

“Technology and Applied Sciences”), Volume 4 (*Science and Technology in Islam*) has been the result of the efforts of some of the most respected historians and philosophers of Islamic science and presents fruits of life-long reflections and research. Contributions by George Saliba, Ahmad Y. al-Hasan, Roshdi Rashed, Julio Samsó, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, and Donald R. Hill, among others, make these two volumes (consisting of 1250 pages) one of the most important secondary works now available to general readers.

These volumes need the largest circulation possible, especially in the Muslim world, where most books published in the West remain out of reach for interested readers due to their prohibitive price. UNESCO’s website for the project indicates the preparation of electronic versions of these volumes. This is an excellent decision, especially if they are made available at no or a minimum cost.

Taken together, the three volumes already published fulfill the aim of the project. Their planned translations into French and Arabic will make them more widely accessible. The project does not envision translations in other languages, but perhaps UNESCO can establish a mechanism with the help of regional publishers or private organizations interested in local editions and produce translations of these volumes into various Islamic languages. Readers of these volumes will eagerly wait for the rest.



Muhammad Ali Khalidi (ed.): *Medieval Islamic Philosophical Writings*

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The aim of this anthology is to provide “a representative sample of the Arabic-Islamic philosophical tradition in a manner that is accessible to beginning students of philosophy, as well as to more seasoned philosophers with little or no exposure to this tradition” (xii). As such, the main challenge of the editor was of selection procedures; Khalidi chose to include “extracts from longer philosophical works rather than entire texts or a large number of brief passages from a variety of text” (xii). The result is an admirable volume containing five selections from five most influential authors: al-Fārābī (*ca.* 878-950), Ibn Sīnā (980-1037), al-Ghazālī (1058-1111), Ibn Ṭufayl (*ca.* 1109-1186), and Ibn Rushd (1126-1198).

The selection immediately raises a question, preemptively answered

by the editor: why end with Ibn Rushd to perpetuate the false notion that Islamic philosophy died with him? Khalidi's answer is problematic, as it complicates the idea: "Despite the survival of philosophical activity of some kind in the Islamic world, I would argue that a 'style of reasoning' did indeed decline after Ibn Rushd, one that is seamlessly connected with natural science, a logic-based, Greek-influenced, and rationalist enterprise" (xii); one has only to go to Qum and sit in one of the lessons of an Ayatullah Jawadi or any other master of philosophy to arrive at a different conclusion. This, however, does not seriously detract from the merits of the book, which attempts to achieve a certain degree of thematic unity by focusing broadly on metaphysics and epistemology rather than on ethics and political philosophy.

In his introduction Khalidi provides brief biographical information about the five authors as well as the selected works. As general information about the authors is readily available elsewhere, his introductory remarks are kept to a bare minimum, saving space for introducing the selected texts. All but one of the five texts have been previously translated, though Khalidi has translated them afresh from published Arabic editions.

Al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Hurūf* (*The Book of Letters*) had never before been translated into English; Khalidi has chosen to include its middle section. This section represents a fundamental break from the first and last sections, in that here al-Fārābī gives a sequential account of the origin of language and the emergence of various disciplines (in the first and last sections of his book he is concerned instead with the meaning of philosophical terms).

In choosing a part from *On the Soul*, from Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Najāt* (*The Book of Salvation*), which is a condensed version of his magnum opus *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (*The Book of Healing*), Khalidi omitted the first three chapters. These concern, respectively, the vegetative soul, the animal soul, and the internal senses of the soul, and he thus begins his selection with the chapter on the human rational soul. The choice is most appropriate for the book, for here Ibn Sīnā (as well as numerous other Muslims influenced by Aristotle) are at their best in their efforts to reconcile Aristotle's account with Islamic teachings. Ibn Sīnā's concept of soul rests on his dualist account in which souls can achieve different grades depending on the degree to which its potential has been actualized.

Perhaps no editor of an anthology of this kind can resist selecting a portion from al-Ghazālī's autobiographical masterpiece, *al-Munqidh min*

al-Dalāl wal-Mūṣil ilā dhil-Izzah wal-Jalāl. Khalidi includes an intriguing portion of this book—the section where al-Ghazālī demonstrates in three distinct ways that prophecy is a genuine phenomenon which surpasses reason. He first offers a rational demonstration that nonrational apprehension is possible; secondly, he shows how prophecy can be affirmed through direct, albeit restricted, awareness of the mystical state; and, finally, al-Ghazālī shows how prophecy can be established through trust in testimony and second-hand corroboration, which he interestingly terms *īmān* (faith).

Like al-Ghazālī's *al-Munqidh*, Ibn Ṭufayl's *Ḥayy bin Yaqzān* (*Alive, Son of Awake*) is a compelling choice. Relying on Albert Naṣrī Nādir's 1993 edition, Khalidi has retranslated over three quarters of the book, omitting the extensive introductory section and the concluding epilogue.

The fifth and the last selection is from Ibn Rushd's famous response to al-Ghazālī's *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*). Ibn Rushd's response can be read as a debate between the two philosophers, though Ibn Rushd always has the last word. This aspect of the work, however, is not as overwhelming as it might be, since al-Ghazālī had the foresight of including future objections to his arguments in his own work. The excerpted section regards the seventeenth issue of twenty and deals with the nature of causation. This is perhaps the most important section of the book, since it deals with the respective positions of the two writers on causation and miracles and leads to the last four sections, which discuss the natural sciences.

Overall, the book is an excellent introduction to the intricate and involved world of medieval Islamic learning—an enriching experience for both general readers and advanced students.

Muzaffar Iqbal
Center for Islam and Science,
Sherwood Park, AB
Canada



Gad Freudenthal: *Science in the Medieval Hebrew and Arabic Traditions*

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