sînâ, that the form is an instrumental mover but, like Aristotle, that the generator is the mover and that natural action results when there is no impediment, just as someone who has the habit of science can use it whenever he wants.[156]

Secondary causality

Ibn-Rushd criticizes the Ash`arites for their denial of the necessity of a certain measure *(maqâdîr)* in creation. This belongs to the universe because of its finality *(ghâya)*, which requires a certain order either necessarily or by reason of fittingness. Otherwise "the quantities and qualities of creatures would depend on the caprice of the creator, and anyone could be a creator... Those who wanted to exalt the First Creator have deprived him of wisdom and denied what is the best of his attributes."[157] "Learning of this wisdom makes the intellect an intellect in man; likewise its existence in the eternal Intellect is

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[153]II, pp. 746-763; *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 128, 136; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, p. 1600.

[154]I, pp. 357-358.

[155]II, p. 710.

[156]Cf. *Commentarium magnum in Aristoteis De physico auditu libros octo*, Junctas, vol. 4, fols. 368a-371b.

[157]II, p. 623; cf. p. 787; *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 140-142.

the cause of its existence among existing things."[158]

By denying all secondary causality, the Ash`arites take away all the order and wisdom of God in the world. They are wrong to restrict all action *(fi`l)* to God because he is the only one who is truly knowing and free, as if there is no life in creation; besides they err in making knowledge a prerequisite to action and in denying the true causality of nature.[159] By their confusion of human and divine criteria, Ibn-Rushd accuses the Ash`arites of having "made God an eternal man and man a generable and corruptible God."[160]

The denial of natural causality also takes away from creatures their natures and definitions, which are known only by their actions and proper attributes.[161] Whoever takes away causes takes away understanding."[162]

The argument from design

In the context of the order of the universe, Ibn-Rushd sometimes says that God must choose what is best for the world.[163] In the same context he often passes over to an argument for the existence of God from design, the fifth way of Thomas Aquinas.[164]

> This proof is decisive and simple, as is obvious from what we have written. It is built on two principles recognized by everyone. The first is that all the constitutive parts of the universe are ordered to the existence of man and other earthly things. The second

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[158]II, p. 812.

[159]I, pp. 362-364, 412-413; II, p. 440, 807.

[160]II, p. 711.

[161]II, pp. 721, 727, 781-784.

[162]II, p. 785.

[163]II, p. 647; *Manâjij al-adilla*, p. 115.

[164]II, p. 658.

is that the harmony of its parts in a single action or finality is necessarily the work of someone. The natural conclusion from these two principles is that the universe was made *(maṣnû`)* and that it has a maker.[165]

2.1.12 Moshe ben Maimon

As for proving the existence of God, Moshe ben Maimon attacks the Muslim theologians *(mutakallimûn)* who try to do so by first establishing that the world had a beginning in time. Both the philosophers who think that the eternity of the world is necessary and the theologians who think it is impossible are wrong.[166] "The question whether the world has a beginning or not cannot be settled by a decisive proof." In any case, a proof that grants that the world has no beginning is a stronger proof than one that denies this possibility.[167]

After examining the principles of the Muslim theologians, Moshe ben Maimon concludes that they are incapable of determining anything about God because of their false philosophical foundations.[168] As for the philosophers, he maintains that Aristotle's arguments for the eternity of the world are only dialectical, not conclusive as al-Fârâbî thought.[169]

Moshe ben Maimon attempts to prove God's existence from the argument of motion. Like the Arab philosophers, he accepted the Greek system of a geocentric world encircled by many celestial spheres. Beyond these spheres is God, and each sphere is animated by an intellect that assures the permanence of its movement and governs the sphere immediately below. In his cosmological system there are at least eighteen heavenly spheres. If they were to stop revolving all below would die, just

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[165]*Manâhij al-adilla*, p. 110; cf. 109-131; cf. pp. 65-70, 77.

[166]*Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, p. 273, 319.

[167]*Ibid.*, pp. 186-188.

[168]*Ibid.*, pp. 228,232.

[169]*Ibid.*, pp. 313-319.

as an animal dies when its heart stops beating.[170] The heavenly spheres are moved by intelligences that animate them, and ultimately by an immaterial unmoved mover responsible for the system as a whole.[171] There are over fifty intelligences which move the spheres because of a desire to resemble God *(at-tashabbuh bi-llâh)*. Of these, the lunar Agent Intellect gives existence to the forms of material things as well as intelligible forms in the human intellect.[172] The Agent Intellect by its nature is always pouring out *(tafîḍ)* something. Its effect depends on the disposition of the receiver.[173]

He also proposes the argument of contingency, adopting (without acknowledgement) Ibn-Sînâ's distinction between what is necessarily existent and what is possibly existent. The latter is possible in itself, but necessary with respect to its cause.[174] In all created things existence is distinct or additional *(zâ'id)* to essence; existence and oneness are accidental to essence.[175]

Elsewhere he proposes an argument from design. A common opinion is that all material creation seems to be ordained for the good of man, and man is ordained to worship God. Moshe ben Maimon is ready to agree with this view, but adopts the philosophers' exception that the higher (the heavenly bodies), are not created to serve the lower (man). The survival of man is only a side benefit, and no general purpose of the creation of the heavenly bodies or of man can be assigned except the free choice of God.[176]

A cardinal principle of Moshe ben Maimon's theology is that

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[170] *Ibid.*, 190-193; cf. *Mishna Tora.*

[171] *Ibid.*, pp.273-277.

[172] *Ibid.*, p. 286.

[173] *Ibid.*, p. 411.

[174] *Ibid.*, pp. 277-283.

[175] *Ibid.*, 139.

[176] *Ibid.*, p. 509-520.

our knowledge of God is only negative; the only positive thing we can know is the fact of his existence *(anniyya)*.[177] Yet he goes on to say, after a long discussion on the name Yahweh, that this name means "necessarily existent".[178] As for the eternity of God, Moshe ben Maimon rejects the term *qadîm*, because for him that means existing in time without any beginning, whereas God is above time.[179]

As for positive attributes, he affirms that God is an Intellect identical with himself as the object of his understanding.[180] In any case, all God's attributes are one reality; in maintaining this he also attacks the Christian Trinity.[181] Echoing the Ash`arite-Mu`tazilite controversy over the createdness of the Qur'ân and also Ibn-Gabirol's divinization of the Word or Will, Moshe ben Maimon declares that the Word of God and the Torah are simple creatures.[182]

As for creation, Moshe ben Maimon avoids the term *`illa* (cause), which seems to imply causation by natural necessity, and prefers the term *fâ`il* (agent) which, he says, can legitimately be said of God even before the effect exists, since there is nothing that can impede him from acting.[183]

To the objection that for God to begin creating would imply a change in him, Moshe ben Maimon replies that God cannot change because he is immaterial and potency is found only in matter. He goes on to say that God is always in act, but not always acting, just like the Agent Intellect. True to his principle that we cannot know anything positive about God, Moshe ben

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[177] *Ibid.*, pp. 140 ff.

[178] *Ibid.*, pp. 153-164.

[179] *Ibid.*, p. 140.

[180] *Ibid.*, pp. 171-174.

[181] *Ibid.*, pp. 119-130.

[182] *Ibid.*, p. 166.

[183] *Ibid.*, pp. 174-175.

Maimon avoids probing this question too deeply, saying that "acting" and "willing" apply equivocally to God and man.[184]

In spite of the lack of proofs for the eternity or non-eternity of the world, Moshe ben Maimon argues that creation in time better manifests God's freedom of choice; he points out that the variety of stars and heavenly movements cannot be explained by intrinsic necessity.[185]

As for God's relationship to creatures, Moshe ben Maimon calls God, though separated from the world, "the ultimate form of the world" *(aṣ-ṣûra al-akhîra li-l-`âlam)* or "the form of forms", since without him other forms would not exist.[186] Similarly he is the "purpose of purposes" *(ghâya al-ghâyât)*.

Matter is good, while evil is a privation caused accidentally.[187] Moshe ben Maimon combats the common notion that evil is more prevalent than good; this opinion comes because people are considering only their personal interests, not God's. Evil is of three kinds: (1) that coming from natural causes, because matter is subject to generation and corruption, (2) that coming from other men, (3) that coming from oneself, causing bodily and mental diseases. Moral habits *(akhlâq)* have a bodily component, and the two change together.[188]

2.1.13 Thomas Aquinas

All "five ways" of Thomas Aquinas are found with the Arab philosophers. Among the slightly different cosmologies of each, Thomas is closest to that of Ibn-Rushd, who simplifies the number of heavenly spirits. Nevertheless Thomas says that it is improbable that the heavenly bodies are animated. Nevertheless

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[184] *Ibid.*, p. 325.

[185] *Ibid.*, pp. 328-347.

[186] *Ibid.*, p. 176.

[187] *Ibid.*, p. 496.

[188] *Ibid.*, pp. 500-508.

he swallowed the whole system of spiritual movers of these bodies, a system that collapsed after the discovery that these bodies are not incorruptible and that they are subject to the same inertia (or *impetus* in Thomas' terminology) which governs earthly bodies.

As for the eternity of the world, like Moshe ben Maimon, Thomas says that neither its necessity nor its impossibility can be demonstrated. Against the objection of Ibn-Rushd that every possibility must be found in already existing subject, Thomas states that the power of God extends to all being that does not imply a contradiction of terms.[189]

Thomas' most important borrowing from the Arab philosophers is the explicit recognition of a real distinction between essence and existence outside of God, likewise that everything depends on an exterior cause for the continuation of its existence. But Thomas refined this distinction, rejecting the idea of Miskawayh (less clear with Ibn-Sînâ) that existence is an accident, and showing that its relationship to essence is that of act to potency. Thomas also insisted that this act of existence depends immediately on God, and that there are no intermediaries in creation, as posited in the system of al-Fârâbî and Ibn-Sînâ.

2.2 God's knowledge of singulars

2.2.1 Al-Fârâbî

Does God know his creatures? Al-Fârâbî was accused of denying that God knows singulars.[190] In his writings which have survived al-Fârâbî says nothing of the sort. In a discussion of this question in his books on politics, he only says that God knows himself, that this is his happiness, and that his intellect cannot be perfected by understanding things outside himself.[191]

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[189] *Summa theologiae*, I, q. 25, a. 3.

[190] Massignon quotes Ibn-ad-Dâ'î and Ṣadrâ Shirâzî who affirm that; cf. *La passion d'al-Hallâj*, p. 562, n.1; English edition, vol. 3, p. 72, n. 134.

[191] *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 5; *As-siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 45:11.

But in the logic of his neo-Platonism al-Fârâbî would have to admit that, since God is immaterial, he knows only the general nature of material things, and not particular individuals, such as this man and his actions. These things can be known only by the senses.

2.2.2 Ibn-Sînâ

In his *Risâla az-ziyâra wa-d-du`â'* Ibn-Sînâ simply says:

> The First Principle influences all that exists, without exception, and his comprehensive knowledge of them is the cause of their existence, so that "not the weight of an atom escapes from him" (Qur'ân 10:61).

Elsewhere he explains that God knows himself as well as all the details of creation, because he is the cause of their existence coming from him.[192] Changes in the world imply no change in the knowledge of God, which is universal and infinite, above the past, present and future; thus he knows everything that happens together with its time of happening.[193] On the other hand, Ibn-Sînâ states that there are additional relationships (*iḍâfât*) to the knowledge of God which change with the changes of this world. He explains that "it is acceptable to say that a remote accident does not influence the essence".[194] This hypothesis compromises the unity of God.

In any case, Ibn-Sînâ states the Islamic principle which was at the basis of his ṣûfic life, that God is the principle of everything and that he is closer to it than any intermediary,[195] and thus he knows everything by his essence.[196]

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[192] *Al-Ishârât, namaṭ* 7, *faṣl* 15-18; *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 51; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 28-29, 87, 97-98, 119-123, 158, 168.

[193] *Al-Ishârât, namaṭ* 7, *faṣl* 19-21; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 66-67.

[194] *Ibid., namaṭ* 7, *faṣl* 19.

[195] *Fusûs al-hikma*, 56.

[196] *Ibid.*, 54.

Why then does al-Ghazâlî accuse Ibn-Sînâ of teaching that God does not know singulars?[197] That may be because in the logic of neo-Platonism the causality of God is mediate, operating through the first separated intellect and then the intellects of the spheres. He should know singular effects in their causes, and not in themselves.

2.2.3 Ibn-Gabirol

Ibn-Gabirol does not speak directly of God's knowledge of singulars, but he states a principle that would exclude it, by saying that the intellect directly knows form, knowing matter only through the senses.[198]

2.2.4 Ibn-Rushd

Regarding this question of knowledge, Ibn-Rushd, like al-Fârâbî, first states that "if God know all things he would be altered by what is inferior to himself."[199] Then he says:

> He knows the nature of what exists by what exists absolutely, that is, by his essence... That is because his knowledge is the cause of existence, while existence is the cause of our knowledge. God's knowledge is not characterized by universality or by particularity. For someone who has universal knowledge has only potential knowledge of actual things... but there is no potentiality in his knowledge. So his knowledge is not universal. It is even clearer that his knowledge is not particular, because particular things are infinite, and knowledge cannot contain them. Nor can God be characterized by knowledge such as we have or by the ignorance which corresponds to it...[200]

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[197] In *Tahâfut al-falâsifa*, n° 15.

[198] *Ibid.*, 5:13.

[199] *Tafsîr mâ ba`d at-tab`iyya*, 1697; see the whole section pp. 1693-1708.

[200] *Ibid.*, p. 1708; cf. *Tahâfut*, II, p. 535, 567, 703.II; *Faṣl al-maqâl*, pp. 48-49.

This passage could be compared with texts of Thomas Aquinas which distinguish the imperfection of human universal knowlege and angelic and divine knowledge which is the more perfect the more it is universal and simple. Likewise one should read where Thomas Aquinas explains how God knows an infinitude of possible things.

In the *Tahâfut* Ibn-Rushd says that "the First knows only his essence... and he knows it as it is the cause of all that exists."[201] He knows not only what proceeds immediately from him, but also what proceeds from him by way of intermediaries.[202] Forms have their lowest existence in matter; they have a progressively higher existence when they are in the senses, in the human intellect, and in an angelic intellect; their most perfect existence is in God's intellect who knows everything.[203]

Answering the question how God can know a plurality or even an infinity of things without having any composition in his knowledge, Ibn-Rushd re-states that God's knowledge is completely actual and that it is not characterized by universality or particularity. Then he says that "to define the modality *(takyîf)* of this knowledge and to understand it as it really is, is beyond the human intellect, because if man knew that he would know the intellect of the Creator, and that is impossible."[204]

The same refusal "to say how" pushed Ibn-Rushd to reject the position of the Ash`arites that God knows temporal things by an eternal knowledge. As it was proposed, this position cannot avoid the implication of a change in the knowledge of God, as it corresponds to the past, the present and the future.[205] The same problems follow from an attempt to qualify God's will as

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[201] I, p. 361; cf. *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 142-144.

[202] II, pp. 666-671.

[203] *Tahâfut*, I, pp. 308-310, 374-376, II, pp. 704-705; *The epistle on the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect*, p. 38.

[204] II, p. 535; cf. *Faṣl al-maqâl*, pp. 48-49.

[205] *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 77-78.

eternal, because an act of the will should correspond to an actual effect.[206]

2.2.5 Moshe ben Maimon

Moshe ben Maimon attacks Alexander of Aphrodisias for saying that God does not know singular things outside himself because (1) he has no senses, (2) singular things are infinite and the infinite is unknowable, and (3) singular things are always changing, whereas God's knowledge is unchangeable.

To answer this objection, Moshe ben Maimon first shows that God has providence for single things and then comes to the point that God knows them. He asserts that God's knowledge is one, simple, eternal and unchanging. It extends to privation *(`adam)*, the infinite, and all possible things, even those that will never exist. Unlike our knowledge, God's knowledge precedes and is the cause of the created things that he knows. Thus it is not multiplied by the multiplicity of the things he knows nor does it change as they change.[207]

2.2.6 Thomas Aquinas

We have seen that according to Ibn-Sînâ and even Ibn-Rushd, God should know singular effects in their causes and not in themselves. Thomas Aquinas considers this opinion insufficient and teaches rather that the knowledge of God extends as far as his causality; and the active power of God extends not only to forms, but also to matter, by which forms are individualized.[208]

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[206] *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

[207] *Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, pp. 522-547.

[208] *Summa theologiae*, I, q.14, a.11.

CHAPTER 3

SECONDARY CAUSALITY OR DETERMINISM

3.1 History of the debate[1]

The word *qadar* means determination of events. We might then think that a Qadarite is someone who holds that God determines everything, but historically the word was applied to those who hold that man determines his own acts by free choice.

During the Umayyad period the question had political implications. The Umayyad caliphs favored divine determinism to support their claim to authority by divine right. The poets Jârîr and al-Farazdaq popularized this claim, holding up the heirs of `Uthmân, the Umayyads, as the representatives of God on earth. They called them "the shadow of God" on earth, and used the term *khalîfat Allâh* to mean "deputy of God" (Qur'ân 2:30 applies the word to Adam in this sense, and 38:26 to David), and not with the usual meaning of "successor" of Muḥammad. Thus whatever the Umayyads decreed was taken as the decreed of God and no one was supposed to oppose them or doubt their authority.

The Islamic background to the question is important. Arabia is a country that has no regular rainy season. Nomads struggling to find pasture for their animals easily adopted a fatalistic attitude. Pre-Islamic poetry speaks of Time (*dahr, zamân*) or Days (*ayyâm*) as an impersonal force that determines everything, especially the length of one's life (*ajal*) and one's daily sustenance (*rizq*). On the other hand, the Arabs admired human exploits, especially victory in war, and regarded them as signs of a hereditary ability to accomplish great things.

The Qur'ân retains the notions of *ajal* and *rizq*, but teaches that

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[1]Cf. W.M. Watt, *The formative period of Islamic thought*, ch. 4; L. Gardet, *Dieu et la destinée de l'homme*, chs. 1-4; H.A. Wolfson, *The philosophy of the Kalâm*, chs. 6-8.

these are determined by God and not by impersonal forces.[2] Although the Qur'ân teaches that man is responsible for his acts on the Day of Judgment it affirms also that God can pardon or punish sins as he wishes (2:284; 3:129; 4:48,116; 5:18,40) or pardon at the request of intercessors (10:3; 19:87; 20:109; 34:23; 43:86). Besides, it is said that God guides (*ahdâ*) men or leads them astray as he wishes (6:125; 16:93) or helps them to achieve success (*naṣara*) or abandons them (*khaḍala*). Other verses present this guidance or leading astray as the result of previous good or bad actions (2:26; 3:86).

So the question arose: what is the will of God? Is it what happens in the world according to his predestination, even if it is a sin, or is it the commandments of God expressed in the Sharî`a? In a story told by al-Ash`arî, Maymûn had lent some money to Shu`ayb and came to ask for repayment. Shu`ayb answered: "I will repay you if God wishes". Then Maymûn said: "God wishes you to repay me"; and Shu`ayb answered: "If God had wished this I would not be able to refuse you". They continued to argue, highlighting the seeming contrast between God's omnipotence and his goodness.

During the `Abbâsid age the question of *qadar* had no more political overtones. The Mu`tazilites held the Qadarite position that the justice of God required freedom of the human will. The Ash`arites held the opposite position, adopting a completely atomistic and occasionalist theory to diminish the worth of creation and exalt the omnipotence of God. Before examining the positions of the philosophers, we must first look at the position of Ash`arism, which is the dominant school of Islamic theology.

3.2 Ash`arite theology

Al-Ash`arî's thought was developed and popularized by his disciples, especially al-Ghazâlî. Since the 15th century the best

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[2]Cf. Qur'ân 45:23-25; 57:22.

known popularizer of Ash`arite thought was Muḥammad ibn-Yûsuf as-Sanûsî, from whom I take the following points.[3]

3.2.1 The *Shahâda*

The first part of the *Shahâda* or Muslim profession of faith, is: "Lâ ilâha illâ llâh" ("There is no divinity but Allâh"). This statement is the core of Islamic monotheism, and means that God is the one and only divinity.

Islamic monotheism has far ranging consequences. Muslim theologians like to tie all the beliefs of Islam to the two statements of the *Shahâda*: profession of faith that God is one and that Muḥammad is his Messenger. The *Shahâda* serves as a good memory device and a pedagogical method to help students navigate among the many dogmas of Muslim theology. Nevertheless the *Shahâda* is more than an artificial link of disparate teachings to two fundamental points. These points bind all the teachings of Islam together in a tight logic, so that the whole of Islam is characterized by a remarkable consistency and coherence. No point of doctrine can be altered without affecting the whole religious system of Islam.

Let us examine here the logical implications of the first part of the *Shahâda* such as they have been developed by the interpretation of the majority of Muslims over the course of history. In fact the *Shahâda* has given birth to a radical monotheism in Ash`arite theology. That could have various sociological explanations, but the metaphysical foundation of Islamic monotheism can be identified as a particular understanding of analogy. Exactly what is the idea of analogy underlying the popular Ash`arite understanding of the *Shahâda*?

3.2.2 The Ash`arite understanding of analogy

As we have seen, pre-Islamic Arab thought was very

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[3]Cf. J. Kenny, *Muslim theology as presented by M. b. Yûsuf as-Sanûsî, especially in his al-`Aqîda al-wusṭâ.*

occasionalist and fatalistic, and this is reflected in one strand of Qur'ânic thought. God can do whatever he wants because he is the sole sovereign, without partner or competitor. Having opted for an unqualified omnipotence in God, the Ash`arites found a convenient support in neo-Platonism which took the world of ideas as the true reality, leaving the material and sensible world in a shadow of irreality and near nothingness.

Plato's idea of analogy was thus a relationship between two terms that are infinitely disparate; this is called analogy of attribution. It was Aristotle who invented an analogy of four terms to safeguard the reality of each element of the comparison; this is called analogy of proportionality.

Pursuing the exaltation of God at the expense of creatures, the Ash`arites adopted the theory of Democritus and Epicurus, who conceived of the world as a cloud of atoms floating without laws–except that the Ash`arites added: according to or under the influence of God.[4]

Let us now see how Ash`arite theology developed this occasionalist interpretation of the *Shahâda*, pointing out where they differed from the philosophers and the Mu`tazilites.

3.2.3 There is no power in creatures

As a variation of the *Shahâda*, any attribute or name of God can be replaced by "*ilâha*". For example, "No one is strong (*qadîr*) but God"; "No one is seeing (*baṣîr*) but God".[5] Ash`arite theology used such expressions to support its cardinal teaching that there is no power in nature; or, to be exact, nature as a principle of action does not exist. Only God acts directly at every instant on the occasion of the conjunction of what appears to be a cause and an effect. That is a way of viewing the

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[4]For a detailed study of this question cf. J. Kenny, "Islamic monotheism: Principles and consequences."

[5]Cf. M. as-Sanûsî, *al-`Aqîda aṣ-Ṣughrâ*, and al-Ghazâlî, *al-Maqṣad al-asnâ fî sharḥ asmâ' Allâh al-ḥusnâ*, p. 47.

relationship between God and creatures exclusively under the angle of Plato's analogy of attribution, to the exclusion of Aristotle's analogy of proportionality. Let us quote Muḥammad as-Sanûsî's *al-`Aqîda al-wusṭâ*:[6]

> For the same reason, you become aware of the impossibility of anything in the world producing any effect whatsoever, because that entails the removal of that effect from the power and will of our majestic and mighty Protector, and this necessitates the overcoming of something from eternity by something which came into being, which is impossible. Therefore a created power has no effect on motion or rest, obedience or disobedience, or on any effect universally, neither directly nor through induction. (n. 35)
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> For that matter, food has no effect on satiety, nor water on moistening the land, growing plants or on cleaning, nor fire on burning, heating or cooking food, nor clothing or shelter on covering or repelling heat and cold, nor trees on shading, nor the sun and the rest of the heavenly bodies on illumination, nor a knife on cutting, nor cold water on diminishing the intensity of the heat of other water, as neither has the latter in diminishing the intensity of cold in the former. Conclude by analogy to these examples that whenever God acts in his ordinary way he makes something exist on the occasion of another. But know that it is from God from the start, without the other accompanying things having any intermediacy or effect on it, neither by their nature, nor by a power or peculiarity placed in it by God, as many ignorant people think. More than one sound imâm has recalled that there is agreement that whoever holds that those things produce an effect by their nature is an unbeliever. (n° 39).

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[6]References to *al-`Aqîda al-wusṭâ* are from my *Muslim theology as presented by M. b. Yûsuf as-Sanûsî, especially in his al-`Aqîda al-wusṭâ.*

The total lack of power in creatures applies also to human choice. The same as-Sanûsî holds that man has a "power" to choose, but that this power has no effect whatsoever on his act. It only gives him a feeling that all is well and that he is free, although in reality he is forced to act (n. 37). God rewards obedience and punishes disobedience by his own free decision, not because he is held to do so by some obligation of justice (n° 38).

The position of as-Sanûsî perfectly expresses Ash`arite thought, even though Qur'ânic texts can be quoted in favor of human liberty as well as for divine determination.[7]

The popular expression of this teaching is the doctrine of *qadar* or determination, which goes back to pre-Islamic Arab tradition. *Qadar* is applied first of all to the termination of one's life span (*ajal*) or one's daily sustenance (*rizq*), but also to human choice, which Ash`arite thought, in spite of the subterfuges of *kasb* (acquisition, imputation of the act to man), puts firmly under the determination of God.[8]

This position was pushed to its extreme by al-Bâqillânî. Following Democritus, he denied the existence of nature and of natural units, saying that everything is just an accidental formation of tiny atoms which have no continuity in space or time, which cease to exist and are re-created at each successive instant.

3.2.4 Absence of philosophical ethic

The next step in the logical process was to deny the validity of any philosophical ethics. If the natural world has no predictable behavior of its own, we cannot look to the nature of man and say that anything is good or bad for him, because that all depends on the free decision of God. God's free decisions, revealed in the Qur'ân and Ḥadîth, are known as *Sharî`a*. Let us again listen to

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[7]Cf. J. Jomier, "La toute-puissance de Dieu et les créatures dans le Coran".

[8]Cf. W.M. Watt, *The formative period*, pp. 88-90, 191-195.

al-`Aqîda al-wusṭâ:

> It is impossible for the Most High to determine an act as obligatory or forbidden... for the sake of any objective, since all acts are equal in that they are his creation and production. Therefore the specification of certain acts as obligatory and others as forbidden or with any other determination takes place by his pure choice, which has no cause. Intelligibility has no place at all in it; rather it can be known only be revealed law. (n. 19)

In other words, God does not command or forbid something because it is good or evil, but it is good or evil because he commands or forbids it.

3.2.5 There is no divine charism in man

The use of analogy of attribution to the exclusion of that of proportionality also means that men do not have any share in God's life or attributes. In Islam there is none of the Christian "new life", "regeneration", or "sanctifying grace". There is only *fiṭra*, the natural man as God created him, distinguished only by piety (*taqwa*) or adherence by faith to the covenant (*mîthâq*) with Adam and his descendants.[9] Thus the basic difference among men is between believers and non-believers; all believers are fundamentally equal, although they may have differing amounts of good works to their credit.

The same equality applies to rulers and the ruled. No one has a divine right to rule (except that the Shî`ites believe that `Alî and the imâms designated to succeed him do), but everyone has the right and duty to "command the good and forbid the evil".[10] Even Muslims who are guilty of misbehavior are obliged to correct the misbehavior of others, since the obligation to avoid evil and the obligation to forbid it are distinct, and someone who

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[9]Cf. Qur'ân 20:115; 7:172 etc.

[10]Cf. Qur'ân 3:104 etc.

omits one obligation is not excused from fulfilling the other.[11] An imâm and law enforcement agents are necessary and deserve obedience, according to Qur'ân 4:59, "Obey God; obey the Messenger and those who have authority among you." But these functionaries, who fulfill a communitarian obligation (*farḍ al-kifâya*) do not take over this obligation completely from other Muslims. Since all are subject to the *Sharî`a*, any time an official is remiss in enforcing it, any Muslim has the duty, according to his ability, to correct the official or, if the case is serious, to engineer a coup.

The logic of the *Shahâda*, following an exclusive use of the analogy of attribution, also demands that prophets have no prerogative elevating them above the rest of men. The gift of prophesy is not a permanent gift at the disposition of the prophet, but is only God acting through him when he wants to reveal something.

This, at least, is strict Ash`arite teaching, but certainly not the popular belief in Islam. One has only to examine the literature for *Mawlid* (the feast of Muḥammad's birthday) to observe that Muḥammad is considered as the Alpha of divine creation–the light which was created before all other things–and the Omega whose intercession will lead the elect to Paradise on the Last Day.

A saint (*walî*) likewise has nothing to distinguish him from other men. He is simply purified from acquired selfishness to return to his original innocence. There is no question of "union with God" or of God "dwelling in him", in spite of a ṣûfist tendency to affirm this.

The Islamic view of the inspiration of Scripture "also follows the idea that man can have no divine charism. In a broad sense of causality, a Muslim could say that God is the author of all books, but particularly in the case of a book of revelation man

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[11]Cf. M. as-Sanûsî, *Sharḥ al-wusṭâ*, f.82b.

cannot cooperate. To say that Muḥammad is the author of the Qur'ân, even to the slightest degree, would imply that the Qur'ân is that much less inspired. Cooperation would imply a division of causality on a percentage basis. Whatever the percentage, such a partition of the composition of a book of Scripture is unacceptable both to Muslims and Christians. Yet the idea that God is the first cause and man a subordinate, secondary cause of the whole result, was never considered by Ash`arite theology. The Christian idea is that God is 100% author of the sacred book and man is likewise 100% the author of the book attributed to him.

3.3 Mu`tazilite theology

The Mu`tazilites in general were uniformly opposed to determinism, but not all for the same reasons. For the majority it was simply a case of defending the justice of God, since it would not be just for him to reward or punish someone if he were not free and responsible for his actions. Yet for Mu`ammar and an-Naẓẓâm, the issue was one of recognizing natural causality.

As opposed to the Ash`arites, the Mu`tazilites said that goodness or evil are intrinsic to things, and for that reason they are forbidden or commanded. Moreover, good and evil can be known even without *Sharî`a*[12]

3.4 The philosophers

Contrary to the above position, there is the Platonic concept of the philosophers that men and angels are stratified in to different ranks according to the excellence of their nature. The prophets are simply men who, by their superior intelligence, can understand divine things.

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[12]Cf. M. Valiuddin, "Mu`tazilism", ch. 10 in M.M. Sharif, *A history of Muslim philosophy*, I, p. 201.

3.4.1 Al-Kindî

The Arab philosophers admitted the reality of nature and created power. This position was clear with al-Fârâbî, but al-Kindî seems to have hesitated. In his *Risâla fi l-fâ`il al-ḥaqq al-awwal at-tâmm wa-l-fâ`il an-nâqiṣ alladhî huwa bi-l-majâz*, as the title indicates, he attributes true causality to God alone, who acts without anything else acting upon him, whereas every other thing is called a "cause" by way of metaphor, since these act by reason of the fact that they are acted upon by others. Nevertheless, in his *Kitâb fî l-ibâna `an al-`illa al-fâ`ila al-qarîba l-l-kawn wa-l-fasâd* al-Kindî explains that different things are causes *(asbâb wa-`ilal)* of one another. Heavenly bodies, by the constant change of their positions, are the proximate causes of all the changes of seasons and variety of weather, and in this way of all life on earth. If they are also the cause of human life, al-Kindî reasons in his *Risâla tî l-ibâna `an sujûd al-jirm al-a`qṣâ wa-ṭâ`ati-hi li-llâh `azza wa-jalla*, they must themselves be living and intelligent. As for sensitive powers, they only have sight and hearing; the other senses are redundant, since they are at the service of nutrition, which implied corruptibility, something that heavenly bodies do not have.

While supporting causality in nature, al-Kindî, like most of the Arab philosophers, opted in principle for a cosmological determinism. That was borrowed from Greek commentators of Aristotle in Alexandria, who held that planetary positions determine every event in this world. In this way the intellects of the spheres know in advance everything that will happen. Al-Kindî accepted the principles of this determinism in a cosmos emanating from God, attributing to it not only the physical diversity of peoples, but also their level of intelligence and moral disposition.[13] While discussing the causes and remedies of sadness, he explains that everything that happens to man

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[13]Cf. al-Kindî, *Kitâb fi l-ibâna `an al-`illa al-fâ`ila al-qarîba li-l-kawn wa-l-fasâd*, 225-6.

comes from God by his will; he has lent us all that we have and can freely take it back.[14]

3.4.2 Ibn-Masarra

Ibn-Masarra distinguishes two kinds of determination. Of the first he says:

> The exemplars of things and their determinations are resting beyond motion. They are all contained in the mother-book, and undergo no change, substitution or transfer.

From these derive detailed decisions *(al-qaḍâyâ al-mufaṣṣala)*, which are subject to change and exception. Prayer is useful with regard to this kind of determination, but not to the first.[15]

3.4.3 Al-Fârâbî

Al-Fârâbî, in a long discussion in *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya* on things that are possible on this earth,[16] gives no hint that these are determined by higher causes. The same is true of his other works. In a treatise on the influence of heavenly bodies,[17] he takes a firm position: Most of the things that happen in this world happen by chance (*ittifâq*), and do not have determined causes; they are not therefore subject to scientific proofs, and all that one can say about them is guess work, without any certitude. In saying this, al-Fârâbî does not deny divine providence (*`inâya*); elsewhere he says that God takes care of the whole universe and that his universal providence flows into every detail of the universe.[18] But providence is a theme that al-Fârâbî does not develop, in his care to avoid determinism.

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[14] *Risâla fî ḥîla li-daf` al-aḥzân*, n. 6.

[15] *Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, 99, 106.

[16] Pp. 56:13-65.14.

[17] *Nukat fî-mâ yasihh wa-lâ yasihh fî ahkâm an-nujûm.*

[18] *Al-jam bayn ra'yayn al-hakîmayn*, pp. 25:27-26:3.

Just as al-Fârâbî takes a moderate position regarding the influence of heavenly bodies and the possibility of predicting earthly events, so he takes a moderate position regarding alchemy, in his *Risâla fî wujûb ṣanâ`a al-kimiyyâ*, where he condemns both those who reject this science and those who believe too much in it.

3.4.4 Miskawayh

Talking of the efficacy of prayer, Miskawayh affirms the immutability of God and says that a prayer is heard because it turns us from the distractions of this world and opens us to the influence of the Creator.[19]

3.4.5 Ibn-Sînâ

Ibn-Sînâ, on the other hand, takes a clearly determinist position. Nevertheless it is not God who determines things directly; he acts through intermediaries:

> He who exists necessarily influences the intellects; the intellects influence the [heavenly] souls; the souls influence the heavenly bodies... The heavenly bodies influence this sub-lunar world, and the special intellect of the lunar sphere infuses the light by which man is guided in the obscurity of his search for intelligible things.[20]

In particular, the separated souls of prophets or holy men can benefit those who approach them or visit their tombs, by giving them the good things they desire or by taking away the evils that disturb them.[21]

In his *Najât*, Ibn-Sînâ discusses the question of the necessity that

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[19] *Faṣl âkhar min kalâmi-hi*, p. 194.

[20] *Risâla az-ziyâra wa-d-du`â'*, p. 34; cf. *Ta`lîqât*, p. 130.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

results from this cosmological structure.[22] He distinguishes between God, who is his own existence and exists necessarily (*wâjib al-wujûd*), and every other thing which is not identical with its existence, and for that reason is "possible" (*mumkin*) in itself. Then he says that everything that is possible in itself is necessary by another, that is, by its immediate cause or by the first cause. He presents an argument that it is hypothetically necessary that what exists cannot not be non-existent. But he does not make the distinction of Saint Thomas between what is necessary by another in the sense that it has no material potency and what is essentially contingent because it is material, even though it may be necessary in reference to the first cause who determines all things without taking away their intrinsic contingency.

In his *Shifâ'* Ibn-Sînâ is more nuanced.[23] Contingent hidden things (*mughayyabât*) are brought about by a mixture of heavenly things–which we may be able to count–and earthly things which precede and follow these happenings, whether they are active or passive causes, natural or voluntary; they do not happen by heavenly causes alone."[24] No one can know all these factors, and therefore no one can pretend to know hidden future events, unless he receives a special illumination from on high, that is, from the Agent Intellect (which we will speak about later).

Thus, in spite of the determinism of every event through secondary cosmic causes, Ibn-Sînâ rejects astrology and popular magic.[25]

For Ibn-Sînâ, "God's knowledge itself is his power" which gives necessity to everything that comes from him, and "the fact that he knows the good and chosen order of the universe is the fact

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[22]*Qism* 3, *maqâla* 2, ed. M. Fakhrî, pp. 262-3; see also *Fuṣûṣ al-ḥikma*, 6.

[23]*Al-Ilâhiyyât, maqâla* 10, *faṣl* 1.

[24]*Ibid.*, p. 440.

[25]Cf. *Risâla fî ibṭâl aḥkâm an-nujûm.*

that he is powerful".[26] Everything that happens has a cause, and comes in the last analysis from the First Cause. That is why what happens by chance *(ittifâq)* is necessary *(wâjib)* with respect to God.[27]

Even the choices of the human will (*al-ikhtiyârât*) are determined.[28] These come from earthly or heavenly causes or a mixture of the two. What happens by chance comes from natural or voluntary causes, so that "what is not necessary does not exist" (*mâ lam tajib lam tûjad*).[29] In his *Risâla al-qaḍâ' wa-l-qadar*, Ibn-Sînâ uses the same arguments and concludes in this way:

> Agree from all that has been said that your will is forced and your actions are the consequences [of causes]. You can escape from your error [if you understand] that if it is not forced, it is as if forced. If the word "forced" did not have the meaning of putting up with what one dislikes, I would say that you are forced. For if you are not forced, you are as if forced. This makes no difference if you consider the greatness of the Creator.[30]

In the *Ta`lîqât* Ibn-Sînâ says that "the soul is forced with the appearance of having free choice *(muḍṭarra fî ṣûra mukhtâra)*; only God is truly free.[31]

The whole universe is constructed in a tight order of causes, but the human intellect cannot understand this order, and it must submit with humility to the divine plans.[32]

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[26] *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 52.

[27] *Ta`lîqât*, p. 115.

[28] *Fuṣûṣ al-ḥikma*, 48-49.

[29] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 13.

[30] Pp. 59-60.

[31] P. 53.

[32] *Ibid.*

If "all things are necessary with respect to their first principles," why do they not always exist? Ibn-Sînâ answers this problem in his *Ta`lîqât*, saying that God's emanation is constant and invariable, but the disposition of matter to receive this emanation is variable.[33]

In his *Sirr al-qadar* Ibn-Sînâ answers the objection that commandments, prohibitions, rewards and punishments are superfluous if *qadar* includes human choices. He says that the commandments are stimulations to good for those who are already determined to do good; thus they are the means of *qadar*, and without commandments moral evil in the world would be double what it is. As for rewards and punishment, they are automatic consequences of the state of the soul the moment it leaves this world.[34]

Ibn-Sînâ also answers the objection that the use of medicine is superfluous:

> The truth is that there is no weakness or health, sickness or healing apart from God the Most High. But he has established a cause for everything. For each sickness *(dâ')* there is a remedy *(dawâ')*. If, in his determination and decision there is a remedy for sickness, man, his servant, acts in agreement with his will and desire [in using it]. God has prepared the causes of healing and has simplified this problem for him, giving him easy access to medicine and making it a cause of the cure from his sickness.[35]

In the *Ta`lîqât* Ibn-Sînâ answers the objection that if God determines everything, prayer is superfluous: God has determined prayer to be the disposition to receive what he wishes to give. It is not that we move heaven, but God makes us

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[33]P. 29.

[34]Pp. 303-305.

[35]*Naṣâ'iḥ al-ḥukamâ' li-l-Askandar*, p. 297,

pray. And when we pray we receive from God a power which is the instrument of moving elements for our well-being.[36]

Good and evil are not determined in the same way. "His essence causes the good by his contact or influence; it causes evil by separation or removing his influence on things.[37] In his *Risâla tafsîr al-mu`awwidha al-ûlâ* (sûra 113), Ibn-Sînâ explains that the first thing that comes from God is his *qaḍâ'*; this concerns the heavenly world; it is perfect and contains no evil. But from *qaḍâ'* comes *qadar*, that is, the earthly world. Because the things of this world are material they accept evil as an attachment *(muḍâf)*. God directly wishes good, but evil indirectly and by accident.[38]Good and evil, as well as the differences of perfection among individuals, are attributable to different levels of matter's preparation to receive, since the emanation of divine goodness is always equal.[39] Since God, for Ibn-Sînâ, has nothing to do directly with matter, the question of God's freely determining what is not equal does not arise.

If the good of the universe justifies evil for an individual, Ibn-Sînâ particularly defends the wisdom for the death of men. Besides the fact that it is a passage to a better life, if there were no death the earth would be full of people and there would be no place to live.[40]

Ibn-Sînâ describes evil as "the obscurity of privation" *(ẓulma al-`adam)*[41] or simply as a non-entity,[42] without any precise notion of "privation", which is the key to the teaching of Augustine and Thomas Aquinas on evil. In the *Ta`liqât* Ibn-Sînâ gives two

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[36]Pp. 47-48.

[37]*`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 52-53.

[38]The same explanation is offered in *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, p. 16-18.

[39]Cf. *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, pp. 7-8; *Ta`liqât*, p. 62.

[40]*Risâla fî l-mawt*, pp. 383-384; *Ta`liqât*, pp. 46-47.

[41]*Ibid.*, p. 25.

[42]*Sirr al-qadar*, p. 304.

meanings of privation *(`adam)*: "that which is in potency to come into act," and "the total privation of a form... as man is the privation of a horse."[43] Thus he confuses privation with potency or matter,[44] or with contrariety. But he distinguishes it from pure negation *(salb)*, just as not everything that has no sight is blind.[45]

In man, Ibn-Sînâ explains that evil comes from the vegetative and sensitive powers, which are the enemies to which sûra 113 alludes, even though these powers can also be put at the service of the intellect. The devil is also an enemy, and in that case evil can enter even the divine *qaḍâ'*.[46] In *Risâla tafsîr al-mu`awwidha ath-thâniya* (sûra 114) Ibn-Sînâ continues to allegorize evil spirits as the imagination and the internal senses *(al-jinna)* and external ones *(an-nâs)*.[47] In *Risâla fî bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, he says that the *jinn* are only the product of the imagination, but that angels are real.[48]

On providence, Ibn-Sînâ says that it extends to everything in its individuality, whether it is good or evil. Like Christian authors, Ibn-Sînâ explains that in divine providence evil has its place for the higher good of the universe.[49]

3.4.6 Ibn-Gabirol

Ibn-Gabirol's identification of the *Logos* with the Will gives his universe a voluntaristic stamp. The Will envelops and imposes necessity on all lower things, but is limited by the disposition of

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[43]P. 30.

[44]*Ibid.*, p. 32.

[45]*Ibid.*, p. 36.

[46]*Tafsîr sûr al-falaq*, p. 29.

[47]Pp. 31-32.

[48]P. 413; the same in *Risâla Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân*, and in *Jâmi` al-badâ'i`*, p. 413.

[49]*`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 22; the same in *Sirr al-qadar*, p. 303; cf. *Ta`liqât*, pp. 157, 159.

matter to accept the positive influence of the Will.[50]

Only spiritual (i.e. intelligent) creatures can act; other bodily creatures are only acted upon by the Will.[51]

3.4.7 Ibn-Rushd

Ibn-Rushd, finally, comes back to a less determinist position. In his large commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle, he says:

> God's providence extends to everything that exists, and it consists in the preservation of their species, since it is impossible to preserve them individually. But those who are of the opinion that God's providence touches each individual are partly right and partly wrong. What is true is that each individual belongs to a species, and in this sense it is true that God's providence concerns individuals, but to be provident of individuals as individuals is contrary to the divine goodness.[52]

Later he says that "providence certainly exists and what happens apart from providence comes from the necessity of matter and not from a defect in the agent."[53] The small commentary, *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, adopts no clear position, but it attributes to Alexander of Aphrodisias the opinion that providence extends only to species.[54] In *Manâhij al-adilla* providence is linked with the formation *(ikhtirâ`)* of things, without distinction between species and individuals,[55] but regarding *qadar* he accepts that everything is determined by intermediate exterior causes, depending on God as the first cause. Even the human will is determined in this way, as Ibn-

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[50] *Maqôr ḥayyîm*, 5:19,86.

[51] *Ibid.*, 3:16; 5:57.

[52] *Tafsîr mâ ba`d at-ṭabiyya*, p. 1607; cf. *Tahâfut*, II, p. 759.

[53] *Tafsîr mâ ba`d at-ṭabî`ya*, p. 1715.

[54] Pp. 160-164.

[55] Pp. 65-70.

Sînâ said before.[56] Ibn-Rushd emphasizes divine causality in the universe:

> There is no agent apart from God the Blessed and Most High. Other causes apart from him, which he controls, are agents only metaphorically, since they exist only by him and it is he who set them up as causes. And it is he who preserves them in existence and action. He also preserves their effects after their action and forms the substances [of these effects] when these causes are applied to them. In this way he preserves them in themselves, and apart from this divine preservation they would cease to exist instantly.[57]

What does this preservation consist in, since Ibn-Rushd rejects the distinction between essence and existence, and thus the contingency of creatures? He explains that it is by the order of the universe, with each heavenly body defined in its size, its position and its speed.

> If we were to suppose that one of these bodies were removed or placed in a different position or had different size or a different speed than that ordained by God, all the things existing on the earth would cease to exist, because that is the way he established their natures.[58]

It is in the same way that we must understand Ibn-Rushd when he says: "The name Creator *(khâliq)* is not shared by any creature, not even in any close or remote metaphorical sense."[59] That does not deny intermediate causality.

Ibn-Rushd does not accept as science astrology, chiromancy,

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[56]Pp. 134-143.

[57]*Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 139-140.

[58]*Ibid.*, p. 140.

[59]*Manâhij al-adilla*, p. 142.

divination, the art of talismans, and alchemy.[60] He admits the possibility of miracles, but defines a miracle as something that is possible in itself, but is impossible to an ordinary man.[61] Better than miracles in nature is the miracle of announcing things hidden with God *(al-ghuyûb)*, that is, true doctrine.[62] Elsewhere he defines *al-ghayb* as "what will exist in the future or does not exist at all".[63]

As we have seen, Ibn-Rushd supports the causality of nature against the Ash`arites. Miracles are possible because a cause can be impeded.[64] Against the Ash`arites who hold for total indeterminism, as far as nature is concerned, saying that the regularity of nature is only God's customary action, Ibn-Rushd asks what is custom *(al-`âda)*? God cannot have a custom, which is something acquired and added to nature; only animate creatures can have it. Thus by not recognizing nature the Ash`arites do not recognize what is a miracle.[65] On the other hand:

> One must have no doubt that existing things act upon one another, but they are not self-sufficient in this action; they do it by an exterior Agent whose action is a condition not only of their action, but also of their being.[66]

But that does not prevent the First Agent from acting through intermediaries.

As for the question of evil, although Ibn-Rushd does not try to

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[60] *Tahâfut*, II, pp. 768-769.

[61] II, pp. 775-776.

[62] II, p. 776.

[63] *Manâhij al-adilla*, p. 138.

[64] II, pp. 783-784.

[65] II, pp. 786-796.

[66] II, p. 787; cf. p. 793.

give a definition of evil, he says that it is exceptional and that it is for the good of the universe; as examples he cites the good and the evil effects of fire. Ibn-Rushd insists that moral good and evil exist and can be recognized by reason independently of revelation.[67] He criticizes the Ash`arites:

> They hold that there is nothing just or unjust in itself. But it is extremely absurd to say there is nothing good or evil in itself, since justice is known by itself as good, and injustice as evil. It is unjust in itself to worship anything else but God; this is not wrong simply from the point of view of revelation. [According to them,] if revelation said that one must believe in many gods that would be just, and if it prescribed disobedience that would be just. But this is contrary to both revelation and reason.[68]

3.4.8 Moshe ben Maimon

Moshe ben Maimon treats of determination under the heading of divine providence. He first lists five opinions on the matter:

(1) Empedocles thought there was no providence, only chance.

(2) Aristotle and Alexander of Aphrodisias thought that providence covers everything in the heavenly world, but in the earthly world of generation and corruption it extends only to the conservation of species in the earthly world, not to individuals as such.

(3) The Ash`arites say that nothing happens by chance, but everything is planned and determined by God's will. Thus everything is either necessary or impossible, and nothing is possible.

(4) The Mu`tazilites say that man is free, but God's providence

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[67] *Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 143-149.

[68] *Ibid.*, p. 144.

touches every detail of nature. They believe that the evil which one suffers in this life will be compensated by the rewards of the next life; this applies also to animals.

(5) The Torah teaches that man has free will, and no evil intent *(jawr)* can be attributed to God. In the earthly world providence extends to individuals of the human race, but only to the species of other things. Providence is more active with prophets, and with others according to the level of their perfection.[69]

A peculiar teaching of Moshe ben Maimon is that each man gets what he deserves, even if we sometimes do not understand why. As for the possibility of the innocent suffering, he says: "The question of testing is very difficult. In fact it is the greatest problem in the Law." Yet he does not allow that even Job suffered innocently. In his exegesis of the book of Job, he identifies the views of the interlocutors with various philosophical positions:

(1) Job's view, that God strikes the good and the evil indifferently, thus denying providence for individual men, is that of Aristotle.

(2) Eliphaz' view, that Job deserved all that he suffered, is that of Jewish Law.

(3) Bildad's view, that if Job is suffering so much innocently he will be rewarded in the next life, is that of the Mu`tazilites.

(4) Zophar's view, that all that happened to Job is because of God's arbitrary will, and no reason should be sought, is that of the Ash`arites.

(5) Elihu repeated the views of the other opponents of Job, and went on to explain that God is just, but is not obliged to treat men as we expect, because his wisdom is far above our

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[69] *Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, pp.524-536.

understanding.[70]

3.5 Thomas Aquinas

Against Ash`arism, particularly that of al-Bâqillânî, Thomas teaches that God preserves the continued existence of things, since the being of things depends directly on him.[71] Against the philosophers, he says that no intermediary can confer the act of existence.[72] With the Ash`arites, he holds that God is the cause of the action of all things, since they all depend constantly on him for their existence.[73]

On the other hand, Thomas insists that creatures have their own causality. In taking this position, he is not only against the Ash`arites but also Ibn-Sînâ who attributed the generation of everything on earth to the Agent Intellect as the giver of forms. Ash`arite occasionalism goes contrary to the evidence of the senses, which bear witness that definite effects come regularly from definite things. And, instead of exaggerating the omnipotence of God, he says that the power of God is manifested in the perfection and fertility of what he makes, and not in their poverty and sterility. And, as Ibn-Rushd objected, such a position denies the order and inter-dependence of things in the universe, and consequently the wisdom of God. Thus one should admit the causality of creatures not only in producing accidental effects, like heat, but also in the generation of their like.[74]

These effects are attributable to natural causes and to God and the same time, according to the order of subordination of secondary causes to the first cause. There is no question, as the Ash`arites and even the Mu`tazilites imagine, of sharing

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[70] *Ibid.*, pp. 533, 548-569.

[71] Cf. *Summa contra gentiles*, III, 65.

[72] *Ibid.*, n. 66.

[73] *Ibid.*, n. 67.

[74] *Ibid.*, nos. 69-70.

causality between the creature and the Creator, implying a subtraction from divine omnipotence.

Again, one can see a Platonic notion of analogy as the ultimate root of the Ash`arite position, that is, the use of analogy of attribution to the exclusion of that of proportionality.[75] As Plato thought that the sensible world was only a shadow or and almost irreal reflection of the world of intelligible forms, so the Ash`arites minimized nature to exalt God.

Are these positions necessary to Islam? Historical circumstances contributed to their development and a different direction is theoretically possible. The Mu`tazilites wanted to recognize in creatures a power that God gave them to act, but they were unable to provide a coherent rationalization of their position, even though it was reasonable in itself. Mu`tazilite thought was echoed in a modern thinker, Muḥammad `Abduh,[76] and it is popular in certain modern Muslim circles that are opposed to any fatalism. But most such authors do not give any philosophical foundation for their preferences.

Certainly Christianity has accommodated different tendencies on this question. The more we meditate on God and his perfections, the more we think in terms of the analogy of attribution. The more we are engaged in this world, the more we think in terms of analogy of proportionality. A balance of the two points of view could well gain wide acceptance in the Muslim community.

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[75]For the teaching of Thomas Aquinas on analogy, see *In Metaphysicorum libros Commentarium*, liber 5, lectio 8. For its application to the relationship between creature and God wee *Questiones disputatae de veritate*, 1, art.11, et *Quaestiones disputatae de potentia*, 7, art. 7; *Summa theologiae*, I, q.13, a.56; *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 34.

[76]Cf. J. Jomier, *Le commentaire coranique du Manâr*, chs. 3 & 4.

CHAPTER 4

THE HUMAN SOUL

Following Aristotelian tradition, the Arab philosophers held that man has five exterior senses and other interior ones. Besides these sense-based cognitive powers, all these philosophers held that each man has an intellect by which he knows. As for details, each philosopher went his own way.

4.1 Al-Kindî

The problem that al-Kindî and later philosophers faced was to reconcile the immaterial activity of the intellect with the fact that the human soul animates a physical body. If form is proportionate to matter and the soul is the substantial form of a body, how can it have an immaterial activity? Al-Kindî did not speak of the soul as the form of the body, but as a complete substance independent and separable from the body, and he praises Plato for this teaching.[1] As for body-soul relationship, for al-Kindî, the brain is "the seat of all psychic power".[2]

In his *Risâla fî l-`aql* al-Kindî distinguishes four intellects:

(1) the intellect which is always in act; this is eternal, and al-Kindî lets the reader suppose that this intellect is God, but he does not call it God later al-Fârâbî will propose an Agent Intellect between God and man;

(2) the intellect in potency, which is the human soul in the state of ignorance; note that al-Fârâbî denies a distinction between the soul and its sensitive or intellective powers;

(3) the intellect that has passed from potency to act, having acquired *(mustafâd)*, through the influence of the first intellect, intelligible forms and having identified with them; this refers to habitual knowledge;

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[1] *Risâla fî anna-hu jawâhir lâ ajsâm; Risâla fî l-qawl fî n-nafs al-mukhtaṣar min kitâb Aristû wa-Flâṭun wa-sâ'ir al-falâsifa; Kalâm fî n-nafs mukhtaṣar wajîz.*

[2] *Risâla fî mhiyya an-nawm wa-r-ru'yâ*, p. 297.

(4) the manifest intellect *(ẓâhir)*, that is, the soul actually considering what it knows.[3]

4.2 Ar-Râzî

For ar-Râzî, the rational soul is immortal because it is a complete and immaterial substance. (The concupiscible and the irascible souls perish.)[4] It existed alone but in its stupidity desired to be united with matter. To return to its original happiness it must purify itself by study of philosophy. Otherwise, according to the ideas of Pythagoras and Plato attributed to him by his critics, it must purify itself through a cycle of reincarnations, maybe even by becoming an animal.[5]

4.3 Ibn-Masarra

Ibn-Masarra developed the idea that the human soul is guided by the "great soul" *(an-nafs al-kubrâ)* of the heavenly world and the separated intelligences beyond.[6] He distinguishes four souls: the vegetative, animal and rational souls, and a separate intelligence, to which the human soul is related like the moon to the sun.[7] In man there is the body, an animal soul and a divine spirit, which is the truth *(al-ḥaqq)* which was breathed into Adam.[8] He defines spirit as "a light airy body",[9] whereas the soul is a power flowing into bodies from the heavenly spheres and has no stability.[10]

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[3]For a detailed analysis of this work, see Jean Jolivet, *L'Intellect selon al-Kindî.*

[4]*Aṭ-tibb ar-rûḥânî*, section 5.

[5]*Al-`ilm al-ilâhî*, 4; Aḥmad ibn-`Abdallâh al-Kirmânî, *Kitâb al-aqwâl adh-dhahabiyya fî ṭ-ṭibb an-nafsânî*, section 5.

[6]*Risâla al-i`tibâr*, pp. 67-69; *Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, p. 80.

[7]*Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, pp. 87-91.

[8]*Ibid.*, 91, 97, 104.

Ibid., p. 101; cf. p. 108.

[10]*Ibid.*, p. 108.

4.4 Isḥâq ibn-Ḥunayn

To this translator of Greek works into Arabic is attributed a *Kitâb an-nafs* which does not simply repeat what Aristotle said, but advances some ideas that anticipate those of later philosophers. Like Plato, he said that the rational soul is a substance like the pilot in a ship, and not like a material form; it is a separated intellect.[11] In this life it needs the imagination, but after death it will not forget anything, because it has no need of an instrument.[12]

4.5 Qusṭâ ibn-Lûqâ

From this translator and author one work has survived, *al-Firq bayn an-nafs wa-r-rûḥ*, on the difference in man between the spirit and the soul. "The animal spirit" *(ar-rûḥ al-ḥayawânî)* is a subtle physical substance that resides in the heart and in the brain; it is corruptible, whereas the soul is distinct from the body and incorruptible. The animal spirit is an instrument of the soul in animating the body, whereas "the psychic spirit" *(ar-rûḥ an-nafsânî)* in the brain serves as an intermediary for sensation and moving the body.[13]

4.6 Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân al-Isrâ'îlî

In the course of defining a wide range of philosophical terms, Isḥâq ibn-Sulaymân distinguishes three kinds of intellects: (1) one which is always in act with an ever present knowledge of all things, (2) one which is in potency, before actualization, (3) an actualized intellect, having received knowledge from the senses through the imagination.[14]

As for the soul, he is aware of the difference between Plato, who

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[11]P. 166.

[12]P. 169.

[13]*Kitâb al-farq bayn ar-rûḥ wa-n-nafs wa-quwâ n-nafs wa-mâhiyya an-nafs*, in *Rasâ'il Ibn-Sînâ*, 2, p. 88, 93

[14]*Liber de definitionibus*, pp. 311, 332.

makes the soul an extrinsic principle of motion, and Aristotle, who makes it the form of a body. Of the various kinds of soul, he recognizes one which animates the heavenly sphere and is the cause of generation here below. On this earth there are rational, animal and vegetative souls.[15]

The human soul operates through a vital "spirit", based in the heart and influencing the whole body. It is a bodily substance that dissolves with the body, whereas the soul is incorporeal and survives bodily death.[16] The soul of man is an exterior principle to the body, whereas "nature" is an interior principle; Isḥâq offers various definitions of "nature", none of which is Aristotelian.[17]

4.7 Al-Fârâbî

Al-Fârâbî adopted Aristotle's hylomorphic structure of nature, but gave it his own interpretation. Matter, of course, is the subject of form, which it possesses either in act or in potency. But matter is not pure potency; it is a subject which receives or puts on a form, and the form is given by an exterior agent; it does not come from the matter. This is a reading of Aristotle according to the teaching of Plato.[18]

Another curiosity of the teaching of al-Fârâbî on this subject is that he seems to believe in the multiplicity of forms in the same individual. "A body becomes the matter of another body either by giving it its form completely or by taking on something of its form."[19] Al-Fârâbî applies this idea to the human soul, where he sees each lower power as the matter of the power immediately above it.[20] He says the same thing about the relationship of the

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[15] *Ibid.*, p. 312.

[16] *Ibid.*, p. 318.

[17] *Ibid.*, p. 320.

[18] *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 16, 19 (p. 33).

[19] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[20] *Ibid.*, 21.

four intellects which he distinguishes in human knowledge.[21] Although, in his *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya*, he says that man has only one soul, in his *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs* he takes a very clear position for the multiplicity of forms or of souls in an individual.[22]

Al-Fârâbî distinguishes four intellects in a different way from al-Kindî: Man has vegetative, sensitive and intellective powers. Among the latter,

(1) man is born with an intellect that is rational (*nâtiqa*) in potency (the possible intellect of Aristotle); this intellect is also called the material intellect (*hayûlânî*).

(2) By receiving first receiving first intelligible principles it becomes an intellect in act (*munfa`al = bi-l-fi`l*).

(3) When this intellect progresses to the perfection of knowledge, it becomes the acquired intellect (*mustafâd*); in this way it becomes "divine" (*ilâhî*), because it is in contact with God through the world of spirits separated from matter.[23] In his *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, al-Fârâbî goes so far as to say that the different stages of the intellect make a distinction in nature (*tabî`a*) and essence (*jawhar*).[24]

(4) Man is incapable by himself of coming out of his condition of materiality without the action of the Agent Intellect. This power, postulated by Aristotle, which Saint Thomas holds is individual to each man, was interpreted by the Greek commentators as the lowest of the heavenly spirits, distinct from individual men but giving them all understanding. Al-Fârâbî accepted this idea and identified this intellect with the "faithful spirit" (*ar-rûh al-amîn*) and "the holy spirit" (*rûh*

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[21] *Ibid.*, 27, p. 58.

[22] Nos. 75-76.

[23] On the whole question of intellects, cf. *Mabâdi' ârâ'* 22 & 27 (p. 58); *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 32:6, 36:1, 55:5, 79:9 ff.; *Risâla fi l-`aql*, nn. 17, 18, 31, 32-40.

[24] Nos. 90-93.

al-qudus) of the Qur'ân, which Muslims understand as being the angel Gabriel.

The job of the Agent Intellect, according to al-Fârâbî, is first of all to impress in the possible intellect the first principals of understanding, such as the principle of contradiction. Then it helps people to reach happiness by inspiring in them (if it finds them ready) a higher knowledge.[25] Al-Fârâbî does not say the Agent Intellect is necessary for further knowledge, but explains that images coming from the exterior senses pass through the common sense and the imagination to the "power of discretion" [the cogitative] which prepares them for being understood by the intellect.[26]

In his *Ta`lîqât* al-Fârâbî remarks that by dreams and premonitions man has a natural contact with "the first", that is, with heavenly spirits.[27] He continues to say that the work of the imagination is to prepare the intellect to receive intelligible forms from "the giver of forms".[28] He also says that the Agent Intellect influences even the souls of heavenly bodies;[29] that may be because in this work he speaks of numerous agent intellects, each in a different level of perfection;[30] these refer to the separated intellects corresponding to each heavenly sphere,as is explicitly said in the *Risâla fî ithbât al-mufâraqât*.

Does the Agent Intellect have as cosmic function for al-Fârâbî, as it does for Ibn-Sînâ? In his large treatises on *siyâsa* he says nothing of the sort. In a reply to questions asked of him, he simply says that forms come to matter by the action and passion

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[25]Cf. *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, 98.

[26]*Jawâb masâ'il su'il `an-hâ*, n. 28.

[27]*Ta`lîqât*, n. 52; cf. *Ihṣâ' al-`ulûm*, ch. 3, p. 103, on "practical astrology".

[28]*Ta`lîqât*, n. 53.

[29]*Ta`lîqât*, n. 78.

[30]*Ibid.*, n. 2.

of sensible things.[31] In the important opusculum on the meaning of the intellect (*Risâla fî l-`aql*) he says that forms are given to matter by the Agent Intellect,[32] and that the heavenly bodies, which are the primary agents on earthly bodies, give the Agent Intellect the material in which it works.[33] In his *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, where he raises the question formally,[34] he says that the heavenly bodies, with the help of the Agent Intellect, can act on earthly elements and bodies and cause things to exist, but the Agent Intellect alone acts on the human intellect, while natural things have their proper natural causes; for example man gives birth to man. In his *Zaynûn al-kabîr al-yûnânî* he is more precise:

> This intelligence constantly understands the First and constantly understands whatever is under the First. Forms come necessarily from it, but the souls of the spheres help it in preparing causes for the reception of forms from it, just as a doctor does not give health, but prepares causes for the reception of health.[35]

In his *Risâla fî l-`aql* al-Fârâbî says that the Agent Intellect, being in full act and possessing all forms, knows all things, and from it comes the material existence of these forms.[36] This idea goes back to Plato's world of forms and is completely contrary to Aristotle, for whom only the possible intellect has knowledge.

I must remark, lastly that the work *Kitâb maqâlât ar-rafî`a fî uṣûl `ilm aṭ-ṭabî`a*, in its style and doctrine, appears unauthentic. It is a treatise which presents a hierarchy in man consisting of the intellect, the spirit and the soul, where the intellect, which is

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[31] *Jawâb masâ'il su'il `an-hâ*, n. 28.

[32] N. 38, 42.

[33] *Risâla fî l-`aql*, n. 49.

[34] N. 99.

[35] C. 3.

[36] N. 37.

supreme, lives with the spirit in the heart, while the soul lives in the brain.

4.8 Miskawayh

As the other Arab philosophers, Miskawayh sees intellectual activity, which distinguishes man from the beasts, as the reason for saying that the human soul is a substance distinct from the body,[37] having an accidental relationship with the body.[38] As a simple substance, it is not distinct from the intellect and it knows "by its essence".[39] It is not merely the mover of the body,[40] but knows itself by turning itself totally into the totality of its essence.[41] In this movement it is (as Plato said) as a whole both mover and moved.[42]

Coming to knowledge, Miskawayh says that our intellect is actualized by another intellect which is always in act.[43] That intellect is the first of God's creatures.[44] Elsewhere Miskawayh speaks of "agent intellects" corresponding to the heavenly bodies.[45] Just as the heavenly bodies lie one over the other, so the heavenly spirits are arranged in a hierarchy.[46] Although he does not expatiate on the function of the Agent Intellect, Miskawayh attributes to it the origin of the first principles of reason which, according to him, do not come from the senses.[47] Miskawayh anticipates Ibn-Rushd in speaking of the unicity of

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[37] *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, pp. 50, 21-20; *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 64.

[38] *Faṣl âkhar min kalâm-hi*, p. 195.

[39] *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, 75-81.

[40] *Risâla fi jawhar an-nafs*, p. 197.

[41] *Fî ithbât aṣ-ṣuwar ar-rûḥâniyya*, p. 200.

[42] *Fî ithbât dhâlika ayḍan*, p. 201.

[43] *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, 62-61.

[44] *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 87.

[45] *Risâla fi l-ladhdhât wa-l-âlâm*, p. 68.

[46] *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 101.

[47] *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, pp. 64, 49; *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 126.

the soul or intellect:

> A substance which is not as body is indivisible... If we sometimes speak otherwise that is by way of metaphor. For if we say that a particular soul has such and such a condition or that the universal soul has such or such a form, we are not affirming a bodily division, but we wish to deny that individuals that are multiple by accident are governed by multiple souls. We give tentative names to that governance, even if it is not really like that, to help us to understand. For example, humanity is in men, even if it differs by matter and complexion; in reality it is one in concept. Just as a stamp is different according as it is made on clay or wax or lead or silver, according to the difference of matter, nevertheless it remains one in itself. Thus we say that the power designated by humanity is one, even if it differs according to matter. This power governs all matter as it is the matter of this power. It is like a man who builds a house out of clay, or makes a jug for water or a boat from wood, or makes of whatever matter whatever it is capable of receiving and which satisfies his plan.[48]

But this passage does not agree with *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, where Miskawayh says that one of the pleasures of the separated soul is the company of other souls that resemble it.[49]

4.9 Ibn-Sînâ

What is the soul?

As for Ibn-Sînâ, in his *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, he first looks for a definition of the soul;[50] he concludes that the soul must be

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[48] *Risâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, pp. 55-54.

[49] P. 105.

[50] Ch. 1.

related to the body, but in the case of man it is an extrinsic mover and is not "impressed" in the body or mixed with it; if we want to call it a form, it is not like something dwelling in the body but like its governor.[51]

In the words of *ash-Shifâ'*:

> The soul is not impressed in the body nor does it subsist in it, but its special relationship *(ikhtiṣâṣ)* with it is after the manner of individual configuration *(hay'a)*, which attracts the soul to look after an individual body, with an essential and special providence for it.[52]

Elsewhere Ibn-Sînâ goes as far as saying that the soul is the "form" by which the body exists and acts.[53] In any case, in his essence *(anniyya)*, man is not his body, but he is his soul, in spite of the fact that those who are immersed in the world of sense think otherwise.[54]

In *ash-Shifâ'*, Ibn-Sînâ holds that every soul, even that of plants, is a substance *(jawhar)* and not an accident *(`araḍ)*; it is distinct from the body and gives it its consistence and existence. But, he says, not every substance is necessarily separable. Speaking of the question of intermediate forms, Ibn-Sînâ holds that there is no other actual form but the soul, and that the soul of an animal is the cause of its specific animal activities, like sensation, and also of its vegetative functions.[55] In the case of man, vegetation, sensation and intellection do not come from three souls, but only one. Ibn-Sînâ says that on this point he differs from Plato (and implicitly from al-Fârâbî).[56]

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[51] *Risâla fî l-kalâm `alâ n-nafs an-nâṭiqa*, one of the late works of Ibn-Sînâ, which summarizes *ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5.

[52] *Ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5. *faṣl* 2, p. 196.

[53] *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 2.

[54] *Ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, 141-151.

[55] *Ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 1, *faṣl* 3; *maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 7.

[56] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 11.

But we should not forget that when he writes about chemistry, Ibn-Sînâ attacks those who hold that in a composite the elements lose their own forms to take on the sole form of the compound. Rather, he says that earth and fire retain their own substantial forms when they are part of flesh, and only their active qualities are modified.[57]

Relationship with the body

In *ar-Ru'yâ wa-t-ta`bîr*, Ibn-Sînâ gives further details on the relationship between the soul and the body:

> Man does not have one single meaning *(ma`nâ)*, but he is composed of two substances: one is the soul and the other the body. The soul has the role of a subject, and the body, with all its members, is like the instrument which the soul uses for its different operations. The surprising thing is that the body is not an extrinsic instrument, like a sword... but the body is an instrument that the soul joins to itself by preserving its shape and using it as it needs sit.[58]

Nevertheless, in holding that the soul and the body are two distinct substances, with an accidental relationship with one another, Ibn-Sînâ does not see the consequence that, if the soul is not the form of the body, the body must have another form which is not the soul.[59]

As for the mode of governing the body, Ibn-Sînâ says that the soul acts through the intermediacy of the heart, and the heart regulates the sensitive and vegetative powers, each in its own

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[57] *Ash-Shifâ': al-Kawn wa-l-fasâd, faṣl* 7.

[58] *Al-faṣl alaf*, p. 274; cf. also *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*, p. 187-188.

[59] Ibn-Sînâ discusses the relationship of the soul to the body in *ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 4 = *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 9; cf. *An-nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî `ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 158-161.

organ, through the intermediacy of physical "spirits".[60]

Earlier, Qusṭâ ibn-Lûqâ had postulated an "animal spirit" *(ar-rûḥ al-ḥayawânî)* which serves as the soul's intermediary in giving life to the body, while the "psychic spirit" *(ar-rûḥ an-nafsânî)* in the brain serves as an intermediary for sensation and the movement of the body.[61] This idea was retained by Ibn-Sînâ in his *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*,[62] but in his *ar-Ru'yâ wa-t-ta`bîr*,[63] he says that there are three spirits: a vegetative one in the liver, an animal one in the heart, and a psychic one in the brain. And he even goes as far as saying that there are three corresponding souls which are the forms of these spirits. This position, contrary to his position expressed elsewhere, raises the question of the authenticity of this work but, as we have seen, a multiplicity of substantial forms is in accord with the Ibn-Sînâ's dualism. The three spirits with their proper organs are found also in his *Risâla aṣ-ṣalât*, where the three spirits seem to imply three souls, of which only the rational soul is immortal.[64]

The senses

Ibn-Sînâ, like Aristotle, distinguishes five external senses.[65] But for the internal senses, he presents a slightly different scheme [Ibn-Rushd will be more accurate]: (1) the common sense *(al-mushtarak)*, (2) the imagination *(al-khayyâl/ al-mutaṣawwira)* which retains sensible images, (3) the estimative power *(al-mutawahhima)* which judges the particular good or evil of sensible things, (4) the estimative memory *(al-mutakhayyila)*, or cogitative power *(al-mufakkira)* in the case of men, to retain

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[60] *Ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 8; *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 155-156.

[61] *Kitâb al-farq bayn ar-rûḥ wa-n-nafs wa-quwâ n-nafs wa-mâhiyya an-nafs, dans Rasâ'il Ibn-Sînâ*, 2, p. 88, 93

[62] P. 187-188.

[63] P. 275.

[64] Pp. 3-7.

[65] *An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ulûm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, p. 152.

what the estimative power presents, and (5) memory *(al-ḥâfiẓa/ adh-dhâkira)* which retains all sensible images and their meanings (*ma`ânî*, whether of good or of evil) in general.[66] Reasoning, he observes, takes time because it uses the imagination.[67]

In spite of the radical distinction that Ibn-Sînâ makes between the soul and the body, he holds that the exterior and interior senses serve the soul as a source of knowledge. Especially in geometry and astronomy, diagrams and graphic representations are necessary.[68] On the other hand, the senses can be an obstacle to abstract reasoning, because the senses do not want to be left idle during an intense activity of the intellect.[69]

The four intellects

In *ash-Shifâ'* Ibn-Sînâ follows al-Fârâbî in the division of intellects, with the addition of the habitual intellect.[70] The first, called the "material intellect" because of its resemblance to prime matter empty of all forms, is also the "passive intellect" in relationship to the Agent Intellect.[71]. The second is the intellect in act when it makes a judgement. The third is the habitual intellect which knows self-evident first principles and what derives from these principles. The fourth is the perfected or acquired (*mustafâd*) intellect. The fifth is the Agent Intellect.

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[66]*Ibid.*, pp. 154-155; *ash-Shifâ', an-nafs*, pp. 145-171; *Risâla fi bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, pp. 401-403.

[67]*Ta`lîqât*, p. 109.

[68]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 6; *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 8; *ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5. *faṣl* 3; *An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fi l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 156-157, 161-162, 167-169; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 83-84.

[69]*An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fi l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 164-165, 168-169; *Risâla fi bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, p. 405.

[70]*Maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 6, pp. 212-220.

[71]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 12.

The *Risâla fî l-ḥudûd*[72] and the *Risâla fî l-`uqûl*[73] present the same five intellects, but in these treatises the intellect in act precedes the acquired intellect, and there are many agent intellects which are identified with the angels. The *Risâla fî l-ḥudûd* goes on to explain other terms, such as "the intellect of all" *(`aql al-kull)*, which can be understood as the intellect which governs the highest sphere, from which the motion of the whole universe flows, or as all the intermediate intellects; the last of these is the Agent Intellect for all human souls. Likewise, the "soul of all" *(nafs al-kull)* is all the soul of the heavenly bodies. The relationship between these souls and the corresponding intellects is the same as between our souls and the Agent Intellect. The soul [of the moon] is the proximate cause of the existence of sub-lunar things, and it derives its existence from the intellect which corresponds to it. In this work Ibn-Sînâ explains that the variant terms, "the universal soul"/ "the universal intellect" *(an-nafs al-kullî/ al-`aql al-kulli)* only mean a universal concept which includes all the heavenly souls or intellects, but elsewhere he speaks differently: The Intellect which is the first creation and which directs all creation which follows is sometimes called "the universal soul" *(an-nafs al-kullî)* or, in religious and non-philosophical language, "the universal spirit" *(ar-rûḥ al-kullî)*.[74]

In a noteworthy passage of his *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, Ibn-Sînâ compares the five intellects with the elements mentioned in Qur'ân 24:35:

> God is the light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche where there is a lamp; the lamp is inside a glass which is like a shining star. The lamp is lighted because of a blessed tree, an olive tree neither from the east nor from the west, whose oil would give light even

[72]Pp. 68-70.

[73]P. 416.

[74]*Risâla ajwiba `an `ashar masâ'il, al-mas'ala ath-thâlitha*, p. 78.

> if fire never touched it. Light upon light! God directs to his light anyone he wishes.

The material intellect is the niche. The reasoning by which the habitual intellect looks for the middle term of a demonstration is the olive tree; the rapid grasp of this middle term is the oil; the habitual intellect *(`aql bi-l-malaka)*, if it is weak, is the glass; if it is strong it is the holy power whose oil would give light even if no fire touched it. The acquired intellect *(al-`aql al-mustafâd)*, which actually knows first principles and what derives from them is the light upon light. When it can easily turn to intelligible things, putting itself in front of the rays of holy lights, it is the intellect in act *(al-`aql bi-l-fi`l)*, or the lamp. The Agent Intellect which gives existence and knowledge to the soul is the fire.[75] The *Risâla fi ithbât an-nabuwwât* gives a variant interpretation of this Qur'ân verse:

> God is the light; the material intellect is the niche; the acquired intellect is the lamp; an intermediate state between these intellects [i.e. the habitual intellect] is the glass. But the olive tree is the cogitative power *(al-quwwa al-fikriyya)*, the interior sense that is between the intellect (the east from which the light comes) and the purely animal senses (the west where the light disappears). The Agent Intellect, finally, is the fire.[76]

In passing, we can not that in his *Tafsîr âya an-nûr*, Ibn-Sînâ makes all the images of this verse refer to Muḥammad, who enlightens the world; the same holds for *Risâla al-fi`l wa-l-infi`âl*.[77] In *al-`Ilm al-ladunî* Ibn-Sînâ makes the animal spirit the lamp, the heart the glass, life its brilliance, the blood the oil; sensation and movement are the light; the concupiscible is its heat, and the irascible its smoke.[78]

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[75]Pp. 162-163, 167.

[76]Pp. 49-52.

[77]P. 4.

[78]P. 188.

In summary, the division of the intellects in *ash-Shifâ'*, which follows al-Fârâbî, more or less, was revised in his other works. The *Risâla fî l-ḥudûd*[79] and the *Risâla fî l-`uqûl* [80] change the order, and *an-Nukat* makes another change. Then *Aḥwâl an-nafs*,[81] *`Uyûn al-masâ'il*,[82] *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*[83] and *Risâla fî ithbât an-nabuwwât*[84] reduce the intellects to four, just as they were presented by al-Kindî.

Ash-Shifâ':	*R. fî l-ḥudûd/`uqûl*:	*An-Nukat*:	The others:
Material intellect	material	material	material
intellect in act	habitual	habitual	habitual
habitual intellect	in act	acquired	in act
acquired/holy intellect	acquired	in act	—
agent intellect	multiple agents	agent	agent

The *Risâla fî l-`uqûl* clarifies that the different intellects of man (except for the agent intellect) are only different states *(aḥwâl)* of the speculative intellect.[85]

The intellect in act

Although Ibn-Sînâ describes knowledge of material things as a process of abstraction from the senses,[86] he insists that first principles, such as "the whole is greater than any of its parts" etc. cannot come from sensible experience, because they are too certain and universal; so they must come from a "divine

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[79]Pp. 68-70.

[80]P. 416.

[81]Ch. 2.

[82]P. 21.

[83]P. 37-38.

[84]Pp. 43-44.

[85]P. 416.

[86]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 3.

emanation".[87]

In *ash-Shifâ'* Ibn-Sînâ explains that intelligible forms are not in the intellect when it does not actually think of them. The intellect has no habitual knowledge, but only the proximate preparation to receive forms anew from the Agent Intellect. The intellect thus prepared is "a kind of intellect in act" *(al-`aql bi-l-fi`l)*, but when it actually knows it is "the acquired intellect" *(al-`aql al-mustafâḍ)*.[88] Thus Ibn-Sînâ adopts Aristotle's terminology of habitual knowledge, but he empties it of meaning by situating it in a neo-Platonic context where all knowledge comes by infusion from on high.

In *an-Nukat* it is not clear whether Ibn-Sînâ denies habitual knowlege, as he does in *ash-Shifâ'*. Nevertheless he says: "If it happens that the soul has acts of understanding in a stable way, and these acts are present by actual consideration, it is in fact in contact with the Agent Intellect."[89]

The intellect cannot be fully in act in this life, but after death it will, being in continual contact with the Agent Intellect.[90] Likewise, the human intellect in this life can know the existence of separated substances and some of their essential properties *(lawâzim)*, but it cannot know their very essence *(ḥaqîqa)*, nor the essence of sensible things in this world, but only their properties and accidents.[91]

The Agent Intellect

The Agent Intellect, as with al-Fârâbî, is not part of man, but is separated from him. But Ibn-Sînâ goes much father than al-

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[87] *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 10; cf. *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, 163-165; *ar-Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 13; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 23.

[88] Pp. 212-220; cfr. *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm at-tabî`î*, 167.

[89] *An-nukat*, p. 172.

[90] *Ash-Shifâ': an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 6.

[91] *An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, 165-166; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 34-35, 82.

Fârâbî. For Ibn-Sînâ, the Agent Intellect gives existence to human intellects, to all souls and (with the dispositive action of heavenly bodies)[92] to the four natural elements.[93] Thus it possess all intelligible forms,[94] and impresses them in the human intellect "by a divine emanation", according to the disposition of the intellect to receive this emanation.[95] It is not God, because it produces multiple effects, whereas God, the One, can only produce one effect, the first created intellect.[96]

Above the Agent Intellect there is a whole hierarchy of other superior intellects: the souls of the heavenly bodies–since Ibn-Sînâ insists that these are animated, endowed with intelligence et imagination to regulate their movement[97]–then intellects completely separated from matter, and above all of them the First Principle which gives existence to all.[98]

We should note that in his different works Ibn-Sînâ identifies the Agent Intellect with different heavenly spirits:

(1) Most strictly, it is the separated intellect corresponding to the lunar sphere, as the following passage says:

> This tenth [intellect, that of the sphere of the moon] the philosophers call the Agent Intellect. It is the spirit of holiness, which gives necessity to our souls and perfects them. Its relation with our souls

(kalimât) is like the relation of the sun to the eyes. He it is who greeted Mary saying, "I am only the messenger of your Lord, so

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[92]See also *Ta`lîqât*, p. 41.

[93]*`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 9; *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 3, says that all souls (of all kinds) come "from without".

[94]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 12; *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 10.

[95]*Ibid.*, 39.

[96]*An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, 166-167.

[97]Cf., for example, *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, pp. 13-15; *Ta`lîqât*, 62, 101-108, 128-130, 166.

[98]Cf. also the opusculum *Masâ'il `an aḥwâl ar-rûḥ*.

that I may give you a pure boy" (Qur'ân 19:19).[99]

In the *Risâla fi bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, Ibn-Sînâ identifies this Agent Intellect with the "preserved table" *(lawḥ maḥfûẓ)* of Qur'ân 85:22.

(2) Elsewhere he speaks of inspiration not only from the Agent Intellect but also from separated substances in general.[100] In his *Risâla az-ziyâra wa-d-du`â'* Ibn-Sînâ explains that the eight separated intellects corresponding to the heavenly spheres are all called by the philosophers as agent intellects.[101] The *Risâla fi l-`uqûl* identifies them with the angels.[102]

(3) Lastly, sometimes he identifies the agent intellect with the first intellect, which God creates without any intermediary.[103]

In his *Risâla fi ithbât an-nubuwwa*, Ibn-Sînâ explains that the Agent Intellect gives first intelligible principles directly, but further knowledge comes by way or reasoning.[104] Yet elsewhere Ibn-Sînâ gives the Agent Intellect a much wider role.

In sleep, the Agent Intellect acts directly on the human intellect, and through it acts on the imagination *(at-takhayyul)*. But in wakefulness it is the opposite: the Agent Intellect acts directly on the imagination, and through it on the intellect.[105] Thus dreams can come from: (1) sensations that one had before sleeping, (2) from what thought of before sleeping, (3) from the psychic condition of the spirit of the brain, which depends on physical conditions, and lastly (4) from the Agent Intellect,

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[99]*Kalimât aṣ-ṣufiyya*, p. 165; the word *kalima* is often used in this ṣûfic work for the human soul.

[100]For example, *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fi l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, 167.

[101]*Jâmi` al-badâ'i`*, p. 33; `Âṣî, p. 284.

[102]P. 418.

[103]In *Risâla fi mâhiyya al-`ishq*, p. 26; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 100.

[104]P. 44.

[105]*Ibid.*, pp. 167-168; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 83.

which gives fore-knowledge of future things.[106] Ibn-Sînâ explains that the Agent Intellect fills the universe by its operation without being mixed with it, but only watching over it by its providence.

This is what the ancient Ṣâbi'ens called "the Immediate Director" *(al-mudabbir al-aqrab)*, the other Greek philosophers "The Divine Infusion" *(al-fayḍ al-ilâhî)*, the Syrians "the Word" *(al-kalima)*, the Jews "*Shakîna*" and "Spirit of Holiness", the Persians "*Shayd Shaydân*" (Light of Lights), the Manichaeans "the good spirits", the Arabs "the Angels" and the Divine Determination *(at-ta'yîd al-ilâhî)*, and Aristotle the "Agent Intellect".

This intellect is concerned with the welfare of the whole universe, but especially the welfare of men. The highest degree of inspiration coming from him is prophecy; after that his providence extends especially to kings and philosophers *(ḥukamâ')*, who direct others.[107]

In his *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, Ibn-Sînâ discusses the opinion that separated souls can act on living men for good or for evil, according to the state of these separated souls. Some people say that unpurified souls retain their interior estimative sense, by which they act on corporal beings. They also say that good souls are the *jinn*, while the bad are the *shayâṭîn*, or demons.[108] But we have seen above that, for Ibn-Sînâ, all

the senses corrupt at death, and the *jinn* are only the interior senses.

Intellect-soul

If the intellect is a substance, it cannot be a power of the soul. In denying that the intellect uses and organ, Ibn-Sînâ says that

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[106] *Ar-Ru'yâ wa-t-ta`bîr, al-faṣl hâ, wâ*, pp. 283-288.

[107] *Ibid., faṣl jâ*, pp. 290-294.

[108] Pp. 215-223.

this power "knows by its essence".[109] We see the same confusion in *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, where Ibn-Sînâ compares God's knowledge of himself with the soul's knowledge of itself.[110] In *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, Ibn-Sînâ argues that the intellective power is a substance distinct from the body.

> The acts of this power come from it essentially, and not by something extrinsic to its essence. And anything whose act comes from it essentially and not from something extrinsic to its essence is a substance subsisting by its essence. Otherwise the intellect would be more noble than the substance and the essence.[111]

On the other hand, he presents the rational soul as having two powers, the one speculative or cognitive which looks at the intelligible universe from on high, the other practical which looks from below at what it must do in particular things.[112]

Immortality

As for the immortality of the soul, Ibn-Sînâ rejects the exclusivism of al-Fârâbî and, before him, of Alexander of Aphrodisias, who said that the intellect becomes immaterial by taking on intelligible forms and that ignorant souls will be annihilated. Opting for the opinion of Themistius, he simply says that the intellect of man survives death. "The soul without the body is the true man."[113] "Death is only the soul abandoning its instruments."[114]

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[109] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 7; *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, pp. 35, 38; *ar-Risâla al-aḍḥawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, pp. 167, 175.

[110] P. 8.

[111] P. 12.

[112] *An-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 156 et 162, *Risâla fî bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, p. 404, *Risâla fî l-`uqûl*, p. 416-417, and in the other works of Ibn-Sînâ.

[113] *`Uyûn al-masâ'il*, 21; cf. *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 15; *ar-Risâla al-aḍḥawiyya*, p. 213.

[114] *Risâla fî l-mawt*, p. 379.

Ibn-Sînâ presents two arguments to show that everyone has an immortal soul. The first is the soul's experience of its own activity as being different from that of the body. Ibn-Sînâ supposes that if someone were in a void without any exterior sensation, his soul would nevertheless be conscious of itself. (He does not think here of the activity of the internal senses and the impossibility of self-consciousness without consciousness of something intelligible, normally through sensation.) Thus he concludes that the soul is a substance complete in itself, independent of the body, but which influences the body, especially by its emotions, much more than the body influences the soul.[115]

The second argument is that the intellect, as a receptacle of intelligible forms, should itself be immaterial and immortal.[116] Since it does not use the body as an organ, the intellect is independent of it and can be separated from it. This is the classic argument of Aristotle and the scholastics. The principle of this argument is that, besides our knowledge of sensible singulars, we know the essences of things in an intelligible and universal way. The intelligibility of things in our knowledge is not individualized by matter, but is spiritual. This spiritual object is the actualization of the intellect either in a habitual way (like memory) or in an actual way. But act corresponds with potency. If the act is spiritual, the potency likewise must be spiritual. The human intellect and soul are therefore spiritual and by that fact immortal.

A sign of that is, as Aristotle said, that the intellect does not get weak by old age, nor does it suffer by knowing what is exceedingly intelligible, as the senses suffer from objects that are too strong.[117] But, for Ibn-Sînâ this argument has the weakness of a dualistic context, where the soul is presented as

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[115] *Al-Ishârât, namaṭ* 3, *faṣl* 1-4; *ash-Shifâ': an-nafs, maqâla* 1, *faṣl* 1; there is a similar argument in the opusculum *Masâ'il `an aḥwâl ar-rûḥ.*

[116] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 4 & 9; *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 9.

[117] *Al-Ishârât, loc. cit.*; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, 153-183.

a complete substance apart from the body.[118]

The soul, then, although "possible" or contingent from the point of view of its existence and its temporal beginning, from the point of view of its lack of composition of form and matter in its essence it cannot cease to exist.[119]

The soul's origin with the body

On the other hand, the soul has no pre-existence, because humanity is one, and can only be multiplied by matter. When elements are put in the right shape and mixture to receive the soul, the soul is created and joined to the body.[120] The body is necessary for the beginning of the soul, but not for its continuation in existence.[121]

Thus the soul was created with the body and is individuated in relation to it.[122] Exactly what does this individuation consist in? Ibn-Sînâ rejects "the impression of the soul in the body", and thus the "matter designated by quantity" of Thomas Aquinas. Ibn-Sînâ says that this individuation should be an order or configuration *(hay'a)* of the soul or else a power or a spiritual accident or a combination of these. It could also be a difference in intellectual knowledge or self-knowledge, or a difference of bodily powers or other things, even though we do not know which.[123] In the *Ta`lîqât*, speaking of individuation *(tashakhkhuṣ)* in general, he says that it consists in position and

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[118]Cf., for example, *ar-Risâla fi s-sa`âda*, pp. 12-13.

[119]Cf. *Risâla ilâ Abî `Ubayd al-Jûzjânî.. fi amr an-nafs*; *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fi l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, p. 177-178; *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 166; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fi l-ma`âd*, 185-189.

[120]*Ta`lîqât*, pp. 63-64, 110.

[121]*Ta`lîqât*, p. 81.

[122]*Ibid.*, ch. 8; *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fi l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, p. 177-178; *Kalimât aṣ-ṣufiyya*, 159; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fi l-ma`âd*, 125-133.

[123]*Ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 3; cf. *Ta`lîqât*, 65.

time.[124] In any case, there will be no fusion of soul into a single soul or a fusion with God.[125]

No reincarnation/ resurrection

Thus the soul cannot take on any other body but its own; this excludes the possibility of reincarnation or transmigration of souls.[126] As for those who hold for reincarnation, Ibn-Sînâ has in mind (1) the representatives of oriental traditions (such as Hinduism) to whom he alludes in quoting "Buzurgmihr",[127] (2) Greek philosophers such as Plato and Pythagoras, whom he excuses, saying that they were speaking metaphorically,[128] (3) those who believe that the soul rejoins the body at the resurrection.[129] Ibn-Sînâ rejects reincarnation, taking more or less the same line of argumentation that Saint Thomas would later take, but without all the latter's distinctions.

All that Ibn-Sînâ says implies that after death there will be no bodily resurrection. He expresses his though explicitly in his *Risâla aṣ-ṣalât*, where he denies the possibility of the resurrection or of the immortality of the vegetative and animal spirit (or soul), but he affirms it for the rational soul.

This will have a resurrection after death. "By death I mean separation from the body; by resurrection I mean its joining spiritual substances and its consequent reward and happiness."[130]

Maybe out of fear of the consequences of this position, at the

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[124]P. 107; cf. p. 145.

[125]Cf. *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 178.

[126]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 10; *ash-Shifâ', an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 4; *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 167; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, 99-139; *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 65, 67.

[127]P. 139.

[128]Pp. 135, 207.

[129]In *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya* Ibn-Sînâ restricts himself to answering this third category.

[130]P. 7.

end of this work Ibn-Sînâ admonishes the reader not to divulge his secret, so as to keep him out of trouble.[131]

In his *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, Ibn-Sînâ quotes Qur'ânic verses (89:27-28; 70:4; 54:55; 33:44; 22:48; 75:30, 12; 53:8) to support his position that it is the soul without the body that will appear before God.[132]

Nevertheless, we see in the ṣûfic work, *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*, the statement: "The rational soul... awaits its return to the body on the day of resurrection, as revelation says."[133] Is he here speaking metaphorically or out of consideration for his hearers? In the same work he insists that the soul is a complete substance, independent of the body.[134] The *Risâla fi l-ḥudûd* says that it is only by revelation *(shar`)* that we know that there will be a bodily happiness,[135] but this treatise does not try to interpret what this happiness will be.

The most definitive treatment of this question is in the late work, *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fi l-ma`âd*. First he rejects the opinion based on many Qur'ânic verses that man is a body having life as an accident; at death the body is reduced to dust and life disappears; the resurrection is a re-creation. In that case the raised man is not the same as the one who died, because the form of the body is not numerically the same.[136]

Then he rejects the most common opinion among Muslims, that the resurrection is the reunion of the soul with a reconstituted body. If we suppose, with Ibn-Sînâ, the eternity of the world, that is impossible, because the whole earth would be insufficient for the formation of an infinitude of men. And if the true

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[131]P. 14.

[132]P. 159.

[133]P. 189.

[134]Pp. 189-190.

[135]P. 91.

[136]Pp. 41-43, 63-65.

happiness of man is spiritual, it would be a punishment to make him go back to the body where compete happiness is impossible. Besides, what is the difference between resurrection and reincarnation, which is another impossibility? One cannot escape from this problem by saying that it is the same body with the dame matter that will be raised, because the body may have undergone mutilation; also, by the process of metabolism matter is continually and inevitably changing, and through natural cycles or by cannibalism the same matter is shared by many human bodies.[137]

In particular, Ibn-Sînâ attacks the Christian teaching of the resurrection, because Christians hold for the resurrection of the body but reject bodily pleasures in Paradise. For Ibn-Sînâ, all these pleasures promised in the Qur'ân are metaphoric descriptions of the vision of God and of the communion of angels and saints. But he is convinced that preaching bodily rewards is necessary to motivate ordinary people, and that Christian preaching lacks all moral force.[138]

4.10 Ibn-Gabirol

For Ibn-Gabirol, the soul is attached to the body without touching it;[139] it does so through the intermediacy of a [physical] spirit.[140] In the hierarchical gradation of the universe, the soul is intermediary between the [separate] intellect and the senses.[141] There are three souls in man: the vital one *(ha-ḥayônîth)*, the vegetative one *(ha-ṣômêḥah)*, and the rational soul *(ha-madbarath)*.[142]

Ibn-Gabirol distinguishes between the universal intellect and

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[137]Pp. 29-31, 67-85, 107, 205.

[138]Pp. 85-97; for the communion of separated souls, see p. 215.

[139]*Maqôr ḥayyîm*, 2:29-30.

[140]*Ibid.*, 3:3.

[141]*Ibid.*, 3:24.

[142]*Ibid.*, 3:28-30.

particular intellects.[143] Presumably the first is the separate one posited by the other philosophers of the Arab world, and the second is the rational soul. Ibn-Gabirol opts for Plato's theory of innate knowledge which is obscured by matter; so that learning is a process of remembering.[144]

4.11 Ibn-Bâjja

Ibn-Bâjja's *Risâla al-ittiṣâl* follows al-Fârâbî's tradition on the different classes of men. It distinguishes: (1) the majority *(jumhûr)* who, like Plato's people of the cave, have only sensible or material knowledge, (2) the scientists of nature *(ṭabî`iyûn)* who know intelligible forms abstracted from sensible things, and (3) those who know the Agent Intellect directly; these are in contact with the Agent Intellect through divine science (metaphysics) and not by the deceptive imagination of the Ṣûfîs; this criticism of the Ṣûfîs, taken up by Ibn-Rushd, is a frequent them with Ibn-Bâjja.[145] The intellect of the third type is numerically one and the object of their knowledge *(al-ma`qûl)* is likewise one. Their destiny is eternal happiness, but without any individuality, whereas the masses have nothing to look forward to.

The acquired intellect *(al-`aql al-mustafâd)* is the human intellect perfected by certain knowledge and always in act, so that the intellect and the object of its knowledge are one.[146]

Ibn-Bâjja, perhaps without knowing Miskawayh's opinion, preached the unicity of the intellect which Ibn-Rushd adopted.

> The first mover of man is the intellect in act, and that is the intelligible in act, since the intellect in act is the intelligible in act... The intellect in act is an active

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[143] *Ibid.*, 4:6; cf. 4:19.

[144] *Ibid.*, 5:65.

[145] *Risâla al-wadâ`*, pp. 121 ff. which criticizes the *Munqidh* of al-Ghazâlî, and *Ittiṣâl al-`aql bi-l-insân*, pp. 166-167, 171.

[146] *Ittiṣâl al-`aql bi-l-insân*, pp. 130-131.

> power... This intellect then is numerically one in each man. It is clear from the above that all men, present past and absent are numerically one. But this idea is repugnant and maybe impossible. But if all existing, past and absent men are not numerically one, this intellect is not one. In a word, if this intellect is numerically one, the persons who have such an intellect are all numerically one.[147]

He explains that the apparent multiplicity of this intellect comes from its multiple relationships with different material subjects. We can observe that, like Ibn-Rushd, in his *Middle Commentary* on *De anima*, the intellect in act and the Agent Intellect are identified, and there is no place for the possible intellect, except for the imagination which is called the "material intellect".

4.12 Ibn-Ṭufayl

Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân begins his speculation on the soul by making an autopsy of his step-mother, the gazelle, and by the vivisection of other animals. He discovers that the principle of life is a physical spirit in the left ventricle of the heart.[148] Then he embarks on a monist theory that this spirit is really one, but multiple by accident.[149] Then he extends this monism to plants, minerals and all things, saying that all the things that we observe in this world are unequal manifestations of a single reality. He concludes this meditation by explaining how the animal spirit is composed of a form, which is the soul, and prime matter.[150]

Man is distinct and superior to all animals.[151] The intellect is its essence, and it is independent of the body.[152] In this passage

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[147] *Ittiṣâl al-ʿaql bi-l-insân*, pp. 160-161; see also chapter 5, "Ibn-Bâjja".

[148] Pp. 138-148.

[149] Pp. 149-150.

[150] Pp. 150-162.

[151] Pp. 188-189.

[152] Pp. 178-180.

Ibn-Ṭufayl does not apply monism to the human intellect, because Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân has not yet learned of the existence of other men. But at the end he affirms the unicity of all human souls, as Ibn-Rushd will later propose, and he denies individual survival:

> If separated essences had a body which always exists and never corrupts, like the heavenly spheres, they would exist forever. But if they belong to a body which goes back to corruption, like the rational animal, they would corrupt, disappear and be annihilates, like reflected rays. For their form has no more stability than what is in a mirror; if the mirror corrupts, the form also corrupts and disappears.[153]

Ibn-Ṭufayl also speaks of "the spirit or the intellect which always emanates from God and is like the light of the sun which always shines on the world."[154] One might think here of the "Agent Intellect" of the other philosophers, but in the monist system of Ibn-Ṭufayl it is rather the single intellect of angels and men.

4.13 Ibn-Rushd

Ibn-Rushd preserved the whole system of his predecessors on the existence of separated intellects corresponding to the heavenly spheres, and the opinion that the heavenly bodies are animated. Since these bodies are of themselves incorruptible, they are not necessarily animated, but they are because they should possess the best possible condition.[155] But as for Ibn-Sînâ (and al-Fârâbî's) idea of the Agent Intellect as a "giver of forms" in the physical world, Ibn-Rushd rejects this. He holds the simple position of Aristotle that everything begets its like, either in the same species or in the same genus, according to the idea that the heavenly bodies can cause generation–an idea

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[153] P. 215.

[154] P. 124.

[155] *Tahâfut*, II, p. 438.

which Ibn-Rushd says has "no evident proof" *(ghayr al-mushâhada)*,"[156] but which Thomas Aquinas accepts without question. Later Ibn-Rushd explains that the partisans of the hypothesis of the "giver of forms" do not deny that natural causality disposes matter for the reception of a substantial form.[157]

Sensitive powers

As for sensitive powers, in his small commentary, *Jawâmi` Kitâb an-nafs*, Ibn-Rushd repeats Aristotle's division of the five exterior senses, but he gives only two internal senses: common sense *(mushtarak)* and the imagination *(takhayyul)*. The latter, conserving sensible images in the absence of sensible objects, includes the function of the memory.[158] In the *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut* he says that the imagination estimates the convenience or inconvenience of sensible things, and that there is no need to suppose another power, the estimative *(wahmiyya)* as Ibn-Sînâ did.[159]

In the *Commentarium magnum* Ibn-Rushd accepts all the four interior senses mentioned by Aristotle, against his former opinion that accepted only the common sense and the imagination.[160] As for the first principles of reason, he hesitates to pronounce from where they come, and seems to lean towards the opinion of Ibn-Sînâ that they are directly infused by the Agent Intellect.[161]bn-Rushd also raises the question whether the material intellect can know separated substances. After a long discussion of opinions, he accepts the principle that the material

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[156]II, p. 622; *Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1497 ff.

[157]II, p. 790.

[158]*Jawâmi` Kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 54-65; the same restriction of the interior senses is found in *Talkihîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 106-120.

[159]II, pp. 818-819; cf. *Talkhîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, p. 120.

[160]Pp. 419, 449; these senses are also recognized in *The epistle on the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect*, p. 27.

[161]Pp. 407, 496, 506.

intellect can know all that is intelligible, and that this can be realized by contact with the Agent Intellect.[162]

The intellect

Regarding questions about the intellect, we can distinguish three stages in the evolution Ibn-Rushd's thought. First, in his little commentary he insists that the intelligible, in so far as intelligible, is eternal and incorruptible, but he rejects the theory of Plato that these intelligibles pre-exist in us and that learning is nothing but remembering. All science comes through sensitive experience.

Ibn-Rushd asks how intelligible things can be received by a corruptible man and be multiplied according to the multitude of men. He answers that intelligible forms have a formal aspect, which is unique and eternal, and a material aspect, by which they can be received by many men. What is the precise aspect of man which permits him to receive these intelligible forms? It is not the body, which can only receive a bodily form; nor can it be an intellect, because an intellect as intellect must be in act; therefore it must be the soul, and among the powers of the soul, precisely imaginary forms. This preparation *(isti`dâd)* of the imagination is the "material intellect", in its existence *(wujûd)*, but not in is receptiveness; for if the material intellect receives intelligible forms it must be empty.

By receiving intelligible forms the material intellect becomes the "habitual intellect" *(al-`aql bi-l-malaka)*, which becomes "the intellect in act" when man is conscious of intelligible forms. The "Agent Intellect" actualizes the material intellect; it is also called the "acquired intellect" *(al-`aql al-mustafâd)* when the material intellect is in union *(ittiḥâd)* or contact *(ittiṣâl)* with it. The word *mustafâd* is used because we take advantage *(nastafid-hu)* of it.[163]

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[162]Pp. 488 ff.

[163]*Jawâmi` kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 66-90.

The second stage was the *Commentarium magnum*. Ibn-Rushd rejects the opinion, attributed to Alexander of Aphrodisias and which he had adopted in his small commentary, that the material intellect is a disposition of the imagination.[164] He says that the Agent Intellect and the material intellect are both eternal, incorruptible and unique for all of humanity. The two come into contact with each man through the phantasies of the imagination which the Agent Intellect actualizes in the material intellect. The Agent Intellect, through phantasies made intelligible, also has the relationship of form to the material intellect. It is in this way that the material intellect somehow multiplies in humanity and that each individual has his own knowledge and learns little by little. But since the imagination is corruptible, the acquired or speculative intellect is corruptible, with all its individual knowledge. The material intellect nevertheless continues to be actualized by the Agent Intellect in other individuals, since the human race exists always.[165]

After this large commentary Ibn-Rushd wrote an appendix to his little commentary, referring the reader to the large commentary and correcting his adoption of the opinion of Alexander of Aphrodisias that the material intellect is the preparation of the imagination, and says that he was deceived by Ibn-Bâjja in following this opinion. He affirms rather that the material intellect is an eternal substance, and the imagination only furnishes the objects of knowledge.[166]

The third stage appears in the middle commentary, *Talkhîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, which is the latest. Ibn-Rushd explains that the material intellect has no physical passivity *(infi`âl)*, but that it can receive *(qubûl)* intelligible forms.[167] He rejects the opinion of

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[164]P. 396-397; the same position is found in *Tractatus de animae beatitudine et Epistula de connexione intellectus abstracti cum homine.*

[165]Pp. 999-412, 448-500.

[166]P. 90.

[167]Pp. 121, 128.

Alexander that this intellect or preparation to receive *(isti`dâd)* exists in the human soul, and he says that it should be in a subject of the same genus as the intelligible forms, that is, in a separated substance. But, as other commentators say, a separated substance is not in itself of the same nature as this preparation, but it is in so far as it is in contact *(ittiṣâl)* with man.

It is clear then that the material intellect is something composed of this preparation in us and of the intellect which is in contact with this preparation. In so far as it is in contact with it, it is the prepared *(musta`add)* intellect and not an intellect in act. It is an intellect in act in so far as it is not in contact with this preparation. And this intellect is exactly the Agent Intellect.[168] Thus, following Ibn-Bâjja, there is no need to posit a passive or material intellect distinct from the Agent Intellect which is unique for all of humanity.

The same idea is also supposed in the large commentary on the *Metaphysics* (later than the large commentary on the *De anima*), where Ibn-Rushd explicitly says that the material intellect is corruptible (it is then the imagination), as well as the habitual intellect. The Agent Intellect is distinct from the material intellect, but it comes in contact with it. By an act that is distinct from its essence, the Agent Intellect makes sensible forms intelligible, and thus an eternal intellect knows corruptible things. But when man comes to perfection he loses all that is potential and has no other act than that of the Agent Intellect. "That is ultimate happiness."[169]

Knowledge and appetite

All knowledge comes from the Agent Intellect through the imagination, even first principles, contrary to Ibn-Sînâ.[170] On self-knowledge, Ibn-Rushd says:

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[168]P. 124.

[169]*Tafsîr mâ ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 1489-1490.

[170]*Talkhîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, p. 137.

Speculative knowledge and what is known are exactly the same thing... But that is only fully true in things separated from matter, that is, that the intellect and the intelligible are one thing in ever respect. But in the case of our intellect they are one only by accident. That is, since is nothing but the knowledge of what exists outside itself, it knows its existence by accident when it knows things extrinsic to its essence. That is because its essence is nothing more than the understanding of things exterior to its essence, as opposed to separated substances which know external things through their essence.[171]

Intellection takes place in us when the Agent Intellect enlightens the phantasms of the imagination, making them intelligibles in act. The Agent Intellect produces in us "a likeness *(shabîh)* of what is in its substance," giving us the habit *(malaka)* actually to consider whenever we want. This Agent Intellect, which is our last form, does not understand and exist from time to time, but has always existed and will always exist. If it goes out of the body it cannot die. It is precisely itself which knows *(ya`qul)* intelligible forms here when it is joined *(`ind inḍimâmi-hi)* to the material intellect. But if the material intellect leaves [the body] it can know nothing of what is here. Therefore after death we remember nothing of what we knew when it was in contact with the body. When it is in contact with us it knows intelligible forms that are here, but if it leaves us it knows its own essence. But if it can know its own essence while it is in contact with us is another question.

We should know that Themistius and most of the commentators are of the opinion that the intellect which is in us is composed of the intellect which is in potency and the intellect which is in act, that is the Agent

[171]Pp. 128-129; the same is said in the *Commentarium magnum de Anima*, p. 420.

> Intellect. In so far as it is composed, it does not know its own essence, but it knows things that are here when it is joined to imaginative meanings *(ma`ânî)*. But when these meanings corrupt, it happens accidentally *(ya`ruḍ)* that intelligible forms corrupt and forgetfulnessand error ensue.[172]

The appetitive power *(al-quwwa an-nuzû`iyya)* is moved by the imagination, and it itself moves the natural heat which moves the members to cause motion in each animal.[173] In *Talkhîs kitâb an-nafs* Ibn-Rushd also speaks of good *(khayr)* and evil *(sharr)* known by the practical intellect as causes of movement. But he never speaks of the rational will as a special power.[174]

The unicity of substantial form

As for the question of the unicity or multiplicity of substantial forms in an individual, Ibn-Rushd always supposes unicity. He affirms this explicitly when he says that elements exist only in potency in complex bodies.[175] But when he says that the soul is the form of a living body, he does not explain how one can have a "rational soul" and an intellect that is separable from this soul.

4.14 Moshe ben Maimon

By his intellect man is the image of God.[176] Moshe ben Maimon agrees that the soul is immortal, but in answering an objection to the hypothesis of an eternal world that this would entail an infinite number of separated souls, he answers by quoting Ibn-Bâjja that separated souls have no bodies to distinguish them and they are therefore all one.[177]

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[172]P. 130-131.

[173]*Kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 87-93; cf. *Talkhîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, p. 145.

[174]Pp. 134, 138-145.

[175]*Talkhîṣ as-Samâ' wa-l-`âlam*, pp. 306-307.

[176]*Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, pp. 26-28.

[177]*Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, pp. 223-224.

Like Ibn-Sînâ, he holds that the human race is diversified by different levels of intelligence: (1) unbelievers, (2) heretics, (3) ordinary believers, (4) the jurists, who discuss the practices of religion, (5) those who venture into speculation on the fundamental principles of religion [theologians], (6) those who have demonstrative knowledge of natural science, (7) those who understand metaphysics, and (8) the prophets, some who see nearby things, others see afar.[178]

Moshe ben Maimon wrote a *Letter on the resurrection of the dead*, replying to Samuel ben Eli who accused him of denying it. In this he held the immortality of the soul, but did not state clearly whether it would be individual or unique. He admitted nevertheless the possibility of a bodily resurrection.

4.15 Thomas Aquinas

The problem that Thomas Aquinas faced was to reconcile two facts: (1) that the human soul is the substantial form of man, and (2) that the act of intellection transcends matter and the subject of this act can survive without the body. Since act must correspond to potency, according to the first fact the soul should be a material form, but according to the second fact the act of intelligence requires an immaterial subject.

First of all, Thomas did not identify the rational soul with the intellect, as the Arab philosophers did, but distinguished the substance of the soul from its powers, as he distinguished these powers from their habits and acts. For him a single soul is the substantial form of the body. By its vegetative powers it is the source of the vital functions of the body; by its sensitive knowing and appetitive powers it is the source of its animal functions, and by the passive and active intellects and the will it exercises properly human activities.

Thus the soul has some activities that are purely material and others that are spiritual. Against Ibn-Sînâ, man is essentially

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[178] *Ibid.*, pp. 718 ff.

soul and body; there is no room for dualism. To solve the problem how the form of matter can have an operation which transcends matter and can exist without matter, Thomas makes an exception to his general teaching that the act of existence is the act of the composite of matter and form. In the case of man, he says that the act of existence is attached first and directly to the human soul, and through the soul to the body which participates in it, being animated by the soul. Thus at death the soul retains its existence apart from the body.[179]

Another point of sharp difference between Thomas and the Arab philosophers was his position that the intellect, whether passive or active, is a personal power of every man.[180] Instead of Ibn-Sînâ's theory of continual dependence on an exterior agent intellect, Thomas holds that man retains a habitual knowledge; nevertheless he admits that man, apart from his normal knowledge acquired from sense experience, can receive angelic inspiration.

As for the origin of the human soul, Thomas is in agreement with Ibn-Sînâ that it is created with the body.[181]

As for heavenly spirits, Thomas holds that there are incorporeal intellectual creatures, each unique in its own species, whose number is not limited to the movers of the heavenly bodies.[182]

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[179]Cf. *Contra gentiles*, II, n. 69-72.

[180]*Ibid.*, II, nos. 59, 69, 73-78; *De unitate intellectus contra Averroistas.*

[181]*Contra gentiles*, II, nos. 83-90.

[182]*Ibid.*, II, nos. 91-101.

CHAPTER 5

THE WAY TO HAPPINESS

5.1 Human happiness

5.1.1 Al-Kindî

Al-Kindî[1] adopts the idea of Plato that the human soul is a complete and immortal substance, distinct from the body like the rider of a horse. "It even comes from the substance of God like a ray of light from the sun." Its happiness here below consists in the exercise of the intellect mastering the passions and receiving enlightenment from God or separated souls, to the extent that it is purified. Being only in transit in this world, its true happiness is to go to the spiritual world beyond the heavenly spheres, where it will be filled with the light of God and will resemble him.

But not all souls will go immediately to this spiritual world. Those who still have traces of their passions must remain in the sphere of the moon before going on to that of Mercury and then to that of the fixed stars, until they are completely purified. Then at last it is "in the light of the Creator; it is proportioned *(ṭâbaqat)* to him and it sees everything clearly."[2]

Here below the difference of souls is manifested also in the intensity of their imagination and intelligence in abstracting from the exterior senses and being absorbed in thought, which can happen when they are awake and when they are asleep as well. It is then that the strong can understand hidden truths and make true predictions of the future, seeing far-away effects in their causes.[3] All that depends on the soul's degree of

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[1]In his *Risâla fî l-qawl fî n-nafs al-mukhtaṣar min kitâb Arisṭû wa-Flâṭun wa-sâ'ir al-falâsafa.*

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Cf. *Risâla fî mâhiyya an-nawm wa-r-ru'yâ.*

purification from its passions, such as lust and anger.[4]

5.1.2 Ar-Râzî

From ar-Râzî we have a complete treatise on ethics, *aṭ-Ṭibb ar-rûḥânî* (spiritual medicine), which discusses a series of virtues, and a small treatise, *as-Sîra al-falsafiyya*. Ar-Râzî stresses moderation, rejection the extreme asceticism of Socrates. The soul must purify itself by the study of philosophy. A soul that does so will enjoy happiness after it is separated from the body, but a non-purified soul will suffer from the privation of the bodily pleasures it is used to.[5]

5.1.3 Ibn-Masarra

Happiness, according to Ibn-Masarra, consists in knowing God the best we can by reason or revelation. This makes one ready for the company of God and for the vision of his being *(kunh-hu)* as the promised reward. Those who close their eyes to the truth have an unhappy end.[6]

5.1.4 Al-Fârâbî

Al-Fârâbî says that human happiness consists in the separation of the soul from matter forever (*dâ'iman abadan*); in this way it rises to the level of the Agent Intellect.[7] There it has no need of the body.[8] In its separated state each soul retains its individuality because the unique impression it received from its body during its earthly life.[9] For the same reason, souls cannot transmigrate from one body to another.[10] After their separation

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[4]*Risâla fî l-qawl fî n-nafs al-mukhtaṣar min kitâb Aristû wa-Flâṭun wa-sâ'ir al-falâsafa.*

[5]*Aṭ-ṭibb ar-rûḥânî*, section 2; cf. Abû-Ḥâtim ar-Râzî, *al-Munâẓarât.*

[6]*Risâla al-i`tibâr*, pp. 72-73.

[7]*Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 23, *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 32:8.

[8]Cf. *Risâla fî l-`aql*, n. 45-46.

[9]*Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 29 (p. 64).

[10]*Ta`lîqât*, n. 32.

from the body, souls coming from the society of the virtuous will rejoice in the company of other souls in this state, and the arrival of every new soul into their company will mark and increase in joy.[11]

But the ignorant, who have not come out of their condition of materiality by knowledge of the truth, will perish at death like the animals.[12] Nevertheless, those who knew the truth and turned away from it to do evil are destined to eternal punishment. The same for leaders of heresies who lead people astray; they will undergo an eternal punishment, but ignorant people will simply perish. Only the virtuous who were forced to go astray by evil leaders will be spared.[13]

In his *Ta`lîqât* al-Fârâbî remarks that the human soul is not a material form, yet it is impressed in matter,[14] but later in the same work he goes back to the position that only the soul that transcends the imagination and is perfected by knowledge is capable of surviving and receiving the emanation of the Agent Intellect,[15] and that the human soul is naturally mortal; only it receives permanence by contact with the active intellects.[16] Only the *ad-Da`âwî al-qalbiyya* says that the soul of everyone is naturally incorruptible and immortal.

How much truth must one know to belong to the society of the virtuous and qualify for eternal happiness? Al-Fârâbî says one must know the First Cause and his characteristics, beings separated from matter and their characteristics, with the proper activities of each, down to the Agent Intellect, the characteristics of each of the heavenly spheres, the wisdom and order of the

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[11] *Ibid.*, 30; *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 62:6.

[12] *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 32 (p. 67); *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 82:16; *Risâla fî ithbât al-mufâraqât.*

[13] *Mabâdi' ârâ'*, 32 (p. 68).

[14] *Ta`lîqât*, n. 31.

[15] *Ibid.*, n. 51.

[16] *Ibid.*, n. 54.

process of generation and corruption of natural bodies, the structure of man's body and soul and how the Agent Intellect acts on the soul, the structure of the virtuous society, and finally eternal happiness.[17]

In a word, it is all of philosophy, which can be mastered only by a small fraction of humanity. But al-Fârâbî is pragmatic; he provides a place for the masses by saying that knowledge of things by way of similitude (*tamthîl*) is sufficient for them. It is the task of the prince learned in philosophy or revelation to instruct them on the right path.[18]

On the other hand, as for the power of the human intellect to know natural things, al-Fârâbî says that it does not know their real essences, but only their external properties, which are not the true specific differences of a definition.[19] Elsewhere he distinguishes between an essential definition of natural things and a definition through external properties, without raising the problem of the validity of the one or the other.[20]

Philosophy and revelation are alike in the fact that both come from an emanation of the Agent Intellect. If this inspiration touches the imaginative power it makes a man a prophet; if it touches the intellect it makes him a philosopher.[21]

5.1.5 Miskawayh

Miskawayh teaches that this life should be a search for wisdom, which brings about moderation between excess and defect. True wisdom is characterized by subtlety *(dhihn)* which is the mode of angelic intelligence, understanding instantly without passing through the paths of reasoning.[22]

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[17]*Ibid.*, 33; cf. *Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, 1:3, pp. 68-69.

[18]*Loc. cit.*

[19]*Ta`lîqât*, nos. 6, 48, 84; cf. *Iḥṣâ' al-`ulûm*, ch. 4, pp. 114-115.

[20]*Falsafa Aristûtâlîs*, 3, pp. 85-90.

[21]*Ibid.*, 25 & 27.

[22]*Waṣiyya*, pp. 191-194.

Happiness in this life also demands knowledge of the physical, spiritual and divine worlds.[23] Happiness is characterized by unity and rising to the intelligible world, whereas misery is characterized by division and descent into the sensible world.[24] Miskawayh answers the objection that excessive intellectual activity brings about melancholy. He says that it is not the exercise of the intellect that brings about melancholy, but excessive activity of the imagination.[25]

Miskawayh describes the experience of a rapture by the Agent Intellect, when a person faints and almost dies because of this perfect pleasure.[26]

Happiness in the future life consists in the reception of a divine emanation *(fayḍ)*, which each soul receives according to its different capacity. One of the pleasures of the separated soul is the company of like souls. The unhappy are those who have an impediment to this emanation.[27] The desire for future happiness makes us despise the pleasures of this world and avoid the impediments which are lust and anger. Any material description of future happiness is only metaphorical.[28]

5.1.6 Ibn-Sînâ

As for Ibn-Sînâ, the eternal destiny of everyone is either happiness (*as-sa`âda*) or unhappiness (*shaqâwa*).[29] Happiness after death consists in conjunction with the Agent Intellect, which gives the soul its perfection by communicating to the

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[23] *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, pp. 96-97.

[24] *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

[25] *Maqâla fi n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, pp. 59-57, 48-47.

[26] *Risâla fi l-ladhdhât wa-l-âlâm*, p. 67.

[27] *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, pp. 104-106.

[28] *Ibid.*, pp. 106-110.

[29] *Ibid.*, 22; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fi l-ma`âd*, p. 189.

enlightenment of the divine emanation.[30] Thus the separated soul has no more need of the body for knowledge, but it knows by its essence.[31] Ibn-Sînâ rejects the monist tendency of those who say that union with the Agent Intellect is becoming (or fusion with) the Agent Intellect. The separated soul retains its individuality.[32]

In this life, since the perfection of the soul comes by infusion from the Agent Intellect,[33] even *ṣalât* is directed to it (passing on to God), and it is through this *ṣalât* that the Agent Intellect descends to the soul.[34] Given the cosmic and universal role that Ibn-Sînâ accords to the Agent Intellect, it is not surprising that he shows a devotion to it which to us seems idolatrous. But in his *ad-Du`â'*, he directs his prayer to God, asking him to enlighten him through the Agent Intellect.[35] Elsewhere he recommends devotion to the angels, who know and direct the details of this world by their substance. Angels are visible to each other, and a man who seeks to learn the truth and be purified can receive communications from them.[36] Thus the *Risâla fî tazkiya an-nafs* contains a cosmic prayer, asking from God an infusion of wisdom through the action of the stars, of Saturn, Mercury, Jupiter, and the Agent Intellect.[37] Elsewhere Ibn-Sînâ recommends moderation and the practices of worshiping God prescribed by the Prophet.[38]

The most happy are those who have most developed their

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[30]*Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsânsiyya*, ch. 10; *Risâla fî l-kalâm `alâ n-nafs an-nâṭiqa*; *Kitâb an-nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, p. 168.

[31]*Al-Ishârât, namaṭ* 7, *faṣl* 1-2.

[32]*Ibid., namaṭ* 7, *faṣl* 9-12.

[33]Cf. *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 166-169.

[34]Cf. *Risâla aṣ-ṣalât*, pp. 11-12.

[35]P. 297.

[36]Cf. *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 16.

[37]Pp. 293-294.

[38]*Ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, p. 207.

intellects in this life, and this supposes that their reason has dominated their passions. Those who have conceived the desire of developing their reason, but have turned away from this will have the greatest misery in the next life. Those who have not had the least idea of human perfection will not suffer so much by lacking it in the next life.[39] The distractions of this life impede the soul from seeing its true condition, and the joy of seeing God or the pain of lacking this are only realized after death.[40] Often Ibn-Sînâ talks of how the soul will be shocked by the truth when it finds itself stripped of the body.[41]

In his *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, Ibn-Sînâ repeats that true happiness can only be found in the next life. To determine what true happiness is in this life, he follows Aristotle's method of passing in review all the possible sources of happiness and eliminating them one after the other.[42] Likewise in *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, he explains that there are all sorts of bodily and spiritual pleasures, which are unequal. True pleasure is knowing God, the angels and the nature of heavenly and earthly things.[43]

[This pleasure] can only be realized and be absolute in the next life. For happiness in this life consists in stripping the soul from the body and from the traces of nature, and in the complete separation of its essence, when it will see by an intellectual vision the essence of Him whose reign is supreme, the spirits that adore him, the upper world, and how it got there. The greatest pleasure is in that, whereas the greatest unhappiness consists in the opposite of that. Just as this happiness is the greatest, so that unhappiness is the most painful.[44]

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[39] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 15; *Maktûb Abî-s-Sa`îd ilâ sh-Shaykh wa-jawâbu-hu.*

[40] *`Uyûn al-ḥikma*, 53; *an-Nukat wa-l-fawâ'id fî l-`ilm aṭ-ṭabî`î*, 164-165; *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, pp. 201-207; *Ta`lîqât*, p. 81.

[41] *Ta`lîqât*, pp. 23-24 and elsewhere.

[42] Pp. 2-5.

[43] Pp. 191-201.

[44] *Ibid.*, p. 205.

Where exactly is the dividing line between those who are destined to eternal happiness and those destined to eternal unhappiness? Ibn-Sînâ says that he can only venture an approximation: 1) Those who have a general idea of the structure of the universe, how everything flows from the first immaterial Principle, and who practice moderation in their private and social life will be qualified for happiness. 2) Those who have no scientific idea of the order of the universe, but follow religious beliefs on this subject can also reach happiness. 3) But among both classes of people there are those who have dispositions contrary to contemplation of the truth, who have immoderate attachment to sensible things and even think that intelligible and immaterial things do not exist. These will reach eternal happiness, but by passing through temporal suffering after death.[45] This is in agreement with the statement of the Sunnites [= the Ash`arites] that "none of the Believers who commits great sins will stay for eternity [in the Fire]."[46]

Elsewhere Ibn-Sînâ says with assurance that: 1) the first class of people mentioned above, who are the *sâbiqûn, muqarrabûn* of Qur'ân 56:10, merit to enter "the world of intellects". 2) Those who lack either the necessary knowledge or its corresponding behavior will go to "the world of the heavenly souls", that is to the Paradise of sensible joys described in the Qur'ân. These will stay there until they are purified; then they will pass to the rank of the first. 3) Those who lack both necessary qualifications will enter "the world of the body", which is one of suffering.[47] Children and others who die without the possibility of developing their intellects will have neither absolute joy nor absolute pain, but will be in an intermediate state, "between Paradise and the Fire".[48]

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[45] *Ibid.*; cf. also *Jawâb sitt `ashar masâ'il li-Abî Rayḥân*, n. 3, p. 3; for disbelief in intelligible things, see *Ta`lîqât*, p. 32 and elsewhere.

[46] *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 17.

[47] *Risâla fî ma`rifa an-nafs an-nâṭiqa wa-aḥwâli-hâ*, ch. 3 & *khâtima*.

[48] *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 16.

The *Risâla fî `ilm al-akhlâq*, speaking of the knowledge necessary for happiness, says that one must acquire all the sciences mentioned in the books that enumerate the sciences *(kutub iḥṣâ' al-`ulûm*–such as that of al-Fârâbî and his own *Risâla fî aqsâm al-`ulûm al-`aqliyya*).[49] As for both intellectual and moral perfection, just as one is in this life so he will be when he is separated from the body.[50]

Thus both intellectual and moral perfection are requires for eternal happiness, but there are individuals who lack one or the other.

If the soul is content with the corrupt state of its knowledge and beliefs and it is separated from the body, it will encounter the evil that we mentioned. The human soul can only be saved from this intellectual state by a period of time spent in learning with certitude the truths of philosophy. So it is obligatory not to be remiss in the acquisition of philosophy, which is salvation from the deception that damages the essence of the rational soul.[51]

In *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, Ibn-Sînâ presents six categories of souls in the next life:[52]

(1) The perfect [in intelligence] who are purified from sensible attachments; these have absolute happiness.
(2) The perfect who are not purified and are before a barrier *(barzakh)* or temporary state of waiting before proceeding to absolute happiness.
(3) The imperfect who are purified, who have embraced error and fought against the truth; these will suffer eternally.
(4) The imperfect who are purified, having been in error not from their own fault.
(5) The imperfect who are purified, never having known either truth or error, such as mad people and infants. Categories

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[49]P. 115.

[50]*Ibid.*, p. 123.

[51]*Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 18.

[52]Pp. 209-213.

(4) and (5) will have neither absolute happiness nor absolute misery, but will be in an intermediate state.

(6) The imperfect who are not purified, having been responsible for the imperfection of their mind; these will be in eternal misery. If they are not responsible they will be in an intermediate state with sufferings brought on by their lack of purity.

It should be noted that the moral differences between those who follow the mean and those who sin by excess or defect corresponds to a physical difference between a balance or lack of balance of the elements of which the body is composed.[53] In principle, good physical complexion and beauty should go together with a good character, but this beauty can be damaged by external influences; besides, someone who has physical beauty can choose evil and become habituated to it.[54]

We should also note that, for Ibn-Sînâ, acquiring happiness is not a purely human work. Intellectual and moral development is first of all a gift of God:

> The works that come [from the soul] are acquired by divine goodness, since the perfection of everything comes from his goodness, and the privation of things that hurt [this perfection] is also from the goodness of God. This goodness is generous, provided that giving a particular thing does not harm a higher good; in that case it is better to prevent that thing.[55]

This explains why throughout the writings of Ibn-Sînâ intellectualism is mixed with Ṣûfism.[56] The *Ta`lîqât* explains the relationship between human effort and divine help, always through the Agent Intellect:

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[53] *Risâla fî l-kalâm `alâ n-nafs an-nâṭiqa.*

[54] *Risâla fî mâhiyya al-`ishq*, p. 19.

[55] *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, p. 19.

[56] Among his other works, see the little *Risâla fî l-ḥaththh `alâ dh-dhikr.*

> The relationship of good works to the existence of virtue is like the relationship of consideration and thought to the existence of certitude. Just as consideration and thought do not cause the existence of certitude but prepare the soul for its reception, so good works prepare the soul to receive virtue from the giver of forms.[57]

The *Risâla fî mâhiyya al-`ishq* places the acquisition of happiness in the context of the natural desire of everything, even non-animated, for its own perfection. Every natural desire is good, but in the case of man rational desires should control animal desires, especially that of sex.[58] Natural desires are the result of the manifestation *(at-tajallî)* of the goodness of God. When he gives existence, God gives at the same time the desire for perfection, which is a certain resemblance *(tashabbuh)* to him. Those who resemble him the most are intellectual creatures. When they attain their perfection they are the "divinized" or "divine souls" *(an-nufûs al-muta'allaha/ al-ilâhiyya)*.[59]

It is clear that someone who perceives the good naturally loves it. It is also clear that the First Cause is lovable to divinized intellects. And when human or angelic souls are perfect enough to conceive of intelligible things as they are, they have a resemblance to the absolute good, and their operations are in conformity with intelligible reasons, characterized by justice.[60]

In using this ṣûfic, or even Christian, language, Ibn-Sînâ goes even so far as to adopt the ṣûfic term "union" *(ittiḥâd)* with God, which as-Ghazâlî later will reject.[61]

Happiness or misery in the next life are not recompenses that fall

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[57]P. 37.

[58]Pp. 15-17.

[59]Pp. 21, 27 etc.

[60]P. 23.

[61]P. 25.

upon the soul, but are the lifting of the veil that hides the soul from itself. When the soul looks at itself without any impediment, automatically it acquires the state of happiness or misery corresponding to its condition.[62]

What place does the vision of God have in happiness? At the end of the two editions of his *Risâla Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân* Ibn-Sînâ raises the question. He seems to speak of this life when he says that no one can conceive of its beauty and excellence.

His goodness is the veil of his goodness; his appearance is the cause of his invisibility; his manifestation is the reason why he is hidden, like the sun; if it is a little covered it is much more manifest, but when it shines it is veiled, and its light is the veil of its light. If this King lets his subjects see his majesty, he does not prevent them from approaching him. But when their [cognitive] faculties approach him without seeing him, he rightly gives them an abundant infusion [of himself], flooding those who receive it, as he is vast in his providence, universal in his giving. If anyone witnesses just a trace of his beauty, he cannot turn is look from him for an instant.[63]

In these texts Ibn-Sînâ gives the impression that God is too elevated to be seen. But the Agent Intellect is proportioned to man, and in communion with it he can find his eternal happiness. It is only in a late work, *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, that he insists that the greatest pleasure in the future life is the vision of God.[64]

What does eternal misery consist in? It is not corporal fire, but first of all the distance from the Creator that comes from the condition of the soul. Secondly, it is the frustration of the desire engraven in the soul for the bodily pleasures it lacks.[65]

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[62] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 15; cf. also *Mabḥath `an al-quwâ n-nafsâniyya*, ch. 10.

[63] *Jâmi` al-badâ'i`*, p. 113; cf. al-`Âṣî, *at-Tafsîr al-Qur'ânî wa-l-lugha aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 335.

[64] Pp. 89-91.

[65] *Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 167; *Risâla fî s-sa`âda*, pp. 16-17; *Risâla fî l-mawt*, p. 382.

According to those who hold that the separated soul retains its imaginative or estimative powers, the separated soul can experience, by phantom sensation, all the punishments or pleasures described in the Qur'ân; that is the reality of the "punishment or reward in the tomb" and of the bodily resurrection.[66] To avoid punishment for sins committed in this life, Ibn-Sînâ simply recommends avoiding these sins.[67]

In the *Risâla fî ithbât an-nubuwwât*, the Fire or Hell is the world of the external senses, and Paradise is the world of intelligibles. The passage on the *ṣirâṭ*, in the eschatology of the Ḥadîth, is the hard work of the soul in passing from the external senses to the imagination, to the estimative power, to the cogitative power and finally to the intellect.[68]

5.1.7 Ibn-Gabirol

In a very brief discussion of happiness, Ibn-Gabirol says that it consists in knowing the divine world. This is made possible by first understanding the world of matter and form, then by knowing the Will. The result of this flight from sensible to intelligible things is to escape death and be joined to the spring or source of life *(maqôr ḥayyîm)*.[69]

5.1.8 Ibn-Bâjja

Ibn-Bâjja distinguishes different ranks of humanity: first of all the masses who are dominated by sensible knowledge. Then there are those who know the science of nature, who see the intelligible in the sensible. Lastly, there are the happy people who directly see the intelligible in itself, as in the sun, as Ibn-Bâjja explains by Plato's allegory of the cave. In that case they become light itself, which must mean an ontological

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[66] *Ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fî l-ma`âd*, pp. 223-225; cf. *Risâla fî ithbât an-nabuwwât*, 55-57.

[67] *Risâla fî l-mawt*, p. 382.

[68] Pp. 58-59.

[69] *Maqôr ḥayyîm*, 5:73-74.

identification with the Agent Intellect.[70] That is realized in a preliminary stage by the acquisition of metaphysics, but perfectly when one leaves the body. In this state one will meet all those who came before or after in this life, because they will all be numerically one.[71]

The final destiny of the first two categories can be surmised to be what al-Fârâbî says, whom Ibn-Bâjja quotes so often.

5.1.9 Ibn-Ṭufayl

For the future life, Ibn-Ṭufayl distinguishes first those who did not know God in this life; these will have no desire for him and will suffer no pain for missing him. Those who knew him but followed their passions will suffer the loss of God, at least during a period of purification. Those who knew him and sought him in this life will have the pleasure of his contemplation.[72] These distinctions are not consistent with the denial of individual survival expressed elsewhere. In the context, they seem simply to be a recitation of ideas common in the Muslim community.

In this life one is obliged to be busy with the necessities of the body, but the principal aim of human life is the contemplation of God and acquiring a similitude of his attributes.[73] One is also obliged, like the heavenly spirits, to share in God's providence for lower creatures. Thus Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân was concerned with the preservation of nature, coming to the aid of distressed animals and plants.[74]

5.1.10 Ibn-Rushd

Man's happiness in this life, for Ibn-Rushd, is realized in

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[70] *Ittiṣâl al-`aql bi-l-insân*, pp. 167-169.

[71] *Risâla al-wadâ`*, p. 143; *Risâla al-ittiṣâl*, p. 171.

[72] *Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân*, pp. 181-182.

[73] Pp. 191-194, 201.

[74] Pp. 195-199.

conjunction with the Agent Intellect.[75] According to the *Epistle on the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect* that is realizable because the material intellect is eternal and "the eternal can understand the eternal".[76]

> As to the elementary forms of prime matter there is joined a second disposition to receive the forms of composites, so to the actualization of these forms there is joined a third disposition to receive the nutritive soul; to the realization of that is joined a fourth disposition to receive sensitive forms; to the realization of that is joined a fifth disposition to receive imaginative forms and a sixth disposition to receive speculative intelligibles; thus it is necessary that there be joined to these a seventh disposition [for conjunction with separated substances].[77]

This disposition is realized by the actualization of the material intellect by study and not by Ṣûfism; in this way it becomes a "speculative" or "acquired" intellect. Study should be accompanied by the action of purifying the soul of its passions by prayer, fasting and silence.[78]

But all this preparation, achieved by so much work, must corrupt and disappear at the moment of direct conjunction with the Agent Intellect, "like a combustible body before the fire that transforms it into its own nature".[79] Then the material intellect will enjoy the condition of life of the Agent Intellect, without

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[75]*Tafsîr mâ ba`d at-tab`iyya*, pp. 1602-1613; cf. *The epistle on the possibility of conjunction with the active intellect*; *Talkhîṣ ma ba`d aṭ-ṭabî`a*, pp. 145-146; *Tractatus de animae beatitudine; Epistola de connexione intellectus abstracti cum homine.*

[76]P. 108.

[77]Pp. 85-86.

[78]*Ibid.*, pp. 103-105.

[79]P. 55.

alteration or corruption.[80] We must understand correctly the meaning of this "conjunction" or "continuity" *(ittiṣâl)* which has a precise meaning in the philosophy of Aristotle and Ibn-Rushd. It is for two things to have their extremities not just touching, but made one; it is a true union *(ittiḥâd)* in a single being.[81]

> The object of understanding becomes the knower, and then the intellect, the object of the intellect and the knower are one thing, being transformed into the essence and dignity of the Agent Intellect. The material intellect as intellect, the material intellect as knowing, and the Agent Intellect as known are, according to these three aspects, a single being with three dispositions... The three intellects are transformed into one divine being.[82]

This happiness should be realized in this life. Ibn-Rushd criticizes al-Fârâbî for having denied its possibility because of it being a union between the corruptible (the material intellect) and the incorruptible (the Agent Intellect), and also because he became old without experiencing it.[83] After this life there will be either "perpetual non-existence or perpetual pain".[84] Ibn-Rushd does not restrict these words to a particular category of men, but he seems to be echoing Ibn-Bâjja in speaking of the destiny of those who do not arrive at conjunction with the Agent Intellect, whereas those who have, as he teaches in the *Tahâfut*, will have immortality but not a personal one.

In the first question of his *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut* Ibn-Rushd supposes that the soul is immortal, but, against Ibn-Sînâ, he denies its individuality, for two reasons. The first is that, if the world has always existed, there would be an infinity of separated

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[80] Pp. 111-112.

[81] *Jawâmi` as-Samâ` aṭ-ṭabî`î*, pp. 85-87, 103-105.

[82] *Tractatus de animae beatitudine*, p. 153a.

[83] *Tractatus de animae beatitudine*, p. 150a; 152a-b; *Epistola..*, p. 157a.

[84] *Ibid.*, sect. 16.

souls, but an actual infinity is impossible; besides these souls would exhaust the finite earth for the material of their bodies. The second is that the form of the soul is the same for all men and is distinguished only by matter; if matter is taken away there will be no more distinction but only one separated soul.[85]

In this context we can observe that by "the soul" Ibn-Rushd means the "intellect", since he clearly says elsewhere that "man is essentially an intellect."[86] The soul, as form, is inseparable from the body,[87] and all its sensitive powers, including the imagination or the material intellect, are corruptibles.[88]

Thus, in spite of a certain obscurity of the texts, we can conclude that, according to the middle commentary on *De Anima*, there is no personal agent or possible intellect, nor even a single common possible intellect, but all men share in a single eternal intellect, the Agent Intellect. This is a substance separate from the soul which knows everything and which is the real subject of knowledge when we attribute knowledge to anyone. What is personal to each man is an indwelling or radiated likeness of this intellect, corresponding to the different phantasms in the imagination of each person. This likeness, whether it takes on the state of the material intellect or the habitual intellect or the intellect in act, is corruptible, like the soul which is the substantial form of the body; both disappear with the body.

In his summary *(Talkhîṣ)* of the *Risâla al-ittiṣâl* of Ibn-Bâjja, which he added to a later edition of his small commentary on the *De Anima*, after writing his large commentary, Ibn-Rushd praises the work of Ibn-Bâjja. He explains the degrees of knowledge proposed by Ibn-Bâjja, saying that the lowest degree is sensible knowledge, proper to the masses of people *(jumhûr)*. The next degree is mathematics, which is abstract and remote

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[85] *Tahâfut*, I, pp. 92-98; II, pp. 443, 856.

[86] II, p. 561.

[87] *Kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 6-7; *Talkhîṣ kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 50, 56.

[88] *Talkhîs kitâb an-nafs*, pp. 23-24.

from individual reality *(al-ashkhâṣ)*. The next degree is science of nature, which is closer to reality, but removed in so far as it is universal. The supreme degree is metaphysics, which studies the reality of separated substances which are at the same time individual and intelligible.[89]

Ibn-Rushd next considers the objection that metaphysical knowledge depends on principals *(muqaddimât)* taken from physical science and that this knowledge is only intelligible by relation and analogy *(bi-l-munâsaba wa-l-muqâyasa)* to material things. He answers that this dependence on physical science is accidental *(iḍâfa)*, and that it is by way of negation *(salb)* that one progresses little by little, starting from knowledge of the human soul, to a pure and unmovable understanding of God and separated substances. Thus conjunction with the Agent Intellect is not a physical or natural perfection *(ṭabî`î)* bit a divine one *(ilâhî)*, which makes of man thus perfected a composite of the perishable *(fâsid)* and the eternal *(azalî)*.

In the *Tahâfut* Ibn-Rushd speculates on the state of the separated soul, saying that death is like sleep, in that in both states the soul is in act without an organ.[90] Avoiding any clear statement of his own position, he quotes the opinion of certain partisans of Ibn-Sînâ who defend the multiplicity of separated souls by the supposition that they have some subtle matter; they would then be like the *jinn*.[91] Supposing that the resurrection of the body is possible and true, Ibn-Rushd praises al-Ghazâlî for his position that in the resurrection the body is not of the same matter as that left at death.[92] Like the other philosophers, Ibn-Rushd takes Qur'ânic descriptions of the bodily pleasures of heaven as

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[89]Cf. Ibn-Bâjja, *Ittiṣâl al-`aql bi-l-insân*, pp. 164-165. These same degrees of knowledge are proposed by the grandson of Ibn-Rushd, Abû-Muḥammad ibn `Abdallâh ibn-al-Walîd Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad ibn-Rushd, *Maqâla hal yattaṣil bi-l-`aql al-hayûlânî al-`aql al-fa``âl wa-huwa multabis bi-l-jism*.

[90]II, p. 734.

[91]II, p. 862.

[92]II, pp. 871-872.

figures of true spiritual pleasures; the bodily punishments of Hell are likewise symbols of the suffering of the soul.[93]

In all these texts, there is no basis for saying that Ibn-Rushd believes in personal immortality.[94] Rather on this question he follows the road traced by Ibn-Bâjja. It is only in his *al-Kashf `an manâhij al-adilla*, while discussing the question of the resurrection, that Ibn-Rushd seems to take another position. He first establishes that human happiness consists in the act of the intellect, together with the speculative and practical virtues. Then he says:

> After death souls will be stripped of their bodily desires. But if they had been stained, their separation will add to their dirtiness, because they will suffer from the sins *(raḍâ'il)* that they have acquired. And the failure that they experienced by their lack of purification will be intensified when they are separated from the body, because they can gain nothing apart from the body.[95]

Ibn-Rushd outlines three ways that different religions follow in trying to describe future life: 1) that future life is just like this life (with bodily pleasures), but it is permanent–the opinion of the majority of Muslims, 2) that future life is spiritual, and its sensible representation in the Qur'ân is allegorical–the opinion of the philosophers, and 3) that future life is bodily, but completely different from this life, because there we will be incorruptible and have no metabolism or nutrition or generation; thus "his life and the future life have only the name life in common," as Ibn-`Abbâs said. Ibn-Rushd is happy that those who propose this opinion do not demand that at the resurrection

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[93]II, p. 870-871.

[94]As does B.H. Zedler in "Averroes and immortality," *The New Scholasticism*, 28 (1954), pp. 436-453; she had a better presentation of Ibn-Rushd's teaching in "Averroes on the possible intellect," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 25 (1951), pp. 164-178.

[95]*Manâhij al-adilla*, p. 151.

the soul takes back the same matter that it left behind at death.[96]

Ibn-Rushd wrote *al-Kashf `an manâhij al-adilla* to show that, although a philosopher, he is an authentic Muslim. He praises all the expressions that are found in the Qur'ân as the best way to guide the masses, but it is clear that he himself leans towards an allegorical interpretation of the stories of the resurrection. His acceptance of the immortality of the soul does not contradict his teaching on the unicity of the intellect of those who die in a state of perfection. The different destiny of the unperfected agrees with his teaching in *The conjunction* that the misery of these people is really annihilation.

5.1.11 Moshe ben Maimon

The purpose of man, for Moshe ben Maimon, is to develop in the likeness *(tashabbuh)* of God.[97] Happiness in this life is to receive emanation *(fayḍ)* from God and angels, particularly in the form of dreams, which are 1/60th part of prophecy.[98] Moshe ben Maimon pinpoints matter as the factor that drags man down; thus desires for material things like alchohol and sex are opposed to living by intelligence and knowing separated substances.[99] Thus moral evil is the consequence of ignorance or lack of knowledge of the Lord.[100]

The moral law in the Torah is guided by wisdom and not simply the arbitrary will of God. Nevertheless not every detail of the Law can be justified by reason.[101]

5.1.12 Thomas Aquinas

For Thomas Aquinas, the perfection of human life is to know

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[96]Pp. 153-154.

[97]*Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn*, p. 135.

[98]*Ibid.*, pp. 405-408.

[99]*Ibid.*, pp. 487-494.

[100]*Ibid.*, p. 499.

[101]*Ibid.*, pp. 574-581.

God.[102] Since this knowledge is not possible to achieve by philosophy, by faith, or by inspiration from separated intellects, it is not possible for man to achieve it in this life.[103] Even in the future life, the vision of God cannot be acquired by knowing the angels or other separated souls, but only God himself can give it. That is through the gift of glory, which is an adaptation of the soul to see God.[104] This vision is not comprehensive, but it is available to every soul to the extent of its readiness.[105]

5.2 The society of the virtuous

For Ibn-Masarra, human society is, like the world of nature, hierarchical. Under God, prophets, religious scholars *(`ulamâ')* and philosophers *(ḥukamâ')* correspond to the human soul. Kings and other rulers correspond to the animal soul, and workers correspond to the vegetative soul.[106]

For al-Fârâbî, one condition of human development in preparation for eternal happiness is "the society of the virtuous" or "the virtuous city" (*al-madîna al-fâḍila*). This, with its hierarchical structure, is a mirror of the celestial hierarchy.[107] Founded by a philosopher-king, who could be a prophet, it continues under the direction of a wise king.[108]

Likewise for Ibn-Sînâ, the prince or true king should be endowed with a perfect intelligence and the moral virtues.[109]

Ibn-Rushd expresses his ideas in a commentary on the *Republic* of Plato, in which he follows Plato's ideas on the philosopher-

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[102]*Contra gentiles*, III, nos. 25, 37.

[103]*Contra gentiles*, III, nos. 38-48.

[104]*Ibid.*, III, nos. 49-54.

[105]*Ibid.*, nos. 55-58.

[106]*Khawâṣṣ al-ḥurûf*, p. 95.

[107]*Taḥṣîl as-sa`âda*, n. 20.

[108]*Ibid.*, 48, 57-61; *as-Siyâsa al-madaniyya*, 79:3.

[109]*Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 14.

king.

As for Thomas Aquinas, like al-Fârâbî, he holds that the order of the universe is hierarchical, with a heavenly and an earthly hierarchy. Just as superior angels enlighten their inferiors, men endowed with greater intelligence should enlighten and direct others, and man is to direct creatures that are below man.[110]

5.3 Prophecy

5.3.1 Al-Fârâbî

As we have seen, for al-Fârâbî, human knowledge consists in the reception of intelligible forms from the Agent Intellect. Prophecy, then, is nothing more than an extraordinary level of the same reception from the Agent Intellect.

5.3.2 Ar-Râzî

Since all are created with the ability to learn every truth about God by philosophy, ar-Râzî says that prophets are not necessary, and those who claim to be prophets are impostors. We will come back to ar-Râzî's position in the next chapter.

5.3.2 Miskawayh

The prophet, for Miskawayh, occupies the summit of the human hierarchy which extends from those who are endowed with the greatest subtlety of intelligence all the way down to the blacks of Africa *(zanj)* who live almost like beasts.[111]

The philosopher and the prophet have the same knowledge, but the prophet receives it without effort.[112] Divination *(kahâna)* is nothing but astrological guessing.[113]

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[110]*Contra gentiles*, III, nos. 78-81.

[111]*Al-Fawz al-asghar*, pp. 111-118.

[112]*Maqâla fî n-nafs wa-l-`aql*, p. 23.

[113]*Al-Fawz al-asghar*, pp. 136-138.

5.3.3 Ibn-Sînâ

On prophecy, in *ash-Shifâ'* Ibn-Sînâ remarks that certain intellects are exceptionally well prepared to receive emanation from the Agent Intellect; such an intellect Ibn-Sînâ calls a "holy intellect" *(`aql qudsî)*; that is a sort of prophecy; in fact, it is the highest of prophetic powers.[114]

Discussing prophecy later on in *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, Ibn-Sînâ takes as his point of departure the absolute determination of all things through the separated intellects and heavenly bodies. A prophet is someone who can put himself in contact with these separate intelligences. He can do so because he has the natural disposition to do so in his imagination. There are different levels of men: 1) those who receive light inspirations which are quickly confused or forgotten; 2) others receive stable inspirations without any follow-up; 3) others receive stable or stronger inspirations which impel them to express them to others; this is prophecy at its minimum; 4) other prophets retain what they have received without ever being distracted from it; 5) finally there are prophets who besides that can continue to work at practical things without prejudice to their prophetic experience. Sometimes even mad men can know hidden things, because their imagination sometimes alienates them from external sensation and permits them to receive influence from on high.[115]

In his *Risâla fî ithbât an-nabuwwât*, a late work, Ibn-Sînâ puts prophecy at a place between the Agent Intellect and the material intellect. The Agent Intellect has the act of understanding by its essence; other intellects have it as an accident. Just as the habitual intellect is superior to the material intellect, the perfected intellect is still superior. But the intellect that is perfected by means of reasoning is inferior to that which is perfected by a direct infusion from the Agent Intellect. This

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[114] *Ash-Shifâ': an-nafs, maqâla* 5, *faṣl* 6; cf. *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*, p. 197.

[115] *Aḥwâl an-nafs*, ch. 13; on the experiences of mad men, cf. *Risâla fî bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb*, p. 408.

latter is a prophet.[116]

Someone is a prophet if his intelligence is supremely developed and he can grasp much at once. That is because of his power of intuition *(ḥadas)*, but especially because he is open to the influences of the heavenly spirits.[117] This is exactly what Thomas Aquinas calls "natural prophecy".[118] Ibn-Sînâ explains this idea in *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*:

> In his providence God approaches this soul in a general way, and looks at it with a divine look. He makes of this soul his slate, with the universal soul [= the Agent Intellect] his pen. And he inscribes on it everything that the universal soul knows. Thus the universal intellect becomes a teacher and the hole soul its student, who in this way acquires all sciences; all forms are written in it without its having to study or think.[119]

In his *ar-Risâla al-`arshiyya*, Ibn-Sînâ defines the speaking *(kalâm)* of God in this way:

> Sciences are infused by him onto the slate of the heart of the Prophet... by means of the Engraver Pen *(al-qalam an-naqqâsh)* which is also known as the Agent Intellect and the King who is brought near *(al-malik al-muqarrab)*.[120]

In his *Risâla al-fi`l wa-l-infi`âl* he explains:

> The definition of revelation *(waḥy)* is the secret communication *(ilqâ')* of the Agent Intellect *(al-amr al-`aqlî)*, with the permission of God the Most High, to human souls that are prepared to receive this

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[116]P. 46.

[117]*Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfiyya*, p. 168.

[118]*Quaestiones disputatae de Veritate*, 12, a. 3.

[119]P. 197.

[120]P. 12

> communication, either in the state of awakedness–and that is called revelation– or in sleep–and that is called inspiration of the soul *(nafath fi r-rû`)*.[121]

He continues to explain, according to the *Mutakallimûn*, how revelation made to a prophet is verified by miracles *(mu`jizât)*, but those who receive inspiration *(ilhâm)* can only work wonders *(karâmât)*. In his *Risâla fi bayân al-mu`jizât wa-l-karâmât wa-l-a`âjîb* Ibn-Sînâ explains that these are possible because pure souls can have an influence on external matter. Ibn-Sînâ likewise refers to the power of the eye, according to the widespread belief in the Muslim world of his time and long afterwards.[122]

Prophecy is not a direct intelligible communication, but it passes through the imagination, according to the Qur'ân verse: "It has not been given to a mortal that Allâh should speak to him, unless by revelatory signs, or from behind a veil, or by sending him a messenger to reveal what he wishes with His permission" (42:51).

And as long as man is in this world, he cannot escape the "evil of the surreptitious Tempter" (Q 114:4), to whom God gave power over him. The imagination is Iblîs who would not bow down to the deputy of God [Adam] and his soul when the angels and all the powers did so (cf. Q 2:34). That is why everything that the intellect judges regarding things abstract from matter, the imagination detests... The Legislator [Muḥammad] said: "There is no one among you who does not have a Satan."[123]

Here Ibn-Sînâ does not draw the conclusion that it is possible for there to be error in prophecy. He seem simply to say that the imagination serves as a means of prophecy, but it is opposed sometimes to pure truth.

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[121]P. 3.

[122]P. 411-412.

[123]*Kalimât aṣ-ṣûfîyya*, p. 169.

In the *Ta`lîqât*, however, prophetic illumination comes first of all to the intellect in a sudden comprehensive idea; then it passes to the imagination where it becomes an audible composition.[124]

Ibn-Sînâ accepts the classic distinction of the *Mutakallimûn* between a prophet *(nabî)* and a messenger *(rasûl)*; the latter, besides receiving a message, has the task of communicating *(tablîgh)*. (The distinction in the Qur'ân is rather that "prophet" is applied to Biblical prophets, while "messenger" is applied also to other prophets.[125]) But he adds that a messenger receives his message precisely from the universal intellect [= the Agent Intellect], whereas a prophet receives it from the universal soul [= that of the moon]. The relation between this soul and the universal intellect is like the relation between Eve and Adam. From the universal intellect there comes revelation *(waḥy)*, whereas from the universal soul only inspiration *(ilhâm)* comes. The Ṣûfîs also participate in inspiration, which continues after the close of revelation with Muḥammad.[126]

5.3.4 Ibn-Ṭufayl

Prophecy, according to Ibn-Ṭufayl, is the perfect reception of the emanation of the spirit or intellect which comes from God. What this spirit is, we have discussed in chapter 4.

5.3.5 Ibn-Rushd

As for prophecy, in the *Tahâfut* Ibn-Rushd remarks that divine science (or metaphysics) is so marvelous that some people attribute it to the *jinns*, but others to prophets; thus he quotes Ibn-Ḥazm that the existence of this science is the best indication of the existence of prophecy[127]–with the implication that philosophy does not differ essentially from prophecy.

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[124] *Ta`lîqât*, p. 82.

[125] Cf. Willem Bejlefeld, "A prophet and more than a prophet," *Muslim World*, 59 (1969), 1-28.

[126] *Al-`ilm al-ladunî*, pp. 198-200.

[127] I, p. 347.

Elsewhere he remarks that revelation *(shar`)* can supplement reason, but one should distinguish well between what surpasses reason absolutely and what is above the level of certain people, whether by nature *(fiṭra)* or by lack of education.[128]

In any case, Ibn-Rushd defends the prophecy of Muḥammad, established by the miracle of the Qur'ân which, for Ibn-Rushd, consists in its theoretical and practical wisdom.[129]

5.3.6 Moshe ben Maimon

Moshe ben Maimon lists three opinions on candidates for prophecy: (1) The popular idea is that anyone, even ignorant or bad, can become a prophet, provided he also becomes good. (2) The philosophers, however, say that prophecy comes only to those of superior intelligence, and by necessity. (3) Jewish tradition is that prophecy is given to superior people, but not necessarily; God acts where and when he wishes.[130]

Prophecy consists in the attachment of the soul to the Agent Intellect, and is activated by visions or dreams. This requires the best disposition *(mazâj)* of the organ of the imagination. If it is dead now, it is expected to return in the days of the Messiah.[131]

Different levels of divine emanation result in different gifts: Coming to the intellect alone, it results in learned people who perfect themselves and others. When it comes to both the intellect and the imagination it results in prophets, who also perfect themselves and others. When it comes to the imagination alone, it results in civil leaders, priests and other moral leaders.

True prophets are characterized by a good life and bravery. False prophets are misled by imaginary visions and dreams, and

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[128]I, p. 415.

[129]*Manâhij al-adilla*, pp. 121-134.

[130]*Dalâla al-ḥâ'irîn.*, 392.

[131]*Ibid.*, p. 404-409, 422; cf. *Commentary on the Mishna*, where he proposes 13 principles that every Jew should accept.

are given to pleasure, especially womanizing.[132]

There are grades of prophecy:[133]

1. when a prophet does a great salvific work under divine inspiration
2. when a spirit speaks through him when he is awake
3. when the prophet sees a parable *(mathal)* in a dream and understands it
4. when he hears the speech of God in a dream without knowing it is from God
5. when he hears a person speaking to him in a dream
6. when he hears an angel speaking to him in a dream
7. when he sees God
8. when he sees a vision while awake
9. when he hears God speaking to him in a vision
10. when he sees a person speaking to him in a vision
11. when he sees an angel speaking to him in a vision

Although a prophetic message is usually in the form of parables directed to the imagination, the Torah is pure truth.[134]

5.3.7 Thomas Aquinas

Against the tendency of the Arab philosophers to reduce prophecy to a completely natural phenomenon pertaining to those who are eminent in intelligence, Thomas Aquinas holds that true prophecy is a purely gratuitous gift out of the control of the prophet, which he cannot exercise whenever he wishes. As a gift, it has nothing to do with the natural intelligence of the prophet, but the adaptation of his intellect to receive divine enlightenment is a supernatural gift.[135]

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[132] *Ibid.*, pp. 412-422.

[133] *Ibid.*, pp. 435-447.

[134] *Ibid.*, pp. 452-455.

[135] *Summa theologiae*, II-II, qq. 171-174.

CHAPTER 6

FAITH AND REASON

The Arab philosophers, of course, conceived of philosophy as a rational knowledge of the world, independent of theology or revelation. The theologians, for their part, were divided into different schools on the question of the possibility or validity of using philosophical concepts to explain revelation.[1]

6.1 The positions of the theologians

6.1.1 The Ḥanbalites

The followers of Ibn-Ḥanbal (see ch. 1), were fiercely attached to the idea that Sacred Scripture (the Qur'ân and the collections of Ḥadîth) is the sole authority for a Muslim. The rejected any attempt to interpret a verse of the Qur'ân in an allegorical sense or to use philosophy to explain the conditions of truth of the verse.

That explains why the Ḥanbalites attacked the philosophers and all other theological schools during the course of the ninth century.

Ḥanbalism was later developed by Ibn-Taymiyya (d. 1328), who has had a great influence up to today, especially in the theory of an Islamic society.[2] On the one hand the ideas of Ibn-Taymiyya were taken up by `Abdalwahhâb in the Arabian peninsula in the eighteenth century. Ḥanbalite Wahhâbism is at the base of the present regime in Saudi Arabia, from where it spread throughout the Muslim world, especially in certain countries of Africa.

On the other hand, the Ḥanbalism of Ibn-Taymiyya influenced

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[1]For the history of these schools, cf. R. Caspar, *Traité de théologie musulmane, I. Histoire le la pensée religieuse musulmane*; L. Gardet & M.-M. Anawati, *Introduction à la théologie musulmane*, pp. 21-93; on faith and reason pp. 303-373.

[2]Cf. Henri Laoust, *Le Traité de droit public d'Ibn Taimiyya* (Beirut: Institut français de Damas, 1948) et *Les schismes dans l'Islam, introduction à une étude de la religion musulmane* (Paris: Payot, 1965).

the modern reformism of al-Afghânî (d. 1897), of Muhammad `Abduh (m. 1905) and Rashîd Ridâ (d. 1935).[3] These were university teachers without great influence on society. Yet, throwing aside decadent Ash`arite theology, they advocated a pragmatic accommodation to modern society.

The same line of thought was continued by the Pakistani Abû-l-`Alâ Maudûdî (d 1979), who developed the political dimension of Islam in a more radical way.[4]

In the twentieth century these writers influence the radical movement of Muslim Brothers and the thought of the most influential of its members, Sayyid Quṭb.[5] Neo-Ḥanbalism is still very important in the context of contemporary radical Islam.[6]

6.1.2 The Mu`tazilites

The Mu`tazilites were not of one uniform school, but one of their common characteristics was their free use of philosophical concepts and methods.

Besides, they interpreted the Qur'ân allegorically to make it agree with their rational positions deriving from philosophy. For example, they resorted to allegorical interpretations to avoid all anthropomorphisms and to reduce all the descriptions or names of God to a unity which did not admit of any real distinction between the attributes of God. Insisting also on the justice of God, they interpreted allegorically every verse that implied a divine determination of the events of this world.

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[3]Cf. Jacques Jomier, *Le commentaire coranique du Manâr* and *Introduction à l'Islam actuel*.

[4]Cf. Abû-l-`Alâ Maudûdî, *Fundamental principles of Islamic political theory, Islamic law and constitution, Political theory of Islam*, and *Towards understanding Islam*.

[5]Cf. Olivier Carré, *Mystique et politique, lecture révolutionnaire du Coran par Sayyid Qutb, Frère Musulman radical*.

[6]Cf. J. Kenny, "The sources of radical movements in Islam."

6.1.3 The Ash`arites

Al-Ash`arî broke from the Mu`tazilites because they did not respect the literal sense of the Qur'ân, and did not offer satisfactory explanations to answer the difficulties raised by their positions. For example, in their absolute insistence on the justice of God and the free will of man they could not provide for God's omnipotence and goodness, particularly his ability or wish to pardon.

Al-Ash`arî then became a partisan of the literal interpretation of the Qur'ân, except in certain cases where this would result in impossibilities. But to explain and support his positions, al-Ash`arî did not hesitate to use all the philosophical tools at his disposal.

We can see how each of these three schools were opposed to the philosophers and to each of the other schools. Besides, opposition was not limited to universities, but it also spilt over into the streets of Baghdad and created an unstable political situation.

6.2 The search for truth by direct experience

Some Muslims found satisfaction neither in the literal interpretation of the Qur'ân, nor in the search for truth by rational methods, such as the study of law or theology or philosophy.

6.2.1 Shî`ites

Shî`ites, partisans of `Alî, considered him the first legitimate caliph by right of appointment by Muḥammad and because he was his closest relative. A Shî`ite imâm has believed to have authority directly from God. He partakes of the *`iṣma* (infallibility and impeccability) of the prophet.

Shî`ites see in the Qur'ân not only ambiguities which must be interpreted, but throughout, many hidden meanings. Each verse has an outward meaning (*ẓâhir*), which is the literal sense, and

an inner meaning (*bâṭin*), which is allegoric or esoteric. This meaning cannot be discovered by study or reason, but only by a special enlightenment accorded to the imâm, who in his turn teaches his followers.

Shî`ism then is a system somewhat like Gnosticism, based on a wisdom coming down from on high, which certain privileged people benefit from who must then direct others.

We should note that al-Fârâbî and Ibn-Sînâ are much appreciated by Shî`ite rulers today, because these philosophers supported a hierarchical organization of society, where the superiors, who are the wise, enlighten the inferiors.

6.2.2 The Ṣûfîs

Ṣufism is a movement seeking a personal experience of God apart from the rituals prescribed in the *Sharî`a*.[7]

As a mystical movement, Ṣûfism has emphasized the presence and immanence of God, to the point of entering into conflict with the religious authorities. Ṣûfîs finally found acceptance in Muslim society by a compromise worked out principally by al-Ghazâlî: 1) They could speak of the love of God or friendship with him (this is not a theme of the Qur'ân), but they could not say that God dwells (*ḥulûl*) in the believer. 2) They could follow the way (*ṭarîqa*) and practices of Ṣûfism to arrive at *ḥaqîqa* (the Truth, Reality = God) by drawing near to him, not by union, but they could not dispense themselves from the prescriptions of *Sharî`a*, which are never abandoned at a superior stage. 3) By their mystical prayer they may well experience the wonders of the Lord, but they must not call them miracles in the proper sense, because a miracle (*mu`jiza*), by definition, is a proof of prophecy, which has been terminated with Muḥammad.

Ṣûfism presents many facts and questions which need to be

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[7]Cf. G.-C. Anawati et Louis Gardet, *Mystique musulmane*; Robert Caspar, *Cours de mystique musulmane*.

analyzed and integrated into Muslim philosophy and especially Muslim theology. But in fact, apart from efforts to safeguard orthodoxy, very little theological reflection has been made on Ṣûfism, and Kalâm has borrowed nothing from it.

The principal observation that should be made here, in a discussion of philosophy, is that Ṣûfîs, like Shî`ites, have sought the truth by way of direct experience or divine enlightenment. But, being a movement within Sunnism, Ṣûfism is distinct from Shî`ism by the fact that it is open to every Muslim without exception. The Ṣûfic democratization of mystical experience was the Sunnite response to Shî`ism.

Another important observation is that Ṣûfic brotherhoods are still in conflict with neo-Ḥanbalite movements, such as Wahhâbism of Saudi Arabia and the followers of Sayyid Quṭb in Egypt. In Africa Quṭb's disciples regard Ṣûfîs as syncretists who corrupt the purity of Islam. In fact, Ṣûfîs are in some way the guardians of African tradition against an Arabization of culture.

6.3 Al-Ghazâlî and rational knowledge

As we have seen in Chapter 1, al-Ghazâlî's attacks were the principal factor in the demise of philosophy in the Muslim world. What were his views on rational knowledge in general which help to explain this attitude?

On this subject al-Ghazâlî composed: 1) *Tahâfut al-falâsifa* in 1095 before his crisis and retreat from teaching. In this book he attacked twenty philosophical theses which he qualifies as heretical (*bid`a* = innovation) or, more seriously, as disbelief (*kufr*). During his retreat he wrote 2) *Iḥyâ' `ulûm ad-dîn* (Revivification of the sciences of religion), a large work or *summa*, of which Book 1, chapters 1-7 are relevant here. In the same period he wrote 3) *Ayyuhâ l-walad* (O son!) to instruct a Ṣûfî novice. After resuming teaching he wrote 4) his autobiography, *al-Munqidh min aḍ-ḍalâl*, which summarizes what he wrote in his preceding works. Let us look at the second

and third of these works.

6.3.1 The Iḥyâ'

In the *Iḥyâ'*, Book 1, ch. 2, al-Ghazâlî speaks of the different kinds of sciences. What exactly did science mean in the philosophical context of his time? Science (in Arabic *al-ʿilm*, in Greek επιστημη) was a technical term for knowledge of a determined subject, an attribute which is the property of that subject (having the same extension) and the cause of that attribute, which is to be found in the nature (the form or matter) of the subject and also in external final and efficient causes. Such knowledge is demonstrative, because it is knowledge of the fact and the proper reason for the fact. Demonstration, in Aristotelian tradition, is not a means of discovery, but an analysis of knowledge already gained from experience and research.

Taking a lawyer's approach, al-Ghazâlî refers to five legal categories to judge the value of different sciences. These are: 1) obligatory, 2) recommended, 3) permitted, 4) discouraged, and 5) forbidden.

Al-Ghazâlî then says that each Muslim is obliged to know the practical aspects of his religion, that is: 1) the *Shahâda* (*Lâ ilâha illâ llâh, Muḥammadun rasûl Allâh*) without proofs or detailed explanations, 2) the rituals that everyone is obliged to carry out, and 3) what is forbidden to Muslims.

He then distinguishes four types of theoretical sciences: 1) mathematics (geometry and arithmetic), which is allowed for everyone and obligatory for some (such as the accountants of a community), 2) logic, which for al-Ghazâlî has no reason for autonomous existence, but is an introductory part of Kalâm, 3) natural theology (like Book XII of the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle), which also has no right to an independent existence but should form part of Kalâm, and 4) the natural sciences. Al-Ghazâlî distinguishes the natural sciences into: false sciences (astrology and magic), useful sciences (medicine) and useless sciences

(such as detailed science of the world). He does not mention here his objection that the natural sciences suppose the principle of natural causality, which goes against his Ash`arite theology.

The only human sciences he allows are mathematics and medicine–which in practice are indispensable.

As for religious sciences, al-Ghazâlî distinguished many branches, but emphasized the greater importance of knowledge infused by God, such as experienced by the Ṣûfîs. He concludes chapter 3 by saying: "The science that the Qur'ân brings is all science."

6.3.2 Ayyuhâ l-walad

This little work is an exhortation to a *sâlik*, a Ṣûfî novice who is setting out on the road (*ṭariqa*, another word for Ṣûfism). In one passage of this work he says:

What do you gain by mastering Kalâm, the different opinions of Law, medicine, genealogies, poetry, astronomy, prosody, grammar and declensions, except that you waste your time and neglect God?

Al-Ghazâlî continues to emphasize that what is important is action and not knowledge. Action gives a person a taste (*dhawq*) of reality (*al-ḥaqq*, or the "Truth") which can be gained only by experience and not be studying.

The *sâlik* should know only four things: 1) correct belief (= the *Shahâda*), 2) good advice, and for that he needs a spiritual director (*shaykh murshid*), 3) how to be reconciled with those who criticize him, and 4) the *Sharî`a* sufficiently enough to follow the commandments of God.

The result of this mistrust of science has been pointed out in Chapter 1.

6.4 The Philosophers

6.4.1 Al-Kindî

Al-Kindî accepted all the dogmas of Islamic faith and did not try to challenge them by his philosophy. For him, philosophy is inferior to prophetic revelation, because prophecy comes suddenly, without any effort or reasoning. No philosopher could produce anything equal to the Qur'ânic verses, with their wisdom and succinct and clear expression.[8]

Nevertheless, he complains bitterly of his religious opponents, accusing them of pride:

> They defend their false thrones which they built without merit to gain authority and to make a business out of religion. But they are the enemies of religion, because anyone who makes a business out of something is selling that thing, and anyone who sells something does not own it any more. So anyone who makes business out of religion has no religion, and should rightly be deprived of [the offices] of religion for having opposed the desire to know the truth of things and for calling this desire disbelief.[9]

6.4.2 Muḥammad ar-Râzî

As we have seen in chapter 5, for Muḥammad ar-Râzî, all men are equally endowed with reason, and can discover all truth by means of philosophy. Prophecy does not exist. In fact, it was a Satan that came to Muḥammad claiming to be an angel and offering him a prophetic mission, so as to create division among people and incite them to religious war.[10] Besides, the lives of the prophets were not exemplary, and what they claim as

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[8] *Risâla fî kamiyya kutub Arisṭûṭâlîs*, pp. 372-376.

[9] *Kitâb al-falsafa al-ûlâ*, pp. 34-35.

[10] *Al-`ilm al-ilâhî*, 5; cf. Aḥmad ibn-`Abdallâh al-Kirmânî, *al-Aqwâl adh-dhahabiyya*; Abû-Ḥâtim ar-Râzî, *al-Munâẓarât*.

miracles are not miracles at all.[11]

> It is more fitting for the wisdom of a wise God and the mercy of a merciful God to inspire all his servants with the knowledge of what is helpful or harmful in their present life and for the life to come. He should not prefer some to others; otherwise there will be conflict and dissent and they will perish. Thus he should not make some men imâms over others; otherwise each sect will believe its own imâm and treat other imâms as liars and will fight the members of other sects with the sword, spreading calamity, while people perish from warfare and contention. Many people have perished in this way, as we can see.[12]

Then ar-Râzî compares Muḥammad, the Biblical prophets, Mani and Zoroaster to show that they do not agree on any truth, and therefore they must all be false.[13]

6.4.3 Ibn-Masarra

Ibn-Masarra opens his *Risâla al-i`tibâr* with the question whether prophecy is the only way of knowledge. He goes on to explain that God gave us an intellect to know him as he knows himself. We know him through the world, which is like a book. We also know him through the prophets; they not only tell of God's highest attributes, but also point to earthly signs of God. Prophesy starts at God's throne and goes down, whereas philosophy starts from the earth and goes up. While philosophy confirms the truth of prophecy, prophecy cannot be understood without philosophy.[14] Nevertheless, philosophers sometimes make mistakes in trying to describe the order of creation under

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[11]Cf. Ismâ`îl al-Majdû`, in the preface to *al-Munâẓarât*.

[12]Abû-Ḥâtim ar-Râzî, *Munâẓarât*.

[13]*Ibid.*

[14]Pp. 61-69, 72.

God. Prophets in such cases correct them.[15]

6.4.4 Al-Fârâbî

At the end of his *Iḥṣâ' al-`ulûm*,[16] al-Fârâbî raises the question of philosophical interpretations that could be given to religious dogmas. First of all there are the theologians (the Ḥanbalites) who allow no possibility of interpretation, because the content of faith is too elevated to be scrutinized by human reason.

There are others who, when they meet something in revelation that seems contrary to reason or sense experience, do not contradict the sacred text, but give it an interpretation which is in accord with reason; but when they cannot reconcile the two, they refrain from contradicting revelation and take refuge, like the first group, in the truth of revelation which, in such a case, escapes the power of man to understand.

On the other hand, there are those who refuse to accept a dogma which contradicts reason. It happens that because of their boldness they are expelled from their religious community. For fear of that, others do not dare to express their convictions. Finally, al-Fârâbî complains of fanatics who do not hesitate to use any means to persecute dissidents.

6.4.5 Miskawayh

For Miskawayh philosophy and prophecy agree on the same truths, but philosophical knowledge begins from below and rises upwards, whereas prophecy follows the opposite direction. Nevertheless, Miskawayh observes, the prophet descends to material language, a means less apt to express the truth.[17]

6.4.6 Ibn-Sînâ

The position of Ibn-Sînâ on faith and reason depends on his

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[15]Pp. 69-70.

[16]Pp. 132 ff.

[17]*Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, p. 128.

conception of the origin of knowledge, which is that the Agent Intellect infuses all intellectual knowledge, sometimes directly, sometimes passing through sense data or reasoning. Thus intellectual knowledge does not differ essentially from prophecy; both are received from on high. The only difference is that prophecy is always received directly. The result is as Ibn-Sînâ expresses in *al-`Ilm al-ladunî*:

> Knowledge is of two kinds: One is revealed; the other is rational. Most rational sciences are revealed to one who has a mystical knowledge of them; most revealed sciences are intelligible to one who has a scientific knowledge of them.[18]

In *ar-Risâla al-aḥḍawiyya fi l-ma`âd* Ibn-Sînâ est is more explicit. Revelation *(ash-shar`)* should use metaphoric language, since it is aimed at the masses who would not understand scientific language, as can be seen in the question of God's unity *(tawḥîd)*.[19] "If that is true in the case of *tawḥîd*, how is it not also true for the other articles of faith?"[20] Although he admits that certain Qur'ân verses should be taken literally,[21] he concludes:

> All we have said is to help the person who wants to be among the elite, and not the common people, since the exterior meaning of what is revealed *(ash-sharâ'i`)* has no probative value in such questions.[22]

The conclusion of the *Risâla fi aqsâm al-`ulûm al-`aqliyya* is that there is nothing in all the branches of science or philosophy *(al-ḥikma)* that is opposed to revelation.[23]

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[18]P. 191.

[19]Pp. 43-63.

[20]P. 49.

[21]Pp. 47, 51-53.

[22]P. 63.

[23]P. 94.

6.4.7 Ibn-Gabirol

Although he adopts an essentially Plotinian universe, Ibn-Gabirol corrects this by his Jewish faith in creation in time of the Intellect, the universal soul, universal matter, and all particular things. He only retains the Will or Logos as having no beginning in time. The Platonic *Nous*, which became the Agent Intellect of other philosophers, perhaps seemed to accord with the Biblical idea of Wisdom. Certainly the Christian idea of the Logos was far from the intention of Ibn-Gabirol.

6.4.8 Ibn-Ṭufayl

When Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân hears from Asâl an exposition of Islamic faith, the two see the perfect agreement between revelation received *(al-manqûl)* and what comes from reason *(al-ma`qûl)*.[24]

But Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân has two objections against Islamic revelation. The first is the anthropomorphism of the Qur'ânic descriptions of God. The other is the permission that Sharî`a gives to indulge in the pleasures of this world, which turn one from the reality of God. Asâl has no answer to these objections.[25] Then Ḥayy ibn-Yaqẓân is moved to such pity for the people who follow such a law that he persuades Asâl to take him to them so that he can preach the truth to them. He does so, but the best of those people are so hard and dull in intelligence that they reject the message of Ḥayy ibn-Yaqzân.[26]

6.4.9 Ibn-Rushd

In the *Tahâfut*

Ibn-Rushd wrote his *Tahâfut at-Tahâfut* towards 1180, answering point by point the attacks of al-Ghazâlî's *Tahâfut al-*

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[24]P. 226.

[25]Pp. 227-228.

[26]Pp. 229-233.

falâsifa. Ibn-Rushd forbids speaking of philosophical subtleties to the public, and criticizes al-Ghazâlî for creating a public debate on questions which only specialists should talk about.[27]

Revelation is silent on certain subjects, allowing reason or demonstration to investigate them.[28] But philosophy has its limits, and the philosophers should not discuss the principles of revelation *(mabâdi' ash-shar')*. Even specialists should begin by accepting revelation and undergoing training in the virtues which it teaches. Later they can move on to philosophical investigation[29]

Every prophet is a wise man *(ḥakîm)*, but the contrary is not true.[30] Prophecy is a vision of what will happen by the nature of things.[31]

In *Faṣl al-maqâl*

At the same time, Ibn-Rushd wrote *Faṣl al-maqâl*, a legal work to defend the legitimacy and necessity of philosophy. In the first chapter of this work Ibn-Rushd states not only the legitimacy of philosophy, but even more strongly the obligation to study it, at least for some people. Various Qur'ân verses appeal to reflection and meditation on the whole of creation,[32] but the most perfect rational reflection is demonstrative knowledge. One is therefore obliged to know logic, which shows how to formulate a correct demonstration, as well as the rest of philosophy. One must also use the writings of the ancients, even if they are not Muslims, because one cannot discover all science by oneself.

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[27] *Tahâfut*, II, pp. 550-553, 558, 624-625, 646-649, 735.

[28] II, p. 651.

[29] II, pp. 791-792, 866-869.

[30] II, p. 868.

[31] II, p. 798.

[32] Qur'ân 59:1 etc.

Ibn-Rushd then distinguishes different kinds of people according to the level of their intelligence: 1) those who can follow a demonstration and arrive at certitude, 2) those who can reason, but only with probable arguments which lead only to opinion, and finally 3) those who cannot analyze the intelligible complexity of things, but must be content with rhetorical persuasion, which presents truth (or falsehood) by sensible images. Later Ibn-Rushd identifies these categories with: 1) the philosophers, 2) the Ash`arite and Mu`tazilite theologians, and 3) most ordinary Muslims.

It is philosophers who are capable of grasping truth in the most perfect way and it is their obligation to do so. Theologians and jurists must not impede them.

Ibn-Rushd goes on to show that philosophy and revelation are in agreement. Latin Averroists were accused of teaching "the double truth": that what is true in philosophy can be false in theology, and vice versa. But chapter 2 of *Faṣl al-maqâl* opens with the declaration that philosophical demonstrations cannot contradict Holy Scripture, because "truth is not opposed to truth, but agrees with it and bears witness to it."

Immediately afterwards, Ibn-Rushd says that in case of apparent conflict, Holy Scripture should be interpreted in an allegorical sense. He defends the legitimacy of allegorical interpretation by the example of jurists who use it all the time when one verse is in conflict. If they can do this at the level of dialectical thought, philosophers have all the more right to use allegorical interpretation to make a verse agree with demonstrated truth. It is because the Qur'ân is written in an imaginative form that it can be interpreted in different ways, but philosophy presents the truth in an intelligible and immovable way. Yet Ibn-Rushd recognizes why ordinary people, who cannot understand a demonstration, are led to accept a literal interpretation; one should not disturb their faith, challenging this interpretation by publicizing the teachings of philosophy.

In any case, the consensus (*ijmâ`*) of Muslims in interpreting

Holy Scripture should be respected. *Ijmâ`* is in fact the foundation of Muslim faith, because it is *ijmâ`* that accepts the Qur'ân or Ḥadîth as revelation. But, says Ibn-Rushd, if Muslim philosophers do not agree with a position, one cannot talk of a Muslim consensus. Al-Ghazâlî was wrong to accuse the philosophers of heresy (*bid`a*) or, more seriously, of disbelief (*kufr*), when there is no consensus. He was also wrong to divulge all his opinions in public, thus disturbing the faith of simple people.

Ibn-Rushd then answers the accusations of *kufr* (disbelief) that al-Ghazâlî made against certain particular positions, such as: 1) God's knowledge of particulars; Ibn-Rushd says yes, God knows them, but because his knowledge is the cause of their existence and not the effect, as is the case with human knowledge. 2) On the duration of the world, Ibn-Rushd says that it makes no difference if one says that the world had no beginning if one admits that it depends on God for its existence. Besides, the Qur'ân nowhere explicitly says that the world had a beginning, and one can even quote verses that lead one to think that the world was created from pre-existent matter. 3) Speaking of the future life and the accusation of the philosophers' denial of the resurrection of the body, Ibn-Rushd merely says that this is still a debatable question and that a diversity of opinions is legitimate.[33]

Finally, in chapter 3 Ibn-Rushd, excuses himself for having spoken of these subjects in a public work. He was forced to do so because of the public attacks made by al-Ghazâlî (then dead) which continue to be repeated by fundamentalist jurists and theologians.

In *al-Kashf `an manâhij al-adilla*

In this other important work Ibn-Rushd gives details about when one must not take the Qur'ân literally. Apart from the cases

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[33]Cf. chapter 4.4.

where the literal sense is clear and poses no problems, there are four possible cases when the text is symbolic *(mithâl)* of another truth:

(1) Where it is not evident that the text is symbolic and what it symbolizes is not evident–then the interpretation *(ta'wîl)* is reserved to specialists *(râsikhûn)*.

(2) Where both are evident–then everyone should accept the symbolic sense.

(3) Where it is evident that the text is symbolic, but what it symbolizes is not evident–then the interpretation is reserved to specialists who, when asked by others, must give explanations adapted to their understanding.

(4) Where it is not evident that the text is symbolic, but if it is pointed out that it is, what it symbolizes is evident–here the learned should not disturb the faith of simple people by declaring that these texts are symbolic. Ibn-Rushd accuses the Mu`tazilites and the Ash`arites, al-Ghazâlî in particular, for having made and publicized bold interpretations that have created divisions among Muslims.[34]

6.10 Moshe ben Maimon

Moshe ben Maimon considered his own teachings likely to be misunderstood and found shocking by the masses. He therefore urged his auditors not to divulge his teachings.[35] A fundamental principal is that anthropomorphic Scripture texts should not be taken literally. He devotes the whole first part of *Dalâ'il al-ḥâ'irîn* to illustrate this principle. Elsewhere he devotes much space to Scriptural exegesis, attempting to show that what he proposes as philosophical truth agrees with Scripture.

He admits that Scripture passages can be given different

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[34]Pp. 155-158.

[35]*Dalâ'il al-ḥâ'irîn*, pp. 23-24, 76-85, 183, 377, 463.

interpretations *(ta'wîl)*, for instance to support creation from eternity. But, he says, there is no reason to do so, since there is no proof that the world always existed. Besides, creation in time accords with God's free choice of a certain people in a certain time, the raising up of certain prophets and the working of certain miracles through them, all through his free choice. Furthermore, temporal creation accords with the traditional teaching of the rabbis.

6.5 Thomas Aquinas

Against the Ḥanbalites and the Ash`arites who so exalt revelation that they give little or no value to reason, and against Muḥammad ar-Râzî who recognizes only human reason, Thomas agrees with the other Arab theologians and philosophers who recognize the autonomy of reason and of revelation. Each of them leads to areas of truth where the other cannot go, but they overlap when it comes to certain fundamental truths concerning God, man and creation in general.[36]

Can there be a conflict between the two? God has endowed us with reason by which we know certain truths so clearly that it is impossible to deny them. It is likewise illegitimate to deny the truths of faith, which are confirmed by divine authority. Thus anything that is contrary to the truths of reason or of revelation cannot come from God, but must come from wrong reasoning. The conclusions of such reasoning have no validity, but only the appearance of truth.[37]

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[36]*Contra gentiles*, I, nos. 4-6.

[37]*Ibid.*, I, nos. 7-8.

CONCLUSION

I have made only a general outline of a subject that merits a vast detailed study. One must admire these philosophers for having carried on, in spite of sometimes fierce opposition, research into deep questions that touch the basis of human life, society and religion – questions that have agitated the minds of every generation.

Despite the pretensions of some, like Ibn-Rushd, that they have come up with a perfect theory of the universe resting on solid demonstration, one sees that for the most part it was only dialectic – but a dialectic that is exceptionally valuable for a contemporary discussion of the same questions.

We can notice errors, prejudices and ingorance, but at the same time valuable clarifications of points and perennial contributions.

One can see throughout this book how I have made continual comparison with the thought of Thomas Aquinas and Moses Maimonides. They faced the same questions from alternate religious contexts and gave their own ingenious replies. But they did not do so without building upon the thought of these same philosophers who preceded them.

Without falling into a scepticism that relativizes the truth, we can also say that the pursuit of truth is an on-going project. To go onward one must always push one's roots more securely into the past. One does not arrive at a fixed summit of the truth, where one can throw away the ladder. That is why there is permanent value in the history of philosophy, particularly of the Arab philosophers.

May this book be a modest contribution to this task, and also a useful tool for those who wish to embark on such a study.

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Members

THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into the cultures of one's nation—and of other parts of the world by which they can be strengthened and enriched—in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of the societies built upon their relations one with another. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) is a group of scholars who share the above concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the promotion of human kind in our times.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

PROJECTS

A set of related research efforts is currently in process; some

were developed initially by the RVP and others now are being carried forward by it, either solely or conjointly.

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life.* Sets of focused and mutually coordinated continuing seminars in university centers, each preparing a volume as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by continent. This work focuses upon evolving a more adequate understanding of the person in society and looks to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

2. *Seminars on Culture and Contemporary Issues.* This series of 10 week crosscultural and interdisciplinary seminars is being coordinated by the RVP in Washington.

3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies, which have been underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987 in China, concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psycholo-gists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980 especially in the Americas.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in our society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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