

Mutezilē'nin Felsefe Eleştirisi Harezmlî Mutezilî İbnü'l-Melâhimî'nin Felsefeye Reddiyesi [Mu'tazila's Critique of Philosophy: Mu'tazilî Theologian Ibn al-Malâhimî of Khwârazm's Refutation of Philosophy], by Orhan Şener Koloğlu, (Bursa: Emin Yayınları, 2010), x + 397 pp., ISBN: 978-9944-404-68-6

Although the relationship between *kalām* and philosophy (or between religion and philosophy) remains one of the most popular subjects in Islamic studies, much of the discussion appears to be confined exclusively to al-Ghazālî's refutation and Ibn Rushd's defense of philosophy in *Tabāfut al-falāsifa* and *Tabāfut al-Tabāfut*, respectively. Needless to say, this discussion should be enriched by introducing new figures, works, and centuries. Ibn al-Malâhimî's (d. 536/1141) *Tuhfat al-mutakallimîn fî l-radd 'alâ l-falāsifa* (*Gift for the Theologians in Refutation of the Philosophers*), edited by Hassan Ansari and Wilferd Madelung in 2008 (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy & Institute of Islamic Studies Free University of Berlin) can be seen as an important contribution to this enrichment. What makes Ibn al-Malâhimî particularly significant is his affiliation to the Mu'tazila as a member of the school of al-Ḥusayniyya, founded by Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Başrî, in Khwârazm. For, although the critique of philosophy done by Sunnî and *salafî* theologians is relatively well known in the literature, we still lack adequate detailed examination of the Mu'tazilî theologians' approach to philosophy.

Koloğlu's book is the first comprehensive study of Ibn al-Malâhimî's work. The author first examines Ibn al-Malâhimî's life and works by focusing on his position in the Mu'tazilî tradition. He then analyzes the *Tuhfa* on the basis of its three chapters: *ilâbiyyât*, *shar'îyyât*, and *sam'îyyât*. He also identifies Ibn al-Malâhimî's direct and indirect sources, including both Mu'tazilî and philosophical ones. According to Koloğlu, the importance of Ibn al-Malâhimî's book revolves around three points: (a) *Tuhfa* was completed during the approximate period 532/1137 to 536/1141, that is, less than fifty years after al-Ghazālî's *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, and it is the second book written to critique the philosophers in Islamic civilization; (b) it is the only refutation of philosophy written from a Mu'tazilî point of view; (c) it is the most comprehensive and systematic refutation of philosophy. As Koloğlu indicates, Ibn al-Malâhimî has a very severe

and exclusive approach to philosophy. He sees philosophy as a foreign discipline, alien to Islam and to the Islamic community. His aim is to demonstrate how Muslim philosophers, like al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, have attempted to present Islam on the basis of the ancient philosophers' doctrines, thereby depriving it of its true foundation and the message of the prophets. He is very worried that many scholars of *fiqh* were engaged in philosophical sciences to reach a deeper understanding of the religious law and jurisprudence. Further, he stresses that the Islamic community may share the fate of Christians, whose religion was distorted by adopting Greek philosophy. Thus, the primary difference between Ibn al-Malāḥimī's and al-Ghazālī's refutations of philosophy is that although the latter has a selective approach to philosophy, the former presents an outright rejection of philosophy in its entirety and considers it impossible to find a common ground between religion and the philosophical doctrines that he criticizes. Moreover, Ibn al-Malāḥimī is reluctant to mention al-Ghazālī in *Tuhfa*. The fundamental reason behind this reluctance is that he did not consider al-Ghazālī's approach in *Tabāfut* to be a proper and correct way of refuting philosophy. Interestingly enough, when he narrates the doctrines of philosophers, he usually relies on al-Ghazālī's *Maqāsid al-falāsifa* and extensively paraphrases it, whereas he often quotes and criticizes passages from al-Ghazālī's esoteric interpretations in *al-Maḍnūn bi-hī alā ghayr ablibī* on eschatological concepts like resurrection, balance, reckoning, intercession, and the path over hell.

Koloğlu emphasizes that Ibn al-Malāḥimī condemns philosophers on two points: (a) that their doctrines lead to compulsion (*jabr*); (b) that they have esoteric teachings. Because Ibn al-Malāḥimī, as a Mu'tazilī theologian, understandably defends human free will and frees God from any responsibility for evil, he sees the deterministic character of Muslim philosophers' teachings as dangerous. One can observe this criticism throughout the chapters on *ilābiyyāt* and *shar'iyāt*, which specifically deal with temporal creation of the world, God's attributes, the problem of evil, the nature of human responsibility, prophecy, and miracles. As for the second point, he focuses on al-Ghazālī's thoughts in his *al-Maḍnūn*, as mentioned above, and rejects the doctrines of the philosophers on the hereafter (*sam'iyāt*), on the grounds that they are based on an over-interpretation of exterior meanings of Qur'ānic verses.

Though the Mu‘tazila is known as the representative of rationalism in Islam, Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s merciless attitude toward philosophy raises some questions about this judgment, and this suspicion increases owing to Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s adherence to the school of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī in the Mu‘tazilī tradition, who is known by, and often attacked for, his interest in philosophical sciences. Although Koloğlu does not scrutinize Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s relationship with the Ḥusayniyya school, he states that the rationalistic characteristic of the Mu‘tazila does not mean that they share the same doctrines with philosophers. Rationalism of the Mu‘tazila, he believes, is intended to understand and justify the truth brought down by the prophet, not to establish a new truth as philosophers do.

Koloğlu’s well-researched book is a welcome addition to *kalām* studies in Turkey, where the interest in the history of *kalām* is increasing steadily. Koloğlu’s work not only examines Ibn al-Malāḥimī’s specific criticisms of philosophical teachings, but also provides detailed information on Mu‘tazilī doctrines and is a useful source for students of the Mu‘tazila. The increasing scholarly attention paid over the past two decades to the central position of Ibn Sīnā in Islamic philosophy in particular, and to Islamic intellectual history in general, has convincingly demonstrated the existence of a strong relationship between philosophy and *kalām*. In this context, Koloğlu’s study is indispensable for students of the history both of Islamic philosophy and of *kalām*.

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