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Richard C. Taylor
Marquette University, richard.taylor@marquette.edu

Philosophy

RICHARD C. TAYLOR

Although the original meaning of the Greek term 'philosophy' (*falsafa* in Arabic) is 'love of wisdom', philosophy encompasses a wide variety of methods and subjects, including the structure of reality, the character of human actions, the nature of the divine and much more. Philosophical method certainly includes human rational argumentative discourse and investigation (*al-naẓar*) by the use of intellect (*bi-l-ʿaql*) in the search for what is true or right in the realms of nature, metaphysics and ethics. If understood in this sense, philosophy – or something much like it, employing many of the methods found in philosophy – can be seen in Islam among the *mutakallimūn* or practitioners of *kalām* (Islamic argumentative theology) well before the advent of the *falāsifa*, or philosophers working in the framework of Platonic and Aristotelian thought. The Arabic term *kalām* has many senses, including speech, word, account and more, depending on context, including Divine Speech. Some later well-known philosophers of the classical rationalist period, such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā/Avicenna and Ibn Rushd/Averroes, commonly regarded *kalām* as unscientific dialectical argumentation in defence of basic tenets of the Islamic faith. However, some of the proponents of ʿilm al-kalām, the science of *kalām*, regarded themselves as engaged in expounding issues which today would commonly be considered within the purview of philosophy, even if 'the primary function of *kalām* – its end and its activity – is to rationalise the basic beliefs of the Muslims as they are given in the Koran and the Sunna and are present in the way these are read and understood by orthodox believers'.[1] To this extent it seems appropriate to call *kalām* a distinctly philosophical theology. From the advent in the Islamic milieu of *falsafa* as a widely recognised intellectual

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1 R. M. Frank, 'The science of *kalām*', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 2 (1992) p. 22. Also see Harry A. Wolfson, *The philosophy of the kalam* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1976); and the authoritative and comprehensive work of Josef van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra: eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam*, 6 vols. (Berlin and New York, 1991–7).

discipline in the third/ninth century, *kalām* and *falsafa* existed as parallel discourses on issues of physics, metaphysics and ethics. They involved distinct principles and analyses, with *kalām* having a place inside religious institutions such as schools and mosques, while *falsafa* was taught separately as a secular science espoused by Muslims, Christians, Jews and others outside the confines of their religious confessions. These disciplines certainly eyed each other with considerable suspicion, and at times with outright hostility. There were some instances of methodological conciliation and many others of conflict, as is clear in the philosophers and also in well-known theologians such as al-Ghazālī, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and al-Ījī. While the present chapter focuses for the most part on *falsafa*, some remarks on *kalām* are in order.

'Ilm al-kalām, or Islamic philosophical theology

The *mutakallimūn* are generally divided into two camps, the Mu'tazilites and the Ash'arīs, although reasoned theological disputes antedate these groupings. The major centres of *kalām* were Baṣra and Baghdad, although it was practised widely with great diversity of doctrine and reasoning. Mu'tazilism is traced to Wāṣil ibn 'Aṭā' (d. 131/748f.), who in the matter of grave violation of religious law is said to have separated himself (*i'tazala*) from the extreme positions of the Khārijite charge of *kufr* (unbelief), entailing ostracism from the Muslim community, and the Murji'ite view of the offender as remaining a believer within the community. The term may also denote a middle position in the dispute over 'Alī's succession as leader of the Muslim community. Mu'tazilites are often characterised as holding for rational criteria in theological issues, as is evident in the five principles found in 'Abd al-Jabbār (d. *c.* 415/ 1025): *tawḥīd* (divine unity and uniqueness); *'adl* (justice); *al-wa'd wa-l-wa'īd* (promise and threat, reward and punishment in the afterlife); *al-manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* (the intermediate position mentioned); and *al-amr bi-l-ma'rūf wal-nahy 'an al-munkar* (the commanding of good and prohibition of evil).[2] There is an insistence on the value and efficacy of human rationality present in all these issues. As Frank remarks, 'The earlier Mu'tazilite masters held that the mind's autonomous judgment, based on purely rational principles and axioms, is the sole arbiter of what must be or what may be true in theology

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2 For a translation of the 'Book of the five principles' by 'Abd al-Jabbār and a discussion of classical and modern Mu'tazilism see Richard C. Martin and Mark R. Woodward, with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from medieval school to modern symbol* (Oxford, 1997). Also see D. Gimaret, 'Mu'tazila', *EI2*, vol. VII, pp. 782–93, available at www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0822'.

and their theology is, in this and in other respects, rationalistic in the proper sense of the term.'[3] This is particularly evident in regard to divine justice, which Muʿtazilites famously held necessarily to entail a strong assertion of human free will for the sake of moral responsibility and justly deserved divine reward and punishment. There also followed from the negative theology of their conception of *tawḥīd* that the Qurʾān is created, not eternal, a doctrine that was a key point of contention during the infamous *miḥna* of third/ninth-century Baghdad. The basis for this teaching was their ontological atomism, which held that all created things are composed of atoms and accidents,[4] while God alone is eternal absolute unity without attributes distinct from his essence.[5]

Sophisticated opposition to this rationalist approach and the limitation of divine will and power it appears to entail was set forth vehemently by Abu 'l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, who was born in Baṣra in 260/873 and died in Baghdad in 324/935f. First a student of the Muʿtazilite Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī in Baṣra, al-Ashʿarī held for a more literal approach to the statements of the Qurʾān following the views of the Baghdad jurist Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 241/855) who was imprisoned during the *miḥna* for refusing to accept the created nature of the Qurʾān. While Ibn Ḥanbal rejected anthropomorphism, as did the Muʿtazilites, he famously refused to accept extensive allegorical interpretation of scripture, and instead asserted that divine attributes and other assertions about God must be accepted in their transcendent mystery *bi-lā-kayf*, that is, without asking precisely how they can characterise the Divine in a way acceptable to human reasoning. Al-Ashʿarī followed Ibn Ḥanbal in this and held the Qurʾān to be the uncreated speech of God, by whose will and action alone all things exist.[6] His doctrine of occasionalism, which ascribes all agency to God who acts without restriction on his will, even in the case of acts

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3 R. M. Frank, 'Elements in the development of the teaching of Ashʿari', *Le Muséon*, 104 (1991), p. 144; repr. in Dimitri Gutas (ed.), *Richard M. Frank: Early Islamic theology: The Muʿtazilites and al-Ashʿarī: Texts and studies on the development and history of kalām*, vol. II (Aldershot, 2005).

4 For brief accounts see M. Rashed, 'Natural philosophy', in P. Adamson and R. C. Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy* (Cambridge, 2005); and Jon McGinnis, 'Arabic and Islamic natural philosophy and natural science', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-natural/, first published 19 December 2006. A more comprehensive account is found in A. Dhanani, *The physical theory of kalām: Atoms, space, and void in Basrian Muʿtazili cosmology* (Leiden, 1994).

5 See Peter Adamson, 'al-Kindī and the Muʿtazila: Divine attributes, creation and freedom', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 13 (2003); and Catarina Bello, 'Muʿtazilites, al-Ashʿarī and Maimonides on divine attributes', *Veritas* (Porto Alegre), 52 (2007).

6 'One must grant, in brief, that between the traditionalist fundamentalism of ibn Ḥanbal [on the one hand] and the leading masters of the Muʿtazila on the other, there may be some third and it is, in fact, this third "intermediate way" to which the Ashʿarites lay claim': Frank, 'Elements in the development of the teaching of Ashʿari', p. 144.

attributed to human beings, was developed in response to the perceived limitations of divine will and power set forth by the Mu'tazilites. Espousing a form of theological voluntarism or divine command theory,[7] al-Ash'arī held that 'God determines our works and creates them as determined [and] belonging to us'[8] for 'God creates it as the motion of another' such that 'our acquisition (kasba-nā) is a creation by another'[9] (sc. God). That is, the actions of human beings are created in human beings as acquisitions from God, in whom all power for all actions, events and things solely resides. In this way divine justice is faithfully held and defended by the notion that 'He creates injustice for another, not for Himself, and is not thereby unjust Himself.'[10] These and related views provided foundations for the development of a flourishing Ash'arite school in Islam in which followed a long list of theologians, many knowledgeable and sophisticated in *falsafa*, such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) and al-Ījī (d. *c.* 756/1355).

Falsafa, or the foreign science of philosophy

Translations

Philosophy in the Islamic milieu followed upon the availability of texts of the Aristotelian and Platonic traditions. An enormous number of translations came from Greek or Greek via Syriac during the reign of the 'Abbāsid dynasty at the newly created city of Baghdad designed by order of the second caliph, al-Manṣūr (r. 136–58/754–75). His support of the intensive translation movement of more than 200 years brought to Muslims, Christians, Jews and other thinkers in Islamic lands the scientific and intellectual wealth of a Greek tradition stretching back to Galen, Aristotle, Plato, the Pre-Socratics and Homer.[11] While there is no easily identifiable single motivating factor for this movement, it has been suggested that a 'culture of translation' present in a 'Zoroastrian imperial ideology' was inherited, adopted and furthered by al-Manṣūr and his successors, who had strong familial and cultural links to Persian influences.[12] Most well known are the two

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7 On theological voluntarism see Mark Murphy, 'Theological voluntarism', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/voluntarism-theological/, first published 8 January 2008.

8 al-Ash'arī, *Kitāb al-luma'*, in Richard J. McCarthy, SJ (ed. and trans.), *The theology of al-Ash'arī* (Beirut, 1953), Arabic, p. 35, English, p. 74 (translation modified).

9 Ibid., Arabic, p. 44, English, p. 62.

10 Ibid,. Arabic, p. 44, English, p. 64.

11 See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture: The Graeco-Arabic translation movement in Baghdad and early 'Abbāsid society (2nd–4th/8th–10th centuries)* (New York and London, 1998).

12 Ibid., pp. 40–5.

distinct early translation movements at Baghdad in both of which Christians played key roles: the movement associated with the circle of al-Kindī (d. 252/866) – though some of these translations preceded al-Kindī – and the movement initiated by the famous Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq al-ʿIbādī, a Christian Arab.[13]

Works concerning issues of metaphysics, Platonic and Aristotelian, are strongly represented in the translations associated with al-Kindī's circle. These include Aristotle's *Metaphysics* by Usṭāth (Eustathios) and the *Meteorology, On the heavens*, as well as works of zoology by Ibn Baṭrīq, who is mentioned in the *Fihrist* of Ibn al-Nadīm[14] as having been commissioned to translate by al-Manṣūr. A much modified version of the *Parva naturalia* bears internal resemblance to these, as does a treatise on the *De anima* probably by Ibn Baṭrīq, who also translated the *Timaeus* of Plato, which in the Neoplatonic tradition was read as an important work of metaphysics. One of the most important and influential translations of this period consisted of thoughtfully selected texts on Soul, Intellect, the One and more from *Enneads* IV–VI by Plotinus in three collections constituting the *Plotiniana Arabica*: the *Theology of Aristotle*; a *Treatise on divine science* falsely attributed to al-Fārābī; and a group of *dicta* attributed to the 'Greek Sage'. Other works of Neoplatonism such as the *Introduction to arithmetic* by Nicomachus and propositions from the *Elements of theology* by Proclus also display the common characteristics of this group: foreign terms, transliterations, phraseology from Greek, Persian or Syriac, neologisms and abstract nouns such as *māhiyya* (which became 'quiddity' in later medieval Latin translation) and more.[15] The preface of the largest portion of *Plotiniana Arabica*, the *Theology of Aristotle*,[16] mentions the Syrian Christian Ibn Nāʿima al-Ḥimṣī as translator and describes this work as an exposition by Porphyry (the original editor of the Greek *Enneads*) edited by al-Kindī for Aḥmad ibn al-Muʿtaṣim, son of the caliph al-Muʿtaṣim (r. 218–27/833–42). There the work is also characterised as 'the

13 On the importance of Christians in the development of intellectual culture in Islam with particular reference to philosophy see Sidney H. Griffith, 'Christian philosophy in Baghdad and beyond: A major partner in the development of classical Islamic intellectual culture', in *The church in the shadow of the mosque: Christians and Muslims in the world of Islam* (Princeton and Oxford, 2008).

14 This catalogue contains a wealth of information on translations. See Ibn al-Nadīm, *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. G. Flügel, 2 vols. (Leipzig, 1871–2); also in *Kitāb al-fihrist*, ed. Rida Tajaddud (Tehran, 1971); trans. Bayard Dodge as *The Fihrist of al-Nadim*, 2 vols. (New York, 1970).

15 See Gerhard Endress, 'The circle of al-Kindī: Early Arabic translations from the Greek and the rise of Islamic philosophy', in Gerhard Endress and Remke Kruk (eds.), *The ancient tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism* (Leiden, 1997), esp. pp. 58–62.

16 See Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus: A philosophical study of the 'Theology of Aristotle'* (London, 2002).

totality of our philosophy' in accord with what has already been spelled out in the *Metaphysics*.[17] More than a mere translation, this work contains significant omissions, interpolations and also translations of an Aristotelian flavour that produced a deliberately crafted hybrid metaphysics in which the Neoplatonic One beyond being and naming is restyled in Aristotelian fashion as being and actuality, albeit now understood in a thoroughly non-Aristotelian way as pure being and actuality without the delimitations of form. This philosophical transformation gave rise to an early form of the distinction of essence and existence in medieval philosophy and was reflected in chapter 8 of another work of the circle of al-Kindī, the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī al-khayr al-maḥḍ* (Exposition on the pure good) (which powerfully influenced metaphysical thought in the Latin West under the title *Liber de causis* (Book of causes)).[18] In this work the First Cause is said to be *anniyya faqaṭ* ('only being', *esse tantum*), while all created things are form and being.[19] This hybrid metaphysics also set forth an influential account of divine analogical predication which negated any comprehensive natural knowledge of God and set out a negative theology by denying of God the names of created things. At the same time it permitted affirmative predication of attributes with the proviso that they be understood in a higher, more transcendent way in God, the cause of all things. The Plotinian doctrine of soul as both universal and transcendent was also harmonised with the Aristotelian hylomorphic doctrine to some degree by the translator/adaptor in a way that preserved the transcendent origin and nature of the individual rational soul while retaining the Aristotelian view of it as form, actuality and perfection in relation to the body.[20] The *Theology* also contains Plotinus' famous account of the soul's mystical ascent to the One, an ascent in which the soul '*is able to recognize the glory, light and splendour of the intellect and to recognize the power of that thing which is above the intellect*, being the light of lights, the beauty of all beauty and the splendour of all splendour'.[21] The

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17 'Jumlata falsafati-nā': *Plotinus apud Arabes*, ed. A. Badawi (Cairo, 1947), p. 6; English trans. of most of the *Plotiniana Arabica* by G. Lewis in *Plotini opera*, vol. II: *Enneades IV–V*, ed. P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer (Paris and Brussels, 1959).

18 See Cristina D'Ancona and Richard C. Taylor, 'Le *Liber de causis*', in Richard Goulet *et al.* (eds.), *Dictionnaire de philosophes antiques: Supplément* (Paris, 2003).

19 See Richard C. Taylor, 'Aquinas, the *Plotiniana Arabica*, and the metaphysics of being and actuality', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 59 (1998).

20 See the detailed account of this in Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, pp. 49–68.

21 See *Plotinus apud Arabes*, p. 56; English trans., *Plotini opera*, p. 375 (translation slightly modified). In his translation Lewis uses italics to indicate corresponding Greek text and normal script to indicate additions and interpolations not found in the original Greek. On 'the splendour of all splendour' see C. Bucur and B. G. Bucur, '"The place of splendor and light": Observations on the paraphrasing of *Enn* 4.8.1 in the *Theology of Aristotle*', *Le Muséon*, 119 (2006).

much-read *Plotiniana Arabica*, and these views in particular, exercised a significant influence on later philosophical thinkers.[22]

A more sophisticated and enduring tradition of translation was initiated by the Nestorian Christian Ḥunayn ibn Isḥāq al-ʿIbādī (d. 260/873), who was expelled from medical studies by Yūḥannā ibn Māsawayh only to reappear a few years later reciting Homer in Greek.[23] His deep interest in medicine coincided with strong demand for translations of medical works. He is said to have translated over 100 works by Galen as well as works by Hippocrates and the pharmaceutical *Material medica* by Dioscorides. Although learned in Syriac, Greek and Arabic, Ḥunayn himself often translated from Greek into Syriac, with others of his group translating from Syriac into Arabic. Working with his son, Isḥāq, and many others, Ḥunayn followed a much more sophisticated understanding and scientific methodology. Translations by this group are much more precise, especially in contrast to the paraphrasing and modifying tendencies found in works studied in the circle of al-Kindī. They made a deliberate effort to form a technical vocabulary for science and philosophy in Arabic, and at the same time to capture the sense of the texts without a slavish literalness following the original. Both a prime motivation for this and also its value to the philosophical tradition in Arabic are aptly described by Dimitri Gutas:

> The high level of translation technique and philological accuracy achieved by Hunayn, his associates, and other translators early in the fourth/tenth century was due to the incentive provided by the munificence of their sponsors, a munificence which in turn was due to the prestige that Baghdadi society attached to the translated works and the knowledge of their contents. Better long-term investment was perhaps never made, for the result was spectacular for the Arabic language and Arabic letters. The translators developed an Arabic vocabulary and style for scientific discourse that remained standard well into the present century.[24]

They also produced translations of a much wider variety, among them summaries or complete translations of works such as the *Timaeus*, *Sophist*, *Politics* and *Laws* by Plato and most of the *Organon* as well as the *Rhetoric*, *Physics*, *On generation and corruption*, *On the soul*, *Metaphysics*, *Nicomachean ethics* and *Magna moralia* of Aristotle. Ḥunayn himself is said to have provided

22 See Peter Adamson, 'The *Theology* of Aristotle', section 5, in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at //plato.stanford.edu/entries/theology-aristotle/, first published 5 June 2008.

23 See G. Strohmaier, 'Homer in Bagdad', *Byzantinoslavica*, 41 (1980); G. Strohmaier, 'Ḥunayn b. Isḥāķ al-ʿIbādī,' *EI2*, vol. III, 578–9, available at www.brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_COM-0300, Marquette University, 27 February 2009.

24 Gutas, *Greek thought, Arabic culture*, p. 141.

an explanatory account of the *Republic* of Plato. Isḥāq translated the *De anima* and the *Paraphrase* of it by Themistius and also worked with the Sabian Thābit ibn Qurra from Ḥarrān, where Neopythagorean interest in astrology and mathematics was strong. Thābit commented on Aristotle's *Physics*, and corrected Isḥāq's version of the *Elements of Euclid* and the *Almagest* of Ptolemy. Many other translators were active in this period, among them: Qusṭā ibn Lūqā, a Christian and expert in medicine who translated works of Galen and Hippocrates as well as the *Metaphysics* of Theophrastus, the *Mechanica* of Hero, the *Arithmetica* of Diophantus, and a *Placita philosophorum* (*Opinions of the philosophers*) and also works of astronomy, and who was probably involved in translations of Aristotle's *Physics* and works of Alexander of Aphrodisias and John Philoponus; and Abū 'Uthmān al-Dimashqī, a Muslim who translated works of medicine and mathematics as well as Aristotle's *Topics*, Porphyry's *Isagoge* and works by Alexander. Other translations of texts of Alexander, Porphyry, Proclus, Themistius, Nemesius and others were also made available in this period when works might be translated twice or more. This tradition of translation continued at Baghdad well into the fourth/tenth century, when al-Fārābī set out the philosophical foundations for the classical rationalist tradition. New translations, revisions of earlier versions and commentaries and explications of Greek philosophy abounded in a continuation of cooperation of philosophers and translators to bring this secular learning to prominence alongside the ongoing development of religious thought in their diverse Abrahamic traditions. Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (d. 328/940) led a second wave of translations from Syriac, rendering Aristotle's account of Divinity in book 12 of the *Metaphysics* together with a commentary by Alexander, in addition to translations of Aristotle's *Posterior analytics*, *Meteorology*, *On sense*, *Poetics* and *On the heavens*. He is also credited with being the teacher of the philosopher al-Fārābī. The Christian logician Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974), a student of al-Fārābī, engaged in philosophical and theological debates and also was involved in the translations of Aristotle's *Categories*, *Topics*, *Sophistics*, *Physics*, *On the soul*, *Metaphysics* and *Poetics*, as well as the *Metaphysics* of Theophrastus and commentaries on Aristotle from the Greek tradition.[25] As the era of translation was coming to an end, Ibn

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25 Many of the commentaries made available were of works from the dominant Neoplatonic tradition. For details see Cristina D'Ancona, 'Greek into Arabic: Neoplatonism in translation', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*; Cristina D'Ancona, 'Greek sources in Arabic and Islamic philosophy', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/arabic-islamic-greek/, first published 23 February 2009.

al-Khammār (d. 408/1017) and Ibn Zurʿa (d. 399/1008) translated works of Aristotle including *On the generation of animals*, *History of animals* and *Meteorology*. However, scientific achievements advancing beyond translated sources were well under way, as was the formation of new philosophical syntheses which developed into philosophical approaches native to the Islamic milieu. With the conclusion of the translation movement the cultural assimilation of Greek philosophical thought begun in earnest with al-Kindī, furthered by al-Fārābī and the Baghdad Aristotelians, as well as the Humanists of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī's circle, came to fruition in the brilliant mind of Avicenna, who crafted a genuinely new philosophical account that proved to be profoundly influential among many later philosophers and *mutakallimūn*.

al-Kindī (d. 252/866)

Known as 'the philosopher of the Arabs', al-Kindī played the roles of philosopher, adaptor, text editor, organiser and leader for a group of translators and thinkers versed in the philosophical works of Aristotle and at the same time much attached to the philosophical teachings of the Neoplatonic tradition. With the support of members of the caliphal family, al-Kindī was the first major philosopher of the Arabic tradition to promulgate the ideas of the Greek tradition in a concerted effort to establish a firm place in the Islamic milieu for the secular and foreign science of philosophy. For nearly thirty years of al-Kindī's adult life the *miḥna*, or imposition of religious views by al-Maʾmūn and his successors, was in effect, with its distinctive insistence upon the created nature of the Qurʾān, a doctrine characteristic of Muʿtazilite teachings whose position on divine attributes may be consonant with that espoused by al-Kindī on the basis of philosophical argumentation from the Neoplatonic tradition. Author of perhaps as many as 250 works, al-Kindī wrote on cosmology, mathematics, optics, music and medicine, as well as metaphysics, philosophical psychology and ethics. All but a small selection of his works are lost, though what remains extant provides valuable information on his philosophical thought.

Perhaps the most valuable of the surviving works of al-Kindī is a portion of his *On first philosophy* in which we find him both advocating insistently for the study of Greek philosophy in his day as a sound and valuable approach to the true understanding of the nature of Divinity religiously revealed in the Qurʾān and also demonstrating the powerful argumentation of the Neoplatonists in behalf of divine unity (*tawḥīd*). In his thoughtfully structured argument in the preface, he establishes that philosophy at its highest level is consonant with Islam in that 'the noblest part of philosophy and the highest in rank is the First Philosophy, i.e., knowledge of the First Truth Who is the cause of all

truth'.[26] Logic and Aristotle's account of the four causes – material, efficient, formal and final – reveal the definitions essential to the attainment of knowledge and truth under the methods of the ancient philosophers, to whom thanks are owed. He then proceeds to attack as devoid of religion those theologians of his day who, with their weak methods, little knowledge, poor interpretations and undeserved positions of leadership, label as unbelief (*kufr*) the philosophical understanding of the real natures of things ('*ilm al-ashyā' bi-ḥaqā'iqi-hā*). Yet they do not understand that what they condemn encompasses the knowledge of divinity, unity and virtue brought by true messengers (*al-rusul al-ṣādiqa*) in confirmation of the divinity of God with truth which even these who oppose philosophy are required to acknowledge as necessary. He then closes the preface with an appeal to God for support and defence in this work which will argue for God's divinity, explain His unity, and defend God against unbelievers with arguments (*bi-l-ḥujaj*) squelching their unbelief.[27] In this way al-Kindī understands philosophy, as found in Aristotelian metaphysics, the Neoplatonism of the *Plotiniana Arabica* and Arabic texts from the *Elements of theology* of Proclus, to constitute a single philosophical investigation that has divine unity (*tawḥīd*) as its object, just as Islamic theology has as its object *tawḥīd* and what it entails. That is, he determines that metaphysics has God as its object and he asserts that this philosophical study of divinity with its method of definition and demonstration is an equal to the methods of Islamic revelation and theology in the attainment of the knowledge of the divinity and unity of God. While the determination of God as object of this science has important ramifications for the study of metaphysics, the assertion of an equality of philosophy and religion marks the initiation of argumentation that would be used to assert the primacy of philosophy over theology in the thought of a number of major philosophers in Islam. The terms in which al-Kindī framed the debate set the stage for the classical rationalist accounts of al-Fārābī, Avicenna and Averroes which find the necessity of philosophical methods, particularly the ideals of demonstration, to yield a certain primacy for philosophy in the interpretation of revelation.

In what remains of the incomplete version of *On first philosophy* extant today, al-Kindī argues for the physical and temporal finitude of body and,

26 al-Kindī, *Oeuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī*, ed. Roshdi Roshed and Jean Jolivet, 2 vols. (Leiden, 1997–8), vol. II, p. 9. English translation in al-Kindī, *al-Kindi's metaphysics: A translation of Ya'qūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī's Treatise 'On first philosophy' (Fī al-falsafah al-ūlā)*, trans. Alfred Ivry, Studies in Islamic Philosophy and Science (Albany, 1974), p. 58.

27 al-Kindī, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, vol. II, pp. 11–17; al-Kindī, *al-Kindī's metaphysics*, pp. 56–60.

under the influence of arguments from Philoponus, rejects the common view of Aristotle and the Neoplatonic tradition that the world is eternal, instead insisting upon its creation. He further supports this conclusion by reasoning that unity in individual things is accidental, not true unity, and that it must have as an agent cause the One for creation in unity and existence, for conservation in being, for motion, and for all the various forms of unity. In the True One itself there is a unity of oneness and being requiring the denial of attributes, though in all other things there must be caused unity as a necessary condition for being. 'The cause of unity in unified things is accordingly the True One, the First, and everything which receives unity is caused, every one other than the One in truth being one metaphorically and not in truth' (fa-kullu wāḥidin ghayra al-wāḥid bi-l-ḥaqīqati fa-huwa bi-l-majāzi lā bi-l-ḥaqīqati).[28] A similar account of metaphorical predication and the derivative reality of creatures is found in his *Treatise on the one true [and] perfect agent and the deficient agent which is [so] by metaphor.* There al-Kindī reasons that act (fiʿl) is an equivocal term only properly predicated of God whose act of creation (ibdāʿ) presupposes nothing in his true act of 'making existents to exist from non-existence' (taʾyīs al-aysāt ʿan laysa).[29] Secondary and metaphorical is the agency of an intermediary which acts upon something else and yet is itself dependent upon the agency of the Creator for the power by which it acts. But only the Creator is an agent in the proper sense, presupposing no other agency, and providing agency immediately and mediately to creatures acting in virtue of the Creator's true agency. This account of primary and secondary causality was a commonplace of the Neoplatonic tradition and is similar to that found in the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī al-khayr al-maḥḍ* mentioned earlier, another work associated with the circle of al-Kindī.

In his philosophical psychology al-Kindī writes of four intellects: three are characteristics of the immortal human soul and the fourth is the transcendent agent intellect in an interpretation of Aristotle's underdetermined account in *De anima* 3.5. Yet while he speaks of what is sensible in act being acquired by the soul, knowledge comes not through abstraction but in the apprehension of immaterial forms by intellect. The Platonist meaning of this is confirmed in *On recollection*, where al-Kindī argues explicitly that sense perception cannot provide knowledge of intelligible forms, which it instead apprehends through its own essence in recollection.[30] Though the remote source is Plato, rather

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28 al-Kindī, *Oeuvres philosophiques*, vol. II, p. 95.

29 Ibid., p. 169.

30 Gerhard Endress, 'al-Kindī's theory of anamnesis: A new text and its implications', in *Islão e arabismo na Península Ibérica: Actas do XI Congreso da União Europaeia de Arabistas e Islamólogos* (Évora, 1986).

than reaching back to his *Phaedo* for this doctrine, it seems likely that al-Kindī's view results from late Neoplatonic debates over whether predicated universals founded on the experience of sensibles of the world can be the source of an intellectual understanding of the transcendent forms themselves; instead, they may merely be promptings for the soul to recollect or otherwise apprehend transcendent eternal forms in the First Intellect.[31]

Although it was eventually eclipsed in the tradition by the powerful and creative philosophical synthesis of Avicenna, the tradition of al-Kindī continued well into the fourth/tenth century. A follower in that tradition, al-ʿĀmirī (d. 381/992) used philosophical texts in the interpretation of the Qurʾān and religious teachings of Islam. In his native Khurāsān al-ʿĀmirī studied with Abū Zayd al-Balkhī (d. 322/934), the well-known geographer and polymath, who apparently conveyed from al-Kindī to his student the value of both philosophy and religion in understanding God and creation. Of al-ʿĀmirī's works there survive treatises on optics, predestination, the defence of Islam using philosophical argumentation, a work on the afterlife and an interesting metaphysical text, but none of his commentaries on the works of Aristotle. His familiarity with works and arguments from the tradition of al-Kindī is particularly evident in his *Kitāb al-amad ʿalā l-abad* (On the afterlife)[32] in which al-ʿĀmirī draws on Plato's *Phaedo* to argue for the reward or punishment of the immortal soul and in his *Fuṣūl fī al-maʿālim al-ilāhiyya* (Chapters on metaphysical topics) where he draws on the *Kitāb al-īḍāḥ fī al-khayr al-maḥḍ* (*Liber de causis*) in its adaptation of portions of the *Elements of theology* of Proclus.[33] Religion seems to play a more prominent role in the works of al-ʿĀmirī than in those of al-Kindī, as indicated by the former's use of Qurʾānic terms and phrases to label philosophical teachings. Generally al-ʿĀmirī held that philosophy plays a valuable complementary role to that of religion in the immortal rational soul's quest for knowledge of the Creator and His creatures. As Wakelnig puts it, al-ʿĀmirī 'wants to relate the concepts of Neoplatonic philosophy closely to the Koran and the Islamic tradition, in order to show that philosophy and religion are in accordance

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31 For the account of Porphyry, who may have been among the first to prompt debate of this issue, see H. Tarrant, *Thrasyllan Platonism* (Ithaca and London, 1993), pp. 108–47.

32 For the text with English translation and study see Everett K. Rowson (ed. and trans.), *A Muslim philosopher on the soul and its fate: al-ʿĀmirī's Kitāb al-abad ʿalà l-abad* (New Haven, 1988).

33 For a valuable study of this work and al-ʿĀmirī's extensive knowledge of metaphysical texts of the Neoplatonic tradition see Elvira Wakelnig (ed. and trans.), *Feder, Tafel, Mensch: Al-ʿĀmirī's Kitāb al-fuṣūl fī l-maʿālim al-ilāhīya und die arabische Proklos-Rezeption im 10. Jh* (Leiden, 2006).

with each other with regard to their objectives'.[34] It should also be noted that his metaphysical reflections gave rise to his use of the term *wājib al-wujūd* ('necessary existent') in characterising divine existence, a notion that would be developed extensively by Avicenna.[35]

The rise of philosophy in the fourth/tenth century

While al-Fārābī is the most well-known philosopher of fourth/tenth-century Baghdad, his era was one of a broad diversity of intellectual flourishing in philosophy, *kalām*, literature and much more, with ongoing translation, lively philosophical and theological debate and methodologically multiple approaches and teachings by a wide array of thinkers. It was in this period that the iconoclastic philosopher and famous physician Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. *c.* 313–23/925–35) taught clinical medicine at Rayy and Baghdad, wrote detailed works of medicine widely known in Islam (and translated into Latin) and infamously held that prophecy and revelation are not necessary. Little of the philosophical work of al-Rāzī survives, but from reports and what is available it is clear he was much influenced by the *Timaeus* as well as other works by Plato, and held a Platonic conception of the soul,[36] together with a powerful aversion to revealed religion. In a well-known debate in 320/932 the logician and Aristotelian commentator Mattā ibn Yūnus, mentioned earlier as a translator, famously defended logic as a universal tool transcending the grammar of a particular language against Abū Saʿīd al-Sīrāfī, who rejected that idea, insisting that logic is merely a form of Greek grammar. Al-Fārābī had the Christian Yūḥannā ibn Ḥaylān as a teacher for portions of the *Organon* and apparently knew Mattā. Yaḥyā ibn ʿAdī, another Syriac Christian, was a student of al-Fārābī and became a leading figure as translator, philosopher and theologian in the developing school of Baghdad Aristotelians.[37] Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī al-Manṭiqī (the logician) (d. *c.* 375/985), whose companion

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34 Elvira Wakelnig, 'Metaphysics in al-ʿĀmirī: The hierarchy of being and the concept of creation', *Medioevo*, 32 (2007), esp. p. 46.

35 See Robert Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's metaphysics in context* (Ithaca, 2003), pp. 239–40.

36 Two of his important philosophical treatises are extant and available in English translation, 'Spiritual medicine' and 'The philosopher's way of life'. See respectively, al-Rāzī, *The spiritual physick of Rhazes*, trans. A. J. Arberry (London, 1950); and Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman (ed. and trans.), *Classical Arabic philosophy. An anthology of sources* (Indianapolis, 2007), pp. 36–44. For a general account of al-Rāzī see L. E. Goodman, 'al-Rāzī, Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā', *EI2*, vol. VIII, pp. 474–5, available at www. brillonline.nl/subscriber/entry?entry=islam_SIM-6267, Marquette University, 28 February 2009.

37 For a list of his writings see Gerhard Endress, *The works of Yaḥyā Ibn ʿAdī: An analytical inventory* (Wiesbaden, 1977). Also see Griffith, *The church in the shadow of the mosque*, pp. 122–7.

Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī recorded sessions of the circle of al-Sijistānī at Baghdad, led an intellectually rich group of thinkers, and himself held philosophy and religion as two distinct methods, philosophy concerned with the created realm and able to know only the fact of the existence of God, not the divine nature itself. The original version of Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī's *Ṣiwān al-Ḥikmah*, a historical account of philosophy, survives only in various abbreviated versions.[38] As for the group's view of the role of philosophy in relation to religion, Kraemer writes, 'The objective of the Falasifa was to enable society to depart safely and gradually from the old beaten paths of inherited belief.'[39] For the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿism the key to the proper guidance of the community in all matters depends upon a divinely inspired prophet. In their theological descriptions the Ismāʿīlīs drew deeply on Neoplatonic thought to express their doctrines. In this tradition Abū Yaʿqūb al-Sijistānī (d. *c.* 361/971) stressed the complete transcendence of God beyond all intelligibility, even insisting that there be not a single but rather a double negation said of God. As Walker puts it, 'One states that God is *not* not a thing, *not* not limited, *not* not describable, *not* not in a place, *not* not in time.'[40] During this period there was also under way the assembling of the *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-Ṣafāʾ*, a religiously inspired collection of treatises drawing on philosophical translations, Sufism, Ismāʿīlī thought, Qurʾānic revelation, religious teachings, politics and science, with the aim of the purification and salvation of the soul.[41] While by no means the sole concern of those studying philosophy, the issue of philosophy and its relation to religion was one of universal interest with a considerable variety of conclusions reached.

al-Fārābī (d. 339/950f.)

Although Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī is often said to have been of Turkish ethnic origin, the historical sources vary considerably. He probably came from the eastern part of the empire to Baghdad, where he did most of his work, for philosophical studies, though he spent time in Damascus, Aleppo and Egypt before his death in Baghdad. Al-Fārābī understood himself and his associates to be reconstructing philosophy as practised in the Alexandrian tradition, according to his own account

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38 See Joel L. Kraemer, *Philosophy in the renaissance of Islam: Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī and his circle* (Leiden, 1986), pp. 119ff.

39 Ibid., p. xii.

40 Paul E. Walker, 'The Ismāʿīlīs', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*, p. 82.

41 For a recent brief account with a valuable bibliography and web links see Carmela Baffioni, 'Ikhwan al-Safa', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at plato.stanford.edu/entries/ikhwan-al-safa/, first published 22 April 2008.

in his *Fī ẓuhūr al-falsafa* (The appearance of philosophy), which – significantly – makes no reference at all to the work of al-Kindī or al-Rāzī.[42] There al-Fārābī relates that upon the arrival of Islam philosophical studies moved from Alexandria to Antioch and finally, on the initiative of a few individuals, made its way to Baghdad, where religious restrictions by Christians were dismissed and al-Fārābī himself studied the entire *Prior* and *Posterior analytics* with Yūḥannā ibn Ḥaylān. Focus was now on the proper curriculum and order of study, and in particular the need to begin with logical studies, in which al-Fārābī himself was a master, writing commentaries and paraphrases of the *Organon* and the *Isagoge* or *Introduction* to the *Categories* of Aristotle by Porphyry. For al-Fārābī logic was understood also to include rhetoric and poetics – and itself to be a sort of universal grammar of thought and reason, in contrast to the grammars of particular languages. And demonstration is understood as that form of syllogistic that yields absolute certainty, while other forms of syllogistic yield lesser states of assent by the soul.[43] These logical notions played an important role in al-Fārābī's understanding of the roles of citizens and leaders in the state where non-demonstrative affirmations based on dialectical argumentation and rhetorical suasion are seen to have important value for the formation of a societal community aspiring for the full attainment of happiness. Following the hierarchical account found in Plato's *Republic*, al-Fārābī argues in several works that the perfect state is that in which the legislator, philosopher and imam are found in a single person, while in less perfect cities these may be found in a plurality of individuals, or perhaps not be found at all in those cities lacking proper hierarchy and unity. This doctrine or political philosophy as philosophy of state involves a special coincidence of logical teachings with those of cosmology, metaphysics and philosophical psychology in al-Fārābī.[44]

The cosmological and metaphysical scheme crafted by al-Fārābī situates the First Cause as the First Being (*al-mawjūd al-awwal*) and the eternal creative emanative source for the existence (*wujūd*) of all other beings and as itself free

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42 This is noted by Dimitri Gutas in 'The "Alexandria to Baghdad" complex of narratives: A contribution to the study of philosophical and medical historiography among the Arabs', *Documenti e Studi sulla Tradizione Filosofica Medievale*, 10 (1999), p. 155.

43 See Deborah L. Black, 'Knowledge (*'ilm*) and certitude (*yaqīn*) in al-Fārābī's epistemology', *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 16 (2006). On logic in al-Fārābī in its historical context see the introduction by F. W. Zimmermann to his translation of *al-Farabi's commentary and short treatise on Aristotle's* De interpretatione (London, 1981).

44 For a recent synthetic account of the thought of al-Fārābī on these matters see Philippe Vallat, *Farabi et l'École d'Alexandrie: Des prémisses de la connaissance à la philosophie politique* (Paris, 2004).

of every sort of deficiency.[45] The science that treats of the First Cause is metaphysics, but it does so in so far as it treats of all being under the rubric of being qua being.[46] Under the influence of another hybrid of Neoplatonism and Aristotelianism, in this case traced to Ammonius at Alexandria, al-Fārābī characterises the First Cause as the One in the most deserving sense (since divisibility, corporeality, materiality, subject and beginning are all denied of it) and also as at once intellect, understood, and understanding (fa-anna-hu ʿaqlun wa-anna-hu maʿqūlun wa-anna-hu ʿāqilun).[47] Positive predication or naming of the First Cause is permitted, albeit with the important restriction that these names cannot have the meaning and level of perfection of created beings, but instead must be predicated in accord with its ultimate and transcendent perfection.[48] From the First Cause there emanates an intellect which thinks (yaʿqilu) its own essence and that of the First, and from the latter another intellect results as well as the outermost heavens. This begins a series of mediated emanations of celestial bodies and intellects extending to the eleventh intellect in the hierarchy which is the Agent Intellect (al-ʿaql al-faʿʿāl) associated with the sphere of the moon and the sub-lunar world.

The Agent Intellect, charged with governance of the sublunary realm in some works but called the emanative cause of it in others, plays an essential role in human reason and in the guidance of humanity through prophecy. Following Alexander of Aphrodisias and most of the Greek tradition, al-Fārābī understands the Agent Intellect to be both an eternal immaterial entity existing in actuality separate from the world and also as intimately involved in human epistemology. In an account of intellect only superficially similar to that of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī explains that the intellectual apprehension necessary for the formation of universals takes place thanks to the Agent Intellect which 'provides something like light to the material intellect', that is, provides soul with a power by which it transfers (yanqulu) intelligibles that 'come to be from the sensibles which are preserved in the imaginative power'.[49] In this way it abstracts or extracts

45 al-Fārābī, On the perfect state (Mabādiʾ ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila), ed. and trans. Richard Walzer (Oxford, 1985), p. 57.
46 This is significant because it entails a rejection of the approach of al-Kindī, who described Divinity as the object of both metaphysical and religious investigation. In contrast, al-Fārābī holds the consideration of the First Cause as a special part of metaphysics and assigns religion to a position subordinate to political governance.
47 al-Fārābī, On the perfect state, pp. 68 and 70 respectively.
48 al-Fārābī, al-Fārābī's The political regime (al-Siyāsa al-madaniyya also known as the Treatise on the principles of beings), ed. Fauzi Najjar (Beirut, 1964), p. 49.
49 al-Fārābī, On the perfect state, p. 202. The term material intellect derives from Alexander of Aphrodisias. While immaterial in itself, the material intellect derives its name from its receptivity, which also exists, though in a different sense, in matter. Marc Geoffroy

(*tantaziʿa*) forms of material things in the mimetic power of imagination and receives them as actualised intelligibles in the material intellect.[50] With this power now existing as intellect in act, the separated and immaterial intelligibles themselves can be the objects of human intellection at a new level al-Fārābī calls acquired intellect. No longer requiring a body for its activity, the human soul can then rise in a transformation or realisation into its immaterial substance as intellect at the level of the Agent Intellect. For al-Fārābī the attainment of the human end to which the Agent Intellect directs the soul is happiness in the perfection of intellect by voluntary action and individual effort in the context of human society. The conditions for this achievement must be provided by society, even though the majority are brought to truth not by demonstration and the high intellectual methods of the philosopher but rather by rhetorical or dialectical persuasion. For this reason the mimetic power of imagination is needed by the prophet to represent the intelligibles received from the Agent Intellect for the guidance of humanity in persuasive images for the formation of society in the way most suitable for the attainment of happiness.[51] Religious teachings here function as mimetic representations of true philosophy made suitable in a particular culture and at a level appropriate to those incapable of the fullness of philosophical understanding.[52]

Avicenna (d. 428/1037)

It is especially fortunate that the most influential philosopher in the history of Islamic thought, Ibn Sīnā or Avicenna, wrote an autobiography which is extant with a continuation by Abū ʿUbayd al-Jūzjānī.[53] There he relates that his father

argues that al-Fārābī may never have read Aristotle's *De anima* but instead relies on Alexander. See his 'La tradition arabe du *Peri nou* d'Alexandre d'Aphrodise et les origines de la théorie farabienne des quatre degrés de l'intellect', in Cristina D'Ancona and Giuseppe Serra (eds.), *Aristotele e Alessandro di Afrodisia nella tradizione Araba*, Subsidia Mediaevalia Patavina 3 (Padua, 2002).

50 Al-Fārābī, *Alfarabi: Risalat fi ʾl-ʿaql*, ed. Maurice Bouyges, SJ, 2nd edn (Beirut, 1983), p. 12. On this issue see Richard C. Taylor, 'Abstraction in al-Fārābī', *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, 80 (2006).

51 On this understanding, the thought of al-Fārābī is a continuing development of the philosophical tradition in the societal context of Islam rather than a break and an advancement of a new science of politics. Regarding the former see Dominic O'Meara, *Platonopolis: Platonic political philosophy in Late Antiquity* (Oxford, 2005); regarding the latter approach see Christopher A. Colmo, *Breaking with Athens: Alfarabi as founder* (Lanham, MD, 2005).

52 Thérèse-Anne Druart observes that al-Fārābī seems to have held that ethics necessarily involves religion for all with the exception of the true philosopher. See her 'al-Fārābī (870–958): Une éthique universelle fondée sur les intelligibles premiers', in Louis-Léon Christians *et al.* (eds.), *Droit naturel: Relancer l'histoire?* (Brussels, 2008), p. 231.

53 For this and other sources on the life of Avicenna see William E. Gohlman, *The life of Ibn Sina: A critical edition and annotated translation* (Albany, 1974). The most comprehensive

was a government administrator and Ismā'īlī follower who, after moving to Bukhārā, arranged for teachers for Avicenna, who proved to have extraordinary intellectual talents. His study of the Qur'ān completed by the age of ten, Avicenna was provided with teachers in jurisprudence and then, beginning with the *Isagoge* of Porphyry, in philosophy, in which he quickly excelled his teachers. By sixteen he was distinguished in law and medicine, and proceeded deeper into philosophy, creating a collection of notes and proofs for himself as he proceeded through all the branches of the discipline. His only bump in the road was frustration with the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle – which he claims to have read forty times, and even memorised, without grasping its purpose. But thanks to the chance purchase of al-Fārābī's *Fī aghrāḍ kitāb Mā ba'd al-ṭabī'a* (On the aims of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*), Avicenna was able to come to a clear vision of Aristotle's end, one very different from al-Kindī's identification of religious theology and metaphysics.[54] Noteworthy for the understanding of the philosophical thought of Avicenna is the absence of reference to studies in a particular school of thought or circle of teachers in which he learned the ways of philosophical analysis and argumentation in a particular tradition. Rather, aside from some modest guidance in his pre-teen and early teen years, he relied on his own remarkable powers of intellect and approached texts of philosophy with a genuine openness that led to new philosophical doctrines that have had powerful and continuing influence on the development of philosophy in Islam, and also in the West through Latin translations. His most influential teachings are in metaphysics, and in particular concerning the nature of God.

According to Avicenna God must be conceived as the Necessary Being, the sole being necessary in itself, and as the sole entity in which existence (*wujūd*) and essence (*māhiyya*) are in complete unity. This is most clearly expressed in his latest major work, his *Ishārāt wa-tanbīhāt* (Pointers and reminders), where in the section on 'Existence and its causes' he distinguishes essence from existence, argues for the need of an efficient cause of existence, and sets forth his account of necessity and possibility in essences. Dismissing what is impossible in itself, he reasons that every chain of caused beings must be finite or infinite and must be founded on a being which is the Subsistent and is itself the Necessary Being (*wājib al-wujūd*). Since every being is either necessary in its own right or possible in its own right, and even an infinite causal chain of possible beings cannot bring about the realised necessity of a possible being,

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guide to the development of the philosophical thought of Avicenna is Dimitri Gutas's invaluable *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition: Introduction to reading Avicenna's philosophical works* (Leiden, 1988).

54 Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian tradition*, pp. 238ff.

then there must be a being necessary in itself as an uncaused cause extrinsic to the chain as its term and foundation. This is the unique Necessary Being, which is without definition and can be indicated by no one but he who possesses intellectual knowledge in purity, although its existence can be established by consideration of being itself.[55] The compact late account in *Ishārāt wa-tanbīhāt* combines distinct arguments set forth elsewhere in Avicenna, some of which have sources in early Islamic *kalām*. As Wisnovsky has shown,[56] Avicenna's famous distinction of existence and essence is rooted in theological issues concerning the ontological status of 'thing' (*shay'*) as requiring a divine determinative cause for its existence, and also in al-Fārābī's metaphysical analysis of existent and thing. That distinction appears in his earlier *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'* where in book 1, chapter 5, Avicenna considers the notions or meanings of the existent (*al-mawjūd*), the thing (*al-shay'*) and the necessary (*al-ḍarūrī*), and proceeds to argue that the first conceived is the necessary (*al-wājib*). His famous analysis of necessity and possibility is then found in chapter 6, where he dismisses the impossible and argues that 'whatever is possible in existence (*mumkin al-wujūd*) when considered in itself, its existence and nonexistence are both due to a cause'.[57] On the basis of an analysis which has its roots in his careful consideration of Aristotle on necessity,[58] Avicenna then reasons with a new and widely influential argument that all that exists owes its instantiation to a necessitating that can be traced to God as the Necessary Being. In book 8 of the same work he goes on to offer argument for the finitude of essential causes and to conclude for the Necessary Being as uncaused and itself a first cause ('illatun ghayra ma'lūlatin wa-'illatun ūlā),[59] from whom eternally emanates the celestial hierarchy of intellects, bodies and soul (book 9), which come to an end in the Agent Intellect functioning as emanative cause of the world of generation and corruption and all its forms. For the great majority of philosophers and many theologians who followed, Avicenna's metaphysical teachings were

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55 Avicenna, *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, 4 vols. (Cairo, 1960–6), see vol. IV, pp. 7ff.; trans A.-M. Goichon in *Ibn Sīnā, livre des directives et remarques* (Beirut and Paris, 1951), pp. 350ff.

56 See Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's metaphysics in context*, pp. 145 ff. For a short account see Robert Wisnovsky, 'Avicenna and the Avicennian tradition', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*, pp. 92–136.

57 Avicenna, *Avicenna: The metaphysics of the healing*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT, 2005), p. 31.

58 See Wisnovsky, *Avicenna's metaphysics in context*, pp. 197–217; and Wisnovsky, 'Avicenna and the Avicennian tradition', pp. 115–19.

59 Avicenna, *The metaphysics of the healing*, p. 258.

simply accepted as providing the terminology and agenda for later philosophical and theological discussions of God and creatures.[60]

While Avicenna was the dominant influence in metaphysics for centuries, his philosophical psychology contained some teachings that hampered its widespread acceptance. For, while Islam and Christianity both held for the resurrection of the body in the afterlife, Avicenna's philosophical argumentation, under the influence of the late Neoplatonic school of Ammonius at Alexandria,[61] held that the rational soul alone survives the death of the body. Created by emanation in a suitably disposed material preparation in the womb and individuated by its initial relationship with body, the rational soul for Avicenna remains separate from the body, functioning as its final cause and existing immaterially, as Avicenna repeatedly reminds his readers with his famous 'flying man' in which the soul recognises its own existence even in the absence of sensation.[62] The body and its senses also serve the rational soul in the formation of knowledge on the part of the soul. Sense-perception of the world is conveyed through abstraction (tajrīd) to the common sense, then to the retentive imagination, and then to the active compositive imagination. Avicenna also asserted the existence of an intuitive power (ḥads), responsible for quick – or even immediate and certain – insight into the middle term of a syllogism, or prophetic intuitive knowledge. These internal powers are responsible for prenoetic bodily stages of abstraction, and it is at this level that the estimative power (wahm) present in all animals apprehends non-sensible characteristics (intentions, maʿānin) such as those involved in the sheep's fear in the presence of a wolf. Memory and recollection complete his account of the internal powers related to sense. Abstractions are formed by use of these powers in the brain, although for Avicenna intelligibles in act are not realised in human understanding without the involvement of the Agent Intellect which is said to provide an emanation (fayḍ) of intelligible forms to the soul or to realise a conjoining (ittiṣāl) with the Agent Intellect. The human receptive (i) material intellect comes to be (ii) possible intellect (or dispositional intellect ('aql bi-l-malaka)) when it has the primary principles of thought whereby it can become

60 On the development and influence of Avicenna's metaphysical thought see Jules Janssens, 'Bahmanyār ibn Marzubān: A faithful disciple of Ibn Sīnā?', in David C. Reisman (ed.), Before and after Avicenna: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group (Leiden and Boston, 2003); and Jules Janssens, 'Bahmanyār, and his revision of Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical project', Medioevo, 32 (2007). Also see Heidrun Eichner, 'Dissolving the unity of metaphysics: From Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to Mullā Ṣadra al-Shīrāzī', Medioevo, 32 (2007); and the articles by Mayer, Al-Rahim, Rizvi and Takahashi in the bibliography to this chapter.

61 See Wisnovsky, Avicenna's metaphysics in context, pp. 21–141; Wisnovsky, 'Avicenna and the Avicennian tradition', pp. 96–104.

62 Michael Marmura, 'Avicenna's "Flying Man" in context', Monist, 69 (1986).

(iii) the perfection of this power as intellect in act (*'aql bi-l-fi'l*) as able to know at will previously attained intelligible forms. This latter is intellect in potency in comparison to (iv) acquired intellect (*'aql mustafād*) which is the immediate state of actual conjoining with the Agent Intellect and apprehending intelligible forms. Those intelligibles in act exist as such only in the Agent Intellect with the result that for the actuality of knowledge the rational soul, which is without intellectual memory, reverts to conjoining with the Agent Intellect which provides the forms for human intellection as well as those constituting the world when the receptive subject is suitably disposed.[63] Prophecy also occurs intuitively in a select few through a natural emanation from the Agent Intellect or Holy Spirit.

al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111)

The philosophical accounts of al-Fārābī and Avicenna conveyed an intellectually powerful understanding of the world, human nature and the Creator; but significant parts of their views conflicted with common Islamic religious tenets, and prompted the Ash'arite theologian and teacher al-Ghazālī to attain a mastery of parts of philosophy in order to craft a detailed response. Based on philosophical studies reflected in his summary of Avicennian thought in the *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* (Intentions of the philosophers),[64] al-Ghazālī authored his incisive *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (Incoherence of the philosophers)[65] as a revelation of the philosophers' dissimulations and as a detailed refutation indicating the inadequacy of the arguments of the philosophers for key positions. In particular he held that they and their followers should be condemned as unbelievers for three metaphysical doctrines: (1) denial of resurrection of the human body on the last day; (2) denial of God's knowledge of particulars; and (3) assertion of the past and future eternity of the world. Particularly interesting are his accounts of agency and causality. In the third discussion al-Ghazālī argues that the very notion of agency must include that of will such that the philosophers' assertion that the world emanates necessarily by divine agency is incoherent. Rather, God as agent of the world acts by a will free of all determination other than that of the will itself. In the seventeenth discussion al-Ghazālī famously denies that

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63 This account is based on *Avicenna's De anima (Arabic text) being the psychological part of Kitāb al-shifāʾ*, ed. F. Rahman (London, 1959), pp. 48 ff. The often-used term *wāhib al-ṣuwar*, 'the giver of forms', appears at Avicenna, *The metaphysics of the healing*, p. 337.

64 The *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa* is based on Avicenna's Persian *Dānish nāma-i alā'ī*. Regarding an untitled work by al-Ghazālī on the metaphysical thought of the philosophers, see Frank Griffel, 'MS London, British Library Or. 3126: An unknown work by al-Ghazālī on metaphysics and philosophical theology', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 17 (2006).

65 See al-Ghazālī, *The incoherence of the philosophers/Tahāfut al-falāsifa, a parallel English–Arabic text*, ed. and trans. M. E. Marmura (Provo, UT, 1997).

there is a necessary connection between cause and effect, asserting a doctrine of occasionalism which places all causal agency immediately with God. There al-Ghazālī also provides a second account closer to the philosophical account of primary and secondary causality which also finds in God the causality for all events. Whether al-Ghazālī in fact prefers this second philosophical account is a matter of controversy among scholars today.[66] While the *Tahāfut* was written to combat the ways of the philosophers, al-Ghazālī's strong approval of the value of philosophical logic and natural philosophy in his *Tahāfut*, his *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* (Deliverance from error), and some other works contributed influentially to the introduction of methods of logic and natural philosophy into *kalām*. Even some doctrines of metaphysics, which al-Ghazālī specifically condemns, were eventually adopted from Avicenna by the *kalām* tradition in a way that allowed the introduction of methods from the foreign science of philosophy into traditional discussions of *kalām*. Though he taught the value of religious faith and tradition, al-Ghazālī's analysis in the *Munqidh* comes to the conclusion that the most certain and fulfilling method is that of the Sufi way of life in the immediacy of the mystical experience *(dhawq)*.[67]

Falsafa in Andalusia

In the western lands of Islam philosophy rose to prominence in the twelfth century, though texts from the east were available earlier. This is clear in the Jewish poet Solomon Ibn Gabirol (d. *c.* 1058), who wrote the philosophical dialogue *Mekor hayyim* (known as *Fons vitae* in its highly influential Latin translation) which espoused a doctrine of universal hylomorphism crafted under the influence of the *Plotiniana Arabica*, among other works.[68]

The first major Muslim philosopher was Ibn Bājja/Avempace (d. 533/1139), who was a poet and philosopher as well as a person of political engagement serving different times as vizer, emissary or judge *(qāḍī)*, with these involvements perhaps contributing to his death in Fez – reportedly by poisoning. He was deeply interested in Aristotelian natural philosophy, to which he applied a

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66 An analysis with reference to the issues and literature is available in Frank Griffel, 'al-Ghazālī', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/al-ghazali/, first published 14 September 2007.

67 Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl/Erreur et délivrance*, ed. and trans. F. Jabre (Beirut, 1959), Arabic p. 44; English trans. Richard Joseph McCarthy SJ in *Freedom and fulfillment: An annotated translation of al-Ghazālī's al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl and other relevant works by al-Ghazālī* (Boston, 1980), p. 100; repr. as *al-Ghazali's path to Sufism* (Louisville, 2000).

68 See Sarah Pessin, 'Jewish Neoplatonism: Being above being and divine emanation in Solomon ibn Gabirol and Isaac Israeli', in Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (eds.) *The Cambridge companion to medieval Jewish philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003).

new conception of the dynamics of motion and argued against Aristotle's rejection of motion in a void, possibly under some influence of the writings of John Philoponus. In philosophical psychology Ibn Bājja wrote a *De anima* after Aristotle; but in that and also in his *Risāla ittiṣāl al-ʿaql bi-l-insān* (On the conjoining of the intellect with human beings) and his *Risāla al-wadāʿ* (Letter of farewell) the influence of al-Fārābī and critical arguments from the Neoplatonic tradition are evident. Following al-Fārābī in part, Ibn Bājja presented an account of the formation of abstractions from sense in which imagination plays a double role of spiritualising (or de-materialising) forms or intentions and of being the subject for abstractions in so far as it functions as the personal material intellect belonging to each human being individually.[69] But under the influence of Neoplatonism Ibn Bājja rejected Aristotle's Third Man Argument in critique of the Platonic Theory of Forms and insisted that true intelligibles are not intentions abstracted from experience of imperfect particulars, but rather are those found united in the transcendent Agent Intellect. Efforts at abstraction from sensory experience can never yield more than the imperfect content of the objects experienced. Hence, human epistemological advancement through the stages of abstraction is merely preparatory for the soul's gradual ascent from ideas through ideas to ideas found in the Agent Intellect. Science and the attainment of knowledge in all their levels are in this way the means to the end of ultimate human happiness in an immaterial uniting and conjoining with the Agent Intellect.[70] In his *Tadbīr al-mutawaḥḥid* (Rule of the solitary) he speaks of the happy in an imperfect city, explaining that the life of the body must be renounced since it is without happiness, while the spiritual is to be embraced for its nobility. But it is the life of the wise person or philosopher that is virtuous and divine, for it is through intellectual understanding of transcendent intellects that he comes himself to be intellect and attain a kind of divinity and perfect happiness. This can come to pass only if one declines association with those devoted to the body and pursues association with those who are spiritual, and ultimately with those who are at the highest level of intellect.[71]

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69 Ibn Bājja, *Risālat ittiṣāl al-ʿaql bi-l-insān*, ed. and trans. Miguel Asín Palacios in 'Tratado de Avempace sobre la union del intelecto con el hombre', *al-Andalus*, 7 (1942), pp. 1–47, Arabic pp. 13–16; English trans. in McGillis and Reisman (ed. and trans.), *Classical Arabic philosophy*.

70 See Alexander Altmann, 'Ibn Bajja on man's ultimate felicity', in *Harry Austryn Wolfson jubilee volume*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem, 1965) vol. I.

71 For a recent and very valuable short account of Ibn Bājja and his works see Josep Puig Montada, 'Ibn Bajja', in Edward N. Zalta (ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*, available at http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ibn-bajja/, first published 28 September 2007.

A very different approach to the imperfection of human cities and the goal of the philosopher is found in the philosophical novel *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* by the physician Ibn Ṭufayl (d. 581/1185f.) who also served as vizier to the caliph Abū Yaʻqūb Yūsuf (d. 580/1184). Under inspiration from Avicenna's allegorical *Epistle of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*, Ibn Ṭufayl crafted the story of Ḥayy with two possible beginnings. The first is that he was born to the king's sister, who sought to save this child of a secret marriage by setting him to sea in a small boat which reached a deserted isle where the child was discovered and raised by a gazelle. The second account has it that a mixture of material constituents advanced to the point of being a preparation sufficient for the reception of a human soul from God (after Avicenna). Passing through several stages of development, Ḥayy learns natural science and even the nature of the soul, advancing to reason the necessary existence of a First Cause for the world and the heavens. Displaying obvious Sufi influence, Ḥayy realises that his fulfilment is to be found in imitating the ways of the Necessary Being and in exercises leading to the mystical vision of the Divine. But the life of Ḥayy changes through a meeting with a visitor, Absāl, who pursues the deeper inner meanings of religion and had left behind his contemporary, Salāmān, who prefers the literal and surface interpretation of religious law. Ḥayy eventually learns language and Absāl explains to him the ways of organised religion that guides the mass of humanity in their weakness of mind and will. At the opportunity of a passing boat, the two travel to the island city ruled by Salāmān. There Ḥayy views the ignorance and preference for passions and sensory pleasures of the people of that society in their inability or unwillingness to know and to follow the true ways of God. He and Absāl then retreat from the island of Salāmān and return together to their contemplative ways on Ḥayy's island. With this story Ibn Ṭufayl expressed despair for the masses in imperfect societies and endorsed the need for the individual through Sufism to find happiness and transcendent mystical fulfilment in the inner reaches of the human rational soul independent of the strictures of traditional religion.[72]

Averroes (d. 595/1198)

Ibn Rushd/Averroes was trained in law (*fiqh*), as were his father and his famous grandfather, for whom he was named, and put skills of careful textual scholarship and of persuasive argumentation to work both in his professional career as lawyer and judge and also in his philosophical studies. He was known in the

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72 See Josep Puig Montada, 'Philosophy in Andalusia: Ibn Bājja and Ibn Ṭufayl', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*.

philosophical tradition in Islam though no school based on his thought was established and no great prominence was given to his writings. In the Latin west he was a figure of enormous influence through his purportedly demonstrative commentaries on the works of Aristotle, which taught theologians and philosophers of medieval Europe how to understand Aristotle's difficult texts. There his work soon engendered condemnation for its support of the genuinely Aristotelian doctrines of the eternity of the world and of happiness attainable in the earthly life, and for his own novel doctrine of the unique separately existing material intellect shared by all human knowers. In the initial wave of Latin translations in the early thirteenth century there were included none of his dialectical writings written for a less expert audience: his legal treatise *Faṣl al-maqāl*, his short explanatory *al-Masāʾil allati dhakara-hā al-shaykh Abū al-Walīd fī ʿFaṣl al-maqāl'* (Treatise on what Averroes mentioned in the 'Decisive treatise'), his theological *al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla* (Explanation of the sorts of proofs in the doctrines of religion) and his detailed response to al-Ghazālī in the *Tahāfut at-tahāfut* (Incoherence of the incoherence).

Today he is perhaps best known in the Muslim world for his *Faṣl al-maqāl* (Book of the distinction of discourse and the establishment of the relation of religious law and philosophy),[73] a much-misunderstood work sometimes superficially thought to provide a harmonious account of the conciliation of reason and philosophy with revelation and religious tradition in a way respecting each fully and equally as sources of truth and knowledge of God and his creation. Written as a sort of *fatwā* or legal determination regarding whether philosophy and logic should be permitted, prohibited or commanded either as recommended or required, the *Faṣl al-maqāl* is a carefully crafted dialectical treatise arguing for the priority of philosophy with its method of demonstrative reason over all other methods in the determination of the meanings and import of religious revelation and tradition. Key to its argument are the equivocal meanings of *al-naẓar* as religious reflection or Aristotelian theoretical science; *qiyās* as religious analogical reasoning or Aristotelian syllogistic; and *iʿtibār* as religious consideration or scientific inference explained at the very beginning of Aristotle's *Posterior analytics*. These equivocations allow Averroes to substitute philosophical meanings for the theological and to assert that 'this method of reflection (*al-naẓar*) which religious Law has called for is the most perfect of the kinds of reflection by the most

73 With this translation I follow A. El Ghannouchi, 'Distinction et relation des discours philosophique et religieux chez Ibn Rushd: Fasl al maqal ou la double verité', in R. G. Khoury (ed.), *Averroes (1126–1198) oder der Triumph des Rationalismus: Internationales Symposium anlässlich des 800: Todestages des islamischen Philosophen* (Heidelberg, 2002).

perfect kind of *qiyās* which is called demonstration (*burhān*)', that is, the most perfect and certain method of philosophy. With this reasoning and the principle, 'Truth does not contradict truth but rather is consistent with it and bears witness to it', which is taken directly from the *Prior analytics* (1.32) without mention of its source in Aristotle,[74] Averroes declares the unity of truth in a way that permits philosophy with its certain (*al-yaqīn*) method of demonstration a place of priority in the judgement of what is true in all matters, including religion. This is simply because philosophical demonstration by definition itself contains truth with necessity per se, while assent (*taṣdīq*) through rhetorical persuasion or on the basis of dialectical assumptions does not contain truth per se but only *per accidens*. With this methodological approach established, Averroes goes on in the *Faṣl al-maqāl* to reinterpret the three issues for which al-Ghazālī charged the philosophers with unbelief and to affirm precisely what al-Ghazālī had claimed as unbelief in two matters: (1) scripture itself supports a sense of eternality for the world since the Qur'ān mentions God's throne and also water as prior to creation, a view reconcilable with the eternality of matter and the efficacy of God in Aristotle; (2) God's knowledge is neither of universals nor of particulars since both of those are posterior to sensation; rather, God's knowledge is distinct from both since it is causative of particulars and universals. As for (3) resurrection of the body, in the *Faṣl al-maqāl* he declares it obligatory for unscientific people (*min ghayr ahl al-ʿilm*) and says it is unbelief to deny it.[75] But in *al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla* he explains that its true purpose is to help the majority of humanity who live by their imaginations to reflect upon immateriality and perhaps attain something of a proper understanding of the invisible God.[76] This is significant because in his demonstrative Aristotelian commentaries and other strictly philosophical works Averroes finds no room for a teaching on the immortality of the soul.[77]

74 See Richard C. Taylor, '"Truth does not contradict truth": Averroes and the unity of truth', *Topoi*, 19 (2000).

75 Averroes, *Ibn Rushd (Averroes): Kitāb faṣl al-maqāl*, ed. George F. Hourani (Leiden, 1959), pp. 16–17. trans. Charles E. Butterworth with facing-page Arabic text as *Averroës: The book of the decisive treatise determining the connection between the law and wisdom & epistle dedicatory* (Provo, UT, 2001).

76 Ibn Rushd, *al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla*, ed. Muḥammad ʿĀbid al-Jābrī, 2nd edn (Beirut, 2001) pp. 147ff., trans. Ibrahim Najjar in *Averroes' exposition of religious arguments* (Oxford, 2001) pp. 64ff.

77 The distinction between dialectical and demonstrative works is indicated at Averroes, *Averroës: Tahafot at-tahafot*, ed. Maurice Bouyges, SJ (Beirut, 1930), pp. 427–8; trans. Simon Van Den Bergh as *Averroes' Tahafut al-tahafut (The incoherence of the incoherence)*, 2 vols. (London, 1969), vol. I, pp. 257–8.

In philosophy Averroes composed early short commentaries (*Mukhtaṣarāt* or *Jawāmiʿ*) often concerned with key issues, paraphrasing middle commentaries (sing. *talkhīṣ*), detailed long commentaries (sing. *sharḥ* or *sharḥ kabīr*) containing the complete text of Aristotle, a very Aristotelian *Commentary on the* Republic *of Plato*, and a brief *Commentary on the* De intellectu *of Alexander of Aphrodisias*, as well as shorter works on various topics, including a valuable collection of essays under the title *De substantia orbis*. The *Long commentaries* on Aristotle's *De anima*, *Physics*, *De caelo*, *Posterior analytics* and *Metaphysics* are generally thought to contain his most sophisticated and mature teachings. In his mature physics he follows Aristotle's account of the eternity of the world, and reasons that God is the unmoved mover of the outermost heavens. In metaphysics he argues for God as pure act and thought thinking thought with knowledge of the universe only in so far as He knows Himself as the cause of all being through a final causality that refers all other beings to the ultimate perfection of the First. In the early pages of his *Tafsīr mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿa* (Long commentary on the *Metaphysics*) he even goes so far as to assert that the study of metaphysics constitutes the most complete worship of God: 'The *sharīʿa* specific to the philosophers is the investigation of all beings, since the Creator is not worshipped by a worship more noble than the knowledge of those things that He produced which lead to the knowledge in truth of His essence – may He be exalted!'[78]

Averroes' most controversial and perhaps least well understood teachings concerned the nature of human intellect, a doctrine that developed through various stages in his short, middle and long commentaries on Aristotle's *De anima*, as well as in five other works. Throughout his works Averroes followed the common tradition holding for a transcendent Agent Intellect involved in human intellection. The point of most contention in his thought was the nature of the receptive material intellect. In the short commentary he holds for a plurality of individual intellects, and follows Ibn Bājja in holding that the human material intellect is a disposition of the forms of the imagination. In the later middle commentary he retains the plurality of intellects and eschews his earlier view of the material intellect as too closely associated with a power of the body truly to be intellect. He then argues that the human material intellect must be a disposition separate from matter yet belonging to the human being from whom it derives its individuation. In his final position in the *Long commentary on the* De anima Averroes spells out a doctrine of the transference of intentions in the abstraction of intelligibles from the

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78 Averroes, *Averroès Tafsīr mā baʿd at-ṭabīʿat*, ed. Maurice Bouyges, SJ, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1938–52), vol. I, pp. 10.11–16. This particular text was not available in the Latin translation.

experience of the world through the internal powers of the soul and the abstractive 'light' of the Agent Intellect which comes to be 'form for us'. He goes on further to insist on the unity of intelligibles for the sake of common discourse and science (relying on reasoning from the *Paraphrase of the* De *anima* by Themistius) and concludes to the existence of a second transcendentally existing intellect, the unique Material Intellect shared by all human beings. In this new doctrine of intellect Averroes finds that both these transcendent Intellects must be 'in the soul' to be used by the individual knower at will. For Averroes this very activity of intellectual understanding through use of these two transcendent Intellects constitutes the end for human beings and ultimate human happiness. Here and also in his other two commentaries on the *De anima* there is no argument or provision for the Islamic religious doctrine of resurrection or for personal immortality.[79]

In 591/1195, just three years before his death, Averroes and his writings were condemned, he was exiled from Cordoba for a time, and philosophy was banned. Although the reasons for this may have been political, there is little doubt that his philosophical rationalism pushed at the limits of Islamic tolerance at a time when philosophy in the east had already been moving away from Aristotelian rationalism towards becoming a truly Islamic philosophy with the integration of key religious doctrines of Islam. While his sons are reported to have carried his books to the court of Frederick II Hohenstaufen at Sicily,[80] Averroes and his students formed no school to continue his methodological approach in the lands of Islam. Instead, his thought proved to be powerfully influential in Jewish circles, where his authority displaced that of Aristotle,[81] and in Christian Europe, where his teachings were variously embraced, challenged, condemned and revivified through the period of the Renaissance.

Sufi mysticism and a very distinctive philosophy of mystical unity and experience was already present in Andalusia in the person of Ibn al-'Arabī

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79 For a detailed discussion of the development of his doctrine of intellect see the introduction to Averroes, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd) of Cordoba: Long commentary on the* De anima *of Aristotle*, trans. Richard C. Taylor, with Thérèse-Anne Druart (New Haven and London, 2009).

80 See Charles Burnett, 'The "Sons of Averroes with the emperor Frederick" and the transmission of the philosophical works by Ibn Rushd', in Gerhard Endress and Jan A. Aertsen (eds.), *Averroes and the Aristotelian tradition: Sources, constitution and reception of the philosophy of Ibn Rushd (1126–1198): Proceedings of the Fourth Symposium Averroicum, Cologne, 1996* (Leiden, 1999).

81 See Steven Harvey, 'Arabic into Hebrew: The Hebrew translation movement and the influence of Averroes upon Jewish thought', in Daniel H. Frank and Oliver Leaman (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to medieval Jewish philosophy* (Cambridge, 2003).

(d. 638/1240) who when very young is said to have met Averroes. Islamic philosophy was soon also to appear in many thinkers such as the widely travelled Andalusian philosopher Ibn Sab'īn (d. 669/1270), who reflected this movement with a philosophical approach learned in Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism but constituted as Sufi mystical wisdom.

al-Suhrawardī (d. c. 587/1191)

In the tumultuous era of the Crusades, the warrior ruler of Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia, Saladin (d. 589/1193), recaptured Jerusalem in 1187 from the Christians, who had held it for nearly a century. The Christian response in the form of the Third Crusade four years later initiated a debilitating military struggle which came to an end in 1192 with a truce with Richard the Lionhearted. In 1183 the mystic and philosopher Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā al-Suhrawardī had come to recently captured Aleppo, now governed by Saladin's young son, who came under the influence of this unorthodox and popular philosopher. In 1191 Saladin, already fully engaged with the Christians, apparently became concerned over the stability of his hold on Aleppo and the sway al-Suhrawardī wielded over his son. In that year Saladin ordered the execution of al-Suhrawardī, who may well have suffered death in connection with his philosophical views. While those views were perhaps Platonic in political matters, the philosophy set forth by al-Suhrawardī was a novel construction of his own making. Well versed in the history of philosophy and in the Peripatetic tradition of al-Fārābī and Avicenna, al-Suhrawardī attacked the distinction of essence and existence in things set out by Avicenna as merely a conceptual distinction in the mind, not in the reality of things.

Al-Suhrawardī also rejected that tradition's epistemological foundations for the apprehension of intelligibles and essential definitions purportedly grasped through abstraction or emanation. Rather, true apprehension of real essences is not mediated, but rather found in the unmediated presence (*ḥuḍūr*) of the known to the knower. Al-Suhrawardī expounds this new teaching in his *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The philosophy of illumination), where he explains his Platonism with an implicit reference to the mystical account of Plotinus found in the *Theology of Aristotle*. He writes:

> Plato and his companions showed plainly that they believed the Maker of the universe and the world of intellect to be light (*nūr*) when they said that the pure light is the world of intellect. Of himself, Plato said that in certain of his spiritual conditions he would shed his body and become free from matter. Then he would see light and splendor within his essence. He would ascend to

that all-encompassing divine cause and would seem to be located and suspended in it, beholding a mighty light in that lofty and divine place.[82]

For al-Suhrawardī the Platonic forms and the transcendent intellects of the tradition as well as human knowers are essentially lights, for light requires no mediation but only its own presence to make itself known. From the creative Light of Lights (God) come all the other lights, varying in intensity as well as other things, including time, which is without beginning or end. In this metaphysics it is the task of human beings to transcend the shadows of corporeality and realise themselves as lights. Fully integrating into his philosophical account passages of the Qur'ān and urging his readers to the ways of prayer and religious observance, al-Suhrawardī crafted both from a critical epistemology and from his own mystical experiences a distinctive illuminationist metaphysics of light as a ḥikma (wisdom) encompassing in a unitary way religion and philosophy.

Rejection and integration of *falsafa*

The prolific and influential theologian Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1209) in his early years became well versed in philosophy and read Avicenna broadly. He furthered al-Ghazālī's openness to the value of philosophical logic and argumentation by use in his own reasoning, but he was a deeply committed Ash'arī. He rejected Avicenna's metaphysical teachings on emanationism and the restriction of divine knowledge to universals and instead embraced the atomism and occasionalism characteristic of the Ash'arite tradition's emphasis on divine power, though with some significant modifications. While he frequently wrote in favour of a thoroughgoing determinism, he found the issue of determinism and freedom without a satisfactory resolution. He wrote: 'There is a mystery (*sirr*) in [this issue]; viz. that proving the existence of God compels one to uphold determinism (*jabr*) ... while proving prophecy compels one to uphold [human] autonomy (*qudra*). For if man does not act autonomously, what use is there in sending prophets and in revealing scriptures?'[83] However, Avicenna had a lasting impact on the discussion of metaphysical matters in both *kalām* and *falsafa*, as thinkers from both traditions used and developed his thinking and influenced one another.[84] The

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82 al-Suhrawardī, *The philosophy of illumination*, ed. and trans. John Walbridge and Hossein Ziai (Provo, UT, 1999), p. 110. Also see John Walbridge, 'Suhrawardī and illuminationism', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*.

83 Ayman Shihadeh, *The teleological ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden, 2006), p. 39.

84 See, for example, the discussion of the metaphysical issue of *al-umūr al-'āmma* and the subject of metaphysical science as developed in those traditions through the centuries with various interactions from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī to Mullā Ṣadra in Eichner, 'Dissolving the unity of metaphysics'.

Kitāb al-mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām (Book of stations on the science of *kalām*) by the Ash'arite theologian 'Adud al-Dīn al-Ījī (d. 756/1355) also displays a powerful proficiency in philosophical argumentation, both in its critical assessments of the reasoning of the *falsafa* tradition and in its philosophical theology in the *kalām* tradition. In six parts, this work deals with theory of knowledge and syllogistic proof, issues of ontology, unity and causality, atoms, substance, accidents and astronomy, God and divine attributes, actions etc. (*ilāhiyyāt*), faith, prophecy and more. There he rejects the notion of knowledge by presence and prefers to understand knowledge as a created attribute.[85] Sabra rightly cites the work of al-Ījī as an example of 'the overcoming of *falsafa* by *kalām*' and as an example of what the philosopher of history Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) considered a mixing of *falsafa* and *kalām*, which generally 'resulted in making "the one discipline ... no longer distinguishable from the other"'.[86]

Efforts to integrate *falsafa* into Islam, found in the followers of al-Kindī, most notably in al-'Āmirī, and also in al-Suhrawardī, were continued in connection with interpretation of Avicenna's late *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (Pointers and reminders), the last section of which was read in accord with developing mystical and illuminationist philosophical accounts. Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), a Shī'ī well known for his influential *Akhlāq-i nāṣirī* (Nasirian ethics), responded to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in his own commentary on *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*.[87] He embraced Avicenna's account of possible and necessary being leading to the assertion of the Necessary Being and furthered the mystical reading of Avicenna with his commentary on Avicenna's *Epistle of Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān*. Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311) studied Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* with al-Ṭūsī and wrote his own commentary on *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* (The philosophy of illumination) by al-Suhrawardī. These were the beginnings of a philosophical tradition of thinkers united by their interest in the integration of philosophy, religion, mysticism (under the influence of Ibn al-'Arabī and his followers) and illuminationism, culminating in the founding of the 'School of Iṣfahān' by Mīr Dāmād (d. 1041/1631) and Ṣadr

85 'Adud al-Dīn al-Ījī, *Kitāb al-mawāqif fī 'ilm al-kalām*, ed. 'Abd al-Rahman 'Umayrah, 3 vols. (Beirut, 1997), vol. I, pp. 582ff. This text and others are cited by A. I. Sabra in 'Science and philosophy in medieval Islamic theology: The evidence of the fourteenth century', *ZGAIW*, 9 (1994), pp. 18 ff. Also see Josef van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des 'Adudaddīn al-Īcī: Übersetzung und Kommentar des esten Buches seiner Mawāqif* (Wiesbaden, 1966).

86 Sabra, 'Science and philosophy', p. 13.

87 See Toby Mayer, 'Fakhr ad-Dīn ar-Rāzī's critique of Ibn Sīnā's argument for the unity of God in the *Ishārāt*, and Naṣīr ad-Dīn aṭ-Ṭūsī's defence', in David C. Reisman (ed.), *Before and after Avicenna: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group* (Leiden and Boston, 2003).

al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī or Mullā Ṣadrā (d. 1050/1640),[88] whose thought continues as foundational to modern philosophy in contemporary Iran. This can be seen in *The principles of epistemology in Islamic philosophy: Knowledge by presence*[89] by the late Iranian Shīʿite philosopher Mehdi Haʾiri (d. 1999), who received a doctorate at the University of Toronto and followed in that tradition but also integrated aspects of Western philosophy into his work.[90]

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88 On 'first philosophy' and 'divine science' in the metaphysical thought of Mullā Ṣadrā see Rüdiger Arnzen, 'The structure of Mullā Ṣadra's *al-Ḥikma al-muttaʿāliya fī l-asfār al-ʿaqilyaa al-arbaʿa* and his concepts of first philosophy and divine science: An essay', *Medioevo*, 32 (2007).

89 Mehdi Haʾiri Yazdi, *The principles of epistemology in Islamic philosophy: Knowledge by presence* (New York, 1992).

90 Also see Hossein Ziai, 'Recent trends in Arabic and Persian philosophy', in Adamson and Taylor (eds.), *The Cambridge companion to Arabic philosophy*.