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Ilyas Altuner

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DEDICATION

This issue of *Entelekyia Logico-Metaphysical Review* has been dedicated to Emanuele Severino, who is the Italian philosopher, whose original philosophical position called neo-Parmenidism, May he rest in peace.



On the Common Universal Things and That They Are Not Beings by Themselves *

ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS

Translated by

İLYAS ALTUNER 

Iğdır University

Entelechy

Submitted: 29.10.2020 | Accepted: 22.11.2020

Abstract: Alexander's views on universals are, it seems, quite important in the history of western philosophy. When Boethius gives in his second commentary on Porphyry's *Isagoge* his solution to the problem of universals as he conceived it, he claims to be adopting Alexander's approach. If true, this means that the locus classicus for all western medieval thinkers on this topic is really a rendering of Alexander's teaching. Alexander commented on Aristotle's statement in his *On the Soul* "The universal animal either is nothing at all or is posterior if it exists" (402b8), and this commentary has been translated into Arabic several times in the classical period. In this study, the anonymous Arabic translations of Alexander's commentary has been translated into English.

Keywords: Aristotle, Alexander, *On the Soul*, commentary, universal, animal.

* This translation is a section of studies which were performed under the title of 'Entelekyia School of Logico-Metaphysics'. For the translation source, see Alexander of Aphrodisias, "Maqāla al-Iskandar al-Afrūdīsī fī al-Ashyā al-‘Āmmiyya al-Kulliyya wa Annahā Laysat bi-A’yān Qāima," Ar. trans. Anonymous, ed. Hans-Jochen Ruland, "Quaestio I, 11a: De Universalibus," *Zwei Arabische Fassungen der Abhandlung des Alexander von Aphrodisias Über die Universalia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1979), 254-9.

ENTELECHY

ALEXANDER OF APHRODISIAS

ON THE COMMON UNIVERSAL THINGS

AND THAT THEY ARE NOT BEINGS BY THEMSELVES

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الاسكندر الأفروديسي

مقالة في الأشياء العامة الكلية

وأنها ليست بأعيان قائمة

انتليخيا

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On the Common Universal Things

- 5 Alexander of Aphrodisias said that Aristotle mentioned in his work *On the Soul*, “The universal animal either is nothing at all or is posterior if it exists.”

We should investigate why it is said and what the meaning of his saying “The universal animal either is nothing at all or is posterior if it exists.”

- 10 We have said that we have explained this statement in a really good way in our great commentary on this book. Also, we comment on this statement, and we say that the genus is universal, and the universal is of things that existed universally. If things do not happen first, there is not any universal or genus at all. If so, the things that existed should be first, then at that time to have universal is an accident for them. Then the entities to which the universal is an accident are that existed in itself. The universal is not something that existed by itself, but [rather] it can be an accident for something else. Like “animal”, it denotes to some natures, for it means an ensouled substance capable of sense perception.

- 15 We say that the animal itself and its nature is not universal, for even if it were assumed that animal is only one in number, it would be an ensouled substance capable of sense perception. It is merely a universal when it is an adjective to many things differing from each other in forms. Now the name “universal” from the animal has become an accident, for it has not existed in the substance of something, it was an accident belonging to it.

- 20 Now then we return to [the topic] to say that this genus is universal, and the universal is the accident of the substance. Aristotle said of it “The universal animal either is nothing at all...” Since it is not a being in the proper sense, it does not signify the nature of its own, that is, he has no entity, but it is an accident for some things. Or, if one would call as something that existed, then it will be “posterior” to that being, after that the thing to which the accident belongs.

مقالة في الأهواء العامة الكلية

5 قال الإسكندر إن أرسطو ذكر في كتابه في النفس «إن الحي الكلي إما ألا يكون شيئاً البتة وإما إن كان قائماً، كان أخيراً».

وقد يحق علينا أن نفحص عن ذلك وما معنى قوله «إن الحي الكلي إما ألا يكون شيئاً البتة وإما إن كان قائماً، كان أخيراً».

فنقول إنا قد لخصنا هذا القول في تفسيرنا ذلك الكتاب تلخيصاً جيداً ونحن
10 ملخصون ذلك الآن أيضاً وقائلون إن الجنس هو كلي وإن الكلي هو للأشياء، موجود على كلية. فإن لم تكن الأشياء أولاً، لم يكن كلي ولا جنس البتة؛ فينبغي إذن أن تكون الأشياء الموجودة أولاً، ثم حينئذ يعرض أن يكون لها كلي؛ فتكون عند ذلك الأشياء التي يعرض لها الكلي موجودة بذاتها، فأما الكلي فليس بشيء موجود قائم بذاته، لانه يكون عرضاً لشيء آخر. شبه الحي، فإنه دال على بعض الطباع، أعني على جوهر متنفس ذي حس.

15 فنقول إن الحي بذاته وطبيعته ليس هو كلي، وذلك أنه ولو لم يكن إلا حي واحد في العدد فقط، فهو جوهر متنفس ذو حس. وإنما صار كلياً، حين صار نعتاً على أشياء كثيرة مختلفة الصور. فقد صار الآن اسم «الكلي» من الحي عرضاً، لأنه إذا لم يكن في جوهر شيء موجوداً، كان فيه عرضاً.

فترجع الآن فنقول إن الجنس هذا كان كلياً والكلي عرض جوهر؛ قال أرسطوطاليس
20 لذلك «إن الحي الكلي إما ألا يكون شيئاً البتة...»، لأنه ليس بموجود وجوداً حقاً، ولا هو دال على طبيعة ذاتية، أعني أنه ليست له ذات، لانه عرض لبعض الأشياء؛ وإما إن سماه أحد شيئاً موجوداً، فإنه إنما كان موجوداً «أخيراً» بعد ذلك الشيء الموجود فيه العارض له.

The truth of what the philosopher said is as I mention: For given the singular animal, it is not necessary that the universal animal exist (for it is possible to exist just one animal), but if the universal animal should exist, it is necessary also for a singular animal to exist.

5 If we have done away with the ensouled substance capable of sense perception, the genus animal would not exist either at all (for non-entity cannot exist in many things). But if we have done away with the genus animal, the ensouled substance capable of sense-perception would also have not done away with, for it might be, as we said earlier, in just one animal. And for these reasons that I mentioned, the philosopher said: “The universal animal either is nothing at all or is posterior if it exists.”

10 Now it has been clarified and corrected that then neither the genus and nor the universal are an entity and being by itself, as the first philosophers thought, but the two [concepts] are the accidents for the singular entities and explanation on them.

The article is done, and thank God very much, as is his family, no Lord but him.


وتحقيق ما قال الحكيم ما أنا ذاكره: إذا كان الحى الجزئى، لم ينبغ أن يكون الحى الكلى اضطرارا (لأنه قد يمكن أن يكون حى واحد فقط)، وأما إن كان حى كلى، كان ينبغى أن يكون حى جزئى اضطرارا.

5 وإن نحن رفعنا الجوهر المتنفس المحس، لم يكن الحى الجنسى البتة به، (وذلك أن الذى ليس بموجود لا يمكن أن يكون فى أشياء كثيرة)؛ وإن نحن رفعنا الحى الجنسى، لم يرفع الجوهر المتنفس المحس، لأنه قد يمكن أن يكون فى حى واحد فقط، كما قلنا آنفا. فلهذه الوجوه التى ذكرت قال الفيلسوف «إن الحى الكلى إما ألا يكون شيئا البتة وإما إن كان قائما، كان أخيرا».

10 فقد استبان الآن وصح إذن أن الجنس والكلى ليست لهما ذات ولا عين قائم، كما ظن بعض الأولين، لانهما عرضان للأشياء المفردة ولبيان عليها.

تمت المقالة، والحمد لله كثيرا، كما هو أهله، لا رب سواه.

The Relationship between Reason and Revelation from the Perspective of an Extraordinary Salafi Abū al-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl *

HATİCE KÜBRA İMAMOĞLUGİL 

Burdur Mehmet Akif Ersoy University

Research Article

Submitted: 21.10.2020 | Accepted: 17.11.2020

Abstract: The relationship between reason and revelation has been on the agenda of Islamic scholars for a long time and it has been discussed as an essential argument with regard to developing the source of religious epistemology. The Salafist approach represents the most traditionalist fundamental religious idea of Islam, they subordinate the reason to the revelation and hence they consider the revelation and religious narrations as a pure and the only source. Ibn 'Aqīl was a member of the Salafi/Hanbali scholars and he had some counter-view/discourses against intellectual tradition that he belonged to. He attached great importance to reason and this is the most notable discourse in his doctrine. Also, this is an indication of his traditionalist approach and meanwhile, he tends towards rationalism. The main argument of Ibn 'Aqīl regarding the relationship between reason and revelation is the compatibility of reason and revelation. Reason confirms revelation and revelation agrees with reason. So, there is no contradiction or conflict between reason and revelation. Thusly, a correct understanding of revelation is only possible by using the mind/by putting the mind into action correctly.

Keywords: Ibn 'Aqīl, reason, revelation, reasoning, knowledge.

* This study is based on my unpublished master dissertation titled *Reason and Revelation Relationship in Abu'l Wafa Ibn 'Aqīl* at Ankara University in 2017.

Introduction

Reason and revelation are two main sources of knowledge. The balance between these two sources have been disturbed due to strict traditionalist, that restricted reason and strict rationalist that restricted the knowledge of revelation. However, reason and revelation are not alternative to one another, rather than this, they are promoter/supporting phenomena for one another. Because revelation is a dominant source over the human being deeds/actions as well as it is a motivated source that leads human being to do ontological inquiries about the external world and search for the meaningfulness.

Relationship between mind and reason is the first and a main issue in the agenda that always keep the mind of the Islamic scholar, especially philosopher and theologian busy. The Kalam (islamic theology) has attached a great importance to the reason when setting its methodology and this is the key feature that distinguishes kalam from other related studies. The reason has a function in evaluating, processing, and verification the knowledge just as it is performing the same function to get the knowledge. So, the reason has the same approach to revelation as well. The Muslim theologians (mutakallimūn) consider the reason as an effective instrument in understanding and interpreting revelation.

In Salafī's paradigm reason is considered as a way for understanding activities as well as using of reason/rational method in religious interpretation is considered as bid'a (innovation) and void, in opposition to Muslim theologians. Although Abū al-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl, who lived in the fifth century Hijri and was a Hanbalī-Salafī that member of Ashab al-Hadith, he questioned the possibility of a third approach among these two-opposite points of views. The main reason behind his differentiation from the Salafī predecessor, is the lecture of kalam that he attended for a while within the scope of multiple/ versatile teaching activities which were given by Mu'tazili scholars.

The Epistemic Value of Reason

Ibn 'Aqīl¹ attached importance to the concept of the reasoning (naẓar) and independent reasoning (ijtihād), and these were his main and the most important objections to the Salafi tradition that he was a member of.² As a matter of fact, the first these two concepts, which are completely against the codes of Salafi tradition, indicates domination of personal opinion/evaluation and interpretation on the subject/provision and the second one indicates that one obliged to use the mind in the process.³

To Ibn 'Aqīl, the reasoning (naẓar), which is the way of inferential knowledge, means to contemplate/think deeply about the condition and the evidence of something, in order to attest to those things. It is also means distinguishing and knowing the right from wrong as well as proof something and doubt about, and this can be possible only with searching through rational method. On the flipside, Ibn 'Aqīl pointed out that acquired knowledge by personal effort includes suspicion and hence he stated that every aspect/viewpoint and research does not lead to the correct result, and there might be a false viewpoint/aspect, due to this fact, he indicated that the knowledge which have been obtained through the viewpoint and inferential method might have suspicion. Consequently, the accurate viewpoint could only be obtained by using a right method, if not it might cause inaccuracy.

Ibn 'Aqīl described the processes of the reasoning (naẓar) in two ways; as a goal and as a tool, he characterized the naẓar as a tool, since the result that could be taken through the naẓar is out

¹ For detailed information on Ibn 'Aqīl's life and thought system, see George Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl et la Résurgence de l'Islam Traditionaliste au XIe Siècle (Ve Siècle de l'Hégire)* (Damas: Institut Français de Damas, 1963); Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam* (Edinburgh: Edinburg University Press, 1997).

² Abū al-Faraj Ibn Rajab, *Dhail 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, I-V, ed. 'Abdurrahmān b. Sulaymān al-Uthaymīn (Riyad: Maktaba al-Ubaykān, 2005), I, 348.

³ Abū al-Wafā' Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, ed. George Makdisi (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2010), I, 7-8 and 25.

of its control and at the same time as a goal/aim, since the intended is only could be obtained through the aim itself. For instance, knowing God and His Messenger is the main aim of the reasoning. To accessing the knowledge is the first thing which is expected from the obligant (mukallaf) and this is a religious obligation (fardh) on him. Ibn 'Aqīl mentioned about the notion of demonstration (burhān) within framework of the reasoning (nazar). He defined the notion of evidence as a tool that could provide accessibility to the needed/ necessary information/ knowledge, similarly to his definition of notion of the reasoning.⁴

Ibn 'Aqīl believes that it is an obligation to use the deduction and the view which are the dominant method of theologian principal, it is also obligatory for every individual who has responsibility/obligant. He indicated the way that Abraham went through to discover the existence of God via his rational effort⁵ and considered it as a reference, in this regard, Ibn 'Aqīl emphasized on the reasoning (nazar), deduction and induction as the functions of mind/ reason.⁶

To Ibn 'Aqīl having approach of the reasoning and jurisprudence mean to be against/ avoid the imitation (taqlid) and paying attention to avoid from imitation, which is another point that differentiated him from companions of hadith. Also, he thought that it is obligation to be subjected of evidence, not the ideas/arguments of Ahmad b. Hanbal.⁷

To Ibn 'Aqīl, reason, prophet and Quran are the dominant of divine grace that God bestowed on human being. Ibn 'Aqīl gave priority to the reason as a precondition, since, reason has an important role in deciding and evidencing the reality/trueness of the prophet and the text that has been brought by him. Ibn 'Aqīl touched on the factor that the reason was given to human being

⁴ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, I, 22; IV/I, 236-237.

⁵ Sūrah al-An'ām, 6/76.

⁶ Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, ed. George Makdisi (Beirut: Institut de Letters Orientales, 1970-1), II, 717.

⁷ Ibn Rajab, *Dhail 'alā Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, I, 348.

as a grace, in order to explain the importance that he attached to functional mind/reason. In this regard, the reason should be used in obeying to his endower (Allah), his orders and prohibitions, to show the needed gratitude to his generosity and to be fair and kind to other people. Because the mind/reason which is not concerned with obeying to God and being fair with people is not different from a blind eye and a deaf ear in terms of function.⁸

Ibn 'Aqīl pointed out to that the reason should be forethoughtfulness.⁹ As God says” Say, “Have you considered? If it is from God and you reject it—who is further astray than he who is cutoff and alienated?”¹⁰ “If he is a liar, his lying will rebound upon him; but if he is truthful, then some of what he promises you will befall you”¹¹ these verses are criticism to those who do not take precaution and reason involves in/a part of this action. These verses that call for taking precaution and appeal to reason to take this action, since this action cannot be taken by anything else, but only by reason.¹² We can say that this means reason is coincide with revelation and confirm revelation in regard to the way of Ibn 'Aqīl's consideration the issue that God appeals to human mind/ reason.

The Scope of Authority/Jurisdiction of Reason and Revelation

Rational knowledge and revelational knowledge are complementary for each other. However, this does not always make for them possible to expresses interchangeably. The mutakallimūn considered this as a problem and determined the authority of both rational knowledge and revelational knowledge under three categories, in their works.¹³ The things/issues can

⁸ Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, II, s. 652; Makdisi, *Ibn 'Aqīl: Religion and Culture in Classical Islam*, 92.

⁹ According to Abū al-Hussain al-Basrī, reason has made it necessary to be cautious. Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, II, 600.

¹⁰ Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilat, 41/52.

¹¹ Sūrah al-Mu'min, 40/28.

¹² Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, II, 648-649.

¹³ Bāqillānī, *at-Taqrīb wa al-Irshād aş-Şaghīr*, akt. Binyamin Abrahamov, *İslam Kelâmı: Gelenekçilik ve Akılcılık*, Tr. trans. Emine Buket Sağlam (İstanbul: İnsan

only be known by reason, the things/issues can only be known by revelation and the things/the issues can only be known by both reason and revelation, also, Ibn 'Aqīl's work/approach includes descriptions about these categories. Principally, we should underline that he did not develop a different approach and explanation about the subject. However, it is important to know that he agreed with discourses of mutakallimūn.

Ibn 'Aqīl incontrovertibly gave the priority to the reason in the category where the limit of authority of reason and revelation are separated. According to this, the reason has a main function in the context/ framework of confirming the messenger and his messages and priorly, proving the existence and tawhid (God's oneness). When he made this definition, he started with categorization of the things that could be known by reason without appealing to revelation, and these issues are respectively proving of God's existence, God as the creator of the world, God's oneness, the obligatory attributes of God, the tracts, and proving the necessity of sending a messenger and he considered the reason as a sole authority, in order to prove these issues.¹⁴

Ibn 'Aqīl argued the issue with emphasizing on monotheism (tawhīd) and prophecy that can only be known by reason, without elaborating his view about the creation of the universe. Minerals and plants are the signs of God's existence in this context. Also, they indicted the existence, mastery and wisdom of the craftsmen.¹⁵ Therefore, the reason does not need revelational knowledge to make deduction about the existence of a creator and the traces of his wisdom through his creation, on the contrary, the reason must be convinced to prove the reality of revela-

Yayınları, 2010), 123-124; al-Juwaynī, *Kitabū'l-İrşād: İnanç Esasları Kılavuzu*, Tr. trans. A. Bülent Baloğlu, Mehmet İlhan, Sabri Yılmaz and Faruk Sancar (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 2012), 291-292; Abū Ya'lā al-Farrā', *Mukhtaşar al-Mu'tamad fī Uşūl ad-Dīn*, ed. Vedī' Zeydān Ḥaddād (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1974), 24-25; Abū al-Hussain al-Basrī, *Kitāb al-Mu'tamad fī Uşūl al-Fiqh*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥamidullāh (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1964-5), II, 886-888.

¹⁴ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍiḥ fī Uşūl al-Fiqh*, I, 33-34.

¹⁵ Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, II, 665.

tional knowledge. According to Ibn 'Aqīl, the revelation based on God's speech and message and this is the indication of the argument. There is a consensus (ijma) that the messenger of God as a recipient and transmitter of the revelation did not make any mistake in transferring the messages. However, he thought that it would be truer approach to know about God first and then know about the accuracy of God's speech and message, since it is secondary (fer)¹⁶ to prove the existence of God. Therefore, he stated that it is impossible to know Allah/God without knowing his attributes/names and his messenger. Thusly, he put the knowledge about knowing Allah and his messenger in the category of the rational knowledge that could be obtained through reason, rather than through revelational knowledge, he also emphasized on obligation of knowing the messenger/prophet through reason/rational knowledge and he also indicated that the argument on the contrary of this, namely, the argument of those who said that knowing Allah/God is only possible through revelation is unreasonable/ irrational.¹⁷ As a matter of fact, he thought that imitation is permissible in terms of religious rituals; such as prayer and ritual of prayer, but he disapproved the imitation in the field of monotheism/tawhīd and prophecy.¹⁸ His point of view gave clue that he was an extraordinary/ out of common Salafists.

On the other hand, Ibn 'Aqīl stressed that it is not an obligation to have knowledge about the reality of the informant/the messenger and he pointed out that we have no other reference except reason, in order to answer the question, how one could be sure from the reality of the prophet/messenger. According to him, it is impossible for someone to say that I received a message about the existence of God and His messenger, hence they should be considered as truth. Because such matters; God's oneness and the existence of the prophet/messenger need evidences that could be proved through comprehension, independently from

¹⁶ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, II, 98.

¹⁷ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, II, 33.

¹⁸ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, IV/II, 507.

the message and the messenger. Such a message can be attractive to us, but what we need is the real evidence rather than the words/ the messages of the messenger. The precision of these issues is only possible with reason. If the informant got the knowledge about the Tawhid/God's oneness and prophecy through the view, Ibn 'Aqīl stated that this indicates the truth of our words, if the informant got these information/knowledge through another informant, in this case, one needs to prove the correctness/truthiness of all knowledge/information one by one, as a result, he concluded that this is impossible.¹⁹

As it can be seen, Ibn 'Aqīl has revealed/suggested that rational theorem is unrivaled in terms of epistemic value in the subjects that related to Tawhid/God's oneness and prophethood. As a matter of fact, it is impossible to prove/confirm frequent messages. The accuracy of the received message can only be confirmed by reason. In another word, the reason has the sole competency in this regard.

Actually, he brought the issue to the agenda and it is becoming highly crucial, while considering him as a member of Salafi/Hanbeli tradition that acting deliberately and cautiously about giving authority to the reason. Ibn 'Aqīl emphasized on the idea of misusing the reason or not using the reason/mind leads to sin, on the contrary of the approach that considering using the reason as a bidat/innovation which is lead to sin. Also, he stated that what Allah will be more pleased, if we use the reason truthfully and continued:

The person who grasp/comprehends the importance of the reason, which is God's gift to his servants, will use his means available and his power to the extent of his abilities and sedulity in order to show his gratitude to his God. But as far as I can see, most people debar the reason from the place that the reason deserved. They lament through the poetry and prose for their youth/past years.²⁰

¹⁹ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, I, 33-34.

²⁰ Ibn 'Aqīl, *Kitāb al-Funūn*, II, 691-692.

Based on the question of whether the reason alone is sufficient to comprehend the tawhid and nubuwwat, Ibn 'Aqīl inferred that this will not change the fact that the reason is not capable to comprehend other matters. So/at this point revelation gets involved in the issue. According to Ibn 'Aqīl there are some categories that reason is not capable to identify and they can only be known by revelation, these types of knowledge/ categories included the issues which are related to the judgement of such as acts; husun-qubuh (the concept of good and evil), harām-halāl (permissible/lawful-sinful/unlawful) obedience and rebellion, obligatory and meshbūh/abominable, etc. He pointed out that there is a third category, which can be known by both reason and revelation, in this regard, he prioritized the knowledge related to tawhid (God's oneness) and prophethood and he stated that these two concepts need to be supported by revelation, even in the cases that they can be comprehended by reason. Additionally, it is impossible to get some knowledges via reason only. For instance, making comparison between judgments, the vision of God (ru'yatullāh), the preciseness of the good action which are based on the solitary hadīth (khabar al-wāhid), and great sinners (murtakib al-kabīra) are among these knowledges.²¹

Conclusion

Although Ibn 'Aqīl is a member of the Hanbali tradition, which has an introverted, extremely strict in terms of sectarian nomism, he emphasized that there is an absolute agreement between reason and revelation, in consequences of they are favor of the same sources, thusly, the conflict or contradiction would not be possible between them (reason and revelation), also he underlined that with using mind/reason correctly (precise view), it is possible to understand the revelation truly and he attached importance to the reasoning and use of reason as a muslim theologian (mutakallim). However, He deemed the comprehensive

²¹ Ibn 'Aqīl, *al-Waḍīḥ fī Uṣūl al-Fiqh*, I, 33-34.

and interpretative activities of the reason as an obligation, and he always considered the revelational knowledge as a restrictive factor in his method/ for his approach.

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The Interpretation of Personal Religious Experience in al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh min ad-Ḍalāl*

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Research Article

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Abstract: Hujjat al-Islam Imam al-Ghazali is a thinker, mystic, jurist, and theologian who has still influenced today since his time. In his *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal*, he writes about how he survived the crisis that his inquiries about life had driven him to depression. Due to the distress caused by the crisis in him, he left the place where he lived and moved away from people. During this abandonment, he confesses his experiences, inquiries, introspection, and ways of getting to know himself in *al-Munqidh*. In this article, I will try to understand how he reached guidance from this crisis, what his method was, and how he gained personal religious experience. I will examine the differences and similarities of the way of Sufism from the clergy, where the concept of rational theosophy corresponds in al-Ghazali's thought. He shows us the limits of reason on the way to reach precise information. He talks about realities that cannot be explained within these limits, what he has learned in the *uzlat* (escaping from community life and living alone), and why the love for the world is dangerous. The reason why al-Ghazali returned to social life is explained with the idea of 'fiqh of priorities' in Islam. Al-Ghazali attributes the "nour" (light) that descends to his heart to the will of God in explaining his salvation from the turning point in his life.

Keywords: Al-Ghazali, personal religious experience, clergy, theosophy, knowledge of God, light, mystical theology.

Your look at the subject you are discussing should be directed at God, for God and with God. Because if you do not investigate and examine to God, He will leave you with yourself or with what you turn to other than Him. (al-Ghazali, *al-Munqidh*)

Introduction

Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Ghazali al-Tusi (d. 505/1111) is an Islamic thinker known for his philosophical criticism of Ash'ari theology, Shafii jurists, Sufism and philosophers. He was born in 450 in Tabaran, Tus in the Khorasan region of Iran.¹ He has nicknames like Hujjat al-Islam² and Zayn al-Din³. According to an information in al-Dhahabi, al-Ghazali said that people called his name with a double "z" but he was from a village called Ghazal. A similar rumor belongs to Sheikh Mohammed, but despite this, according to the vast majority of ancient history writers, he was referred to as Ghazzâlî because of his father's profession. His father was gazzal wool spinner. Likewise, Ibn Khallikan sees the reading of al-Ghazali as opposed to common usage. He states that commemorating a person according to his own profession is a tradition in the Khwarazm region where al-Ghazali lives. Finally, a reading in the form of Ghazali has been deemed appropriate for recent writers.⁴

As a result of his life-long work on philosophy, theology, Batiniyya and Sufism, al-Ghazali's conclusion is that he has led to a depression, depression in the world of mind and soul, in his own words. The depression in al-Ghazali's inner world was getting bigger and bigger as he would admit in *al-Munqidh*, it was

¹ Tus region is the famous city of Iran at that time known for its scholars and statesmen.

² "Hujjat al-Islam" means the proof of Islam and the person competent in religious matters.

³ Zayn means ornament. Zayn al-Din means the ornament of religion.

⁴ Mustafa Çağrı, "Gazzâlî," *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1996), XIII, 489.

becoming inextricable. This skepticism, as al-Ghazali said, was present in his own creation. Because his effort and curiosity to seek the truth was a state that started in his youth. With the magic of his fame and reputation, his studies and achievements, this state of depression was postponed for a while, but at the end of his teaching for four years, the effect of Sufism, which had influenced him since his youth, emerged again and strongly. His suspicion arises not only in knowledge problems or metaphysics but also in the field of morality, he said that the world was almost drowned in this situation. Even in the content of his education as an educator, he said that he was dealing with sciences that were useless for the hereafter and devoid of God's approval, and he admitted that his desire for fame and fame came to the fore in this. Even if he wanted to leave Baghdad for this reason and get rid of this fame's eyes and heart.⁵ He said that the struggle of the soul with its reputation and position lasted six months. These crisis situations started in al-Ghazali like Rajab 488 (July 1095) and caused psychological and even physiological problems in him. Doctors who were unable to diagnose their difficulty in lecturing, lack of appetite, indigestion, and weakness because of drug treatment were convinced that the situation was psychological. Finally, al-Ghazali, who won the struggle of his soul, cut off all his relations with Baghdad, gave the remainder of his family's property to the needy, left his madrasa duty to his brother Ahmed al-Ghazali and left Baghdad in Dhul Qadah 488 (November 1095). In the background of his departure from Baghdad, there are also thoughts that the political events of that period were caused by the political events of that period, and there were also those who went further and in fact made their departure from Baghdad a completely political decision. But the reasons for the depression in *al-Munqidh* and the way out, and even the fact that *al-Munqidh* was written during this crisis will clarify us on this issue.

Al-Ghazali, who left Baghdad, went to Damascus and stayed

⁵ Çağrı, "Gazzâlî," 491-492.

in Damascus for two years. During his stay in Damascus, he retreated to the Umayyad Mosque⁶ to purify, cleanse, cultivate his soul, deep thoughts about his moral and epistemological doubts, and gave his time to riyadat.⁷ Then he went to Jerusalem and retreated. During this private period, which al-Ghazali says lasted eleven years, he conveyed many enlightenment and exploration possibilities for him, but the details of this period are not clear. al-Ghazali, who returned to Nishapur again after this inward journey, started teaching again, but after his guidance (in his own words), he described his teaching again: “At that time, I was teaching the science that gave position, now I call on the science that has lost the position”. We understand from these words how vital this change in himself is.⁸

According to al-Ghazali, doubt is the only way to reach the truth. Because those who do not doubt cannot think, the truth cannot be seen without thinking, and those who cannot see the truth remain in heresy. His systematic skepticism first begins with the issue of what existence is. Thus, he entered the philosophy for the first time by questioning the existence and the nature of the object. Exact knowledge should be cleared of suspicion. According to him, mathematical knowledge is precise knowledge. Thus, he first questioned the sources of knowledge, doubted his sense perceptions. It was the reason that brought the wrong knowledge, so how true could the propositions of reason be? al-Ghazali did not see any certainty about the reliability of the a priori and axiomatic knowledge he was questioning during this crisis period. Because evidence is based on evidence, and evidence is knowledge whose accuracy is previously accepted. Therefore, his skepticism, which he constructed with the inference that there is no reliable knowledge, led him to psychological

⁶ “The Umayyad Mosque is the first magnificent example of Islamic religious architecture in Damascus that has survived to this day.” Talip Yazıcı, “Emeviyeye Camii,” *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yayınları, 1995), XI, 108.

⁷ Notion with the concept of “disciplining the soul” (riyadat nl-nafs).

⁸ Çağrı, “Gazzâlî,” 493.

depression. The doubts about knowledge and existence explained in a few sentences here are essentially the result of al-Ghazali's reading and understanding of almost all philosophical sources of his age and the thoughts of the philosophers of the past. This crisis is not an ordinary thinking crisis. It is the whole thought system hitting the wall of philosophy. As he would later say in *al-Munqidh*, he survived thanks to “a thrown light in his heart by God”. Otherwise, the well where he fell is dark, his explanations are insufficient, and his evidence is without any source. After this healing, he accepts the necessary knowledge of the mind with all certainty. In his work *Tahafut al-Falasifa* (*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*), he criticizes philosophers on the basis of their own evidence.⁹ While understanding this work written by al-Ghazali against philosophers and those who dealt with philosophy, we cannot read this situation apart from the effects of the age al-Ghazali lived. Because there were some groups that were in the period of al-Ghazali and whose purpose used philosophy to attract people to their goals. Although these groups could exist in any age, the philosophy they used in line with their intentions had to be used in the period of al-Ghazali and it had to be shown for what purpose. With their knowledge, al-Ghazali undertook the task of destroying the basic issues of this destructive effect.¹⁰ He showed us what kind of purpose philosophical thinking can be used on this subject, again in his own expressions. There are philosophical methods and logical implications in these narratives.

Al-Ghazali accepts the principles of logic and mathematics, the competence of natural sciences in the experimental field. What he means is that the human mind is incompetent in the metaphysical field and that we need the support of revelation for this field beyond physics. In al-Ghazali, mind indicates four meanings:

⁹ Çağrı, “Gazzâlî,” 493-495.

¹⁰ Hasan Hüseyin Bircan, *İslam Felsefesine Giriş* (İstanbul: Ensar Neşriyat, 2008), 78-79.

- 1) The ability to acquire theoretical knowledge acquired from birth,
- 2) This ability has reached the level of comprehending the basic principles of logic in the age of appeal,
- 3) All of knowledge from experience,
- 4) The form of this knowledge ability to predict and judge various situations that will arise in the future.

According to him, the source of rational information can work in a way like active mind. It treats the word “nour” in verse 35 of Surah an-Nour¹¹ as a type of knowledge. Here, he connected the intuitive knowledge he handles as “nour” to mind. The first and true “nour”, which is the source of all “nour”, is God.¹²

Al-Mustasfa min Ilm al-Usul (proofs and interpretation methodology in Islamic law), which he devotes entirely to the subject of logic, is an example of this. He seriously criticized the method of theologians and based on Aristotle's logic. He said on this subject: “The accuracy of a knowledge is measured not by its reputation but by its obviousness.” According to him, the science of a person who does not know logic is not trusted. al-Ghazali's most striking criticism is his critique of determinism. The view that creation is renewed every moment and that every created thing is independent from each other did not agree with the determinist view. Indeterminism for morality does not stipulate human will. He argues that his free will is not bound by the law of reason.¹³ Al-Ghazali is the thinker who put the Greek-origin criticism of determinism into its place in the history of Islamic thought. Islamic philosophers accepted determinism by tying the

¹¹ “God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The example of His light is like a niche within which is a lamp, the lamp is within glass, the glass as if it were a pearly [white] star lit from [the oil of] a blessed olive tree, neither of the east nor of the west, whose oil would almost glow even if untouched by fire. Light upon light. God guides to His light whom He wills. And God presents examples for the people, and God is Knowing of all things.” Surah an-Nour, 35.

¹² Çağrı, “Gazzâlî,” 493-495.

¹³ Süleyman Hayri Bolay, *Felsefî Doktrinler Sözlüğü* (Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları, 1990), 73.

knowledge of God instead of God's free will in nature. However, al-Ghazali accepted this causal link, but denied that it was the result of an inherent necessity of nature. According to him, God is in a state of creation at all times¹⁴ and the causal link formed by this creation is in the hands of God.¹⁵ Malebranche's occasionalism has been the theory that best explains al-Ghazali's causality. Malebranche rejects determinism (necessary causality) and says that God created the cause-effect link in the universe (the view of occasionalism).¹⁶

Although al-Ghazali said in *Tahafut al-Falasifa* that we cannot base theological issues on a rational ground, he criticized Islamic philosophers for strictly adhering to the proving methods such as logic and mathematics and giving judgment on theology with conjecture and guesswork. Because philosophers have been lax in this matter. Concerning the inclusion of metaphysical issues in the Qur'an, al-Ghazali distinguishes between being irrational and being above the ration. The importance of this distinction stems from the fact that when dealing with metaphysical issues, we resort to our minds again. A rational reading of the Quran is quite possible for al-Ghazali. The rationality here is not necessity but admissibility. Because of these thoughts of al-Ghazali, it is said that although he was interested in Sufism, he never broke with philosophy and even built his Sufism on a philosophical ground.¹⁷ Reynold A. Nicholson emphasizes the great importance of al-Ghazali in the development of Sufi thought in his book titled *The Sufis of Islam*. Because he blended theosophy as rationally.¹⁸

Al-Ghazali combined traditionalist morality based on law

¹⁴ Surah ar-Rahman, 29: (كل يوم هو في شأن) "Every day He is at some task."

¹⁵ Çağrı, "Gazzâlî," 498.

¹⁶ Muharrem Şahiner, "Gâzzâlî'nin Nedensellik Anlayışı İle Malebranche'in Okazyonalizminin Karşılaştırılması," *Kilis 7 Aralık Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 7 (2014), 25.

¹⁷ Çağrı, "Gazzâlî," 498-500.

¹⁸ Reynold D. Nicholson, *İslam Sufileri*, Tr. trans. Mehmet Dağ and Kemal Işık (İstanbul: Kültür Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1978), 25.

with sufistic morality. He gave importance to the problems of human value and nature. The ultimate goal of knowledge and the ultimate is knowledge of God. al-Ghazali attributes the honor and virtue of man to knowing God, which distinguishes himself from other creatures. In order to reach knowledge of God, a person must first know himself, get to know himself and constantly purify himself.¹⁹ al-Ghazali in *Ihya'i 'Ulum ad-Din* (The Revival of the Religious Sciences) stated that these four concepts will have the same psychological, moral and epistemological meanings in the part of his work “Acaibu'l Kalb”, where he describes the nature of human, the meaning of the soul, and the relationship between heart, soul and mind. We can say that he is a dualist, considering that he treats the body together with the soul as a part of being and in a realm specific to humanity, and that the body must be valued in life.²⁰

In the essence of al-Ghazali's idea of *Ma'rifatullah* (knowledge of God) we see that the limits of the human mind become clear. Accordingly, reaching an unlimited God from a limited mind cannot be within the limits of rational mind. *Ma'rifatullah* is the highest ideal, and every heart can be gifted within its own capacity.²¹

Personal Religious Experience in *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal* (From Heretics to Guidance)

Al-Ghazali's *al-Munqidh min ad-Dalal* consists of six chapters. In this study, “inner struggle”, “Mysticism is Known by Living” and “What I Learned in Seclusion” under the heading “Sufism Way”, which are four chapters where he gives information about his personal religious experience, are the sections where the article focuses.

At the entrance of *al-Munqidh* begins with praise to God,

¹⁹ Bolay, *Aristo Metafiziği ile Gazzâlî Metafiziğinin Karşılaştırılması* (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 2005), 208.

²⁰ Çağrı, “Gazzâlî,” 500-501.

²¹ Bedriye Reis, “Gazzâlî'ye Göre Bir Bilgi Kaynağı Olarak Marifet,” *Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 9 (2017), 36-37.

blessings and supporting to our Prophet and especially to all his family and friends who have been guided by error. The point of interest here is that he emphasized that all of his family and friends, including the our Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him), were in error before and that he was guided later. We must understand this issue in the light of the seventh verse of Surah of ad-Duha. The verse says: “Did He not find you unguided then guided you?”²² pass in the form. The dedication here, “Did not he find you in error and guide you?” It is a valid message for Muhammad and all humanity afterwards. Therefore, the fact that a prophet is in error can be read as not knowing what the absolute right or the absolute wrong is. Just as al-Ghazali cannot get out of error when he searches for the absolute right and the absolute wrong under kalam, philosophy and Batiniyya.²³ Because any force that can show us absolute truth must be the source of absolute truth. He is God.²⁴

Al-Ghazali tells him the stages he has gone through to those who want him to find the al-Haqq (God) and reveal it and tell him about his troubles and troubles and how he reached a solid belief from these troubles. First of all, he made use of the science of theology, followed by his studies in Batiniyya, then philosophy and finally explains that he likes the Sufism way. While making these explanations, he mentions that every person will think that his own way is right, but as in the Surah of al-Mu'minun,²⁵ the ways of others except for a few are not correct. While making these explanations, he mentions that every person will think that his own way is right, but as in the Surah of the Believer, the ways of others except for a few are not correct. He then attempts to question his own questioning, including whether all the information that came to him from his parents since his childhood is

²² Surah ad-Duha, 7.

²³ Gazālī, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal (Dalaletten Hidayete)*, Tr. trans. Onur Şenyurt (İstanbul: Ehil Yayınları, 2017), 22.

²⁴ Gazālī, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 24.

²⁵ “But the people divided their religion among them into sects - each faction, in what it has, rejoicing.” Surah al-Mu'minun, 53.

correct. This is, “Every child who is born is born with a sound nature;[1] it is his parents who make him a Jew or a Christian or a Magian.” He does it based on his hadith²⁶.

The truth of knowledge is to know 2ilm al-yaqin² (exact knowledge). Ilm al-yaqin is knowledge that is clear enough to leave no doubt about it. However, al-Ghazali saw that there was no knowledge he could be so sure of, after his reviews in theology, Batiniyya and philosophy literature. As a result, we have not come across any knowledge that can be obtained from other sources other than the exact knowledge obtained through the sense organs of knowledge and through the principles of compulsory reason. Later, when he was confronted with the opposite evidence in his query about the reliability of this knowledge, they also lost their reliability. He has not survived this crisis of suspicion by his inquiries and reading, nor by his logical and consistent answers. Just in his own words, “I was saved thanks to a “nour” (light) that God almighty poured into my heart.” As a source of knowledge, “nour” is the key to many knowledge gates. Whoever thinks that the knowledge to be reached about the truth can only be reached by means of reason, logic, science and other independent knowledge, he will narrow and limit the vast mercy of God.²⁷

As M. Hamdi Yazır says in the preface of *Metâlib ve Mezâhib* (translaton of *Histoire de la Philosophie: Les Problèmes et les Écoles*): “If you had not brought this apparent separation to the inner reunion, I would not see me, I would not perceive you”.²⁸ Just like M. Hamdi Yazır's words, al-Ghazali attributes the “nour” (light) that descends to his heart to the will of God in explaining his salvation from the turning point in his life.

In response to the question of what kind of light is this light

²⁶ Buhari, “Cenaiz,” 80, 93; Müslim, “Kader,” 22, (2658); Muvatta, “Cenaiz,” 52, (1, 241); Tirmizi, “Kader,” 5, (2139); Ebu Davud, “Sünnet,” 18, (4714).

²⁷ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 26-31.

²⁸ M. Hamdi Yazır, “Dibâce (Önsöz),” Paul Janet and Gabriel Séailles, *Metâlib ve Mezâhib: Metafizik ve İlâhiyât*, Tr. trans. M. Hamdi Yazır (İstanbul: Eser Neşriyat, 1978), xxiii.

mentioned by al-Ghazali, Surah al-An'am, 125 is similar to the act of opening his heart: "God will open the hearts of whomever He wants to guide to Islam". In addition, al-Ghazali discussed the meaning of opening one's heart mentioned in this verse; He explains with the hadith, "It is a light that God Almighty poured into the heart." In response to the question of what kind of light is this light mentioned by al-Ghazali, Surah al-An'am, 125 is similar to the act of opening his heart: "God opens his heart to Islam whoever he wants to guide". In addition, al-Ghazali discussed the meaning of opening one's heart mentioned in this verse; He explains with the hadith, "It is a light that God Almighty poured into the heart." In the continuation of the hadith, when the Companions asked about the sign of this light, he said the hadith "to turn to the eternal home (the hereafter) by avoiding the land of deception (the world)". This "nour" is where the discovery of the truth is revealed for al-Ghazali.²⁹

Until the *Way of Sufism*, the fourth chapter of *al-Munqidh*, al-Ghazali answered those who called him skeptical and those who left him under suspicion that he denied the sciences. He classified those who seek the truth as theologians, Batiniyya, philosophers and Sufis. The aims pursued by these classes put forward their thesis. He explained in detail and with examples that some of these theses are correct, some lead to wrong and some are wrong.³⁰ Moreover, he evaluated this criticism with modesty, for example, about the science of Kalam, although he was not satisfied with this knowledge, it does not mean that others would not be satisfied either.³¹ He says that it is only possible to deny or approve a thought by understanding it, to grasp its essence and to know its essence, otherwise it is no different than throwing stones in the dark.³²

There are arguments of Swinburne (1979), Alston (1991) and

²⁹ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 32.

³⁰ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 32-37.

³¹ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 38.

³² Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd-Dalal*, 40.

Plantinga (1981, 2000) regarding the epistemological possibility of personal religious experience.³³ However, the aim of the article is not to prove or criticize, but to examine the personal dimension of religious experience in al-Ghazali.

Spiritual Awareness

In the introduction of al-Ghazali's *Kimya-i Saadat* (Alchemy of Eternal Bliss), the 53rd verse of Surah al-Fussilat³⁴, under the title “Knowing Your Own Truth”: “We will show them Our signs in the horizons and within themselves until it becomes clear to them that it is the truth. But is it not sufficient concerning your Lord that He is, over all things, a Witness? “ He points out that knowing God is through knowing yourself. There is nothing closer to man in this world than his own soul.³⁵ With their own pain, joy, sadness and enthusiasm, they only affect and activate the person in their own soul. A person who does not feel pain does not take his hand from fire. People who believe they are happy always try to continue living in that state. It is the testimony of one's own soul but that deeply affects man. Hearing from others will never be the same as your own experience. Who could be happier and higher than the man who experiences his Creator in a state in his soul?

According to al-Ghazali, the real happiness (happiness in the hereafter) is achieved by saving from the will of piety and taqwa.³⁶ These are realized by moving away from the life of the

³³ Mark Webb, “Religious Experience,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* ed. Edward N. Zalta (Winter 2017 Edition), <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2017/entries/religious-experience>.

³⁴ Surah al-Fussilat, 53 (Muhammed Esed).

³⁵ Gazâlî, *Kimya-i Saadet*, Tr. trans. Ali Arslan (İstanbul: Merve Yayınları, 2000), 14.

³⁶ Taqwa is God-consciousness or God-fearing piety. Also rendered as “God-fearing,” “right conduct,” “virtue,” “wariness.” Taqwa and its derivatives appear more than 250 times in the Quran; Abu al-A’la al-Mawdudi (d. 1979) identified taqwa as the basic Islamic principle of God-consciousness, together with brotherhood, equality, fairness, and justice, on which the true Islamic society is established. Sayyid Qutb (d. 1966) systematically elaborated the significance of taqwa in his Quranic commentary, which is characterized by an emphasis

world, which he calls the land of pride, connecting to the life of the hereafter, and turning to God with all his existence. The heart must cut itself off from the world. The heart should avoid the world, but the authority, the property, and the efforts that will keep man from high degrees. After these definitions, al-Ghazali explains his situation. When he looks at his own situation, he says that the occupations of the worldly life surround him from all sides. He explains that the best thing in his life accounting is to teach, and that he is full of information that is not useful for the hereafter. He thinks even more clearly about his confession and begins to question his own intentions. He says that his intention is not only for the consent of God, but that he has a sense of authority and fame, and that if he does not improve his situation, he is about to fall into the fire. In this case, al-Ghazali, who struggled with his soul, thought about leaving Baghdad to get rid of this situation, and his soul kept him and gave up his decision.

As a result of this struggle, the voice of his faith asks him, if you do not free him from these bonds that bind him to the world today, when will you save him? On the other hand, his soul was suggesting that this state of mind was temporary and that he would never find it again if he left this position and regular life and returned. This mood continues for six months in al-Ghazali. So much so that he cannot teach. Sorrow falls in his heart because of not being able to teach. It cannot digest food and has stomach problems. Physicians cannot get results from medication. He is told that “medicines will not make a profit unless this sadness in his heart is eliminated.” al-Ghazali, who falls into such a desperate situation, takes refuge in God. He prays. God makes it easy for him to want to move away from worldly things.³⁷ He separates the alimony of his family and leaves Baghdad. Then, in his two years of Damascus life, he was interested in cleansing his

on political activism. Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988) identified it as “perhaps the most important single concept in the Quran,” an inner vision that helps humans overcome their weaknesses. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2340>.

³⁷ Gazālī, *El-Mūnkız Mine'd Dalal*, 97-101.

heart with dhikrullah, correcting his morality, cleansing his soul from bad habits.³⁸ He does these as he learned from Sufism books. As a requirement of what he learned, he preferred to live separately from people and to be obedient. He prefers to be alone and to cleanse his heart with dhikr. He prefers to be separated from people for about ten years and to cleanse his heart with the help of God and to contemplate. During this ten-year period, a lot of knowledge is opened to him. In this process, he understands that Sufis are the ones who find the way to God. Even if the sciences of the scholars are brought together, they cannot comprehend these situations and experience this knowledge. Sufism is a process that begins by cleansing the heart with the dhikr and then extends to *Fana Fillah* (annihilation in God), but the maqam *Fana Fillah* is not the end of the road, but the courtyard between the main door and the outer door of the house.³⁹

Al-Ghazali wrote his work *Ihya'i 'Ulum ad-Din* as a product of his efforts to reconcile traditional Islamic beliefs with Sufism. *Fana Fillah* thought has tended to be interpreted as “closeness” (qurb) in order to make it more acceptable to the traditional Islamic belief that the self-destruction of Sufis in God.⁴⁰

Those who get closer to God and enter different moods may witness some errors such as hulul, ittihad and wusul. Not trying to explain what happened by a person in this state only tells that they do not remember, they should be thought well and should not be asked anything. The situations of our Prophet (pbuh) were similar. He would go to Hira, contemplate and worship like that.

³⁸ Some other mysticism issues such as tawhid, waḥdat al-wujud, prophethood, guardianship, ma'rifah, muhabbah, love, repentance, dhikr, zuhd, taqwa, nafs, soul, heart, sayr wa suluk, patience, thank, qurb, yaqin. Hüseyin Kurt, “Elmalı Muhammed Hamdi Yazır'ın Tasavvuf Anlayışı,” *Diyanet İlmî Dergi*, vol. 51, no. 3 (2015), 199.

³⁹ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 101-105.

⁴⁰ Michael E. Marmura, “Ghazâlî,” Tr. trans. M. Cüneyt Kaya, *İslam Felsefesine Giriş*, eds. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (İstanbul: Küre Yayınları, 2008), 154.

Whoever wants to know this state must live.⁴¹ Saying that this state gave him a lot of knowledge about understanding the institution of prophethood, al-Ghazali then gave information about prophethood. In the last chapter of *al-Munqidh*, he tells about what he lived in the seclusion when he returned to teaching again. During this period when he lives in seclusion away from people, he becomes aware that human beings are composed of body and heart (soul). The heart is the place of Ma'rifatullah.⁴² He feels his knowledge only in his heart (soul). He becomes acquainted with this knowledge when he is sometimes in a state of submission, sometimes as a rational evidence, and sometimes from strong faith. The soul, which he calls the human heart, can get sick, delusional, and drag people to wrong places just like a sick body. The antidote to these heart diseases is to know God. Just as we are looking for instant remedies and medicines for our body ailments, we should obtain treatment methods for our soul, and we should take care of this discomfort.

Al-Ghazali tells us that the cure for various worldly ailments that bore our souls and overwhelm us can be healed by embracing the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, the remedy for heart diseases is worship.⁴³ Human mind may not be able to reach the essence of the information brought by the prophethood and may not be able to see the wisdom in it. The things the prophets commanded are themselves beautiful. They provide us with benefits in the world and the hereafter. The orders of the Prophet are aimed at protecting the life, property, and health of a person. They strengthen the ties that connect the human heart to God.⁴⁴

Al-Ghazali's experiences in reaching belief can be analyzed in three parts. The knowledge he learned from the books and the traces left by that knowledge. The other is that the dreams and

⁴¹ Gazālī, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 101-108.

⁴² Gazālī, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 121-122.

⁴³ Gazālī, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 123.

⁴⁴ Muhammed Abduh, *Tevhid Risalesi*, Tr. trans. Sabri Hizmetli (Ankara: Fecr Yayınları, 1986), 131.

dreams he saw sometimes overlap with events, and finally, the effects of dhikr and worship on his life. For example, eating away from animal foods or fasting can cause the mind to work in different dimensions.⁴⁵

Religion is not just a doctrine of going towards good in the face of evil or escaping from wrong to right. Religion should not be perceived as such a moral problem-solving authority. This would be to belittle the place and meaning of man in religion. The divine consciousness of man reveals eternal beauty. This beauty leads people to divine flavors that man has never tasted before. It returns to human roots by means of a state of consciousness directed towards Him with a will focused on God. Spiritual transformation is perfection with love.⁴⁶ This transformation is progressed by talking to God without intermediaries (prayer) and dhikr (remembrance).

Al-Ghazali thinks that it would not be right to withdraw to seclusion all his life. Because people have questions and doubts about their faith. It sees itself obliged to dispel these doubts. This is a debt and al-Ghazali must fulfill this debt. He thinks that a life away from people for life will not save him. Now hearts are sick, even doctors are sick. The people are being driven wrong and al-Ghazali thinks that seclusion cannot cope with this job, despite seeing so much turmoil.⁴⁷ He goes back to teaching again. But this return does not mean going back to the past, with a stronger faith and being more aware of what and why you are telling, it is for a purpose.

The issue of fiqh of priorities correctly explains the return of al-Ghazali to a purpose he regards as more sacred. Fiqh of priorities is that there is a priority and a later order among the principles of our religion. Consistent choices on “amr bi al-ma’ruf wa

⁴⁵ İbrahim Ağâh Çubukçu, *Gazâlî ve Şüphelilik* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1964), 86.

⁴⁶ Rabia Christine Brodbeck, *Hazreti İnsan*, Tr. trans. Ömer Mansur Çolakoğlu (İstanbul: Sufi Kitap, 2007), 195-207.

⁴⁷ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 130.

nahy an al-munkar (commanding good, and prohibiting evil) are vitally important.⁴⁸ Today, what Muslim nations need most is to be armed with the knowledge of the age and not to remain unaware of this situation. God requires the message of Islam, to which he completes his blessing, not to be dependent on anyone about the tools of the age. The weapon of this age may be technology or science.⁴⁹ The philosophy of al-Ghazali's life could be explained to the public only by learning their weapons and directing them to them, the thought of making weapons for himself and attracting people to his view. al-Ghazali, who attaches importance to the fiqh of priorities, criticized the Muslim community for being negligent in this regard.⁵⁰

This negligence is astonished in al-Ghazali, the subject of those who both have willpower and do not take the necessary knowledge. He explains his astonishment and rebellion on this issue with the following couplets:

If man does not know his Creator
How he carries the genus name, wonder
Waiting a change in nature is impossible
Lion roars, dog barks, very natural⁵¹

There is the testament of al-Ghazali in his *Ihya' Ulum ad-Din*. The words in the introduction of the testament guide and determine the direction for all researchers on what they need to research. The philosopher, who does not set a purpose for his research, subject, or examination, is on his way to a place where the fate of a planet that has lost its satellite is not clear, but whose position is not visible at all. al-Ghazali states the following on the subject: "Your look at the subject you are discussing should be directed at God, for God and with God. Because if you

⁴⁸ Yusuf Karadâvî, *Öncelikler Fıkhu*, Tr. trans. Abdullah Kahraman (İstanbul: Nida Yayınları, 2017), 13.

⁴⁹ Karadâvî, *Öncelikler Fıkhu*, 138.

⁵⁰ Karadâvî, *Öncelikler Fıkhu*, 286.

⁵¹ Gazzâlî, "Gazzâlî'nin Vasiyeti," Tr. trans. Mahmut Kaya, *İslam Filozoflarından Felsefe Metinleri* (İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2010), 412.

do not investigate and examine to God, He will leave you with yourself or with what you turn to other than Him.”⁵²

Relationship between Clergy and Sufism

The word “رهب” (r-h-b) is used in the Qur'an to mean awe, fear. The meaning of the word priest is like the word Muttaqi (who has taqwa). It means those who fear God and feel awe of Him. Throughout the historical process, the concept of clergy has experienced a shift in meaning and it has been perceived as a lifestyle that is completely distant from people and withdrawal. The Prophet (pbuh) exalted Muttaqi and encouraged his Companions to perform obligatory external other worship as much as they could. However, he said that subjects such as being completely isolated from society and living in a state of continuous seclusion and considering the foods that God regarded as halal for himself as haram are not in Islam.⁵³

In ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Anatolia, Rome, India and China, priesthood and monasticism have always existed under different names. Topics in priesthood and monasticism are submission, humility, suffering, poverty, withdrawal, single life, chastity, conviction, contemplation, self-discipline, prayer, scripture reading.⁵⁴

According to al-Ghazali, the most valuable deed in Sufism is to take the soul, to keep it away from bad morals and to empty it from everything except God, to fill it with dhikrullah.⁵⁵ According to him, Sufism is known by living not by learning. Knowing the truth conditions and reasons of life can only be achieved by leaving the pleasure and joy of life and killing the self-pleasures and thus living the life of taqwa.⁵⁶ Along with this process, al-Ghazali

⁵² Gazâlî, “Gazzâlî'nin Vasiyeti,” 410.

⁵³ Ahmet Cahid Haksever, “‘Ruhbanlık’ Kavramındaki Anlam Kayması ve Tasavvufî İlişkilendirilmesi Üzerine Bazı Değerlendirmeler,” *Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 23 (2013), 27-28.

⁵⁴ Süleyman Uludağ, “Ruhbanlık ve Tasavvuf,” *Tasavvuf İlmi ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 13 (2004), 19.

⁵⁵ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 95.

⁵⁶ Gazâlî, *El-Münkız Mine'd Dalal*, 96-97.

reconstructed the epistemological truth with a view that observes its limits in matters concerning the mind, and by explaining it within reason in matters beyond the limits of the mind.⁵⁷

Love for the world is inconvenient for al-Ghazali. The beauties of the hereafter should be preferred to the temporary pleasures of the world. The love of the world can go to the heart to associate with God. In terms of not affecting the heart deeply, he views the worldly life with good eyes, but this should not cause clergy. Since the criterion will be between ifrat and tafrit (excess) in all behaviors, balance is essential in this matter. al-Ghazali's idea of abandoning world affairs is like that of Hasan al-Basri:

Because in his thought of revival based on the hereafter, only the interest side of the world is denied. According to him, the dirty and sinful world is the world that has been transferred from the substance of things to the inner realm of the person. The world is the power that tries to dominate one's inner world as a tool of arrogance, pride and domination. It is okay to have an “outside” relationship with him. What Ghazali calls “the world” consists of the exuberance of all feelings, desires, aspirations and ambitions coming out of an abstract state in a place and “going out” into body and body.⁵⁸

Al-Ghazali's Rational Theosophy and the Relationship of Sufism

The concept of theosophy is a mystical, religious and philosophical concept that can be traced back to the Ancient Age. With this comprehensive definition of the concept of theosophy, it is possible to talk about Western theosophy, Indian theosophy and even Islamic theosophy. However, it can be said that the concept of theosophy gained a different understanding and dimension with the Theosophical Community of which Helena Petrovna

⁵⁷ Sobhi Rayan, “Gazzālī'nin Şüphe Metodu,” Tr. trans. Fatmanur Ceran, *Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 34 (2015), 237.

⁵⁸ Mehmet Zeki İşcan, “Gazālī'nin İhyâ ve Islah Düşüncesine Genel Bir Bakış,” *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 47, no. 3 (2011), 122.

Blavatsky was the leader. The word theosophy consists of the Greek words “Theos” (God) and “sophia” (knowledge, wisdom). In this sense, divine knowledge can be used in the sense of divine wisdom and genius. From a religious point of view, the use of the term is experience, transcendent, mystical, and direct knowledge of God. It is the theosophist who grasps this divine transcendent, secret, and experiential knowledge.⁵⁹

The importance of the concept of theosophy stems from the fact that it integrates the knowledge from many religions, teachings and beliefs within the concept of “theosophy” and creates a mystical theology. In this sense, understanding its relationship with Sufism and examining the concept's place in its inclusiveness will expand our field of view on Sufism.

Rational theosophy means that the unclear knowledge of God can be grasped by reason. al-Ghazali does not take good care of a permanent asceticism in social life, a way of life that is completely distant from people. Just as in the Theosophical Community, the understanding of asceticism thinks that it is right for people to finally get involved in social life, just like al-Ghazali's understanding of Sufism. Bodily ordeals are absolutely useless for spiritual or theosophical progress.⁶⁰

The American diplomat Alexander Russell Webb (1846-1916), who first met Theosophy and then chose Islam, was a member of the Theosophical Community. After leaving Christianity and living as an atheist for ten years, he adopted the teachings of Buddhism. But he does not stop researching and thinking and chooses Islam. He does not cut his interest in theosophy after becoming a Muslim.⁶¹

For al-Ghazali, the essence of Sufism is to confess the one-

⁵⁹ Ali Gül, *Senkretik Bir Oluşum Olarak Teosofi Cemiyeti ve XX. Yüzyıl Kültürel Yapıları Üzerindeki Etkisi*, Doktora Tezi (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2015), 10-11.

⁶⁰ Gül, *Senkretik Bir Oluşum Olarak Teosofi Cemiyeti ve XX. Yüzyıl Kültürel Yapıları Üzerindeki Etkisi*, 122.

⁶¹ Gül, *Senkretik Bir Oluşum Olarak Teosofi Cemiyeti ve XX. Yüzyıl Kültürel Yapıları Üzerindeki Etkisi*, 263.

ness of God. The bond established with God at all stages and connecting directly to God by not interfering with them is just to show the unity of God through the state. An experience that a person can understand only means that God and the servant are together without intermediaries. The act of being alone with God and thinking only about Him, which is a pure form of worship in terms of tawhid⁶², is the act of Islam's "no god but God" has turned into worship.

Conclusion

The conclusion that al-Ghazali has reached as a result of his work on philosophy, theology, Batiniyya and Sufism throughout his life is that he created a crisis in the world of mind and spirit. al-Ghazali, who left the place where he lived after this crisis reached serious levels, thinks that he found the right way with Sufism. Because he got rid of this crisis only by a "nour" thrown into his heart at the will of God. He even described his recovery from the crisis and returning to the place where he lived again: "At that time, I was teaching the science that gave position, now I am calling on the science that lost the position".

According to al-Ghazali, doubt is the only way to reach the truth. Because those who do not doubt cannot think, the facts cannot be seen without thinking, and those who cannot see the truth remain in heresy. al-Ghazali did not see any certainty about the reliability of a prioric and axiomatic knowledge he was questioning during this crisis period. Evidence-based evidence is preconceived knowledge, so there is no reliable knowledge, which drove him into a crisis. After getting rid of the crisis, he again accepts the competence of logic, mathematics and natural principles, especially the accuracy of aprioric knowledge.

⁶² Tawhid is the defining doctrine of Islam. It declares absolute monotheism – the unity and uniqueness of God as creator and sustainer of the universe. Used by Islamic reformers and activists as an organizing principle for human society and the basis of religious knowledge, history, metaphysics, aesthetics, and ethics, as well as social, economic, and world order. *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*, <http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2356>.

Al-Ghazali combined Aristotelian logic and theological method and adapted Aristotle's logic to Islamic sciences for the first time. His work on this subject is *al-Mustasfa* (On Legal Theory of Muslim Jurisprudence), which contains all the principles of logic.

Al-Ghazali is an indeterminist; determinist Islamic philosophers relate the occurrences in nature to His knowledge instead of God's free will. al-Ghazali accepts this causal link but denies that it is the result of an inherent necessity of nature. According to him, God is always in a state of creation and the causal link formed by this creation is in the hands of God. In this direction, Malebranche's occasionalism and al-Ghazali's causality are similar.

When we compare the concept of theosophy, which is similar to the Ma'rifatullah concept but used in a more general sense, with the knowledge of al-Ghazali's Ma'rifatullah, which does not belong to a religion but originates from religion, we see that al-Ghazali unites theosophy within the rational field and within rational limits.

Al-Ghazali thinks that it would not be right to withdraw from seclusion all his life. It compares the benefit for humanity of being in the seclusion for a whole life and the benefit for humanity of being useful to people. Priorities in Islam leave the seclusion and return to the profession of teaching, as the more useful is preferred to the less useful, as per fiqh.

In al-Ghazali, the place where knowledge is opened to him and where the truth will be discovered is the "nour" where he gets rid of the crisis. It emphasizes the importance of personal religious experience here. This is not a topic or situation that can be explained to people. It is a situation that a person can achieve only by his own will, by wanting to live and feel. However, he emphasized that this is again in the hands of God and with His will. The happiness of man in this world is attaining this "nour", reaching the knowledge of God (Ma'rifatullah) and experiencing God in this way.

While examining the subject of clergy and mysticism, it has become difficult to clarify the subject thanks to the meanings of the concepts and the change of meaning that occurred in the historical process. If we understand the seclusion of the clergy as a life spent in a state of pain and suffering, by getting away from people, cutting without eating, drinking, this will not be a suitable state for Islam. Because, although there is a tendency towards obligatory external other worship to the extent that man can afford it in Islam, for example, this happens in limited days, such as the worship of faith, it has not turned into a lifestyle that encompasses a whole life. Because we do not witness such an example in the life of our Prophet (pbuh). In addition, it is not suitable for Islam to consider and ban foods that God regards as halāl. When we look at the practice of Sufism in al-Ghazali's life, his consensus has made a rational progress with the fiqh of priorities and has been included in social life thinking that his profession will be more beneficial for people. But this seclusion is within the human being and only then should it be in social life, erasing the love of the world from his heart. According to him, just as we seek remedies for our bodily ailments, we should seek remedies for our soul before it is too late and purify it.

For al-Ghazali, the essence of Sufism is the bringing of the unity of God to life through a state. One can only question one's own heart and decide how much love of the world is taken. It is necessary to withdraw these heart movements from the world and its love, to cleanse them from all bad conditions and to fill them with God.

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Human Nature in Plato's Philosophy

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Research Article

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Abstract: Plato argued that knowledge of human nature can be reached through dialogue and dialectical method in accordance with the Socratic heritage. In his philosophy, man can be defined as being capable of rationally answering a rational question. By giving rational answers to himself and others, human also becomes a moral subject. In Plato's philosophy, we see a clear program based on human nature. Issues related to human nature are discussed in the process of applying Plato's theory of ideas to the field of morality, art, politics and education. What emerges in practice, for example, right and fair behavior is a manifestation of the principle of truth and justice. According to Plato, man reflects the character of the state he lives in. To understand a person, it is necessary to consider the society in which he lives. The state is not an institution that people come together and establish with their own will, but an organism, a whole. According to Plato, in order to grasp the true meaning of human society and to arrange it properly, one must first comprehend the astronomical cosmos. Because, knowing the meaning of the concepts of harmony and order is possible only by understanding the astronomical cosmos, which is the expression of an eternal order. While studying the astronomical cosmos, a man comes to the idea of harmony and order itself. Indeed, the infinite canonical and harmonious movements of the stars in this pre-eternal order on their perennials lead to the concept of law itself.

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People who admire this harmony and order in the sky want to realize a model of it on earth. He concludes that the laws that will rule over the human world must be continuous and compatible, just like the laws in the world of stars. Thus, the state must be an earthly model of the astronomical cosmos. If a person lives in the state, he should realize this harmony and order in the state in his own spirit.

Keywords: Socrates, Plato, philosophy, state, human nature.

Introduction

Each theory of human nature, primarily "What is the place of man in the universe?", "Why are we here?" "For what are we here?" and "what should we do" as a result of the effort to make sense of existence.¹ When we look at the human problem in terms of Socrates and Plato, we witness that a transcendent and objective purpose is foreseen for human life and human history.

In the early stages of philosophy, we see that philosophers' interest was more towards natural studies. Although explanations based on reason came to the fore in this period, mythological explanations were also frequently used. In the following periods, these explanations continued to exist by gaining a new form and depth. However, in the first mythological explanations about the universe, we always see a primitive cosmology accompanied by primitive anthropology. Because "the problem of the beginning of the world is inextricably mixed with the problem of the beginning of the human."² The human problem, which finds its clearest expression in Heraclitus' saying "I discovered myself"³, gained a solid theoretical framework and a competent

¹ Leslie Stevenson, et al., *İnsan Doğası Üzerine On Üç Teori*, Tr. trans. Damla Tanla (İstanbul: The Kitap Yayınları, 2018), 12.

² Ernst Cassirer, *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, Tr. trans. Necla Arat (İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi, 1980), 15.

³ Herakleitos, *Fragmanlar*, Tr. trans. Cengiz Çakmak (İstanbul: Kabalcı Yayınevi, 2005), fr. 101.

form with Socrates.⁴ The only universe directed by his research is the human universe.

If we classify Socrates' philosophy, we can clearly say that it is an anthropological philosophy. He finds the truth and universality criteria of the knowledge he is looking for in conceptual knowledge. For this reason, he thinks that mythological narratives and nature studies will not benefit him. The reason for this is explained in the *Phaidros* dialogue as follows: "I have not yet known myself, according to the advice on the door of the Delphoi temple. It seems ridiculous to me to try to know foreign things while I don't know myself... I study myself, not myths."⁵ In the aforementioned Dialogue, Socrates and his friend Phaidros come to a natural wonder outside the city walls of Athens. Phaedrus is very surprised to realize that Socrates has seen these beauties for the first time. In the face of Phaidros' surprise, Socrates said, "Please tolerate me, my good-hearted friend; After all, I love learning." It is the people in the city, not the fields and trees that teach me anything."⁶

When it comes to human nature, experimental observation and logical analysis are insufficient. We cannot investigate the nature of human beings with the methods we study the nature of physical objects. Physical objects can be described through their objective properties. But man can only be described and defined through his consciousness. To understand human beings, one must really encounter him. Philosophy is understood as an intellectual monologue until Socrates has turned into a dialogue in Socrates. Socrates believed that the knowledge of human nature could only be reached through dialogue and dialectical thinking.⁷

Instead of giving a direct and definitive answer to the question "What is a human?" We have to give an indirect and open-

⁴ Cassirer, *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, 16.

⁵ Platon, *Phaidros*, Tr. trans. Furkan Akderin (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2017), 230a.

⁶ Platon, *Phaidros*, 230e.

⁷ Cassirer, *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, 17. See also, Fatih Özkan, "Sokrates'in Entelektüalist Ahlakı," *İğdir Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 4 (2013), 35-53.

ended answer. Because man is a being that constantly researches himself and therefore the conditions of his existence must be examined and controlled at every moment of his existence. Socrates says, "A life that is not researched, questioned and not thought over is not worth living."⁸ We can summarize Socrates' thought by describing the human being as a being capable of the rational answer when asked a rational question. Human knowledge and morality can be understood within this framework.⁹

In classical psychology, life changes and flows within itself. But the true value of life must be sought in an infinite order that accepts no change. By holding the right to perceive, question and judge, the man grasps his pioneering role in the relationship with the universe. "In fact, it is the richness of nature, the intelligibility and the versatility of the human being that determine it."¹⁰ For this reason, it is not possible to reveal a permanent and unchanging "nature" of human beings, a simple and homogeneous existence. It is a strange mixture of matter and meaning. The place of man is between these two poles.

Human Nature

Plato's inspiration to the thinkers after him is that he promises that we can discover both the knowledge of the truth and the wise ways of life only if we use our logic carefully and systematically. It is emphasized in the Phaidon dialogue that human nature is "in the soul of man". Spirit or mind is a mirror in which divinity is reflected in us. For a person to know himself essentially, he must know himself in the essence of someone else. Real recognition of the essence is possible by understanding the difference: Spirit is the shelter of divinity in man.¹¹ We discern that

⁸ Platon, *Sokrates'in Savunması*, Tr. trans. Furkan Akderin (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2015), 38a.

⁹ Cassirer, *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, 17.

¹⁰ Cassirer, *İnsan Üstüne Bir Deneme*, 21-2.

¹¹ Platon, *Phaidon*, Tr. trans. Suut Kemal Yetkin and Hamdi Ragıp Atademir (Ankara: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yayınları, 1997), 133a-e.

it is the divine homogeneity between people that is truly realized. And we reinforce our self-knowledge through other-selves.

Knowing the self enables the person to realize whether his/her things are good or bad. Likewise, if we know who our interlocutors are, we can open the way for them to realize the good and the bad. Also, an important purpose of the "Know Yourself" principle is to remind that people are not the measure of everything. Because self-knowledge eliminates pride.¹² Moreover, "to know and do the things that concern him, to know himself is reserved only for the wise man."¹³ Plato insistently emphasizes that every person has the will to know himself. Accordingly, doing philosophy is more than accumulating knowledge or acquiring a technical skill.

We see a clear program based on human nature in Plato's philosophy. Issues related to human nature are addressed in the process of applying Plato's theory of ideas to the field of morality, art, politics and education. The right and fair behaviors that emerge in practice, for example, are the manifestations of the principle of truth and justice. Plato also demonstrated the meticulousness of Socrates in distinguishing between examples of moral behavior and his ideas. While one person does well for another person, this action may not be good for another. Accordingly, although moral behavior has a share of an absolute idea, they do not carry absolutely.

The main feature of the human nature theory put forward by Plato is the claim that man is a social being. As an individual, man is not self-sufficient because he has many needs that he cannot fulfill on his own. He cannot even meet his material needs such as food, clothing and shelter without relying on others. Someone who spends most of the time struggling to survive has little time left for activities such as friendship, play, art, and learning. It is also an obvious fact that different individuals have

¹² Platon, *Phaidros*, 229e.

¹³ Platon, *Timaios*, Tr. trans. Furkan Akderin (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2015), 72a.

different interests and abilities. For example, there are farmers, craftsmen, soldiers, administrators and the like in society. Each individual specializes in a task, with education and experience according to their nature.¹⁴ The naturalness of living in society is a typical Greek understanding and is adopted by Plato. Nothing else can be as human as social.¹⁵ People have weaknesses as well as strengths. These weaknesses and deficiencies seen in humans are also caused by some problems in the social structure. An incompetent society produces incompetent individuals. With reverse reasoning, flawed individuals form imperfect societies. Unfair individuals create an unfair social structure. The opposite is also true. Because justice is the fulfillment of each individual's duty properly and in harmony with each other.

According to Plato, man reflects the character of the state he lives in. To grasp the human being, it is necessary to consider the society in which he lives. The state is not an institution that people come together and establish with their own will, it is an organism, it is a whole. Therefore, while the state is a human being on a large scale, and a human being is a state on a small scale. For example, the enthusiasm for glory and honor of the individuals living in a state that regards glory and honor above everything else subordinates all other virtues and all other values. Individuals who grow up in repressive states become oppressors and slaves. They are merciless tyrants when they take power, and slaves when they fall from power. In the souls of individuals living in a state where wealth is at the forefront, only ambition for wealth takes place and keeps all other values in second place. Finally, a democratic state, which is a toy in the hands of master orators and demagogues, also produces individuals who act according to their ambitions and enthusiasm. Because a state that has become a toy in the hands of demagogues and constantly

¹⁴ See, Platon, *Devlet*, Tr. trans. Sabahattin Eyuboğlu and M. Ali Cimcoz (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2001), 424a-25c and 519a.

¹⁵ Stevenson, *Yedi İnsan Doğası Kuramı*, Tr. trans. Necla Arat, et al. (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2005), 39.

changes their minds according to their whims can never set a constant and stable example for individuals.¹⁶

According to Plato, in order to understand the true meaning of human society and to arrange it properly, one must first understand the astronomical cosmos. Because, knowing the meaning of the concepts of harmony and order is possible only by understanding the astronomical cosmos, which is the expression of an eternal order. While studying the astronomical cosmos, a man comes to the idea of harmony and order itself. Indeed, the infinite canonical and harmonious movements of the stars in this pre-eternal order on their orbits lead to the concept of law itself. People who admire this harmony and order in the sky want to realize a model of it on earth. He concludes that the laws that will rule over the human community must be continuous and compatible, just like the laws in the world of stars. Thus, the state must be an earthly model of the astronomical cosmos. If he is living in the state, he should realize this harmony and order in the state in his own spirit.¹⁷

Plato suggested that either philosopher should be kings or kings should be philosophers, as a condition for the complete harmony between individuals and society and the solution of their problems. In this way, the power of the state and the power of the mind will be united in the same person, and it will be possible to achieve the highest level of harmony in the life of people and society by giving everyone a job that suits their nature.¹⁸

According to Plato's opinion, man is not a being that can only know what reality is and remain indifferent to other things. In addition to being knowledgeable, the human is a being with moral, aesthetic, social and religious aspects. Hence, for man to become ultimate competent, the world in which he lives must be one that can meet the demands of his complex nature. That is

¹⁶ Kâmuran Birand, *İlk Çağ Felsefesi Tarihi* (Ankara: Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1958), 61-2.

¹⁷ Birand, *İlk Çağ Felsefesi Tarihi*, 67-8.

¹⁸ Platon, *Devlet*, 473d.

why Plato calls the highest reality 'the idea of the highest good'. When the idea of the highest good is known, our ultimate questions are resolved. In other words, Plato affirms the ancient Greek ideal of the cosmos. The world and man form organic integrity.¹⁹ In that case, the world of ideas is not only a data warehouse where information is stored but also a field of reality that responds to the demands regarding justice, aesthetics, religion and morality, as Plato suggests. For this reason, the idea of the highest good is above all other ideas in terms of competence.

As Jones stated, the analysis of the idea of 'justice' brings up the concepts of organism and function: "It comes from the fact that the purpose of man is not pleasure, but happiness, that man is an organism whose various functions must be balanced and harmonized."²⁰ These are objective facts about human nature, according to Plato. According to Plato, sophists either did not understand the nature of the good or ignored it.

Plato designed the soul as a triple anatomical structure by defining the separate elements of human nature. Although mind, will, and appetite are present in every human being, Plato identified three different types of people according to the dominant role of one of them: knowledge follower; fame follower; pleasure follower.²¹ The right of management and control over the will and appetite among the elements of the soul should be in mind and there should be complete harmony between them. Plato meets this ideal condition with the Greek word *dikaiousune* (justice).²² A well-organized just society is one in which each element plays its role in harmony with each other. Plato considers virtue as the competence and full functionality of the moral values within its scope. He sees immorality as a flaw and weakness. Therefore, the theory of the elements of the soul represents the

¹⁹ William T. Jones, *Batı Düşüncesi Tarihi*, Tr. trans. Hakkı Hünler (İstanbul: Paradigma Yayınları, 2006), I, 202.

²⁰ Jones, *Batı Düşüncesi Tarihi*, I, 242.

²¹ Platon, *Devlet*, 581e.

²² Stevenson, *Yedi İnsan Doğası Kuramı*, 38.

ideals of the individual and society in Plato's thought.

As Stevenson pointed out, many people today review the overlapping and diverging aspects between the Platonic ideal of society and the current situation. According to this, "many people still do not coordinate their mental powers with any inner harmony, and many societies do not have the order and stability that Plato followed."²³ In Platonic thought, individual problems are closely related to social problems. Individual problems arise not only from social processes or social problems only from the flaws of individuals; they feed each other positively or negatively as stated in the composite pot theory.

According to Plato, there is a one-to-one relationship between the governance styles of states and the characteristics of citizens. He sees the aristocracy as the best form of government. Individuals attain mental and physical health and individual harmony mostly under this management style. All other forms of government and their citizens are problematic. It would be appropriate to dwell on four of the other forms of state and to consider the human being who corresponds to each shape. So, he went through them all, separating the best from the worst; we can understand whether the best person is the happiest and the worst person is the unhappiest. The first and most famous of this state form is the timocracy, which is the state form of Crete and Lakedemonia. The second in terms of value is the oligarchy, the flaws of which are countless. Third comes democracy, its opposite. The fourth and last, tyranny that suppresses them all.²⁴ There are all kinds of these in both Greeks and foreigners... There are as many forms of the state as there are human beings. The forms of state also emerge from the predominant habits of the citizens in every business. Habits of citizens correspond to the habits of states.²⁵ Plato follows the traces of the negativities experienced in political processes from the past and examines in

²³ Stevenson, et al., *İnsan Doğası Üzerine On Üç Teori*, 122.

²⁴ Platon, *Devlet*, 544a-c.

²⁵ Platon, *Devlet*, 545a.

detail the effects of intergenerational relations on the shaping of the individual characters of new generations.

Sophia and Phronesis Coexistence

The basis of Plato's philosophy is knowledge. By asking rational questions, it is aimed to reach definite, conceptual and universal knowledge. Sound knowledge ensures both the empowerment of individuals and the building of the state. Because the question of how to ensure a good life and a just state is a question of knowledge rather than reconciling conflicting opinions. There is a truth about how we should live, and those who have reason and goodness can reach the knowledge of this truth using the method of dialogue.

According to Plato, if such a superior order had not been found in this world, it would not have been possible for real knowledge to emerge. This superior order in the world can only be explained by the existence of a good God. This superior force carries out this goddess order in the world. The essence of this order is the future life of the immortal human soul. The soul will be rewarded for good deeds and punished for bad deeds.²⁶

Plato rejects a categorical distinction between Sophia, in which Aristotle subsequently focused on theoretical virtues, and phronesis, the subject of practical virtues. Plato did not make such a distinction between Sophia and phronesis and thought that theoretical knowledge of forms was necessary and sufficient for the correct application. In Socratic thought, the unity of virtue results from the identity of wisdom and virtue. In fact, a pure virtue is a knowledge that really contributes to what is truly good for man, the health and harmony of his soul. More important than the definition here is the teachability of virtue. Sophists no doubt claimed that they would teach the art of virtue, but Socrates separated from them by mentioning the existence of universal and unchanging moral criteria. The main point to be noted is that 'teaching' is not just a conceptual informational meaning for

²⁶ Platon, *Devlet*, 621d.

Socrates, but rather a means of leading a person to real insight.²⁷

W. T. Jones states that the reason for Plato's appeal to metaphors such as sun and cave is to reach the virtues themselves and to experience some virtue through metaphors in the relational context provided by dialogues, rather than the conceptual knowledge of virtue. According to him, metaphor is about reconstructing an experience with the help of imagination rather than reflecting it in person: "There are only two ways of knowing what it is like under fire. One is to be under fire; the other is not a description but a reconstruction based on imagination. This helps explain the role of myth in Plato's writings. Plato thought that none of the truly important things - the essence of goodness, nobility of the spirit, humanity - could not be reduced to idioms carefully written in a clean draft notebook. These things cannot be reduced to such aphorisms, just as the real pleasure from Paris cannot be obtained from a city guide. In Plato's opinion, the best way to learn the meaning of such concepts is to live close to someone who already knows them (just as the best way to get to know Paris is to go there and walk the streets and sit in sidewalk cafes along the banks of the Seine and stroll through the gardens of Luxembourg). If one lives with such a great-spirited man for a long time, he can learn and understand what he knows - not through formal lessons or even wholly exemplary, but some kind of intellectual and moral fusion. That would be a direct experience. Plato offered to those who were not fortunate enough to participate in such a direct experience a myth that was an imitation of that experience. Myth is not a description of the experience, but an artistic call to experience."²⁸

Indeed, both Socrates and Plato have gained the identity of philosophers not because they teach behind a chair, but because they put forward the possibility of philosophizing based on social

²⁷ Frederick Copleston, "Bölüm 1a: Ön-Sokratikler ve Sokrates," *Felsefe Tarihi: Yunanistan ve Roma*, Tr. trans. Aziz Yardımlı (İstanbul: İdea Yayınevi, 1997), 103.

²⁸ Jones, *Batı Düşüncesi Tarihi*, I, 200.

life. Philosophy in antiquity is both a discourse and a way of life, this dual wisdom trying to reach but never reaching it. Lifestyle and discourse should not be confronted as if one is practice and the other is theory. Discourse has an applied aspect to the extent that it has a certain impact on the listener or the reader. The way of life, of course, cannot be theoretical, but it can be contemplated.²⁹ Socrates' personality had a decisive influence on the definition of "philosopher" suggested by Plato in the Symposium dialogue.³⁰

What is questioned in the dialogues involving Socrates is the values that govern our lives rather than the information we think we have. Thus, the interlocutor becomes conscious of his own self and starts questioning himself. So the real problem is not to know this or that, but to exist in one form or another.³¹ In his defense, Socrates expresses this in the following words: "I have no worries about what most people are concerned about; monetary affairs, management of goods, military duties, success in public speaking, judgment, political partnerships, separations. I will do my best by dedicating myself not to this path... to persuade each of you to be more concerned with what you are than you have so that you are as flawless and rational as possible."³²

Ultimately, in the Ancient Greek tradition, knowledge stands out as a life, a skilled knowledge rather than a completed, conceptual and theoretical quality. The philosopher type Plato drew in the Symposium also reveals such a figure of Socrates. The knowledge of the truth, *Sophia*, and the knowledge of good deeds, *phronesis*, emerges in the person of Socrates as a whole.

The Allegory of the Cave and Enlightenment

Using the allegory of the cave in book VII of his book *The State*, Plato helps to advance the path of wisdom, encouraging to

²⁹ Pierre Hadot, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Nedir?*, Tr. trans. Muna Cedden (Ankara: Dost Kitabevi, 2011), 14.

³⁰ Hadot, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Nedir?*, 33.

³¹ Hadot, *İlkçağ Felsefesi Nedir?*, 39.

³² Platon, *Sokrates'in Savunması*, 36c.

rise gradually from the darkness of the cave to the principle of light beyond what the eye sees. With this metaphor, Plato talks about our nature, sees people as prisoners at the beginning and points out that they think the shadows and reflections on the walls of the underground cave are real. Without a transitional period, going out of this environment suddenly only leads to rebellion, madness, severe pain, and vicious transformation in every way. Because when a person comes out of the cave in a hurry, his blindness increases.³³ Plato emphasizes that education requires a long-term effort. He states that the prisoners in the cave need time to understand that what is on the wall consists of shadows and to understand their development process and that they should be willing to change by their own will and to suffer the physical and spiritual pain that this change brings.³⁴

If the prisoners' eyes want to see the world, they will have an exercise period for it. Starting from the shadows that they can easily see, they will first focus their attention on the reflections in the water, then raise their eyes and see the stars and the moon. Finally, they will see the sun itself beyond its reflections in the outside world. They will realize that the sun arranges the whole visible world and that the source of everything they see in the cave is the sun.³⁵ The sun is the cause of the appearance of being, but also and particularly, the cause of the sensible being. In the sixth book of his book *The State*, Plato mentions the sun as the source of the Good as well as the sun of the material world. It also symbolizes the good idea, which is at the top of the order of ideas in terms of value. The good idea created the sun as its equivalent. What the sun is in the visible world, it is a good idea for the conceivable things of the world conceived.³⁶

Likewise, Plato sees the value of those who think among

³³ Platon, *Devlet*, 515c-e.

³⁴ Jacqueline Russ, ed., *Felsefe Tarihi: Kurucu Düşünceler*, Tr. trans. İsmail Yergöz (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), I, 52.

³⁵ Platon, *Devlet*, 516b.

³⁶ Platon, *Devlet*, 508b-d.

people above those who act. He uses the following statements in the dialogue between Socrates and Kriton in the Kriton dialogue: "The ideas that should be respected were not bad ones, they were good ones, right Kriton" says. Kriton confirms this. Socrates then said, "Well, good ideas are the ideas of the sages and bad ideas are the ideas of the fools, right?" he says. Kriton confirms this too. Thereupon, Socrates says, "So, dear Kriton, we should not bother ourselves by asking what the majority would think, but it should be cared about that the man who has mastered the right and wrong, that is, the truth itself,"³⁷ As can be seen, we come to a clear conclusion about Socrates in the last dialogue. "Is it important what is said or who is saying it?" Socrates' answer in his discussion is clear: Who says is important; it is true if the wise have said it.

According to Plato, the process of knowledge takes place through a special kind of seeing. The wise man sees through the eyes of the soul. For this, it is necessary to get rid of the things that can cover and obstruct the soul's eye in a methodical way. Achieving the intellectual vision required for this is opening up to another world for the prisoner in the cave. This world is certainly not in another, remote and inaccessible place, it is within one's own; it only becomes clear and conscious at the end of an effort. The allegory of the cave describes the different stages of the remembering process in which existence, knowledge, action and contemplation are intertwined. Plato proves that "learning is nothing more than remembrance", especially with the help of the educator who, in the State and Menon dialogues, leads the soul to itself and takes it back to 'homeland'.³⁸

The Harmony of Spirit

Plato is one of the earliest sources of the dualist view that the mind and soul are intangible beings that can survive separately from the body. He argued that the immortality of the human soul

³⁷ Platon, *Kriton*, Tr. trans. Furkan Akderin (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2010), 47a-c.

³⁸ Russ, ed, *Felsefe Tarihi: Kurucu Düşünceler*, I, 54.

will continue its existence after death as well as before birth.³⁹ The knowledge of ideas that do not change in Plato's thought and are not subject to existence and deterioration does not appear in the body, but the soul.

Plato adopts the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, which was defended by the Pythagoras before him. According to this teaching, the soul exists independently of the body before birth and after death. Therefore, the soul remembers the previous knowledge of the world through association. Plato clearly stated this in his Menon dialogue by having an untrained slave solve complex mathematical problems from simple to difficult.⁴⁰ It is possible that such a mental skill to accept the validity of inferences and conclusions is innate. Because, to learn something, one must have the ability to learn beforehand.⁴¹

The immortality of the soul holds an important place in Plato's philosophy. Plato attempts to prove the immortality of the soul in Phaidon, Menon and some other dialogues. "Remembering" comes first among these evidences. The fact that the soul remembers previous ideas is proof that it existed before coming to this world. On the other hand, according to Plato, the act of knowing ideas by the soul shows that it has an essence similar to ideas, close to ideas. Because only beings that resemble each other can get to know each other. Therefore, the soul that knows eternity must itself be eternal. Then, according to Plato, the soul is something to do with the idea of life. Because every soul is alive. In this case, the soul should not be related to the ideals of death. Because something cannot enter both circles of two concepts that are opposite to each other. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul also allows for the existence of true knowledge, and the existence of true knowledge is proof that the soul is immortal.⁴²

³⁹ Platon, *Menon*, Tr. trans. Furkan Akderin (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2012), 81b-c.

⁴⁰ Platon, *Menon*, 82c-4a.

⁴¹ Stevenson, at al, *İnsan Doğası Üzerine On Üç Teori*, 117.

⁴² Birand, *İlk Çağ Felsefesi Tarihi*, 59.

Plato points out the existence of two equal forces related to the soul. The soul is not one and one whole but consists of three parts. The soul has a thinking aspect, which is the mind. Then there are two more aspects of the soul, which make up the will and consist of instincts. In the part of the soul where the instincts occur, certain cravings appear from time to time. The soul is tormented by the satisfaction of instincts. However, against these lower forces of the soul, the mind, which represents the superior part based on thought, comes into play. Mind mostly dominates instincts with the help of will. The overcoming of a strong desire for anything shows the power of the mind. The mind should always resist the compulsion of instincts and prevent it from directing itself. When it comes to will, it is a force that is separate from both instincts and reason. The inferior forces of the spirit, which are constantly driving people in pursuit of some extreme desires, are concentrated in the lower part of the body. Will, which is a superior force, is located in the chest and heart of a person. Finally, the mind, which is the supreme force governing the will, resides in the head of the man.⁴³

The thinking aspect of the soul requires thinking within the scope of Delphoi understanding and principles, knowing oneself, turning to oneself and making an effort for the salvation of the soul. In reality, other things are of secondary value. According to Plato, the principle that will enable the realization of the harmony in the astronomical cosmos and that this harmony in the astronomical cosmos will be applied to the individual, the society and the state is justice.⁴⁴ Tips on how to achieve such harmony are included in the symposium dialogue. Great emphasis is placed on education as the most important way to raise virtuous, harmonious, balanced and just people. Plato sees education not only as formal processes but also evaluates all social effects on a

⁴³ Birand, *İlk Çağ Felsefesi Tarihi*, 59-60.

⁴⁴ İlyas Altuner, "Ontological Bases of the Universe in Plato's and Aristotle's Cosmologies," *Iğdır University Journal of Social Sciences* 3 (2013), 4.

person's development within the scope of education. Like Socrates, Plato believed deeply in the value of the soul for the mind and will and realized the value of knowledge and true wisdom for the soul to gain competence.

Conclusion

We are witnessing that a transcendent and objective purpose is predicted for human life and human history in Plato. The main and enduring feature of his theory of human nature is that it shows that we are social beings. Plato states that human nature is in the "soul" of man. Hence Human nature is unchangeable, and thus moral values are also immutable. According to Plato, in order to grasp the true meaning of human societies and to organize it properly, one must first grasp the astronomical cosmos. Because knowing the meaning of the concepts of harmony and order is only possible by understanding the astronomical cosmos, which is the expression of an eternal order. Thus, the state must be an earthly model of the astronomical Cosmos. If he is living in the state, he should realize this harmony and order in the state in his own spirit.

Plato also predicted an identity relationship between knowledge and virtue in accordance with the Socratic tradition. In fact, a mere virtue is an insight or knowledge to truly contribute to what is really good for man, to the health and harmony of his soul. However, an even more important result is that virtue can be taught.

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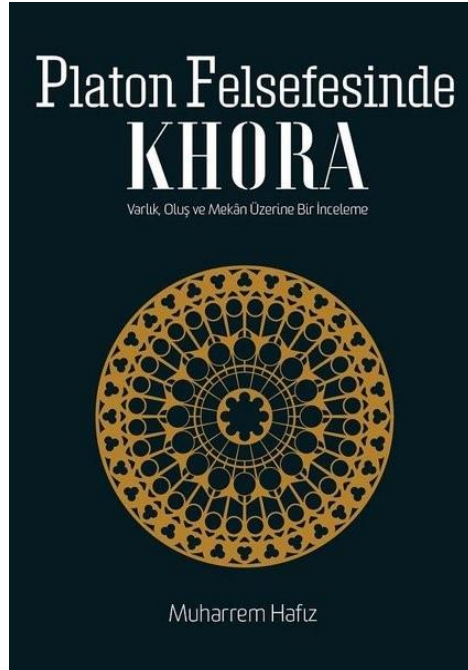
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Book Review

Submitted: 14.11.2020 | Accepted: 20.11.2020

Especially with his work aforementioned, Muharrem Hafız made important contributions to the field of philosophy. He voiced a new reading and interpretation attempt towards the philosophy of dualism and Aristotelian or Neo-Platonic interpretations, which has an important place in the history of philosophy. In the work, the author examines the meanings attributed to the concept of Khôra, which draws attention in *Timaeus*, from many aspects, and endeavors to touch on all the frames in which the concept is discussed. The Khôra, which Plato deals with in *Timaeus*, is a new kind of participation that includes and nurtures existence and being. The author brings a different perspective to the philosophy of duality by examining the interpretations of Khôra, which is added to the



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distinction between existence (idea) and being (sense), as a third type, first in Plato's philosophy and then from the ancient period to the contemporary period. This is also a different approach to Plato and Plato's philosophy. Khôra was discussed in different ways. The reason for the diversity in the interpretations of the concept from antiquity to the contemporary period is the inherent indeterminacy of the concept. Although Khôra etymologically means country, homeland and land, it has been handled in different ways by many thinkers. The author also made a comprehensive examination of his work and tried to include almost all the comments he could reach about the concept since Plato.

The book consists of an introduction, three main chapters and a conclusion section. The section of the introduction is a prelude to the main subject, the scope of the subject and the research method. The reader is prepared for the content with the conceptual analysis, terminology and segmentation information added to the entry. This chapter is very useful for a book dealing with the concept of an uncertain nature.

In the first part, three main issues are discussed: the metaphorical presentation of the concept of Khôra, its rational presentation and its place between the existence-being duality through its use in Plato dialogues. Its metaphorical presentation is a result of the ambiguous nature of the concept. Many thinkers have tried to make the concept prominent in minds through metaphors. The author examines the metaphors one by one and explains why the concepts of mother, reservoir and gold were chosen. This method also reveals the similarities between metaphors and the concept of Khôra. Thus, a certain picture appears in the minds regarding the concept of Khôra.

With the rational presentation of the concept, Khôra begins to be introduced gradually. The rational presentation is based on Plato's dialogues. *Theaetetus*, *Timaeus*, *Sophist* dialogues stand out in this respect. The author draws attention to the fact that in the *Theaetetus*, being approaches existence and in *Sophist* existence approaches being. The most important feature of Khôra is

that it provides the transition between existence and being. After pointing out this feature, the author determines some of the features of Khôra through metaphoric implications and rational inferences. Then he examines the place of the concept between existence and being and its relationship with them. He briefly compares the features and functions of each. This comparison also shows the distinction of Khôra as a third species.

The second part of the book includes commentaries on the concept of Khôra in the history of philosophy. As a result of the author's investigations, it was revealed that Khôra had evaluations such as matter (material), place, environment, both matter and space, or neither matter nor space in the history of philosophy. An evaluation can be made about the use and nature of Khôra through these comments.

Also, the diversity in interpretations is a reflection of the indeterminacy of the concept. In this respect, the author's gathering of comments is an important contribution. This section also includes Aristotle's critical interpretation, Neo-Platonists' interpretations of Khôra as the space confirming the theory of emanation and modern interpretations in which Khôra is meant as matter or space. In addition to these interpretations, the author mentions the interpretations of people such as Moderatus of Gades (1st century), Plotinus (204/5-270) Abu Bakr al-Razi (854-925) and John Burnet (1863-1928) who defend the unity of matter and space with a unifying point of view, arguing that Khôra is both matter and space. Derrida's (1930-2004) opinion stands in opposition to these views. According to him, Khôra is a concept that can be positioned against the dualistic understanding of the philosophers and cannot be evaluated as either space or matter. For Derrida, Khôra is a concept that can escape from dichotomies and language determinations. Therefore, it would be wrong to surround it with certain definitions. The author's inclusion of the philosophers' interpretations of Khôra in this section is beneficial in terms of seeing the meaning and evaluation of the concept in different ways in the course of the history of philosophy.

In the third and last chapter, it is examined from what angles and how the concept of Khôra is handled in the contemporary period and its use in feminism and aesthetics are included. It is especially striking that the concept is used by feminist thinkers. While some consider Khôra as a supportive element (concept) of feminism, some feminist thinkers consider and criticize its metaphorical using such as the reservoir or mother as the product of masculine logic. For example, Julia Kristeva (1941-) insists on identifying the Khôra with the maternal body, while Luce Irigaray (1930-) finds the concept valuable in that it represents an excluded and marginalized femininity against the general mind-set dominated by masculine metaphysics. On the other hand, Judith Butler (1956-) does not accept this type of defense because she sees it as a form of interpretation formed from materiality and again masculinity.

It is quite correct that the author included feminist comments after informing the reader about the nature of Khôra in the first two chapters. In this way, it will be possible to understand more clearly how the concept takes place in the world of thought and social issues in modern times.

The author establishes the connection between Khôra and aesthetics through the concepts of choir and dance space in Greek Tragedy. At this point, the aesthetic relationship with Khôra is established through Nietzsche (1844-1900) and the choir/Khôra experience. In this title, Khôra is considered as the place of participation in divine creation through human creation under the influence of Nietzsche.

The work meets with the reader as the product of detailed research and reading on the concept and Plato's philosophy. Khôra is a concept that is difficult to explain and convey, due to its indeterminable nature and lack of a clear definition. However, after the author creates a frame in the minds with metaphorical expressions in his work, he also shows its usage in Plato dialogues and facilitates the understanding of the concept. Thus, the place of Khôra between existence and becoming clearer. After-

ward, he clarifies the concept in his mind by giving comments about Khôra objectively. It is especially important to include feminist interpretations in terms of showing the concept's interpretations in modern times. The detailed and systematic presentation of Khôra is also valuable work to reinterpret Plato and Plato's philosophy. Thus, approaches towards Plato's philosophy also differed. Also, the classic existence and being a dilemma is carried to another dimension with the concept of Khôra.

Averroes, *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*, Translation, Introduction, and Notes by Charles E. Butterworth (South Bend, Indiana: St. Augustine's Press, 2000), 178 pp.

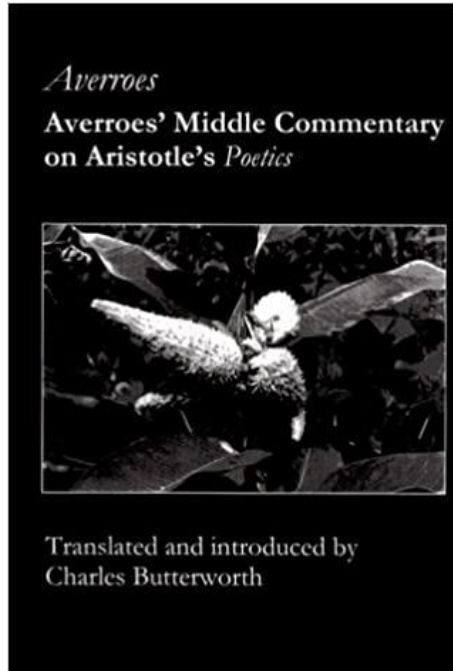
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Book Review

Submitted: 17.11.2020 | Accepted: 28.11.2020

The book that I will try to review here is *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* translated into English, introduced, and annotated by Prof. Charles E. Butterworth, and published in 2000. We have two editions of the book. The first edition was published in 1980, the second edition was made in 2000 and Prof. Butterworth wrote a new Preface in which he clarified the translation method that he used for his translation with its reasons and examples. For this reason, I write this review on the second edition of the book. I need to clarify why I review this book twenty years after the second edition of it: First, I want to remind that studying classical logic and philosophy texts



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and translating them into another language in the modern period is not easy and requires a very meticulous effort without expecting a response. Second, I have the same translation experience for this book. I translated *Averroes' Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* from the Arabic edition of Charles E. Butterworth and Ahmad A. Haridi into Turkish in 2019, I used this edition there, and I also translated Butterworth's Arabic Preface, Arabic Introduction, Arabic summary, and some of the tables that he prepared so that the text could be understood easier and added all of those into my work.¹ This interesting translation experience taught me how difficult to have a good grasp of the depths of such a classical book in which Averroes attempted to adapt Aristotle's poetical theory to the Arabic poetry tradition about fifteen centuries later. In other words, it should not be easy to reexpress an ancient book (Ibn Rushd's *Talkhis Kitab ash-Shi'r*) that aims to adapt the philosophical meanings in the other ancient book (Aristoteles' *Peri Poiêtikês*) that puts forward the universal rules derived from poetry tradition belonging to a particular language and culture, to the poetry tradition of its own language and culture, with comments in a modern language (Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*). And when I read Butterworth's works, I cannot stop myself remembering Abu Tammam's verse as follows: 'It is easy for us to speak and for you to act (لهان علينا أن نقول وتفعل)'. I also must say the same, for instance, for the Arabic translation of Abu Bishr Matta and the Turkish translations of Mübahat Türker Küyel, Hamdi Ragıp Atademir and Ömer Türker from Aristotle, al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. Here, I would like to bring this book back to the agenda, for that, I will try to summarize the book and draw attention to Butterworth's translation style.

As said above Charles E. Butterworth edited Averroes' original Arabic text, he also wrote Arabic Preface, Arabic Introduc-

¹ İbn Rüşd, *Poetika (Şiir) Orta Şerhi*, Tr. trans. Ali Tekin (İstanbul: Endülüs Yayınları, 2019).

tion, and prepared useful tables in Arabic for the book.² He used this edition that he prepared with Ahmad A. Haridi in his English translation (p. xiii). The book consists of the preface for the first edition in 1980 (p. ix-xvi), a new preface for the second edition in 2000 (p. xvii-xxi), one Introduction (p. 3-49), one summary of the book (the Order of the Argument) (p. 51-58) and the English translation with notes (p. 59-142).

In the first Preface, Butterworth mentions Hermannus Alemannus' inadequate Latin translation of Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics*, O. B. Hardison's English translation of this Latin translation, the unacceptable considerations of Ernest Renan and Luis Borges on Averroes' *Middle Commentary*, publications of the Arabic original of the commentary, Vicente Cantarino's imaginative rewriting, Shukri 'Ayyad's and Kamal al-Rhubi's masterly studies on the field (p. ix) and then he clarifies his aim of this study: "I hope that the present English translation of Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* with its introduction and notes, as well as the critical Arabic edition on which it is based, will quicken scholarly interest in this fascinating treatise and inspire some alert minds to consider the prevailing ill-informed judgments about his understanding of Aristotle's *Poetics*" (p. x). Butterworth reminds us of the commentary styles that Averroes used. Averroes wrote two commentaries on the *Poetics*. One of them is the *Short Commentary on Poetics* and the second one is the *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* translated in this book (p. x-xi). Because he did not know Greek, Averroes studied the Arabic translation of Aristotle's text. Aristotle's *Poetics* was translated from Syriac into Arabic by Abu Bishr Matta and we are not sure whether Averroes used it or not but it is possible. In any case, Averroes' aim was not to understand and to explain Aristotle's own text but in the commentary he tried to grasp the universal nature of the art of poetry in his own world. Butterworth utters Averroes' project as follows: "Averroes' goal

² Ibn Rushd, *Talkhīṣ Kitāb ash-Shi'r*, eds. Charles Butterworth and Ahmad Abd al-Majid ak-Harīdī (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Miṣriyya al-Āmma li al-Kitāb, 1986).

here is not simply to make Aristotle's more readily accessible but to draw from it principles of poetry common to all or most nations" (p. xii). Towards the end of the first Preface, he gives information about the translation method and the text preparation technique he followed.

In the Preface to the second edition Butterworth utters the pleasure of seeing the new edition of the book, just points out speculation that the book did not get enough attention and he does not care about that (p. xv). I think it is natural and normal for a classical commentary book written in Arabic on Aristotle in the classical period in the Islamic world. In fact, he draws attention to this situation in the Preface of another book by the name of *Averroes' Three Short Commentaries on Aristotle's "Topics", "Rhetoric" and "Poetics"*.³ After that, Butterworth says that the translation did not need a fundamental change although it had been criticized in some ways and gives some examples for some terms criticized. Some readers claimed the translation was closer to Greek and Arabic than to English (p. xviii). We can say this is a classical discussion about the translation method. Some translators prefer a translation method based on the meaning the author of the book means and then try to express this meaning in his or her own language. On the other hand, according to the translators who follow the literal translation way, the translator has to reexpress the text on its own terms, otherwise, we cannot claim the text we translated is a translation, but it might be closer to paraphrase. In the translation, we must use the same word in our translation for every single technical term in the main text as possible but if it is very difficult to find the same word in our language we may change the word and maybe we can translate it based on meaning. Butterworth expresses it as follows: "...So that the words used to reflect the nuances of the original without unduly prejudging it, the translator must strive to use the same

³ Charles E. Butterworth, *Averroes' Three Short Commentaries on Aristotle's "Topics", "Rhetoric" and "Poetics"* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1977), vii-viii.

word in his or her own language for the same word in the language being translated and to use the one word alone for the other. Synonyms are just that, synonyms; and they should be rendered accordingly, not translated willy-nilly as it strikes the translator's fancy" (p. xix). After the discussion about the translation method, he puts forth how Averroes adapted Aristotle's poetical theory in Greek culture to his own Arabic culture. According to this, Averroes tried to grasp the universal rules of the art of poetry and after that, he tried to adapt the universal theory to his own particular world (p. xx-xxi). At the end of the Preface to the second edition, Butterworth reminds us of the tension between philosophy and poetics, and he points out what he thinks about this problem (p. xxi).

It can be said that the Introduction consists of four parts. In the first part, Butterworth mentions the power of poetry in societies, its being more influential than philosophy, societies' perceptions of their poetic traditions, and the etymology of the words used for poetry in Greek and Arabic (p. 3-6). For Westerns, names such as Odysseus, Achilles and Agamemnon are well known, but Dhu al-Rummah or his poetry does not make sense. It is clear that if it is known it allows them to envisage what they have perhaps never experienced (p. 4). In the second part of the Introduction Butterworth reveals the essence of Plato's discussion and criticism about poetry in the *Republic* and the *Ion*, then he compares the perspectives in these two dialogues before moving to Averroes' text because Averroes wrote a *Middle Commentary* on Plato's *Republic* as well (p. 6-11). Butterworth says that consequently we can not learn from Plato's works the nature of the art of poetry and we can get the universal rules of this art from Aristotle's *Poetics* (p. 11). I think we can reemphasize here that Aristotle was not a poet but he was a philosopher and he analyzed the nature of the art of poetry as a philosopher. We can say the same consideration for the art of rhetoric, the art of dialectic, the art of sophistry as well. Aristotle investigates those who are practitioners of these activities and then he analyzes and puts for-

ward what their natures are universally in his own works that he writes them as arts. Therefore if we want to learn what the art of poetry is and why it is so attractive to us we need a good grasp of Aristotle's book. For this reason, Butterworth says at the beginning of the third part of the Introduction as follows: "Only by philosophic inquiry into, rather than an attack upon poetry and its adherents can we acquire such knowledge. For that kind of inquiry, we must turn to Aristotle and Averroes. They do recognize the necessity of investigating poetry as an art and of indicating where it belongs in the hierarchy of knowledge..." (p. 11-12). Because he read Aristotle's text from an Arabic translation, Averroes tried to adapt the theory to his own context and his goal was not Aristotle's text reexplain Averroes had some different explanations in his text. It was natural but despite these differences, he agrees with Aristotle on the essential character of poetry (p. 13). Here Butterworth offers us two tables in which he compares the books of both philosophers Aristotle and Averroes chapter by chapter and he investigates and analyzes two philosophers' views about the art of poetry in detail (p. 11-46). While revealing how Averroes interpreted Aristotle's theory by comparisons, Butterworth also clarifies Averroes' view of why Arabs are not a natural nation other than those from Andalusia (p. 42-46). In the last part, he mentions Aristotle and Averroes' views about the evolutionary structure of poetry, how they studied on poetry differently from Plato and what Averroes' aim in his own book (p. 46-49).

After the Introduction Butterworth shows us the summary of Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Poetics* paragraph by paragraph (p. 51-58). This summary is very essential for those who try to grasp the whole book easier.

It is not true for me to talk about the English translation of Averroes' *Middle Commentary of Aristotle's Poetics* because I do not see myself good enough for this kind of consideration about that, but I can repeat what I think about the translation method that I also prefer here and I can also express briefly what I feel

when I read his translation. It is possible to say that the way of translation that Butterworth prefers is faithful to the original Arabic text and literal. As known literal translation method can be criticized because it is closer to the original language of the text. In my opinion, this depends on the translator's choice in translation. I also prefer literal translation personally. We can see the translators who translated some of Aristotle's text by using this way in the classical period. For example, if we try to read Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics* in Greek and Abu Bishr Matta's translation, we can easily find the same words and same structures of the sentences in two languages although Abu Bishr translated the book from Syriac, not Greek. This way of translation is also useful for those who learn classical languages for studying on the logical and philosophical text. Perhaps those who read translations but do not need to look at the original text think that translations are not smoothy in their own languages but if we try to analyze a classical text in its original language and want to comment correctly literal, the translation will be more useful for us. We can also add that literal translation is more difficult and requires keeping each word in mind throughout the text (p. xiii-xiv) but for example, if we want to express the meaning in a more aesthetic way we can also use another method; we can use other translations of the same text, read about the topic in the text and then we can try to reexpress the text in our language as a paraphrase, or we can try to write a new commentary on that text in our own language.

Finally, it must be pointed out that the notes that Butterworth wrote for his translation are very useful specially to understand the examples from Arabic poetry that Averroes' gave because Butterworth gives information about those verses and comments to make them understandable.

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1. **Entelekya Logico-Metaphysical Review** publishes studies on the Classical Aristotelian Logic, Metaphysics and Rational Psychology and Theology; in addition, other classical, modern and contemporary studies related to the Aristotelian tradition. Submissions are accepted in English but submissions in other languages are decided by Editorial Board.
2. Book reviews sent to **Entelekya** are expected appropriate to the publication policies of the journal. Book reviews written in languages other than English will never be accepted. As to translations into English, they can be published when related to Aristotelianism.
3. All papers must contain an abstract of 150 words and at least 5 keywords in English. When the submission language is different, both abstract and keywords should be in English only.
4. Papers should not exceed 5000 words, with a double space interlining, with margins, left 4,5, up 4,5, down 3,5 and right 4,5 cm. In papers, it should be made use of Times New Roman 11 points. Pictures or graphics in the papers should be sent separately as png or jpg file, maximum 10x20 cm in size.
5. Annotation and reference system of the journal has been described the Chicago Manual of Style, 16th Edition. Henceforth, in manuscripts to send to the journal, it will be used.

Style Sheet

A. BOOK OR A PART OF BOOK

One Author

¹ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 50.

² Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, 51.

Ryle, Gilbert. *The Concept of Mind*. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

Two or More Authors

¹ Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), I, 23.

² Whitehead and Russell, *Principia Mathematica*, I, 30.

Whitehead, Alfred North and Bertrand Russell. *Principia Mathematica*. 3 vols. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910.

Editor, Translator, or Compiler in Addition to Author

¹ Alfarabi, *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962), 45.

² Alfarabi, *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, 49.

³ Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, trans. W. David Ross, *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. VIII, ed. W. David Ross (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-52), A.1, 980a21.

⁴ Aristotle, *Metaphysica*, A.1, 980b17.

⁵ John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. Anthony D. Woozley (New York: Meridian Book, 1974), 123.

⁶ Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, 129.

Alfarabi. *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*. Trans. Muhsin Mahdi. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962.

Aristotle. *Metaphysica*. Trans. W. David Ross. *The Works of Aristotle*, vol. VIII. Ed. W. David Ross. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1908-52.

Locke, John. *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. Ed. Anthony D. Woozley. New York: Meridian Book, 1974.

Chapter or Other Part of a Book

¹ Richard Sorabji, "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle," *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. Richard Sorabji (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), 23.

² Sorabji, "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle," 30.

Sorabji, Richard. "The Ancient Commentators on Aristotle." *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*. Ed. Richard Sorabji. New York: Cornell University Press, 1990: 1-30.

Preface, Foreword, Introduction, or Similar Part of a Book

¹ George F. Hourani, "Introduction," Averroes, *On the Harmony of Religion and*

Philosophy, trans. and ed. George F. Hourani (London: Luzac and Company, 1976), 7.

² Hourani, "Introduction," 8.

Hourani, George F. "Introduction." Averroes, *On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*. Trans. and ed. George F. Hourani. London: Luzac and Company, 1976: 2-8.

B. JOURNAL ARTICLE

Article in a Print or Online Journal

¹ Amos Bertolacci, "On the Arabic Translations of Aristotle's Metaphysics," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005), 250.

² Bertolacci, "On the Arabic Translations of Aristotle's Metaphysics," 253.

Bertolacci, Amos. "On the Arabic Translations of Aristotle's Metaphysics." *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 15 (2005): 241-75.

Article in a Newspaper or Popular Magazine

¹ Daniel Mendelsohn, "But Enough about Me," *The New Yorker* (25 January 2010).

² Mendelsohn, "But Enough About Me."

Mendelsohn, Daniel. "But Enough About Me." *The New Yorker*, 25 January 2010.

C. OTHER FORMS

Book Review

¹ İlyas Altuner, "Being and Intellect: Theory of Demonstration in Aristotle and al-Fārābī by A. Tekin," *Entelekyia Logico-Metaphysical Review* 2, no. 1 (2018), 68.

² Altuner, "Being and Intellect," 69.

Altuner, İlyas. "Being and Intellect: Theory of Demonstration in Aristotle and al-Fārābī by A. Tekin." *Entelekyia Logico-Metaphysical Review* 2, no. 1 (2018): 67-70.

Thesis or Dissertation

¹ Roger Ariew, *Ockham's Razor: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis Ockham's Principle of Parsimony*, PhD Dissertation (Illinois: University of Illinois, 1976), 15.

² Ariew, *Ockham's Razor*, 21.

Ariew, Roger. *Ockham's Razor: A Historical and Philosophical Analysis Ockham's Principle of Parsimony*. PhD Dissertation. Illinois: University of Illinois, 1976.

Presentation at Meeting or Conference

¹ Alix Cohen, "Kant on the Ethics of Belief," *The Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (London: University of London, June 2, 2014).

² Cohen, "Kant on the Ethics of Belief."

Cohen, Alix. "Kant on the Ethics of Belief." *The Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*. London: University of London, June 2, 2014.

Film

¹ Joel Silver, *The Matrix* [Film], dir. Larry and Andy Wachowski (USA and Australia: Warner Bros. Pictures and Roadshow Entertainment, March 1999).

² Silver, *The Matrix*.

Silver, Joel. *The Matrix*. Film. Dir. Larry and Andy Wachowski. USA and Australia: Warner Bros. Pictures and Roadshow Entertainment, March 1999.

Website

¹ "Aristotle," Wikipedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle> (Accessed May 10, 2014).

² "Aristotle," Wikipedia.

Wikipedia. "Aristotle." <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aristotle> (Accessed May 10, 2014).

