

Mustakim Arıcı. *Metaphysical Thought in the Post-Rāzī Period: The Case of al-Kātibī [Fahređđin Rāzī Sonrası Metafizik Düşünce: Kātibī Örneđi]*. İstanbul: Klasik Yayınları, 2015. 377 pages. ISBN: 9786055245702.

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This book, written by Mustakim Arıcı who conducts research on the history of Islamic philosophy-science after Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), is based on his 2011 dissertation presented to İstanbul University, “Necmettin el-Kātibī ve Metafizik Düşüncesi (Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī and His Metaphysical thought),” which sought to introduce this scholarly figure, define his thought in comparison with the intellectual tradition he inherited, and observe the adventure of theoretical thought starting from İbn Sīnā to al-Rāzī until the Ottoman times, all within in the context of al-Kātibī. Arıcı’s work has five main chapters, as well as an introductory and a concluding chapter. A great deal of valuable material based upon relevant primary sources is appended at the end.

In the Introduction, Arıcı presents information about the topic’s characteristics as well as his sources. The author devotes a relatively ample space for al-Kātibī’s biography and works, for this is the first study that has ever been devoted to this scholar and his ideas. Mentioning this figure’s intellectual environment and intellectual networks are essential to determining his impact upon both his contemporaries and the succeeding generations. Arıcı then proceeds to introduce the classical and contemporary sources, the latter of which is very scant. Based upon his experiences, he argues that some of the records found in the manuscripts are crucial and underscores that some the relevant biographical information can be found in the records provided by these manuscripts. The author examines al-Kātibī’s philosophy from the perspective of how İbn Sīnā’s philosophy went through the prism of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī before reaching al-Kātibī.

In this respect, he sets out to follow the course of metaphysical philosophy in the post-Rāzī period. For this reason, Arıcı states that he frequently refers to İbn Sīnā and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. He limits the book’s scope to the most fundamental metaphysical

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topics (e.g., the introduction to metaphysics, the principle issues of ontology, necessary of existence and the rational soul), as they were the ones treated by al-Kātibī in his *Hikmat al-'ayn*.

In the first chapter, “The Milieu of al-Kātibī’s Thought, His Scholarly Figure and Impacts,” Arıcı frames the period’s political and intellectual atmosphere in terms of the literature produced by its specialists. The author focuses especially on the political landscape during al-Kātibī’s lifetime (1204-77), with reference to the Seljuq Empire, the Khwarazmian Dynasty, the Mongols, the Anatolian Seljuq Sultanate, the Ayyubid Dynasty, the Mamluk Sultanate, and particularly to the Ilkhanate Empire. The conclusion he presents is quite interesting: Despite all of the political and social chaos, there was a substantial ongoing vitality in scholarly activities. Arıcı explains this situation as being due to the forced migration of scholars, who were representatives of various scholarly traditions. He further claims that they planted their ideas in other scholarly traditions, which caused various cross-influences.

Arıcı demonstrates that in the context of al-Kātibī’s life, the Islamic realm’s scholarly networks were sound and potent. His chart representing these networks is of great importance, for a culture’s most important principle is its *continuity*. Therefore, the scholarly landscape sustained among such groups represented by al-Kātibī, as well as his teachers, colleagues, and students during the thirteenth century, provides a good sense of the intellectual continuity during those years and of how this legacy was inherited, processed, and transmitted further. This continuity can be seen in the fact that the most prominent names in their disciplines – Kamāl al-Dīn Ibn Yūnus, Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī, Nāsīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī, Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, Ibn Kammūna, Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, and Ibn al-Muṭāhhar al-Ḥillī– became absolutely central for the following centuries of Islamic philosophy-science.

Al-Kātibī’s works are the best concrete examples of this centrality. Arıcı introduces this scholar’s works on logic, philosophy, medicine, and other disciplines. In order to ground his conclusion firmly, the Appendix contains a detailed chart of commentaries, glosses, and super glosses written on *al-Shamsiyya fī al-manṭiq*, which became a madrasa-level textbook on logic, and on *Hikmat al-'ayn*, which was studied in Peripatetic philosophy (*al-Mashshā'iyūn*).

In the second chapter, “Metaphysics as a Science,” Arıcı deals with the definition of metaphysics as a discipline, its subject matter and scope, and its historical development. The author locates this discipline in the classification of sciences and examines the relationship between logic and metaphysic. Al-Kātibī, in his capacity as one of his era’s prominent logicians, attached immense importance to this relationship, for he held that in order to understand metaphysics duly, a

detailed study of the science of logic was a *sine qua non*. At the same time, logic is the principle of the possibility of metaphysical knowledge, because that which renders such knowledge possible is deductive argumentation (*naẓar/istidlāl*). Moreover, only certain and true premises produced with this methodology, namely, with logic, could offer certain knowledge in this particular discipline.

In the third chapter, “Fundamental Issues in Ontology,” Arıcı deals with *metaphysica generalis* (*al-umūr al-āmma*), namely, existence, quiddity, unity-plurality, necessity-possibility-impossibility, eternity (*qidam*), and temporality (*ḥudūth*). However, he discusses *metaphysica generalis* beyond the outlines of al-Kātibī’s work *Ḥikmat al-‘ayn* with reference to the tradition of Ibn Sīnā and ideas of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī, and Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī. Arıcı claims that al-Abharī’s discussion of *metaphysica generalis* oscillates between Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī and that al-Kātibī, a pupil of al-Abharī, drew upon earlier work and managed thereby to combine their respective traditions. Subsequently, Arıcı analyzes in detail al-Kātibī’s ideas in *Ḥikmat al-‘ayn* concerning every concept involved in *metaphysica generalis*. Though investigating the conceptual turns in such broad-scale studies as Arıcı’s book in terms of their historical settings and intertextual analyses of the concepts is demanding, we anticipate that he, in his prospective studies, will analyze in detail the points he raised with regard to these turns.

After depicting the framework in the third chapter, chapter four, “Necessary of Existence and Its Relationship with the Cosmos,” looks at the Ibn Sīnā’s concept of “necessary of existence” in the context of al-Kātibī’s thought. The author first presents the proofs for the “possibility/contingency (of the universe)” propounded by the Peripatetic philosophers (*al-Mashshā’iyyūn*) and the proofs for the “createdness” (of the universe) held by the *mutakallimūn*. He then presents the critiques against the concept of “attribute” (*ṣifa*) developed by the *mutakallimūn*. Following this, Arıcı deals with the relationship between God and Universe (i.e., between Unity and Plurality) in the context of the theory of emanation (i.e., emanationism [*ṣudūr*]). He specifies that the necessary of existence is, at the same time, the agent (*fā’il*). In this conceptual model, he discusses the nature of the causality principle.

In all of these discussions, Arıcı keeps both the arguments and counter-arguments of Ibn Sīnā and al-Rāzī in mind. The remarkable point in this analysis is that, although al-Kātibī considers all of the proofs for the principle of “one emanates from one” as weak, he does not deny the theory of emanation. Interestingly, al-Kātibī’s objections to the theory of emanation were later put to use by such theologians as Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī. In this regard, we may ask this question: Considering the close friendship between Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī and al-Kātibī, was the



latter informed about the mathematical proof based on the former's combinatory analysis developed for proving the theory of emanation?

Lastly, the fifth chapter, "Soul as a Metaphysical Existence," takes the human soul, or, as Arıcı calls it, the "rational soul," into consideration, excluding the animal and vegetative soul. In this analysis, he examines such metaphysical issues as the ontological state of the soul, its essence, and its state after death. In addition, he uses the same methodology as in the third chapter to evaluate the issue in a long process from Ibn Sinā until al-Kātibī. In the first place, excluding the cognitive faculties and acts is an apparent shortcoming; nevertheless, delimiting the subject to metaphysics is related to al-Kātibī's method. Basing ourselves upon Arıcı's analysis in this chapter, we understand that in al-Kātibī's philosophical system the Active Intellect is still holding its own in terms of connecting the relation between the intellect and body. Moreover, according to him, the answer to the question of whether the body or the soul will resurrect cannot be achieved through deductive reasoning.

In the first section of the concluding chapter, Arıcı makes rather broad assessments about his study. Accordingly, al-Kātibī deals with the systems of Ibn Sinā and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī comparatively and attempts to build a logically consistent and balanced composition between them. In so doing, he does not take al-Rāzī as a commentator of Ibn Sinā but as the author of *al-Mulakhkhaṣ*, *Muḥaṣṣal*, and *al-Mabāḥith*. For this reason, al-Kātibī uses the method of *ādāb al-baḥth wa-al-munāzara* based upon al-Rāzī's style of inquiry (*taḥqīq*). According to him, metaphysics is possible only through a demonstrative methodology, and this is possible only by relying upon logical consistency. Al-Kātibī trained some prominent figures of the next generation following the tradition of Ibn Sinā and al-Rāzī. In the second part of the concluding chapter, Arıcı, based upon his own experiences, shares some conclusions as a guide for those interested in studying Islamic philosophy and science in the post-Rāzī period. For that reason, the concluding chapter is not representative of the rest of the book.

Since this work is the first enterprise in its field, it is quite normal for it to contain some other shortcomings. From our perspective, the most noteworthy deficiency is its descriptive nature, a problem that arises from the work's grand scale. We hope that the author will overcome this deficiency through analytic works on these topics in the future. Despite all of this, Arıcı's work is written in a systematic manner, based upon his analysis of the primary sources, in fluent Turkish. These virtues alone entitle it to a distinguished place among the works on the history of Islamic philosophy and science.