Al-Āmidī's Reception of Ibn Sīnā: Reading *Al-Nūr al-Bāhir fī al-Ḥikam al-Zawāhir*

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I. Introduction

In his classic essay published in 1951, Ignaz Goldziher made a strong case for the negative attitude of orthodox Muslim scholars towards the so-called ancient sciences (*ʿulūm al-awāʾil*), which include philosophy and logic, citing among others the al-Āmidī affair as a case in point.[1] Goldziher's conclusion and the assumptions upon which it is based have been called into question recently by Sonja Brentjes and Dimitri Gutas.[2] It is argued that in fact one may refer to the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries as the 'golden age' of Islamic philosophy.[3]

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[1] I. Goldziher, 'Die Stellung der alten islamischen Orthodoxie zu den antiken Wissenschaften', in *Abhandlungen der Königlich Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften*, Jahrgang 1915, Phil.-hist. Klasse, 8 (Berlin, 1916), pp. 3–46 (repr. in Goldziher, *Gesammelte Schriften*, 6 vols (Hildesheim, 1967–73), v, 357–406, and Goldziher, 'The Attitude of Orthodox Islam toward the Ancient Sciences', in *Studies in Islam*, trans. by M. L. Swartz (Oxford, 1981), pp. 185–215).

[2] See S. Brentjes, 'Orthodoxy, Ancient Sciences, Power, and the Madrasa ('College') in Ayyubid and Early Mamluk Damascus' (paper presented to the International Workshop on Experience and Knowledge Structures in Arabic and Latin Sciences, Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin, 16–17 December 1996), pp. 17–33 (preprint p. 77); D. Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbāsid Society (2nd–4th/8th–10th Centuries)* (London, 1998), pp. 166–75; cf. M. Chamberlain, *Knowledge and Social Practice in Medieval Damascus, 1190–1350* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 83–84.

[3] D. Gutas, 'The Heritage of Avicenna: The Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy, 1000–ca. 1350', in *Avicenna and his Heritage*, ed. by J. Janssens and D. De Smet (Leuven, 2002), pp. 81–97.

For it was during this period that the ancient sciences flourished and Ibn Sīnā's legacy gained momentum, giving rise to a torrent of intellectual exchange and discussion, and a corresponding literary output.[4] Among those who took part in this intense philosophical activity, al-Āmidī is too outstanding a figure to ignore. His philosophical writings represent a significant episode in the reception of Ibn Sīnā's thought among later Muslim philosophers and theologians. In what follows I shall present a small study on al-Āmidī and his work, with special attention to his *Kitāb al-Nūr al-Bāhir fī al-Ḥikam al-Zawāhir* and its relation to Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, offering a detailed conspectus of *Kitāb al-Bāhir* as well as analysis of its contents and textual collation in order to illustrate the manner in which al-Āmidī exhibits the influence of Ibn Sīnā.

Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī,[5] whose full name was Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Abī ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn Sālim ibn Muḥammad al-Āmidī at-Taghlibī, or alternatively

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[4] On this see D. Gutas, 'Aspects of Literary Form and Genre in Arabic Logical Works', in *Glosses and Commentaries on Aristotelian Logical Texts: The Syriac, Arabic, and Medieval Latin Traditions*, ed. by C. Burnett, Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 23 (London, 1993), pp. 60–62.

[5] Here, only a summary of al-Āmidī's life and work is given, based on the following sources: al-Qifṭī (d. 646/1248), *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamāʾ*, ed. by J. Lippert (Leipzig, 1903), pp. 240–41 (= *Ikhbār al-ʿUlamāʾ bi Akhbār al-Ḥukamāʾ* (Cairo, 1326)); Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī (d. 654/1256), *Mirʾāt al-Zamān*, 8 vols (Hyderabad, 1951), VIII, 691; Abū Shāmāh (d. 665/1267), *al-Dhayl ʿalā al-Rauḍatayn*, ed. by M. Z. al-Kawtharī (Beirut, 1974), p. 161; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa (d. 668/1270), *ʿUyūn al-Anbāʾ*, ed. by N. Riḍā (Beirut, 1965), pp. 650–51; Ibn Khallikān (d. 681/1282), *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, ed. by I. ʿAbbās, 7 vols (Beirut, 1970), III, 293–94; Ibn Wāṣil (d. 697/1298), *Mufarrij al-Kurūb*, ed. by Ḥ. M. Rabīʿ and S. ʿA. ʿĀshir, 5 vols (Cairo, 1977), IV, 78 and 87, and V, 35–41; ʿImād al-Dīn Abū al-Fidāʾ (d. 732/1331), *al-Mukhtaṣar fī Akhbār al-Bashar*, 4 vols (Beirut, [n.d.]), III, 155–56; al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348), *Siyar Aʿlām an-Nubalāʾ*, ed. by B. ʿA. Maʿrūf and M. H. al-Sarḥān, 23 vols (Beirut, 1985), XXII, 364–67; al-Dhahabī, *Tārikh al-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa l-Aʿlām: Ḥawādith wa Wafayāt 631–640 A.H.*, ed. by ʿU. ʿA. al-S. Tadmurī (Beirut, 1988), pp. 74–76; al-ʿUmarī (d. 749/1348), *Masālik al-Abṣār*, facsimile ed. by F. Sezgin, 27 vols (Frankfurt a.M., 1988), IX, 95–96; al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363), *al-Wāfī bi-l-Wafayāt*, ed. by M. al-Ḥujayrī, 29 vols (Wiesbaden, 1988) (= *Bibliotheca Islamica*, 6.21), XXI, 340–46; al-Yāfiʿī (d. 768/1367), *Mirʾāt al-Jinān*, 4 vols (Beirut, 1970), IV, 73–75; Tāj al-Dīn as-Subkī (d. 771/1370), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿiyya al-Kubrā*, ed. by M. M. at-Tanāḥī and ʿA. al-F. M. al-Ḥulw, 10 vols (Cairo, 1971), VIII, 306–07; al-Isnawī (d. 772/1370), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʾiyya*, ed. by ʿA. A. al-Jabūrī, 2 vols (Baghdad, 1390; repr. Beirut, 1987), I, 73; Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1372), *al-Bidāya wa al-Nihāya*, 14 vols (Beirut/Riyadh, 1966), XIII, 140–41; Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah (d. 851/1448), *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīya*, ed. by ʿA. al-ʿA. Khān, 4 vols (Hyderabad, 1979), II, 99–101; Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 852/1448), *Lisān al-Mīzān*, 7 vols (Hyderabad, 1912; repr. Beirut, 1971), III, 134–35; Ibn Taghrībirdī (d. 874/1470), *al-Nujūm al-Zāhira*, 12 vols (Cairo, [n.d.]),

al-Thaʿlabī,[6] was born in 551/1156.[7] in Āmid, a small town in eastern Anatolia known in ancient times as Amida and now called Diyār Bakır, Turkey.**[8]** At the age fourteen, after having received his early education, he left his hometown for Baghdad in order to study law under the Ḥanbalite Ibn al-Mannī (d. 583/1187)[9]

VI, 285; al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), *Ḥusn al-Muḥāḍara*, ed. by M. A. al-F. Ibrāhīm, 2 vols (Cairo, 1967), I, 541; al-Nuʿaymī (d. 927/1520), *al-Dāris fī Tārikh al-Madāris*, ed. by J. al-Ḥasanī, 2 vols (Damascus, 1948), I, 393; Tashköprüzādeh (d. 968/1561), *Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda wa Misbāḥ al-Siyāda*, ed. by K. K. Bakrī and ʿA. al-W. Abū al-Nūr, 4 vols (Cairo, [n.d.]), II, 179–81; Ibn al-ʿImād (d. 1089/1678), *Shadharāt al-Dhahab*, 8 vols (Cairo, 1351), V, 144–45. Recent biographical studies include: D. Sourdel, 'Āmidī', in the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn (Leiden, 1960); Brentjes, 'Orthodoxy', pp. 17–33; Ḥasan Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Āmidī wa Ārāʾuhu al-Kalāmiyya* (Cairo, 1998), pp. 27–105; A. M. al-Mahdī, 'Ḥayāt al-Āmidī', introduction to his edition of the *Abkār al-Afkār fī Uṣūl al-Dīn li al-Imām Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī*, 5 vols (Cairo, 2002), I, 15–28.

   [6] The sources are in disagreement with regard to the correct spelling of al-Āmidī's surname. Historians such as Abū al-Fidāʾ, al-Yāfiʿī, al-Subkī, Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn Qāḍī Shuhbah read 'al-Thaʿlabī' instead of the more likely 'al-Taghlibī.' However, they are unanimous that in any case the surname refers to a certain Arab tribe, although it does not necessarily imply that he was of Arab descent, as it could merely suggest that his ancestor was a client or protégé of an Arab master, as was common at the time. Both readings are therefore acceptable since the tribe of Thaʿlab derives from that of Taghlib. See al-Samʿānī (d. 562/1166), *al-Ansāb*, ed. by ʿA. al-R. ibn Yaḥyā, 6 vols (Hyderabad, 1963), III, 57 and III, 133–36; cf. Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Lubāb fī Tahdhīb al-Ansāb*, 3 vols (Cairo, 1357), I, 177 and I, 193–95.

   [7] While the great outlines and all the important events of his life are known, chroniclers differ as to some details and dates. Ibn Khallikān and al-Ṣafadī, who were al-Āmidī's students, assign the year 551 AH as the birth date of al-Āmidī. Others like al-Qifṭī (*Tārīkh*, p. 161) places it sometime after 550, whereas al-Dhahabī (*Siyar*, XXII, 364) says it could be between 553 and 559 (*nayf*).

   [8] On Āmid see Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī (d. 626/1229), *Muʿjam al-Buldān*, 5 vols (Beirut, 1955), I, 56; al-Maqdisī, *Aḥsan al-Taqāsīm fī Maʿrifat al-Aqālīm*, ed. by M. J. de Goeje, 2nd impr. (Leiden, 1906), p. 140; Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Baghdādī, *Marāṣid al-Iṭṭilāʿ fī Asmāʾ al-Amkinah wa al-Biqāʿ*, ed. by ʿA. al-Bajāwī, 3 vols (Cairo, 1954), I, 6.

   [9] He is Abū al-Fatḥ Naṣr ibn Fityān ibn Muṭahhar al-Nahrawānī, a renowned legal scholar of Iraq (*Faqīh al-ʿIrāq*), leader of the Ḥanbalites (*Shaykh al-Ḥanābilah*) of the period, and a teaching professor (*shaykh*) at the Madrasah al-Maʾmūniyya of Baghdad. According to al-Dhahabī, however, his full name was Sayf al-Dīn Abu al-Muẓaffar Muḥammad ibn Muqbil ibn Fityān ibn Maṭar al-Nahrawānī ibn al-Mannī al-Ḥanbalī; he was born in 567 AH and died in 649. See *Siyar*, XXIII, 252; cf. al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī*, V, 52–53; Ibn Rajab (d. 795/1393), *Dhayl Ṭabaqāt al-Ḥanābila*, II, 248; Ibn Taghrībirdī, *al-Nujūm*, VII, 24; Ibn al-ʿImād, *Shadharāt*, V, 246. Among al-Āmidī's fellow students under Ibn al-Mannī was the celebrated Ḥanbalite jurist Ibn Qudāmah (d. 622/1223).

as well as under the prominent Shāfiʿite jurist Ibn Faḍlān (d. 595/1198).[10] It was during his stay in this metropolis that al-Āmidī's interest broadened. Thus, apart from rigorous legal training, he managed to study philosophy and logic, allegedly under some Christian and Jewish scholars. In 582/1186 he moved to Aleppo, where he reportedly met the famous Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl (d. 587/1191).[11] But a year later he left that city for Cairo, where he was to spend the next twenty years of his life. Al-Āmidī soon rose to prominence, apparently due to his academic excellence and his breadth of knowledge. But his fame and success had caused him some trouble too. A number of scholars, most likely out of envy, accused him of heresy (*fasād al-ʿaqīdah*) and intellectual corruption (*inḥilāl al-ṭawiyyah*), of upholding the doctrine of *taʿṭīl* (denying God's attributes), and of subscribing to the doctrines of philosophers and ancient sages.[12] They signed a petition (*maḥḍar*), demanding that al-Āmidī be sentenced to death. Even though he was eventually declared 'clean', the accusations ruled out as being unfounded, al-Āmidī, fearing for his life, fled to Ḥamāh, Syria. In response to the charge levelled against him, he is said to have quoted the following verse:[13]

حسدوا الفتى إذ لم ينالوا سعيه   ﴾   فالقوم أعداء له وخصوم[14]

(Unable to compete with him, they envied the young man, | And so have the folk turned against him, hostile as enemies.)

In Ḥamāh, al-Āmidī placed himself at the service of al-Malik al-Manṣūr (r. 587–617/1191–1221), who had a madrasa built for him, where he was to teach for the next four years. The governor also stipulated for al-Āmidī a considerable allowance (*jāmikiyyah*) and had a regular audience with him.[15] Upon al-Manṣūr's death, al-Āmidī was summoned to Damascus by al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam (r. 615–24/1218–27)

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[10] He is Jamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Qāsim Yaḥyā ibn al-Faḍl Ibn Faḍlān, a prominent Shāfiʿite leader of his day. We are told that among al-Āmidī's classmates under Ibn Faḍlān was ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Baghdādī (d. 629/1231).

[11] See al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt*, XXI, 341.

[12] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, III, 293.

[13] Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-Aʿyān*, III, 294; al-Isnawī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Shāfiʿīya*, I, 138; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāya wa l-Nihāya*, XIII, 141.

[14] According to Ḥasan al-Shāfiʿī (in *al-Āmidī wa Ārāʾuhu*, p. 39 n. 2), the verse arguably belongs to Abū al-Aswad al-Duʾalī (d. 69/688), cited in his *Dīwān*, ed. ʿA. al-K. al-Dujaylī (Baghdad, 1954), pp. 232 and 253.

[15] See Ibn Wāṣil, *Mufarrij al-Kurūb*, IV, 78. For the context in which the term *jāmikiyya* was used, see Abū Shāmah, *al-Dhayl*, p. 236.

who appointed him to the chair of the Madrasah al-ʿAzīziyyah. Al-Āmidī's career and fortunes came to an end two years later. The new ruler of Damascus, al-Malik al-Ashraf (r. 626–34/1229–37), who took over the city from al-Malik al-Muʿaẓẓam, soon issued a decree banning the study and teaching of kalam, philosophy, and logic. Not long thereafter al-Āmidī was dismissed from his post, to be confined in his house for the rest of his life. Al-Āmidī breathed his last on Tuesday, the third day of Ṣafar 631/8 November 1233, at the age of eighty and was buried at Mount Qāsiyūn, not far from Damascus.[16]

II. Survey of al-Āmidī's Philosophical and Theological Works

Although he was first and foremost a jurist, the voluminous and influential writings al-Āmidī left to posterity undeniably testify to his authority in other fields as well. He wrote over a dozen books on a wide range of subjects, from law and theology to logic and philosophy. It is unfortunate, however, that of some twenty-five works of his, only less than a half appear to survive, while the rest seem to be lost or known only by name.[17] What follows is a brief description of his extant theological and philosophical works.

1. Subtle Truths on Wisdom (Daqāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq fī al-Ḥikma)

This is one of al-Āmidī's early works on Peripatetic philosophy. Its subtitle is given variously by different authors: fī al-Ḥikma (as in Ibn Kathīr and Ḥājjī Khālīfah); fī ʿIlm al-Awāʾil (as in al-Qifṭī and Tashköprüzādeh); fī al-Manṭiq (as in Brockelmann). Taking into account the fact that al-Āmidī entered the most productive period of his life during his sojourn in Egypt, I am inclined to date the work sometime before 612/ 1215. The authenticity of this work is corroborated both by

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[16] Al-Ṣafadī, al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt, XXI, 345.

[17] For a list of al-Āmidī's works, see Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, ʿUyūn al-Anbāʾ, p. 651; al-Ṣafadī, al-Wāfī bi al-Wafayāt, XXI, 345–46; Tashköprüzādeh, Miftāḥ al-Saʿāda, II, 180; Ḥājjī Khalīfah (Kātib Celebī), Kashf al-Ẓunūn ʿan Asāmī al-Kutub wa l-Funūn, 2 vols (Istanbul, 1941), I, 17 and 758; Ismāʿīl Pāshā al-Baghdādī, Īḍāḥ al-Maknūn fī al-Dhayl ʿalā Kashf al-Ẓunūn, 2 vols (Istanbul, 1945), II, 137 and 327; al-Baghdādī, Hadiyyat al-ʿĀrifīn, Asmāʾ al-Muʾallifīn wa Āthār al-Muṣannifīn, 2 vols (Istanbul, 1951–55), I, 707; ʿUmar Riḍā Kaḥḥālah, Muʿjam al-Muʾallifīn, 15 vols (Damascus, 1961), VII, 155; C. Brockelmann, Geschichte der arabischen Literatur, 2 vols (Leiden, 1937–42), I, 393, and its Supplements, 3 vols (Leiden, 1943–49), II, 678; Ḥ. M. al-Shāfiʿī, al-Āmidī wa Ārāʾuhu al-Kalāmiyya (Cairo, 1998), pp. 67–103; A. M. al-Mahdī, 'Ḥayāt al-Āmidī', in Abkār al-Afkār fī Uṣūl al-Dīn li al-Imām Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī, ed. by al-Mahdī, 5 vols (Cairo, 2002), I, 30–34.

internal and external evidence. Al-Āmidī often refers to it in other works of his such as the *Abkār al-Afkār*. The Ḥanbalite theologian Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328) also mentions this work, frequently quoting from it *in extenso* whilst criticizing and refuting the *falāsifa* and *mutakallimūn* in his *Darʾ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql*.[18] Although it must have originally comprised several volumes, as mentioned by al-Qifṭī and Ḥājjī Khalīfah, only the first volume of this work appears to be extant, namely the section on logic. The surviving manuscript was once preserved in the library of al-Bārūdī in Beirut (as noted by Brockelmann[19] and ʿĪsā al-Maʿlūf),[20] but later it was removed to Princeton University Library (Garret Collection, MS 42 B). I have not yet had the opportunity to study this work, so I cannot offer here a detailed comparison with other works of al-Āmidī.

2. *Splendid Light on Bright Wisdom* (*al-Nūr al-Bāhir fī al-Ḥikam al-Zawāhir*)

Modelled on Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, this encyclopedic work on logic, physics, and metaphysics may be considered as al-Āmidī's *magnum opus*, a clear testimony to his mastery and erudition in the field of philosophy. Its authorship is attested by al-Āmidī's students such as al-Qifṭī and al-Ṣafadī. But Ḥājjī Khalīfah gives a different subtitle, namely *fī ʿIlm al-Awāʾil wa al-Awākhir*. Unfortunately it survives only in part in a unique manuscript that has yet to be edited. According to Fuat Sezgin, the surviving portion of it was copied in 592/1196 and was discovered among the collection of the Ismāʿīl Sāʾib Library (MS 4830) in Istanbul. However, following its transfer to the library of Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi, University of Ankara, where it is now housed, only four out of five volumes were found (MSS 631 (vol. I), 2866 (vol. II), 4624 (vol. III), and 4830 (vol. V)), while the fourth part is still missing. The extant portion has been recently published in facsimile by the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, University of Frankfurt (ser. C, vol. LXVII, 2001). It is this work that we shall be looking at in greater detail below.

3. *Unveiling the Distortions* (*Kashf al-Tamwīhāt*)

As indicated by its subtitle, *Sharh al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, this is a refutation of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's critical commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa*

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[18] Ibn Taymiyya, *Darʾ Taʿāruḍ al-ʿAql wa al-Naql,* ed. by M. R. Sālim, 11 vols (Riyadh, 1979–83). References to al-Āmidī's works are listed in the index (XI, 71–72).

[19] C. Brockelmann, *Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, I, 393, and *Supplements*, III, 678.

[20] See ʿĪsā al-Maʿlūf, 'Khazāʾin al-kutub al-ʾarabiyya: min nafāʾis al-khizāna al Bārūdiyya al-Kurbrā fī Bayrūt', *Majallat al-Majmaʿ al-ʿIlmī* (Damascus), 5 (1925–26), 133–35.

l-Tanbīhāt. It was composed sometime before 617/1220, during al-Āmidi's sojourn in Ḥamāh since, according to Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, al-Āmidī dedicated his work to the ruler of Ḥamāh, al-Manṣūr ibn Taqī al-Dīn. Despite its importance, this special work has yet to attract the attention it deserves from scholars, past and present, and still awaits critical edition and study. It is preserved in the British Library (London, MS Or. 8253), as well as in the Staatsbibliothek (Berlin, MS Pm. (Petermann) 596 = no. 5048 in Ahlwardt's Catalogue).

4. *First-Born Thoughts on the Principles of Religion* (*Abkār al-Afkār fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*)

Of all al-Āmidī 's works, this one is perhaps the best known and most frequently cited, especially by later scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah and al-Ījī. It was completed in Cairo sometime in 612/1215, prior to al-Āmidī's departure to Syria. Due the wide reception and profound influence it exerted, this multivolume work has survived in its entirety, copies of which are found and preserved in many libraries, for example, Sülaymaniye (MS 747) and Köprülü (MS 794) libraries in Istanbul, and Berlin (MS Petermann I, 133 = no. 1741 in Ahlwardt's Catalogue). Reminiscent of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah*, the *Abkār* is a kind of *summa theologiae*. It has recently been edited and published in five volumes by Ahmad Muḥammad al-Mahdī, titled *Abkār al-Afkār fī Uṣūl al-Dīn li al-Imām Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī* (Cairo, 2002).

5. *Goal of the Aspiration in the Science of Kalam* (*Ghāyat al-Marām fī ʿIlm al-Kalām*)

This compendium on Asharite Kalam appears to be an abridgement of the *Abkār al-Afkār*, as anyone comparing the contents of both works can easily notice. As such, the work must have been written probably during al-Āmidī's tenure in the ʿAzīziyya Madrasa in Damascus, sometime between 617/1220 and 626/1229. The only surviving copy of this important work is preserved in Shahīd Pāsha Library (MS 1694) in Istanbul, upon which Ḥasan Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf based his edition of it (Cairo, 1971).

6. *Critical Review of al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* (*Mulakhkhaṣ al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah*)

Like his *Kashf al-Tamwīhāt* mentioned earlier, al-Āmidī's *Mulakhkhaṣ al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah,* as its title clearly indicates, is also a refutation of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. In it al-Āmidī reviews and criticizes al-Rāzī's theological theses and arguments as found in *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliyah* (The Sublime Enquiry), the latter's *magnum*

opus. According to Ḥasan Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf, there is one copy of it preserved in Feyzullah Library (MS 1101) in Istanbul as well as in Maʿhad al-Makhṭūṭāt Cairo (MS 3, Tawḥīd), which has been, however, wrongly given the title *Abkār al-Afkār*.

7. *Clarifier on Elucidating the Words of Philosophers and Theologians* (*al-Mubīn fī Sharḥ Alfāẓ al-Ḥukamāʾ wa al-Mutakallimūn*)

This is a dictionary of technical terms that are commonly understood and used by philosophers and theologians in their discussion. It reminds us of Ibn Sīnā's *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd* (Book of Definitions) and the like. The work was probably written in Ḥamāh, sometime before 617/1220, since the author dedicated the treatise to the local ruler. It is preserved in several libraries such as the Ẓāhiriyyah (MS 9199) in Damascus, and it has been edited and published at least three times in recent years: as part of the collection *La Terminologie philosophique chez les arabes*, edited by ʿAbd al-Amīr al-Aʿsam (Baghdad, 1985; 2nd edn, Cairo 1989); again by the same editor (Beirut, 1987); and later by Ḥasan Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf al-Shāfiʿī (Cairo, 1993).

It should be clear by now that al-Āmidī's extant works are academic in nature, having been composed in connection with his career as a scholar and teacher. *Al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, just like *Abkār al-Afkār*, is a particularly rich treasure trove of philosophical thought spanning a vast range of issues in logic, epistemology, natural philosophy, and metaphysics. Nevertheless, in part because of the lack of critical editions of some of al-Āmidī's extant works, the value and significance of his oeuvre, some of which are unpublished in any form, as well as the complex relationship between them, such as that between the extant *portions of* his *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* and the *Daqāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq*, is not entirely clear. Indeed, while there have been numerous studies on the legal and theological aspects of al-Āmidī's thought,[21] it was only recently that scholars began to pay attention to his philosophical writings.[22]

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[21] B. G. Weiss, 'Al-Āmidī on the Basis of Authority of Consensus', in *Essays on Islamic Civilisation Presented to Niyāzī Berkes* (Leiden, 1976), pp. 342–56; Weiss, 'Āmidī on the Basis of Authority of Juristic Opinion', in *Arab and Islamic Studies in Honor of Marsden Jones: Dirāsāt ʿArabiya wa Islāmiya*, ed. by T. Abdullah and others (Cairo, 1997), pp. 111–16; Weiss, 'The Primacy of Revelation in Classical Islamic Legal Theory as Expounded by Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī', in *Stvdia Islamica*, 59 (1984), 79–109; Weiss, *The Search for God's Law: Islamic Jurisprudence in the Writings of Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī* (Salt Lake City, 1992).

[22] G. Endress 'Die dreifache Ancilla. Hermeneutik und Logik im Werk des Sayfaddīn al-Āmidī', in *Logik und Theologie: Das Organon im arabischen und im lateinischen Mittelalter*, ed. by D. Perler and U. Rudolph (Leiden, 2005), pp. 117–45. I am grateful to Professor H. Daiber for drawing my attention to this article.

III. 'Al-Nūr al-Bāhir' and 'Kitāb al-Shifāʾ'

Neither the date of composition nor the history of transmission and survival of this important work can be established with certainty. One can only surmise, on the basis of al-Āmidī's words in the prologue that it must belong to his latest works, probably composed during the last period of his life, following his untimely retirement. Indeed, towards the end of page 2 (fol. 1ʳ) al-Āmidī recalls the predicament in which he found himself when he set out to write the book:

> I continued to draw upon [the legacy of philosophers] and excavate its hidden secrets, enjoying it in seclusion and conversing with it all the time, until I became old, when the time had come for me to leave [this world], the vigour of my youth having faded away, and the sign of [my] departure appeared. I found it impossible both to elucidate my findings and to suppress it, owing to the time constraint, absence of assistants and friends, and [due to] the prevalence of heresies [*ghalabat al-ahwāʾ*] over [sound] beliefs, excessive fanaticism, lack of enthusiasm on the part of students as well as declining interest of those wishing [to study this].[23]

Our present survey of *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* is based on the extant portions of the text that are preserved in the unique manuscript copy. As noted above, it was discovered among the collection of the Ismāʿāl Sāʾib Library (MS 4830) in Istanbul by Professor Fuat Sezgin in 1959, who later published it in facsimile editions in 2001. According to him, the manuscript was presumably copied in the year 592/1196. It contains 724 folios of nineteen lines per page, written in unvocalized *naskhī* style. It is obvious from the troubled state of the text that the copyist was not familiar with the material he encountered in the text. Moreover, he apparently found his source frequently to be difficult, if not impossible, to read because it was itself a much less than a perfect copy. A goodly number of words in the manuscript merely convey the copyist's vague impression of what he found in front of him. Thus, although his own hand is reasonably clear, he did not or could not provide a sound text to work from, and, therefore, many emendations seem to us to be necessary.

This work has the standard classical *falsafa* objective of elucidating the kind of knowledge that would lead to the perfection of one's rational soul in order to attain true happiness. In the prologue al-Āmidī tells his reader that the acquisition of this knowledge is possible when one learns what is called practical philosophy (*falsafa ʿamaliyya*) such as politics and ethics, the purpose of which it is to produce good citizens, as well as theoretical philosophy (*falsafa naẓariyya*), which includes metaphysics, the mathematical sciences, and natural science. Practical

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[23] Al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir,* fol. 2ʳ = p. 3.13–19 (facsimile edition).

knowledge is taught by prophets and divine messengers, but not so theoretical knowledge. The latter sciences represent the effort and result of enquiries carried out by various thinkers and travellers in search of truth.[24] Al-Āmidī further explains that in this book he engages himself in rational enquiry (*al-baḥth al-fikrī*) and theoretical investigation in order to ascertain the truth and extract the core details (*ʿuyūn al-daqāʾiq*) from the doctrines of the Greek sages and the philosopher-metaphysicians (*maqālāt al-ḥukamāʾ al-Yūnāniyyīn wa al-falāsifah al-ilāhiyyīn*), leaving no questions unanswered and no riddles unsolved.[25]

The book consists of five major divisions (*juzʾ*), each being further divided into parts (*maqāla*), chapters (*fann*), subchapters (*qāʿidah*) and sections (*faṣl*). The overall plan of the book follows exactly the order of the philosophical sciences as classified in the Aristotelian tradition developed by Ibn Sīnā in *Kitāb al-Shifāʾ*, namely logic-physics-mathematics-metaphysics. The variation in the order occurs, if at all, in the internal arrangement of each one of these sciences and in the treatment of its respective subject matter. The following is the general outline of the work:

I. Logic (vols I–II, fols 1ʳ–400ᵛ)

    1. Introduction = *Eisagoge* (*maqāla* I, *faṣl* 1–10)

    2. On Explanatory Terms (*maqāla* II, *faṣl* 1–2)

    3. Peri Hermeneias (*maqāla* III, *fann* 1–2: *fann* 1 (*faṣl* 1–8), *fann* 2 (*faṣl* 1–3))

    4. On the Forms of Argumentation (*maqāla* IV, *fann*. 1–8: *fann* 1, *qāʿidah* 1 (*faṣl* 1–6), *qāʿidah* 2 (*faṣl* 1–5), *fann* 2 (*faṣl* 1–2), *fann* 8 (*faṣl* 1–9)) = Prior Analytics

    5. On Demonstration (*maqāla* V, *faṣl* 1–22) = Posterior Analytics

    6. On Dialectic (*maqāla* VI, *faṣl* 1–10) = Topica

    7. On Sophistics (*maqāla* VII)

    8. On Rhetoric (*maqāla* VIII, *faṣl* 1–3)

    9. On Poetics (*maqāla* IX, *faṣl* 1–2)

II. Natural Sciences (vol. III, fols 401ʳ–584ᵛ)

    1. Physica (*maqāla* I, *faṣl* 1–3)

    2. On Motion and Rest (*maqāla* II, *fann* 1 (*faṣl* 1–10))

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[24] Al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, fols 1ᵛ–2ʳ = pp. 2–3 (facsimile edition).

[25] Al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, fol. 2ʳ = p. 3 (facsimile edition).

3. On Place (*maqāla* II, *fann* 2 (*faṣl* 1–2))

4. On Time (*maqāla* II, *fann* 3)

5. On Magnitude (*maqāla* II, *fann* 4 (*faṣl* 1–2))

6. On Infinity (*maqāla* II, *fann* 5 (*faṣl* 1–5))

7. On Direction (*maqāla* II, *fann* 6)

8. On the Heavens and the Universe (*maqāla* II, *fann* 7, *qāʿidah* 1 (*faṣl* 1–3), *qāʿidah* 2 (*faṣl* 1–4)) = De Caelo et De Mundo

9. On Coming To Be and Passing Away (*maqāla* II, *fann* 8 (*faṣl* 1–6)) = De Generatione et Corruptione

10. On Actions and Passions (*maqāla* II, *fann* 9 (*faṣl* 1–2)) = De Actionibus et Passionibus

11. On Mixture (*maqāla* II, *fann* 10 (*faṣl* 1–2)) = De Mixione

12. On Minerals, etc. (*maqāla* II, *fann* 11 (*faṣl* 1–3)) = Mineralogy and Meteorology

III. Metaphysics (vol. V, fols 585^r–724^v)

1. On the Subject, Purpose, Use, Rank, and Name of Metaphysics (*maqāla* I)

2. On the Division of Being (*inqisām al-mawjūd*) into Ten Categories (*maqāla* II, *faṣl* 1–7)

3. On the One and Many and Their Concomitants (*maqāla* III, *faṣl* 1–4)

4. On the Division of Being into Causes and Effects (*maqāla* IV, *faṣl* 1–8)

5. On the Proof of the Necessarily Existent Being and Its Attributes (*maqāla* V, *faṣl* 1–6)

6. On the Degrees of Causes and Effects, on the Emanation of the Universe from the Principle of Being, and on the Movement of Celestial Spheres (*maqāla* VI, *faṣl* 1–7)

7. On the Destination and Return of the Souls and Bodies (*maqāla* VII, *faṣl* 1–2)

8. On Prophecy, Miracles and the Case of the Righteous Caliphs and the Rightly-Guided Leaders (*maqāla* VIII, *faṣl* 1–3)

When comparing the general layout of *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* with that of *Shifāʾ* one finds that al-Āmidī does not always follow Ibn Sīnā. First, he places the discussion of the Ten Categories (*al-maqūlāt al-ʿashr*) not in logic but rather in the metaphysical

section, whereas Ibn Sinā deals with them in the section on logic. Second, al-Āmidī's book (at least the extant portions) does not include discussions on the soul (*kitāb al-nafs*), plants (*kitāb al-nabāt*), and animals (*kitāb al-ḥayawān*). Third, al-Āmidī devotes a separate chapter in the physics to the question of elemental mixture (*fī al-mizāj*), whereas Ibn Sīnā subsumes it under the section on coming to be and passing away (*fī al-kawn wa al-fasād*). Finally, one wonders whether al-Āmidī also wrote as Ibn Sīnā did on the mathematical sciences, namely, geometry (*ʿilm al-handasa*), astronomy (*ʿilm al-hayʾa*), arithmetic (*ʿilm al-ḥisāb*), and music (*ʿilm al-mūsīqā*). Since the fourth volume of his *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* is still missing, one must be content with private guesses that are difficult to verify.

Equally noteworthy is al-Āmidī's treatment of metaphysics. A cursory look at the relevant section in *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* reveals that al-Āmidī took liberty with regard to the ordering and selection of the subjects to be discussed. Thus, for example, he places the chapter on the One and the Many before that on the proof for the Necessary Existent. Ibn Sīnā , in contrast, deals with the concept of existence, the Necessary and Possible Existent in the first *maqāla*, immediately after the introduction. Judging from the structure of the book, one gets the impression that al-Āmidī was somehow influenced by his theological background, seemingly having in mind the God of Abrahamic religions when discussing the Necessary Existent and His Attributes. Moreover, al-Āmidī curiously left out the question about the complete and the deficient (*al-tāmm wa al-nāqiṣ*), discussed by Ibn Sīnā in *maqāla* IV.3. The problems of universals and particulars, genus and species, differentia and definition are also excluded from the discussion. All this seems to demonstrate that although he must have used Ibn Sīnā's text, al-Āmidī deliberately chose not to follow its plan.

To explain this departure from Ibn Sīnā's text at least two factors must be taken into account. The first is that the omission was apparently intentional. Al-Āmidī might have thought it unnecessary to repeat what he had dealt with at length in the logical section of the book. Second, al-Āmidī's ordering can be defended by noting that while Ibn Sīnā proceeds along the 'path of discovery' (*via inventionis*), al-Āmidī follows the *via doctrinae*— quite understandably, since his chief purpose as a theologian is to establish the truth of religious doctrine.

The resemblance between *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* and Ibn Sīnā's *Shifāʾ* is apparent in both its overall structure and contents. In al-Āmidī's discussions of logic, physics, and metaphysics, Ibn Sīnā's writings are present implicitly or explicitly throughout *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*. In order to illustrate the manner in which he draws upon Ibn Sīnā's text, I shall examine a few passages from *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* in comparison with the similar ones in Ibn Sīnā's *Shifāʾ*.

Some of the most significant of al-Āmidī's implicit references to Ibn Sīnā oc-
curs in *maqāla* IV.5, where al-Āmidī reproduces *in extenso* but with slight stylistic
changes Ibn Sīnā's long argument in *maqāla* VIII.1, on the finitude of the Efficient
and Receptive Cause.[26] Tacit references are to be found also in the preceding
chapter (*maqāla* IV.4), where al-Āmidī presents — and ultimately rejects — the
Platonic theory of forms and the pre-Socratic doctrines. Al-Āmidī's exposition
summarizes Ibn Sīnā's treatment in *maqāla* VII.2–3 of the *Shifā*.[27] Whereas Ibn
Sīnā sets forth his refutation in detail, al-Āmidī does not.

Al-Āmidī's reliance upon Ibn Sīnā's text can be gathered from many other pas-
sages in *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*. In *maqāla* II.2 al-Āmidī discusses the concept of the Many
and its concomitant opposites.[28] Also, in *maqāla* V.3, al-Āmidī describes how the
universe and everything therein emanates from and owes its existence to the Prin-
ciple of Being (*mabda' al-kā'ināt*) — a Plotinian cosmological theory commonly
held by Muslim philosophers and mystics. This idea as well as the principle *ex uno
non fit nisi unum*[29] have also been expounded by Ibn Sīnā in his major works.[30]

In *maqāla* VII.1–2, al-Āmidī discusses how the rational soul of human beings is
influenced by the celestial souls and how it receives illumination from the Active
Intellect. Arguments similar to those put forth by al-Āmidī on this issue can be
found in Ibn Sīnā's *Shifā*, *maqāla* IX.3, where he discusses where the human soul
would finally return upon leaving the body and what should be done in order to
attain happiness in the next life. From such examples of explicit or implicit refer-
ence it is evident that al-Āmidi's study of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical corpus was a
significant source of his ideas.

There are indeed a few issues that Ibn Sīnā does but al-Āmidī does not touch
upon in the metaphysics section of his book. The importance and benefit of worship

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[26] See al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir,* pp. 160–6l (facsimile edition) and Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā':
al-Ilāhiyyāt*, II, 327–31.

[27] See al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, pp. 155–60 (facsimile edition) and Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā':
al-Ilāhiyyāt*, II, 310–24.

[28] See al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, especially pp. 120–29 (facsimile edition) and Ibn Sīnā,
al-Shifā': al-Ilāhiyyāt, II, 304–09.

[29] See al-Āmidī, *al-Nūr al-Bāhir*, pp. 224–26 (facsimile edition). On this formula see
M. A. Mensia, *Essai sur le principe 'de L'un ne procède que de l'un' dans la philosophie
islamique*, Thèse 3ème cycle (Paris, 1977) and A. de Libera, 'Ex uno non fit nisi unum: La
Lettre sur le principe de l'univers et les condamnations parisiennes de 1277', in *Historia
philosophiae medii aevii*, ed. by B. Mojsisch and O. Pluta, Festschrift für Kurt Flasch zu
seinem, 60, Geburtstag, 2 vols (Amsterdam, 1991), I, 543–60.

[30] Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifā': Ilāhiyyāt*, II, 402–09; also his *Ishārāt: Ilāhiyyāt*, pp. 216–17.

for one's well-being in this world and in the Afterlife, the family matters, the necessity of government, popular obedience, and morality — all this is not discussed by al-Āmidī. However, al-Āmidī does include in the final section the discussion on the possibility of miracles and the controversy surrounding the status of the four rightly guided caliphs.

Concluding Notes

The preceding investigation, preliminary though it is, may lead to two conclusions. First, given the fact that the three centuries subsequent to Ibn Sīnā's death witnessed the proliferation of philosophical writings such as al-Āmidī's *Daqāʾiq al-Ḥaqāʾiq* and *al-Nūr al-Bāhir* it is misleading to characterize the period in question as that of decline and stagnation; and so it is historically baseless to link the supposed downturn to the alleged negativism of the so-called Islamic orthodoxy. Second, although al-Āmidī seldom mentions his sources explicitly, there is little doubt that in composing his philosophical works al-Āmidī did make use of Ibn Sīnā's texts, but frequently with modification and refinement. This finding only reinforces the general impression that Ibn Sīnā's philosophical doctrine had been so influential throughout the Muslim world that it became identified with philosophy itself.[31]

   While it is true that he adopted Ibn Sīnā's method of rational analysis and argumentation, al-Āmidī was also critical in his approach, his own contribution lying in the fact that he provided a cogent and coherent assessment of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical legacy. But to recognize that al-Āmidī's philosophy owes a great debt to Ibn Sīnā is not equivalent to suggesting that the *Shaykh al-Raʾīs* is the only influence on him; al-Āmidī also drew upon other thinkers. Rather it simply means that whatever he took on from other sources is held to be compatible with what he already held in common with Ibn Sīnā. Finally, it should be noted that to draw attention to the sources of al-Āmidī's works is not to say that everything he holds philosophically can be traced back into historical antecedents.

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[31] See *Avicenna and his Heritage: Acts of The International Colloquium Leuven-Louvain-la-Neuve, September 8–September 11, 1999*, ed. by J. Janssens and D. De Smet (Leuven, 2002); *Aspects of Avicenna,* ed. by R. Winovsky (Princeton, 2001) *(= Interdisciplinary Journal of Middle Eastern Studies,* 9); *Before and After Avicenna: Proceedings of the First Conference of the Avicenna Study Group*, ed. by D. C. Reisman and A. H. Al-Rahim (Leiden, 2003).