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**The Influence of Islamic Philosophy on Bar Hebraeus  
(Abu'l-Faraj Ibn Al-Ibrî)**

*Ebü'l-Ferec İbnü'l-İbrî Üzerinde İslam Felsefesinin Etkisi*

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**The Influence of Islamic Philosophy on Bar Hebraeus  
(Abu'l-Faraj Ibn Al-Ibrî)**

**Abstract:** The most important instances of the interaction between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought can be seen between the 2/7<sup>th</sup> and 7/13<sup>th</sup> centuries. In the early periods, Syriac thinkers were more active but then, especially after the 5/11<sup>th</sup> century in which Islamic philosophy became stronger, Islamic philosophy influenced other philosophical traditions. After this period, Syriac thought came under the influence of Islamic philosophy. Syriac thought was rather influenced by Islamic philosophy than other cultures. In the 7/13<sup>th</sup> century, the most important figure of Syriac thought, Abu'l-Faraj Ibn al-Ibrî (Bar Hebraeus), followed Islamic philosophers and he adapted their works to Syriac thought. He was influenced by Avicenna and Nasir al-Dîn al-Tûsî on theoretical matters of philosophical thought on the one hand, and on the other hand he was influenced by Ghazzâlî on practical matters of ethics and philosophy of mystical life. In this study, Abu'l-Faraj's intellectual closeness and debt to the above-mentioned thinkers will be examined. In other words, this study will examine which particular ideas from these thinkers he was interested in and what he took from them. In addition, this study bears importance for dealing with one of the most important examples of the reflection of Islamic philosophy in non-Muslim cultures.

**Keywords:** Islamic philosophy, Syriac thought, Abu'l-Faraj, Ibn Sinâ, Nasir al-Dîn al-Tûsî, Ghazzâlî.

**Ebü'l-Ferec İbnü'l-İbrî Üzerinde İslam Felsefesinin Etkisi**

**Öz:** İslam felsefesi ve Süryani düşüncesi arasındaki etkileşimin en önemli örnekleri II/VIII. ve VII/XIII. yüzyıllar arasında olmuştur. İlk dönemlerde Süryani düşünürler daha aktif iken özellikle XI. yüzyıldan sonra İslam felsefesinin güçlenmesi ile birlikte İslam felsefesi diğer düşünce birikimlerini etkisi altına alarak güçlenmiştir. Bu dönemden sonra Süryani düşüncesi büyük oranda İslam felsefesinin etkisi altına girmiştir. Müslüman olmayan unsurların arasında Süryani düşüncesi, diğer kültürlerle nazaran daha fazla İslam felsefesinin etkisinde kalmışlardır. VII/XIII. yüzyılda Süryani düşüncesinin en önemli ismi olan Ebü'l-Ferec İbnü'l-İbrî (Bar 'Ebroyo), İslam felsefesinin önemli düşünürlerini takip etmiş ve onların eserlerini Süryani düşüncesine uyarlamıştır. O felsefî düşüncenin nazarî meselelerinde İbn Sînâ ve Nasiru'd-Dîn Tûsî'nin etkisinde kalırken pratik ahlak

konularında ve mistik yaşam felsefesinde Gazzâlî'nin etkisinde kalmıştır. Bu çalışmada onun adı geçen İslam düşünürleri ile yakınlığı ve düşünsel ilişkisi incelenecektir. Başka bir ifadeyle onun bu düşünürlerin hangi fikirleri ile ilgilendiği ve onlardan neler aldığı tartışılacaktır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda, İslam felsefesinin etkisinin Müslüman olmayan kültürlerdeki yansımalarının en önemli örneklerinden birini ele almakla önem arz etmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** İslam felsefesi, Süryani düşüncesi, Ebü'l-Ferec, İbn Sînâ, Nasiru'd-Dîn Tûsî, Gazzâlî.

#### SUMMARY

The first thing that comes to mind concerning the relationship between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought is the contributions of Syriac thinkers to Islamic philosophy. According to this, they were initiators of the development of philosophical sciences in the Muslim world with their translations of Greek works to Arabic. Additionally, they acted as teachers to Islamic philosophers while introducing philosophical sciences. This view is not only a shallow one, but is also only a unilateral approach which cannot explain intellectual movements in the history of thought which needs to be done by resorting to more than one factor. Therefore, it is so difficult to reach a satisfactory interpretation without considering the historical process of the reaction between the two cultures.

Islamic philosophy completed its formative stage and early development until the 3<sup>rd</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> centuries. Starting with the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century it started to effect and direct other cultures. We can see the first effects of this transformation and development on the non-Muslim neighbours of Islamic culture. In this context, the first example that comes to mind is the Syriac-speaking Christian communities. The effect of Islamic philosophy on Christian culture was first witnessed over the Syriac-community in the East before the intellectual movements that emerged in Europe in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. For example, we can see this effect in the intellectual circles which were represented by the East Syrian metropolitan bishops of Nisibis in the 5<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century. It can be seen in Eliya of Nisibis' work that he had produced important evaluations of Islamic philosophy and received important concepts of Islamic philosophy into his studies. This case becomes more clearly visible in the case of the works of Abu'l-Faraj in the 7<sup>th</sup>/13<sup>th</sup> century. To such an extent that, Abu'l-Faraj serves as an important and telling ex-

ample which shows the near impossibility of philosophical study without resorting to the literature of Islamic philosophy.

The 13<sup>th</sup> century was one of the most productive periods in terms of Islamic philosophy. In this period, the thought of Islamic philosophers, especially that of Avicenna, was effective on many philosophers and theologians and also on non-Muslim thinkers of other cultures. Avicenna wrote a work titled *Al-Shifā* in which he collected thought inherited from Greek philosophy, but which also formed his individual approach on this material and epistemology. On the other hand, many Muslim philosophers wrote commentaries and explanations on his works. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Suhrawardī were directly influenced by him and Al-Ghazzālī revealed different perspectives by giving his philosophy unfavourable reviews.

The effects of Islamic philosophy can be seen not only on Muslim thinkers but also on representatives of non-Muslim cultures. The most important example of this was Abu'l-Faraj who was the metropolitan bishop of Malatya and was also the "maphrian" (Arabic, *mafiryān*) -a degree between the patriarch and the metropolitan. Abu'l-Faraj travelled to many centres of learning where he met many Islamic philosophers and made friends with them. For example, his conducting researches in Marāgha where Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī was the head of the observatory and his attending al-Tūsī's lessons are noteworthy in this respect. Abu'l-Faraj formed his philosophical thoughts under the influence of Muslim philosophers and aimed to revive Syriac thought that was weakened with regard to Islamic philosophy.

In the first chapter of this paper, Abu'l-Faraj's interest in Avicenna is examined. Abu'l-Faraj took Avicenna's *Al-Shifā* as a model to reveal his philosophical opinions. He examined logic, physics, ethics and metaphysics in his *The Cream of Wisdom* like Avicenna and, additionally, while examining these matters, he used philosophical concepts of Avicenna. For example, he used Avicenna's concept of "the necessary existence" and analysed it although it was contrary to Christian theology and especially the idea of trinity. This example shows that he attached importance to Avicenna's philosophical concepts and his philosophical interests.

In the second chapter of this paper, Abu'l-Faraj's interest in Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī is examined. He followed Avicenna on logic, physics and metaphysics in *The Cream of Wisdom* while he took Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī as a

model on practical philosophy because Avicenna did not include practical philosophy in *Al-Shifā*. Furthermore, al-Tūsī was taken as a model because he was one of the most famous figures of practical philosophy in Islamic philosophy.

In the third chapter of this paper, Abu'l-Faraj's interest in Al-Ghazzālī is examined. Al-Ghazzālī's critique of philosophy and theology and then his preference for Tasawuf made some influence on Abu'l-Faraj. In his *The Book of Dove* which is about his individual research for the truth, he benefited from the experience of Al-Ghazzālī's *Al-Munqiz* and adapted it for Syriac thought. Additionally, in his work on ethics, the *Itiqon*, he took Al-Ghazzālī's *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* as a model and created its titles of chapters and matters according to *Ihyā'*. Also, when examining these matters, he adopted the method of Al-Ghazzālī but converted his Islamic sources and references to Christian sources and references.

It seems that for Abu'l-Faraj a revival of Syriac thought is to be conducted through the epistemology of Islamic philosophy and Islamic philosophers' works. Therefore, he took Islamic philosophers' works as a model for many subjects including philosophy, astronomy, ethics, law, physics and metaphysics. But he was not a passive actor, that is, an imitator and collector, but, on the contrary, he acted as an adapter in a reconstructive style while examining these sciences. As a matter of fact, in Abu'l-Faraj's day, this method was called "tahqiq" and was practiced by many philosophers.

The main topic of this study is Abu'l-Faraj's careful examination of Avicenna, Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī and Al-Ghazzālī and how it is transferred to Syriac thought. In addition to this, the paper also deals with how Syriac thought was recovered through the works of Abu'l-Faraj.

#### **INTRODUCTION**

On the interaction between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought, it is worth considering two important points:

Firstly, when the impact of Islamic philosophy is examined, the first thing that comes to mind is its effects on the Western world through translations in the VI/XII<sup>th</sup> and VII/XIII<sup>th</sup> centuries. It is claimed that through these translations which were made in Italy and Spain, the Western world gained direct relation with Islamic philosophy and an indirect relation with ancient philosophy. According to this viewpoint, the movements of Reformation and Renaissance in the West were influenced by Islamic philoso-

phy. However, searching for the effects of Islamic philosophy primarily in the West may not lead to accurate results in terms of its historicity. It could be argued that, it is not possible to look at these effects in relatively farther places whilst ignoring the historical processes namely, the impact should be considered by particularly looking at the non-Muslim people in the East. Therefore, it is important to examine non-Muslim thought in the East particularly the works of Syriac scholars such as Iliya of Nsibis (d.1046), Abdisho Bar Briko (d.1318), Ishoyab Bar Malkon (d.1246), Yohanon Bar Ma'dani (d.1263) and most importantly Gregory Bar Hebraeus, known as Bar 'Ebroyo (d.1286).

Secondly, it is misleading to think of the interaction between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought unilaterally. There seems to be a general approach in the literature, which argues that this interaction was only transferred from Syriac thought to Islamic philosophy. In this context, many historians of Islamic philosophy have related the emergence of Islamic philosophy to the translations which were made by Syriac translators in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. This approach has the consequence that by cutting this interaction at a point of historical process, Syriac scholars and translators were left to back stage of history after the end of their translation 'task'. On the other hand, translation movements can be best explained by the juxtaposing of mutual interactions between cultures. In other words, it is both inaccurate to approach Syriac translators as "professional translators", and also inaccurate to see them as one sided actors in this interaction. This is because, since the V/XI<sup>th</sup> century, the direction and the nature of the interaction was transformed and Syriac scholars became "receivers" of the Islamic culture to which they had contributed through their translation of Greek philosophy. Thus, it is important to study aforementioned scholars and others as examples of this "receiver" position but also to investigate how as "receivers" the Syriac scholars contributed to the development of medieval Islamic philosophy.<sup>1</sup>

Selecting Bar Hebraeus as the main figure in the interaction between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought is the focus of this work. Therefore, it is necessary to go back two centuries before Bar Hebraeus, when an important philosophical and cultural movement emerged in Syriac thought. Many important works were written by Syriac scholars, especially the metropolitan bishops of the city in the School of Nsibis which was established

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 187-189.

by the East Syrians (Nestorians). This period has been called the "Syriac Renaissance"<sup>2</sup> in which many important works on history, philosophy, theology, law, language and literature were authored by Syriac scholars. It extends from the V/XI<sup>th</sup> century where Iliya of Nsibis lived, to Abdisho Bar Brikho who was another scholar of Bar Hebraeus' time.<sup>3</sup>

The cultural movement from Syriac to Arabic, reversed in that period by turning from Arabic into Syriac. To facilitate this movement, philosophical and literary dictionaries were written. The most important examples of this movement include Iliya of Nsibis' *Kitāb al-targumān fi ta'lim al-lughat al-Suryān* (ܟܝܬܐܒܐ ܬܪܓܘܡܐܢ ܦܝ ܬܐܠܝܡܐܠܘܓܗܐܬ ܫܘܪܝܐܢ)<sup>4</sup> that was written to enable the transitions of grammatical, theological and scientific concepts from Arabic to Syriac; Severius Bar Shakko's *Book of Dialogues*, based Syriac grammar rules on principles of Arabic language; Ishoyab Bar Malkon's *The Book of Syriac Grammar*, written by using Arabic language rules; Bar Hebraeus' grammar book, *Book of Splendours* (ܟܝܬܐܒܐ ܕܝ ܫܦܝܪܘܬܐ), based on Zamakhsharī's *Al-Muhassal fi al-Nahv* and Abdisho Bar Brikho's *Firdaws al-'Adn* (ܦܝܪܕܘܘܫ ܐܠ ܐܕܢ)<sup>5</sup> written to prove the riches of the Syriac language<sup>5</sup> in response to Arab thinkers who despised the Syriac language and claimed that it was not a philosophical and theological language.

Syriac thought was influenced by Islamic philosophy not only in linguistic and philological studies but in a wider context since the V/XI<sup>th</sup> century. For example, in his *Kitāb al-majālis*, Iliya of Nsibis dealt with philosophical and theological issues. In this book, one of the most important resources of Iliya was Islamic thought and culture. He tried to base some Christian beliefs (like trinity, hypostasis and incarnation) on Islamic concepts and theories (like God's existence by Himself/*Qaim bi nafsihī* and the Sunni theory of attributes) Ishoyab Bar Malkon, in his *Kitāb al-bayān*, explained Christological issues by citing passages from Avicenna (d.1037)'s *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*.<sup>6</sup> More interestingly, he wrote a commentary of the

<sup>2</sup> Herman Teule, "The Syriac Renaissance", in *The Syriac Renaissance*, Ed. H. Teule & C. F. Tauwinkl et al (Leuven: Peeters Publications, 2010), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Teule, "The Syriac Renaissance", 1-5.

<sup>4</sup> Iliya of Nisibis, *Kitāb al-targuman fi ta'lim al-lughat al-Suryan*, Published by P. de Legarde (Göttingen: 1879), 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> Abdisho al-Soba'ī, *Pardayso d-'Adin*, Published by G. Kardahi (Beirut: 1889), 6.

<sup>6</sup> Herman G.B. Teule, "A Theological Treatise by Īsho'yahb Bar Malkon Preserved in the Theological Compendium Asfar al-Asfar", *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 58, no. 3-4, (2006): 250.

Bible in Arabic. This shows that Arabic was a language of communication in that period among Syriacs who were trying to understand the Bible through Arabic. In Yohanon Bar Ma'dani's *The Book of Poems* (ܩܘܘܡܐܢܐ), two mystical odes on human soul and body (one of them consists of 122 couplets and the other consists of 25 couplets) which are titled as "The ode of Bird", were influenced by Avicenna's *Risāla al-tayr*. Bar Ma'dani's other ode which was about the way and ranks of perfect humans is similar to the section "maqāmāt al-'arifin" in Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt*.<sup>7</sup>

The VII/XIII<sup>th</sup> century was the period in which the influence of Islamic philosophy on Syriac thought reached its peak. Then, the most productive Syriac thinker was, undoubtedly, Bar Hebraeus. Researchers who dealt with his works have correlated almost every book by him to an Islamic philosopher.<sup>8</sup> Bar Hebraeus was aware that his Syriac ancestors who had paved the way for the rise of Islamic philosophy, by taking part in the translation movement, lost their previous influence. He knew and confessed that the Syriacs who had once transmitted ancient philosophy to the Islamic world, in later periods -in a reciprocal gesture- received Greek philosophy through Islamic scholars. He expressed this as follows:

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<sup>9</sup>.ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ ܩܘܡܐܢܐ

They (Arabs) have acquired the wisdom through translators who were all Assyrians but now we have to ask the wisdom from them.

As a result of his scientific and philosophical understanding, Bar Hebraeus found it acceptable to receive Greek philosophy through Islamic scholars. Therefore, he closely dealt with the works of Islamic philosophers including Avicenna, Al-Ghazzālī (d.1111) and Nasir al-dīn al-Tūsī (d.1274) in accordance with his period's popular philosophical approaches. In addition, it is useful also to consider the following possibility: Bar Hebraeus may have missed the positions of his ancestors and wanted to prove that Syriac thought was a continuity of Greek philosophy. In any case, Bar Hebraeus produced a huge collection of books in philosophy and other sciences.

<sup>7</sup> Yohanon Bar Ma'deni, *Mimrē we Mushhēto* (Jerusalem: 1929).

<sup>8</sup> Hidemi Takahashi, "Barhebraeus", *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, v:3 (Brill, 2014), 2:41-3; For more detail see: *ibid*, *Barhebraeus: a bio-bibliography* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kithobo d-mkatbunoto zābno (Chronicon Syriacum)* (Paris, 1890), 98.



In this paper, Bar Hebraeus' philosophical works are compared to Islamic philosophy. In other words, the aim of this work is to explain Bar Hebraeus' interests in Islamic philosophers. In this context, his philosophical approach, will be examined through his interest in Avicenna, al-Ghazzālī and Nasir al-dīn al-Tūsī, respectively.

### **1. BAR HEBRAEUS' INTEREST IN AVICENNA**

The time in which Bar Hebraeus lived was a period that witnessed many in depth discussions and new synthesis about Avicenna's philosophy. Then, the schools of "philosophical theology" and "Illuminationism" had developed as an output of Avicenna's philosophy. In other words, it can be said that the most popular and prevalent philosophy in Bar Hebraeus' time was still Avicennian philosophy. For example, his *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* was interpreted firstly by Fakhr al-dīn al-Rāzī (d.1209) who was one of the sources of Bar Hebraeus, and then by Nasir al-dīn al-Tūsī who was a contemporary of Bar Hebraeus and the head of the observatory in Maragha (the Mongol capital in northern Iran). In this context, considering a young philosopher, Qutb al-dīn al-Shīrāzī's *Sharh wa'l hashiya 'ala al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* which compared Rāzī and Tūsī's commentaries, it is understood that Avicenna's work was discussed in a large philosophical environment in that time. Also, thinking about Bar Hebraeus' relationship with Islamic scholars when he was in Maragha, his interest in Avicenna becomes clearer. Therefore, Bar Hebraeus' interest in Avicenna can be explained by the intellectual interests of his time.

When mentioning Avicenna in his works, Bar Hebraeus relied on Islamic concepts like *The Main Master/Sabo Rishono* (سبوی ریشونو).<sup>10</sup> Avicenna, for Bar Hebraeus, was a figure that brought him closer to Greek philosophy. Thus, Aristotle and Avicenna, for Bar Hebraeus, were both undoubted masters of philosophy. It is possible to understand this reality from his following statements:

Our master [Aristotle] has treated the doctrine of economy, in brief and dispersed words, in his book (consisting) of eleven divisions on ethics.... The supreme philosopher, Shaikh al-Rāis

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<sup>10</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-Remzē w-Mi'ironotho*, (Florence: Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana), or. 86, 1<sup>a</sup>

[Avicenna] wrote an admirable tractate about this art. We used the opinions of these philosophers in our work.<sup>11</sup>

The work which Bar Hebraeus was referring to above is his *The Cream of Wisdom* (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ). This book is a collected philosophical work that was a model of Avicenna's *Al-Shifā*. It deals with logic, physics, metaphysics and ethics that are four subjects of philosophy. When comparing<sup>12</sup> *The Cream of Wisdom* and *Al-Shifā* on the matters and divisions of philosophy, similarities clearly can be seen between them. These similarities are illustrated in the arrangement of the two works as follows:

THE CREAM OF WISDOM (ܟܬܒܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)	AL-SHIFA (ܟܬܒܐ ܫܝܦܐ)
Logic (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ)	Logical Sciences (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Isagogī (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>2. Categories (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>3. On Interpretation (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>4. Prior Analytics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>5. Posterior Analytics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>6. Topics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>6. Sophistical Refutations (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>7. Rhetoric (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>8. Poetics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introduction (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>2. Categories (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>3. On Interpretation (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>4. Prior Analytics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>5. Posterior Analytics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>6. Topics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>7. Sophistical Refutations (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>8. Rhetoric (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>9. Poetics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> </ol>
Natural Sciences (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)	Natural Sciences (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10. Physics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>11. On the Heavens (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>12. On Generation and Corruption</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Physics (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>2. On the Heavens (ܟܘܠܘܠܐ ܕܟܘܡܐܘܬܐ)</li> <li>3. On Generation and Corrup-</li> </ol>

<sup>11</sup> N. Peter Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2004), 99. also see: Abul Faraj Ibn Ibrī, *Tarikh al-Mukhtasar al-duwal* (Beirut: Dar al-Kutūb al-Ilmiyya, 1997), 162.

<sup>12</sup> For this comparison see: Hidemi Takahashi, "Edition of Syriac Philosophical Works of Barhebraeus with a Preliminary on the Edition of the Book of Heaven and the World and the Book of Generation and Corruption of the Cream of Wisdom", in *The Letter before the Spirit: The Importance of Text Editions for the Study of the Reception of Aristotle*, edited by Asfke M.I. van Oppenraay, (Leiden-Boston, 2012), 114-5, Ibn Sinā, *Al-Shifā-Al-Mantiq (al-Madkhal)*, Published by Khodeiri, Anawati and Ahwani (Cairo: 1952), 10-11; *Mantiq al-Mashriqiyyin* (Beirut: Dar al-Hadatha, 1982), 23-27.

(ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	tion (الكون والفساد)
13. Mineralogy (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	4. Actions and Passions (الأفعال والإفغالات)
14. Meteorology (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	5. Mineralogy and Meteorology (واللائقار العلوية المعادين)
15. Botany (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	6. Psychology (كتاب النفس)
16. Zoology (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	7. Botany (كتاب النبات)
17. Psychology (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	8. Biology (كتاب الحيوان)
<b>Metaphysics (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)</b>	<b>The Science of Mathematics (رياضيات)</b>
18. Prior Philosophy (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	1. Geometry (أصول الهندسة)
19. Theology (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	2. Arithmetics (الحساب)
	3. Music (الموسيقى)
	4. Astronomy (علم الهيئة)
<b>Practical Philosophy (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)</b>	<b>Metaphysics (الإلهيات)</b>
20. Ethics (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	22. Metaphysics (الإلهيات)
21. Economics (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ)	
22. Politics (ܩܘܪܘܢܐ ܕܥܘܠܡܐ) <sup>13</sup>	

In the context of comparing these two corpora, we should explain some important points. When Bar Hebraeus classified the logical sciences, he added rhetoric and poetics to logic which Islamic philosophers had previously added to Aristotle's logical works. In addition, it can be seen that he, following Avicenna, added *Isagogē* to logic which Al-Fārābī (d. 950) had not included in the logical sciences. This is significant because it indicates that Bar Hebraeus followed Avicenna's *Al-Shifā*.

The second book of his work is on Physics where he dealt with Physics in eight sections like Avicenna. In ordering the sections, Bar Hebraeus differed from Avicenna by dealing with *Botany* and *Zoology* before *Psychology* -which was similar to Aristotle. However, he adhered to Avicenna's order by dealing with *Mineralogy* before *Meteorology*. Additionally, he dealt

<sup>13</sup> Takahashi, "Edition of Syriac Philosophical Works of Barhebraeus with a Preliminary on the Edition of the Book of Heaven, the World and the Book of Generation and Corruption of the Cream of Wisdom", 115.

with *Actions and Passions* which Avicenna had classified as a book of natural sciences, in his *On Generation and Corruption and Mineralogy*.<sup>14</sup>

The third part of Bar Hebraeus' *The Cream of Wisdom* deals with Metaphysics. He loyally followed Avicenna's classification of the *Metaphysics* section dealing with it in two books: *Theology* and *Prior Philosophy*. Adding theology to metaphysics adhered to the classification of Avicenna in his work *Al-Mantiq al-mashriqiyyīn*.<sup>15</sup>

Bar Hebraeus reserved the last part in this work to practical philosophy. This part which dealt with ethics, economics and politics,<sup>16</sup> consists of sections which Avicenna mentioned in his *Introduction of Al-Shifā (al-Madkhal)*<sup>17</sup> and said he would deal with as an independent work in the future. Bar Hebraeus dealt with practical philosophy's matters according to the order of Nasir al-dīn al-Tūsī's *Akhlāq-i Nasirī*. We examine this in more detail in the next section.

In this way, Bar Hebraeus' philosophical project was completed. He followed Avicenna's *Al-Shifā* in structure and content in the parts of logic, physics and metaphysics except for mathematical sciences (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music). The reason of not including mathematical sciences in his work is that he dealt with them in a separate work.<sup>18</sup>

Bar Hebraeus' other work on philosophy, *Discourse of Wisdom* (ܘܫܘܒܘܬܐ ܕܘܚܘܡܐ), is divided into four parts: logic (in the first part), natural sciences, the essences of physical and heavenly bodies, the kinds and matters of souls (in the second part), the reality of Necessary Existence (ܘܫܘܒܘܬܐ ܕܘܚܘܡܐ/*Olsoy Ithotho*) and the perfect attributes which refer to God, the contingent existence and the order of the universe (in the third part), the issue of fate, immortality of soul, happiness, divine retribution, spiritual tastes, miracles, prophecy and the afterlife (in the fourth part).<sup>19</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Takahashi, "The Reception of Ibn Sīnā in Syriac", in *Before and after Avicenna: proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group*, Ed. D. C. Reisman and A. H. al-Rahim (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2003), 263.

<sup>15</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Mantiq al-Mashriqiyyīn*, 27

<sup>16</sup> N. Peter Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 97-131.

<sup>17</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā-Al-Mantiq (al-Madkhal)*, 11.

<sup>18</sup> Takahashi, "The Reception of Ibn Sīnā in Syriac", 262.

<sup>19</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, edited by Herman F. Janssens (Paris: Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres-Liège&Librairie E. Droz, 1937), 45-134.

Many passages in Bar Hebraeus' *Discourse of Wisdom* have been taken from Avicenna's *Al-Ishārāt, Al-Shifā, al-Najāt*<sup>20</sup> and *al-Risāla al-arshiyya*.<sup>21</sup> The metaphysics part of his work is full of Avicennian concepts. As an example, some passages on the Necessary Existence can be compared with the works of Avicenna:

According to Bar Hebraeus, existents are divided into two kinds: Necessary and Contingent. The Contingent Existent is in equal distance to presence and absence, whereas the Necessary Existence is necessary and also its absence is inconceivable. In this case, when contingent comes into being, it will have a cause whereas the Necessary Existence does not have any cause because He exists and His absence cannot be thought of. Bar Hebraeus' opinion can be compared with Avicenna's as follows:

BAR HEBRAEUS	AVICENNA
<p>כל האנשים אשר הם קיימים הם או נכונים או אפשריים. וכל אשר אפשרי אינו נכונה בפני עצמו. והנכונה אינו אפשרי.</p> <p>All existents are either necessary or contingent. The Necessary Existence necessarily exists whereas the contingent existence is not necessary to being or not being. Being of the contingent existence is possible solely by an efficient cause.</p>	<p>وواجب الوجود هو الضروري الوجود، والممكن الوجود هو الذي لا ضرورة فيه بوجه. أي لا في وجوده ولا في عدمه.</p> <p>The Necessary Existence is that it is necessary, whereas the contingent existence is absolutely not necessary neither in its existence nor in its absence.<sup>23</sup></p> <p>كل موجود اذا إنتفت إليه من حيث ذاته من غير إنتفات إلى غيره فاما ان يكون بحيث يجب له الوجود لنفسه أو لا يكون. فإن وجب فهو الحق بذاته وهو القیوم.....الإمكان، فيكون باعتبار ذاته الشيء الذي لا يجب ولا يمتنع.....فكل موجود إما واجب الوجود بذاته وإما ممكن الوجود بحسب ذاته.</p> <p>Every existence on its own is necessary or not. If it is necessary, then it is reality by Himself and self-existent (al-qayyūm). But the contingent by itself is neither necessary nor impossible. So every existence is either</p>

<sup>20</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najāt fi al-Mantiq wa al-Ilahiyāt* (Beirut: Dar al-Jil, 1992).

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*, in *Majmu' Resāil al-Shaikh al-Rāis* (Haydarabad: Matba' al-Daira al-Ma'arif, 1353 H.).

It cannot exist without an efficient cause. <sup>22</sup>	necessary existence by himself or contingent by itself. <sup>24</sup>
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To Bar Hebraeus, the Necessary Existence is unique in His existence because He has no cause. His non-existent cause is not shared with any other existent. The Necessary Existence is unique in this case. All existents except for Him do not have a common denominator with the Necessary Existence. Therefore, the Necessary Existence is One and has neither an equal nor a partner. Bar Hebraeus' opinion on this issue can be found in Avicenna's *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* and *al-Risāla al-'arshiya*.

BAR HEBRAEUS	AVICENNA
<p>כלה חכמה מן רשמי                  תעשההם מהלכה בעצמם.                  מהלכה לה חלכה מה                  חכמה. חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה</p> <p>When the absolute cause exists, the caused would necessarily exist. Or else there would be no absolute cause. Therefore, every contingent existence needs a cause and it is not either necessary or impossible.<sup>25</sup></p>	<p>ما حقه في نفسه الإمكان فليس يصير موجودا من ذاته.....فوجود كل ممكن الوجود هو من غيره.....إما أن يتسلسل ذلك إلى غير النهاية فيكون كل واحد من آحاد السلسلة ممكنا في ذاته، والجملة متعلقة بها فتكون غير واجبة أيضا....فكل سلسلة تنتهي إلى واجب الوجود بذاته.</p> <p>Contingent existence does not exist by itself. Existence of every contingent existence is from the other....If the contingent existence continues endlessly, every contingent would be contingent by itself and everything connected to it is also not necessary. Thus, all series end in the Necessary Existence itself.<sup>27</sup></p>
<p>כל חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה                  חכמה חכמה חכמה</p>	<p>فممكن الوجود لا يدخل في الوجود إلا بسبب يرجح وجوده على عدمه فإن كان سببه أيضا ممكن الوجود فهكذا تتعلق الممكنات بعضها بعض فلا يكون موجود البتة لأن هذا الوجود الذي فرضناه لا يدخل في الوجود ما لم يسبقه وجوده مالا يتناهي وهو محال فإذا الممكنات تنتهي بواجب الوجود.</p>

<sup>23</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najāt fi al-Mantiq wa al-Ilahiyāt*, 2:77.  
<sup>22</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 89-90.  
<sup>24</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* (Qum: Bostani Ketabi Qum, 1381 q.), 266-7.  
<sup>25</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 90.  
<sup>27</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, 267.

<p>כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית.</p> <p>Every contingent existence necessarily needs a cause that brings it into existence. If this cause was contingent, it would be impossible continuity.<sup>26</sup></p>	<p>The contingent existence comes in existence solely by a cause who chose its existence than its absence. If its cause was also contingent, all contingents would connect to each other in this way and it would not exist absolutely. That is because, this existence which we assumed, will not come into being unless it is preceded by an endless existence. And this is impossible. Therefore, contingent existents end in the Necessary Existence.<sup>28</sup></p>
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According to Bar Hebraeus, the Necessary Existence does not have a cause, is unique, is neither a body nor an accident, and is also not restricted to any time and space. Thus, when considering His being as a body, this means that He is a compound existence, but that is not possible because material beings are composed from matter and form. But the Necessary Existence is away from compound as well as simple existence. Furthermore, accidents need a subject to exist. But the Necessary Existence cannot be conceived in any subject. His opinion on the Necessary Existence as neither body nor accident can be compared to Avicenna's *al-Najāt*, *Al-Ishārāt* and *al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*.

BAR HEBRAEUS	AVICENNA
<p>כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית. כל קיום אפשרי צריך סיבה נצחית.</p> <p>The Necessary Existence is not body because the body consists of matter and form and is caused by them. Therefore, every compound existence</p>	<p>وكل جسم محسوس فهو متكرر بالقسمة الكمية وبالقسمة المعنوية إلى هيولى وصورة..... فكل جسم محسوس وكل متعلق به معلول. واجب الوجود لا يشارك شيئا من الأشياء في ماهية ذلك الشيء.</p> <p>Every corporal body multiplies in quantity and abstractly into matter and form. Hence, every corporal body and everything related to it are caused. But the</p>

<sup>26</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 92.

<sup>28</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Risāla al-'arshiyya*, 3.

<p>is caused by their parts because it needs them. In addition, the Necessary Existence is not accident because every accident needs a subject to continue its existence and also is caused by it. Therefore, the Necessary Existence is not in a time and space.<sup>29</sup></p> <p>له لى, كسبوسه كن لهه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه كسبوسه. كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه. كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه لهه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه كسبوسه لهه.</p> <p>There is no equal and partner of the Necessary Existence because not every existence has necessity except the Necessary Existence. Since everything is under His power and no one equals Him in power, there is no equal, partner and opposite for Him.<sup>30</sup></p>	<p>Necessary Existence does not share any of these.<sup>31</sup></p> <p>أن واجب الوجود لذاته لا ند له ولا مثل ولا ضد، لأن لأضداد متفاسدة ومشاركة في الموضوع. وواجب الوجود بريء من المادة.</p> <p>The Necessary Existence itself has not got any partner, equal and opposite because opposites corrupt and participate in the subject. The Necessary Existence is immaterial.<sup>32</sup></p> <p>أنه ليس بعرض أن العرض هو الموجود في الموضوع فيكون الموضوع مقديما عليه ولا يمكن وجوده دون الموضوع.</p> <p>He (the Necessary Existence) also is not an accident because accident exists in a subject and the subject precedes it and it cannot exist without the subject.<sup>33</sup></p>
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Although Bar Hebraeus' idea that the Necessary Existence is not a body and accident is similar to Avicenna's philosophical approach, it must be said that he does not share all concerns of Avicenna who had stated that the Necessary Existence is not substance (*jawhar*). As known, the substance in Avicenna's philosophy is a genus that is subdivided into species. In other words, the substance is used for existences whose essence and existence are separate. Therefore, the Necessary Existence cannot be considered

<sup>29</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 93.

<sup>30</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 94.

<sup>31</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, 272-273.

<sup>32</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najāt fī al-Mantiq wa al-Ilahiyāt*, 2:83.

<sup>33</sup> Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Risāla al-'arshīyya*, 4-5.



a substance.<sup>34</sup> But for Bar Hebraeus, in order to explain the trinity according to Christian belief, God must be a substance. Thus, when he talked about the Necessary Existence, he intentionally did not mention that the Necessary Existence is not a substance. Therefore, it is difficult to claim that he, as a Syriac Christian philosopher, and unlike Avicenna, understood from the concept of the Necessary Existence both principal and real unity, and dealt with God in a dimension which is above all human categories including substance. Moreover, he accepted the trinity of Neo-Platonists (*one, mind and soul*) and the theory of emanation for trinity hypostasis as a reference in the later part of *Discourse of Wisdom*.<sup>35</sup> In spite of this, he seems to have shared the notion of the Necessary Existence advocated by Avicenna though it is not real but principal. This perspective, undoubtedly, brought many arguments which supported Bar Hebraeus and also gave him a superiority as being under Avicenna's influence.

The other work of Bar Hebraeus on philosophy is *Treatise of Treatises* (ܩܘܪܬܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐܢܐ) that was written as a summary of *The Cream of Wisdom*. Although the distinguished German scholar Anton Baumstark claims that Bar Hebraeus wrote this work by taking Avicenna's *'Uyūn al-Hikma* as a model, recent research notably by the Japanese scholar, Hidemi Takahashi rejects this claim and holds that this work was written by taking al-Ghazzālī's *Maqāsid al-Falāsifa* as a model.<sup>36</sup> Al-Ghazzālī's *Maqāsid* claimed to reveal opinions of peripatetic Islamic philosophers, in particular Avicenna's opinions, in an objective way. Consequently, the interest of Bar Hebraeus in al-Ghazzālī's *Maqāsid* indirectly shows his interest in Avicenna.

*Book of the Pupils of the Eye* (ܩܘܪܬܐܢܐ ܕܩܘܪܬܐܢܐ) was Bar Hebraeus' work on logic and deals with topics of Aristotle's *Organon*. It includes; the introduction of logic, categories, prior analytics, topics, posterior analytics and sophistics.<sup>37</sup> Despite the presence of many passages from such Greek logicians' works like Aristotle and Porphyrios in this work, it is said that Bar

<sup>34</sup> Ibn Sinā, *Al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt*, 273-274; *ibid*, *Al-Shifā al-Ilāhiyāt*, Published by G. C. Anawati & Saïd Zāyid (undated), 2:348-9; *ibid*, *Ta'liqāt*, ed. Abdurrahman Badawi (Tahran: Mektebu'l-A'lami'l-Islamī, 1404 q.), 187.

<sup>35</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-sawad sufyo*, 99.

<sup>36</sup> Takahashi, "The Reception of Ibn Sinā in Syriac", 255.

<sup>37</sup> Bar Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-bobētho*, published by Herman J. Janssens, *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 47, issue.2 (1931): 94-134 and 48, issue.4 (1932): 209-263.



## 2. BAR HEBRAEUS' INTEREST IN NASIR AL-DIN AL-TŪSĪ

Bar Hebraeus' work on Ethics is *Practical Philosophy* (فلسفة عملية) (فلسفة عملية), which is the last part of *The Cream of Wisdom*. This work consists of ethics, economics and politics, and was probably written in Bar Hebraeus' later years<sup>42</sup> by taking the *Nasirean Ethics* (*Akhlaq-i Nāsiri*) of Nasir al-Dīn al-Tūsī as a model. Bar Hebraeus consulted a contemporary Islamic philosopher (Tūsī) in the "practical philosophy" as a part of *The Cream of Wisdom* because Avicenna's *Al-Shifā* did not include practical philosophy. Tūsī's work is similar to *The Cream of Wisdom* in terms of construct,<sup>43</sup> and we may surmise that Bar Hebraeus' close relationship with Tūsī when he was in Maragha was also a factor to be considered. When considering Tūsī as the most important representative of Avicenna's philosophy, Bar Hebraeus' choice would be understood more clearly.

Tūsī wrote a commentary for Avicenna's *al-Ishārāt* after Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's commentary and replied to Rāzī's critique intended against Avicenna's philosophy. Bar Hebraeus translated *Al-Ishārāt* under the influence of these discussions. In addition, Bar Hebraeus' *Book of Ascent of the Intellect* (كتاب الصعود إلى الله) was influenced by Tūsī's works on astronomy. However, Bar Hebraeus' special interest in Tūsī's ethical book can be understood from his statements which are found in his *Chronicon* and Arabic work on history:

This year, Nasir al-dīn al-Tūsī is dead. He had a big observatory in Maragha and also, he worked on all kinds of wisdom. He wrote many books on logic, physics, theology, Euclid and Majesty. In his extraordinarily beautiful ethical book in Persian language, he collected all texts of Plato and Aristotle on practical philosophy.<sup>44</sup>

We understand from Bar Hebraeus' statements above that Tūsī for him was a mediatory figure who transferred Greek philosophy to him, as well as being his admired model, like Avicenna.

<sup>42</sup> N. Peter Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 1.

<sup>43</sup> Mauro Zonta, "Structure and Sources of Bar-Hebraeus' "Practical Philosophy" in *The Cream of Science*", *Orientalia Christiana Analecta* 256, ed: Renē Lavenant (Roma: Instituto Orientale, 1998), 284.

<sup>44</sup> Ibn İbrî, *Tārikh al-mukhtasar al-duwal*, 500-501.

In what follows, a comparison is presented between the titles of two books (*The Cream of Wisdom* and *Nasirean Ethics*)<sup>45</sup> is presented. According to Joosse<sup>46</sup> who edited the book of Bar Hebraeus, approximately 60% of ethics and 75% of economics and politics depend on *Nasirean Ethics*. Other parts are quotations from other Arabic-Islamic philosophers, Greek and Syriac scholars.<sup>47</sup>

<p><i>The Cream of Wisdom</i> (Practical Philosophy/ <b>فلسفة عملية</b> <b>فلسفة</b>)</p>	<p><i>Nasirean Ethics</i> (<i>Hikmat-i Amalī</i>, <b>حکمت عملی</b>)</p>
<p><b>1. Ethics (<i>Kthobo d-Itiqon</i>)</b></p>	<p><b>1. Ethics (<i>Tahzīb al-Akhlāq</i>)</b></p>
<p><b>a. Preliminaries</b>                      a.1. The divisions of Philosophy                      a.2. The subject of this science                      a.3. On the superiority of man                      a.4. On human soul can be perfect and detective                      a.5. On the perfection of the human soul                      a.6. On the happiness of men who have reached perfection                      a.7. On the definition and alteration of the character                      a.8. On the superiority of this science  <b>b. On the virtues and vices</b>                      b.1. The human virtues                      b.2. On the species of virtues                      b.3. On the vices of the soul and their species  <b>c. On conjectural virtues</b>                      c.1. Conjectural wisdom                      c.2. Conjectural courage                      c.3. Conjectural temptation</p>	<p><b>a. The principles (<i>Mebādī'</i>)</b>                      a.1. Subject and principles                      a.2. Human soul                      a.3. The faculties of human soul                      a.4. About that man is the noblest being of this world                      a.5. The perfection and defects of the human soul                      a.6. The perfection of the soul                      a.7. The good and happiness  <b>b. The aim and content (<i>Maqāsīd</i>)</b>                      b.1. The definition and fact of the character                      b.2. The correction of character (<i>Tahzīb al-Akhlāq</i>) is the noblest art                      b.3. The enumeration of virtues                      b.4. The species of virtues                      b.5. The enumeration of vices                      b.6. The difference between</p>

<sup>45</sup> See for a comparison of two books: N. Peter Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*; Nasir al-Din al-Tūsī, *Akhlāqī Nasirī*, (Tahran: Intisharat Khawarizmī, 1978); Mauro Zonta, "Structure and Sources of Bar-Hebraeus' "Practical Philosophy" in *The Cream of Science*", 280-283.

<sup>46</sup> Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Zonta, "Structure and Sources of Bar-Hebraeus' "Practical Philosophy" in *The Cream of Science*", 284; Joosse, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 12.

<p>c.4. Conjectural justice  <b>d. Acquisition of virtues and removal of justice</b>  d.1. On the order of virtues  d.2. On the preservation of the health of the soul  d.3. On healing the illnesses of the soul  d.4. On the illnesses of the rational faculty  d.5. On the illnesses of irascible faculty  d.6. About that fear of death is not necessary  d.7. On the illnesses of appetitive faculty</p>	<p>virtues and conjectural virtues  b.7. The nobility of Justice and its divisions  b.8. The acquisition of virtues and the orders of happiness  b.9. The preservation of the health of the soul  b.10. The cure of the illnesses of the soul</p>
<p><b>2. Economics (Kthobo d-Iqonomiqo)</b></p>	<p><b>2. The administration of the house (Tadbîr al-Manâzil)</b></p>
<p><b>a. Preliminaries</b>  a.1. The cause of the need for the house  a.2. The administration of riches  <b>b. How to deal with the members of family</b>  b.1. How to deal with a wife  b.2. How to educate sons  b.3. The administration of servants  <b>c. Physiognomy</b></p>	<p>a. The cause of the need for the house  b. The regulation of property and provisions  c. The administration and treatment of family  d. The administration and treatment of sons  e. The administration of servants and slaves</p>
<p><b>3. Politics (Kthobo d-Polotiḡon)</b></p>	<p><b>3. The administration of cities</b></p>
<p><b>a. Preliminaries</b>  a.1. On the need for politics  a.2. The love by which the political community is connected  a.3. On the divisions of political societies  <b>b. On political administration</b>  b.1. On royalty regime  b.2. How a king can preserve his kingdom</p>	<p>a. The need for civilization (<i>tamaddun</i>)  b. The nobility of the love which connects the communities  c. Divisions and conditions of society  d. The politics of royalty  e. The administration of servants and the rules for dealing with kings</p>

b.3. How to deal with kings <b>c. The social behaviours</b> c.1. On true friendship c.2. On choice of friends c.3. On the amity c.4. How to deal with the masses of people	g. How to deal with the different traits of character h. The testament of Plato
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Bar Hebraeus' reliance on Tūsī's work is not only literal. Although he cannot be regarded as an original philosopher in this field, he used his resources cleverly and reconstructed them by giving them a new shape because he was "one of the most excellent compilers of all times", in Joose's opinion.<sup>48</sup> In addition, Barhebraeus' interest in Tūsī is significant because it is understood that he was following actual discussions in his time as well as simultaneously depending on Islamic philosophers.<sup>49</sup>

### 3. BAR HEBRAEUS' INTEREST IN AL-GHAZZĀLĪ

It can be seen from the previous discussions, Bar Hebraeus was greatly influenced by Avicenna's and Tūsī's philosophical works. Yet, it was al-Ghazzālī's works that had more influence on him with respect to morality. This is well demonstrated in Bar Hebraeus' *Itiqon* (إتيقون) and the *The Book of Dove* (كتاب الحمام).

In the introduction of *Itiqon*, Bar Hebraeus divided sciences into two kinds: theoretical and practical. According to him, humans can distinguish between right and wrong through theoretical sciences, but good and evil through practical sciences. Having said that, Bar Hebraeus' aim in *Itiqon* is the explanation of practical sciences. He divided this book into four parts: bodily exercises, the ways of strengthening the body, the ways of soul purification and the ways of soul beautification through virtues.<sup>50</sup> In the context of bodily exercises, Bar Hebraeus dealt with praying, asceticism, sleeping, psalmody-*tasbīhāt*, hymns, fasting, seclusion, solitude and visiting Jerusalem.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Joose, *A Syriac Encyclopaedia of Aristotelian Philosophy*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Zonta, "Structure and Sources of Bar-Hebraeus' "Practical Philosophy" in The Cream of Science", 291

<sup>50</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, edited by Paulus Bedjan (Paris: 1898), 1-2.

<sup>51</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, 2-118.

Al-Ghazzālî also divided his *Revival of Religious Sciences (Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn)* into four parts: worship (*ibādāt*), conventions (*'adāt*), destructive evils (*muhlikāt*) and constructive virtues (*munjiyāt*). In the first part, he listed similar titles which Bar Hebraeus listed later. In this part, al-Ghazzālî dealt with knowledge, the rules of faith, purity, praying, amity, fasting, pilgrimage, Qur'an reading, invocation and supplication, the arrangement of prayers and division of the night.<sup>52</sup>

Bar Hebraeus reserved the second part of his *Itiqon* for the arrangement of bodily life which include rules of eating and drinking, marriage, cleaning of clothes, learning and teaching, manual work and amity.<sup>53</sup> Similarly, al-Ghazzālî reserved the second part of his *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* for conventions. He mentioned the following as topics of the section: rules of eating and drinking, rules of marriage, making a living, *halāl* and *harām*, friendship-brotherhood-companionship, rules of seclusion, rules of travelling, rules of music and ecstasy, calling for good and forbidding evil.<sup>54</sup>

The third part of Bar Hebraeus' book examines ways of protecting the soul from evils which spoil the soul such as gluttony, desire, defects of tongue, anger, hatred and envy, love of wealth, selfishness, pride and vanity.<sup>55</sup> Al-Ghazzālî's third part is concerned with destructive evils. These involve illnesses of the heart and the importance of avoiding them such as the two passions (gluttony and lust), defects of tongue, anger, hatred and envy, love of wealth and greed, hypocrisy, vanity and selfishness.<sup>56</sup>

Bar Hebraeus reserved the final part of *Itiqon* for virtues that embellish the soul. According to him, it is possible to clean the human soul through the following virtues: knowledge, advice, faith, repentance, patience, thanksgiving, hope, poverty, abstinence, reliance upon God, brotherhood, remembrance of God and pondering His art of creation, cleansing bad things from mind, love of God and remembrance of Death.<sup>57</sup> Al-Ghazzālî similarly reserved *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*' last part for constructive virtues. According to him, the things that bring salvation to humans are these: repentance, patience, thanksgiving, fear and hope, the unity of God

<sup>52</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* (Beirut: Daru al-Marifa, undated), 1: 125-361.

<sup>53</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, 121-202.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*, 2:2-387.

<sup>55</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, 203-314.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*, 3:79-326.

<sup>57</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, 285-406.

and reliance upon Him, poverty and abstinence, love and longing, intention-truthfulness and sincerity, self-examination, meditation and remembrance of death.<sup>58</sup>

The table below clearly illustrates the comparison between *Itiqon* and *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*:

<b>Itiqon</b>	<b>Ihyā 'ulūm al- dīn</b>
<b>1. Bodily Exercise</b>	<b>1. Worship (Ibādāt)</b>
Praying, Asceticism, Sleeping, Psalmody- <i>Tasbīhat</i> , Hymns, Fasting, Seclusion, solitude, Visiting Jerusalem.	Knowledge, The Rules of Faith, Purity, Praying, Amity, Fasting, Pilgrimage, Qur'an Reading, Invocation and Supplication, The Arrangement of Prayers, Division of the Night.
<b>2. The Arrangement of Bodily Life</b>	<b>2. Conventions ('adāt)</b>
Rules of Eating and Drinking, Marriage, Cleaning of Clothes, Learning and Teaching, Manual Work, Amity.	Eating and Drinking, Rules of Marriage, making a Living, <i>Halāl</i> and <i>Harām</i> , Friendship-Brotherhood-Companionship, Rules of Seclusion, Rules of Travelling, Rules of Music and Ecstasy, Calling for Good and Forbidding Evil.
<b>3. The Things Which Pollute Soul</b>	<b>3. Destructive Evils (muhlikāt)</b>
Cupidity, Desire, Defects of Tongue, Anger-Hatred and Envy, Love of Wealth, Self-Conceit and Pride and Vanity.	Harms of greed, Harms of Tongue, Harms of Anger, hatred and Envy, Evils of the world, Evils of wealth and miserliness, Evils of Power and show, Evils of Pride and Self-praise, Evils of Erroneous Beliefs.
<b>4. The Virtues Which Embellish Soul</b>	<b>4. Constructive Virtues (munjiyāt)</b>
Knowledge, Advice, Faith, Repentance, Steadfastness, Thanksgiving, Hope, Poverty, Abstinence, Reliance Upon God,	Repentance, Steadfastness, Thanksgiving, Fear and Hope, The Unity of God and Reliance upon Him, Poverty and Abstinence, Love and Longing, Inten-

<sup>58</sup> Al-Ghazzālī, *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*, 4:2-448.



Brotherhood, Remembrance of God and Pondering His Art of Creation, Cleansing Bad Things from Mind, Love of God and Remembrance of Death.	tion-Truthfulness and Sincerity, Self-Examination, Meditation and Remembrance of Death.
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As is illustrated, there is a similarity between Bar Hebraeus' and al-Ghazzālî's works in terms of structure. Although topics are examined under different titles, it is clear that Bar Hebraeus took al-Ghazzālî's *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* as a model not only in structure and titles, but also in content. In this regard, it is possible to compare almost every title of the two books. Although some researchers have worked on identifying comparisons between the two works under discussion, it is helpful to add a new comparison. When al-Ghazzālî and Bar Hebraeus talked about "reading of the holy book", both agreed that crying is an important manner of reading the holy book. According to Bar Hebraeus, reverence and crying are necessary for reading psalms. When this passage is compared to *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* corresponding passage below, we find a surprising similarity.

Bar Hebraeus	Al-Ghazzālî
<p>Holy fathers have consensus about the necessity of reverence and crying when reading psalms. And they said that: someone who is obdurate and cannot cry must soften their heart and blame themselves by remembering and counting their sins, and imagining the pains which await bad people.</p> <p>An ascetic said that: In my dream, I saw myself reading psalms in front of the Psalmist (David). He told me: I am shocked how you learn reading without crying? Did not you hear my saying that 'I go to my bed every night and wash my blanket by my tears'.<sup>59</sup></p>	<p>Crying while reading is a good deed. The prophet of God said that: 'Cry when you read Qur'an. If you do not cry, try to cry'....Salih al-Merra said that: 'I saw myself in my dream when I read Qur'an to the prophet of God. He told me: 'O Salih! that is reading but where is crying?'.<sup>60</sup></p>

<sup>59</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-itiqon*, 50.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*, 1:277.

When Bar Hebraeus took *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* as a model, he imitated the contents but took concepts and figures from Christianity rather than Islam. In other words, many elements of "Islamiyāt" can be found in Bar Hebraeus' thoughts, similarly as elements of "Israiliyāt" are found in Islamic culture. This, can be seen in every part his work. In that case, it can be said that Bar Hebraeus took al-Ghazzālī's *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* as a model for the needs of Syriac society.

Additionally, the *Book of Dove* which was written on morality by Bar Hebraeus is a summary of *Itiqon*. In this book, he dealt with bodily exercise, spiritual life and the ways of cleansing the soul from evils.<sup>61</sup> The last part of this book is significant in the context of this paper. That is because, Bar Hebraeus talks about his biography and study of finding the truth. It can be understood that he was influenced by al-Ghazzālī's *al-Munqiz min al-dalāl* in his search for truth. Both thinkers started their works as follows:

Bar Hebraeus	Al-Ghazzālī
I have cared to understand holy books and learn mysteries in Saint's books by a natural light beside a capable master from my childhood as I fell in love of science. <sup>62</sup>	To be thirsty for comprehending the real meaning of things was indeed my habit and wont from my early years. <sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, al-Ghazzālī and Bar Hebraeus implemented "methodological scepticism" in their works. Both discussed values of sensual and rational sciences but eventually they stated that they were liberated from sceptical approaches with the help of God which occurred by a divine light or by divine love. In addition, they underlined that reaching knowledge of truth cannot be proved by evidence<sup>64</sup> and criticised philosophers and theologians who aimed to do that. Bar Hebraeus stated that disagreements between Christian sects are literal rather than about essential matters. Therefore, he did not argue about that. Likewise, al-Ghazzālī stated that Islamic theologians had not got adequate evidence that convince him and generally used evidence of their opponents. Hence, according to al-Ghazzālī, to reach

<sup>61</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-yawno*, edited by Paulus Bedjan (Paris: 1898), 523-576.

<sup>62</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-yawno*, 577.

<sup>63</sup> Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-Munqiz min al-dalāl* (Beirut: Dar Al-Andalūs, 1967), 63.

<sup>64</sup> Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-Munqiz min al-dalāl*, 68; Bar 'Ebroyo, *Mnorath qudsha (Menaret al-aqdās)*, Translated into Arabic by Behnam Jijawi (Aleppo: Dar Al-Mardin, 1996), 23; *ibid.*, *Kthobo d-yawno*, 53.

truth is not possible by argument and evidence. Their opinions about theology are compared in the table below:

Bar Hebraeus	Al-Ghazzālî
When I finished my twentieth year, the patriarch of that time asked me to be head of church. At the time, I was thinking to argue and discuss against beliefs which are both internal and external. I eventually reached this conclusion: The arguments of Christians to each other are literal and only discussions not about meanings, because all Christians believe that Christ is exactly God and also exactly a human, without an integration or mixing. Some of them see that as a natural integration whereas others see that as essential and named it hypostasis (eqānim). When I saw the unity of Christians in belief I left the sectarian argument with them and filled my heart with love by eradicating hate from it. <sup>65</sup>	Firstly, I started with theology (kalām). I excelled in it. I comprehended its essence. I examined the books of the experts of this science. And I wrote books on matters which I want. Finally, I saw that this science is not adequate for this aim. Thus, theology did not convince me and did not heal my disease which I complaint about. <sup>66</sup>

Both writers were not convinced by principles of theology and hence resorted to philosophy to find truth. But both writers stated that in their journey of finding truth, philosophy is insufficient and only increased their doubts. Philosophy was criticised by both thinkers because it gave superiority to reason with regard to knowledge of truth. But according to them, the reason alone is not adequate for knowledge of truth. Their opinions are compared in the following passages:

<sup>65</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-yawno*, 577-578.

<sup>66</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Al-Munqiz min al-dalāl*, 71-72.

Bar Hebraeus	Al-Ghazzālī
<p>Then I moved to learn Greek wisdom namely literature, physics, metaphysics, mathematics, geometry and astronomy because life is short and there are many things to learn. Thus, I took care of learning about all sciences. After I learnt that, my case was as someone's case who confined in the middle of sea and to avoid drowning, he randomly extended his hands to everything which came front of him. There was neither internal nor external science that convinced me and in that case, I was gradually going to perish. I am not happy to explain about what I lived and experienced at length in here.<sup>67</sup></p>	<p>I started to learn philosophy after I finished theology. I understood that rejecting one science without knowing and comprehending its essence exactly is similar to shooting a bullet to darkness. Thus, I devoted myself to learn it and I examined the book written in that field until I did not need a teacher's help. I studied that when I had a break time from religious sciences. Then I was teaching three hundred students in Baghdad that God gave me an insight into the farthest reaches of that science in less than two years through mere reading in those free moments. After I understood that science exactly, I constantly thought, repeated and comprehended it. I eventually became so familiar about its tricks and its reality and its delusions without any doubt. After I finished philosophy, learning and teaching it, criticising what must be criticised, I understood that it is not adequate exactly for the aim. Mind solely cannot comprehend all subjects and principles and cannot remove ambiguity from complex issues.<sup>68</sup></p>

Though al-Ghazzālī and Bar Hebraeus did not find truth in theology and philosophy, they discovered mysticism as a result of their investigations. Their books, which were on Aristotelian philosophy, cannot change that result which was reached because of methodological scepticism. But considering their interest in philosophical sciences, it can be said that their searches resulted in philosophical mysticism.<sup>69</sup> Consequently, both thinkers found knowledge of truth in mystical experience. According to them, truth cannot be gained solely by thought. Therefore, it is necessary to stay away from all material things, to set heart to immaterial and high truths through

<sup>67</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-yawno*, 578.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-Munqiz min al-dalāl*, 74.

<sup>69</sup> Takahashi, *Barhebraeus: a bio-bibliography*, 45.

spiritual exercise and removing the desires of the soul. Mystical experience is gained through living and taste rather than through mind and knowledge. Their opinions about mystical thought are exemplified in these passages:

<b>Bar Hebraeus</b>	<b>Al-Ghazzālî</b>
<p>If God had not strengthened my weak faith and had not led to me the thoughts in the books of scholars like Father Evagrius and others from West and East, I would have perished and despaired spiritually but not physically. I read these books for seven years, I left other kinds of knowledge which I had studied most of them superficially not for my own sake but for the sake of others. At that time, I was faltering in several doubts and even I was falling into disbelief and was shouting: 'How these ascetics sound high, their mills turn round but without flour!'. Namely, I was saying that they say vain empty words through sophistry thoughts. And my conscience sometimes was telling me that: 'Do not be silly! and do not think what you do not know does not exist. I was thrown from side to side with that imbalance until a light, which blinded my eyes, illuminated me. In that time, the cover which is on my eyes was removed and I saw.. I saw some things, though partly. I devoted myself to worship to see more and to entirely remove the cover on my eyes. And to see the beloved clearly, not in</p>	<p>When I finished these sciences, I started to investigate the way of Sufis by all my power. I knew that this way is consummated only by knowledge and by activity....Firstly, I began to learn from books of Sufis like Abu Talib al-Makkî's The Food of Hearts (Qūt al-Qulüb) and the books of Harith al-Muhasibî and many handed down from the masters of Sufis like Junayd, Shibli and Abu Yazîd al-Bistamî...And then I understood that the aim which Sufis want to reach is not gained through learning, but through taste, living and changing states and attributes. I reached this result: The only way to obtain after-life happiness is to live in piety and to curb the desires of the soul. The beginning of this activity is to move away from world life and get addicted to the after-life and to stop all interest of the heart in the world. I eventually understood undoubtedly that: Sufis are the ones who hold the way of God. Their work is the best and their ways are the best.<sup>71</sup></p>

the dark. That is possible through love no thought. <sup>70</sup>	
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Our aim in mentioning these long quotations is to reveal the influences of al-Ghazzālī on Bar Hebraeus. Hence, Bar Hebraeus' approach seems to be more an "imitation" than a similarity to al-Ghazzālī. Significant also is the kind of Bar Hebraeus' interest in al-Ghazzālī's works. In this context, it is difficult to say that his interest was solely philosophical, for it seems that Bar Hebraeus' interest in philosophy was peripatetic and he considered Avicenna and Tūsī as the main sources in this field. But his interest in al-Ghazzālī was about mystical life and practicing religious life.

One of his statements in his *Chronicon* on al-Ghazzālī shows that Bar Hebraeus was seeing al-Ghazzālī as a mystical resource.

In this year, Ghazālī, the great scholar of the Muslims (tayyoyē), died... This man reproached the Muslims in his teaching because they cared just about their washing and cleaning of the body and they neglected the purity of heart which is the source of sins. He encouraged asceticism and poverty and gave many examples from the cases of Desert fathers [ascetics], and thus we have mentioned him.<sup>72</sup>

Law is another field where Bar Hebraeus was interested in al-Ghazzālī. Al-Ghazzālī's *al-Vajīz* and *al-Wasīt* influenced Bar Hebraeus' *Book of Directions* (ܩܘܕܫܐܘܬܐܘܬܐܘܬܐ) which was about living a Christian life. According to research about this topic, Bar Hebraeus had realized that the writings of Syriac scholars were not adequate as they did not respond to the needs of Syriac society, particularly in civil law in that time. Thus, he resorted to his Muslim neighbours.<sup>73</sup> In this context, the best choice was Ghazālī who was *shaikh al-Islām* of Islamic world and an authority in Islamic law.

Bar Hebraeus' other work which related to al-Ghazzālī's works is *Treatise of Treatises* (ܩܘܕܫܐܘܬܐܘܬܐܘܬܐ). This work stands out in its similarity to al-Ghazālī's *Maqāsid al-Falāsifa*. Comparing the titles of the topics, its similarity to *Maqāsid* is more obvious than to Avicenna's *Danishnāma-yi*

<sup>71</sup> Al-Ghazzālī, *Al-Munqiz min al-dalāl*, 102, 106.

<sup>70</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-yawno*, 579.

<sup>72</sup> Bar 'Ebroyo, *Kthobo d-mkatbunoto zabno (Chronicon Syriacum)* (Paris: 1890), 276-277.

<sup>73</sup> Takahashi, "The Influence of Al-Ghazzālī on the Juridical, Theological and Philosophical Works of Barhebraeus", 307.

*Alā'i*.<sup>74</sup> But this similarity does not provide evidence for Bar Hebraeus' proximity to al-Ghazzālî in his philosophical approach. Because of that, the aim of al-Ghazzālî in writing this book, according to the book's introduction, is to reveal the opinions of Islamic philosophers according to their approaches without expressing judgement.<sup>75</sup> In other words, the content of *Maqāsid* is more about Avicenna's opinions than al-Ghazzālî's. Thus, Bar Hebraeus' interest in *Maqāsid* is his interest in Avicenna.

Finally, it can be said that Bar Hebraeus was more interested in Ghazālî's works in terms of practical issues and mystical thought especially since the *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn* was about practical issues of a Muslim's daily life and hereby written for the lower classes ('*awām*) like *Kimya as-sa'āda* (*The Alchemy of Happiness*) rather than a sophisticated philosophical work. Bar Hebraeus' interest in Al-Ghazzālî's works which were written for the lower classes over and above his philosophical works like *Mishkāt al-anwār*, *Faisal al-tafrīqa* and *Qistās al-mustaqīm*,<sup>76</sup> might be submitted as evidence for his philosophical interest in Avicenna rather than al-Ghazzālî.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

The interaction between Islamic philosophy and Syriac thought should not be a one directional study. Syriac thinkers and translators played a great role in transforming Greek philosophy to Islamic world between the II/VIII<sup>th</sup> and the V/XI<sup>th</sup> centuries. After this century, the direction of this impact reversed because great Muslim philosophers had emerged and started to influence other cultures including that of the Syriac Christians. Islamic philosophy's influence continued until the VII/XIII<sup>th</sup> century, during the period of the Il-Khanate, in which Bar Hebraeus lived. Before spreading to Europe, Islamic philosophy offered a rich and significant resource to neighbouring non-Muslim communities and cultures. In this context, benefitting from the dominance of Islamic philosophy, Bar Hebraeus promoted the emergence and development of Syriac thought in language, sciences and philosophy. That inheritance and borrowing by Bar Hebraeus from Islamic philosophy, further fulfilled the potential of Syriac

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<sup>74</sup> For a comparison of aforementioned three books see: Takahashi, "The Influence of Al-Ghazzālî on the Juridical, Theological and Philosophical Works of Barhebraeus", 318-319.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Ghazzālî, *Maqāsid al-Falāsifa*, edited by Solayman Donya (Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1961), 31-32.

<sup>76</sup> Gürbüz Deniz, "Gazālî'yi Anlamanın Usûlü", *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 47, issue.3 (2011): 11.

thought. Thus, he was not only influenced by Islamic philosophy, but also adapted it according to the needs of his community and time.

The best way to define Bar Hebraeus is that of being a collector. He might be one of the best-known collectors of all time, yet his collection was not just a basic borrowing from Arabic to Syriac. It can be said that he selectively approached Islamic philosophy. In other words, he chose what was in keeping with his Orthodox-Christian background and ignored what was not. Hence, adaptation and interpretation marks out Bar Hebraeus; His was not just a passive role of 'inheriting Islamic philosophy' but active in that he applied it to the context of his communities.

It is understood that Bar Hebraeus' biggest dream was to compile a huge philosophical encyclopaedia in Syriac language. Thus, he certainly had to resort to Greek philosophy. He chose an indirect way to do this although he could have chosen direct way for achieve that aim. The reason of this decision might be that Islamic philosophy was closer to Syriac thought more than Greek philosophy. Anyway, he chose Avicenna who was the most important philosopher in the Islamic world as a model of his philosophical works because Avicenna had compiled great encyclopaedic work (*Al-Shifā*), on Greek especially Aristotelian philosophy. At that time, Avicenna influenced not only Bar Hebraeus but also a large number of Muslim, Syriac and Jewish thinkers, poets and philosophers like Bar Ma'danī (Syriac), Nasir al-Dīn Tūsī (Muslim) and Ibn Kammuna (Jewish). As a result, he influenced by Avicenna's works and his followers like other his contemporaries.

However, Bar Hebraeus' interest in al-Ghazzālī was very different from Avicenna. Bar Hebraeus' personality was apparently one of a religious and mystical thinker rather than a philosopher. Thus, he wanted to compose a religious work in Syriac like al-Ghazālī's *Ihyā' al-'ulūm al-dīn*. In addition, Bar Hebraeus impressed al-Ghazzālī's biography in his search for truth. al-Ghazzālī was also a model for Bar Hebraeus in composition of a mystical and religious work for Syriac religious people. In other words, al-Ghazzālī was not a philosophical model for Bar Hebraeus because he was interested in al-Ghazzālī's non-philosophical works.

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