Themed section

Towards New Perspectives on

Ethics in Islam

Casuistry, Contingency, and Ambiguity

Guest editor

Feriel Bouhafa

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The Place of Virtue Ethics within the Post-Classical Discourse on *ḥikma*: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*

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Abstract

Preserved in what seems to be a unique manuscript at the Bodleian Library, *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* (*The Soul and the Spirit together with an Explanation of Their Faculties*) of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) is a curious book. At the beginning, the author describes the text as part of the philosophical sciences (as opposed to the religious ones) and clarifies that it deals with *ʿilm al-akhlāq*, meaning Aristotelian virtue ethics. The text is divided into two parts, the first explaining subjects of philosophical psychology, such as the nature of the soul, its faculties, and its survival after the death of the body. The second part explains how one can “treat” or “heal” the soul from certain negative character traits or vices. In both parts, the book makes liberal use of quotations from the Qurʾān, from prophetic *ḥadīth*, and from sayings by other prophets and sages. This is quite unlike any other “book on philosophy” that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī wrote.

The article explains the distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical books in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and what it means for a book to belong to the former group. Al-Rāzī's works in the theoretical fields of philosophy (logic, the natural sciences, metaphysics, and theology) do not use evidence derived from revelation and hardly ever refer to it. The relationship between revelation and the practical disciplines of philosophy (among them ethics), however, is different from the relation between revelation and theoretical philosophy. This difference leads in Avicenna to an almost complete abandonment of the practical disciplines. In authors who follow Avicenna in his Farabian approach to the relationship between philosophy and revelation, it leads to hybrid works such as *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* that follow a philosophical agenda but employ means and strategies that mimic and imitate revelation.

Keywords: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Avicenna, al-Ghazālī, ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, *ʿilm al-akhlāq*, Ethics, Practical philosophy, Psychology, Soul, Prophecy, Revelation.

Around the year 622/1225, the philosopher ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231) wrote an essay of cultural criticism where he voiced his dissatisfaction with the predominant directions of intellectual life during his days. The text is known as the *Kitāb al-Naṣīḥatayn*, or the *Book of the Two Pieces of Advice* and ʿAbd al-Laṭīf wrote it most probably in the Anatolian city of Erzincan where he worked as a teacher in the *ʿulūm al-awāʾil*, the rational sciences that the Arabs had inherited from the Greeks. ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's two pieces of advice are actually just a single one, spread out over two fields of knowledge. In medicine as well as in philosophy, students of these two fields do well if they just stick to the Greek forefathers and disregard

as much as possible the Arabic authors who have deviated from them. In medicine, students should study the works of Galen and Hippocrates and in philosophy those of Aristotle and Plato. Arabic authors are worthy of attention only insofar as they are faithful to the Greeks. Al-Fārābī (d. 339/950-951) was, in ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s opinion, such a faithful follower but Avicenna (Ibn Sīnā, d. 428/1037) was not. In fact, the second part of ‘Abd al-Laṭīf’s book on philosophy is a long diatribe and a polemic against Avicenna’s works, his philosophy, and against his corrupting influence on many scholars, among them al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and Ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (d. after 536/1141; al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 165-166). His most violent attacks against Avicenna come at the end of his book when ‘Abd al-Laṭīf touches on Avicenna’s moral conduct. Those who know Avicenna well and who follow him, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says, “report that he used to drink wine and indulge in fornication (*yartakibu l-fawāḥish*) and that he would write his books only when drunk and intoxicated.” (al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 168). Such behavior is unworthy of a philosopher and it brought the whole field into disrepute. It is, however, not just a coincidence but a consequence of the way Avicenna conducted the philosophical sciences. Close to the end of his *Book of the Two Pieces of Advice*, ‘Abd al-Laṭīf takes the reader into his confidence and says:

I will tell you a secret so amazing and of so much benefit that had this book of mine contained nothing but this alone, it would have been enough to lend honor [to it]. It is the following: We have reported about the philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*) that they said philosophy (*ḥikma*) ought not to be taught to anybody except to those who grew up according to prophetic practice (*sunna*) and who are accustomed to acting according to the religious law (*sharʿa*). I will tell you the reason for this. This is that the religious law accustoms one to be bound by its fetters (*quyūd*) to the point that one stops at its commandments and its prohibitions. But the fetters of philosophy are more numerous and heavier, so that whoever is not accustomed to the fetters of the religious law despite their lightness, how can he withstand the fetters of philosophy with all their weight? (al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 169-170; English translation adopted from MARTINI BONADEO 2013: 192-193)

Avicenna could not even live up to the religious prohibition of drinking alcohol despite its moral lightness. With regard to his sexual conduct, Avicenna’s promiscuity may not have broken the religious law. ‘Abd al-Laṭīf mentions that the Muslim religious law allows a man to have sex with four wives and with as many beautiful concubines as he wishes. Philosophy, however, prohibits frequent sexual activity because it weakens body and soul in their attainment of the truth. Philosophy also prescribes a strict continence on eating and drinking to avoid damage to body and soul and, so ‘Abd al-Laṭīf says here at least implicitly, it prohibits intoxication (al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 170).

Avicenna violated the moral code of philosophy because he was one of those whom ‘Abd al-Laṭīf calls a “vain,” “worthless,” and a “false philosopher” (*faylasūf bahraj, bāṭil, and zūr*; al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 173). He focused only on the theoretical science and did not understand that the true goal of philosophy and its ultimate purpose lies in the actions that it makes its practitioners adopt. The false philosopher, so ‘Abd al-Laṭīf, acquires some measure of the theoretical sciences and believes that with it he has also acquired happiness (*saʿāda*). Such happiness, however, is only of the kind that the masses of the people deem desirable. He neglects to habituate himself in doing truly virtuous acts. Instead, the vain philosopher

follows his own appetites and inclinations. The true philosopher, however, follows the example of Plato and al-Fārābī and “their actions and their conduct in life are a witness to their teachings. Their teachings are not empty of deeds so that one could think they are fabrications and make-believe” (al-BAGHDĀDĪ 2017: 174).

Although ‘Abd al-Laṭīf never says so explicitly, what he bemoans in Avicenna’s œuvre is that the latter, unlike Plato and al-Fārābī, never wrote a book of ethics. Plato wrote the *Laws* and the *Republic*, and he has much to say about ethical conduct. Al-Fārābī wrote a commentary on Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*, which is lost, and he has much to say about the right conduct in many of his other books (see RUDOLPH 2017: 622-636). In all his numerous philosophical encyclopedias, however, Avicenna never included a part that deals with ethics. His most extensive philosophical work *The Fulfillment (al-Shifā’)* is divided into four parts: logic, mathematic, natural sciences, and *ilāhiyyāt*, which is metaphysics and philosophical theology. Practical philosophy is dealt with only at the very end, in the tenth book of the *Ilāhiyyāt (Metaphysics/Theology)* that deals with the office of the prophet and the ideal rules he should issue for a society. The same is true for other of Avicenna’s philosophical compendia such as *Pointers and Reminders (al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt)*, for instance, which is divided into two major parts of which the second one covers subjects in the natural sciences and in metaphysics and theology combined. Whereas in *al-Shifā’*, prophecy is dealt with at two places, the end of the natural sciences and the end of metaphysics, the particular arrangement of *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* allows Avicenna to explain it at one place only, namely in the tenth and last *namaṭ* on the secrets of the signs and wonders (*asrār al-āyāt*). Here in *Ishārāt*, however, he says nothing about the particular laws and rules a prophet should issue for his society.

If we look at Yaḥyā Maḥdāvī’s bibliography of works by Avicenna as well as Jules L. Janssens’ resourceful *Annotated Bibliography on Ibn Sīnā* of 1991 with its two appendices of 1999 and 2017 and go to the pages that cover Avicenna’s own texts on ethics, the result is quite meager (MAHDAVĪ 1954, JANSSENS 1991: 71-72; JANSSENS 1999: 35-36; JANSSENS 2017: 131-134). There is a *Kitāb al-Akhlāq* that belongs to Avicenna’s short epistles, included in a small collection of nine texts, *Tis’ rasā’il*, printed first 1881 in Istanbul. That epistle has merely five pages and not once—as Charles Butterworth notes in a programmatic article of 1987 about Islamic traditions of virtue ethics—does it mention “character traits” or “moral habits” (*akhlāq*; BUTTERWORTH 1987: 244-246). Rather it talks about virtues (*faḍā’il*), which are qualities of the soul that humans need to perfect. Here, Avicenna mentions four cardinal virtues (*uṣūl*), namely temperance (*‘iffa*), courage (*shajā’a*), practical wisdom (*ḥikma*), and justice (*‘adāla*). The latter is the combination of the three earlier virtues (similar in IBN SĪNĀ, *al-Shifā’*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 378). These cardinal virtues Avicenna divides into twenty-three branches and identifies a particular sphere of influence for each. On the five pages of his *Kitāb al-Akhlāq*, however, Avicenna has precious little to say how these virtues are acquired. At the beginning of the treatise he says that the perfection of one’s theoretical faculties—which lead to happiness in this world and the next—will somewhat include the perfection of the four cardinal virtues. This seems to vindicate ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī’s criticism that for Avicenna the key of all perfections lies in the acquisition of the theoretical sciences and that he paid no attention to philosophical ethics.

That does not mean, however, that Avicenna had no ethical theory. As an Aristotelian he subscribed to the position that the morally good is defined in terms of the Aristotelian notion

of *entelekheia* (“realization of potentialities”). Whatever leads to the perfection of the potentialities inherent in things and in society is good and whatever distracts from it is bad (ERLWEIN 2019: 30-35, 50). Among the little we can say for certain about Avicenna’s teachings on morality is the fact that he understood moral judgments not as principles that are valid in all circumstances but rather as highly contextualized agreements among members of a certain society. Here he followed earlier concepts of moral judgments in Arabic philosophy by, for instance Miskawayh (d. 421/1030). In an exchange of opinions between Miskawayh and his colleague and friend al-Tawhīdī (d. between 400/1009 and 414/1023), written around 365/975 in Rayy, the latter asks whether a divinely revealed law (*sharīʿa*) can possibly include rules that violate reason, such as animal sacrifice or the imposition of blood money on the clan of a murderer? This is something like a trick-question, as the latter was practiced among Muslims and is sanctioned by Islamic law. Al-Tawhīdī hence truly asks whether the Muslim revealed law violates reason (*ʿaql*)? Miskawayh answers that it does not. Judgments of reason are permanent and never cease to be valid. Moral judgments, however, change and are subject to context (*qarāʿin*) and to circumstances (*shurūṭ*). The two examples are not judgments of reason, Miskawayh clarifies, as the common opinion on animal sacrifice has changed over time. What was once acceptable is now considered cruel and harmful. This shows, however, that these moral judgments do not represent knowledge based on reason but mere opinion (al-TAWHĪDĪ 2019, II: 210-219).

Avicenna voices a similar position in some of his textbooks on logic. There, he discusses the epistemological grounding of certain kinds of premises that we employ in arguments. One class of premises are so called “*mashhūrāt*,” meaning “generally accepted knowledge” that is affirmed by an unspoken consensus of people within a community. For most people the existence of China, for instance, is such a *mashhūra*, given that most people rely for this piece of information on the testimony of the few who have traveled there. One can also say that *mashhūrāt* are merely hearsay, albeit one that is not challenged by opposing information and hence usually reliable. For Avicenna, moral judgments belong to this class of *mashhūrāt*. In a famous thought experiment in *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt* (*Pointers and Reminders*), Avicenna asks his readers to imagine a situation in which a human has never had any associations in this world, no parents, no education, has never heard about others’ opinions or religious convictions, and that this human is only left with sense perception and his two faculties of reason and of estimation (*wahm*) (VASALOU 2016: 58-65). Would such a human decide that theft, lying, or animal sacrifice is wrong? Avicenna denies that he would and says that nothing of this is required by “pure reason” (*ʿaql sādhiq*).

If a human were to imagine himself as created at once with a complete intellect, having received no education and not being under the power of psychological and moral sentiments, he would not assert any such propositions. (IBN SĪNĀ 2002: 127; Engl. trans. VASALOU 2016: 59)

Yet this human would affirm that the whole is greater than its parts, which is eternally true and becomes an axiom (*awwaliyya*) of the philosophical sciences. Moral judgments, however, are not eternally true and hence not the object of proper philosophical inquiry. For any Aristotelian “knowledge” (*epistēmē*, *ilm*) is only that what is universal and hence always true (ADAMSON 2005).

Moral judgments are affected by their context (*qarā'in*) and the circumstances (*shurūṭ*). That is one reason why in Avicenna they become closely associated with politics and—as we will see—with religion. Charles Butterworth pointed out that Avicenna subordinated the acquisition of the virtues to politics and from there to the most efficient and virtuous way a human society can organize, namely to prophetic legislation (BUTTERWORTH 1987: 238). That is why the tenth book of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* (*Metaphysics/Theology*) in Avicenna's *al-Shifā'*, says Butterworth, should be regarded as the place where he deals with ethics. Butterworth has shown that here, Avicenna not only talks about laws and about rules but also—quite abruptly as Butterworth notices—about character traits (*akhlāq*) and about habits (*'ādāt*; BUTTERWORTH 1987: 238-242). He also speaks about virtues (*faḍā'il*) and thus connects his ideas about prophecy and its content to the moral discourse that readers of philosophy have been familiar with in the works of al-Fārābī, for instance. In short, if the very last book in his *al-Shifā'* is the place where Avicenna explains his moral theory, it is one that is based on the familiar Aristotelian themes of virtues and character traits that are acquired through habituation. This habituation, however, is best achieved through prophetic legislation and by revelation.

Avicenna, however, was not the first to bring revelation and prophetic legislation in such a close relationship with philosophical ethics. Recently Feriel Bouhafa could show that already al-Fārābī tries to account for Islamic ethics within an Aristotelian division of knowledge and he subsumes *fiqh* as a practical science. Religious ethics is for al-Fārābī a preparation for the philosophical one. For al-Fārābī philosophy and revelation are not two parallel and distinct ways of acquiring truth and establishing the virtues. Rather, they are one way where the religious is basic and propaedeutic and where philosophy represents the demonstrative and indisputable pinnacle (BOUHAFI 2019). Yet only few people read books on philosophical ethics, hence this discipline is in its efficiency for establishing virtues vastly outperformed by revelation. The latter prescribes acts of external and internal worship that lead to habituation and the establishment of virtues in the individual (GALSTON 1979: 568-569). Given that revelation is widely followed whereas only few study philosophical ethics, the latter stands for Avicenna in the long shadow of the former (KAYA 2014). Whereas al-Fārābī wrote important books on philosophical ethics, among them a lost commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (see RUDOLPH [et al.] (eds.) 2017: 180-182, 221-223, 403), Avicenna's particular adaptation of the Farabian position on the relationship between practical philosophy and revelation leads to a neglect of philosophical ethics in his œuvre, or rather its reduction to the tenth book of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* on prophetic legislation.

Prophetic legislation, however, is geared toward the masses and not to the intellectual elite. 'Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī therefore has a point when he criticizes Avicenna—but not al-Fārābī—for neglecting the difference that characterizes the conduct of a philosopher from that of those not committed to this field. Even today those of us who feel a commitment to philosophy expect more from our peers in that field than the mere compliance with the law or the fulfillment of moral expectations that society has agreed upon. While Avicenna often refers to the philosophers as an elite in the theoretical sciences whose method is superior to all other scholars who work in fields concerned with similar subjects, there is no such sense of superiority when it comes to the practical sciences, at least Avicenna nowhere writes about that.

Avicenna's reluctance to write about practical philosophy did not rule out an eagerness to comment on how one should write about it if one were to do it. He includes practical philosophy in his several divisions of the sciences. In his *Aqsām al-ḥikma* (*The Parts of Philosophy*), a text also known as *Fī aqsām al-ʿulūm al-ʿaqliyya* (*On the Division of the Rational Sciences*), Avicenna applies the traditional Greek division of practical philosophy into three branches, namely ethics, household management, and the management of the city. He introduces this division by saying that practical philosophy is divided into two parts, one dealing with "a single individual" (*shakḥ wāḥid*) the other with "shared participation" (*al-sharika*). The latter is divided into two fields, one concerned with the household (*manzil*), the other with the city (*madīna*). So it is not, strictly speaking, a threefold division but two steps of a twofold division. On the first branch that deals with individuals, Avicenna writes that "through it one learns how the human's character traits and the human's actions should be so that his [or her] life in this world and in the hereafter is happy (*saʿīd*) and this is what is contained in Aristotle's book *Fī l-akhlāq* (= *Nicomachean Ethics*)" (IBN SĪNĀ 2020: 12). While this threefold division of practical philosophy goes back to older roots within the philosophical tradition, there are at least two texts by Avicenna where he deviates from this scheme or where he modifies it (KAYA 2014: 274-277). The first is his Persian *Dāneshnāmeḥ-yi ʿAlāʾī* (*Book of Knowledge for ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla*) written for the court of the Kākūyid ruler of Isfahan, ʿAlāʾ al-Dawla Muḥammad (d. c. 433/1041), whom Avicenna served as vizier during the last fourteen years of his life. In the introduction to the part on metaphysics in his *Dāneshnāmeḥ*, Avicenna produces a division of the sciences and here he divides "the field of knowledge of management of all people (*ʿilm-i tadbīr-i ʿāmm-i mardom*) into two branches, one discusses the divine laws or revelations (*sharāʾiʿ*), the other discusses what Avicenna calls *siyāsāt* and what I understand as the applied laws of the rulers. The only clarification Avicenna gives is that the first is the root (*aṣl*) of this field of knowledge while the latter represents the branch and what follows from it (*shākh ve-khalīfeh*; IBN SĪNĀ 1952: 2).

While this brief comment by Avicenna is interesting, particularly when we consider the emergence of a field of *siyāsa*-studies during the Mamlūk period and its proliferation in the Ottoman one, another text of Avicenna has a more immediate effect and that is his division of practical philosophy in one of his latest works, *al-Mashriqiyyūn* (*The Easterners*). Of this book, we only have the introduction, the logic, as well as parts of the natural sciences. In the introduction Avicenna sets out a highly innovative division of philosophy that had a huge impact on its study during the post-classical period (GUTAS 2014: 127, 137-144). Studies by Heidrun Eichner and Jules L. Janssens have shown that the fourfold division of the theoretical sciences into logic, the natural sciences, a universal science, and a science of divinity was picked up by Avicenna's students and applied in many subsequent philosophical *summae* of philosophy and also of *kalām* (EICHNER 2007, EICHNER 2009: 9-11, 351-506; JANSSENS 2003). What is less known is that in his introduction to *al-Mashriqiyyūn*, Avicenna divides the practical sciences of philosophy also into four, and he points out that both the theoretical sciences as well as the practical sciences have the same number. The four fields of study on the practical side of philosophy are the three that we already know from Avicenna's earlier text *Aqsām al-ḥikma*, which are here divided in the same manner, first by the criterium of individual versus collective (*mushāraka*) and second by the criterium of "partial collectivity" (*al-mushāraka al-juzʿiyya*). This creates ethics (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*), household management, and universal collectivity (*al-mushāraka al-kulliyya*), which is the study of associations on the

level of the city. Whereas the goal of ethics is the happiness of the individual in this world and the next, the goal of the two disciplines that deal with collectives is the creation of “a virtuous order” (*niẓām fāḍil*; IBN SĪNĀ 1910: 7). All these three, for Avicenna in the introduction to *al-Mashrīqiyyūn*, are best served if they are governed by one rule that comes from a single lawgiver who is a prophet. Out of this best arrangement (*al-aḥsan*) generates a fourth field of knowledge, which is the study of *al-ṣināʿa al-shārīʿa*—literally “the art (or: the craft) of prophetic legislation.” In the introduction to *al-Mashrīqiyyūn* Avicenna writes:

However, [when you examine it] you will see that it is best to treat the discipline of ethics (*al-akhlāq*), the discipline of household management, and the discipline of the management of the city as a [field of knowledge] by itself, and to take the art (or: craft, *ṣināʿa*) of prophetic legislation and what it should include as an independent matter (*amr mufrad*). (IBN SĪNĀ 1910: 7-8)

It can be argued—and it has been argued by M. Cüneyt Kaya, for instance—that this new field of practical philosophy, whose object is “art (or: craft) of prophetic legislation and what it should be” (*al-ṣināʿa al-shārīʿa wa-mā yanbaghī an yakūna ʿalayhi*) is precisely what Avicenna writes about in the tenth book of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* (*Metaphysics/Theology*) of *al-Shifāʾ*, where he lays out the characteristics of the best legislation that a prophet can bring (KAYA 2013: 212-215; 2014: 293). This seems to be the only sub-field of practical philosophy he ever wrote about, because despite laying out the divisions of the practical fields of knowledge in the introduction of *al-Mashrīqiyyūn*, he did not write about it in this book either. At the end of the introduction, Avicenna promises to deal with practical knowledge, but “only to the extent as it is needed for someone who seeks salvation” (IBN SĪNĀ 1910: 8). Given that the latter parts of Avicenna’s book *al-Mashrīqiyyūn* are lost, we do not know what that means and how much he really wrote about this subject.

Why is all this important if we want to understand the place of ethics within the post-classical discourse on philosophy? First, I should clarify what I mean by “the post-classical discourse on philosophy.” Over the past years I have been working on a book titled “The Formation of Post-Classical Philosophy in Islam” that looks at the changes to the study of philosophy in the Islamic east during the 6th/12th century (GRIFFEL 2021). The project is a chronological continuation of my 2009 monograph on al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and it began with the question of whether my insights in that book about the teachings of al-Ghazālī and his closeness to the discourse of philosophy were shared by his most immediate readers in the century after him (GRIFFEL 2009). The project, however, evolved and it became a study on the emergence of a new kind of philosophy, as I would put it now, which exists in full bloom in the œuvre of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) and many of his successors in the centuries that follow after him. Among the many results that the study generates I will focus here on just one, namely the distinction between two different genres of literary production that we should both accept as part of what was philosophy in post-classical Islam: *ḥikma* and *kalām*. From my reading of developments within the 6th/12th century, I conclude that authors such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī wrote two different kinds of books that follow different rules of rationalist engagement and that led to the development of two different genres. The genre of al-Rāzī’s *kalām*-books is well known and has been described and studied in quite a number of works of the past two decades, among them, for instance, Ayman Shihadeh’s monograph *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, as well as many of his articles. Here, I would

also include other monographs on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī by Tariq Jaffer, Muammer İskenderoğlu, and Yasin Celan, and even the very first monograph study on that thinker by Muḥammad Ṣāliḥ al-Zarkān (JAFER 2015, İSKENDEROĞLU 2002, CELAN 1996, al-ZARKĀN 1971). These authors observed that al-Rāzī's teachings are heavily influenced by his detailed study of Avicennan philosophy yet that he remains—despite noteworthy innovations—committed to the doctrinal principles of Ash'arite theology, most importantly its position that God is a free actor who chooses to create this world from a number of alternatives and who created it in time.

Almost all secondary literature on al-Rāzī of a more recent date subscribes to what is today the most widespread model of how *falsafa* and *kalām* reacted to one another in the post-classical period. The reigning narrative was inspired by an article that A. I. Sabra published in 1987. In this article, Sabra suggests that during the course of Islamic history what was initially regarded as Greek science had become fully Islamic. Whereas earlier Western scholars from the generation of Ignác Goldziher on taught that the so-called ancient sciences in Islam (*'ulūm al-awā'il*) were contested and finally disappeared, Sabra developed a different explanation for why the Greek sciences and among them philosophy were from a certain point in time no longer visible. According to him it is not the ancient sciences that disappeared, rather what disappeared was their foreignness. The dichotomy between the *'ulūm al-awā'il* and “properly” Islamic sciences disappeared because the latter were integrated into the former. For Sabra this happened in a two-step development of first appropriating the Greek sciences in a process of translation and adaptation to a new cultural context, characterized by the use of the Arabic language and a Muslim majority culture, and secondly naturalizing them so that the Greek origins of these sciences were no longer visible. *Kalām* hence became a thoroughly philosophical field that integrated much what was earlier called *falsafa*.

I should stress that I do not dispute this now reigning narrative. I would just like to add that it mostly applies to *kalām*. Post-classical authors such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī did one thing in *kalām* and something else within a second academic discourse, namely in his books on *ḥikma*. Al-Rāzī himself identifies several of his works as “philosophical books” (*kutub ḥikmiyya*). These are, first of all, his two *summae* of philosophy (*ḥikma*), *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* (*The Eastern Investigations*) and *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī l-ḥikma wa-l-manṭiq* (*The Compendium on Philosophy and Logic*) as well as his extensive commentary on Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*. In these three books and in a few shorter works al-Rāzī does something quite different from what he does in his books of *kalām* and in his monumental Qur'an commentary (*tafsīr*). In *ḥikma* he reconstructs the philosophical system of Avicenna on its own terms. That means that here, he accepts certain premises of Avicenna—premises that are rejected in his works on *kalām*—and develops a philosophical system that although not identical to that of Avicenna, is very similar to it. The most important premise accepted in *ḥikma* but disputed in *kalām* is the universal applicability of the principle of sufficient reason. Books of *ḥikma* argue that all beings and all events in creation have a sufficient reason. In Arabic al-Rāzī expresses this by the need for “a preponderating factor” (*murajjih*) that shifts the equal possibility of a thing's or an event's existence and non-existence towards existence. Every time a thing or an event comes into being, there must be preponderation (*tarjih*) toward existence and that requires a preponderating factor (*murajjih*) or—in the parlance of a Western philosopher such as G. W. Leibniz (d. 1716)—a sufficient reason

(French: *raison suffisante*; German: *zureichender Grund*). In books of philosophy as well as in *kalām*, all events require such a reason or cause and there can be only a single being that is without such a cause, which is God. Yet whereas in *kalām* the requirement for a sufficient reason ends once God's free choosing will (*irāda*) is reached, books of *ḥikma* continue to ask for a sufficient reason even for God's actions. Whereas in *kalām*, God's will is the sufficient reason of all events in the world, in philosophy there is a requirement for a cause for God's will and that leads into a fully determined universe and into a self-necessitated God. Post-classical books of philosophy (*ḥikma*) accept most implications that stem from a full embrace of the Principle of Sufficient Reason (PSR). These are necessitarianism, the existence of a single self-necessitated Being, the world's existence from pre-eternity, and this world as the only possible one and the best possible (DELLA ROCCA 2010).

The God who is described in al-Rāzī's books of *ḥikma* is not a freely choosing actor but a self-necessitated principle that acts out of the necessity of its essence. While al-Rāzī introduces quite a number of important changes to the Avicennan system—changes that I cannot go into here—the overall outlook of al-Rāzī's teachings in his books of *ḥikma* is thoroughly Avicennan. They describe a fully determined network of causes and effects that is governed by a necessity that has its source in the essence of the Being Necessary by Virtue of Itself.

Books of *ḥikma* such as al-Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* or *al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī l-ḥikma wa-l-manṭiq* generated during the second half of the 6th/12th century from earlier predecessors—one important predecessor is, for instance, al-Ghazālī's *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*—and created a new genre that will be productive for at least two centuries and studied until the beginning of the colonial period in the 19th century. Important examples of the genre of *ḥikma* are Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's (d. 663/1265) *Hidāyat al-ḥikma* (*Guide to Philosophy*) or Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī al-Qazwīnī's (d. 675/1276 or 693/1294) *Ḥikmat al-ʿayn* (*Philosophy from the Source*) as well as other, more voluminous books by these authors. Other important authors were Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī (d. 631/1233), Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī (672/1283), or Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274), all active during 7th/13th century. The authors of these books are referred to as *ḥukamāʾ* ("philosophers") but not as *falāsifa*. Al-Ghazālī's argumentative onslaught on *falsafa* and on Avicenna in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*Precipitance of the Philosophers*) led to a pejorative understanding of the label "*falāsifa*." From a certain point on it is only used for Avicenna himself as well as for those of his students and followers who did not react to al-Ghazālī's attacks. Almost every author of books on *ḥikma* after the mid-6th/12th century self-identifies as one of the *ḥukamāʾ* rather than one of the *falāsifa* (these words are hardly ever used in their singular forms).

I say almost all, because there were some exceptions. One was ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī, with whom this article began. He rejected Avicenna's philosophy from what might be called the conservative point of view of pre-Avicennan Aristotelianism. He also rejected the discourse of *ḥikma*. He wrote two bitter polemics against Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, for instance, one on medicine and one on *tafsīr* and he never ever mentions al-Rāzī's works of philosophy or his innovations therein. Based on ʿAbd al-Laṭīf's polemics against Avicenna's neglect of ethics we may assume that he thought the same fault persisted among his contemporaries who followed Avicenna. And like in the case of Avicenna we must admit that ʿAbd al-Laṭīf makes a valid point. Fakhr al-Dīn's reconstruction of Avicenna's philosophical project in his two philosophical *summae* *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* and *al-Mulakhkhaṣ* is limited to theoretical philosophy and does not include practical.

Al-Mabāḥith is the earlier of the two books and it is much longer than *al-Mulakḥḥaṣ*, which had a greater impact on later generations of scholars. In the more advanced version in *al-Mulakḥḥaṣ*, there is a part on logic, one on attributes that all beings have in common (the so-called *al-umūr al-‘amma*), one on the natural sciences, and one on *ilāhiyyāt*, which here stands for knowledge about God, meaning theology. The last part of the book draws conclusions about God, his attributes, and his actions from reason alone, without assistance from revelation. The very last subject treated in this book is the sending of prophets as part of God’s actions. Such a chapter exists at least in the longer *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*; the shorter *al-Mulakḥḥaṣ* concludes with a much briefer explanation of God’s actions. In the chapter on prophecy in *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* the author very briefly touches on ethics. He starts from the Aristotelian premise that humans are political animals by nature and in need of regulations for their communal interactions (*mu‘āmalāt*) that prevent oppression (*ẓulm*) of some humans over others. This requires a human lawgiver who is singled out in a number of aspects from other humans. The best lawgiver, so al-Rāzī in this philosophical book, is a prophet whose rules are followed universally. Given that God’s providence strives toward the best arrangement, prophecy is part of the order of the good (al-RĀZĪ 1990: II, 555-257). The very last sentence in al-Rāzī *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* explains, however, that ethics is not part of this book:

As for the explanation of how worship and pious deeds have effects on the purification of the souls as well as the details about this, that is connected to ethics (*‘ilm al-akhlāq*). If God delays the appointed time of death (*ajal*), we will put together some orderly writing (*kalām muḥarrar*) on these two fields of knowledge (*fī ḥādhayn al-‘ilmayn*) and attach it to this book. (al-RĀZĪ 1990: II, 557)

Similar words appear in the introduction of *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, where al-Rāzī presents the table of contents of his book. Its last part, he says there, deals with the necessity of prophecy and he adds that he will compose “some orderly writing” (*kalām muḥarrar*) on the two fields of knowledge of *akhlāq* and *siyāsa* (al-RĀZĪ 1990: I, 93). Given that this earlier passage mentions “two fields of knowledge” (*‘ilmayn*) and clarifies that these are ethics and the organization of societies (*siyāsa*), it makes sense to assume that “these two fields of knowledge” pointed at at the end of the book also refers to *akhlāq* and *siyāsa*.

Ethics and the organization of societies were hence part of al-Rāzī’s philosophical project, even if they were not included in *al-Mabāḥith* nor in *al-Mulakḥḥaṣ*. He clarifies his understanding of what ethics is in the text from *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* just quoted. It is “how acts of worship and pious deeds [lead] to the purification of the souls.” Worship and pious deeds are religious acts that follow the prescription of a prophet. Al-Rāzī’s understanding of what ethics is, is premised on the fact that it is part of religion and the effects of prophecy. This is not a fully-fledged philosophical inquiry into ethics that ‘Abd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī demands but rather a treatment of ethics under Avicenna’s Farabian premises. The meaning of *siyāsa*, however, is nowhere explained. Judged from its appearance in Avicenna’s *Dānishnāmeḥ-yi ‘Alā’i*, one must assume it refers to the non-religious juridical process under the sole supervision of rulers. Here I mean the *ta‘zīr* punishment that Seljuq rulers, for instance, executed without consulting legal experts in *fiqh* (LANGE 2008).

Did Fakhr al-Dīn ever write the kind of book he promises his readers at the beginning and the end of *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*? There is at Oxford’s Bodleian Library a manuscript,

Huntington 534 (Uri 456), that includes several texts by Avicenna, among them an important copy of his *Discussions* (*al-Mubāḥathāt*) with his students as well as a copy of *al-Najāt* (*The Salvation*), followed by a text titled *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* (*The Soul and the Spirit together with an Explanation of Their Faculties*) that is ascribed to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (foll. 257a-295b).¹ The colophon of Avicenna's *al-Mubāḥathāt* dates this copy to 634/1237 and that at the end of his *al-Najāt* even earlier to 466/1073. The different texts of the book, however, circulated individually and were only bound together at some point in time before Robert Huntington (1637-1701) bought this codex during his posting to Aleppo and his travels in Syria, the Levante, and Egypt. The copy of *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* has no colophon but is by virtue of its paper and its handwriting far older than the late 17th century.²

The Ottoman bibliographer of the 11th/17th century Kātib Çelebi indeed lists a *Kitāb fī l-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ* of Fakhr al-Dīn in his catalogue of Arabic books and sciences. It appears in the article on the Arabic translation of Aristotle's *De anima* as one of that book's abbreviations and/or commentaries (KĀTIB ÇELEBİ, ed. Flügel 1835-1858: V, 165).³ The text, whose only known source is the manuscript in Oxford, has been first edited 1968 by Muḥammad Ṣaghīr Ḥasan al-Ma'sūmī in Islamabad (Pakistan). The text of this edition has been re-printed at least twice: First in 1986 in an excerpted mass-market paper-back, published in Damascus' Ḥalbūnī quarter that includes chapters 1 to 4 and 11 and 12 of its first part,⁴ and second in 2013 edited by 'Abdallāh M. 'A. Ismā'īl in Cairo, who adds an introduction and a great number of footnotes. Al-Ma'sūmī, the first editor of the text, also translated it into English. This rendering, published around 1969 in Islamabad, is noteworthy because it is the first proper translation of a book by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī into a Western language and still a rare example of a text of post-classical philosophy in Islam that exists in English.

While "*Kitāb fī l-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*" is on the title page of the manuscript (fol. 257a), al-Ma'sūmī chose a different title for his English translation, where he calls the book "Imām Rāzī's *ʿIlm al-Akhlāq*." He justifies this change by pointing to the first words in the manuscript text after the *amma ba'du*, which are: "this is a book in the discipline (or: science) of ethics" (*fa-hādhā kitābun fī ʿilm al-akhlāq*, fol. 257b). Such a book with the title "*Kitāb al-Akhlāq*" is, so al-Ma'sūmī, "mentioned by the biographers," which "clearly indicates that the present work supplies the text of *Kitāb al-Akhlāq*" (al-MA'SŪMĪ in the introduction to his trans. of al-RĀZĪ's *Imām Rāzī's ʿIlm al-Akhlāq*, 25).

1 On this codex and its copy of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Mubāḥathāt*, see REISMAN 2002: 92-94. Another possible MS of *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ* that was not available to me is MS Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi Kütüphanesi, Emanet Hazinesi 1296 (see KARATAY 1962-1969: II, 130, no. 5069).

2 The paper is Oriental and my rough paleographic dating would put the handwriting anywhere between the 8th/14th and the 10th/16th century (see also MA'SŪMĪ in the introduction to his trans. of al-RĀZĪ, *Imām Rāzī's ʿIlm al-Akhlāq*, 25). An analysis of an owner's note and two stamps on the front page might lead to a more precise dating.

3 The whole section on *ʿilm al-naḥs* and its related books is missing in Yaltkaya and Bilge's more recent edition of KĀTIB ÇELEBİ 1941-43, II, 1970.

4 The editor Sulaymān Salīm al-Bawwāb ascribes the text on the title page to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, on p. 23 of his book, however, erroneously to Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī (d. 313/925 or 323/935).

Indeed, al-Rāzī's earliest biographer, his younger contemporary Yāqūt (d. 626/1229), includes "*al-akhlāq*" within a list of al-Rāzī's works that he compiled most probably in Herat with the help of the Imam's sons and his students (YĀQŪT 1993: VI, 2589). Many of al-Rāzī's later biographers copy that list of works. Another authoritative list of works by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was compiled by his admirer and doctrinal adversary Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274). It is currently available only in manuscripts. This list, which was written about a generation after Yāqūt's, has no "*al-akhlāq*" but rather a "*mukhtaṣar al-akhlāq*," i.e., an "abbreviation of 'the ethics'" (al-ṬŪSĪ, *Tafṣīl muṣannafāt*, no. 30; ALTAŞ 2013: 134). Finally, in his late work on *kalām*, *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, al-Rāzī mentions himself a "*kitāb al-akhlāq*." There, in the context of arguments that point to the survival of the soul after the death of the body, al-Rāzī says that without the soul's survival, humans would be condemned to a life of suffering and tribulations and hence the act of humankind's creation would be frivolous (*ʿabath*). God, however, does not act frivolously. This argument relies on the premise that life in this world (as opposed to the afterlife) is nothing but misery. This was indeed al-Rāzī's pessimistic attitude toward life, as has been amply documented by Ayman Shihadeh (see SHIHADÉH 2006, 2019, and the discussion below). In *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya*, al-Rāzī comments on this premise and says:

Establishing the validity (*taqrīr*) of this premise will come in the book of ethics (*kitāb al-akhlāq*) when [it deals] in detail with the blame of this bodily life. (al-RĀZĪ 1987, VII: 127)

The quotation illustrates that "the writing of [or: on] ethics" (*kitāb al-akhlāq*) was most probably not the title of a distinct book by al-Rāzī, but merely the description of a particular work or even just a chapter by virtue of its content. This remark comes from the end of his life and can be dated to Rajab 605 / January 1209, when al-Rāzī was just six months away from falling ill and suffering from the sickness that eventually struck him down (ALTAŞ 2013: 139). After this remark he continued to write the eighth and ninth parts of *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* as well as his commentary on *The Elements of Philosophy* by Avicenna (*Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*) (ALTAŞ 2013: 136-140). Shortly before, in 604/1208 he had written his *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā* (*The Censure of this World's Pleasures*), a relatively short book that does deal with the miseries of this world (SHIHADÉH 2006: 155). When al-Rāzī in the seventh book of *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* writes that a certain explanation "will come" later (*sa-ya'tī*), he most likely means that it will come in a later part of that (unfinished) work. Or, given the subject matter, he might mean that it "will come up" in *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*, which he has just finished and thus recommends to his readers. It is highly unlikely, however, that this remark in *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* refers to the text preserved in the Oxford manuscript. Although we are unable to date that to any part of al-Rāzī's life, the last months of his writing career in 606/1209 are so well documented that we can rule out its generation during that period.

This all points to the conclusion that al-Rāzī never truly wrote a particular book titled "Book of (or: on) Ethics" (*Kitāb al-Akhlāq*). When Yāqūt lists a work "*al-akhlāq*" among his writings, he most likely means "a book on ethics." The same applies to Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's "*mukhtaṣar al-akhlāq*" ("abbreviation on ethics") where "*al-akhlāq*" is not a book title but rather a generic term for a certain genre of philosophical works that was triggered by Aristotle's book of that title. Thus "*al-akhlāq*" is similar to "*al-burhān*" or "*al-qiyaṣ*." The latter two were initially the Arabic titles of the *Analytica posteriora* and the *Analytica priora*,

i.e., certain works by Aristotle which are part of his *Organon* on logic. Soon, however, they became descriptive names for the subject matter of those books. A *mukhtaṣar al-burhān*, written in the 6th/12th century would not have been an abbreviation of Aristotle's book *al-Burhān* (*Analytica posteria*) but rather a mid-length work on the construction of demonstrative arguments, which is the subject of Aristotle's *Analytica posteriora*. Similarly, a *mukhtaṣar al-akhlāq* likely means a mid-length book on virtue ethics, which is the subject matter of Aristotle's *Kitāb al-Akhlāq* (*Nicomachean Ethics*).⁵ These descriptions fit well to *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*.

The Arabic “*akhlāq*” is a plural of the word “*khulq*,” which initially means “character trait.” Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* was understood by its Arabic translators or its early readers in Arabic as a book that deals with the development of virtuous character traits through habituation. Hence its adopted title *al-Akhlāq* which soon after provides the name for the genre of Arabic books that deals with virtue ethics. Al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* is indeed part of that genre. The book falls into two almost equal parts, the first devoted to philosophical psychology while the second discusses how humans best use their means to avoid bad character traits. The word “*rūḥ*” is understood as a synonym to “*naḥs*,” “soul” and not in its other philosophical and medical meaning as a “subtle body” (*jism laṭīf*) that permeated the human solid body (on that see GRIFFEL 2018). Hence, the first part is about the soul and its faculties—as Kātib Čelebi has already informed us—whereas the second is on *akhlāq*, meaning “character traits.” The table of contents, which I attach in an English translation as an appendix to this article, lists thirty-two chapters in the book. In part one, al-Rāzī explains that the soul is an incorporeal substance (*jawhar*) and that it is the identity of the human. The soul is attracted to a number of things, some of them bodily pleasures and others spiritual or intellectual pleasures. The spiritual pleasures, so the thrust of the argument in the first part of the book, are infinitely more pleasurable than the bodily ones because they can last an eternity while bodily pleasures are always limited in time. This first part deals—according to its title—with “the general method of this discipline” (*al-uṣūl al-kullīyya li-hādhā l-‘ilm*). What “this discipline” or better “this field of knowledge” is remains unclear in the text. Only two fields can be meant: psychology (*‘ilm al-naḥs*) or virtue ethics (*‘ilm al-akhlāq*). Given that the second part of the book is devoted to the latter, it is ethics that is most likely meant here. The book overall deals with virtue ethics and the first part on psychology is understood as propaedeutics to the second, more important one.

That the book is part of the genre of *ḥikma* is clarified right at the beginning. The first words after the *amma ba‘du* have already been quoted. The full sentence says:

This is a book on ethics and it is arranged according to the demonstrative and indisputable method and not according to the dialectical and persuasive style (al-RĀZĪ, *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ*, ed. al-Ma‘šūmī, 3).

Arabic philosophers in the tradition of al-Fārābī distinguished philosophy from all other sciences by its method. Philosophy employs demonstrative proofs that lead to indisputable results. Demonstrative arguments are based on premises that are either themselves proven or

5 Kātib Čelebi's characterization of *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ* as an abbreviation and/or commentary (*talkhīs* or *tafsīr*) of Aristotle's *De anima* may be a reflection of al-Ṭūsī's implicit characterization of the book as “*mukhtaṣar al-akhlāq*.”

accepted as axioms and self-evident truths. Religious sciences such as *kalām* or *fiqh* use premises that are accepted from revelation. A science that uses sound arguments but is based not on indubitable premises but rather on premises that are accepted (*mutasallam*) and widely held (*mashhūr*) by its practitioners is according to Avicenna and Aristotle a dialectical science (IBN SĪNĀ 1965: 34). Its results are not indubitable but persuasive to all its practitioners. In this short sentence, al-Rāzī clarifies that *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh* belongs to his “philosophical books” (*kutub hikmiyya*) and not to his distinctly religious books in fields such as *kalām* or *fiqh*.

But what an unusual philosophical book it is! In the first part al-Rāzī repeats much of what belongs into philosophical psychology, yet he does so in ways that are drastically different from others of his philosophical books such as *al-Mabāhith* or *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*. The proof for the soul’s immateriality and substantiality, for instance, is stretched over two chapters of which the latter is titled: “On indications received from the Divine Book, which show that the soul is not something bodily.” We have already stressed that in his other philosophical books, al-Rāzī does not admit evidence taken from revelation. *Al-Nafs wa-l-rūh* is full of references to revelation (Qur’an and *ḥadīth*) and to the stories of the prophets (*qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’*) and it makes liberal use of narrative techniques that are not at all known from demonstrative books but rather from those deemed dialectical. Here, the author refers to revelation and to stories to make his readers adapt a certain course of action.

According to its title, the second part deals with “the treatment” (or: “cure”) of what is connected to passions (*fi ‘ilāj mā yata‘allaqu bi-l-shahwa*). It introduces certain vices, or rather negative character traits, and explains how one can get rid of them. These negative character traits are greed, miserliness, love of worldly position, love of praise, hatred of criticism, and the desire to make people believe that one is pious and virtuous (SHIHADDEH 2006: 124). Al-Rāzī’s book explains why these character traits are negative and it develops strategies of how one can shed them through habituation. The book closely resembles the third part of al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, meaning that part which is devoted to the things that lead to perdition (*muhlikāt*).

In fact, the third part of al-Ghazālī’s *Iḥyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn* (books nos. 21-30) has a surprisingly similar structure to al-Rāzī’s *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh*. It begins in book 21 with an exposition of the human soul and a general explanation of human psychology, closely following the teachings of Avicenna (JANSSENS 2011). Book 22 is equally part of human psychology and explains how through training and habituation one can acquire good and shed bad character traits. Books 22-30 deal with individual character traits and like al-Rāzī’s book focus on the negative ones. In al-Ghazālī these are: a passion for food and sex (book 23), the habit of bad language (24), anger, hatred, and envy (25), the miseries of this world (26), avarice and love of material possessions (27), hypocrisy and the desire for fame (28), presumption and pride (29), and finally following seductive illusions (30). There is some overlap between al-Ghazālī’s program and al-Rāzī’s (desire for fame and praise and the hypocrisy in making people believe that one is pious and virtuous) but al-Rāzī seems to concentrate on precisely those vices that al-Ghazālī does not deal with. The two cardinal passions of the body (“*al-shahwatayn*”) in al-Ghazālī, for instance, which are food and sex, hardly appear in al-Rāzī. In fact, the second part of al-Rāzī’s *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh* discusses vices that al-Ghazālī says little or nothing about.

Al-Ghazālī is also the author this book most often engages with. He appears six times, whereas Avicenna is referred to only once (al-Rāzī, *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh*, ed. al-Ma'sūmī, pp. 133, 147, 156, 163, 173, 189; Avicenna appears on p. 85). Al-Rāzī may have assumed that his readers know al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn* and he may have regarded his own book on the vices as complementary reading material to al-Ghazālī's program in books 21-30. The fact that al-Rāzī writes a complement to the third part of the *Iḥyā'* about "things that lead to perdition" is telling and it is a strong indication for al-Rāzī's authorship. In his monograph study of 2006, Ayman Shihadeh could show that al-Rāzī had a thoroughly pessimistic outlook on this world. There are no real pleasures in this world, only pains. If something appears as pleasureable it is just the mere absence of pain. That position is repeated a few times in this book and so is al-Rāzī's teaching that this world and its so-called pleasures deserve condemnation (*dhamm*). If we follow *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*, then we should not bother to strive and develop positive character traits through habituation. Unlike al-Ghazālī, who devoted the last quarter (books 31-40) of his *Iḥyā'* to the development of good character traits, such as patience, gratitude, asceticism, sincerity, and self-examination, al-Rāzī says next to nothing about those. The only thing that is worth striving for is the avoidance—and the cure from—bad character traits.

Al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* is indeed most likely the *kitāb fī l-akhlāq* that al-Rāzī promises in two passages of his earliest philosophical work *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*. After a part of theoretical philosophy on the human soul, it deals with—and here I quote again from *al-Mabāḥith*—"how acts of worship and pious deeds [lead] to the purification of the souls." At least it does explain how the habituation of worship and pious deeds can help avoiding negative character traits. Worship (*'ibāda*) and pious deeds (*tā'āt*) are prescribed by the revealed laws of the prophets. Al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh* has the same religious context as al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyā'*: Habituation, which is the key for any Aristotelian theory of the acquisition of virtues, is prescribed in revelation. Hence, following the revealed law (*al-sharī'a*) will lead to the development of the right kind of virtues. The book therefore fits into the Farabian interpretation of philosophical ethics as Avicenna has produced it. Here, prophetic legislation is considered vastly superior to whatever philosophers write in their disciplines of practical philosophy. This superiority led Avicenna to abandon almost all parts of practical philosophy with the exception of "the art or the craft of prophetic legislation" in book 10 of *al-Ilāhiyyāt* in *al-Shifā'*. Unlike Avicenna, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī did not abandon ethics completely. When he writes his book on ethics, however, he clings closely to prophetic legislation and reproduces much of it. The result is the curious *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*, which is a philosophical book, yet one that actively employs strategies from revelation.

The character of *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh* as a hybrid book on philosophy (*ḥikma*) will become clearer from a passage in al-Rāzī's commentary to *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* (*The Elements of Philosophy*). Avicenna produced this work as an overview of the philosophical sciences relatively early in his life (GUTAS 2014: 417-419). The book includes a classification of the different disciplines of philosophy where Avicenna makes hints about their relationship to revealed knowledge. This was certainly an attractive subject for al-Rāzī. Earlier, al-Ghazālī had engaged in a polemic against Avicenna where he accused him and other philosophers that much of what they teach in their books is taken from the revelation of early prophets such as Moses and Jesus (Griffel 2009: 100). Here in *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, Avicenna seems to

admit that. In this book Avicenna assumes a close connection between prophecy and both the theoretical and practical disciplines of philosophy (on this passage and al-Rāzī's commentary, see also KAYA 2013: 217-220; 2014: 289-292).

The Elements of Philosophy predates *The Easterners*, and hence does not yet envision a fourth part of the practical philosophical disciplines on prophetic legislation. In the introduction to the second part of *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* on the natural sciences, Avicenna produces an overview of all the philosophical disciplines and here comments on the three practical ones (ethics, household management, and the management of cities). The practical disciplines of philosophy are conceived to be parallel to the theoretical ones. Both have the same number (here: three) and both are engaged with an inquiry about the “principles” (singl. *mabdaʿ*) and the “perfections” (singl. *kamāl*) of these disciplines. The three theoretical parts of philosophy are the natural sciences, mathematics, and metaphysics/ theology (*ilāhiyyāt*). Avicenna writes that the principles of these theoretical sciences “are received from the masters of divine religion by way of indication (*tanbīh*).” They are left to be picked up freely by the rational faculty which turns them into arguments that lead “to the acquisition of the rational sciences and to their perfection.” (IBN SĪNĀ 1996: 64; al-RĀZĪ 1994: II, 19.) Here in the theoretical sciences, the “principles” are received from prophets as hints in their revelations, but the proper acquisition and the perfection of these sciences are the work of the human capacity of reason. The process is slightly different in the practical disciplines of philosophy. Here both the principles and the perfections are available in revelation. Avicenna writes in *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* about the practical sciences:

The practical disciplines of philosophy are politics (*ḥikma madaniyya*), household management (*ḥikma manziliyya*), and ethics (*ḥikma khulqiyya*). The principle (*mabdaʿ*) of these three is received (*mustafād*) from the side of divine revelation (*sharʿa*) and the perfections of their prescriptions become clear by virtue of divine revelation. Afterwards, the theoretical faculty of humans administers them freely through the understanding that some humans have about practical laws and about the application of those laws to individuals. (IBN SĪNĀ 1996: 63; al-RĀZĪ 1994: II, 13-14)

So humans receive both the “principle” (singular) of the three practical disciplines of philosophy as well as the “perfections of their prescriptions (or: limits, *ḥudūd*)” (twice in plural) from the mouth of a prophet but “afterwards” (*baʿda dhālika*) administer the laws (*qāwānīn*) freely and apply them to individual cases. Avicenna here describes a model of legislation that follows from his “realistic” interpretation of the Farabian project of creating a virtuous order (*niẓām fāḍil*). Here, a philosopher-prophet-king sets the principles of the laws through revelation, which are later implemented by the judgment (*ijtihād*) of jurists and the competent governance of caliphs (GALSTON 1979: 571-574, 577). In his commentary on this passage Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī explains that each craft (*ṣināʿa*) has a “principle” as well as a “perfection.” The principles as well as the perfections (both in plural) of the three practical philosophical disciplines are received from divine revelation. In fact, given that all ways of human acting are encompassed within these three practical disciplines of philosophy, God sends prophets for the sole reason to teach humans “the principles of these three sciences and their perfections.” Al-Rāzī continues:

The prophets—peace be upon them—can only teach the principles of these sciences and their perfections in a universal way. They say, for instance, that if someone wishes to have such and such a virtue he must do such and such, and if someone wishes to get rid of such and such a vice, he must do such and such. As for the application to the circumstances of Zaid or ‘Amr, that is impossible (for the prophets) because detailed rules for the circumstances of individuals cannot be determined (by prophets). Rather the lawgiver (= prophet) must determine these laws and the rest of the people must learn them. This only comes about through the theoretical faculty. The application of these laws to the individual forms and their circumstances come about through the practical faculty. (al-RĀZĪ 1994: II, 14; compared with MS Yale, Landberg 74, fol. 54a)

Al-Rāzī also clarifies that by “prescriptions” or “limits” (*hudūd*) Avicenna means the amounts or measures that the Shari‘a sets for certain acts of worship, for transactions, or for marriages. Here, al-Rāzī means, for instance, the number five for the daily prayers or four for the maximum number of wives a man can have. These limits “are only known by divine revelation.”

This clarifies how both Avicenna and his commentator al-Rāzī understood divine legislation (*shari‘a*) but it does not yet tell us much about the role that philosophical inquiry plays in this process. Avicenna deals with that in the next passage. Politics and household management teach how these kinds of human cooperations lead to benefit (*maṣlaḥa*). “As for ethics,” Avicenna adds, “its utility is to teach the virtues and how they are acquired in order that you purify the soul through them, and to teach the vices and show how to guard against them in order to cleanse the soul from them.” (IBN SĪNĀ 1996: 63; al-RĀZĪ 1994: II, 15).

Al-Rāzī has little to add to those words, “since all this is well known and not in need of commentary.” Philosophical ethics (*al-hikma al-khulqiyya*) consist of “an understanding of the virtues and the vices” (*ma‘rifat al-faḍā’il wa-l-radḥā’il*) as well as the ways to acquire the former and avoid the latter. That, however, means that philosophical ethics does something quite similar or even identical to what prophetic legislation does. Al-Rāzī explains that in addition to setting the limits for worship and for human transactions, the prophets teach the ways of acquiring virtues and avoiding vices (“...if someone wishes to have such and such a virtue he must do such and such...”). Unlike the “limits,” however, which can only be known from revelation, the acquisition of virtues and avoidance of vices is known through revelation and through philosophical ethics. The only difference between revelation and philosophy seems to be rooted in the former’s strict universality. The prophet can only talk about the acquisition of virtues in a universal way and in general laws whereas practical philosophy also seems to be able to teach something about “the application of these laws to the individual forms and their circumstances.” This seems to be the kind of things that are taught in *siyāsa* (politics).

That, however, remains unsaid and can only be deduced by implication. There is something else that is odd about Avicenna’s and al-Rāzī’s philosophical presentation of divine legislation. Al-Rāzī says that the prophets teach “only in a universal way” and bring general laws (*qāwānīn*). Yet the Qur’an, like many other books of revelation, is not a book of legislation. This presentation is elliptic insofar as it leaves out—for reasons that might be rooted in the genre of this text—the role of *fiqh*. Only the study of Islamic jurisprudence abstracts general rules and laws from revelation and also clarifies how those general rules are

applied. Thus, if one looks at the process of revelation from the perspective of the acquisition of virtues and avoidance of vices, al-Rāzī should have said that prophets reveal the text of revelation and the discipline of *fiqh* extracts the entailed general rules from it. Like philosophical ethics, *fiqh* is a discipline concerned with humans' practical faculty and by virtue of that also teaches the application of these laws to the individuals and their circumstances.

This understanding creates in al-Rāzī a parallel structure of philosophy and the Islamic religious sciences. Whereas *kalām* is the equivalent of the theoretical disciplines of philosophy (logic, natural sciences, and metaphysics), *fiqh* is the equivalent of the three practical disciplines (ethics, household management, and politics). Unfortunately, he nowhere clearly expresses this. It can be deduced, however, from the fact that both *kalām* and *fiqh* work from premises that they receive from revelation. Not so the six philosophical disciplines, which start from certain axioms (*awwaliyyāt*) that are self-evident and whose truths cannot be doubted. But whereas *kalām* comes to results that are different from the theoretical disciplines of *ḥikma*, the results of both practical approaches—one based on revelation the other on reason—are one and the same. In the practical disciplines, *ḥikma* is vastly overshadowed by revelation because of the latter's huge advantage in acceptance by the populace. Given that both reason and revelation identify the same virtues and vices and teach similar, if not identical strategies for acquiring or avoiding them, a detailed presentation of philosophical ethics holds almost no merits.

These are, I believe, the development and the implicit reasoning that led to al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*. First, as a book on philosophical ethics it explains many things that belong to psychology, which is part of the theoretical philosophical sciences. Unlike the practical philosophical sciences this has always been deemed a worthy subject of philosophical presentation. Second, when in the last half the book truly deals with ethics, which is a practical philosophical discipline, it keeps close contact to revelation and mirrors its language and its persuasive strategies. Al-Ghazālī developed that kind of book in his *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, where he teaches Aristotelian virtue ethics in a language that takes its cues and inspirations from revelation. Al-Ghazālī keeps close contact not only to Muḥammad's revelation (Qur'an and *ḥadīth*), but also to that of Jesus and other prophets (on Jesus in the *Iḥyā'* see ASIN PALACIOS 1916-1929). Hence, al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* should be regarded as a book of philosophical ethics (*akhlāq*), but one that is of a hybrid character, where the argumentative presentation of virtue ethics is mixed with and overshadowed by strategies of ethical perfection adapted from revelation.

Conclusion

The success of the Farabian approach to the relationship between reason and revelation first among authors of the movement of *falsafa*—most prominently Avicenna—and later also among philosophical authors of the post-classical period led either to a complete disappearance of books on philosophical ethics or to the production of hybrids like al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*. At the heart of this development are a number of insights about practical philosophy: Parallel to the two areas of theoretical and practical philosophy there exists in revelation a second way of presenting philosophical truths. Whereas philo-

sophy aims to employ demonstrative arguments, revelation is dominated by rhetorical and poetical means of persuasion. While all this is well known and well analyzed with regard to the theoretical sciences, the parallel character of philosophy and revelation also applies to practical philosophy. Indeed here, there is a direct overlap. In the field of theoretical philosophy, revelation only hints at the principles and leaves the task of producing proper knowledge to philosophy. In the field of practical philosophy, however, revelation includes both the (full) principles and the perfections, which creates an overlap between the two that does not exist in the field of theoretical knowledge. Philosophy and revelation both teach the causal connections between certain ways of habituating and the acquisition of virtues and avoidance of vices. Whereas in its theoretical disciplines philosophy regards itself superior to revelation, this relationship is turned into the opposite in practical philosophy. Books of revelation—and the literature they trigger in fields such as *fiqh*, Sufism, etc.—are vastly superior over any kind of presentation of practical philosophy. The ultimate goal of practical philosophy is not the understanding of the causal connections between habituation and virtues but the adaptation of the habituation and the resulting development of virtues among the populace. In his treatise *Aqsām al-ḥikma*, Avicenna writes:

In the theoretical part [of philosophy] the goal is the acquisition of indisputable convictions about the circumstances of those things whose existence is not connected to human action. Here, the intention is just the acquisition of an opinion (*ra'y*). (...) In the practical part [of philosophy] the goal is not the acquisition of indisputable convictions but perhaps the intention in it is the acquisition of a sound opinion with regard to a certain matter that results in an attainment for the human so that he attains what is good in it. The intention is not just the acquisition of an opinion but rather the acquisition of an opinion in order to act. The goal of the theoretical [part of philosophy] is the truth (*al-ḥaqq*), the goal of the practical is the good (*al-khayr*) (IBN SINA 2020: 11).

While there is nothing that beats philosophy in the achievement of its goal in the theoretical part, the same is not true for the practical one. Practical philosophy aims at the widespread performance of virtuous and good actions and here, revelation and religious books are greatly superior to books of philosophy. Philosophers of the post-classical period in Islam express this understanding in numerous comments (KAYA 2014: 286-289). This insight led to the almost complete abandonment of books on practical philosophy among Avicenna and those who followed him in this approach. Why write books on ethics, household management, or even politics, if the stated aim of them is much more successfully achieved by books that belong to the religious discourse?

What, however, about another task of ethical books, namely the explanation of why the good is good? Whoever reads books on ethics might already be good and have already developed virtuous character traits, but she might still need to learn why her dispositions are good for her and for others. In the theological discourse of Islam the question of why the good is good is referred to as *taḥsīn wa-taqbīḥ* (“why good is good and bad is bad”). It plays an important role in al-Rāzī’s works on *kalām*. There, he defends the Ash‘arite position that good and bad are determined by what God recommends and prohibits in revelation against the Mu‘tazilite objection that these attributes are inherently known with the performance of the acts. In many of his works, most importantly his late work *al-Maṭālib al-‘āliya*—which

is neither a work of *ḥikma* nor *kalām*—al-Rāzī defends a third position that good is what leads to benefits and bad what leads to disadvantages both in this world and the next. He integrates that into the Ash‘arite view that God’s recommendations and prohibitions lead to reward and punishment in the next world. Ayman Shihadeh analyzed this latter approach and showed that al-Rāzī’s “teleological” ethics is heavily influenced by attitudes and teachings in *falsafa* (SHIHADDEH 2006).

Fakhr al-Dīn does not deal with this set of questions in *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*. According to its description at the end of *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, this book is about “how acts of worship and pious deeds [lead] to the purification of the souls.” There is indeed little about this subject in al-Rāzī’s philosophical writings. In his two philosophical *summae* practical philosophy is barely touched upon. In *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*, al-Rāzī discusses an interesting distinction that sheds light on what he thought practical philosophy is about. There, he says that “practical philosophy” (*al-ḥikma al-‘amaliyya*) refers as an equivocation to two different subjects that have nothing in common with one another. The first is knowledge about character traits, “how many there are, what they are, which are virtuous, and which supportive, and how are they acquired without (even) intending it, and how are they acquired if one intends it?” This kind of practical philosophy includes politics and household management and is a counterpart to theoretical philosophy. Then there is a second meaning to “practical philosophy”—or better: “practical wisdom” (*al-ḥikma al-‘amaliyya*) as it was mentioned in Avicenna’s *Kitāb al-Akhlāq*. This refers to the virtuous character trait of “wisdom” (*ḥikma*) itself. Al-Rāzī defines it as the disposition from which actions proceed that are in the middle between the two vices of deception and ignorance. The latter kind of practical philosophy, however, is just a habitus and it is not properly part of philosophy (*falsafa*). Only practical philosophy in the first meaning is a science and it is dealt with in books on ethics (*fī kutub al-akhlāq*).⁶

This passage says nothing about how we determine what good actions and virtuous character traits are. Evidently, al-Rāzī did not consider this a subject of books on ethics. Earlier in this paper I referred to the fact that as an Aristotelian, Avicenna defines the morally good in terms of *entelékheia* (“realization of potentialities”). This we find discussed in the chapter on “providence” (*‘ināya*) within the metaphysical section of Avicenna’s *al-Shifā’* (IBN SĪNĀ, *al-Shifā’*, *al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 340-344; ERLWEIN 2019: 31-33). Al-Rāzī reports these teaching faithfully in his two philosophical *summae* in the chapter about how evil enters God creation (e.g., al-RĀZĪ, *al-Mabāḥith*, 2:547-551). The sections, however, are short and in no way equivalent to the space this subject takes up in books of *kalām*. The same applies to the “teleological” aspect of Avicenna’s ethic, which is his opinion that the prescriptions of the religious law should be put in ways that they maximize benefits in society. Avicenna deals with this in the last three chapters of the last book of his metaphysics on prophetic legislation (IBN SĪNĀ 2005: 367-378; ERLWEIN 2019: 49-50). In his philosophical books, al-Rāzī reports these teachings in just a few sentences (al-RĀZĪ 1990: II, 555-557). They still play an important role in his understanding of the Avicennan philosophical project. This is evident from the importance these teachings gain in al-Rāzī’s own “teleological” ethics in his more

6 al-RĀZĪ 1990: I, 509-11. The text in the edition is corrupt and should be read together with the one in MS Berlin, Staatsbibliothek, Mq 13, foll. 148a-b, available through the catalogue <<http://stabikat.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de/>>.

religious books (SHIHADÉH 2006: 109-129). Neither al-Rāzī nor Avicenna, however, discuss the issue of why the good is good or why the virtues are virtuous and vices are vicious in a separate chapter or even a separate treatise. These issues are merely touched upon—one hesitates to say: clarified—in sections that deal with metaphysics and the theology of *falsafa/hikma*. This lack of attention is puzzling and its proper discussion goes beyond the scope of this paper. While noting this lacuna in both Avicenna's and in al-Rāzī's philosophical writings, I have currently no explanation for it.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's particular way of writing philosophical books on ethics follows from his appropriation of Avicenna's interpretation of the Farabian perspective about the relationship between reason and revelation. Yet like Avicenna, he still seems to have had a certain idea of a complete corpus of philosophical writings. In his different catalogues of the philosophical disciplines in *Aqsām al-hikma*, in *ʿUyūn al-hikma*, or in *al-Mashriqiyyūn*, Avicenna writes about the practical disciplines as if they were actually pursued. These texts give the impression that one could find adequate and recent treatments of ethics, household management, or politics within the philosophical sciences. Yet, when we look at Avicenna's philosophical encyclopedia *al-Shifāʾ* or even at his larger œuvre, we see that they do not exist. When at the age of twenty-eight or thirty al-Rāzī wrote his first philosophical *summa al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* he decided that he would produce a book on philosophical ethics and promised it to his readers. What he produced, however, is not in any way comparable to philosophical works on ethics that were written in Arabic before Avicenna. Al-ʿAmirī (d. 381/992) and Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), for instance, had written extensive books on philosophical ethics and even al-Fārābī wrote his commentary on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's book on ethics is quite different as it mimics and imitates the persuasive strategies of revelation.

I have already mentioned that I believe al-Rāzī received his inspiration for this project from al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ ʿulūm al-dīn*, which he read as a book of philosophy, or at least one that achieves philosophical goals. The connection between al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* and al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* allows for some conclusions about this new genre of post-classical books on *akhlāq*. These were written by scholars who were also authorities in the Islamic sciences. Studies have shown that al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* is heavily influenced by philosophical books on virtue ethics by Miskawayh and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. 422/1031) (MADELUNG 1974, VASALOU 2021). At the same time, one must acknowledge that the *Iḥyāʾ* is a highly original book and that there is no predecessor of its kind in Islamic literature. It has already been said that in its 21st book, for instance, it includes an introduction into philosophical psychology just like the first part of al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*. An expertise in philosophy alone, however, would not have been sufficient to write these books. Their authors are also experts on the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, "the stories of the prophets" (*qīṣaṣ al-anbiyāʾ*), and *fiqh*, for instance. Later generations of *ḥadīth*-scholars criticized al-Ghazālī for his loose and liberal attitude toward the sayings of Muḥammad in the *Iḥyāʾ* and his inclusion of much *ḥadīth* material that they regarded as spurious. These critics, however, may have simply misunderstood the genre of this book. As a book on virtue ethics it necessarily has a loose attitude to its sources. For the effect of making people become virtuous, it is important to twist stories into the right direction. It is rather of little consequence whether these stories are actually true. The best author of effective books of *akhlāq* is not the one who knows their philosophical content best, but rather the one who can

best retell parables and stories that make people adopt the virtues. If *fiqh* and *akhlāq* were two competing normative discourses in post-classical Islam and *fiqh* deemed superior to *akhlāq* for the acquisition of virtues, then it needed a good *faqīh* to write efficient books on *akhlāq*. Al-Rāzī's *al-Nafs wa-l-rūh wa-sharḥ quwāhumā* is the kind of book that fits into the narrow niche for philosophical ethics that the competition with religious books combined with the realization of the latter's superiority created. It is a philosophical book that looks very much like a religious one. Hence, al-Rāzī and even al-Ghazālī were authors of books on philosophical ethics that Avicenna not only never wanted to write but also that he never could have written.

Appendix: Table of Contents of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūh wa-sharḥ quwāhumā*

First Part (<i>qism</i>):	On the general method (<i>al-uṣūl al-kulliyya</i>) that this field of knowledge (<i>‘ilm</i>) has.
1st Chapter (<i>faṣl</i>):	Explaining the rank of the human among the different ranks of beings.
2nd Chapter:	Presentation of that what has been said by another method, closer to verification (<i>taḥqīq</i>).
3rd Chapter:	Explaining the ranks of the human spirits (<i>arwāḥ bashariyya</i>).
4th Chapter:	Researching the quiddity (<i>māhiyya</i>) of the soul's substance (<i>jawhar al-nafs</i>).
5th Chapter:	On indications received from the Divine Book, which show that the soul is not something bodily.
6th Chapter:	On that “the heart” is something connected to the substance of the soul.
7th Chapter:	Explaining the faculties of the soul (<i>quwā l-nafs</i>).
8th Chapter:	Researching the different meanings that are connected to expressions and words (<i>nafs</i> , <i>‘aql</i> , <i>rūh</i> , and <i>qalb</i>).
9th Chapter:	On the relation of these faculties with the substance of the soul.
10th Chapter:	Is the rational soul one species or multiple species?
11th Chapter:	Intellectual pleasures are nobler and more perfect than sensual ones.
12th Chapter:	Explaining what parts of the sensual pleasures belong to the condemned (world) and [its] deficiencies.
Second Part:	On the treatment of (or: cure from, <i>‘ilāj</i>) what is connected to passions.
1st Chapter:	On the love of wealth (<i>hubb al-māl</i>).
2nd Chapter:	How to employ wealth to acquire spiritual happiness (<i>sa‘āda rūḥāniyya</i>).
3rd Chapter:	On greed and miserliness (<i>hirs wa-bukhal</i>).
4th Chapter:	On the treatment of miserliness by way of practice (<i>bi-ṭarīq al-‘amal</i>).
5th Chapter:	On the true meaning (<i>ḥaqīqa</i>) of miserliness and munificence (<i>jūd</i>).
6th Chapter:	On being generous (<i>sakhiy</i>).
7th Chapter:	On worldly rank and position (<i>al-kalām fī l-jāh</i>).
8th Chapter:	Explaining true perfections and those that falsely (<i>wahmī</i>) appear as such.

- 9th Chapter: Is seeking popularity necessary, recommended, neutral, discouraged, or forbidden?
- 10th Chapter: The reason for why people love praise and hate condemnation.
- 11th Chapter: On the treatment of (or: cure from) love of popularity.
- 12th Chapter: About practical treatments (*al-ilājāt al-ʿamaliyya*).
- 13th Chapter: Explaining the cure from feeling disgust for condemnation.
- 14th Chapter: Explaining the differences in people regarding their reactions to praise and condemnation.
- 15th Chapter: About make-believe (*riyāʾ*) and its properties.
- 16th Chapter: Explaining latent make-believe (*riyāʾ khafīy*).
- 17th Chapter: Explaining how make-believe is cancelled out and how it is not.
- 18th Chapter: Explaining the degree to which one is permitted intending to openly show pious deeds.
- 19th Chapter: Explaining the degree to which one is permitted to conceal sins.
- 20th Chapter: Explaining the non-performance of pious deeds in fear of make-believe.

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