

**Pure Generosity, Divine Providence,
and the Perfection of the Soul
in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)**

by

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of the requirements of the degree of Master of Arts

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ABSTRACT

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TITLE OF THESIS	Pure Generosity, Divine Providence, and the Perfection of the Soul in the Philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)
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This thesis explores three foundational aspects of Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysical worldview with the aim of displaying their unity, understood as a middle-way between the existential modalities of necessity and contingency. The first chapter examines how Ibn Sīnā reconciles two traditionally opposed views on the relation between God and the universe – necessary emanation and creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*) – through his conception of God’s existentiatio of all things as a unique act of pure generosity devoid of intention beyond the act itself. The second chapter explores Ibn Sīnā’s notion of divine providence as a conjunction of God’s perfect concern for all creatures as necessary of existence by His will, with His complete detachment from all creatures as contingent in themselves. The third chapter then turns to Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the perfection of the human soul as a mean between temperate involvement with the body and intellectual contemplation – a condition of detachment from all things as contingent in themselves, intending only God by primary intention, and all else than God only in the aspect of their necessary relation to Him, that is, as they necessarily exist by His will.

RÉSUMÉ

AUTEUR	Jonathan Samuel Dubé
TITRE DE LA THÈSE	Pure générosité, providence divine et perfection de l'âme dans la philosophie d'Ibn Sīnā (Avicenne)
DÉPARTEMENT	Institut d'études islamiques, Université McGill
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Cette thèse explore trois fondements de la vision métaphysique du monde d'Ibn Sīnā dans le but d'en montrer l'unité, entendue comme une condition intermédiaire entre les modalités existentielles de nécessité et de contingence. Le premier chapitre examine comment Ibn Sīnā réconcilie deux perspectives traditionnellement opposées sur le rapport entre Dieu et l'univers – émanation nécessaire et création *ex nihilo* – en sa conception de l'existentialisation de toute chose par Dieu comme un acte unique de pure générosité dénué d'intention au-delà de l'acte lui-même. Le deuxième chapitre explore comment Ibn Sīnā envisage la providence divine en termes d'une conjonction entre la sollicitude parfaite de Dieu envers toute chose en tant qu'elle est nécessaire d'existence par Sa volonté, et le détachement complet de Dieu face à toute chose en tant qu'elle est contingente en elle-même. Le troisième chapitre se tourne ensuite vers la conception qu'a Ibn Sīnā de la perfection de l'âme humaine comme un état d'équilibre entre son attachement tempéré avec le corps et sa contemplation intellectuelle – une condition de détachement envers toute chose en tant qu'elle est contingente en elle-même, visant Dieu seul par première intention, et toute chose autre que Dieu uniquement sous l'aspect de son rapport nécessaire à Lui, c'est-à-dire, en tant qu'elle existe nécessairement par Sa volonté.

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To Joud

And the King is farthest among them all in that [realm]. Whoever ascribes an origin to Him errs. Whoever claims to have praised Him as He deserves is but a vain babblers (*hadhā*).

For [the King] eludes the definer's ability to define Him, just as here all manner of comparison falls short.

None may represent [His attributes save by affirming] that He has no members that divide Him: He is all a face by His beauty (*ḥusn*), all a hand by His generosity (*jūd*).

And His beauty effaces the influence of all [other] beauty. His generosity debases the worth of all [other] generosity.

– Ibn Sīnā, *Alive, Son of Awake*¹

¹ {ll. 6; 1-3} (pp. 20-1); see tr. W. R. TRASK (2007), p. 320.

INTRODUCTION

Arguably the most influential thinker of Medieval times, the eleventh-century Persian philosopher and physician Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) expounds in his works metaphysical conceptions which have been the object of much philosophical debate over the centuries. While many of his ideas were appropriated by subsequent thinkers, both in the Islamic world and in the West, Ibn Sīnā's personal worldview has been vigorously challenged, notably by the twelfth-century Muslim theologian al-Ghazālī, whose *Incoherence of the Philosophers* is commonly regarded as having dealt a fatal blow to his philosophy. In particular, al-Ghazālī ascribes in the *Incoherence* three 'views' to Ibn Sīnā¹ which, in his final analysis, are categorically incompatible with Islam:

One of them is the question of the world's pre-eternity and [his] statement that all substances are pre-eternal. The second is [his] statement that God's knowledge does not encompass the temporal particulars among individual [existents]. The third is [his] denial of the resurrection of the bodies and their assembly [on the Day of Resurrection] (p. 226).

This thesis aims to explore the three foundational aspects of Ibn Sīnā metaphysical worldview which underlie, although in very different terms, the three 'views' condemned by al-Ghazālī in the *Incoherence*. These condemnations manifest three doctrinal exigencies: (I) safeguarding God's pre-eminent voluntary agency, (II) upholding all-encompassing determinism, and (III) involving the body in the attainment of salvation. In the course of this study, we will consider Ibn Sīnā's personal approach to these questions in the following terms: (I) God's existentionation of the universe as a timeless act of pure generosity – involving the denial of temporal creation;

¹ Although Ibn Sīnā is not named in the following passage, J. JANSSENS (2001) notes that "the actual wording of these three items as given by al-Ghazzālī in that final conclusion indicates a definite Avicennian inspiration" (p. 4). The third-person pronouns have here been changed from the plural to the singular.

(II) divine providence as embracing all creatures in the aspect of their necessary existence – involving God’s complete detachment from the aspect of their contingent existence,² and (III) the perfection of the human soul as realized through its temperate attachment to the body – involving, ultimately, the soul’s transcendence from the body.³

These three aspects of Ibn Sīnā’s thought will be shown to display a structural unity, *i.e.*, consisting in a middle-way between two extremes: (I) his conception of pure generosity as a mean between necessary emanation and creation out of nothing (*ex nihilo*), (II) his notion of divine providence as a mean between perfect concern and complete detachment, and (III) his view of the perfection of the human soul as a mean between involvement with the body and

² This study will not address Ibn Sīnā’s conception of providence in terms of the oft-debated question of God’s knowledge of particulars. On this problem, see M. MARMURA (1962), O. LEAMAN (2002), R. ACAR (2004b), H. ZGHAL (2004), P. ADAMSON (2005), S. NUSSEIBEH (2009). This thesis will approach Ibn Sīnā’s ideas on the ground of his main philosophical preoccupations in an effort to understand his ideas in his own terms, not as conceived by al-Ghazālī, who was in many respects hostile to his thought. The view adopted here is that although this vexed question preoccupied al-Ghazālī in his *Incoherence* (see Discussion XI), it is not a dominant philosophical concern of Ibn Sīnā’s, and this problem is seldom evoked in his works (chiefly, in his analogy of the eclipse in *Metaphysics* VIII.6, pp. 288-90; see al-Ghazālī’s discussion in the *Incoherence*, p. 137ff). In his survey of the scholarship on this problem, R. ACAR (2004a) observes that “al-Ghazālī’s and MARMURA’s arguments, which one might consider representative of the dominant interpretation of Avicenna’s position, do not show that for Avicenna God does not know particulars. Granting their arguments, the most one can conclude is that Avicenna does not provide a successful theory for explaining how God knows particulars” (p. 156). That Ibn Sīnā provides no definite answer to this question indicates that it does not constitute for him a pressing philosophical concern. Ibn Sīnā’s notion that God “intelligizes (*ya’qil*) all things in a universal way” (*Metaphysics* VIII.6, p. 288) is interpreted in the context of this study as signifying that for Ibn Sīnā God knows all things at once. Knowing a particular *as a particular* involves considering it *in isolation* from the whole, in its contingent aspect, as opposed to knowing it through its intelligible causes, in its necessary aspect – hence as a universal. As we will see, according to Ibn Sīnā God’s providence involves that His knowledge encompasses all things as necessary of existence through Him, yet that, simultaneously, God has no relation to things as contingent of existence, *i.e.*, as considered in isolation from the rest of existence. In this sense, for Ibn Sīnā, God does not know particulars as particulars. As he writes in his commentary on the *Theologia*, “[In the higher realm,] every particular is perceived (*mudrak*) in the aspect in which it necessarily [proceeds] (*lazimat*) from its causes, and this aspect makes the particular a universal” {ll. 17-8} (p. 48).

³ The third and last chapter of this thesis will not address Ibn Sīnā’s eschatology but will rather concentrate on his conception of the proper disposition towards the body which enables the human rational soul to achieve its own perfection. On Ibn Sīnā’s eschatological views, see in particular G. C. ANAWATI (1974), J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986a), S. C. INATI (1995), T. JAFFER (1998), and T. A. DRUART (2000).

intellectual contemplation. In all three cases, this middle-way will be shown to correspond in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics to the intermediary ontological condition of the creature, as poised between the existential modalities of necessity (*wujūb*) and contingency (*imkān*): necessary of existence through another (*wājib al-wujūd bi-ghayrihi*), yet contingent of existence in its essence (*mumkin al-wujūd bi-dhātihi*) – a central feature of Ibn Sīnā metaphysical worldview which is arguably his most valuable contribution to philosophy.⁴

Drawing on thirty-four works of Ibn Sīnā, this study will endeavour to bring into focus not only the structure of his ideas, but the particular perspective from which, as a philosopher, Ibn Sīnā envisions his ideas. This approach involves viewing Ibn Sīnā not simply as a thinker who strives to establish and defend philosophical doctrines, but as a human who sees himself as existing within the metaphysical universe to which he 'points' in his works. This study will not therefore concentrate primarily on the logical arguments which Ibn Sīnā puts forward to prove the veracity of his ideas, but rather on the manner in which the ideas he *does* conceive to be true reflect the metaphysical universe in which he sees himself as existing. This thesis will primarily focus on Ibn Sīnā's own writings, and while the secondary literature has been consulted and cited where appropriate, the approach adopted here does not insert itself within current scholarly debates on Ibn Sīnā's thought. This is because the contribution of the present study, based on a broad exploration of Ibn Sīnā's authentic works, incorporates aspects of his thought which are not commonly explored – at least not in comparable terms.

⁴ On the elaboration of this idea in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, see R. WISNOVSKY (2003a), chs. 11-14, pp. 197-263.

The first chapter will explore how Ibn Sīnā's notion of God's pure generosity (*al-jūd al-mahḍ*) reconciles two conceptions of God's relation to the universe which are traditionally regarded as irreconcilable: the Neoplatonizing Aristotelian conception the universe as necessarily emanated from the One First Cause and eternally co-existent with Him, and the Islamic monotheistic view of the world as created out of nothing by a single act of divine will. We will see that the terms by which this dichotomy is commonly understood tend to place Ibn Sīnā squarely on the side of eternalism – given that he denies the temporal creation of the universe, thereby misrepresenting his stance and barring the way to a finer understanding of his conception of the rapport between God and the universe.

As will be shown in this chapter, Ibn Sīnā neither views the universe as an eternal emanation which is necessary in itself, nor as a strictly contingent creation which God originates *ex nihilo* by His will. Thus eschewing both the traditional eternalist and creationist positions, we will see that Ibn Sīnā conceives the universe *both* as proceeding from the One as an eternal emanation which is necessary by His will, *and* as a contingent creation which God originates *ex nihilo* in itself. In transcending the terms of the traditional debate on this question by conceiving God's relation to the universe in terms of essential rather than temporal priority, we will see that Ibn Sīnā applies these two perspectives to the two ontological facets of creatures – necessary through God, yet contingent in themselves.

Ibn Sīnā's reconciliation of necessary emanation and creation *ex nihilo* will be shown to hinge on a conception of divine knowledge inherited from Themistius' modification of Aristotle's theory of divine self-intellection: according to this view, God intelligizes (*or con-*

templates) Himself primarily – and all things through Himself secondarily, as their First Cause. This entails that for Ibn Sīnā God does not intend creatures in themselves, but only through Himself. And given that in his view knowing and creating are identical in God – that is, His knowledge of creatures is one with their existentionation – we will see that for Ibn Sīnā God’s knowledge of all things through Himself corresponds to their necessary existence, which they receive only by virtue of their relation to Him; considered strictly in themselves, however, all things are preceded by absolute nonexistence – realized through God, unreal in themselves; that is, apart from their necessary relation to Him.

Conceived as an act of pure generosity, we will see that for Ibn Sīnā God’s creative act, as the timeless and continuous bestowal of existence and its perfections on all creatures, is not motivated by any intention beyond His very act of generosity. Hence, that according to Ibn Sīnā God intends only Himself – as the Necessary of Existence in His essence – and all things through Himself, yet is devoid of intention towards His creatures as contingent of existence in their essence. Since He possesses perfect existence as His very essence, we will observe that God is according to Ibn Sīnā free of need, and wills all things in their necessary aspect, even as He is absolved of all relation to His creatures in their contingent aspect – save in terms of a double negation: He prevents their absolute nonexistence.

The second chapter will proceed from Ibn Sīnā’s conception of pure generosity to that of divine providence, two notions which he explicitly views as synonymous. We will consider the influence on Ibn Sīnā of Alexander of Aphrodisias’ theory of providence as a middle-way between two views of God’s relation to the universe – epitomized in Alexander’s philosophical

milieu by the positions held by Stoics and Epicureans: radical immanence and involvement of the divine with the order of the universe on the one hand, radical transcendence and disengagement of the divine from the world on the other. Whereas Alexander settles this question by distinguishing between the domain where providence *exists* (*i.e.*, the supernal realm) and the domain where providence *acts* (*i.e.*, the sublunar realm), we will see that Ibn Sīnā approaches for his part the problem of divine providence in terms of the existential modalities of creatures; necessary through God, yet contingent in themselves – applying God’s perfect concern for the good of His creatures to their necessary aspect, and His complete detachment, to their contingent aspect.

While Ibn Sīnā regards all creatures as partaking in divine providence, the key difference in his worldview between the existential condition of supernal and sublunar creatures will be shown to hinge on the limits placed by elemental matter on the reception of the divine effusion, impediments which, in Ibn Sīnā’s view, only exist in the sublunar realm. Whereas in the supernal realm creatures exist in complete alignment with divine providence, and hence fully receive their proper good from God through the necessary order that relates them to Him, we will see that for Ibn Sīnā creatures in the sublunar realm suffer for their part from the oppositions inherent to elemental matter, which divides the forms it receives, and thus impedes the reception of the divine effusion by creatures.

For Ibn Sīnā, as will be shown, God does not ever withhold from His creatures blessings which are suitable for them according to His wisdom. Only conflicting causes in the sublunar realm can prevent creatures from receiving the effusion of existence which God generously

bestows on all that exists by His will. We will see that according to Ibn Sīnā God confers on all His creatures the goodness which is most suitable for them according to His wisdom along with the proper disposition to receive it, and places in all things the love of what contributes to the realization of their proper perfection. Ibn Sīnā's conception of providence will then be examined in terms of the Decree (*qadā'*) and Determination (*qadar*), a pair of theological terms which Ibn Sīnā uses to distinguish between the timeless creative act whereby God bestows goodness on all creatures, and the gradual unfolding of this simple act whereby all creatures receive existence from God and are disposed to realize the perfection of their essential nature.

The divine Decree and Determination will then be shown to correspond respectively, in Ibn Sīnā's worldview, to simple intellectual knowledge (belonging to the Intelligence), and to discursive psychic (*nafsi*) knowledge (belonging to the Soul). Hence, we will see that for Ibn Sīnā the divine Decree consists in the simple intellectual knowledge that God has of His creatures, and the Determination, in the psychic knowledge that creatures have of God through the necessary order that proceeds from Him to all things. The Soul's discursive processes will then be shown to consist according to Ibn Sīnā in its imitation of simple intellectual knowledge, whereby the Soul yearns to assimilate itself to God – the Pure Good, the First, the Real – through its beloved, *i.e.*, the Intelligence of its own sphere.

The third chapter will proceed from Ibn Sīnā's conception of divine providence to his notion of the perfection of the human soul as likewise consisting in a mean between concern and detachment – here between involvement with the body and intellectual contemplation. We will observe that the devotional ideal epitomized by the eighth-century Muslim mystic

Rābi‘a al-‘Adawīya – *i.e.*, devoting oneself to God neither out of desire (for Paradise) nor out of fear (of Hell), a notion also found in an aphorism ascribed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib – parallels Ibn Sīnā’s description of the knower (*‘ārif*) in *Pointers and Reminders IX*. We will consider the distinction which Ibn Sīnā draws between humans who worship God, the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*), for an end other than Him – as primarily intending the attainment of sensible pleasure (Paradise) and the avoidance of sensible pain (Hell), thus worshiping the Real only as a means to these ends – and the knower whose soul yearns to assimilate itself to the Real by primary intention, intending other ends only as subordinate to that aspiration.

Ibn Sīnā’s commentary on the Qur’anic chapter of *Mankind* (Q 114) will then be used to delineate the process by which he envisions the rational soul’s attainment of junction (*ittiṣāl*) with the Active Intelligence. Asceticism, devotion, and knowledge, as defined in *Pointers and Reminders IX*, will be shown to parallel Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation of the meaning of the ‘Lord’, ‘Sovereign’, and ‘Deity’ of mankind (Q 114:1-3); the first thus corresponding to the proper balancing of the body’s temperament (*mizāj*) which God places in the human constitution so as to dispose it to receive a rational soul capable of perceiving intelligibles in its own substance; the second, to the ascendancy of the soul over the body’s faculties, as it enlists them for the realization of its own perfection – which is to assimilate itself to the Real through its junction with the Active Intelligence; and the third, to the attainment of this junction.

In its state of involvement with the body, the perfection of the rational soul will then be shown to consist in its achieving balance (*or* ‘justice’) in the activities of the body’s faculties, thereby elevating itself above material attachments; as for its state of separation from the body,

the perfection of the rational soul will be shown to consist for Ibn Sīnā in its reflecting the supernal realm in its own substance, thereby becoming an intelligible world which mirrors the necessary order of all that exists by God's will. This last chapter will conclude with Ibn Sīnā's view of human love and friendship, as reflecting his notion of the perfection of the soul: since humans who have not transcended mere animal desire for pleasure and fear of harm seek companionship only for the sake of attaining such ends, we will see that for Ibn Sīnā the knower who has assimilated himself to the Real through intellectual contemplation is alone capable of manifesting true generosity and goodness – as loving in other humans their intelligible nature, and as intending what is best for them according to divine wisdom, for their own sake, and not merely to satisfy his own animal needs and desires.

This study will then conclude with observations on the correspondence between these three foundational aspects of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, as reflecting the unity of his worldview: God, as the only Necessary Existent in His essence, intends only Himself primarily, and all things as necessary of existence through Him secondarily, yet is devoid of intention towards His creatures as contingent in themselves. Likewise, for Ibn Sīnā the most perfect creature, inasmuch as it resembles God, intends only God by primary intention, and all else than Him as necessary of existence through Him by secondary intention, yet is devoid of intention towards creatures in their contingent aspect, that is, as considered in isolation from their relation to the Necessary Existent in His essence.

NOTES ON THE TRANSLATIONS

The passages from Ibn Sīnā's works quoted throughout this thesis have all been retranslated from Arabic (*or* Persian in the case of the *Book of Knowledge*), relying on previous translations available in either English or French. For each passage, the {line/s} and (page/s) of the most recent or scholarly edition of the original text are indicated. While in some cases the text of previous translations is reproduced with slight modifications,⁵ all quotations were completely revised on the basis of the primary text. In the bibliography, Ibn Sīnā's works are listed alphabetically by their translated title (as referred to in the thesis), and the edition and translations of each text are grouped together, starting with the most recent and scholarly edition of the Arabic [AR] (*or* Persian [PE]) text, followed by the consulted English [EN] and French [FR] translation(s). Also, the title of each work is followed by its assigned number in the bibliographies compiled by D. GUTAS (2014), G. C. ANAWATI (1950), and Y. MAHDAVI (1954).⁶

⁵ Specifically, the text of M. E. MARMURA's translation of the *Metaphysics of the Healing* (2005) has been largely retained. Since this particular source provides facing English–Arabic text, reference will be given only for the page number. On occasion, the wording of the following translations has been used: *On Love* (E. FACKENHEIM, 1945), *Throne* (A. K. TUFT, 1972), *Book of Knowledge* (P. MOREWEDGE, 1973), *Pointers and Reminders VIII–X* (S. INATI, 1996), *Origin and Return* [in French] (Y. MICHOT, 2002), *Alive, Son of Awake* (W. R. TRASK, 2007).

⁶ Of the thirty-four texts of Ibn Sīnā used in this thesis, four are considered pseudepigraphical, and one spurious by D. GUTAS (2014): *Throne* (PS 1), *Proof of Prophecy* (PS 2), *Secret of the Determination* (PS 4), *Attainment of Knowledge and Wisdom* (PS 7), and *On the Knowledge of the Rational Soul and its States* (SPUR). The inauthenticity of these texts, however, has yet to be demonstrated, and GUTAS' brief annotations do not provide rigorous philological analysis. The latter four of these texts will here be quoted only sparsely, as illustrating ideas which are otherwise established in his undisputed corpus. For its part, the *Throne* will be relied upon more extensively. As a result, challenges to its authenticity must be addressed. In this case, GUTAS invokes a statement made by D. REISMAN (2002b): "I am not convinced that this treatise belongs to the authentic Ibn Sīnā corpus, for both the style and content suggest a post-Ibn al-'Arabī environment" (pp. 21–2, n. 2). For his part, R. WISNOVSKY (2003b) notes that "the fact that the *Risāla al-'Arshīya* passage offers us the transcendent/immanent distinction (not to mention that it articulates the distinction in a very similar way to the *Shifā'*) makes me inclined, in the absence of decisive evidence otherwise, to uphold its attribution to Avicenna" (p. 65, n. 32). Numerous passages from the *Throne* will be here shown to coincide exactly with Ibn Sīnā's established views, as formulated in his authentic corpus.

CHAPTER I

Pure Generosity as a Mean between Necessary Emanation and Creation out of Nothing

The perfect unity and simplicity of God in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical worldview require that His existence cannot be derived from any of the four Aristotelian causes. As the only Necessary Existent in His essence, Ibn Sīnā affirms, God neither receives His existence from an agent nor aims for an end beyond Himself, and neither inheres in a substrate nor subsists by a form which would be intrinsic to His essence.¹ Necessary and uncaused in every aspect, the God of Ibn Sīnā is thus the First Principle of all existence, which He eternally necessitates by virtue of Himself. In keeping with the Neoplatonizing Aristotelian backdrop of his philosophical system, Ibn Sīnā conceives the universe as proceeding at once from God by way of a necessary emanation which eternally co-exists with Him. Since he denies temporal creation – arguing in its stead for the timeless, essential primacy of God over the universe – Ibn Sīnā has been accused of holding that God is eternally compelled to emanate the universe by necessity of His nature, to the effect that, as B. H. ZEDLER (1948) assumed, “the production of the world is accomplished almost in spite of Him” (p. 122). Accordingly, Ibn Sīnā's theory of emanation is commonly envisioned as an automatic process – akin to the emission of light from the sun or the gushing of water from a spring,² natural images which as such undermine

¹ See *Metaphysics of the Healing* (hereafter *Metaphysics*) IX.4, p. 326.

² O. LIZZINI (2011) remarks: “the image that is most often linked to *fayḍ* in philosophical writings is not that of flowing water, but rather the propagation of light rays. To the metaphor of water, is substituted, therefore, that of light (*al-nūr*), and to the idea of emanation, that of illumination. We thus assist to a sort of duplication: the idea of continuity, referred to as ‘flowing water’ is transferred to that of light ‘poured’ from the sun, and with a further transition, the term comes to express the outpouring of light or power” [original in Italian] (pp. 74-5).

any notion of divine knowledge or will.³ In these terms, the Source of all existence, conceived as it were in the aspect of a perpetually overflowing *cornucopia*, can no more choose to bring forth as it can withhold the fruit of its necessary fecundity. This construal of emanation portrays God as the pinnacle of the emanated universe, ontologically bound to it by the latter's intrinsic necessity, and thus on a par with it.⁴

In his landmark study *Proofs for Eternity, Creation and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, H. A. DAVIDSON (1987) argues that for medieval Muslims and Jews the debate on the eternity or creation of the world constituted the fundamental point of dispute on the issue of the rapport between God and the universe. On his account,

The issue of eternity and creation provided an arena for determining [...] whether God is a necessary or a voluntary cause. If the world should be eternal, and a deity is recognized, the deity's relationship to the universe would likewise be eternal. Since eternity and necessity are, by virtue of an Aristotelian rule, mutually implicative, an eternal relationship is a relationship bound by necessity; and necessity excludes will. The eternity of the world thus would imply that the deity is, as the cause of the universe, bereft of will. A beginning of the world would, by contrast, lead to a deity possessed of will (pp. 1-2).

To be sure, this debate between proponents of temporal origination by a free creator and eternal emanation by a natural agent⁵ held sway among many scholars, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian, throughout the Middle Ages. Characteristically, Ibn Sīnā (and with him Aristotle)

³ B. ZEDLER's analysis typifies this common misconception: "[For Ibn Sīnā, God's] only 'contribution' to the production of things consists in a passive acquiescence to an emanation which would proceed from His essence anyway. When confronted with the *fait accompli*, He is not displeased, for the perfection of His goodness requires that the infinite fecundity of His nature expand to creatures" (p. 122).

⁴ Discussing Ibn Sīnā's view of emanation (in the context of Ibn Rushd's appropriation of the theory) B. S. KOGAN (1981) observes: "Ontologically, the causal series will remain inseparable from the Deity, simply because it is an overflow of Himself. Although it is not identical with the Deity, it is presented as a projection out of divine plenitude. [...] For any particular effect, then, the emanation which produces it is a kind of lifeline to being" (pp. 385-6).

⁵ R. ACAR (2004a) notes: "The idea that for Avicenna creation is like a natural action is the popular interpretation of Avicenna's position among scholars" (p. 76, n. 2).

became the exemplary *bête noire* on this question, as the towering figures of al-Ghazālī,⁶ Maimonides⁷ and Aquinas⁸ each indicted him for denying the doctrine of temporal creation – thereby bereaving God of knowledge and will, on which ground they set out to erect their own theories of creation, pitting themselves squarely against (their reading of) Ibn Sīnā’s eternalism.

The terms of this polarized debate,⁹ however, offer no entry point on Ibn Sīnā’s own conception of the relation between God and the universe, and it is probable that he himself would have balked at this controversy; in effect, the impetus and internal dynamics of this dispute are demonstrably foreign to Ibn Sīnā’s personal approach to this question. Rather than holding the position of eternalism against creationism, we will see that Ibn Sīnā sought – as in numerous facets of his philosophy – to achieve a mean between opposite stances, in this case between the Neoplatonizing Aristotelian notion of the universe as an eternally necessitated emanation from its First Principle, and the Islamic monotheistic view of the contingent world

⁶ “According to [the philosophers = Ibn Sīnā],” Al-Ghazālī writes, “God, exalted be He, is not one who wills, but has no attribute at all. Whatever proceeds from Him proceeds by compulsory necessity” (*Incoherence of the Philosophers*, p. 55). D. DE SMET (1995) writes: “Ghazālī résume bien l’enjeu de la question: puisque la relation entre la source et l’émané repose sur la nécessité, l’émanation exclut la liberté et la toute-puissance de Dieu et implique la co-éternité de Dieu et du monde. En d’autres termes, elle forme une entrave à la création du monde *ex nihilo*, dans le temps et par un acte voulu de Dieu en toute liberté” (p. 103).

⁷ Maimonides states: “[Aristotle (= Ibn Sīnā)] holds, as I have recounted to you, that everything that is other than [the First Cause] necessarily proceeds from it. We [for our part] affirm that all these things have been made by Him in virtue of a purpose and a will directed towards this particular being, which did not exist and now became an existent in virtue of His will, may He be exalted” (*Guide of the Perplexed* II.21, pp. 316-7).

⁸ In Aquinas’ words: “We do not hold that God is the cause of the world by natural necessity, but by His will” [*De pot.* 3, 17, ad 4.]; “God does not produce creatures of natural necessity as though the power of God were determined to the existence of the creature” [*Ibid.* 5, 3, resp.; 10, 2, ad 6.], tr. in B. ZEDLER (1948), p. 116.

⁹ A remark of Maimonides encapsulates the typical *either/or* approach to this question: “[To assert that from the fact that] these beings have not come into being spontaneously, it follows necessarily that they have come into being in virtue of the purpose of one who purposed and the will of one who willed, [it is not clear to me that Aristotle (= Ibn Sīnā) believes that, for] to me the combination of ‘existing in virtue of necessity’ and ‘being produced in time in virtue of a purpose and a will’, a combination uniting these two, comes near to a combination of two contraries” (*Guide of the Perplexed* II.20, p. 313).

as utterly dependent on its Creator and originated *ex nihilo* by His will. In that order, L. E.

GOODMAN (2005) writes:

Part of the achievement of Ibn Sīnā is his creation of a synthesis between the two opposed accounts – the metaphysics of being as an eternally given, [...] and the creationist metaphysics of radically contingent being. Both positions by his time had grown extreme, hardened by centuries of polemic, resting on rival premises, and canonizing in each case a cosmology that seeks to recognize the fundamental moral and metaphysical truths about the world but finds them in opposing crystallizations (p. 61). [...] In the polarized rhetoric of the polemics of his day, he was an eternalist. But in his philosophic argumentation Ibn Sīnā fused the Aristotelian metaphysics of self-sufficiency with the monotheistic metaphysics of contingency (p. 63).¹⁰

In interpreting Ibn Sīnā’s philosophical positions it is then crucial to recognize his systematic tendency to avoid extremes and to aim for a middle-way amidst polarized stances. In terms of the relation between God and the universe, Ibn Sīnā thus eschews both emanationism and creationism,¹¹ understood in their crystallized forms: He neither claims that the world proceeds from the One as an eternal emanation which is necessary in itself, nor that the world is a strictly contingent creation which God originates *ex nihilo* by His will. Transposing the problem

¹⁰ J. JANSSENS (1997) correspondingly observes: “[As] soon as one starts to deal in a systematic way with Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysics, one cannot but observe that Ibn Sīnā’s major aim is to combine a metaphysics of necessity with a metaphysics of contingency, or, expressed in other words, between emanation and creation” (p. 456). For his part, R. WISNOVSKY (2003a) argues that Ibn Sīnā’s overarching concern is rather to solve the tension in Neoplatonism between Plato and Aristotle’s cosmologies resulting “from seeing God as both final and efficient cause, as causally self-sufficient but also causally productive” (p. 261). While his analysis does reveal that what he has termed the ‘Ammonian synthesis’ is foundational to the elaboration of Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysical system, this does not, however, override the fact that Ibn Sīnā indeed describes God’s relation to the universe both in terms of necessary emanation (*fayḍ*), as the eternal outpouring of existence from the One, and creation *ex nihilo* – or origination (*ibdāʿ*) – as the prevention of absolute nonexistence in all that exists by His will.

¹¹ D. R. BLUMENTHAL (1980) outlines this tension: “On the one hand, the Scriptural traditions taught that God was radically different from this world, that His being and the being of all of creation had nothing in common, that He was absolutely transcendent. On the other hand, the emanationist traditions taught that God and the world were in some way continuous, that He had let something (of Himself) overflow into reality, and hence that His being and the being of creation did have something in common” (p. 163); see A. HYMAN (1987), p. 73.

from its traditional temporal frame to the domain of the essence,¹² Ibn Sīnā rather holds *both* that the universe proceeds from the One as an eternal emanation which is necessary by His will, *and* that it is a contingent creation which God originates *ex nihilo* in itself.

Neither giving way to a monistic identification of God with the universe nor yielding to a theistic rigor which would deny all participation of creatures in the reality of the divine, Ibn Sīnā therefore achieves a conjunction of opposites which transcends their incompatibility while fulfilling, in its own terms, their respective exigencies. L. GARDET (1951) has observed this conjunctive tendency in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics:

[N]ous avons vu déjà la position des Ash'arites, et leur tendance à affirmer le néant radical, le néant ontologique de la créature devant Dieu [...]. En face d'eux, les *falāsifa* successeurs d'Ibn Sīnā, et les *ṣūfīs* monistes des siècles postérieurs, professeront que Dieu seul existe, et que tout n'est que des modalités de l'existence divine. [...] Les théologiens orthodoxes anéantissent le créé devant le Créateur; les mystiques hétérodoxes intègrent la création en Dieu [...]. – Ibn Sīnā, semble-t-il, s'est efforcé de réaliser un moyen terme : repoussant l'anéantissement ontologique de la créature, et sauvegardant cependant la contingence ontologique de la créature, et donc, en un sens, sa distinction avec le Créateur. Mais cet anéantissement ontologique, il le nie non seulement en fait, mais en droit, et pose l'existentialisation des possibles comme une nécessité éternelle et absolue du plein épanouissement en acte de l'essence divine (p. 68).

In striking this fine balance, Ibn Sīnā can thereby safeguard both God's transcendence from the world as well as His providence for its perfect order through an intricate analysis of the modalities of existence – positing God as the sole Necessary Existent in His essence, all other existents being necessary through Him, yet ever contingent in themselves.¹³

¹² O. LIZZINI (2011) writes: “In eliminating the temporal dimension from divine causation and transposing [the focus of] attention from time to possibility, Avicenna transformed the criterion which determines the freedom and will of the cause” [original in Italian] (p. 289); see also A. HYMAN (1987), p. 87, n. 33.

¹³ Note that Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between possibility and potentiality in that a thing ceases to be potential when it is actualized, while remaining possible or contingent even when it is realized as necessary of existence through another; see A. IVRY (1984), p. 163; F. RAHMAN (1990), p. 41.

Ibn Sīnā firmly denies that God emanates the universe by necessity of His nature, in the sense imputed to him by al-Ghazālī, Maimonides, and Aquinas, as though God were devoid of knowledge and will.¹⁴ “But what is willed by the First,” Ibn Sīnā writes, “is not [willed] in the manner in which [something] is willed by us, where He would have a purpose regarding that which proceeds from Him.”¹⁵ In *Origin and Return*, Ibn Sīnā accordingly designates his conception of God’s relation to the universe as a middle-way between necessary emanation and voluntary creation. He writes:

The existents’ existence does not proceed from the Necessary Existent in a manner devoid of will, as though existents were to follow His existence [in such a way that] there would be no will and generosity. That is unthinkable. [...] The truth is rather something between two alternatives (*bal l-ḥaqq amr bayna l-amrayn*): that the whole proceeds from Him, with His contentment and by His willing the existence of the whole from Himself, as consequent upon Himself; just so, His existence is not for the sake of what is existentiated from Him, and the existence of the whole from Him does not occur by way of consequence devoid of will. His will, as we have asserted, is His intellection of the good which is generated from Him, according to its order; though not by an intention (*qaṣd*) comparable to ours {ll. 20-1; 6-9} (pp. 32-3).

That is to say, for Ibn Sīnā God is satisfied with the universe that proceeds at once from Him, and wills it; even so, God does not intend *in itself* what proceeds from Him, although it does not follow from this that God blindly generates the universe as a consequent of His nature. In Ibn Sīnā’s worldview, nothing in creation constitutes a purpose for God, who wills all things not in themselves but only through His own essence – as their First Principle.

¹⁴ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Metaphysics* IX.4: “The coming to be of the whole from Him is not by way of nature, such that the existence of the whole would come to be from Him with neither knowledge (*maʿrifā*) nor satisfaction (*riḍā*) on His part” (p. 327). R. ACAR (2004a) has discussed in particular the Thomist critique of Ibn Sīnā’s theory of the divine creative action as a natural act devoid of volition. His paper demonstrates that “the pairs of opposites [used by some contemporary scholars]: necessary emanation versus creation, eternal versus created universe, God as natural agent versus God as free creator” (pp. 65-6), obscure the fact that Ibn Sīnā explicitly characterizes the divine creative act as combining both necessity and volition. In his paper, ACAR shows that for Ibn Sīnā God creates not by nature but by a free and voluntary act which “cannot be directed to an end other than God” (p. 69).

¹⁵ *Metaphysics* VIII.7, pp. 294-5.

Ibn Sīnā's view of God as knowing Himself essentially, and the universe all at once in Himself as its First Principle – *i.e.*, not directly as existing beyond Himself – is the cornerstone of his philosophical theology. This conception, although not properly Aristotelian, can be traced to Themistius' commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics Lambda*, whose import Ibn Sīnā explicitly acknowledges in his own notes on the text of the Stagirite:

The merit of Themistius is to clearly state that the First Principle intelligizes (*ya'qil*) His essence, then intelligizes all things from His essence, so that He intelligizes the intelligible realm all at once, without any need for transition or passage from one intelligible to another. He does not intelligize things as objects that would be outside Him, such that He would intelligize them from them, as is the case for us with the sensibles, but He intelligizes them from His essence {ll. 6-9} (p. 57).¹⁶

A concurrent source of influence for Ibn Sīnā's conception of the Intellect as knowing itself essentially, and all intelligibles through itself (*bi-dhātihī*) due to its abstraction from matter – as opposed to sense perception wherein matter produces a rift between knower and known – is the Arabic version of Plotinus' *Enneads* (IV-VI), spuriously titled the *Theology of Aristotle*:

The Intellect is all things, as we have often said; so when the Intellect intelligizes (*ya'qil*) its essence it intelligizes all things. That being so, we say that when the Intellect sees itself, it sees all things, and so is its real self in act, since it is only on itself and not on anything else that it is casting its gaze, so as to encompass all things other than itself. [...] When the Intellect is in the intelligible world it does not cast its gaze on anything outside itself but only on itself, and when it is in a world not its own, *i.e.*, the sensible world, it casts its gaze now on the things and now on itself alone {ll. 19-20; 1-2, 7-9} (pp. 32-3).

While in *Metaphysics Lambda* IX Aristotle famously describes God as “thought (*noēsis*) thinking itself” (1074b21), he provides no further indication as to whether God *also* has knowledge of

¹⁶ In Themistius' words: “It has become evident from all this that God is the First Principle, and that He at once knows His essence and all that of which He is the Principle. In possessing His own essence He is also the Possessor (*Mālik*) of all that whose substance is due to Him; [His] intelligence and what is intelligized by Him are but one [and the same] thing. Now, the First Intelligence intelligizes the world; for when He [...] intelligizes His own essence He intelligizes Himself as He is. Thus, from His own essence he intelligizes that He is the Cause and Principle of all things” {ll. 10-4} (Commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*, p. 21).

other things, let alone as to the modality of such knowledge. As a result, the premise to Aristotle's reasoning – “[the intellect must think] either itself or something else” (1074b22)¹⁷ – has led numerous interpreters to conclude that the God of Aristotle is blissfully ignorant of the world, acting merely as its Final Cause, and ordering the world solely by virtue of His being its supreme object of love. The account of W. K. C. GUTHRIE (1950) exemplifies this reading:

God, wrapped in eternal self-contemplation and indifferent to the world, nevertheless calls forth by his presence the latent powers of nature, which strive in their various ways to achieve form and carry out their proper functions in imitation of the one supreme and eternal active being. God does not go out to the world, but the world cannot help going out to him. That is their relationship, summed up in another pregnant phrase: κινεῖ ὡς ἐρώμενον – God moves as a beloved moves the lover. He is the supreme object of desire (p. 366).¹⁸

Themistius' solution, paralleled in Plotinus' *Enneads*,¹⁹ relieves *Metaphysics Lambda IX* of the absurd implications which may be drawn from Aristotle's cursory remarks, as though God were, in the words of R. NORMAN (1969), “a sort of heavenly Narcissus, who looks around for the perfection which He wishes to contemplate, finds nothing to rival His own self, and settles into a posture of permanent self-admiration” (pp. 63–4). With Themistius, God knows Himself,

¹⁷ As W. D. ROSS (1959) reasons, for Aristotle “that God should know Himself and that He should know other things, are alternatives, and in affirming the first alternative he implicitly denies the second” (p. 179). T. DE KONINCK (1994) remarks that although “this either/or is pure invention, or misconception” (p. 473), it has nonetheless become part of what S. CLARK (1975) has called the “orthodox interpretation” (p. 178).

¹⁸ Likewise, as C. PIAT (1903) eloquently puts it: “Tel est le Dieu d'Aristote [...]. C'est assez qu'il soit vu pour être aimé, et qu'il soit aimé pour répandre partout le charme efficace de sa beauté. Mais aussi, comme ce Dieu a dû s'appauvrir pour se purifier! et quelle effrayante solitude que la sienne!” (p. 120); see B. RUSSELL (1945), p. 169; F. M. CORNFORD (1950), p. 101; L. GARDET (1951), p. 71.

¹⁹ It is noteworthy that this passage from the *Enneads* [V.3, 6, 5ff] may itself have been the source of Themistius' conception of the Aristotelian Intellect as knowing itself and all things through itself. In S. PINES' (1987) view, “[it] is more than probable that Themistius' conception of his God was influenced directly or indirectly by Plotinus' description of the *Nous*” (p. 277); likewise, R. BRAGUE (1999) writes: “Thémistius expose une solution élégante, et qui restera classique. Il adapte au Dieu d'Aristote une théorie exposée par Plotin à propos de l'Intellect (*Nous*). Dieu connaît autre chose que lui sans pour autant 'sortir' de soi. [...] L'idée que Dieu, se connaissant, connaît tout, applique un principe général platonicien: 'qui se connaît soi-même connaît toutes choses' [ἄλλο γὰρ ὅτι ὁ ἑαυτὸν γνοῦς τὰ πάντα οἶδεν {l. 15} (Hermias of Alexandria, *Commentary on Phaedrus*, p. 31)]” (p. 37).

and His self-knowing is at once knowledge of Himself as the First Principle of all things, and hence knowledge of all things through Himself as their First Principle.

For Plotinus, however, this notion does not pertain to the One, since in his analysis the hyperbolic simplicity and self-sufficiency of the One absolutely preclude both knowledge and existence: the One is beyond existence, unknowing and unknowable.²⁰ Plotinus therefore attributes knowledge and existence not to the One but to the Intellect – as the second hypostasis of the triad One-Intellect-Soul. That said, a number of passages in the Arabic version of the *Enneads*, wherein “the Plotinian One is conflated with the Aristotelian divine Intellect,”²¹ disposed Ibn Sīnā to read (the Arabic) Plotinus’ statement in the light of Themistius’ solution, and accordingly transpose the Neoplatonic conception of the Intellect, which is at once knowledge and existence, to God Himself as Pure Intellect.²²

Where Plotinus ascertains the perfect unity and simplicity of God by exalting the One above all intelligibility, Ibn Sīnā views God’s essence as a Pure Intellect whose attributes are neither internal nor superadded to Him,²³ but identical with His essence, which is none other than His necessary existence. That is to say, for Ibn Sīnā God’s necessary existence, will, perfection, power, life, knowledge, intelligence, wisdom, truth, beauty, splendor, love, goodness,

²⁰ In Plotinus’ words: “The One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing: above all need, it is above the need of the knowing which pertains solely to the Secondary Nature. Knowing is a unitary thing, but defined: the first is One, but undefined: a defined One would not be the One-Absolute: the absolute is prior to the definite” {V.3 [49], 12} (*Enneads*, pp. 379–80).

²¹ C. D’ANCONA (1997), p. 430.

²² The fusion of the hypostases of the Intellect and the One, J. JANSSENS (1987) observes, “is after all no more than the full development of a tendency already present in [Ibn Sīnā’s] Arabic Neoplatonic sources” (p. 258).

²³ Ibn Sīnā writes in the *Throne*: “The attributes [of the Necessary Existent] are not superadded to His essence. [...] And if it is said that His attributes are [...] internal to the constitution of [His] essence and that the existence of [His essence] without these attributes is inconceivable, then [His] essence would be compounded and its unity divided” {ll. 10, 16–8} (p. 85).

generosity,²⁴ all consist in the same unitary essence – His pure act of being – and while in other existents these indicate distinct attributes, they denote no such multiplicity in God.²⁵

In Him, it is therefore one thing to be, to know, to will, and to bestow existence on all things:

The will of the Necessary Existent does not differ [in essence] from His knowledge (*‘ilm*), nor does it differ in concept (*mashūm*) from His knowledge. For we have shown that the knowledge belonging to Him is identical with the will that belongs to Him. Likewise, it has become evident that the power belonging to Him consists in His essence being an intellectual perceiver (*‘āqila*) of the whole, by an intellection which is a principle of the whole, not derived from the whole, and a principle in itself, not dependent on the existence of anything. This will, in the form we have ascertained – which is not connected with a purpose (*gharad*) within the emanation of existence – is nothing other than emanation itself. And this is generosity (*jūd*). Now, we have ascertained for you [the state of affairs] regarding the matter of [divine] generosity, and, if you remember it, you would know that this will is itself generosity (*Metaphysics* VIII.7, pp. 295-6).

In envisioning God’s intellection of all things as identical with the emanation of their existence,²⁶ Ibn Sīnā can therefore harness Themistius’ solution to his conception of the divine creative act: in knowing His own necessary existence by primary intention, God knows all things in Himself as their First Principle by secondary intention, and thereby emanates the necessary existence in which all things partake, according to their proper place and rank in the universal order of divine providence.

This conception of the relation between God and the universe, wherein all things are known by God in view of the necessity of existence which belongs to His essence alone, finds

²⁴ These attributes are here listed *in extenso* to signify that all these meanings are simultaneously implied in Ibn Sīnā’s conception of God. For a discussion of Ibn Sīnā’s view of the Necessary Existent as Pure Unity, Truth, Good, Intelligence, Love, Wisdom, Generosity, Rich, King and Light, see I. R. NETTON (1994), pp. 149-62.

²⁵ “Life, in Him, is none other than knowledge. And none of these [attributes] are other than His essence. [...] So it has become evident that the concepts of life, knowledge, power, generosity, will, of which we speak as regards the Necessary Existent are but one [and the same] concept. They are neither attributes of His essence, nor parts of His essence” {ll. 22; 17-8} (*Origin and Return*, pp. 20-1); “Not one of [His attributes] necessitates at all either multiplicity or difference in His essence” (*Metaphysics* VIII.7, p. 296); “He has no members that divide Him: He is all a face by His beauty, all a hand by His generosity” {ll. 2-3} (*Alive, Son of Awake*, p. 21).

²⁶ “Such is the existentiation (*ijād*) of the whole: in Him, [intellectual] perception and the disposition (*tahayyu*) for existentiation have but one meaning” {l. 21} (*Origin and Return*, p. 20).

no place in the aforementioned debate opposing emanationism and creationism: for Ibn Sīnā, the world is not necessary in itself, and yet God necessitates it; just so, the world is not willed in itself, and yet God wills it. Beyond the natural images of a radiant sun or a gushing stream which exemplify the continuity and semblance of cause and effect on the one hand, and an anthropomorphic representation of voluntary agency which stresses the distinction and dissimilarity between the Creator and His creatures on the other,²⁷ Ibn Sīnā strikes a middle-way which both transcends and conjoins these two alternatives – envisioning the divine creative act as pure generosity (*al-jūd al-mahd*), that is, as a beneficent act devoid of intention (*qaṣd*) or end (*ghāya*) beyond the act itself.

In his metaphysical works, Ibn Sīnā distinguishes between two kinds of beneficent acts: the first is an act for which the benefactor derives compensation, and the second, for which the benefactor seeks nothing in return. In the opinion of the masses, Ibn Sīnā remarks, it is sufficient for a man to be called generous that he seeks no apparent gain in compensation for his act, such as money, goods, or other tangible benefits. That is because common people do not recognize “gratitude, praise, a good name, and the rest of the states deemed good” as compensations, *i.e.*, as benefits exchangeable in a transaction.²⁸ Hence, according to Ibn Sīnā if a man

²⁷ As F. BRUNNER (1973) puts it, “l’émánatisme et le créationnisme [...] s’expriment par symboles pour rendre compte de l’origine du monde: ‘émaner’ veut dire ‘s’écouler’, et ‘créer’ veut dire ‘faire’. Dans un cas, il s’agit de ce que nous appelons une représentation physique, et dans l’autre, d’un symbolisme humain” (p. 35).

²⁸ *Metaphysics* VI.5 (p. 231); as in similar passages of *Origin and Return* (p. 32), the *Book of Knowledge* (pp. 100–1) and *Pointers and Reminders* VI. 5 (pp. 555–7), Ibn Sīnā here amplifies an example coined before him by al-Fārābī: “When we give money to others, we get from them honour or pleasure or some other goods with the result that these goods bring about some perfection in us. But the First does not exist for the sake of anything else and not in order that anything else should be brought into existence by Him, so that the purpose of His existence would be to bring about the existence of all the other things in such a way that His existence would have a cause apart from Himself, and it would thus not be the First. [...] But He exists for the sake of His essence” (*Perfect State*, p. 91).

expects no tangible compensation yet still seeks gratitude or praise in return for his act, such a man is not generous. “For the wise man knows,” Ibn Sīnā says, “that anything in which desire intervenes is a profit.”²⁹

In Ibn Sīnā’s analysis, any act which ultimately reverts to the (contingent) essence of an agent, such that his intention is either in terms of his essence or in the interest of his essence, is a mark of deficiency. Even in cases where a benefit is intended for another, if conferring such a benefit is worthier of the agent, whilst omitting it renders him liable to blame, then such an act ultimately “reduces to a purpose connected with his essence, returns to his essence, and reverts to his essence.”³⁰ Any beneficent act which thereby affects its agent, whether in terms of a benefit that returns to him or the averting of a detriment which the act ensures, indicates a deficiency in the agent. “Hence,” Ibn Sīnā states, “every agent who enacts a deed for a purpose that leads to something like a recompense is not generous; and every giver of a form or accident to the recipient and who has another objective [that is to be] attained through the benefit he has bestowed is not generous.”³¹ As Ibn Sīnā further explains in the *Book of Knowledge*, “[generosity (*jūd*)] consists in that goodness (*nīkī*) proceeds from a thing by will, without there being a purpose (*gharad*). Such is the act of the Necessary Existent. Hence His act is pure generosity (*jūd-i maḥḍ*)” {ll. 9-11} (p. 101).

Ibn Sīnā’s claim that the Necessary Existent has no intention in conferring existence and its perfections to all things should not, however, be taken to mean that he regards God

²⁹ {ll. 7-8} (*Book of Knowledge*, p. 101). An Arabic version of this passage is found in Ibn Sīnā’s *Notes* (pp. 27-8).

³⁰ *Metaphysics* VI.5, p. 233.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

as altogether devoid of intention. Indeed, Ibn Sīnā time and again affirms that God intends, not what is beyond Himself, but His own essence.³² This may at first glance seem incongruous, given that Ibn Sīnā precisely defines generosity as an act devoid of an intention which reverts to the essence of the agent. But this apparent problem is soon cleared if we bear in mind that for Ibn Sīnā the deficiency implicated in an agent’s having an intention which reverts to himself involves his intending a thing as an intermediary between his own essence (as agent), and his own essence (as end); in other words, that the agent apprehends or wills a thing through the latter’s contingent essence, as separate from his own.³³ For Ibn Sīnā, God intends the necessary existence that belongs to His essence in such a way that no contingent essence can become an intermediary between God and Himself – and so introduce duality in Him – as though His creative act were to proceed from Him to another, and affect Him in return. And just as for Ibn Sīnā God intends only His essence, so in conferring existence and the perfections of existence on His creatures God intends nothing beyond Himself.³⁴ Ibn Sīnā writes in his *Notes*: “Generosity (*jūd*) consists in that the generous [agent] confers benefit on others than Him in a perfect manner, without having a purpose (*gharad*) beyond generosity” {l. 6} (§527, p. 302). In sum, for Ibn Sīnā God intends only His necessary existence, whereby all

³² Ibn Sīnā accordingly states in his *Notes*: “The aim (*ghāya*) of [God’s] act is His essence” {l. 3} (§3, p. 15).

³³ This would be the case if God were related to the universe through sensation or imagination: “It is not possible that the Necessary Existent would intelligize (*ya’qil*) things from the things [themselves] [...], [for] each sensible and imaginative form is perceived inasmuch as it is [...] [perceived] by an organ which is divisible. And just as the affirmation of a plurality of acts by the Necessary Existent [would amount to attributing] imperfection to Him, so would the affirmation of a plurality of acts of intellection. Rather, the Necessary Existent intelligizes all things in a universal way; yet, despite this, no individual thing escapes [His knowledge], and ‘not [even] the weight of an atom in the heavens and the earth escapes Him’ (Q 34:3). This is one of the marvels whose conception requires the subtlety of a gifted natural disposition (*lutf qarīḥa*)” (*Metaphysics* VIII.6, pp. 287–8).

³⁴ Ibn Sīnā affirms in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*: “The intellection [of the First] is His intellection of His essence, and He intelligizes things from His essence, not from them” {l. 10} (p. 71).

creatures receive the necessity of existence in which they are created to partake as contingent existents, but which in reality belongs to His essence alone.

Given that for Ibn Sīnā all creatures are necessary of existence through God while contingent of existence in themselves, and as God at once knows, wills, and existentiates them not in themselves but through Himself, it follows that the Necessary Existent emanates existents not as contingent in their essence – as when considered strictly in themselves³⁵ – but as necessary through His essence.³⁶ For Ibn Sīnā, God is the Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) from whom the reality of all things proceeds, so that other existents are real solely in relation to Him, unreal (*bāṭil*) in themselves: God emanates all things in their real aspect, as they necessarily exist through Him.³⁷ The distinction between these two facets of every creature – necessary of existence through another (*wājib al-wujūd bi-ghayrihi*) and contingent of existence in its essence (*mumkin al-wujūd*

³⁵ In the words of F. RAHMAN (1981), “Ibn Sīnā proclaims recurrently [...] that all contingents, when looked at *per se*, i.e. without reference to their cause are only possible and not necessary. This is the very meaning of contingency” (p. 10); G. VAJDA (1951) remarks in a footnote to his French translation of Ibn Sīnā’s commentary on the *Theologia*: “la contingence [...] des choses n’est pas à proprement parler dans la pensée que Dieu a d’elles puisque aussi bien cette pensée leur confère nécessairement l’être” (p. 389, n. 1). After all, following God’s emanation of the First Intelligence, contingency arises from the latter’s self-contemplation, which as such is essentially posterior to its existentiation as necessary through God.

³⁶ As Ibn Sīnā writes in *Metaphysics* IX.1, “the Principle of the whole is an essence necessary in its existence, and what proceeds from the Necessary Existent is necessary” (p. 302); likewise, he explains in *Origin and Return*: “The existence of His necessary consequents, insofar as they emanate from Him, consists in the necessity of their existence, as well as in His knowledge of the necessity of their existence” {ll. 17-8} (p. 19).

³⁷ Ibn Sīnā explains: “The Necessary Existent is then always real in Himself, while the contingent existent is real through another, unreal in itself” (*Metaphysics* I.8, p. 38); “If it is said [of God] that He is real, this refers to the necessity of His existence; for a thing is either necessary of existence, impossible of existence, or contingent of existence. As for the Necessary of Existence, He is the Absolute Real (*al-Ḥaqq al-Muṭlaq*), while the impossible of existence is the absolute unreal. The contingent of existence, considered [in itself], is unreal; while with regard to its cause, necessary; and with regard to the removal of its cause, impossible, so that it ceases to exist and becomes nonexistent” {ll. 6-11} (*Throne*, p. 96). L. GARDET (1951) observes: “dans le système avicennien, et par suite d’une évidente influence néoplatonicienne, tout possible a dans son essence, par cela seul qu’il n’est pas l’Être Nécessaire, une non-postulation à l’être qui devient comme une orientation positive au non-être” (pp. 46-7).

bi-dhātihī)³⁸ – is key to Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the divine creative act; and it is significant that in his analysis these are not two components (as in the case of form and matter), but rather two ontological *perspectives* on creatures.³⁹ In Ibn Sīnā’s view, the necessary existence through another and contingent existence in itself of all created existents – from the loftiest angel to the lowliest clod of earth – are therefore distinct only insofar as any created existent can be considered either as receiving from another the necessity of its existence and the reality of its essence, or as possessing from itself the contingency of its existence and the unreality of its essence.⁴⁰ In other words, as receiving its proper good and perfection from God *via* the universal order of divine providence – or in isolation, as possessing from itself nothing but evil and deficiency.

Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on the *Theologia*:

Every thing considered in itself, severed from the facet of its relation to the divine Command, is deserving of abolition (*buṭlān*), which is the extremity of evil, while the existence and the good proper to it comes to it only from Him. Thus, every thing is a mixture of good and evil: considered in itself, it is deficient, devoid of good; while considered [in the aspect of its dependence on]

³⁸ For a developmental analysis of this crucial distinction within the ‘matrix of distinctions’ in Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysics, see R. WISNOVSKY (2003), chapters 11–14, pp. 197–263.

³⁹ While existence as such is not divided, for Ibn Sīnā the adherence of existence to a quiddity produces these two perspectives: “Insofar as [existence] is considered as existence, you cannot characterize it specifically as contingent or as necessary. However, its adherence to the quiddity is contingent insofar as it adheres to the quiddity, while necessary [as it proceeds] from the First, who is the Necessary” {ll. 16–8} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, p. 61).

⁴⁰ “Everything, with the exception of the One [...], obtains existence from another, becoming through it an existent (*ays*), while itself a nonexistent (*lays*). This is the meaning of a thing’s being created – that is, attaining existence from another. It has absolute nonexistence which it deserves in terms of itself; it is deserving of nonexistence not only in terms of its form without its matter, or in terms of its matter without its form, but in its entirety” (*Metaphysics* VIII.3, p.272); “As for the rest of things, their quiddities, as you have known, do not deserve existence; rather, in themselves, and with the severing of their relation to the Necessary Existent, they deserve nonexistence. For this reason, they are all unreal (*bāṭil*) in themselves, real [only] through Him and, with respect to the facet [of existence] that follows Him, realized. For this reason, ‘all things are perishing (*hālik*) except His Face’ (Q 28:88)” (*Ibid.*, VIII.6, p.284); “And when one considers anything in its essence, notwithstanding what it acquires from the First Real, then it is not necessary (*darūri*) of existence, but contingent of existence. And if it were possible for the relation [between it and the First Real] to be severed, then it would disappear and be abolished (*buṭul*). For every thing, considered in its essence, is unreal and ‘perishing except His Face’, the First Real, He [who is] the Real by His essence, and who adorns (*kāsi*) [all] things with the reality of their existence – great is His power!” {ll. 18–9; 1–3} (Commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*, pp. 53, 55).

the First, it receives the good according to its rank and degree. [...] And there is no contradiction in [asserting] that a thing is contingent with respect to its essence, while necessary due to another. As for the First, He is necessary due to Himself – great is His majesty! {ll. 5-9, 14-5} (p. 46).⁴¹

According to Ibn Sīnā, any created existent is thus necessary of existence and real only insofar as its essence partakes in the order of divine providence which God knows, wills, and existentiates at once through Himself, severed from which it ‘deserves’ nonexistence and unreality. The necessity and reality of creatures thus wholly depend on God’s creative act – both as the bestowal of their existence and perfections, and as the prevention of their absolute nonexistence.

The two traditionally incompatible conceptions of the relationship between God and the universe which Ibn Sīnā conjoins in his metaphysical worldview may thus be considered in view of these two facets of all created existents: insofar as God bestows existence and the perfections of existence on a creature, it is necessarily emanated; insofar as God prevents the absolute nonexistence of its contingent essence, it is created *ex nihilo*. In these terms, while God’s creative act is in itself unitary, it has two facets with respect to His creatures.⁴² As Ibn Sīnā states in his commentary on the *Theologia*, “[the process whereby the whole comes to existence through the First’s] intellection of His own essence, and of the excellent order in the existence of the whole, [...] is called a ‘gushing forth’ (*inbijās*) when one considers existents [as proceeding] from the First, and ‘creation’ (*ibdāʾ*) [when one considers] the First in relation

⁴¹ F. RAHMAN (1981) explains that for Ibn Sīnā “the nonexistence of the thing viewed in itself and the bestowal of existence by God are not contradictory to each other and, therefore, co-exist. This means that the inherent nonexistence of the thing persists during, and is not removed by, the bestowal of existence by God. In more direct language, a contingent can never shed its contingency at any stage of its career and become self-necessary like God” (p. 12).

⁴² That is to say, these two facets appear with the creature, not in God’s creative act: “The beginning of duality in the originated [being] (*mubdaʾ*) – whatever it is – is that from itself it holds contingency, and from the side of the First Real, existence” {ll. 18-9} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, p. 60).

to them” {ll. 21-4} (p. 62). This statement indicates that while the language of emanation in Ibn Sīnā’s accounts of the divine creative act refers to God’s existentiation of all things as necessary of existence through Him,⁴³ the language of creation, for its part, pertains to the prevention of absolute nonexistence whereby all creatures, which in themselves do not ‘deserve’ existence, are originated as contingent existents.⁴⁴

Ibn Sīnā is adamant that the existentiation of the universe does not entail any essential rapport between the Necessary Existent and contingent existents: God emanates existents insofar as they are necessary of existence through His essence, but it does not follow from this that contingent existents *as such* proceed from Him. Ibn Sīnā explains in *Metaphysics* VIII.7:

⁴³ J. JANSSENS (1997) remarks that among the terms used by Ibn Sīnā to denote ‘emanation’ (*ḥayḍ, tajallī, inbi‘āth, ṣudūr, inbijās*), “his [terminological] preference goes clearly to *fāḍa*, and its derived notions. [In contrast with the *Theologia*,] which favours the stronger notion of *inbajasa*, [Ibn Sīnā] never posits that the created things are generated ‘by God’s being alone.’ [...] In other words, the realization of the created realm does not belong to the core of the divine essence. Thus being a ‘concomitant,’ it is fundamentally something accidental” (p. 458). Note that Ibn Sīnā’s uncommon use of *inbijās* in the passage cited above may be explained not only as a reflecting the terminology of the commented text, but also in that its being directly set against the notion of *ibdā’* both emphasizes their contrast and tempers the stronger, positive connotation of the term *inbijās*.

⁴⁴ “[The First Cause] is pre-eminent in His causality because He prevents the caused thing from having absolute nonexistence. Hence, this Cause is the one which bestows on things perfect existence. And this is the intention (*ma’nā*) which the sages call ‘origination’ (*ibdā’*), *i.e.*, the existentiation of a thing after absolute nonexistence. In fact, to the caused in itself it belongs to be a nonexistent (*lays*), while out of its cause it belongs to it to be an existent (*ays*)” (*Metaphysics* VI.2, p. 203); “Every thing is originated (*mubda’*) from that One [...], for the originated is that which comes to be after not having been [*i.e.*, not by temporal, but rather by essential posteriority]” (*Ibid.* VIII.3, p. 272); “All that is other than Him [...] is preceded by essential nonexistence, for ‘every thing is perishing’ (Q 28:88) and nonexistent in itself, and its only existence is from the Creator” {ll. 15, 17; 1} (*Throne*, pp. 97-8); “*ibdā’* is the relation between the Originator and the originated as far as this existence is concerned” {l. 4} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, p. 60); “*ibdā’* consists in the perpetual donation of existence and in the perpetual prevention of nonexistence” {ll. 17-8} (*Origin and Return*, p. 77). R. ACAR (2005) explains: “Avicenna prefers the Arabic term *ibdā’* to express the idea of creation [...]. Creation as expressed by the term *ibdā’* means, for Avicenna, to give being in the most comprehensive sense of the word. It is more comprehensive than similar terms, because it takes into account the existence of all things. [...] All things are absolutely nonexistent by themselves, and they exist on account of their cause, God. [...] Things exist after not having existed, but this posteriority is an essential posteriority; it is not a temporal posteriority. [...] Thus, creation is absolutely out of nothing. It is the prevention of nonexistence in the absolute sense” (pp. 170-2).

If you make [contingent existents] concomitants of His essence, then there would occur to His essence that which would not be a necessary existent with respect to them – [this] because of [His essence's] adhesion to the contingent existent. [...] You must not presume that His essence is taken conjointly to some relation [with a thing] whose existence is contingent. For He is not a Necessary Existent inasmuch as [His essence] is a cause for the existence of Zayd, but with respect to [His essence] itself" (p. 294).

In other words, as they proceed from God, according to Ibn Sīnā creatures are not contingent, but necessary; and just as God does not know, will, and existentiate creatures in themselves, so they are not necessary in themselves, but only in relation to Him. Hence, while God emanates existents as necessary through His essence, when considered strictly in themselves their existentiation consists in nothing but the prevention of their absolute nonexistence. In Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical worldview, there thus exists no positive rapport between God's necessary essence and the contingent essence of His creatures,⁴⁵ save by way of a double negation: He prevents their absolute nonexistence.

Ibn Sīnā's conception of God's creative act as devoid of intention beyond the act itself, that is, as pure generosity, can therefore be regarded as mediating the two facets of the rapport between the Creator and His creatures: on the one hand, God's bestowal of existence and its perfections relates all creatures to Him – thus establishing their participation in the necessity of existence which overflows from His essence; on the other hand, the absence of intention in God beyond His creative act negates on His part any essential involvement with His creatures, thereby ascertaining His exaltation above all contingency. God's act of pure generosity – as the simultaneous emanation of existents which are necessary through Him, and creation *ex*

⁴⁵ "The Necessary Existent has nothing in common with the quiddity of anything, since the quiddity of anything which is not Him postulates the contingency of existence" {ll. 2-3} (*Pointers and Reminders* IV.24, p. 477).

nihilo of these existents in terms of their intrinsic contingency – thus relates all things to Him in terms of existence, just as it negates all rapport to Him in terms of essence. In sum, for Ibn Sīnā God’s creative act consists both in the existential *relation* of all creatures to Him, as well as in the *negation* of any essential rapport between God and His creatures. Ibn Sīnā explains:

[It has now become evident] that, if you ascertain the truth about Him, [you will find] that, after [the fact] of His individual existence, He is only described by means of negating all similarities to Him and affirming to Him all relations. For all things are from Him, while He shares nothing in common with what [proceeds] from Him. He is the Principle of all things, but He is not any of the things that are posterior to Him (*Metaphysics* VIII.5, p. 283).

In these terms, Ibn Sīnā’s conception of God’s pure generosity conjoins both the attributes of relation and negation⁴⁶ with respect to creatures – as partaking in necessary existence while being created *ex nihilo* as far as their contingent essence is concerned. Since Ibn Sīnā equates existence and its perfections with goodness,⁴⁷ their bestowal is the beneficent act *par excellence*. And as the Generous has no intention beyond His act of generosity, His creative act in no way binds Him to the created existents which partake in His beneficence, and so does not affect the transcendent simplicity of His essence.

⁴⁶ “The True First [...] does not exist for the sake of anything; but rather, all things exist for the sake of the perfection of His essence, as a consequence (*tābiʿ*) of His existence, and are acquired (*mustafād*) from His existence. [...] His attributes are reducible to negation (*salb*), relation (*idāfa*), and the combination of these two” {ll. 19-20; 2} (*Throne*, pp. 86, 88); “If it is said of Him ‘generous,’ he would have meant it by way of this relation with negation, with the addition of yet another negation, namely, that He does not seek an objective (*gharad*) for Himself” (*Metaphysics* VIII.7, p. 296); “Concomitants are both relative and negative. Relative concomitants are more firmly defined than negative ones. But the most perfectly definable concomitant is one that combines both relative and negative aspects, and this is the case when the ipseity (*huwīya*) is the Deity (*Ilāh*); for that which is not the Deity is derived (*yunsiba*) from Him, whereas the Deity is not derived from another. Only the Pure Deity is like this among existents, for it is a relative [concomitant] that others derive from Him, and a negative [concomitant] that He is not derived from another” {ll. 14-6; 1-2} (Commentary on the chapter of *Sincerity*, pp. 106-7).

⁴⁷ “Existence is, hence, goodness; and the perfection of existence is the goodness of existence” (*Met.* VIII.6, p. 284).

In his article “Creation and Emanation in Ibn Sīnā,” J. JANSSENS (1997) remarks that Ibn Sīnā “undoubtedly has imposed upon himself a very demanding and risky task” in attempting to conjoin a theory of creation *ex nihilo* with an emanative scheme. Conceding that “his theory has some appealing force in itself,” JANSSENS has however noted two points of tension which, he writes, “appear to be of such a fundamental nature that they cannot be ignored.” The first tension has to do with Ibn Sīnā’s identification of thinking and creating in God. As a result, JANSSENS observes, “a strict determinism seems unavoidable, and there is no real space left for any act of choice” (p. 476). It is significant that in his rigorous study of the terms used by Ibn Sīnā to designate creation and emanation JANSSENS makes no mention of the theory of divine intellection which, as we have seen, Ibn Sīnā inherited from (Plotinus *via*) Themistius. Given that Ibn Sīnā identifies knowing and creating in God, this notion should therefore be central to any assessment of Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the divine creative act. For Ibn Sīnā, all existents are determined by God’s bestowal of necessary existence, but God is not determined in return by what He necessitates, precisely because He does not existentiate His creatures *in themselves*. No creature ever possesses in itself the existence and the perfections of existence which God bestows: all must receive it from Him unceasingly, through the necessary order that proceeds from Him.⁴⁸ Necessary existence is thus continuously granted – so long as an existent has a role to play in the universal order of divine providence – but is never possessed, for God alone necessarily exists in His essence.

⁴⁸ “Every perfection is His, [derived] from Him, and is preceded by His essence [...]. Every perfection in another [than Him] is nonexistent, but awaited (*muntazar*); while [every perfection belonging to Him] has existence and is present” {ll. 3–4, 8–10} (*Throne*, p. 85).

As to the question of choice (*ikhtiyār*), Ibn Sīnā denies in the *Throne* that God chooses anything in the universe, not because He is bound to what necessarily proceeds from Him, but because all that God existentiates *is* His will. In other words, for Ibn Sīnā creatures possess no ontological autonomy; all things exist simultaneously as God knows, wills, and existentiates them through Himself. Ibn Sīnā writes:

Since it is evident that [God has no final cause (*'illa ghā'īya*)], it is then manifest that He is Pure Generosity (*Jawād Maḥḍ*) and Real Perfection (*Kamāl Ḥaqq*); it is [likewise] manifest that the meaning of His self-sufficiency is that He neither approves (*yastahsin*) nor disapproves (*yastaqbih*) of anything. For were He to approve or to disapprove of a thing, then that which is approved of would be existentiated and endure, and would not cease to be; while that which is disapproved of would be abolished" {ll. 4-7} (*Throne*, p. 87).

If God were to necessitate *in themselves* the creatures He existentiates, were He to know them *through them* as in the case of sense perception, He would as a result be bound to the universal determinism of the order He generates. His will and satisfaction with this order could then only be affirmed, as H. A. DAVIDSON (1987) puts it, in a Pickwickian sense.⁴⁹ God would be content with His necessary consequents, but would have no 'say' in the matter. However, as we have observed, for Ibn Sīnā God has no intention beyond His creative act, so that whatever necessarily exists *is* His will – not in itself, but through Him.

⁴⁹ "Plotinus speaks of a 'necessary free will' (*Enneads*, IV, 8, 5); and Avicenna and Averroes speak of the deity's 'eternal will' [...]. But these are Pickwickian senses of *will*" (note 3, p. 2). Using the same sardonic expression, M. M. SHARIF (1963) writes: "the creative activity of God, for Ibn Sīnā, means the eternal emanation or procession of the world, and since the emanation is grounded finally in the intellectual nature of God, it has the character of unalterable rational necessity. Even though al-Ghazālī's criticism which assimilates the divine activity of Ibn Sīnā to the automatic procession of light from the sun and, thus, rejects the appellation of 'act' to God's behaviour, is not quite correct (since according to Ibn Sīnā, God is not only conscious of the procession of the world from Him, but is also satisfied with and 'willing' to it), the term 'creation' is nevertheless used only in a Pickwickian sense, and the term 'act' (in the sense of voluntary action) is also seriously modified, since, as we have said, there is no question of real choice" (pp. 502-3).

As Ibn Sīnā further explains in the *Throne*: “Know that the meaning of providence consists in not resorting to an inclination (*mayl*) or intention (*qaṣd*) in specifying a created thing over another as a good” {ll. 2-3} (p. 93). For Ibn Sīnā, God has no inclination to ‘choose’ one thing over another within the created universe, not because His essence is constrained by the necessity of what He knows, wills, and existentiates, but because everything He necessitates – whatever exists – is so only by His will, which has no object beyond itself. And so for Ibn Sīnā the scope of God’s ‘choice’ is not encompassed by the universe, for all that exists *is* His choice.

The second tension which JANSSENS detects in Ibn Sīnā’s theory of creation, he writes,

is linked with [his] contention that the created Beings are necessary, i.e., necessary with respect to their cause. If every ‘possible in itself’ is ‘necessary by something else’, is any real contingency then still possible? And does this not become even more questionable, when, in a somewhat (Neo-Platonic) fashion, a tendency to non-Being is ascribed to the possible in itself? Surely, an opposite tendency manifests itself, where Ibn Sīnā clearly suggests that the existentializing cause in no way nullifies the possibility, i.e., the contingency of the possible in itself. But I cannot see how these two opposite tendencies can be combined in a perfectly coherent manner (p. 477).

Again, since JANSSENS’ analysis overlooks Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the divine creative act as devoid of intention or end beyond the act itself, his otherwise penetrating analysis cannot fully elucidate this pivotal aspect of Ibn Sīnā’s ontology. For it is by virtue of the fact that God does not existentiate creatures *in themselves* that they retain their inherent contingency (hence the possibility of nonexistence), even as He confers on them the necessity of their existence. Considered strictly in themselves, all creatures are thus for Ibn Sīnā purely contingent and, as such, nonexistent and unreal. While all things are related to God, and thereby realized, through the necessary existence of which they partake according to their proper place and rank in the universal order of divine providence, for Ibn Sīnā there exists no essential relation between the

Necessary Existent in Himself and contingent existents in themselves; in other words, in Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical worldview there exists no positive rapport between God's necessary essence and the contingent essence of His creatures, save by way of a double negation: He prevents their absolute nonexistence.

Having addressed Ibn Sīnā's conception of pure generosity, in the following chapter we will turn to his notion of divine providence (*ināya*) – which he explicitly identifies with generosity.⁵⁰ Just as we have seen that Ibn Sīnā envisions God's creative act as a middle-way between necessary emanation and creation *ex nihilo* – that is, as an act of generosity devoid of intention beyond the act itself – we will now see that Ibn Sīnā's conception of the order of the universe reflects these same existential modalities through a notion of divine providence which correspondingly strikes a middle-way between God's perfect concern for the good of His creatures insofar as they necessarily exist through Him, with His complete detachment from all creatures as contingent in themselves.

⁵⁰ Ibn Sīnā states in *Metaphysics* VI.5: “It is necessary within divine providence – which is generosity – that every contingent existent should be given the good existence [which is proper to it]” (p. 225); in his commentary on the *Theologia*, he also writes: “And inasmuch as it was possible for [the soul to come into this world], it was therefore necessary for its emanation to proceed from divine providence – which is pure generosity” {l. 14} (p. 45).

CHAPTER II

Divine Providence as a Mean between Perfect Concern and Complete Detachment

Let it be known that there is no appeal to His judgment, and no rescinding of His Decree (*qaḍāʾ*). It is necessary to be temperate in attributing good and evil to Him; this is only learned after adopting a middle-way between [the two] extremes (*natawassaṭ bi-taqṣīm ḥāṣir*).

– *Epistle of the Throne* {ll. 13-5} (p. 103)

Ibn Sīnā inherited from late-antique philosophy a conception of divine providence which aims to resolve the tension between the then-dominant Hellenistic worldviews of Epicureanism and Stoicism. At one end of the spectrum, Epicureans saw the gods as transcendent beings that enjoy everlasting beatitude in the divine realm where they reside, without a care for the vicissitudes of the human condition.¹ At the other end, Stoics envisioned the cosmos as animated and minutely ordered by an immanent and all-pervading divine force that designs all things for the greatest benefit of (rational) humans.² Transcendence and complete absence of finality on the one hand, immanence and radical finality on the other, the Epicurean and Stoic doctrines as such constituted two extreme positions in a sharply polarized debate on the rapport between the divine and the world. Stepping into this argument, the third-century Aristotelian commentator Alexander of Aphrodisias put forth a theory of divine providence that

¹ “For the whole race of the gods must necessarily, of itself, enjoy its immortal existence in the most profound tranquillity, far removed and separated from our affairs; since, being free from all pain, exempt from all dangers, powerful itself in its own resources, and wanting nothing of us, it is neither propitiated by services from the good, nor affected with anger against the bad” {ll. 646–60} (Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things* II, pp. 77–8).

² As P. THILLET (2003) explains, “Ce qui caractérise la doctrine stoïcienne de la providence, c’est qu’elle s’étend jusqu’au moindre détail de la réalité. D’une certaine façon cela s’exprime dans le finalisme radical qui veut que tout dans la nature ait été fait pour l’homme, être doué de raison et parent des dieux. [...] Il ne s’agit donc pas d’une intelligence transcendante, qui veillerait d’en haut et de l’extérieur: c’est la présence dans le monde, ou la divinité même du monde qui est la providence [...]. Elle s’étend à tous les détails de l’univers, jusqu’aux plus petites choses mais, singulièrement, elle est aux petits soins pour l’homme” (pp. 32–3).

steers clear of both extreme positions, finding in (his reading of) Aristotle a middle-way that neither exalts the divine above all concern for the world, nor degrades the divine by viewing it as subservient to, or even identical with its order.³

Following his account and refutation of the positions held by Epicureans and Stoics, Alexander writes in his treatise *On Providence*: “On the matter of providence, one must adhere to a specific and distinct viewpoint so as to avoid the error which exists in each of these two. And surely there is no way to find an alternate viewpoint, more truthful and lucid, than that of Aristotle” {ll. 19-21} (p. 10). In his treatise, however, Alexander is not content simply to adopt the conception of providence which, although not properly Aristotelian, had come in his time to be ascribed to the Stagirite; namely, that providence extends only as far down as the sphere of the Moon.⁴ Resisting the Middle-Platonic inclination to resolve the problem of providence by distinguishing between a higher and a lower providence, Alexander is rather concerned in his treatise *On Providence* with distinguishing between the domain where providence *exists*, and the domain where providence *acts*.⁵ Hence, while he maintains that divine providence only *exists* in the supernal realm, Alexander wants to show in this treatise that the

³ As R. W. SHARPLES (1982) accordingly observes, “[Alexander’s] position on the question of divine providence [...] marks an attempt to find a *via media* between the Epicurean denial of any divine concern for the world, on the one hand, and the Stoic view that divine providence governs it in every detail, on the other” (p. 198).

⁴ In Alexander’s words: “The affirmation that providence extends down to the sphere of the Moon signifies only that providence exists up there. [...] It is the divine body as a whole which constitutes, according to [Aristotle’s] doctrine, the totality of the body which ends at the sphere of the Moon. And [that body] is the cause of the action of providence towards things here below” {ll. 17-8, 20-2} (*On Providence*, p. 15).

⁵ P. THILLET (2003) writes: “[Or, notre *Peri Pronoias*,] s’il ne distingue pas deux providences [à la suite des auteurs du moyen platonisme], précise qu’il convient de distinguer le lieu où *existe* la providence de celui où elle *agit*. Le monde supralunaire est celui où existe la providence, et les êtres de ce monde-là n’ont pas besoin que l’action providentielle s’exerce à leur égard. Dans le monde sublunaire, celui de la nature, il est en revanche besoin, pour le maintien de la continuité des espèces, que s’exerce l’action de la providence” (pp. 49-50).

action of providence also extends to the sublunar realm, yet neither by accident and without knowledge or will, nor by primary intention (*‘alā al-qaṣd al-awwal*).⁶ He writes:

To affirm that the providence of God is exerted [by primary intention with respect to sublunar things] amounts to saying that things here below are a final cause for the existence of God, the Mighty and Majestic, [...] and this view appears not only unlikely, but [altogether] impossible. [...] Thus, it is not true that the action belonging to the gods by primary intention is the order and preservation of the world and of things here below that come from them. But these things cannot come from [that world] without their knowledge or will. [...] The generation of these things cannot occur in this way, without the knowledge of the gods, nor can it come from their knowledge without their will {ll. 19-20, 23-4; 9-13} (pp. 16-7).

In Alexander’s Hellenistic context, the divinity, eternity, and necessary existence of heavenly beings were not in question, given its remoteness from the exigencies of Biblical monotheism. As a result, his approach to the problem of divine providence involves no fundamental ontological distinction between the First Principle and other higher principles, just as he does not envision celestial creatures as being themselves in need of divine providence.⁷ For Alexander, providence is thus what effectively *exists* in the supernal realm, corresponding to the circular motions of celestial bodies. His treatise *On Providence* thus centers on how the heavenly realm – which as a whole he conceives as the “divine Body” – *acts* with regards to the earthly realm of generation and corruption.⁸

⁶ As P. THILLET (2003) indicates, “l’un des développements importants du [*Peri Pronoias*] est de montrer que l’action de la providence s’étend au monde sublunaire, et non pas par accident [...], encore que ce ne soit pas de façon première, essentielle [...], en première intention” (p. 43); on the terms ‘*prima intentio*’ and ‘*secunda intentio*’ in Arabic logic, see K. GYEKYE (1971): “The Arabic expression (*‘alā*) *al-qaṣd al-awwal* has two different meanings. It means (i) ‘primarily’ (or, ‘principally’); (ii) it means ‘*prima intentio*’ in respect of a ‘concept’” (p. 38). In this context, ‘primary intention’ corresponds to the first meaning, *i.e.*, as designating an agent’s essential end.

⁷ In this work Alexander focuses on the influence of the supernal realm on sublunar things but does not address the rapport between celestial spheres, higher principles (gods), and the First Principle (God). He assumes that providence *belongs* to the supernal realm, and the divine is referred to both in the singular and plural in the text.

⁸ Alexander explains: “It is in and from the divine Body in its entirety that providence exists, which in Aristotle’s view is the whole Body [of the celestial realm] terminating with the sphere of the Moon. And [that Body] is the cause of the action of providence towards things [here] below” {ll. 20-2} (*On Providence*, p. 15).

Ibn Sīnā's familiarity with Alexander's notion of providence (GK. *pronoia*, AR. *'ināya*)⁹ as well as with debates on the question among commentators is verified in a passage of *Origin and Return* where he discusses the purpose of celestial motions as regards the sublunar realm. Although celestial motion will not be discussed in detail here, this passage is noteworthy as it confirms that Ibn Sīnā indeed perceives the problem of providence as framed in terms of a reconciliation of opposite stances. He writes:

Some have heard Alexander say, apparently, that the diversity in these [celestial] motions and their directions is due to providence towards the generable and corruptible things which exist below the sphere of the Moon. However, when they heard, and learned through reasoning, that it was impossible for celestial motions to be [...] for the sake of their effects, they sought to conjoin (*yajma'ū*) these two doctrines {ll. 16–20} (p. 62).

As a Muslim philosopher, Ibn Sīnā could not have regard supernal creatures as 'gods', in the sense that they would be necessary of existence in themselves, although he certainly employs the term 'divine' (*ilāhī*) to qualify them by virtue of their exalted relation to God. To be sure, for Ibn Sīnā such 'divine' creatures are no less in need of the ceaseless bestowal of their existence and perfections by the Necessary Existent – who alone necessarily exists by His essence, and who bestows on all His creatures the necessity of their existence.

The distinction between essential necessity and contingency thus marks for Ibn Sīnā the fundamental distinction – even ontological chasm – between the Creator and His creatures, whether celestial or earthly. On this point, Ibn Sīnā markedly departs from Alexander inasmuch as he approaches the question of divine providence not in 'spatial' terms, that is, in terms of the domain – celestial or earthly – where a thing exists, but rather on the basis of

⁹ Alexander's treatise *On Providence* was translated from Greek to Arabic (*Fī l-'Ināya*) around the tenth century by Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus (active in Baghdād circa 870–940); see P. THILLET (2003), p. 10.

the existential modalities of a thing's essential nature. That is to say, where Alexander regards divine providence as *existing* in the supernal realm and as being *enacted* in the sublunar realm by secondary intention, Ibn Sīnā envisions divine providence as *existing* in God's simple and unalterable Decree (*qaḍā'*) – *i.e.*, in His existentiating knowledge of the whole through Himself as its First Principle – but as being *enacted* in the whole by secondary intention, as the gradual unfolding of causes governed by His Determination (*qadar*), in which all creatures participate insofar as they necessarily exist by His will.

For Ibn Sīnā, the question of God's providential concern for the universe is then not a matter of its being directed towards a more 'worthy' class of beings – by virtue of their perfection and perpetuity – and at best only indirectly to inferior ones. Rather, Ibn Sīnā writes, "all that to which existence arrives enters under the First Providence."¹⁰ In Ibn Sīnā's view, as we have seen, God intends only His own essence, through which He bestows goodness on all things as their First Cause, yet God ever remains utterly detached from His creatures, as caused in themselves. For Ibn Sīnā, all existents, whether celestial or earthly, thus partake in divine providence insofar as they necessarily exist by God's will, as opposed to their contingent aspect, to which belong the possibility of nonexistence, evil, and deficiency.¹¹ The distinction between the necessary existence of God's essence and the contingent existence of the essence of all His creatures is therefore more fundamental to Ibn Sīnā's conception of divine

¹⁰ {l. 4} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, p. 73); in the same work, Ibn Sīnā writes: "If the Creator were not such that He confers existence to all perishable and all eternal things, He would not be the First Real" {l. 15} (p. 67); in *Origin and Return* he also states that "the providence of God embraces the entirety [of existents]" {l. 8} (p. 85).

¹¹ In Ibn Sīnā's words: "[The Necessary Existent] is absolved from the intellection of corruptible things and of the intellection of nonexistents, such as evil and deficiency" {l. 8} (*Origin and Return*, p. 32).

providence than the distinction between supernal and sublunar creatures. In sum, the terms by which Ibn Sīnā approaches the question of divine providence do not primarily involve a distinction between two classes of existents, celestial or earthly, but rather cuts across the two ontological facets of all creatures – necessary through God, yet contingent in themselves.¹²

As in the context of the classical debate opposing adherents to the theory of the world's eternity to those who upheld the doctrine of the creation of the world in time – which Ibn Sīnā sidesteps by shifting the argument from the arena of eternity *versus* time to that of the essence and its existential modalities – here we can see him downplaying, on the question of divine providence, the centrality of the distinction between the eternal and transient domains of existence.¹³ While he retains the frame set by Alexander, Ibn Sīnā does not, therefore, approach the question of providence on the basis of the distinction between eternity and tran-

¹² Note that in taking this route Ibn Sīnā is also parting ways with al-Fārābī, who did not apply the distinction 'through another/in itself' to existential modalities, and consequently maintained the identification of eternity with necessity and transiency with possibility, thus imposing an ontological rift between supernal and sublunar creatures which Ibn Sīnā, for his part, is careful to avoid. As H. A. DAVIDSON (1987) explains, "Alfarabi applied the designation *possibly existent* to those objects that actually exist, yet have the possibility of not existing and are hence unable to exist forever. In other words, he designated all actual transient objects in the sublunar world as *possible existent* with no further qualification; and he restricted the designation *necessary existent* to beings that cannot cease to exist, that is, to eternal beings" (p. 292).

¹³ Ibn Sīnā clearly departs from the emphasis on the pair eternity *vs.* transiency, which for both Muslim theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and philosophers (*falāsifa*) of Greek influence arguably constitutes the central axis of distinction between the divine and the non-divine. In *Kalām*, the prime attribute of God, even the key to His divine character, is His attribute of eternity (*qidam*); see R. WISNOVSKY (2003a), pp. 230-2. Ibn Sīnā, however, does not lay emphasis on this attribute, but instead centers on necessity, and this follows from his distinguishing between the pairs eternity *vs.* transiency and necessity *vs.* contingency. In his analysis, eternity does not co-implicate necessity if the existentiating cause is conceived as being essentially rather than temporally prior to its effect. This also signifies that Ibn Sīnā's stance as an eternalist in the traditional debate is only accidental to his philosophical position: he denies the temporal priority of God over the universe, not because he is interested in proving the eternity of the universe (and hence its co-eternal existence with God), but because in his view the problem needs to be addressed differently, namely, in terms of essential priority. After all, Ibn Sīnā says in the *Throne*, "God the Exalted [alone] is eternal, because He is not preceded by nonexistence, nor is His existence from another than Himself. And what is originated (*hādīth*) is all that is other than Him because it is preceded by nonexistence and its existence is through the First – great is His power!" {ll. 14-6} (p. 99).

siency, but rather, between necessity and contingency.¹⁴ Since in his view all creatures partake in divine providence inasmuch as they necessarily exist by God’s will, the basis for Ibn Sīnā’s affirmation that providence extends below the sphere of the Moon – although neither by primary intention nor by accident – follows from his conception of God’s generosity as devoid of intention towards what He existentiates *as a whole*, and not only towards the sublunar realm. In his commentary on the *Theologia*, Ibn Sīnā thus writes:

The creation (*ibdāʿ*) of those things [in the higher realm] was not for the sake of this world, for the more excellent is not for the sake of what is lower. Generosity also does not end there, even though it is not for the sake of what is after. But [the fact is that] in His creative act (*ibdāʿihi*) there is no impediment to the effusion of divine generosity, down to the last of the quiddities that receive generosity from Him and acquire their existence from there. And as it is impossible for the divine effusion (*al-maʿnā al-ilāhī al-fāʿid*) to come to a halt when there is a possibility beyond [this limit, the bestowal of existence] reaches beyond the complete and perfect things [with which the Creator could have contented Himself] had He conferred them existence due to a need or purpose for the existence of a thing. But [the bestowal of existence] is not due to this, but rather [to the fact that His] generosity is as perfect as possible {ll. 8–16} (p. 60).

For Ibn Sīnā it is because God is devoid of all intention towards His creatures that He does not *choose* to bestow generosity on perfect as opposed to deficient creatures – which would be the case had God been deficient and in need of acquiring perfection through another.¹⁵ In *Pointers and Reminders*, Ibn Sīnā correspondingly explains that God cannot have a purpose in what is lower than Him, since distinguishing, through choice, a thing from its opposite as being more

¹⁴ This shift also transpires in Ibn Sīnā’s manifest revulsion at the idea that God would be regarded as a principle of celestial motion. By distinguishing necessity from eternity, Ibn Sīnā thus elevates God’s causal agency above the plane of perpetuity, which according to him still belongs to the domain of Physics. Hence, in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda* he writes: “It is vile (*qabīḥ*) to proceed to the First Real by way of movement and by way of the fact that He is the principle of motion” {ll. 1–2} (p. 49); in the *Discussions*, he also states: “It is distressing to me that the belief in the reality (*ṭhabūṭ*) of the First Principle, and in the reality of His being one, should be proceeded to by way of motion and the unity of the moved world” {l. 18–20} (§140, p. 84).

¹⁵ Ibn Sīnā remarks in another context: “Pay no heed to the one who considers salvation to be limited to a certain number of people and denied to the ignorant and the sinful for eternity; for God’s mercy is abundant” {ll. 3–5} (*Pointers and Reminders* VII.15, p. 741). This is consistent with Ibn Sīnā’s view that God seeks no perfection from His creatures, which would cause Him to favor perfect over imperfect things.

suitable and necessary would entail that God is in need of perfecting Himself by choosing the perfect over the imperfect. “Hence,” he writes, “the Generous, the Real King, has no end, and the more elevated does not take the lower as its end” {ll. 3-4} (VI.6, p. 559). In Ibn Sīnā’s analysis, God’s creative act cannot be for the sake of the good in what He creates, for such an act would entail that He seeks to be “absolved from all imperfection, glorified and purified. And all this is the opposite of self-sufficiency” {ll. 2-3} (VI.8, p. 560). Possessing perfection in His essence, for Ibn Sīnā God seeks nothing beyond Himself.

As Ibn Sīnā identifies goodness with existence, and the goodness of existence with the perfection of existence,¹⁶ for him the good of every existent thus consists in its fully existing as it must be.¹⁷ And given that God alone possesses necessary existence in His essence,¹⁸ no creature is in possession of its proper good other than through the necessary relation it enjoys, alongside the rest of creation, with the Necessary Existent – First Principle of all existence.¹⁹

¹⁶ “The good, in general, is what everything within its [own] bound desires, and through which its existence is completed. [...] Existence is, hence, goodness; and the perfection of existence is the goodness of existence” (*Metaphysics* VIII.6, p. 284).

¹⁷ “[The] meaning of goodness (*nīki*) is the existence of everything as it must be, and providence consists in that, for instance, He has known how the organs of the human must be to be the best for him, and how the motion must be to be the best for him, and for it to be in the best order; and this, without there occurring in Him an intention (*qaṣd*), demand (*talab*), desire (*ārzū*), or aim (*gharāḍ*), for none of this is worthy of Him” {ll. 14-7; 1-4} (*Book of Knowledge*, pp. 95-6); see also his commentary on the *Theologia*: “The goodness in every thing is to exist according to the most perfect mode of existence which is proper to it” {ll. 5} (p. 46). Note that for Ibn Sīnā the perfection of existence is also its beauty and splendor, which God possesses in Himself: “The Necessary Existent therefore has pure beauty and splendor, and He is the principle of the beauty of all things, and the splendor of all things. His splendor consists in His being in accordance with what ought to be His. And how would the beauty be of Him who is as He must be in necessary existence?” (*Metaphysics* VIII.7, p. 297).

¹⁸ “There is no necessary existence other than Him” {l. 3} (*Pointers and Reminders* IV.18, p. 464).

¹⁹ Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*: “It belongs to the First Real that necessity is from His act, and that no thing possesses necessity from itself. [...] He is the First, He is the Real, He is the Principle of the essence of all substance, and it is through Him that all things other than Him are necessary, and that necessity arrives to them, through the necessary relation established between them and Him” {ll. 8-9, 16-7} (p. 55); in his commentary on the *Theologia*, he also says: “The good in every thing consists in its existing according to the

All creatures thus receive existence and realize the perfections of their existence through God, according to their proper place and rank in the universal order of divine providence. For Ibn Sīnā, then, even the First Intelligence, despite its exalted dignity, is not in itself a pure good:

The contingent existent is not in its essence a pure good, for its essence does not, as such, possess the necessity of existence. Its essence thus bears [the possibility of] nonexistence; and that which in some aspect bears nonexistence is not altogether devoid of evil and deficiency. Hence, there is no Pure Good other than the Necessary Existent in Himself (*Metaphysics* VIII.6, p. 284).

In the opening lines of his Qur’anic commentary on the chapter of the *Daybreak*²⁰ Ibn Sīnā illustrates this existential condition of all creatures with respect to their Creator: “As the First Principle who necessarily exists by His essence,” Ibn Sīnā writes, God “cleaves the darkness of nonexistence with the light of existence” {ll. 1-2}. This daybreak of existence, he explains, “is among the concomitants of His absolute goodness in His identity (*huwīya*), [which (*i.e.*, His identity)] is intended by first intention (*qaṣd*)” {ll. 2-3}. That is to say, God intends the pure goodness which belongs to His identity, whereby all creatures receive the goodness of which they are created to partake. And while there exists no evil at all in God’s creative act – wherein He intends only His own essence by primary intention²¹ – Ibn Sīnā continues, evil lies forever hidden “underneath the radiance (*suṭū*) of the light of the First on [the Decree (*i.e.*, the intelligible whole that God existentiates all at once)]. This [(*i.e.*, evil)] is the shade²² (*kudūra*) adhering to its quiddity, and arising from its own identity” {ll. 4-5} (p. 116). Ibn Sīnā

most complete mode of existence proper to it. Yet every thing, considered in itself, excluding the consideration of its relation to the divine Command, is deserving of abolition, and this is the extremity of evil. The existence and the good proper to it is given to it only from Him” {ll. 5-7} (p. 46).

²⁰ “I seek refuge in the Lord of the daybreak, from the evil of what He created...” (Q 113:1-2).

²¹ “The first and essential act of the First Real [...] is to intelligize (*yaʿqil*) His essence, which in itself is the principle of the order of the good in existence” (*Metaphysics* IX.4, p. 327).

²² or ‘murkiness’, ‘turbidity’ – here translated as reflecting Q 113:3: “...and from the evil of darkness (*ghāsiq*) when it overspreads (*waqab*)...”

is here signifying that contingency is attached to, and stems from, the creature's quiddity,²³ as the 'shade' of the possibility of nonexistence which, so long as a creature receives existence and its perfections from God, ever remains 'hidden' underneath the necessity of its existence.

Since according to Ibn Sīnā evil has no essence of its own but is merely privative,²⁴ in the case of celestial creatures – from the First Intelligence down to the sphere of the Moon – the only 'privation' then consists in their not possessing in their essence the necessity of their existence. That said, given that for Ibn Sīnā no impediment in the higher realm can hinder celestial creatures from perpetually realizing the perfections of their existence through Him, this evil remains in them forever 'hidden'. Supernal creatures thus eternally exist exactly as they must be, so that their contingency ever remains subsumed under the necessity of their existence; that is, they forever exist exactly as God knows them through Himself.²⁵ By virtue of their abstraction from elemental matter (*'unṣur*), which only exists in the sublunar realm,²⁶

²³ "Necessary existence belongs to Him as quiddity belongs to other existents" {ll. 7-8} (*Pointers* IV.25, p. 480).

²⁴ "[Evil] denotes in each thing the privation of the perfection belonging to it" (*Metaphysics* VII.1, p. 239); "Evil has no essence, but is either the nonexistence of a substance, or the nonexistence of what constitutes rectitude for the state of a substance" (VIII.6, p. 284); "Essential evil is privation; not just any privation, but the privation [...] [from a thing] of perfections which are established for [...] its nature" (IX.6, p. 340); "[It is now clear] that the good is wherever the influence of the First Good is manifest; that evil is found where this effect is not manifest, and where there is no receptacle for this effect; and that evil has no other cause" {ll. 3-4} (*Book of Knowledge*, p. 165).

²⁵ Ibn Sīnā remarks in his commentary on the *Theologia* that "in the case of a substance which is inalterable and considered as abiding in its first perfection, the contingent equals the necessary" {l. 2} (p. 38). In other words, its two existential facets are in perfect alignment and never diverge in any way from each other.

²⁶ For Ibn Sīnā, even though a type of matter does exist in the supernal realm, the matter of celestial bodies (*i.e.*, 'ether' – GK. *aithēr*, AR. *aithīr*) is receptive of forms without resistance because this celestial matter is, he writes, "characterized by the disposition to receive one form which has no opposite" {ll. 13-4} (*Supernal Bodies*, p. 267), and therefore does not, as in the case of sublunar elemental matter, admit of only one form to the exclusion of its opposite. That is to say, celestial matter does not divide the form it receives. In his commentary on the verse 'Then He turned to the sky...' (Q 41:11), Ibn Sīnā explains: "The matter of the [celestial spheres] does not resist the Command (*amr*) to receive the form of the sphere, but obeys of itself to this Command. Indeed, [in the supernal realm] there is fundamentally no obstacle. As for the matter of the elements [in the sublunar realm], when commanded to receive another form, is not obedient. Rather, its receptiveness and preparation to submit

no obstacle can prevent supernal creatures from receiving the effusion of God's generosity, *i.e.*, the existence and perfections which are most suitable for them according to His wisdom,²⁷ and so they are perfectly realized as God wills them through Himself. Ibn Sīnā can therefore *also* claim that “all cause of evil is only found within the sublunar realm”,²⁸ since it is only in there that matter can hinder the reception of the divine effusion.²⁹

While for Ibn Sīnā supernal creatures fully receive the emanation of their existence and realize their perfections unceasingly, sublunar creatures suffer for their part from the limits imposed on this reception by the contrarities which exist in the realm of elemental matter,³⁰

itself to the divine Command occur with aversion on its part. [That is] because the preceding form obstructs the occurrence of the engendered form” {ll. 1-6} (p. 92). Ibn Sīnā further clarifies this point in the *Psychology of the Salvation*: “[It] must be known [...] that [in the sublunar realm] elemental bodies are prevented from receiving life by their being in absolute opposition (*ṣarfīya al-taḍādd*). The more these bodies are able to break the absolute-ness of [elemental] opposition and bring it nearer to the mean, which has no opposite, the nearer they approach a resemblance to the celestial bodies, and to that extent they deserve to receive an animating faculty from [the higher realm]. The nearer they approach the mean, the more capable of life they become” {ll. 7-13} (p. 42).

²⁷ Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*: “[God's] ‘suitableness’ (*malā'ima*) consists in that the influence which is received from Him is what is suitable for all things, whether natural, psychic, or intellectual. For all things receive from the favor of His existence what is according to its capacity (*tāqa*)” {ll. 16-7} (p. 51).

²⁸ *Metaphysics IX.6*, p. 341.

²⁹ For Ibn Sīnā God bestows goodness on all things, and while creatures in the supernal realm are “completely exempt from evil, disorder and corruption” {l. 6} (*Pointers VII.23*, p. 730), creatures that exist in the sublunar realm – where matter is informed on the basis of the four elements (see *Pointers II.17-20*, pp. 293-7) – are liable to experience such evils inasmuch as the role which elements fulfil, while essentially good, can in some accidental circumstances produce an evil, albeit minimal compared to the general good it performs. In the *Throne*, Ibn Sīnā correspondingly writes that although in this world “nothing can receive the good [in existence] without water, it is known absolutely that if a man falls into it, he will drown” {ll. 15-6} (p. 105). As the elements could not fulfil their proper role unless in some cases it were also possible for them to cause harm (*i.e.*, drowning or burning), the existence of such circumstantial evils is thus also part of the Decree, yet only accidentally, since according to divine wisdom “the effusion of the good does not require the exclusion of the prevalent good [so as to avert] a rare evil. For excluding [that good would be] a greater evil than that [rare] evil” (*Metaphysics IX.6*, p. 342); see also his commentary on the *Theologia* {ll. 22-3; 1-11} (pp. 64-5).

³⁰ Ibn Sīnā writes in *On the Rational Soul*: “It has become clear in the [Physical] sciences that the celestial bodies are not constituted from a mixture of these four elements, but are totally lacking in these opposites. Moreover, only the involvement with these opposites hinders the reception of the divine effusion” {ll. 17-8} (p. 197); Ibn Sīnā likewise explains in *Felicity*: “As for the simple bodies that exist below the sphere of the Moon, since they are far from pure, and [their forms are] in opposition, they are not properly disposed to receive the [divine] effusion” {ll. 10-12} (p. 15); see tr. J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986b), pp. 67-8, n. 32.

wherein numerous conflicting causes, “by their clashing with one another, lead to evils that derive from them.”³¹ Due to its limited receptivity to the divine effusion, Ibn Sīnā holds, elemental matter brings about an existential condition wherein conflicting causes can hinder the realization by a creature of the perfections proper to it, and even destroy perfections it has already attained.³² If no causes in the sublunar realm ever interfered with the divine effusion of the existence and perfections proper to every creature, then for Ibn Sīnā evil would simply not exist,³³ apart from the existential deficiency of contingent essences that ‘afflicts’ all creatures insofar as none possess the necessity of their existence, and for which they utterly depend on the Necessary Existent in His essence.³⁴ If no evil existed, according to Ibn Sīnā all creatures

³¹ {l. 6} (Commentary on the *Daybreak*, p. 116); in *Decree and Determination*, Ibn Sīnā strikes a vivid analogy to convey the state of existence in the sublunar realm, as affected by elemental matter: “And know that causes are tied to [other] causes, and that [in this world] necessities are opposed by obstacles; and the racing horses of time, coursing on the long tracks of a vast hippodrome, are confronted with causes that veer them off their aim and direction [...]; and sometimes they are arrested suddenly by the violent shock of an obstacle” {ll. 13-7} (p. 59).

³² In *Metaphysics* IX.6, Ibn Sīnā gives as an example of the first case the “shading of high mountains [which] prevents the sun’s influence from reaching the fruits which need [sunlight] to perfect themselves. An example of the second [case],” he continues, “is the frost’s closing in upon plants which are approaching their perfection at the proper time so that [their] specific preparedness [for perfection] and what follows it are corrupted” (p. 341).

³³ As he explains in *Metaphysics* IV.2, “if what is potential were not with [evil] or from it, then the perfections which necessarily adhere to things would [all] be present, and so there would be no evil whatsoever” (p. 142). Ibn Sīnā remarks, however, that “if the world had contained nothing but pure goodness, then it would not be this one, but another” {ll. 5-6} (*Secret of the Determination*, p. 303). Such is the case with the whole supernal realm, whereas the sublunar realm, he states, is “small in relation to the rest of existence” (*Met.* IX.6, p. 341). Ibn Sīnā also affirms in his commentary on the *Theologia* that in this world “harmful and evil things are infrequent” {ll. 4-5} (p. 65); in *Divisions of Philosophy*, he says: “[The fifth fundamental division of metaphysical knowledge (*al-‘ilm al-ilāhī*) involves] [...] showing that the true course [of things] is according to what the Pure Good decrees, that the evil [which is found] in it is not pure but [is rather according to] wisdom, and beneficial (*maṣlaḥa*), and [thus], in a [certain] aspect, a good” {ll. 4-6} (p. 114); see tr. J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986b), pp. 63-4, n. 21.

³⁴ Ibn Sīnā writes in his *Prayer*: “Since existence necessarily belongs to Your essence, contingency belongs to the existence of all others as an inexorable affliction (*darba lāzib*)” {ll. 5-6} (p. 297). In the same text, he interprets the verse “All things glorify His praise, but you are not cognizant of their glorification” (Q 17:44) as indicating the condition of utter dependency of all contingent things on the Necessary Existent: “‘Glory be to You, O God!’ all existents exclaim with the tongue of [their] condition (*ḥāl*) and speech (*maqāl*). You confer on every thing what it deserves according to [Your] wisdom. [...] And so their essences and accidents glorify Your blessings (*ālā’ika*), thankful for the abundance of Your graces (*na’mā’ika*)” {ll. 1-4} (p. 297).

– earthly as well as celestial – would enjoy their proper relation to the First Principle, through the mediation of the higher principles of their existence, and would thus forever exist as God knows them through Himself. Their goodness would be complete, and the affliction of non-existence – *i.e.*, evil and deficiency – would never occur in them.

Ibn Sīnā recurrently asserts in his works that God generously bestows blessings on all His creatures and does not ever withhold the effusion of what is suitable for them, hence that there is no miserliness (*bukhl*) in Him as regards the emanation of existence and perfection on all that necessarily exists by His will.³⁵ Accordingly, Ibn Sīnā commonly refers to God’s generosity in the negative, stating that God is *not* miserly and does *not* withhold blessings from His creatures. This is not to say that for him God is compelled to emanate what He necessitates – that He cannot *not* be generous³⁶ – since, as we have seen, in Ibn Sīnā’s analysis all that God existentiates through Himself is necessary, though not in itself, but by His will. Rather, Ibn Sīnā is signifying that to receive its proper existence and realize its perfection a creature needs only to achieve the proper disposition to receive the divine effusion which is *already* granted, and thus realize its essential nature by means of its reception, as much as possible. In sum, if God wills the existence of a creature, and if this creature exists in the condition

³⁵ Ibn Sīnā writes in the *Throne*: “Evils must be related to individuals, times, and natures. [...] When a deficiency occurs in the individuals of a species, this deficiency is due to a weakness in the receiver or to an insufficiency in its preparation, since the effusion is universal, without miserliness (*bukhl*) or impediment” {ll. 4–7} (p. 103).

³⁶ Whether God is generous by essence or generosity is a necessary concomitant of His essence, in neither case does it follow for Ibn Sīnā that God is bound to what He existentiates. Even if according to him God invariably bestows generosity, nothing compels Him to do so since, as we have seen, God does not act for the sake of what He creates, and seeks nothing in return from His act. For Ibn Sīnā, God is the Pure Existence that grants existence to all things, the Pure Perfection that is the perfection of all things. To exist at all according to Ibn Sīnā is to exist because He does, and to be real is to be so because He is the Real that realizes all things.

determined for it by divine wisdom, then according to Ibn Sīnā it perfectly exists as God necessitates it by His will. But to the extent that a creature deviates from this necessary condition due to the interference of sublunar causes, it is thereby prevented from receiving the divine effusion, and thus becomes afflicted by evil and deficiency.³⁷

In Ibn Sīnā’s worldview, ‘wrath’ – or the withholding of blessings – cannot therefore be attributed to God, but only consists in the condition of alienation from the supernal realm; in other words, in the disruption of a creature’s junction with the higher causes of its existence and perfections. Accordingly, Ibn Sīnā explains in his commentary on the *Theologia* that “the ‘wrath of God’ is the condition of being distant (*bu’d*) from the junction with the higher realm, wherein lie supreme joy (*al-ghibṭat al-‘ulyā*) and sheer radiance (*al-bahjat al-awfā*)” {ll. 15-6} (p. 43).³⁸ For Ibn Sīnā God is therefore vastly generous, and never ceases bestowing abundant blessings on His creatures. In *Alive, Son of Awake*, he writes:

This King is well-aware of those who are His in His splendor (*li-muṭṭali’ ‘alā dhuwīhi bahā’ahu*); towards them He is not miserly of His audience (*lā yaḍanna ‘alayhim bi-liqā’ihi*); those who are deprived of His nearness are only so due to the wretched state of their faculties. He is benevolent and bountiful. His generosity overflows. His goodness is immense. His gifts overwhelm; vast is His court, universal His favor {ll. 7-9} (p. 21).

³⁷ Ibn Sīnā states in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda* that the contingent existence of things in this world “is inferior to all the rest [of existence]. If its receptivity [is not perfect], it is not due to the One who bestows and emanates existence, but it is because the quiddities of these things can only put on their [proper] existence and perfection in this manner. This is why infirmities, malformations and illnesses occur, due to what results from the necessity of deficient matter, which does not receive the form according to its primary and secondary perfection [at once], but either does not receive it at all, or receives it according to its first perfection without its second” {ll. 10-5} (p. 77).

³⁸ Similarly, Ibn Sīnā explains in the *Secret of the Determination* that “the soul’s abiding in deficiency is its distance (*bu’d*) from God the Exalted, and this is [(what is signified by the terms)] the ‘curse’, the ‘penalty’, [God’s] ‘wrath’ and ‘anger’, and pain comes to it from that deficiency” {ll. 12-3} (p. 303).

If God abundantly bestows existence and its perfections on all His creatures, and if nothing can hinder the effusion of His generosity, this does not, however, entail that Ibn Sīnā must deny the efficacy of devotional practices such as the prayer of supplication (*du‘ā*). Although it is certain that in his view prayer can in no way influence God – who is utterly detached from His creatures – in his view its efficacy rather resides in that the request disposes the individual to receive perfections which are *already* granted, but which he can only actualize by achieving the proper disposition to receive them.³⁹ In *Guidance*, Ibn Sīnā thus explains that “the reception of the guiding effusion [...] is due to a cause in the receiver [in such a way that] for the soul the request consists in its acquiring the preparation to receive this guidance in a perfect way. [...] Thus, [what is received] is not something which would occur if there was no request” {ll. 6-8; 1} (pp. 291-2). That is, the request causes the reception of the divine effusion in that it brings about the cessation of its non-reception (*i.e.*, by removing impediments that prevent its reception), and in this sense only is the cause of its reception. Commenting on the term “I seek refuge (*a‘ūdhu*) [in the Lord of the daybreak]” (Q 113:1), Ibn Sīnā explains:

³⁹ Ibn Sīnā says in his *Notes*: “It is not true that the Creator is affected by the request [that man addresses Him]; rather, if the thing that is requested of Him is [according to] what He knows, this request receives a response, whereas if it is not, then it receives none” {ll. 7-8} (§823, p. 447). The same occurs in the case of a body’s reception of a soul: if the matter is suitably prepared, a soul is received from the divine effusion (which is the body’s perfection). Not that the body’s preparation acts as the essential cause of the emanation of a soul on it, but rather as its accidental cause, in that the body’s disposition ceases to negate the actuality of its reception. For Ibn Sīnā, the same then holds with prayer as with the acquisition of intelligibles; that is, of knowledge of things as they necessarily and truly exist: “When we want to know something and the soul prepares itself to receive knowledge of it from the Active Intelligence by making cease the impediment that obstructs this search, then [the soul’s] preparation becomes appropriate for [its reception]” {ll. 7-8} (*Notes*, §357, p. 223); see J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986b), p. 62, n. 18. Ibn Sīnā’s approach to medicine is of the same nature: “The physician does not bestow health, but rather prepares the matter and the instrument for it. In reality, what gives health is a principle loftier than the physician, being that which gives matter all its forms and whose essence is nobler than matter” (*Metaphysics* IX.3, p. 320). In Ibn Sīnā’s worldview, knowledge, medicine, and prayer thus perform the same ‘healing art’: removing impediments which prevent the human from receiving the blessings which God is *already* bestowing on him, as much as is suitable according to His wisdom. – MICHOT (1992) has termed this process ‘dés-altération’ (p. 27).

[The term] ‘seeking refuge’ and its linguistic equivalents (*isti‘ādha*, ‘*awdh*, ‘*iyādh*) are expressions of turning to another for help. Hence, the command simply to turn to another for help indicates that the nonexistence of the realization of perfections is not due to the One from whom beneficial things emanate, but is rather due to [something in] the receiver. And this verifies the established teaching that no perfections [...] are withheld (*mabkhūl*) by the First Principle, but [...] that the realization of everything depends on one’s preparation to receive them. This is the meaning indicated by the Prophet’s saying (upon whom be peace): “During the days of your life, fragrant breezes (*nafahāt*) of mercy waft on you from your Lord. Behold! Be receptive to them (*alā! fa-ta’arradū lahā*).”⁴⁰ It is therefore evident that the diffusion of blessings (*nafahāt al-alīf*) is ceaseless, while interruptions occur only in the preparation [of the receiver] {ll. 13-19, 1-2} (pp. 117-8).⁴¹

In sum, if for Ibn Sīnā a creature is not fully receiving the divine effusion of the existence and perfections which are most suitable for it according to divine wisdom, it is not because God withholds it, but is due to its own lack of preparation to receive it, resulting from the inter-

⁴⁰ This tradition, reported only through Aḥmad b. ‘Abda, is found in the *Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* (no. 15861) and in the *Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ* (no. 2966) of al-Ṭabarānī.

⁴¹ Ibn Sīnā’s *Prayer* eloquently conveys his understanding of the need for the human soul to seek assistance from the higher realm so as to remove psychological and temperamental impediments which hinder the reception of the divine effusion, and to facilitate the actualization of latent faculties: “O God, You have confined my soul to the prison of the four elements (*anāṣir*) and have charged them to prey on her like ravenous beasts (*bi-iftirāsihā sibā’an*). You have compelled her to seek their contentment and to abandon herself (*inqiyād*) to them in their lusts, drawing her closer to the realm ‘which incurs wrath upon itself’ (*al-maghḍūbi ‘alayhi*) (Q 1:7). [...] Have compassion on her by the mercy which most befits You, and by the overflowing generosity which is most suitable and appropriate according to You. Grant her a continuous reversion wherein she returns to her higher realm. Hasten her return to her blessed condition, and dawn on her darkness (*ẓulumāt*) a Sun from the Active Intelligence. Dispel from her the darkness of ignorance and error, and actualize what is latent in her faculties. Bring her out of the darkness of ignorance to the light of wisdom and the brightness of the Intelligence. [...] There is no God but You, [O] Cause of [all] things, Light of earth and heaven! Bestow on me an effusion from the Active Intelligence, O Possessor of majesty (*jalāl*) and plenty (*afdāl*). Purify my soul by the lights of wisdom, and enable me to be thankful for the grace You have conferred on me. Show me the truth as it is, and inspire me to follow it; and falsehood as it is, and preserve me from believing in it, or paying attention to it. Purify my soul from the clay of matter (*hayūlā*), O You [who are] the First Cause! [...] Uplift me to Your unified (*muttaḥid*), pure (*maḥḍ*), and simple (*basīṭ*) realm; for verily, whatever You intend You are able to achieve, and You “encompass all things” (Q 41:54). [O God,] deliver me from the prison of the four natures, and uplift me to Your most vast expanse and loftiest proximity. [...] [Confer on me] a wisdom that will unite my soul to the divine realms and heavenly spirits. [...] Purify my soul by the noble Spirit of Holiness (*Rūḥ al-Quds*), illuminate my intellect and senses with profound wisdom, and make the angels my familiars (*umsī*), instead of the realm of nature. [...] O God, empower my soul to overcome fleeting desires, elevate her to the abodes of the everlasting souls, and place her among the noble (*sharīfa*), pure (*naḥisa*), and precious (*ṣāfiya*) substances in the gardens on high, by Your mercy, O Most Merciful of all those who are merciful!” {ll. 11-7; 12-7, 23-4, 28-9; 2-4} (pp. 297-9). In *The Supreme Recitation*, Ibn Sīnā also says: “O God, You are the Eternal, the First, O First without a First! Make my intellect contemplate the perfect (*sābiḡhāt*) [realities], and [grant me] penetrating thought into the higher realm; turn my aspiration (*himmī*) away from transient vanities and towards the search for the lasting (*bāqiya*) [realities], transcending my lower nature” {ll. 8-10} (p. 320).

ference of causes which, as we have seen, only exist below the sphere of the Moon. And if for Ibn Sīnā the bestowal of blessings from God is due to His will, their reception depends on the preparation of the receiver; not in that the receiver's disposition causes God to bestow blessings, but in that this disposition enables it to receive what is *already* granted, inasmuch as a blessing is suitable for the receiver according to its place in the universal order of divine providence.⁴²

While for Ibn Sīnā God at once and timelessly bestows existence and perfection on all that exists, their reception also requires a proper arrangement and causal order. To distinguish between these two aspects of divine providence Ibn Sīnā employs a pair of theological terms – the Decree (*qaḍā'*) and Determination (*qadar*)⁴³ – denoting respectively the singleness of the creative act by which God bestows blessings on all His creatures by intending only His own essence, and the unfolding of the arrangement and causal order by which they are enabled to partake in His blessings as much as possible.⁴⁴ As Ibn Sīnā explains in *Decree*,

⁴² For Ibn Sīnā this applies to all creatures, from the First Intelligence to the last of quiddities: “[The] reality of the essence of the First arises before [the Intelligence] from the essence of the First, as much as this epiphany (*ṭulū'*) is necessary for any [existent] disposed to receive it, necessity proceeding from this very [epiphany], whereas the receiver [contributes to this process] only by its disposition” {ll. 14–6} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, p. 53).

⁴³ Ibn Sīnā's conception of the Decree and Determination resonates with a compromise that had been formulated in his time between the Ash'arite and Mātūrīdite doctrines: the Decree as a divine 'attribute of essence', and the Determination as a contingent 'attribute of action', in conformity with the Ash'arite position, yet interpreted in terms of divine knowledge rather than will, in line with the more intellectualist Mātūrīdite perspective; see L. GARDET (1967): “[Ces termes seront] mis en relation [...] avec la Prescience éternelle, s'il s'agit du *qaḍā'*; avec l'existentialisation des choses dans le temps, conformément avec cette Science, s'il s'agit du *qadar*” (p. 118). As we will see, in Ibn Sīnā's case, since he views the divine order as unfolding in essential rather than temporal terms, he identifies the Decree with the simplicity of the intellectual order (as God knows it through Himself) and the Determination with the psychic (*nafsi*) unfolding of this simple Decree (as divine creatures know it through God).

⁴⁴ According to Ibn Sīnā's definition: “Providence consists in the First's knowing in His essence the existence of the order of the good, being in His essence a cause of goodness and perfection according to what is possible [...]. He thus knows (*ya'qil*) the order of the good in the highest possible manner, whereby what He knows [...] overflows from Him in the manner, within the realm of contingency, that is most perfect in being conducive to order. This, then, is the meaning of providence” (*Metaphysics* IX.6, p. 339).

The Decree of God the Exalted is His first, sole judgment, which embraces all things and from which all things proceed in the course of time, and His Determination is His arrangement of the outpouring of things from this first Decree, one after the other, as He has said – how mighty a speaker He is! – “There is nothing that does not have its treasures with Us, and We do not send it down save according to a known Determination” (Q 15:21) {ll. 9-10; 1-3} (pp. 104[1]- 5[2]).

Simple and inalterable,⁴⁵ for Ibn Sīnā the Decree is then unfolded, through the Determination, in its most minute details. As he states in the *Discussions*, “the Decree is the precedence (*sābiq*) of God’s knowledge, from which the determinations proceed (*lit.* ‘branch out’, *yatasha‘ab*)” {ll. 4-5} (§859, p. 306). In the *Book of Knowledge*, Ibn Sīnā cites a number of cognate Qur’anic indications of this distinction, here in terms of ‘creation’ and ‘guidance’. He writes:

The Necessary Existent is that Being (*Hastī*) to whom belongs the existence of all things, and who has bestowed on all things the necessity of existence (*farīdaya hastī*). [...] This notion also appears in the Qur’an in several verses. In one verse it is said, “It is our Lord who has bestowed on every thing its form (*khalqahu*), and who has then guided [it]” (Q 20:50). [In another verse] it is said, “He who has determined (*qaddara*) [all things] has then guided [them]” (Q 87:3). [In another] it is said, “He who has created me, it is He who me guides me” (Q 26:78) {ll. 3-4, 6-9} (p. 100).⁴⁶

For Ibn Sīnā, God therefore decrees (*or creates*) all things as a simple intelligible whole, and this Decree at once provides to all His creatures the Determination (*or guidance*) whereby they are enabled to realize their perfection, and thus to fully exist in accordance with His Decree.⁴⁷ Evoking the guidance which God has placed in all things – as their innate disposition to yearn for and to love their proper perfection – Ibn Sīnā cites a tradition in *Metaphysics IX.7* (p. 347), and as the closing words of *Pointers and Reminders IX* (p. 852) and *Decree and Determination* (p. 68): “Everything is made to proceed with ease towards that for which it has been created”

⁴⁵ Ibn Sīnā writes in the *Throne*: “All that exists is as it ought to be; and His justice is favor, and His favor is justice. Let it be known that there is no appeal to His judgment, and no rescinding of His Decree” {ll. 13-4} (p. 103).

⁴⁶ An Arabic version of this passage is also found in his *Notes* {ll. 4-7} (p. 27).

⁴⁷ In his *Homily on Divine Oneness*, Ibn Sīnā writes: “His judgment has prepared (*hayya‘at*) for every thing the causes of its acts; and His mercy guides (*tahdī*) every thing to its proper perfection” {ll. 15-6} (p. 232).

(*kull muyassar limā khuliqa lahu*).⁴⁸ This conception of guidance, as the Determination whereby all creatures are disposed to realize their proper perfections, also forms the basis of Ibn Sīnā's conception of love (*ishq*), or existential yearning, as explained in his treatise *On Love*:

All that is determined (*mudabbar*) in itself (*lit.* in its identity) yearns by nature for its perfection, which is its goodness as received (*manīla*) from the Pure Good in His identity, and recoils by nature from its proper defect, which is its evil, *i.e.*, materiality and nonexistence; for all evil results from attachment to matter and nonexistence. [...] Nothing that exists is devoid of an association with some perfection (*malābisa kamāl mā*), and this association with it is accompanied by love and yearning for what can unite it with its perfection. [...] It is therefore a necessary outcome of His wisdom and of the excellence of His governance (*ḥusn tadbīrihi*) to have placed in [all things] the universal [principle of] love so, as to consequently preserve the universal perfections which He has conferred through emanation {ll. 1-3; 2-3, 8-10} (pp. 244-5).

For Ibn Sīnā, God knows all things at once as possessing their proper perfection through Him, and grants them all that they need to realize their perfection (*i.e.*, to exist as He knows them), as much as possible.⁴⁹ And given that no other existent than God is necessary in its essence, all creatures thus yearn to partake in the existence and perfection which they cannot realize save through their relation to Him who is Pure Existence and Pure Perfection in Himself, and

⁴⁸ From the *Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal (nos. 13846 and 16194), also found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī (nos. 4949 and 7551); it is noteworthy that in *Metaphysics* IX.6 Ibn Sīnā cites this tradition as the complement of another, also from the *Musnad* (no. 17207), which for its part evokes God's detachment from His creatures: "And it is said [by God]: 'I created these for the Fire, and I care not; and I created these for Paradise, and I care not'" (p. 347). Together, these two traditions exemplify the complementary facets of Ibn Sīnā's conception of providence: he reads the first as signifying that God is utterly devoid of concern for His creatures (as caused), and the second, as signifying that God confers on all things the guidance they need to reach their proper perfection. However, Ibn Sīnā modifies the conventional reading of the abovementioned tradition and uses it rhetorically to evoke God's detachment from His creatures, though not directly as an eschatological reference, and definitely not in its conventional predestinarian interpretation. Ibn Sīnā also paraphrases this tradition in *Decree*: "The Creator, the First, without for that detesting His creature, does not alter His judgment, and is not preoccupied with what happens to them; rather, having created these for the Garden, He cares not; and having created these for the Fire, He cares not" {ll. 10; 1-2} (106[3]-107[4]).

⁴⁹ As Ibn Sīnā remarks in *Pointers and Reminders* VIII.19, "If you observe things and reflect on them, you will find that every corporeal thing has a perfection proper to it, a voluntary or a natural love for this perfection, as well as a voluntary or a natural yearning for it when it is separated from it. This is mercy from the First Providence in the manner according to which it is providence" {ll. 6-7; 1-3} (pp. 787-8).

who bestows existence and perfection on all His creatures.⁵⁰ According to Ibn Sīnā, God thus places in all existents the love of what facilitates the realization of their proper perfections – which they achieve only through their relation to Him.

In *Guidance*,⁵¹ Ibn Sīnā exemplifies the distinction between the simplicity of the creative act by which God confers goodness on all creatures, and the gradual unfolding of the universal order of causes whereby all creatures are enabled to receive His goodness, with an epistemological analogy: when a knower is asked a question, a ‘simple thought’ (*amr waḥdāni*)⁵² comes to his mind which at once comprises the whole solution to the problem presented. Then, by means of language, the problem is gradually elucidated in a manner that enables the interlocutor to receive its solution as effectively as possible.⁵³ In these terms, for Ibn Sīnā the ‘simple

⁵⁰ Ibn Sīnā writes in the *Throne*: “The Necessary Existent is Perfection in pure actuality, unhindered by deficiency. Every perfection is His, [derived] from Him, and is preceded by His essence; while every deficiency, even metaphorical, is denied of Him. So every perfection and every beauty is from His essence, and is one of the traces of the perfection of His existence. How could He derive perfection from another than Himself?” {ll. 2-5} (p. 85).

⁵¹ For Ibn Sīnā, the term guidance (*hidāya*), as evoked in the Qur’anic verses cited above, is thus synonymous with the notion of the Determination. God guides His creatures by means of the dispositions which He places in their nature, and these dispositions cause creatures to yearn for the attainment of their proper perfection. Ibn Sīnā’s conception of prayer clearly illustrates this: God places in the human the disposition to request His blessings, so that this disposition is the *real* cause of the request, while the request is only the *apparent* cause of the response. “It is the Creator [...] who made the request the cause of the existence of the thing requested. [...] The cause that moves us to make a request is thus from above, just as our request acts as the cause of the response. However, the occurrence of the request and the production of the requested thing are both the effect of a single cause, even though at times one of the two occurs through the other” {ll. 6-7, 10; 1-2} (*Notes*, §146, pp. 112-3). In other words, Ibn Sīnā is signifying that God confers a blessing along with the disposition to receive it, and thus is Himself the cause which makes this disposition be the cause of the reception of the blessing.

⁵² The word *amr* is contextually translated as ‘thought’. Ibn Sīnā uses *khāṭir* in the *Book of Knowledge*; see *infra*, n. 55.

⁵³ As intellectual knowledge, this ‘simple thought’ is received from the higher realm, then unfolded in the knower’s rational soul through language in a way that prepares the faculties of the interlocutor’s animal soul (such as his imaginative, cogitative, and estimative faculties) so that they will not hinder its reception, and thereby disposes the rational soul of his interlocutor to *also* receive, at once, this ‘simple thought’ from the Active Intelligence.

thought’, which comes “as in the twinkling of an eye” (*ka-lamḥ bi-l-baṣar*),⁵⁴ is akin to God’s

Decree, and its elucidation, to His Determination. He writes:

Since [God] knows His essence, He knows that all existence is from Him [...]. His knowledge is not psychic (*nafsi*), discursive knowledge, but an intellectual [knowledge], above the intellectual; rather, it is similar to what is indicated by the state you find yourself in when a man discusses a problem with you which comprises many points [...], and then a ‘simple thought’ (*amr waḥdāni*) comes to your mind by which you have the certitude of knowing the whole answer; this is simple intellectual knowledge. Then, as you discuss, this [‘simple thought’] is unfolded in your mind, form after form, according to its sequence and order. And this is psychic knowledge, pertaining to the soul, and it is the perfection of the soul. As for the First, He is Knowledge and Intelligence in that He is the Principle of the effusion of this abstracted form from Himself, sometimes in the soul, and sometimes, through its mediation, in matter {ll. 1-8; 1-3} (pp. 266-7).⁵⁵

This analogy is remarkable in that it illustrates the correspondence in Ibn Sīnā’s worldview between the divine Decree and intellectual knowledge on the one hand, and the Determination and psychic knowledge on the other – the first simple, the other discursive. For Ibn Sīnā, the Decree, which *exists* in God as His intellectual knowledge of the best order in existence, is thus unfolded (*or enacted*) in His Determination, that is to say, in the necessary causal order

⁵⁴ Ibn Sīnā cites this Qur’anic trope in the *Throne*: “[God’s] knowledge is one, without multiplicity or plurality – ‘And Our Command is but one, as the twinkling of an eye’ (Q 54:50); plurality occurs either in conversation of the soul, in imagination, or in sense” {ll. 1-2} (p. 95). Ibn Sīnā also writes in *Divisions of Philosophy*: “[The fifth fundamental division of metaphysical knowledge (*al-ilm al-ilāhī*) involves] [...] demonstrating the relation (*irtibā*) of earthly [things] to heavenly [things (*i.e.*, the celestial Bodies), and these] to the acting (*āmila*) angels [*i.e.*, the celestial Souls), and these] to the imparting (*mubligha*) and figurating (*mumthila*) angels [*i.e.*, the separate Intelligences), and showing] the relation of the whole to the Command (*amr*) [*i.e.*, the Decree)], which ‘is but one, as the twinkling of an eye’ (Q 54:50) {ll. 1-3} (p. 114); in *Attainment of Knowledge and Wisdom*, Ibn Sīnā also writes: “The weight of an atom does not escape Him, neither on earth nor in heaven’ (Q 10:61). No extension of a movement, no contraction of a rest, are devoid of a Determination and Decree from Him. [...] All descend from Him, and His Command ‘is but one, as the twinkling of an eye’” {ll. 12-5} (p. 37). Ibn Sīnā accordingly states in *Metaphysics* IX.4: “The First Real [...] intelligizes (*‘āqil*) the order of the good in existence, and intelligizes how this ought to be – not, [however,] through an intellection that moves from one intelligible to another [...], but rather through one act of intellection” (p. 327).

⁵⁵ This analogy is also found in the *Book of Knowledge*: “In having knowledge of all things, the condition of the Necessary Existent may be likened to the ‘simple thought’ (*yakī khāṭir*) which bestows [knowledge of] numerous things. But the Necessary Existent is more excellent (*‘ālā-tar*), more unique (*yigāna-tar*) and more disengaged (*mujarrad-tar*) [from matter], for that thought is contained in the receptacle [of the human soul], whereas the knowledge of the Necessary Existent is separate” {ll. 5-7} (p. 88); see also *Psychology* V.6 (pp. 332-3), and *Metaphysics* VIII.7 (p. 291).

by which creatures are enabled to receive their existence and perfection, as bestowed by God's Decree, and by which alone a creature is real – and a conception, true.

In the above-mentioned analogy, a 'simple thought' – here termed *amr*, thus evoking the divine 'Command' or Decree – comes to the mind of a knower. This is not only a thought, but one by which he is certain to know at once the whole answer to the problem presented. As an intellectual form, for Ibn Sīnā this intuition is true (or real, *ḥaqq*) inasmuch as it derives from a necessary causal order and arrangement, ultimately derived from God, which occurs 'as in the twinkling of an eye'. Since for Ibn Sīnā all that exists in the sublunar realm receives existence and achieves perfection through its proper junction with the Active Intelligence – above which the universal order is perfectly realized⁵⁶ – this 'simple thought' at once provides the necessary causal order by which the truth of the matter under discussion can be realized, as well, in the mind of the interlocutor. Then, as the knower unfolds this intuition through discussion, an imitation takes place in the knower's soul which – insofar as it is an imitation of this 'simple thought' – Ibn Sīnā writes, "is the perfection of the soul" {l. 2} (*Guidance*, p. 267).⁵⁷

In the context of this analogy, for Ibn Sīnā the rational soul's primary intention is here to imitate the Intelligence's simple knowledge of the whole, as decreed by God, an imitation

⁵⁶ According to Ibn Sīnā, from a human perspective this effusion is sought from the Active Intelligence that governs the sphere of the Moon because that Intelligence mediates the supernal realm for all that exists in the sublunar realm; above it, the effusion descends without impediment, so that there is no need for the human – as residing in the sublunar realm – to seek junction with a higher cause than the Active Intelligence, which bestows on all sublunar things the forms of their own existence, and through which the existence and proper perfections of the human are also received. Hence, for Ibn Sīnā junction with the Active Intelligence simultaneously involves junction with the supernal realm as a whole, even though the rational soul's involvement with the body prevents it from achieving its complete reception, so long as it resides in the sublunar realm.

⁵⁷ This point is crucial: for Ibn Sīnā the perfection of the rational soul is not merely discursion, but discursion *inasmuch as it is an imitation*, in succession, of the simple knowledge it receives from the Intelligence.

which disposes matter for the reception of this form, as mediated by the soul. Hence, insofar as the knower's response is an imitation, in successive steps, of the 'simple thought' which his soul receives at once from the Intelligence, it does not as such take place *for the sake of* conferring a perfection on the interlocutor.⁵⁸ Rather, the rational soul's discursive imitation of the 'simple thought' bestowed by the Intelligence *is* itself the perfection which the rational soul receives (and passes down) from the Intelligence. The interlocutor is thus perfected by the knower's discourse in that it prepares his mind (by removing impediments which prevent its reception) to *also* receive the intuition which the knower initially received – through the junction, in turn, of his own rational soul with the Active Intelligence – and thereby himself recognize the truth of the matter under discussion.⁵⁹

This analogy also illustrates the correspondence in Ibn Sīnā's worldview between human and divine creatures – as equally comprised of a separate Intelligence, a Soul and a Body – so that the existential condition enjoyed by celestial creatures realizes the disposition which *also*

⁵⁸ As previously observed (*supra*, n. 39), just as according to Ibn Sīnā the physician's role is not to bestow health – the causes of which proceed from the supernal realm – but rather to remove impediments which prevent the patient's body from receiving the divine effusion, so the knower's role is not to bestow truth on the mind of his interlocutor, but simply to prepare the latter's faculties so as to dispose his rational soul receive the effusion from above. In either case, the knower's primary intention is the junction of his rational soul to the Active Intelligence – mediator of the supernal realm – not the bestowal of a perfection on what is lower. Thus, the bestowal of a perfection ensues from this junction, even though this bestowal is not intended by primary intention.

⁵⁹ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Psychology* V.6: "To acquire knowledge (*ta'allum*) is to seek the perfect disposition for junction [with the Active Intelligence], so that, from [this junction, appears] the Intelligence which is simple, [and from which] emanate in [the soul] the forms which are then expounded in it by means of cogitation. [...] Then, when [...] the soul has turned to the side of contemplation (*nazar*), [...] [which is] the return to the principle that bestows intelligence, the acquisition of knowledge [has the quality of] junction to [that principle]" {ll. 2-8} (p. 337). Note in this context Ibn Sīnā's statement in the *Discussions*: "The intelligible realm presents itself to the soul [...] according to the essential, not temporal order of the intelligibles; and this takes place all at once. There is need for reflection [in this world] only because of the soul's murkiness (*kadar*), or because it has had little training and is incapable of attain the divine effusion, or because of distractions. Were it not for these, the soul would rise (*ista'lat*), leaving everything behind, to the peak (*amad*) of the Real" {ll. 12-6} (§237-8, p. 107).

exists (though in a lesser degree) in the perfected human, namely, the knower (*‘arif*). The relation between the three types of substantial forms of the creature – which, Ibn Sīnā affirms, “embraces all types (*aqsām*) of [contingent] existence,”⁶⁰ – is epitomized by his view of the celestial Soul as moving the Body of its sphere⁶¹ in a perpetual circular motion,⁶² out of its perpetual desire to realize, in succession, the simple perfection which it contemplates in the Intelligence of its own sphere. This Intelligence – as a substance separate from all materiality (celestial as well as earthly), that forever contemplates the Pure Good, First Cause of all things – is the Soul’s beloved, through which the Soul continually yearns to assimilate itself to God.⁶³ For Ibn Sīnā, the Body of each sphere is then perpetually moved by its Soul’s desire – akin, he writes, to “a certain angelic or celestial worship”⁶⁴ – to imitate, in succession, the simple knowledge which it contemplates in its Intelligence, and through which the Soul loves God, so that each Soul loves the Pure Good through the Intelligence of its own sphere.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ In the *Book of Knowledge*, Ibn Sīnā distinguishes three kinds of substances: Intelligence, Soul, and Body. “Intelligence,” he writes, “is that which receives [from God], and gives nothing but what is in accord with [what it receives]; Soul, that which receives from the Intelligence, and gives [to the Body]; Body, that which receives, but does not give. These [three kinds of substances] encompass all types of existence. From these [...], we know, therefore, the three types of contingent existence” {ll. 5-8} (p. 116).

⁶¹ One of the seven visible ‘planets’ of the Ptolemaic cosmos: (1) Moon, (2) Mercury, (3) Venus, (4) Sun, (5) Mars, (6) Jupiter, (7) Saturn; nested within (8) the sphere of the fixed stars, and lastly, (9) the outermost sphere of spheres.

⁶² A detailed analysis of Ibn Sīnā’s theory of celestial motion, especially its kinetic subtleties, lies beyond the scope of this study. Its mention, however, is requisite in this context in that Ibn Sīnā projects both his conception of divine providence and of human psychology on the relations between the Intelligence, Soul, and Body of the heavenly spheres. For a recent study of Ibn Sīnā’s cosmology, see D. JANOS (2013).

⁶³ Ibn Sīnā’s cosmology is as such greatly indebted to Alexander of Aphrodisias. In his words, “Alexander gives the most correct opinion when he affirms in his treatise *On the Principles of the Whole* that [there can only be one] mover of the whole heaven [(i.e., the Absolute Good)] [...], even though each one of the spheres has a mover [(i.e., its Soul)] and a beloved of its own [(i.e., its Intelligence)]” {ll. 5-6} (*Origin and Return*, p. 62).

⁶⁴ *Metaphysics* IX.2, p. 316.

⁶⁵ Alexander writes in *On the Principles of the Whole*: “It follows from what we have said that the yearning (*shawq*) which is in [the Souls of divine things] is by way of choice (*ikhtiyār*), and the true and excellent choice is the love of the good. For choice in an absolute sense is love of the good, or of that which is believed to be good. For

Hence, according to Ibn Sīnā just as the celestial Soul’s imitation, in succession, of the simplicity it contemplates in the Intelligence confers perfection on the Body of its sphere by perpetually disposing it to receive the divine effusion, so in the case of the above-mentioned analogy the knower passes down a perfection on his interlocutor by removing hindrances (*i.e.*, ignorance, misconceptions, doubt) which prevent its reception, and thereby disposes him to *also* receive the effusion from above. In either case, however, the Soul realizes its perfection – which is to imitate the simplicity⁶⁶ of the Intelligence – not by intending to bestow a perfection on the Body, but rather by primarily intending to assimilate itself to the Pure Good, through the mediation of the Intelligence.⁶⁷ For Ibn Sīnā, the Soul’s bestowal of a perfection on the Body does not, therefore, occur by primary intention, but is merely the *effect* of the Soul’s yearning to assimilate itself to the Pure Good, First Cause of all things, through its contemplation of the perfection it perceives in its beloved, *i.e.*, the Intelligence of its sphere.

in Aristotle’s opinion what is chosen is [what] is conceived to be good, and [what] is willed and preferred among things is the First Good. The cause of the natural motion of this divine body, then, is the yearning (*ishṭiyāq*) for the True Good. Desire in these things only exists through the Intelligence [...], for inasmuch as [the Souls] conceive (*mutaṣawwar*) the Intelligence they desire the thing perceived by the latter, and [they] imagine (*mutawahham*) [it]” {ll. 1-11} (p. 50).

⁶⁶ As well as, simultaneously; its necessity, reality, eternity, ontological stability, and independence from matter.

⁶⁷ Ibn Sīnā writes: “What is being sought [by the Soul’s desire] is the imitation of the First – exalted be He – [so as] to be as perfect as possible in itself and in what is consequent on this, inasmuch as [this] is an imitation of the First, not inasmuch as [it is an imitation of the One] from whom things thereafter proceed, so that the motion would be for the sake [of the latter] by first intention – no! I say: The very desire to imitate the First, inasmuch as He is in act, [renders] the motion of the celestial sphere proceeding from Him in the manner in which a thing proceeds from the conception that necessitates it, even though this is not intended in itself by the first intention” (*Metaphysics* IX.2, p. 315). That is to say, the Soul’s desire to resemble God sets in motion the Body of its celestial sphere, yet his bestowal of a perfection on the Body is not intended primarily, but is only the *effect* of the Soul’s imitation of God through the Intelligence. This intention of the higher (and through it, of the highest) is then not for the sake of what follows Him; the Soul intends the Perfect who bestows perfection, though not because He bestows perfection, but because He is Himself that Perfection.

These considerations bring to the fore a key principle of Ibn Sīnā’s worldview: rational creatures (*i.e.*, celestial Souls and human souls), in their state of intelligible perfection, intend nothing in existence, as caused in itself.⁶⁸ And as God decrees all things at once by intending only His own essence by primary intention – which is Pure Existence and Pure Perfection – so the rational creature, as determined by God, intends only His essence by primary intention, and likewise all else in existence, only by secondary intention.⁶⁹ Hence, just as for Ibn Sīnā God’s Decree consists in His simple knowledge of all things though Himself – whereby He bestows on His creatures the necessity of their existence, so His Determination consists in the knowledge that rational creatures have of themselves as known by Him, and through which God disposes all things to receive existence and realize their proper perfections.

This is where Ibn Sīnā’s identification of the Decree with intellectual knowledge, and of the Determination with psychic knowledge, becomes evident: when God manifests Himself to a creature, that creature *as an Intelligence* contemplates God’s necessary essence, through which it receives at once – according to its utmost perfection, *i.e.*, as God knows it through

⁶⁸ As realizing its perfection, the Soul does not intend what is lower. Ibn Sīnā writes in *Metaphysics* IX.3: “It is not possible that anything in [these spheres] should be for the sake of generated things – neither an intention of motion, [...] nor yet indeed an intention of [any] act at all for their sake. This is because every intention is for the sake of the object intended, and is thus lesser in existence than the thing intended” (p. 319).

⁶⁹ Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on the *Theologia*: “Since the Principle of all things is the Everlasting through His essence and the Real through His essence, all things desire Him, either by choice, or by will, or by a kind of inspiration (*ilhām*), or by means of the inclination of natures to the love (*ḥubb*) of what is lasting, which is sought either individually, or simply represented, so that they abide through their species [(in the case of perishable creatures)], and they are moved by this [*i.e.*, love]” {ll. 1–3} (p. 73). Note that although Ibn Sīnā presents this particular statement as reformulating what the author of the *Theologia* is stating (“He said: ...”), he is not, however, reporting these words as differing from his own views. P. ADAMSON (2004) has stated accordingly: “Above all what emerges from the commentary is the impression that Avicenna came to the text with his own fully formed system. He corrects or interprets the text as needed in order to reconcile it with that system. [...] [It] does not show us a philosopher who was building a theory through engagement with a text, as the ancient commentators had done. It shows us rather a philosopher passing judgment on a text, measuring it against the truth already established in other, independent works of his own” (p. 74).

His essence – all that can exist following its own intelligible substance. The Intelligence is thus the existentiatio of God’s Decree, insofar as it intends nothing but God’s essence, through which it at once knows all that proceeds from Him.⁷⁰ Following its contemplation of God, the creature then knows itself through Him, and thereby knows its own essence as necessary of existence through Him; for Ibn Sīnā, this is the creature *as a Soul*.

Knowing itself as necessary of existence through God, the creature as Soul then yearns to realize its own existence and perfection by imitating its Intelligence – which is the creature as God knows it through His essence. While distinct in its contingent essence from God’s necessary essence, the Soul realizes its essence by perpetually imitating in itself the perfection which it contemplates in its Intelligence, and through which it ever yearns to assimilate itself to God, the Necessary Existent in His essence. As a Soul, the creature is thus for Ibn Sīnā the existentiatio of God’s Determination, that is, the creature as intending, through its own essence, nothing but what is necessary of existence through God. In knowing its own essence, the creature as Soul therefore secondarily knows all that proceeds from Him – as manifested to it through the Intelligence of its sphere. Imitating in itself the simple knowledge which it contemplates in the Intelligence, the Soul thus receives from God through the Intelligence

⁷⁰ In other words, for Ibn Sīnā the Intelligence is the creature as God knows it through Himself: its very substance, as an Intelligence, is not an act of intellection of God which proceeds from the creature to God, for then its intellection of God would entail that the Intelligence is itself the necessitating cause of God’s manifestation to the Intelligence. Hence, the Intelligence does not attain to intellectual contemplation of God due to its own intention, for no intention in the creature can affect God and cause Him to manifest Himself to it. Rather, according to Ibn Sīnā it is God’s self-manifestation to the Intelligence which causes the Intelligence’s intellection of Him. Ibn Sīnā thus states in his commentary on the *Theologia*: “It is necessary that the [Intelligences’] intellection of the First Principle is through the First Principle’s self-manifestation to them. When He manifests Himself to them they intelligize Him, they intelligize themselves, and everything in the subsequent orders (*tāliya*)” {ll. 9–11} (p. 49).

the forms of all that can exist following its own psychic substance, as contingent of existence in itself; for Ibn Sīnā, this is the creature *as a Body*. Existing on the ‘edge’ of nonexistence, the Body is then arranged and disposed by the Soul – following the latter’s imitation of its Intelligence – to receive existence in its bodily substance, as much as is suitable and possible for it.

According to Ibn Sīnā, while God intends only His own essence by primary intention, and all necessary existence through His essence by secondary intention (as the Decree), and whereas the Intelligence intends only God’s essence by primary intention, and all that necessarily exists through Him by secondary intention (as the Determination) – both having no relation to bodies (*i.e.*, the contingent aspect of creatures) – the Soul is faced with a choice. Either to turn towards necessary existence, which is the side of the Intelligence, or towards contingent existence, which is the side of the Body. In the case of divine Souls, as existing in the supernal realm, for Ibn Sīnā the choice is always the side of the Intelligence by primary intention, and although related to the Body of their celestial sphere, their care for it is only secondary: they pass down perfection to their Body, not by intending the latter’s perfection, but as an *effect* of their imitation of God through the Intelligence. The divine Soul’s choice of the Pure Good and First Real⁷¹ over evil and unreality – of existence over nonexistence – is then a *rational choice*, meaning that perfect rationality, for Ibn Sīnā, consists in such a choice: the intention of Necessary Existence, the Good, the Real – through the necessary order by which all things exist, as willed by God – over all that is caused, as contingent in itself.

⁷¹ Ibn Sīnā writes in his treatise *On Love*: “It is not inconceivable that [these divine Souls] have a love intrinsic to their essence for the Absolute Real (*al-Ḥaqq al-Muṭlaq*) primarily, and for other intelligibles secondarily. If it were not so, their proper states of preparation for their perfection would be ineffectual (*mu’atṭal*). Therefore, the Real Beloved for both the human and angelic Souls is the Pure Good” {ll. 18-20} (p. 264).

In Ibn Sīnā's worldview the human condition in the sublunar realm is one of alienation from its proper state of existence, as a rational soul.⁷² As we will see in the following chapter, Ibn Sīnā conceives the realization of human perfection in the sublunar realm as consisting in the realization of a middle-way between intellectual contemplation of the Real for His sake, and care for the body, not for its sake, but only so as to dispose it to receive the divine effusion from the supernal realm, through the junction of his rational soul with the Active Intelligence. Despite the fact that for Ibn Sīnā this condition is seldom achieved by the human in the sublunar realm, we will see that in his view this middle-way consists in existing in a condition similar to that of divine creatures residing in the supernal realm – and by which the human rational soul assimilates itself to God, as much as possible. Aligning himself with the order of divine providence through his concern for the good in all things, balanced by his detachment from all contingent existence – as the generous man who, as such, resembles God as much as humanly possible – we will see that this disposition corresponds in Ibn Sīnā's worldview to the ideal of the perfect human creature. This is the human who knows all things according to the necessary order by which they are related to the Real, even as he is detached from all things as considered in themselves – that is, beyond the necessity of their existence, as willed by God through Himself in the best possible way.

⁷² As J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986b) aptly observes: "L'homme avicennien n'est pas de ce monde et c'est dans l'au-delà, hors du monde, qu'il peut enfin être véritablement et pleinement lui-même. Néanmoins, parce qu'il se trouve maintenant dans ce monde et tant qu'il y demeure, jusqu'au trépas, il ne peut être totalement contre le monde, jeter l'anathème sur sa corporéité. Pour faire tomber le plus grand nombre possible de ses entraves, c'est-à-dire pour pouvoir quelque peu actualiser ses pouvoirs essentiels, notamment pour intelliger, contempler Dieu en une vraie prière et agir psychiquement sur les éléments, il doit faire en sorte que le monde – principalement son organisme, ses sens internes – se conforment, soient modelés selon son essence, participent à leur niveau à son projet, symbolisent avec lui" (p. 226).

CHAPTER III

The Perfection of the Soul as a Mean between Involvement with the Body and Intellectual Contemplation

[Rābi'a] said to Sufyān al-Thawrī, “What do you count as generosity (*al-sakhā*)?” He said, “For the sons of this world, it is to liberally give (*yajūd*) of one's possessions. As for the sons of the Hereafter, it is to liberally give of oneself.” She said, “You are mistaken.” He said to her, “Then, what is generosity according to you?” She said, “It is to be devoted to God out of love for Him, without seeking any reward (*jazā*) or compensation (*mukāfa'a*).”¹

The eighth-century mystic Rābi'a al-'Adawīya is widely remembered in the Islamic tradition for the devotional ideal she epitomized: turning to God for His sake, purely out of awareness of His worth and out of love for Him, and as such worshiping Him neither out of fear of Hell nor out of desire for Paradise. This ideal is variously expressed in the sayings ascribed to her.²

In a tradition reported by al-Ghazālī, Sufyān al-Thawrī reportedly says to Rābi'a:

“What is the truth of your faith?” She said, “I have worshiped Him neither out of fear (*khawf*) of His Fire nor out of love (*ḥubb*) for His Paradise, [...] so that I would be like a wicked wage-worker (*al-ajūr al-suw*), but I have worshiped Him out of love and yearning (*shawq*) for Him.”³

Loathing to devote herself to God as a means to an end other than Him, such as the attainment of sensible pleasure and the avoidance of sensible pain (vividly symbolized by the delights of Paradise and the torments of Hell), Rābi'a saw God as Himself the purpose of her worship,

¹ From al-Munāwī's *Ṭabaqāt al-Awliyā'* (no. 4164) in *Witness of Divine Love: Rābi'a l-'Adawīya* {ll. 15-7} (p. 138).

² In 'Aṭṭār's *Memorial of God's Friends*, Rābi'a is reported to have said: “He is a bad servant who worships God out of fear, or adores Him out of desire for reward.’ So they asked, ‘Then why do you worship the Lord? Don't you have desire?’ She replied, ‘*The neighbor, then the house*, as they say. Is it not sufficient that He has commanded us to worship Him? If there were no Paradise or Hell, then it would not be necessary to worship him? Does He not deserve to be worshiped without intermediary?’” {ll. 20-4} (p. 69). In the same work, 'Aṭṭār also reports an intimate discourse (*munājāt*) attributed to Rābi'a: “O Lord, if I worship You out of fear of Hell, burn me in Hell; and if I worship You in the hope of Paradise, exclude me from it. But if I worship You for Your sake, do not withhold from me Your everlasting beauty” {ll. 4-5} (p. 73).

³ *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn IX* (p. 576), in *Witness of Divine Love* {ll. 9-11} (p. 118).

which as such she performed purely out of reverential love for Him.⁴ While Rābi‘a is remembered as the paragon of this ideal, a similar conception is already found among the celebrated aphorisms of ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, as compiled in the *Peak of Excellence*:

A group of people has worshiped God out of desire (*raghba*) [(for reward)] – this is the worship of traders (*tujjār*); another group has worshiped God out of fear (*rahba*) [(of punishment)] – this is the worship of slaves (*‘abīd*); still another group has worshiped God out of gratitude (*shukr*) – this is the worship of free men (*aḥrār*) {no. 237} (p. 648).⁵

Similarly to Rābi‘a, ‘Alī here distinguishes between a kind of worship which is motivated by a purpose other than God – as that of both *traders* who strive for a reward and *slaves* who seek to avoid punishment – and another kind of worship, elevated above these two, which is not performed for the sake of anything besides God by primary intention. Thus, while the trader and the slave are bound to the effect of their act, ‘Alī’s aphorism suggests, the third one is free – that is, detached from both the desire for gain (*or* pleasure) and the fear of loss (*or* harm).

Ibn Sīnā’s writings hold explicit evidence that his worldview was genuinely animated by this devotional ideal. This is most apparent in the ninth section of *Pointers and Reminders*, titled ‘On the Stations of the Knowers’, wherein Ibn Sīnā defines – uncommonly using Ṣūfī terminology – the knower (*‘ārif*) as the human whose rational soul primarily intends God – the

⁴ Conceiving – along with numerous scholars – Ibn Sīnā’s thought in strictly rationalistic terms, O. CHAHINE (1962) contrasts Ibn Sīnā and Rābi‘a: “Avicenne, – dont la thèse de l’amour de Dieu est rationnelle dans son ensemble, et n’apporte pas grand chose au cours de la mystique musulmane – dit que l’Être nécessaire est la fin dans son amour, et il est la fin dans son amabilité. Pour Rābi‘a al-‘Adawīya, l’amour de Dieu a un sens tout à fait désintéressé, autrement dit il faut aimer Dieu pour son essence, et non pas en vue d’une récompense quelconque” (p. 141). In numerous passages, however, Ibn Sīnā himself formulates this ideal, and we will see that his conception of rational love for God has much in common with the ideal epitomized by Rābi‘a.

⁵ A variant of this tradition is attributed to Ja‘far al-Ṣādiq in the *Suffisance*: “Worshippers are of three kinds: a group has worshiped God, the Mighty and Majestic, out of fear (*khawf*) – this is the worship of slaves (*‘abīd*); [another] group has worshiped God, the Blessed and Exalted, seeking reward (*thawāb*) – this is the worship of wage-workers (*ujarā*); [another] group has worshiped God, the Mighty and Majestic, out of love (*ḥubb*) for Him – this is the worship of free men (*aḥrār*), and it is the most excellent [kind of] worship” (vol. II, p. 84, no. 5).

Real (*al-Ḥaqq*) – unlike other humans who, as motivated by their animal soul, primarily intend the attainment of sensible pleasure and the avoidance of sensible pain.⁶ Evoking the devotional ideal expressed in ‘Alī’s aphorism and epitomized by Rābi‘a, Ibn Sīnā writes:

The knower intends (*yurīd*) the First Real (*al-Ḥaqq al-Awwal*) not for anything besides Him, and prefers nothing to the knowledge (*‘irfān*) of Him, and worships Him alone. That is because the First Real is worthy of worship, and because worship is a noble (*sharīfa*) relation to Him, but not because of desire (*raghba*) or fear (*rahba*), since the occurrence of desire or fear would entail that what is desired or feared is the motive and object of the search. The Real would [then] not be the end (*ghāya*), but [only] the intermediary to something other than Him, this being the end and the object of the search, to the exclusion of [the Real] (pp. 810-5).

As with ‘Alī’s aphorism, three kinds of worshipers may thus be discerned on the basis of the intention which motivates their worship: (I) the trader who desires a good, (II) the slave who fears an evil, and (III) the man who, having known God, worships Him freely, neither out of desire nor fear (*i.e.*, as motivated by the faculties of concupiscence and irascibility), but purely out of awareness of His worth. The trader and the slave are therefore alike in that they equally approach worship as a transaction in which another end than God is sought, to the exclusion of Him, whereas the third regards God as the end of his worship, to the exclusion of all else.

⁶ Ibn Sīnā accordingly explains in *Psychology* I.5 that the motive faculty of the animal soul “has two branches: one is called the concupiscible faculty (*quwwa shahwānīya*), which arouses to motion whereby it approaches things that are imagined to be necessary or useful in searching for pleasure; [the other] branch is called the irascible (*ghaḍabīya*) [faculty], and it is a faculty which arouses to motion whereby it repels things that are imagined to be harmful or corruptive, in searching for victory” {ll. 16; 1-6} (pp. 56-7). These ideas can be traced to Aristotle’s *De Anima* II.3 414b, where appetite (*epithumia*), anger (*thumos*), and rational will (*boulēsis*) are categorized as the three branches of the desiring faculty (*orexis*). These also reflect Plato’s doctrine of the tripartite soul: “The three parts [of the soul] have [...] three kinds of pleasure; [...] [one] is that with which a man learns, one is that with which he feels anger (*thumutai*) [...] [and the third is] the appetitive (*epithumētikon*) [...]” (*Republic* IX 580d-e). Significantly, Ibn Sīnā elevates rational will on a different plane than that of the first two, as the rational soul’s yearning for the Real – and for all that is necessary through Him inasmuch as it relates the soul to the Real – whereas he regards appetite and anger as directed towards sensible ends. A.-M. GOICHON (1959) observes: “[La] volonté, βούλησις, apparaît chez Avicenne sur un plan différent, en conséquence de l’importance qu’il donne à l’âme immortelle. Tandis qu’il insiste sur l’aspect animal, bestial, de l’irascible et du concupiscible, [...] il sépare le troisième terme d’Aristote, le spiritualise, en fait l’attribut caractéristique de l’âme [humaine]” (pp. 56-7). The aforementioned devotional ideal, in Ibn Sīnā’s Islamic context, appears to have contributed to this shift.

Again in *Pointers and Reminders IX*, Ibn Sīnā correspondingly discerns three categories of worshipers: the ascetic (*zāhid*), the devotee (*‘ābid*), and the knower (*‘ārif*).⁷ The first, he says, is “one who shuns the pleasures and goods of this world.” The second, “one who persists in the performance of worship through prostration, fasting, and other similar practices.” The third, he adds, is “one who disposes his thought towards the sanctity of the almighty realm (*jabarūt*), in a continual expectation of the dawning (*shurūq*) of the light of the Real in his innermost self (*sirr*)⁸.” For Ibn Sīnā these groups do not form isolated categories, and “some of [these] definitions may be combined with each other” (IX.2, pp. 799–800). Accordingly, even as the knower occupies a higher ‘station’ than that of the two others groups, he *also* performs ascetic and

⁷ Note that this typology is remarkably similar to a saying ascribed to Abū Yazīd Bisṭāmī: “The most veiled from God are three: the ascetic (*zāhid*) by his asceticism, the devotee (*‘ābid*) by his devotion, and the knower (*‘ālim*) by his knowledge. [...] O wretched ascetic, [...] if only he knew the insignificance of this world and of that which he renounces! [...] Verily, the (true) ascetic is one who, in a glance, is captivated by Him and [thereafter] does not turn his gaze on another than Him. As for the (true) devotee, he is one who regards the grace of God upon him in his devotion more than his own devotion, so that his devotion is absorbed in His grace. As for the knower, if only he knew that all the knowledge God has ever manifested amounts to a [mere] line of the Preserved Tablet! [...] [Verily], the (true) knower is he whose knowledge is God, and he draws from Him whenever and however he wants, without [having recourse to] memory or books. These three are those who will possess something on the Day of Resurrection” {ll. 3–12} (p. 155). The resonance of this saying with Ibn Sīnā’s typology in *Pointers and Reminders IX* is evident: the corresponding three categories, understood on two levels: the veiled ascetic, devotee, and knower (here *‘ālim*), who are veiled from God due to their self-absorption, and the (true) ascetic, devotee, and knower, who have known God and thus intend Him primarily. While Ibn Sīnā uses the term *‘ārif* instead of *‘ālim* and does not address the ‘veil’ of the knower who relies on memory or books, his conception of the *‘ārif* is concordant with Abū Yazīd’s description of the knower as one who achieves (true) knowledge by virtue of his relation to God. Another saying of Abū Yazīd bears mention in this context: “The people of knowledge (*ma’rifā*) occupy three stations with respect to God: there are those who request [favours from] God due to their heedlessness (*ghafla*), those who flee God due their weakness (*‘ajaz*), and those who stand still where there is for them neither requesting nor fleeing” {17–8; 1–2} (pp. 102–3). Here again, we see three kinds of worshipers – corresponding to the trader who seeks gain, the slave who fears harm, and the man who is free from both. Note also the resonance of Abū Yazīd’s description of the (true) ascetic above with a passage from Ibn Sīnā’s *Alive, Son of Awake*: “Whoever witnesses a trace of His beauty sets his gaze on it [forever], and thereafter does not turn his gaze away from it, even for the blink of an eye (*ghamza*)” {ll. 9–10} (p. 21).

⁸ This word, rarely used by Ibn Sīnā, is here understood as denoting the substance of the rational soul. In *On the Rational Soul*, he writes: “Know that humans, alone of all animals, possess a faculty which is able to perceiving intelligibles, sometimes called ‘rational soul’ (*naḥs nāṭīqa*), sometimes ‘tranquil soul’ (*naḥs muṭma’inna*) (Q 89:27), sometimes ‘sacred soul’ (*naḥs qudsīya*), sometimes ‘spiritual spirit’ (*rūḥ rūḥāniya*), [...] sometimes ‘divine secret’ (*sirr ilāhī*) [...]” {ll. 1–3} (p. 195); see tr. D. GUTAS (2014), p. 68; on the term *sirr*, see A.–M. GOICHON (1965).

devotional practices, yet not for ends proper to his animal soul – which exclude the Real as an end – but rather by enlisting his animal faculties and bodily organs for the realization of his rational soul’s assimilation to the Real. Ibn Sīnā writes:

Asceticism for one who is not a knower is a kind of trade (*mu’āmalā*), as if one buys the pleasures of the Hereafter [in exchange for] the pleasures of this world. But for the knower, it is a kind of abstinence (*tanazzuh*) from what distracts the innermost self (*sirr*) from the Real, and an elevation (*takabbur*) above all things other than the Real {ll. 1–3} (IX.3, p. 801).

The ascetic who is not a knower therefore abstains from sensible pleasures only in the hope of enjoying an even greater share of such pleasures in the Hereafter. “He worships God,” Ibn Sīnā explains, “[...] only so that He would confer him in the Hereafter [pleasures] [...] such as appetizing food, delicious drink, and beautiful sex” {ll. 4–6; 1} (IX.6, pp. 817–8). For his part, Ibn Sīnā adds, the knower *also* renounces sensible pleasures, yet not in the hope of enjoying such pleasures in the Hereafter, but rather because such ends preoccupy his soul from elevating its aspiration (*himma*) beyond sensible ends and attaining junction with the Active Intelligence, thereby becoming assimilated to the Real.⁹

⁹ Note that according to Ibn Sīnā the knower’s detachment from sensible pleasures follows from his awareness of the superiority of intelligible over sensible pleasures. In *Metaphysics* IX.7, he states that “the desire of the metaphysical philosophers (*al-ḥukamā’ al-ilāhīyūn*) for attaining this [higher] happiness is greater than their desire for bodily happiness. Indeed, it is as though they pay no heed to [the latter] even if it is granted to them. They do not consider it great besides this felicity which consists in drawing close to the First Real” (p. 348). Ibn Sīnā further remarks that “the intelligent person (*‘āqil*) ought not to imagine that every pleasure is similar [to the pleasure] the donkey has in its belly and betwixt its thighs. [...] Nay, indeed, what comparison can there be between what belongs to the lofty [pleasure] and this base one?” (p. 349). For Ibn Sīnā, the knower’s asceticism accordingly results from his disinterest in what is other than the Real: he renounces worldly ends because he recognizes their baseness in comparison to the lofty pleasure of intellectual contemplation. As Ibn Sīnā says in the *Discussions*, “Contemplation (*mushāhada*) is not facilitated for everyone, but only for [the man of certainty who recognizes the baseness] of this ever-changing world (*ṣāhib al-yaqīn bi-fisāla hādha l-‘ālam al-mustahīl*), and the vileness of the attainment of its cravings (*shahawāt*), and the accidents of irascibility and covetousness (*tama’*), and all else in it. For none of this is worthy of devoting one’s aspiration (*‘tikāf al-himma*) to it. Once he has purified his soul, and cast off these coverings (*aghshīya*), contented (*rāḍahā*) and refined her (*hadhdhabahā*), and prepared her for the reception of the higher effusion, the first thing he beholds is the beauty (*husn*) of his soul in her freedom (*hurriyya*),

In sum, according to Ibn Sīnā the knower withdraws from ends other than the Real so as to dispose himself to receive the divine effusion by eliminating that which interferes with its reception. For the knower, therefore, asceticism consists in “setting aside [from the path of choice] that which is other than the Real” {l. 2} (IX.8, p. 821). In intending the Real – the Necessary Existent – above all else, the knower detaches himself from intending contingent existents in themselves, thereby preparing his rational soul to actualize its proper relation to the Real, and through this relation, to all that necessarily exists through Him. That is to say, for Ibn Sīnā it is only through the First Cause that knowledge of the necessary order of causes that follow Him is achieved.¹⁰ For the human, this relation is established through the junc-

elevation (*i'tilā'*), and detachment (*i'tāq*) from what others devote themselves to. Thus there occurs [to his soul] from God the Exalted a light that turns her away from all things, and inspires in her the disdain of all sensible things. Then [his soul] is resplendent (*ibtahaja*), felicitous in her dignity and loftiness. [Such a man] has mercy on [...] [those] who quarrel amongst themselves [for worthless things (*lā shay'*)] in their state of confusion (*takhabbu*), for they are on a course to their ruin, and what they pursue [ever] eludes them. He has mercy on them, since they are filled to the brim with sorrow, fear, envy, distress, and [by the most intricate] preoccupations (*shughl fī shughl*). And this splendor (*bahja*) and light come to [his soul] from God through the light of the Intelligence, to which thought (*fīkr*) and reasoning (*qiyās*) are not guided except to affirm it; but as for its specific quiddity and quality, contemplation alone leads to it – and none attains to this contemplation save he who has been prepared for it through the soundness of the disposition (*mizāj*) of [his] body” {ll. 13-6; 1-11} (§797-8, pp. 277-8); this passage (with minor variants) is found in Ibn Sīnā's commentary on the *Theologia* {ll. 16-7; 1-10} (pp. 55-6). There, he also states: “True contemplation (*al-mushāhada al-ḥaqqā*) follows perception (*idrāk*) when his aspiration (*himma*) turns to the Real One (*al-Wāḥid al-Ḥaqq*) and is cut off from all that distracts and prevents it from casting its gaze (*yanzur*) on Him, until, along with perception, there occurs an awareness of what is perceived, inasmuch as it is suitable and delightful (*lazīz*), being the resplendence (*bahja*) of the pure (*zakīya*) soul, which is the [soul's proper] state – as freed from every affliction (*mihna*), and attaining the Beloved (*ʿAshīq*), who is loved in His essence; not only as perceived and as intelligible, but inasmuch as He is loved in His substance (*jawhar*). And if preoccupations veil the perception of [‘that light and splendor’ (*Theologia*)], how much more [do they veil] true contemplation! I say that you are not informed of this matter save through experience, and it is not among the things that are intellected through reasoning (*qiyās*)” {ll. 5-12} (p. 44).

¹⁰ Ibn Sīnā writes in *On Love*: “[The] divine souls, whether human or angelic, have no claim whatsoever to divinity unless they achieve knowledge (*māʿrifa*) of the Absolute Good. For it is evident that these souls are characterized by perfection only after having gained knowledge of those intelligibles which are caused, and there is no way to conceive these unless one lets their conception be preceded by knowledge of the true causes, and especially the First Cause, [...] just as there is no way for the intelligibles [that are caused] to exist unless the causes themselves, and especially the First Cause, exist prior to them” {ll. 9-14} (p. 261).

tion of his rational soul with the Active Intelligence, above which, as we saw in chapter II, the divine effusion descends without any impediment. For Ibn Sīnā, (true) asceticism thus consists in detachment from other ends than the soul's assimilation to the Real, intending other ends only as subordinate to that aspiration. As for devotional practices, Ibn Sīnā explains:

Devotion for one who is not a knower is a kind of trade (*mu'āmalā*), as if one acts in the present life for a salary that one will receive in the Hereafter, as a wage (*ajr*) and reward (*thawāb*). But for the knower, it is a kind of practice which consists in directing by habit one's aspiration (*himma*) and faculties – such as the estimative and the imaginative faculties of [the animal] soul – away from the side of delusion (*ghurūr*) to the side of the Real. In this way, [these faculties] become receptive to the innermost self (*al-sirr al-bāṭin*) so that, when [the rational soul] seeks the Real, they will not interfere with it {ll. 4-8} (*Pointers and Reminders IX.3*, p. 801).

The devotee who is not a knower thus performs certain prescribed acts so as to be deserving of God's favor in the Hereafter. While for Ibn Sīnā what this devotee “seeks by his efforts will be generously given (*mabdhūlan*) to him in accordance with what he had been promised” {l. 6} (p. 818), his aspiration for a reward in return for the acts he performs nevertheless turns him away from the Real and prevents him from experiencing the intellectual pleasure of junction with the Active Intelligence. Because he turns to the Real merely as a means to another end, the devotee who is not a knower cannot as a result perceive what lies beyond the sensible ends to which he aspires. Ibn Sīnā accordingly writes:

Whoever deems it permissible to place the Real in an intermediary position receives mercy, but only in some manner; for he is not granted the pleasure of rejoicing in [the Real], so that he would be inclined (*yasta'tif*) to it. His knowledge is accompanied only by aborted (*mukhdaja*) pleasures. And so he longs for these, neglectful of what lies beyond them. [...] If he turns away from [the Real], his vision cannot be raised – whether in this world or in the Hereafter – except to the pleasures of his belly (*qabqab*) and genitals (*dhabdhab*). But he who seeks insight through the guidance of sanctity has known the real pleasure, and has turned his face towards it {ll. 1-3; 4-5} (*Pointers and Reminders IX.6*, pp. 816; 818).

For Ibn Sīnā the knower therefore uses devotional practices as means to dispose his body and prepare the faculties of his animal soul – such as his imagination and estimation – to assist (*i.e.*, not to interfere with) his rational soul’s act of intellectual contemplation. In Ibn Sīnā’s analysis this process is not limited to devotional practices, but to any act in which the rational soul uses the animal faculties and organs of the body.¹¹

In *Pointers and Reminders* IX.8, Ibn Sīnā states that for the knower the aim of devotional practices is to “render the commanding (*amāra*) [(or animal)] soul submissive to the tranquil (*muṭma’inna*) [(or rational)] soul,¹² so that the body’s faculties of imagination and estimation may be drawn to estimations (*tawahhumāt*) which are proper to holy matters¹³ (*al-amr al-qudsī*), abandoning those which are proper to base things” {ll. 2-4} (p. 821). In Ibn Sīnā’s view the distinctive trait of the knower thus lies in that the exertion of his body’s faculties and organs is primarily motivated by his rational soul’s yearning to assimilate itself to the Real, an intellectual end which as such lies beyond the reach of the body – including the internal senses of

¹¹ Ibn Sīnā writes in the *Discussions*: “Sometimes [the rational soul] has recourse to the imagination in some of its activities so as to occupy the imagination [and prevent it] from obstructing [the soul], so that, by associating [the imagination] to its [own ends], its own disposition may be strengthened – as we also do in examining sensible figures when contemplating [matters of] geometry” {ll. 2-4} (§151, p. 88); see MICHOT (1986b): “À leur niveau, [l’imagination et les sens] sont appelés à participer à l’intellection [...], parce que c’est là la meilleure manière de les empêcher de s’opposer à l’intuition et de distraire l’intelligence” (pp. 225-6).

¹² Ibn Sīnā is here using Qur’anic expressions to refer to the animal soul, as the ‘commanding soul’ that incites to evil (see Q 12:53), and to the rational soul, as the ‘tranquil soul’ that is worthy of entering Paradise (see Q 89:27).

¹³ In *Divine Effusion*, Ibn Sīnā correspondingly describes devotional practices as means of facilitating intellectual contemplation by enlisting the body and the animal soul’s faculties towards that end. He writes: “A sect of ancient worshipers used to keep the faculties of their soul in the worship of God the Exalted, to His remembrance and the imploration of [...] His assistance, by constructing exquisite (*rafī’a*) sanctuaries and using idols made of precious (*nafīsa*) substances. [...] “‘We worship these,’ they said, ‘only so that they may bring us closer to God’” (Q 39:3). This [practice] was later adopted [...] in constructing mosques, churches [or synagogues] (*biya’*), and monasteries (*ṣawāmī’*), and in placing prayer niches (*maḥārīb*) and chandeliers (*qanādīl*) in them [...]. All these prepare the soul by establishing its obedience and by maintaining its repentance in [its] reversion (*ināba*) and devotion (*‘ibāda*) [to God]” {ll. 9-11, 13-6} (p. 8); see J. [Y.] MICHOT (1986b), p. 223, & tr. pp. 229-30.

his animal soul.¹⁴ As for the ascetic or devotee who are not knowers, even though the animal ends to which they aspire are to be attained only in the Hereafter, it is nonetheless the animal soul which motivates their worship, and as such – even if only in imagination – these sensible ends lie within the reach of the body.

In Ibn Sīnā's view the rational soul's relation to the body is not as such detrimental to its substance, for the soul – as existing in the sublunar realm – needs to employ the body so as to prepare itself to achieve its own perfection. Rather, the soul is harmed by its relation to the body when it adopts a passive disposition towards the latter. Ibn Sīnā writes:

I say: the soul adheres to the body so as to possess the adornment (*zīna*) proper to intelligible things. It is this intelligible adornment and the possibility of junction with supernal substances to which belong true pleasure, beauty, and splendor. The method for the soul consists in making the body and bodily organs means of acquiring the perfection which belongs to it alone. [...] For it is not because of its relation to the body that the soul is turned away from the higher perfection [...]; rather, it is due to a disposition which befalls the soul [as a result of] its involvement with what is base, [...] when the soul becomes [engrossed with the body, so that] dispositions are established in it which are docile to the body, such as concupiscence, irascibility, and others {ll. 10-3, 15-6; 1-2} (Commentary on the *Theologia*, pp. 41-2).

Hence, for Ibn Sīnā intellectual contemplation is not achieved by suppressing the activities of the body's faculties and organs – as though the body were inherently harmful to the soul – but by allying them to the rational soul's aspiration for junction with the Active Intelligence, thereby causing the body's faculties to perform their activities in a more excellent manner.¹⁵

¹⁴ “Reflection (*ru'ya*) consists in that the soul occupies its faculties with something that lies in the path of what it seeks so as to prepare itself to receive the form it seeks from the Bestower of Forms” {ll. 2-3} (*Notes*, §362, p. 226).

¹⁵ In *On Love*, Ibn Sīnā explains: “Many human activities, impressions and reactions belong to the animal soul alone and by itself, such as sensation, imagination, sexual intercourse, and the spirit of aggression and warfare. However, because the human animal soul acquires some splendor due to the proximity of the rational [soul], it performs such acts in a nobler and more refined manner. [...] Often, human actions are manifestly based on an essential partnership between the rational and animal [faculties], such as, for instance, when the rational [faculty] employs the faculty of sensation to abstract universals from particulars by way of induction. The same holds

In Ibn Sīnā's view the perfection of every psychological faculty involves the attainment of its proper pleasure.¹⁶ All psychological faculties thus have in common that “the awareness of the agreeability and suitability [of what is experienced] constitutes the good and pleasure proper to them.”¹⁷ Although ends proper to the animal soul are not evils in themselves,¹⁸ they nevertheless become evils when their intemperate pursuit hinders the realization of other and higher perfections.¹⁹ Ibn Sīnā accordingly explains in *On Love* that “there is goodness in every part of the divinely established order, and each one of these goods is sought after. However, the pursuit of one of these worldly goods often interferes with the attainment of a good that is of a higher rank” {ll. 14–6} (p. 256). For Ibn Sīnā, the human who is entirely preoccupied with the attainment of sensible pleasure therefore pursues goods which are harmful to his rational soul²⁰ – whose proper perfection is to detach itself from sensible ends and to contemplate, in

with cogitation when it employs the faculty of imagination. This sometimes leads to a point where it attains to the perception of whatever its aim may be among the intelligibles” {ll. 11–3; 1–4} (pp. 255–6).

¹⁶ “The perfection of concupiscence,” Ibn Sīnā writes in *Pointers and Reminders* VIII.9, “consists in that the organ of taste acquires the quality of sweetness which it draws from its matter. [...] [For its part,] the perfection of the irascible faculty consists in that the [animal] soul acquires the quality of dominance, or the quality of perceiving that harm occurs to the object of its anger” {ll. 2–3, 6–7} (p. 763). As for the rational soul, he continues, it is to become an intelligible world, reflecting the supernal realm in its own substance.

¹⁷ *Metaphysics* IX.7, p. 348.

¹⁸ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Felicity*: “When the rational soul conforms with [the concupiscible and irascible] faculties in their vile acts – which are not vile in their essence, and are not to be condemned as such, although they are vile with respect to the acts of the rational faculty, just as their essence is vile [in comparison with] the essence [of the rational soul] – they cause it to acquire habits [...] which are detrimental to it” {ll. 23–4; 1} (pp. 18–9).

¹⁹ In terms of the irascible faculty, for instance, Ibn Sīnā explains in *Metaphysics* IX.6 that “injustice proceeds [...] [from this faculty], and subjugation is its perfection. [...] [This faculty] was created to be directed toward subjugation, seeking it and rejoicing in it. Thus, this act relative to it is a good for it [...]; it is only an evil to the one who suffers injustice, or to the rational soul whose perfection [involves] subduing this power and mastering it” (p. 344). Although subjugation is in itself a good for the irascible faculty, according to Ibn Sīnā the human who acts unjustly nevertheless inflicts harm both on another (as the victim of injustice), and on himself (as a rational soul) since the dominance of his animal soul over his rational soul is detrimental to the latter.

²⁰ Ibn Sīnā accordingly explains in *Metaphysics* VI.5 that while pleasure corresponds to “the sensitive, imaginative, and animal good, in terms of the human good [it is mistakenly] believed to be the good. [...] Thus, this act is not devoid of good in terms of [the above], even though it is not a real good according to reason (*‘aql*)” (pp. 224–5).

its own intelligible substance, “the clarity (*jalīya*) of the First Real, [inasmuch as] it is possible for it to attain the proper splendor [of the Real]” {ll. 2-3} (*Pointers* VIII.9, p. 764), followed by the necessary order of all existence, according to the way in which it proceeds from the Real.²¹

Since the animal soul pursues sensible ends only for the sake of the body’s preservation and gratification, and as the human rational soul alone can transcend matter and contemplate intelligible realities, for Ibn Sīnā the rational soul’s perfection can therefore only be realized by the human who subdues his animal soul and brings it under the governance of his rational soul. This consists in achieving a middle-way between proper involvement with the body on the one hand, that is, by abstaining from what disrupts the balance of the human body’s temperament, and intellectual contemplation on the other, that is, by cultivating the rational soul’s yearning for junction with the supernal realm through the Active Intelligence.

²¹ The perfection proper to the rational soul, Ibn Sīnā writes in *Metaphysics* IX.7, “consists in its becoming an intelligible world in which is impressed the form of the whole, [...], beginning with the Principle of the whole, then proceeding to the noble, spiritual, pure substances, [...] and so on, until it completes within itself [the realization of] the order of existence in its entirety. It thus becomes transformed into an intelligible world which parallels the existing world in its entirety, contemplating what is absolute goodness, absolute beneficence, true absolute beauty, becoming united with it, imprinted with its likeness and aspect, affiliated with it, and becoming of its substance” (p. 350). In a ‘memento’ (*tadhkīra*) addressed to a fellow philosopher, possibly Ibn Zayla – see D. C. REISMAN (2002a), p. 568 – Ibn Sīnā writes: “Let God [...] be for him the First and the Last of every thought, the Inner and the Outer of every consideration. Let the ‘eye’ (*‘ayn*) of his soul be anointed with the collyrium [(*kuḥl*)] of contemplating Him (*makḥūla bi-l-naẓar ilayhi*), and let the ‘foot’ [of his soul] be dedicated to standing in audience before Him (*al-muthūl bayna yadayhi*); [let him be] a wayfarer by [means of] his intellect to the highest realm, and [contemplate] therein the magnificent (*kubrā*) signs of his Lord. And when he [turns to the realm] where he resides, then let him contemplate God through His traces; for He is the Inner and the Outer, who manifests Himself to all things through all things. [...] And so when this state (*ḥāla*) has become for him a *habitus*, and this trait as a second nature (*watīra*), then the image (*naqsh*) of the supernal realm becomes engraved in his gemstone (*faṣṣ*), and the sanctity of the divine [reality] (*quds al-lāhūt*) manifests itself (*tajallā*) to his mirror. Thus he becomes familiar with the most exalted society (*alifa l-uns al-a’lā*), and savors uttermost delight. [...] Serenity (*sakīna*) emanates on him, and tranquility (*tuma’nīna*) envelops him. He looks to the lower realm with compassion for its people, seeking to alleviate its heaviness, disdainingly (*mustakhīss*) attachment to it, despising (*mustahqīr*) its favors, and recognizing the errancy (*mustaḍill*) of its ways. [...] He marvels at [this world and its people], just as they marvel at him. Having taken his leave from it, he is with [this world] as if he was not with it” {ll. 19-23, 25; 1-5} (*Attainment of Knowledge and Wisdom*, pp. 38-9); see tr. Y. MICHOT (2000), pp. 125*-7*.

Ibn Sīnā lucidly conveys this process in his commentary on the chapter of *Mankind* (Q 114). In this text, he interprets the first three verses – “I seek refuge in the Lord (*Rabb*) of mankind, Sovereign (*Malik*) of mankind, Deity (*Ilāh*) of mankind” (Q 114:1-3) – as indicating the three principles involved in the realization of human perfection in the sublunar realm. Seeking refuge in these principles thus corresponds respectively to asceticism, devotion, and knowledge, as discussed above, and also parallels the three stages by which Ibn Sīnā (following the influence of Alexander and al-Fārābī’s interpretations of Aristotle’s theory of intellection²²) envisions the realization of the rational soul’s junction with the Active Intelligence: potential intelligence, intelligence *in habitu*, and acquired intelligence.²³ While in his commentary on *Daybreak* (Q 113) Ibn Sīnā explained “the way of seeking refuge with [the Lord of the day-break, which is] the First Principle,” in his commentary on *Mankind* (Q 114) he then explains “the way of seeking refuge with the proximate principle” {ll. 17-8} (p. 124), *i.e.*, the ‘Bestower of Forms’ that governs all that exists under the sphere of the Moon – in this case comprising three degrees: the Lord of mankind, the Sovereign of mankind, and the Deity of mankind.

The first (*or* remote) principle of this junction according to Ibn Sīnā is thus the proper balancing of the temperament whereby God disposes the human body to receive a rational soul that is capable of perceiving intelligibles. This preparation, Ibn Sīnā explains, “comes about through a subtle training (*tarbiya*) and a subtle balancing (*tamzīj*) which the mind cannot fully

²² An account of the complex history of this epistemological theory and survey of the abundant scholarship on this question lies beyond the scope of this study; on this subject, see especially H. A. DAVIDSON (1992).

²³ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Pointers and Reminders* III.14: “This junction [with the Active Intelligence] has for cause a remote faculty, the ‘material’ intelligence, an acquiring faculty, the intelligence *in habitu*, and a completely prepared faculty by which the soul directs itself, whenever it desires, towards the side of illumination (*ishrāq*), by a firmly established *habitus* which we call intelligence in act” {ll. 1-3} (p. 377).

comprehend. [...] This is the meaning of the Exalted’s saying: ‘So when I have fashioned²⁴ him’ (*fa-idhā sawwaytuhu*)” (Q 15:29, 38:72) {ll. 4–5} (p. 123). In Ibn Sīnā’s conception of nature, this process begins with the balancing of the four elements, the equilibrium of which prepares matter to receive from the higher realm the animating principle of vegetal life (the vegetative soul which regulates nutrition, growth, and reproduction). When the subtle balancing of the temperament attains an even higher degree of equilibrium, the living body then receives the animating principle of animal life (the animal soul which regulates motion and sensation). Then, Ibn Sīnā writes in *Origin and Return*, “when the elements reach balance in a way that comes very close to the state of equilibrium, the human appears” {l. 11} (p. 96). For Ibn Sīnā the human is thus the creature that embodies – *i.e.*, when his temperament is properly balanced – the equilibrium of the elements, of vegetal life, then of animal life, the organization of which is subsequently placed under the governance of a rational soul²⁵ which, despite its involvement with the body, is in its own intelligible substance separate from matter.²⁶ Ibn Sīnā thus writes:

²⁴ This verb also connotes ‘to balance, to preserve from excess and deficiency’ (see LANE I.1479). Ibn Sīnā likewise interprets this verse in *On the Knowledge of the Rational Soul and its States*: “This is the meaning indicated [in the Qur’an]: ‘So when I fashioned him, and breathed My Spirit into him.’ The ‘fashioning’ (*taswīya*) is that He prepares the body, through the human disposition, so that the rational soul may attach to it” {ll. 1–2} (p. 185).

²⁵ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Pointers and Reminders* II.28: “Consider the wisdom of the Maker: He began by creating the [elemental] foundations, and from these He then created various mixtures (*amzāj*), and prepared a mixture for each species; and He made [these] mixtures arise from equilibrium (*ʾitidāl*), so that there may arise the [various] kinds of perfection; and He disposed the mixture of the human to be as close as possible to equilibrium, so that it may become a nest (*tastawkarīh*) for his rational soul” (pp. 316–8). As he explains in *On the Rational Soul*, “the closer his temperament (*mizāj*) is to balance, the more [he] is disposed to receive the effusion. [...] When a man applies himself to purifying [his soul through] knowledge, [...] [has a] balanced temperament devoid of those opposites that hinder his receptivity to the divine effusion, then there occurs in him a similarity to the celestial bodies, and he resembles in this the purity of the ‘seven strong ones’ (*al-sabʿ al-shidād*) (Q 78:12), that is to say, the seven spheres” {ll. 20–1; 3–4; 6–7} (p. 197–8). In his *Homily*, he also states: “When his temperament achieves equilibrium and becomes devoid of opposites, the human becomes similar to the ‘seven strong ones’” {l. 18} (p. 233).

²⁶ On the soul’s separability, see R. WISNOVSKY (2003a), ch. 6, pp. 113–41; on the soul and the soul-body relation, see in particular: T. A. DRUART (2000), M. SEBTI (2000, 2004), P. ADAMSON (2004), O. LIZZINI (2010).

The first blessing (*ni'am*) of God the Exalted on the human is that He trains him (*rabāhu*) by balancing his temperament; [the second blessing is that] He trains him through the ascendancy of a governing power, which ensues from the emanation of a rational soul on him. [...] [God has thus placed] the totality of the vegetative and animal faculties [of the human], along with the variety of their acts, and the diversity attached to them, [...] under the rule and governance of a rational and spiritual soul which is noble and perfect {ll. 7-8, 12-4} (Commentary on *Mankind*, p. 123).

While Ibn Sīnā interprets the 'Lord of mankind'²⁷ as signifying the balanced temperament which God has placed in the human constitution so as to dispose it to receive a rational soul, he interprets the 'Sovereign of mankind' as denoting the rational soul in its state of ascendancy above the totality of the faculties and organs of the body. This state therefore corresponds to the rational soul's *habitus* of employing the faculties and organs of the body so as to prepare itself to achieve junction with the 'Deity of mankind', *i.e.*, the Active Intelligence.²⁸

For Ibn Sīnā, seeking refuge in the 'Lord of mankind' therefore parallels asceticism, as practiced by the knower, in that the proper balance of the human temperament is achieved through detachment from material ends which upset this natural equilibrium, as disposed by God in the human constitution. Seeking refuge in the 'Sovereign of mankind' then parallels devotion, as practiced by the knower, in that the rational soul's ascendancy is achieved by enlisting the faculties and organs of the body towards the realization of the perfection which

²⁷ Grounding his explanation in the semantic proximity of the Arabic roots *r-b-b* for 'to lord over', and *r-b-w* for 'to cultivate, nurture', Ibn Sīnā interprets the 'Lord' as indicating God's balancing of the body's temperament.

²⁸ Upon achieving its proper state of ascendancy, Ibn Sīnā explains, "the [rational] soul begins to yearn in its substance for junction with those principles which are separate [from matter], and dedicates itself to coming near to them, adheres to their presence, rejoices in their contemplation, and becomes familiar with their closeness. This yearning is established in the natural disposition of the human, occurring instinctively, impelling him to request and seek continuous imploration of those [higher] principles so that they may emanate on [his soul] something from that sublime sanctity." However, due to its relation with the body, Ibn Sīnā continues, the rational soul needs to "make use of its inner faculties, and the composition of their concepts and meanings, and to move them in various kinds of ways so that [the soul may be] prepared to receive the [divine] effusion" {ll. 3-9} (Commentary on the chapter of *Mankind*, p. 124).

belongs only to it. Lastly, seeking refuge in the ‘Deity of mankind’ parallels the acquisition of knowledge, as practiced by the knower, in that the rational soul’s junction with the Active Intelligence brings about its perfection, which is to reflect the supernal realm in its substance.²⁹ These three stages therefore correspond respectively to (I) potential intelligence, resulting from the equilibrium of the human constitution whereby the body is disposed to receive a rational soul which is capable of perceiving intelligibles in its own substance, (II) intelligence *in habitu*, resulting from the rational soul’s ascendancy over the animal faculties and organs of the body – which it exerts so as to prepare itself to achieve junction with the Active Intelligence, and (III) intelligence in act, resulting from the attainment of this junction.³⁰

Still in his commentary on *Mankind*, Ibn Sīnā interprets the evil against which refuge is sought – namely, “the skulking whisperer (*al-waswās al-khannās*) that whispers in the heart of

²⁹ In Ibn Sīnā’s view, however, this junction is never completely realized in this life. As he explains in *Origin and Return*, “In this world and in the body we may experience some pleasure in perceiving the Real, yet because of the body it is a feeble, obscure, and tenuous pleasure. Thus, it is only when we are truly separated from the body that it is possible to attain felicity” {ll. 23; 1} (pp. 112-3); similarly, he writes in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*: “even though immersed in corporeal nature, we may nonetheless attain, furtively (*‘alā sabīl al-ikhtilās*), [...] to a junction with the First Real. It is then like a wondrous (*‘ajība*) felicity, which lasts only for a very ^{72b15-16}brief time. And He possesses this state eternally; for us, however, this is not possible, since we are corporeal and can perceive this divine flash (*bāriqa*) only stealthily (*khitfatan*) and furtively (*khilsatan*)” {ll. 3-6} (p. 59); likewise, Ibn Sīnā states in *On the Rational Soul*: “The human, no matter how balanced his temperament, is never free from deficiencies [due to his involvements with the] contraries, so long as the rational soul is associated with the human body, [since] no body (*jirm*) can be fully disposed to receive the divine effusion, or have all the intelligibles perfectly revealed to it” {ll. 1-3} (p. 198); see tr. D. GUTAS (2014), p. 73.

³⁰ Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation of the verse of light (Q 24:35) in *Proof of Prophecy* (pp. 48-52) – see also *Pointers and Reminders II* (pp. 389-92) – illustrates this process: the niche as potential intelligence, which is predisposed for illumination due to the nearness of the walls on both sides – *i.e.*, the refined equilibrium of the human body’s temperament; the lamp as intelligence *in habitu*, containing oil from “a blessed olive tree [...] neither from the East nor from the West” – *i.e.*, cogitation, which is neither pure intelligence, as the side from which the light emanates (the East), nor pure sensation, *i.e.*, the imagination when used by the animal soul, where the light utterly disappears (the West); and lastly, the flame as acquired intelligence, which ‘almost lights up’ the oil, signifying that the cogitative faculty does not itself receive intelligibles but only assists the rational soul in its preparation to reflect them in its own intelligible substance. For analyses of Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation of this verse, see J. JANSSENS (2004), pp. 183-4, and M. CHAOUKI ZINE (2009), pp. 551-9.

mankind among jinns and humans” (Q 114:4-6) – as denoting the faculty of imagination when employed by the animal soul.³¹ Since the animal soul aspires only to sensible ends, for Ibn Sīnā its influence on the imagination causes this faculty to “attract the rational soul [to the side of the body], and to preoccupy it with matter” {ll. 3-4} (p. 125), thus preventing it from turning towards the supernal realm and realizing its proper perfection. Ibn Sīnā then explains that the ‘heart’ (*ṣudūr*) is “the [body’s] first point of connection (*muta‘allaq*) to the human [rational] soul” {l. 7} (p. 125),³² so that the ‘whispering’ (*waswasa*) of the imaginative faculty, as ‘retreating’ (*khannās*) towards matter, spreads from the heart to the rest of the body, thus influencing the “jinns and humans” (Q 114:6) which, according to Ibn Sīnā’s interpretation, designate the internal (*or* ‘concealed’) and external (*or* ‘acquainted’) senses of the animal soul.³³

Since the animal soul cannot aim for what exists beyond the domain of the senses, and as the rational soul cannot be free from the body in this life and achieve its proper perfection without the assistance of the body’s faculties and organs, in Ibn Sīnā’s analysis seeking refuge in the Active Intelligence – through the three stages discussed above – is indispensable to the realization of human perfection. In other words, both the condition of detachment from sensible ends and the yearning for junction with the supernal realm depend on the influence of

³¹ As Ibn Sīnā explains in *Psychology* IV.1, the imagination can be employed either by the animal soul or by the rational soul (or intellect): “This [internal sense] is called cogitation (*mufakkira*) when used by the intellect, and imagination (*mutakhayyila*) when used by the animal” {ll. 10-1} (p. 230).

³² Ibn Sīnā writes in *Psychology* V.8: “The first attach of the soul is the heart. [...] Thus the soul animates the animal through the heart; nevertheless it is conceivable that the faculties [which produce] other acts exist through an emanation [coming] from the heart to the other organs [of the body]” {ll. 15-6; 1-3} (pp. 358-9).

³³ Ibn Sīnā reads *jinna* according to its etymological meaning, as a synonym of *istitār* (VIII), ‘to veil, hide, conceal oneself’ (see LANE I, p. 1304) – hence the five internal senses (*sensus communis*, retentive imagination, compositive imagination *or* cogitation, estimation, memory); and *nās*, in the sense of *isti’nās* (X), ‘to consider, examine; to endeavour to obtain clear knowledge of something; to seek or ask for knowledge or information; to inquire’ (see LANE I, p. 113) – hence the five outer senses (touch, smell, taste, hearing, sight).

the Active Intelligence; and just as the animal soul will not be brought under the governance of the rational soul until the latter yearns to assimilate itself to the Real,³⁴ so the rational soul will not yearn for this assimilation until it has brought the animal soul under its governance.³⁵

For Ibn Sīnā, perfection is then bestowed from the supernal realm simultaneously with the disposition to receive its effusion. In his view, the highest human perfection – which cannot be attained in this life unless the rational soul is disposed to receive its perfection from the Active Intelligence – consists in that “acquired intelligence occurs to the contemplative faculty (*quwwa al-naẓarīyā*), and justice to the practical faculty (*quwwa ‘amalīya*).”³⁶ The perfection of the human rational soul for Ibn Sīnā is therefore both a condition of receptivity to the divine effusion, and a condition of ascendancy over the faculties and organs of the body. He writes:

The activity which is proper to the human soul does not only consist in perceiving intelligibles. Rather, by virtue of its involvement with the body [the soul] has other acts, following which are diverse kinds of felicity for it – that is, when it conducts itself as it should, and those are the acts leading to justice. ‘Justice’ signifies that the soul occupies an intermediary position between con-

³⁴ Ibn Sīnā writes in *Metaphysics IX.7*: “It appears that the human will not become free (*yatabarra’a*) from this world and its attachments until he has firmly established (*akada*) [his] relation to that realm, so that he has a yearning (*shawq*) and a love (*‘ishq*) for what is [in that realm] which disinclines him (*ṣaddahu*) entirely from [devoting his] attention (*iltifāt*) to what is behind him” (p. 354).

³⁵ As we have seen in chapter II, for Ibn Sīnā nothing in the supernal realm ever impedes the divine effusion of the good which is suitable for a creature. If its reception is not achieved, it is due to an insufficiency in the receiver. Thus, if the temperament of the body is not properly balanced, it is owing to the interference of sublunar causes; likewise, if the rational soul is not experiencing the pleasure of contemplating intelligible realities, it is due to impediments which also belong to the sublunar domain, and in particular to the body. As Ibn Sīnā states in his commentary on the *Theologia*, “the intelligible order is lucid (*jallā*), radiant (*ṣāṭī’*), and generously bestowed (*mabdhūl*); its effusion occurs to a thing because there is in its substance neither doubt nor deficiency. If it is possible for this deficiency to cease to exist, and for the thing to yearn to be separated from it, it follows that it must seek this in the domain of change, not in the domain of permanence (*thabāt*), since [the latter] does not intentionally withhold (*yabkhal*) the elimination of this deficiency, which is due to an insufficiency [that it possesses] in itself, and because it is in need of a polishing (*ṣiqāl*) which is to occur from another side” {ll. 2–6} (p. 39). In other words, while the effusion emanates from the supernal realm, the rational soul needs to cultivate proper involvement with the body so as to become disposed to receive its proper perfection from above. In employing the body’s faculties and organs, the human therefore needs to prevent these from interfering with the reception of the divine effusion, which for its part is ever ‘generously bestowed’ from above.

³⁶ {ll. 23; 1} (*Origin and Return*, pp. 99–100).

trary moral dispositions (*akhlāq*), in what is desired and not desired, in what rouses anger and what does not, and finally, in that by which it rules its life or not {ll. 15-20} (*Origin and Return*, p. 109).

In *Metaphysics* IX.7, Ibn Sīnā states that “the positive disposition [towards the mean] [...] exists conjointly both for the rational faculty and the animal faculties” (p. 354). For the animal soul, he explains, this disposition towards the mean consists in its submissiveness to the rational soul. Conversely, the disposition towards the extremes of excess and deficiency consists in the dominance of the animal soul over the rational soul.³⁷ For the rational soul, he writes, “the disposition towards the mean [...] is neither contrary to its substance nor [something] that inclines it in the direction of the body; rather, [it inclines it] away from its direction; for the mean always negates the two extremes” (*ibid.*).³⁸ When the human avoids the extremes of excess and deficiency which empower his animal soul – or intensify the ‘whispering’ of the imagination –

³⁷ As explained in *On the Knowledge of the Rational Soul and its States*, “In himself [the human] resembles the angels, and he can exist perpetually in the manner of the Everlasting (*Sarmad*) [*i.e.*, the mode of existence in the higher realm] if he assimilates himself to them. However, he may become like the vilest of brutes and beasts of prey if he is characterized by their moral disposition (*akhlāq*) – ‘inclined towards the earth’ (Q 7:176) ‘and following his lusts, [as one] whose ways exceed all bounds’ (Q 18:28). But if the human abstains in his moral disposition from the two extremes which constitute excess and deficiency, and finds the mean between them (*tawassuṭ baynahumā*), then as regards his faculty of concupiscence he is neither libidinous (*shabīq*) nor abated (*khāmid*), but chaste (*aqīq*) – chastity being the mean of concupiscence. In the same way, as regards his irascibility he is neither impetuous (*mathūr*) nor cowardly (*jabān*), but courageous (*shijā*) – courage being the mean [between these two]. Again, in his way of life he has wisdom, and conducts with grace (*ḥusn*) [his interactions] with others” {ll. 6-11} (p. 190). The attribution of this work to Ibn Sīnā has been questioned by Y. MAHDAVI (1954, p. 302), J. [Y.] MICHOT (1984, p. 498), and D. GUTAS (2014, p. 524); for his part, M. E. MARMURA (2005), stated that “there is insufficient evidence to support the view that [this work] is not authentic” (p. 129, n. 86).

³⁸ Ibn Sīnā accordingly explains in *Guidance* that detachment from bodily dispositions is achieved by “employing the faculties [of the body] according to a mean (*tawassuṭ*): concupiscence in the way of temperance (*iffā*), and irascibility in the way of courage (*shajāʿa*); for indeed, the mean is in a certain way a negation (*salb*). Hence, whoever is separate [from the body] – finding himself in this condition [of equilibrium] – proceeds by degrees to everlasting delight, and in [his rational soul is then] imprinted the disposition of that beauty (*jamāl*) which does not change – wherein he contemplates the First Real and the arrangement [of existence] that follows Him. And [the human] conceives (*yataṣawwar*) all this in his essence, and this [conception] is the perfection of his essence insofar as he is a rational soul; and [in this respect] he is the true king (*al-malik al-ḥaqīqī*) [of the body (*i.e.*, the soul in its condition of ascendancy over the totality of the faculties and organs of the body – see Ibn Sīnā on Q 114:2)], even though he had no awareness of it [when] in the body” {ll. 8-9; 1-7} (pp. 304-5).

thereby causing his soul to become “strongly attached to the body [and] intensely engrossed [with it]” (p. 354), then the body ceases to distract the soul from seeking the perfection which belongs only to it. Ibn Sīnā states in *Origin and Return*:

The disposition of ascendancy is not foreign to the substance of the soul. On the contrary, it is in the nature of its divestment and isolation from matter and its concomitants. The disposition of submissiveness [of the soul, however,] is foreign to it, acquired from matter, [and is] opposed to what the substance of the soul requires. The felicity of the soul, as regards the perfection of its essence, and in terms proper to it, consists in its becoming an intelligible world, while its felicity in terms of its relation to the body consists in its disposition for ascendancy {ll. 9-15} (p. 110).

In achieving ascendancy over the body, Ibn Sīnā holds, the human soul is therefore disposed to experience intellectual pleasure, not only in its state of separation from the body, but also through the mediation of the body’s faculties. This takes place when the soul intends sensible ends secondarily, that is, only insofar as they bring the soul in relation to the Real. In not intending things primarily, but only as means to achieve intellectual contemplation, the human may as a result enjoy the various kinds of felicity which are proper to his body, that is, without causing his soul to become submissive to the body and immersed in material attachments.³⁹

Following the ascendancy of the rational soul, Ibn Sīnā writes in *On Love*, the animal faculties therefore “pursue among sensible things those which are more excellent in [their]

³⁹ Ibn Sīnā illustrates this condition of detachment from sensible ends for their own sake in a passage of *The Bird*: “O Brothers of Truth! It is no wonder that an angel shuns evil, or that a beast (*bahīma*) commits foul deeds; rather, the wonder is when a human resists [worldly] desires, given that his [animal] form has been fashioned to be preoccupied with them; or again, when he yields his obedience to them after the Intelligence has illumined his nature (*jibilla*). By the Eternal God! That human surpasses the angel who is steadfast in resisting desires and whose foothold remains secure; whilst he is lower than the beast who cannot resist the desires of his [bodily] faculties when they call upon him” {ll. 11-15} (p. 339). This notion of the soul’s intermediary condition between the sensible and intelligible realms reflects not only the influence on Ibn Sīnā’s worldview of the Neoplatonic doctrine of the ‘two faces of the soul’ – see D. DE SMET (2001) & O. LIZZINI (2009) – but also that of a tradition ascribed to ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib in the *Oceans of Lights*, to which the passage above implicitly refers: “God [...] gave the angels intelligence without desire, He gave the beasts desire without intelligence, and He gave both to the sons of Adam. So the man whose intelligence prevails over his desire is better than the angels, whilst the man whose desire prevails over his intelligence is worse than the beasts” (vol. V, p. 299, no. 60).

disposition (*mizāj*), and of a more stable composition (*aqwam tarkīb*), things of which other animals are not mindful, let alone pursue them” {ll. 14-5} (p. 255). That is because the rational soul “knows (*arafat*) that the closer a thing is to the First Beloved, the more stable it is in its order, and the more excellent in its balance (*i’tidāl*)” {ll. 12-3} (p. 257). The knower, Ibn Sīnā also remarks in *Pointers and Reminders* IX.25, therefore “intends the splendor (*bahā*) in all things, because it is a quality (*mazīya*) obtained from the First Providence,⁴⁰ and is thus closer to being of the kind to which he dedicates his inclination” {ll. 5-6} (p. 851). As such, the knower’s enjoyment of sensible beauty is not motivated by animal desire, but by the love for what can bring his rational soul closer to its proper perfection.⁴¹ And while for the soul this perfection transcends matter, so in turning to sensible things the soul therefore intends them according to their intelligible reality – that is, in the aspect of their necessary existence.⁴² In intending all things according to the necessary order by which they proceed from the Real, it is then only as ‘traces’ of the Real that the knower seeks them. As such, the knower’s pleasure in enjoying the beauty of sensible forms – as traces of the Real – contributes to reinforcing his rational soul’s relation to the supernal realm.

⁴⁰ In *Metaphysics* VIII.7, Ibn Sīnā states: “The Necessary Existent therefore has pure beauty and splendor, and He is the principle of the beauty of all things, and the splendor of all things” (p. 297).

⁴¹ As Ibn Sīnā explains in *On Love*: “Nothing that exists is devoid of an association with some perfection, and this association with it is accompanied by love and yearning for what can unite it with its perfection” {ll. 2-3} (p. 245). Since the soul’s perfection is intelligible in nature, the soul therefore yearns for and loves that which contributes to the attainment of its perfection – in its necessary aspect, that is, as it emanates from the supernal realm.

⁴² Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on the *Theologia*: “The material appendages (*lawāḥiq*) of things and the things which cover them like a sheath (*ghīṭā*) [...] are believed to be part of the reality of these forms, but they are not. Likewise, sensible states are believed to be from the true [natures] of things, but they are not. Rather, the rational soul purifies them of these husks (*qushūr*) and abstracts them from these foreign appendages” {ll. 10-2} (p. 40).

Ibn Sīnā writes in *Pointers and Reminders* IX.8 that “the practice of rendering the innermost self sensitive to awareness (*talṭīf al-sirr li-l-tanabbuh*) [...] is assisted by subtle thought, as well as by chaste love (*al-fikr al-laṭīf wa-l-‘ishq al-‘aqīq*) which is commanded by the qualities (*shamā’il*) of the beloved, and not by the rule of desire (*sulṭān al-shahwa*)” (pp. 822–7). This is rational love, which, Ibn Sīnā affirms in *On Love*, “cannot be pure until the animal faculty is altogether subdued” {ll. 16–7} (p. 259). As the knower keeps his animal faculties in balance, he is then disposed to perceive other creatures in the aspect of their relation to the Real. As such, the contemplation of human beauty contributes to the elevation of his rational soul. He writes:

[Whenever a man] loves (*aḥabba*) a pleasing (*malīḥa*) form with an intellectual consideration, [...] then this is to be considered as an approximation to nobility, and an increase in goodness. For he desires something which is nearer to that which is under the influence of the Pure Beloved, and more similar to the exalted and noble [beings]. And this will dispose him to gentleness (*zarīfan*) and kindness (*laṭīfan*). For this reason, one will hardly find among the insightful (*ahl al-fiṭna*) – those among the gracious (*zuraḥā’*) and wise (*ḥukamā’*), and who do not follow the way of those who are abusive (*muta’assifīn*)⁴³ and force themselves [on others] (*iqḥām*) – to be devoid of having their heart occupied with a beautiful human form {ll. 10–5} (*On Love*, p. 258).

In his interactions with other humans, according to Ibn Sīnā the knower does not enforce the rule of his animal desires, since the good he loves through them is, as a ‘trace’ of the Real, simultaneously the good which is most suitable for their nature.⁴⁴ And given that the knower loves others according to the reality of their nature, he avoids disrupting the necessary course of their realization, and refrains from giving way to the intemperate pursuit of perfections which

⁴³ MEHREN (1894) has *muta’assiqīn*, and ‘ĀṣĪ (1983) *muta’ashshiqīn*. Neither are attested in LANE (see I, p. 2054).

⁴⁴ In *Pointers and Reminders* IX.21, Ibn Sīnā writes: “The knower is bright-faced (*hashsh*), cheerful (*nashsh*), and smiling (*bassām*). Due to his humility (*tawāḍu’*), he honors the young as he honors the old. He is as pleased with the indolent (*khāmīl*) as he is with the discerning (*nabīh*). How could he not be bright-faced, when he delights (*farḥān*) in the Real, as in all things, since he beholds the Real in all things other than the Real? And how could he not treat all as equal, when all are equal to him? They are a people [deserving] of mercy (*ahl al-raḥma*), pre-occupied with the unreal (*or* ‘what is false, vain’, *bāṭil*)” {ll. 1–4} (p. 843).

belong to his concupiscence and irascibility. Since he recognizes that the good of all things ensues from their preparation to receive their proper perfections from the Real through the necessary order that proceeds from Him, for Ibn Sīnā human goodness consists in helping others attain their preparation to receive the divine effusion which the Real bestows on them, that is, by removing hindrances which prevent them from receiving His blessings.

Returning to the saying attributed to Rābi‘a quoted in the beginning of this chapter, we can see that for Ibn Sīnā generosity also consists in intending the Real, and all that necessarily proceeds from Him, for His sake alone. Since the Real intends through Himself what is best for all things – while ever remaining utterly detached from things in their contingent aspect, so the human who primarily intends the Real simultaneously intends what is best for all things – as also bringing him, through his generosity towards others, in closer relation to the Real.⁴⁵ While in Ibn Sīnā’s view the Real confers blessings without seeking benefit in return for his act, the generosity of the knower is likewise detached from seeking a perfection from the receiver of his beneficence.⁴⁶ That is to say, while the Real intends only His essence by primary intention, and the good of all things through Himself by secondary intention, so the knower

⁴⁵ Ibn Sīnā writes in the closing lines of *Alive, Son of Awake*: “Then the shaykh Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān [(who personifies for Ibn Sīnā the knower *par excellence*)] said to me: ‘Were it not that in conversing with you I approach that King by the very fact that I incite your awakening (*munabbih*), I would have to perform duties for Him that would take me away from you. Now, if you will, follow me towards Him. Peace.’” {ll. 1-2} (p. 22).

⁴⁶ As he observes in *Metaphysics* IX.3, real perfections are not derived from what is caused, but rather from their higher causes: “Deserving praise, displaying one’s power, being remembered lastingly, these things and what resembles them are [merely] opined (*zammīya*) perfections. A [real] gain, however, such as health, the acceptance of God the Exalted and Sanctified, a good return in the Hereafter – these and their like are real perfections which are not alone attained by the one intending them” (p. 320). In other words, intending a gain as a direct result of one’s act brings about only an opined perfection – belonging to the imagination – whereas a real perfection is according to Ibn Sīnā received from the divine effusion. Hence, a real perfection is achieved by ceasing to interfere with its reception, and is received through its higher causes; not by seeking it from the contingent object of one’s act, but rather, by negating its nonexistence in what is disposed to receive it.

likewise intends only the Real by primary intention, and the good of all things through Him by secondary intention, as they proceed from Him.⁴⁷

For Ibn Sīnā, while other humans act out of self-interest, as motivated by their animal desire for gain (*or* pleasure) and fear of loss (*or* harm), only the knower – *i.e.*, the human who has attained junction with the supernal realm, even for ‘the blink of an eye’ – is capable of true love and friendship. In the opening lines of *The Bird*, Ibn Sīnā writes:

Will anyone among my brothers lend me an ear for a moment, that I may confide in him some of my sorrows? Perhaps he could bear with me their heaviness through sharing. Surely, a friend (*ṣadīq*) cannot purify his brother from admixion (*shawb*) unless he preserves, both in sorrow and in joy, his own purity from murkiness (*‘an al-kadar ṣafāhu*). And where would you find such a pure friend (*al-ṣadīq al-mumāḥiḍ*), when companionship (*khalla*) has become a trade to which one returns [only] when an objective (*waṭar*) motivates one to call upon a companion, while the responsibilities [of friendship] are abandoned as soon as the need is gone? A comrade (*rafiq*) will not be visited unless an incident has visited, and a companion will not be remembered unless a wish is remembered. By God, brothers are only those whom divine kinship (*al-qarāba al-ilāhīya*) has brought together, whom heavenly closeness (*al-mujāwara al-‘ulwīya*) has acquainted, who have contemplated (*lāḥazū*) realities with the eye of insight (*baṣīra*), and who have cleared the filth (*wasakh*) of doubt from their innermost self (*sarā’ira*); verily, [brothers such as these] will only be brought together by [the summon of] a divine calling (*munādī Allah*) {ll. 3-10} (p. 338).

Meaningfully, Ibn Sīnā here portrays the true friend as one who strives to preserve the purity of his soul from the murkiness (*kadar*) of material attachments.⁴⁸ This reflects his conception of

⁴⁷ Ibn Sīnā explains in *Pointers and Reminders* IX.17 that the knower finds pleasure in contemplating the Real, as well as in contemplating his soul, only inasmuch as it contemplates the Real: “If [the knower] glances at his soul, it is only inasmuch as it glances at the Real, not inasmuch as it is adorned by [this perfection]. There, the arrival is real” {l. 2} (p. 834). This reflects Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the volition of celestial Souls, as intending what is other than the Pure Good only inasmuch as it proceeds from Him: “What is desired is thus an assimilation to that which is in act, inasmuch as it is devoid of potentiality, [thus] filtering (*rāshḥan*) the overflowing (*fā’id*) good inasmuch as it is a resemblance (*tashbih*) with the Most High, and not inasmuch as it is an effusion on the lower” {ll. 2-4} (*ibid.* VI.11, p. 572). That is to say, the Soul seeks perfection so as to assimilate itself to the Real, yet not for the sake of the perfection that proceeds from the Real; this perfection is sought because it relates the Soul to the Real, and is rejoiced in only inasmuch as it is a relation to the Real. Ibn Sīnā further remarks: “Turning to whatever transcends [the Real] is preoccupation. Counting on whatever is docile (*taw’*) to the [commanding (*amāra*)] soul is weakness (*‘ajaz*). Boasting (*tabajjuh*) in the adornment of pleasure, inasmuch as it is pleasure – even if it is [pleasure] in the Real – is arrogance (*tiyah*). And turning (*iqbāl*) entirely towards the Real is salvation (*khalāṣ*)” (*ibid.* IX.18, pp. 826-7).

asceticism, as practiced by the knower, in that avoiding what is base disposes him to assist his friend in achieving the same. As well, the true friend is one who has concern for his friend beyond his own need, and who honors his duties towards him. This reflects Ibn Sīnā's conception of devotion, as practiced by the knower, in that the true friend does not primarily extend his friendship so as to obtain a benefit in return (even though benefit exists),⁴⁹ forgetting his friend once his need is satisfied. Such a false friend is thus moved to seek his companion only when harm occurs – using his friend as a means to realize a perfection which belongs to his irascible faculty, and when a wish comes to his mind – using his friend as a means to satisfy his concupiscible faculty. Lastly, according to Ibn Sīnā the true friend is one who is related to his friend through a bond that transcends attachments to matter, joined to him as a soul, not merely as an animal. Such a friend finds kinship in those who yearn to resemble the Real – and who as such bring his soul closer to the Real – just as his concern for the good of his companions, for their own sake, contributes to the realization of their essential nature. This reflects Ibn Sīnā's conception of the soul's assimilation to the Real, as practiced by the knower.

⁴⁸ In his *Prayer*, Ibn Sīnā says: “O God, [...] purify [my soul] from the filth (*awsākh*) her sensations and estimations (*awhām*) have impressed on her, and dispel from her the murkiness (*kadar*) of nature” {ll. 21; 1} (pp. 297–8). Commenting on the Arabic Plotinus' use of *awsākh* in the *Theologia*, Ibn Sīnā explains: “By ‘filth’ he signifies the lowly (*radī'a*), base (*radhīla*), unnatural, and unsuitable excesses (*zawā'ūd*) adhering to the thing [*i.e.*, the soul] which, in comparison to them, is pure (*naqīy*)” {ll. 3–4} (p. 42).

⁴⁹ In *Moral Dispositions and Passions of the Soul* (from the *Philosophy for 'Arūḍī*), Ibn Sīnā writes: “Friendship is a condition existing between two [persons], such that each one loves what is good for the other, for the sake of the other, not for his own sake, and that each one loves and is loved” {ll. 5–6} (p. 24). Echoing the opening lines of *The Bird* in the context of his discussion of the divine creative action in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, R. ACAR (2004) remarks: “The constitutive element of friendship between two people consists in the fact that they love each other. But they do not make one another friends simply by expecting to get help from each other. A relationship based on mutual interests would be a business transaction rather than a relationship of loving and caring. But helping each other, when the need arises, necessarily follows from a relationship based on love. It is almost inconceivable that two friends who love each other would not help each other. In this sense, benefit is a necessary concomitant of friendship but is not constitutive of what friendship is” (p. 72).

CONCLUSION

This thesis has explored three aspects of Ibn Sīnā’s metaphysical worldview with the aim of displaying the foundational insight which unifies them, understood as a middle-way between the existential modalities of necessity and contingency – the first belonging to God’s essence alone, and the second, to the essence of all else. In realizing their necessary existence, as willed by God for the good in all things, according to Ibn Sīnā creatures align themselves with the universal order of divine providence – which relates them to all things, and all things to God, as they necessarily exist by His will.¹ In assimilating themselves to the Real by achieving the reality of their essential nature, creatures then attain a certain degree of resemblance to God. For Ibn Sīnā, the highest perfection which a creature may attain thus consists in its existing in accordance with the necessity of its existence, which it receives unceasingly from God – through God for the Intelligence, through the Intelligence for the Soul, and through the Soul for the Body. In these terms, Ibn Sīnā conjoins in his worldview the Neoplatonic doctrine of the ‘reversion’ of all things to the One with the Stoic ideal of ‘living according to Nature’,²

¹ Ibn Sīnā writes in his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*: “Then [Aristotle] says: ^{75A16-19} **All things are arranged in the nature of the whole in a certain way; it is not an arrangement** [in which all things] are equal, for the rank of wild beasts is not that of **birds**, nor is their rank that of **plants**; and despite that [plurality, things] are not dissociated, isolated, cut off [from each other], without junction or relation between each other. On the contrary, there exists a junction and relation which assembles the whole and conjoins the whole to the First Origin – as the principle from which generosity (*jūd*) emanates, [that is, the act] of arranging the whole according to what is in the nature of the whole to be” {ll. 7-12} (p. 75); see M. GEOFFROY *et al.* (2014), p. 74.

² Seneca writes: “Our motto, as you know, is ‘Live according to Nature’” (Epistle V, *On the Philosopher’s Mean* p. 23). A text of Miskawayh misattributed to Ibn Sīnā under the title *Deliverance from the Fear of Death* reads: “The philosophers (*ḥukamāʾ*) have distinguished two kinds of life and death: a volitional (*i.e.*, according to will, *irādī*) life and death, and a natural (*tabīʿī*) life and death. The volitional death is the mortification of [worldly] desires and their avoidance, whereas the volitional life is [man’s quest to satisfy his animal] desires in this worldly life. For its part, the natural life is the eternal soul’s abiding in everlasting felicity, as well as its deliverance

and imbeds them together in his primarily Aristotelian philosophical system. For Ibn Sīnā, the reversion of creatures to God is thus simultaneously their return to the reality of their own essential nature, that is, their alignment with the necessity of their existence, as willed by the Necessary Existent in His essence according to what is best for all things.

In Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical worldview, as we have seen, God primarily intends only His own essence, which is identical with His existence, and secondarily intends the existence of all things through Himself. As such, for Ibn Sīnā God primarily intends only His necessary existence, through which He confers the necessity of existence on all things according to the perfection of their essential nature. Likewise, the creature that most resembles God primarily intends only God's necessary essence, and secondarily intends all else as it necessarily exists through Him.³ Thus, as God intends Himself primarily, and all else secondarily as He knows, wills, and existentiates them at once through Himself while being detached from all contingency, so for Ibn Sīnā the most perfect creature is one that intends the Real primarily, and all else secondarily through its own essence, while being detached from all things in themselves, that is, as considered in isolation from their relation to the Real.

from ignorance by means of knowledge. This is in accordance with [pseudo-]Plato's saying: 'Die to [your] will, that you may live according to nature' (*mut bi-l-irāda talīy bi-l-ṭabī'a*)" {ll. 1-6} (p. 275). The ideas conveyed in this passage have much in common with Ibn Sīnā's philosophical worldview. As such, despite its misattribution this treatise reflects the kinship of Ibn Sīnā's thought with the Stoic ideal of 'living according to (the divine order in) nature', even as he maintains the transcendence of that divine order from nature itself.

³ In his commentary on *Metaphysics Lambda*, Ibn Sīnā writes: "All that receives [existence from the First] bears some relation of resemblance to Him, whereby it is originated (*mubtada'*) in existence and then attains the acme (*akmal*) of the perfections of existence it can possibly receive, until it finally attains power and knowledge – these, [however,] being mere shadows of the perfections of the essence and attributes of [the First] – and [even] attains, in an intellectual mode, the reality [of the First], so that His divinity is impressed in the substance of the receiver; and thus the receiver [of the divine influence (*athar*)] whose ability to perceive [the First] is most eminent most resembles [the First] in His perception of Himself" {ll. 18-20; 1-2} (pp. 51, 53).

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34. Throne – GM-PS1, M61, A179, 183

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APPENDIX
Arabic and Persian Text of Translated Passages¹

[١] رسالة حيّ بن يقظان

والملك أبعدهم في ذلك مذهباً، ومن عزاه إلى عرق فقد زلّ، ومن ضمن الوفاء بمدحه فقد هذى، قد فات قدر الوصّاف عن وصفه، وحادت عن سبيله الأمثال، فلا يستطيع ضاربها إلّا بتباين أعضاء، بل كلّه لحسنه وجهه، ولجوده يدّ، يُعَمِّي حسنه آثار كلّ حسن، ويُحَقِّر كرمه نفاسة كلّ كرم. (٢٠-٢١)

وإنّ هذا الملك لمطلع على ذويه بمجاهد، لا يضنّ عليهم بلقائه، وإنّما يؤتون من دنوّ قوّاهم دون ملاحظته. وإنّه لسمح فيّاض، واسع البرّ، غمر التّائل، رحب الفناء، عامّ العطاء، من شاهد أثراً من جماله، وقف عليه لحظه، ولا يُلفته عنه غمزة. (٢١)

قال الشيخ حيّ بن يقظان لو لا تعزّي إليه بمخاطبتك منبهاً إياك لكان لي به شاغلٌ عنك وإن شئت اتّبعتني إليه. والسّلام. (٢٢)

[٢] حصول علم وحكمة

﴿لا يعزب عنه﴾ {مِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي السَّمَاءِ} . ولا يخلو باسطة حركة ولا قابضة سكون عن قدر منه وقضاء. [...]. وكلّ ينزل من عنده ﴿وما أمره﴾ {إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلَمَجٍ بِالْبَصْرِ} . (٣٧)

فليكن الله سبحانه وتعالى أوّل كلّ فكرة له وآخره وظاهر كلّ اعتبار وباطنه وليكن عين نفسه مكحولة بالنظر إليه وقدمها موقوفة على المثول بين يديه مسافراً بعقله في الملكوت الأعلى وما فيها من آيات ربّه الكبرى فإذا انحطّ إلى قراره فليرى الله في آثاره فإنّه باطن ظاهر تجلّى لكلّ شيء بكلّ شيء. [...]. فإذا صارت له هذه الحالة ملكة وهذه الحضلة وتيرة انطبع في فصّه نقش الملكوت وتجلّى لمرآته قدس اللاهوت فألف الأنس الأعلى وذاق اللذّة القصوى. [...]. وفاضت عليه السّكينة وحفّت له الطّمأنينة واطّلع على العالم الأدنى إطلاع راحم لأهله؛ [مستوهن لحبله، مستخفّ لثقله، مستخسّ لعلقه، مستحقّر لنعمه، مستضلّ لطرقها] [...]. فتعجب منها ومنهم بعجبهم منه وقد وودّعها وكان معها كأنّه ليس معها. (٣٨-٣٩)

¹ The passages are here edited as translated. For textual variants, see the printed editions listed in the bibliography.

[٣] رسالة الطير

هل لأحد من إخواني في أن يهب لي من سمعه قدر ما ألقى إليه طرفاً من أشجاني عساه أن يتحمل عني بالشركة بعض أعبائها فإن الصديق لن يهذب عن الشوب أخاه ما لم يصن في سرائك وضرائك عن الكدر صفاءه. وأني لك بالصديق المماحض؟ وقد جعلت الخلة تجارةً، يفرع إليها إذا استدعت إلى الخليل داعية وطير، فيرفض مراعاتها إذا عرض الاستغناء، فلن يزار رفيق إلا إذا زارت عارضة، ولن يذكر خليل إلا إذا ذكرت مأربة. اللهم إلا إخوان جمعتهم القرابة الإلهية وألفت بينهم المجاورة العلوية، ولاحظوا الحقائق بعين البصيرة، وجلّوا الوسخ وأدران الشك عن السريرة، فلن يجمعهم إلا منادى الله. (٣٣٨)

ويلكم إخوان الحقيقة، لا عجب أن اجتنب ملك سوءاً أو ارتكبت بهيمة قبيحاً، بل العجب من البشر إذا استعصى على الشهوات، وقد طبع على استئثارها صورته، أو بذلك لها الطاعة وقد نور بالعقل جبلته. ولعمر الله لقد بدّ الملك بشر ثبت عند زوال الشهوة، فلم يزل قدمه عن موطنه فيه، وقصر عن البهيمة إنسي فلم تفّ قواه بدرء شهوة تستدعيه. (٣٣٩)

[٤] شرح مقالة اللام من كتاب ما بعد الطبيعة لأرسطوطاليس (من الإنصاف)

أنكر [الشيخ الرئيس أبو علي بن سينا] على أرسطوطاليس والمفسرين فقال: قبيح أن يُصار إلى الحقّ الأول من طريق الحركة ومن طريق أنه مبدأ للحركة. (٤٩)

و«ملاءمته» أنّ الأثر الذي ينال منه هو الملائم لكلّ شيء، طبيعياً كان أو نفسانياً أو عقلياً. فكلّ شيء ينال من فضل وجوده بحسب طاقته. ويكون لكلّ نيل نسبة شبه ما به ابتداء من الوجود وانتهاءً إلى أكمل ما يكون في إمكانه أن يقبله من كمالات الوجود حتى يبلغ القدرة والعلم، وهذه أظلال لكمالات ذاته وصفاته، وحتى يبلغ أن ينال بالوجه العقلي حقيقة، فتنتقم في جوهر النائل إلهيته، ثم يتفاضل هذا الانتقاش بحسب درجات النائلين، فأعظمهم إدراكاً أشبههم به في إدراكه لنفسه. (٥١، ٥٣)

وإذا اعتبر كلّ شيء بذاته، غير منسوب إلى جهة نيله من الحقّ الأول، فهو غير ضروريّ الوجود، بل إمكانيّ الوجود. ولو جاز أن تُفصم العلاقة لتلاشى وبطل. فكلّ شيء باعتبار ذاته باطلٌ ﴿هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ﴾، الحقّ الأول، هو الحقّ لذاته وكاسي الأشياء الأخرى حقيقة وجودها، جلّت قدرته! (٥٣، ٥٥)

وهذا محال، فإنّ موقع الحقّ الأوّل هو أنّ الضّرورة من قبّله، ولا ضرورة لشيء من ذاته. [...] فهو الأوّل، وهو الحقّ، وهو مبدأ ذات كلّ جوهر، وبه يجب كلّ شيء سواه، وتأتيه الضّرورة عند النسبة التي يجب أن يقع بينه وبينه. (٥٥)

ومّا يحسن تامسطيوس فيه أنّه يصرّح بأنّ المبدأ الأوّل يعقل ذاته، ثمّ من ذاته يعقل كلّ شيء، فهو يعقل العالم العقليّ دفعة من غير حاجة إلى انتقال وتردّد من معقول إلى معقول. وإنّّه ليس يعقل الأشياء على أنّها أمور خارجة عنه يعقلها منها، كحالنا عند المحسوسات، بل يعقلها من ذاته. (٥٧)

فنقول إنّنا نحن، مع ضعف تصوّراتنا للمعقولات القويّة وانغماسنا في الطّبيعة البدنيّة، قد نتوصل على سبيل الاختلاس، فيظهر لنا اتّصال بالحقّ الأوّل، فيكون كسعادة عجيبة في زمان قليل جداً. وهذه الحال له أبداً؛ وهو لنا غير ممكن، لأنّنا بدنيون ولا يمكننا أن نشيم تلك البارقة الإلهيّة إلّا خطفةً وخلصاً. (٥٩)

وإن عني أنّ أوّل عقله هو عقله لذاته، ومن ذاته يعقل الأشياء لا من الأشياء فلا تكون الأشياء سبباً لكوّنه عقلاً، بل يكون كونه عقلاً من ذاته سبباً للأشياء، فهو صحيح. (٧١)

ثمّ يقول: وقد تُرتّب الأشياء كلّها في طباع الكلّ على نوع ما، ليس على ترتيب المساواة، فليس حال السّباع كحال الطائر ولا حالهما كحال النّبات؛ وليست مع ذلك مطلقة منفصلة منقطعة لا يتّصل بعضها ببعض ولا يضاف بعضها إلى بعض، بل هناك مع الاختلاف اتّصال وإضافة جامعة لكلّ تجمع الكلّ إلى الأصل الأوّل الذي هو المبدأ الذي يفيض عنه الجود والنّظام على ما يمكن في طباع الكلّ أن يترتّب عليه. (٧٥)

فإنّ الدّرجة الأولى إمكانيها على نحو أفضل، والثّانية دون ذلك، والثّالثة التي للأجرام السّماوية دون ذلك، والتي عندنا دون الجميع. وإذا لم يكن في احتماله لم يكن ذلك بسبب المفيد المفيض للوجود، بل لأنّ كلّ ماهيّة من ماهيات هذه الأشياء إنّما تستطيع أن تلبس الوجود وكماله على هذا النّحو. ولذلك تقع العاهات والتّشويهاة والأمراض، لما يلزم من ضرورة المادّة النّاقصة التي لا تقبل الصّورة على كمالها الأوّل والثّاني، بل إمّا أن لا تقبلها أصلاً، أو تقبل منها الكمال الأوّل دون الثّاني. (٧٧)

[٥] شرح كتاب « أثولوجيا » لمنسوب إلى أرسطاطاليس (من الإنصاف)

والممكن في مثل هذا الجوهر واجب: إذ هو جوهر لا يتغيّر، بل فرض على كماله الأوّل. (٣٨)

فإنَّ قبيل العقل قبيل جلي ساطع مبذول إنما يحصل فيضه للشئ بسبب أنه لا شك ولا نقص في جوهره، فإن كان يمكنه أن يعدم ذلك النقص وكان له أن يشترك إلى مفارقتة، لزم ضرورة أن يطلب ذلك من حيز التغير، لا من حيز الثبات فإن حيز الثبات لم يخل عليه بإزالة النقص قصداً، بل لقصور فيه، واحتياج منه إلى صقال يحصل له في خناب آخر. (٣٩)

[...] أي أن النفس تزيدها حسناً بما تجردها التجريدات المذكورة في كتب « النفس » « الحسن والمحسوس ». وأفضل ذلك التجريد العقلي الذي يقشُر عنها اللواحق المادّية والأشياء التي هي فيها كالغطاء، لأنّها تظنّ أنّها من جواهر تلك الصّورة ولا تكون؛ مثل أحوال محسوسة تظنّ أنّها من حقيقة الأشياء فيها، ولا تكون كذلك، بل النفس الناطقة تُنزّهها عن تلك القشور وتجردها عن اللواحق الغريبة. (٤٠)

أقول: إنَّ النفس لصقت بالبدن ليكون لها الزينة التي تختصّ بالأمور العقليّة، وهو الزينة العقليّة، وليكون لها إمكان اتّصال بالجواهر العالِيّة التي لها اللذة الحقيقيّة والجمال الحقيقيّ والبهاء الحقيقيّ، فسيبيل النفس أن تجعل البدن والآلات البدنيّة مكاسب يكتسب بها الكمال الخاصّ بها فقط. ومن العلوم أنّ اشتغال النفس بالجانب الأدنى يصدّه عن الجانب الأعلى، كما أنّ إقباله على الجانب الأعلى يصدّه عن الجانب الأسفل؛ فإنَّ النفس ليست مخالطة للبدن حتّى يكون البدن بالمخالطة يصدّها عن الكمال العلويّ إذا لم يقع استعمالها على الوجه الذي ينبغي، بل بهيئة تعرض للنفس من الإقبال. فإذا صارت النفس بدنيّة وتمكنت فيها هيئات انقياديّة للأمور البدنيّة من الشهوة والغضب وغير ذلك بل صارت هذه الهيئات ملكات فيها، كانت النفس بعد البدن على الجملة التي كانت في البدن، فتكون مصدودة عن العالم العلويّ. (٤١-٤٢)

ويعني بـ « الأوساخ » زوائد رديئة رذيلة غير طبيعيّة ولا مناسبة تلزم الشئ الذي هو بالقياس إليها نقيّ. (٤٢)

« غضب الله » هو الوقوع بالبعد عن الاتّصال بملكوته الأعلى الذي هناك الغبطة العليا والبهجة الأوفى. (٤٣)

والمشاهدة الحقة تالية للإدراك إذا صرفت الهمة إلى الواحد الحقّ وقُطعت عن كلّ خالٍ وعائق به ينظر إليه، حتّى كان مع الإدراك شعور بالمدرّك من حيث المدرّك المناسب اللذيد الذي هو بهجة النفس الزكيّة التي هي في حالها تلك، والمخلّصة عن كلّ مخنة، الواصلة إلى العشيق الذي هو بذاته عشيق، لا من حيث هو مدرّك فقط ومعقول، بل من حيث هو عشيق في جوهره. ولما كان الإدراك قد تحجب عنه الشواغل، فكيف المشاهدة الحقة! وأقول أنّ هذا الأمر لا ينبعث عنه إلاّ التجربة، وليس ممّا يعقل بالقياس. (٤٤)

وإذا كان ذلك ممكناً لها، وجب أن يفيض من العناية الإلهيّة التي هي جود محض. (٤٥)

لأنّ الخير في كلّ شيء هو كونه على أتمّ أنحاء وجوده الذي يخصّه. وكلّ شيء باعتباره في نفسه مقطوعاً عنه الاعتبار المتعلّق بالأمر الإلهي، مستحقّ للبطلان وهو غاية الشرّ؛ وإنّما يأتيه الوجود والخير الذي يخصّه، منه. فكلّ شيء كأنّه خُلِطَ من شرّ وخير: فإنّه باعتبار نفسه ناقص لا خير له، وباعتبار الأوّل مستفيد للخير بحسب منزلته ومرتبته. [...] ولا تناقض بين كون الشيء ممكناً بحسب ذاته واجباً من غيره. وأمّا الأوّل فواجب من نفسه، عزّت قدرته! (٤٦)

وكلّ جزئيّ فإنّه مدرك هناك على الجهة التي لزمّت من أسبابه، وهي جهة تجعل الجزئيّ كليّاً. (٤٨)

فإنّه لا يمكن أن تكون العقول الفعّالة تعقل ذواتها، فتجب عن عقولها ذواتها وجوب المبدأ الأوّل، فإنّ وجوب المبدأ الأوّل ليس عن ذواتها بل وجوب ذواتها عنه؛ بل يجب أن يكون عقلها للمبدأ الأوّل لها هو من جهة تجلّي المبدأ الأوّل لها. فإذا تجلّت لها عقلته، وعقلت ذاتها، وعقلت كلّ شيء في الدّرجات [التالية]. (٤٩)

لم يكن تجلّي ذات العقل للعقل ناقلاً للعقل عن ذاته إلى ذات الأوّل، بل إنّما تطلع عليه حقيقة ذات الأوّل من ذات الأوّل من حيث يجب لها الطلوع على كلّ مستعدّ قابل وجوباً من جهته وليس من جهة القابل إلاّ الاستعداد. (٥٣)

والإبداع نسبة المبدع إلى المبدع من حيث هذا الوجود. (٦٠)

ليس إبداع تلك الأشياء كان لأجل هذا العالم، فإنّ الأفضل لا يكون لأجل الأحسن، وليس أيضاً الجود وقف هناك، وإن كان ذلك ليس لما بعده لكنّه ليس في إبداعه منع لأنّ يفيض الجود الإلهي إلى آخر ما يقبل منه الجود من ماهيّات الأشياء المكتسبة وجودها من هناك. فلمّا لم يمكن أن يكون المعنى الإلهي الفاضل واقفاً ووراءه إمكان، ولم يمكن أن يكون في المعقول ماهيّات تنال جميع أصناف الوجود العقليّ والحسيّ ثمّ لا يأتيها الجود الإلهي، تعدّى الإيجاد تلك الأشياء التامة الكاملة التي لو كان إيجادها لحاجة من الموجد أو فاقة أو شوق إلى وجود شيء أو غرض في وجود شيء لكان بها غنية. لكنّ ليس الإيجاد لذلك، بل لكون الجود أكمل ما يمكن وكون الماهيّات المعقولة صحيحاً لها أن تقبل وجوداً آخر حسياً وكون ما يصحّ وجوده من عند الفيض بإبداعه. (٦٠)

أول اثنيّتين في المبدع - أيّ مبدع كان هو - أنّ له بحسب ذاته الإمكان، ومن جانب الحقّ الأوّل الوجود. (٦٠)

فمن حيث تلتفت إليه من أنّه وجود ليس لك أن تحكم عليه بتخصيص إمكان أو وجوب. وأمّا كونه للماهيّة فممكّن بإمكان للماهيّة وواجب من الأوّل ذلك الوجوب، هو ذلك الوجود من حيث هو ذلك الوجود. (٦١)

عقله لذاته وعقله للنظام الفاضل في وجود الكلّ وهذا المعنى يسمّى « انبجاساً » من حيث اعتبار جانب الموجودات عن الأوّل و« إبداعاً » من حيث نسبة الأوّل إليها. (٦٢)

لا يمكن أن تكون أسباب الخير أسباباً للخير على الجهة التي هي بها أسباب إلا وتلزمها بالضرورة في الأول. والتدرة أمور ضارة وشور. (٦٥)

لو لم يكن البارئ بحيث يفيد وجود كل دأثر وكل دائم لم يكن الحق الأول. (٦٧)

قال: إنه لما كان مبدأ الأشياء كلها الباقي بذاته والحق بذاته، كانت الأشياء كلها نازعةً إليه إما بالاختيار وإما بالإرادة وإما بضرب من الإلهام وإما بحسب ميل الطباع إلى حبّ البقاء، وطلبه بالشخص أو تحيُّله ليقبى بها بالتّوَع وتحرّكه بذلك. (٧٣)

قال: إنّ جميع ما يتأدّى إليه الوجود داخل في العناية الأولى. (٧٣)

[٦] تفسير قوله تعالى ﴿ثُمَّ اسْتَوَى إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ﴾

فتكون المادّة الفلكيّة مأمورة بقبول صورة الفلك، والمادّة مطيعة من نفسها في هذا الأمر، إذ ليس هناك معاوقة أصلاً. وأمّا مادّة العناصر فإنّما متى صارت مأمورة بقبول صورة أخرى، فإنّها لا تكون مطيعة، بل يكون قبولها واستعدادها لانقياد الأمر الإلهي على كراهة منها إذ الصّورة السّابقة تكون معاوقة عن حصول الصّورة الكائنة. (٩٢)

[٧] تفسير سورة الإخلاص

وواجب الوجود هو الذي لذاته هو هو، بل ذاته أنه هو لا غير، وتلك الهوية والخصوصيّة معنى عديم الاسم، لا يمكن شرحه إلا بلوازمه. واللوازم منها إضافيّة ومنها سلبيّة، واللوازم الإضافيّة أشدّ تعريفاً من الأمور السلبيّة، والأكمل في التعريف هو اللّازم الجامع لنوعيّ الإضافة والسلب، وذلك هو كون تلك الهوية إلهاً، فإنّ الإله هو الذي ينسب إليه غيره ولا ينسب هو إلى غيره. والإله المطلق هو الذي يكون كذلك مع جميع الموجودات، فانتساب غيره إليه إضافي، وكونه غير منتسب إلى غيره سلب. (١٠٦-١٠٧)

[٨] تفسير سورة الفلق (تفسير سورتي المعوذتان)

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ﴾ فالق ظلمة العدم بنور الوجود، هو المبدأ الأول، الواجب الوجود لذاته، وذلك من لوازم خيريته المطلقة في هويته بالقصد الأول. وأول الموجودات الصادرة عنه هو قضاؤه، وليس فيه شرّ أصلاً إلا ما صار مخفياً تحت سطوع نور الأول [عليه] وهو الكدورة اللازمة لماهيته، المنشأة من هويته. ثم بعد ذلك تتأدى الأسباب بمصادماتها إلى شرور لازمة عنها. ونفوذ قضائه وهو المسبب الأول في معلولاته هو قدره وهو خلقه. فلذلك قال تعالى: ﴿مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَ﴾. جعل الشرّ في ناحية الخلق والتقدير، فإنّ ذلك الشرّ لا ينشأ إلا من الأجسام ذوات التقدير. (١١٦-١١٧)

واعلم أنّ فيه إشارة أخرى من خفيات العلوم، وهو أنّ الإستعادة والعود والعياذ في اللّغة، عبارة عن الالتجاء إلى الغير. فلما أمر بمجرد الالتجاء إلى الغير دلّ ذلك على أنّ عدم حصول الكمالات ليس لأمر يرجع إلى المفيض للخيرات، بل لأمر يرجع إلى قابلها. وذلك يحقّق الكلام المقرّر من أنّه ليست الكمالات ولا شيء منها مبخولاً بها من عند المبدأ الأول، بل الكلّ حاصل موقوف على أن يصرف المستعدّ وجه قبوله إليها، وهو المعنى بالإشارة النبوية، على قائلها ﷺ: «إِنَّ لِرَبِّكُمْ فِي أَيَّامٍ دَهْرَكُمْ نَفَحَاتٍ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ أَلَا فَتَعَرَّضُوا لَهَا»، بيّن أنّ نفحات الألفاف دائمة، وإنّما الخلل في المستعدّ. (١١٧-١١٨)

[٩] تفسير سورة الناس (تفسير سورتي المعوذتان)

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ مَلِكِ النَّاسِ إِلَهِ النَّاسِ﴾، قد ذكرنا أنّ الرّبّ عبارة عن التّربية، والتّربية إشارة إلى تسوية المزاج، فإنّ الإنسان لا يوجد ما لم يستعدّ البدن له، وذلك لأنّ الاستعداد إنّما يحصل بتربية لطيفة وتمزيج لطيف تقصّر العقول عنه، وهو المراد بقوله تعالى: ﴿فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ﴾، فأول الدّرجات هي التّربية بتسوية المزاج. (١٢٣)

فأول نعم الله تعالى على الإنسان المعين أنّ رباه بواسطة أنّ سوى مزاجه، ثمّ بعد التّربية بالقهر والغلبة، وذلك بأنّ أفاض عليها نفساً ناطقة، وجعل أعضاء البدن بما فيها من القوى الحسيّة والخياليّة والوهميّة، والفكر والذكّر والسمع والبصر والشّم والدّوق واللمس والشّهوة والغضب والإجماع، والقوى المحركة للعضلات، والقوى النباتيّة من الغاذيّة وشعبها من الماسكة والجاذبة والمضامة والدافعة، والقوى المنميّة والقوى المولّدة، وبالجملة قواه النباتيّة والحيوانيّة مع اختلاف أفعالها وتباين متعلقاتها وتشعب مآخذها صارت مقهورة تحت تدبير النفس الناطقة الرّوحانيّة الشّريفة الكاملة. (١٢٣)

فلما سوى المزاج أولاً، جعله مقهوراً للنفس ثانياً. وهو بحسب ذلك ملك مطلق، أي يملك تفويض تدبير البدن إلى النفس. فإنَّ المالك يملك ويملك، ثمَّ بعد ذلك تصير النفس مشتاقة بجوهرها إلى الاتّصال بتلك المبادئ المفارقة، والعكوف على بساط قريها وملازمة حضرتهما والابتهاج بمشاهدتهما، والاستئناس بالقرب منها. وذلك الشوق الثابت في جبلة الإنسان، الحاصل في غريزته، يحمله في الطلب والبحث على أن يكون دائم التّضرّع إلى تلك المبادئ في أن يفيض عليها شيء من تلك الجلايا المقدّسة، إمّا بواسطة حركات عقلية أو انتقالية إن كانت نفسه عقلاً بالملكة، أو عند الاستعانة بالقوى الباطنة وتمزيج صورها ومعانيها، وتحريكها أنواعاً من الحركات بحسبها يستعدّ لقبول الفيض. وكلّ ذلك عبارات صارت منها لتلك المبادئ لتصير النفس في هذه الدّرجة متعبّدة، وتلك المبادئ معبودة، والإله هو المعبود. (١٢٤)

فإذن لتلك المبادئ أسامي بحسب كلّ وقت، والاسم الأوّل بحسب تكون المزاج الرّبّ، والاسم الثاني بحسب فيض النفس هو الملك، والاسم الثالث بحسب شوق النفس هو الإله. وههنا انتهى درجات أصناف التعلّقات بين المبادئ والنفس، وهذا المبدأ الواهب للصّور، المدبّر لما تحت كرة القمر. ولما بيّن كيفية الإستعادة بالمبدأ الأوّل في السّورة الأولى [(أي: سورة الفلق)]، وهو المبدأ للانفلاق أي هو المبدأ للوجود، وبيّن كيفية دخول الشّرّ في تقديره هناك، ففي هذه السّورة بيّن كيفية الإستعادة بالمبدأ القريب الواهب للصّور، وبين تلك الدّرجات. (١٢٤)

قوله تعالى: ﴿مِنْ شَرِّ أَلْوَسَاسِ الْخَنَاسِ﴾: الوسواس هو القوّة التي توقع الوسوسة، وهي القوّة المتخيّلة بحسب صيرورتها مستعملة للنفس الحيوانية، ثمَّ إنّ حركتها تكون بالعكس، فإنّ النفس وجهها إلى المبادئ المفارقة. فالقوّة المتخيّلة إذا جذبتها إلى الاشتغال بالمادّة وعلائقها، فتلك القوّة تخنس إلى التّحرّك بالعكس، وتجذب النفس الإنسانية إلى العكس. فلماذا ما يكون خناساً. قوله تعالى: ﴿الَّذِي يُوسِسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ﴾، معناه أنّ الخناس وهو القوّة المتخيّلة، إنّما يوسوس في الصّدر التي هي المطية الأولى للنفس، لما قد ثبت أنّ المتعلّق الأوّل للنفس الإنسانية هو القلب، وبواسطته تنبعث القوى في سائر الأعضاء، بتأثير الوسوسة أولاً في الصّدر. ثمَّ قال تعالى: ﴿مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ﴾: الجنّ هو الاستتار، والنّاس هو الاستئناس، فالأمور المستترة وهما الحواسّ الظاهرة والباطنة. (١٢٤-١٢٥)

[١٠] رسالة في القضاء

قضاء الله تعالى هو حكمه الأوّل الواحد الذي يشتمل على كلّ شيء ويتفرّع عنه كلّ شيء على ممرّ الزّمان، وقدره ترتيبه إنبعث الأشياء عن ذلك القضاء الأوّل شيئاً بعد شيء كما قال - عزّ من قائل! - : ﴿وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا عِنْدَنَا خَزَائِنُهُ وَمَا نُنزِلُهُ إِلَّا بِقَدَرٍ مَعْلُومٍ﴾. [...] الخالق الأوّل لذلك خلقه ولا بدّل حكمه ولا يبالي بما يكون بل خلق هؤلاء للجنة ولم يبالي وأولئك للنار ولم يبالي. (١-٤)

[١١] رسالة في القضاء والقدر

واعلم أنّ الأسباب موصولة بأسباب والدواعي مقابلة بالحواجز، ولخيل الدهر ركض في مشوار طويل وحلبة مديدة وقد تتحصّل مصادمات أسباب تحرف عن مقاصد وجهات إلى مقاصد وجهات وربما وجهت صدمة إلى أخرى وربما كانت الصدمة حبسة وربما كانت صرفة وربما كانت همزة بشدّ. (٥٩)

[١٢] كتاب المباحثات

فلو سلّمنا أنّه لا سبيل لنا في علمنا هذا إلى إدراك شيء إلا بتعلّم أو فكر، فليس ذلك بموجب أنّ هذا ديدن النفس في كلّ وجود يكون له، بل لعلّها مادامت في البدن فلها معارض من التّخيل في جميع ما نتعاطاه، فإن استشرکه فيما يناسب فعله سهل عليه استمراره في فعله الخاصّ، وربما أعان. وإن لم يستشرکه فيما يناسب فعله شغل وعوق - كالركب دابة جموحاً - فيحتاج إلى أن يستشرکه ويستعين بمداراته، فإذا فارق الشريك المعاق وله ملكة أن يفعل، استقلّ بذاته. (٧٣)

إنّه ليعظم عليّ أن يكون الاعتقاد في ثبوت المبدء الأوّل وفي ثبوت أنّه واحد مسلوفاً إليه من طريق الحركة ووحدة العالم المتحرّك. (٨٤)

ليس يحتاج العقل منا في كلّ اتّصال بالمفارق إلى الخيال، بل في بدء ما يقتبس التّصوّرات الأوّل الكليّة، وربما استعان بالخيال أيضاً في بعض التّصرّفات بشغل الخيال عن المعارضة وليكن التّهيؤ بمشاركته أكد، كما يفعله في مطالعة الأشكال الحسيّة أيضاً عند التأمل الهندسي. (٨٨)

وإذا تشرّفت النفس واكتسبت القوّة الفاضلة وفارقت البدن كان نيلها ما ينال هناك عند زوال الشّواغل أسرع من نيل الحدس، فتمثّل لها العالم العقليّ على ترتيب حدود القضايا والمعقولات الذاتي - دون الرّمائي - ويكون ذلك دفعة. وإنّما الحاجة إلى الفكر لكدر النفس، أو لقلّة تمرّنها وعجزها عن نيل الفيض الإلهي، أو للشّواغل. ولو لا ذلك [لاستعلّت] النفس جلائاً من كلّ شيء إلى أمد الحقّ. (١٠٧)

من عظيم الفائدة في اعتناء الإنسان بإصلاح قوّاه وتديبير نفسه من حيث تعلّقها بالبدن أنّ هيهنا ضرباً من التّعريف الإدراك الكمال والحسّ الباطن ليس على سبيل القياس، بل على سبيل المشاهدة التي ليس يتيسّر كلّ لها، بل إنّما يتيسّر لها صاحب اليقين [بفسالة] هذا العالم المستحيل وخساسة مبلغ شهواته وأغراض الغضب والطّمع وغير ذلك فيه، وإنّ

جميع ذلك دون أن يستحقّ اعتكاف الهمة عليه. فإذا زكّي نفسه وطرح عنها هذه الأغشيّة وراضها وهذبها أعدّها لقبول الفيض العلويّ؛ فرأى أول شيء حسن نفسه في حرّيتها واعتلائها وعتاقها عما تعبد غيرها، وصار إليها من الله نورٌ تصرفها عن كلّ شيء ويحقر عندها كلّ حسّي، فابتهج واغتبط وعزّ عند نفسه وعلا؛ ورحم دُود هذه الملكوت المردين في لا شيء، المتشاجرين عليه؛ بيناهم في ذلك التخبّط، إذ صاروا إلى البوار، وضلّ عنهم ما كانوا يطلبون؛ ورحمهم من حيث هم محفوفون بكلّ غمّ وخوف [وحسد] وهمّ ورغبة وشغل في شغل. وذلك بحجة ونور يأتي من عند الله بتوسّط نور العقل، ليس يهدي إليه الفكر والقياس إلّا من جهة الإثبات، وأما من جهة خاصّ ماهيّته وكيفيّته فإنّما تدلّ عليه المشاهدة، ولا ينال تلك المشاهدة من استعداد لها بصحّة مزاج النّفس، كما أنّ من لم يذق الحلو فيتصدّق بأنّه لذيذ بضرب من القياس أو الشّهادة، ولا ينال خاصّة الالتذاذ به إلّا بالتطعم إن كان مستعدّاً له بصحّة مزاج البدن، فإنّ كانت هناك آفة لم يلتذّ بها أيضاً ووجدت المشاهدة مخالفة لما وقع به التصديق السالف. (٢٧٧-٢٧٨)

القضاء سابق علم الله تعالى الذي يتشعب عنه المقدّرات. (٣٠٦)

[١٣] رسالة في الفيض الإلهيّ (الفعل والانفعال)

وذلك مثل ما كانت طائفة من المتقدّمين المتعبّدين يشبّون قوى انفسهم على عبادة الله تعالى وتذكيره واستمداد أصناف المعونة من جهته بنياً هياكل رفيعة واتخاذ أصنام من جواهر نفيسة ويجعلون انفسهم وتفاعل ملازماتها ومعتكفة على إلّا قبال عليها متذكّرة بتوسّطها أمر الله عزّ وجلّ ومضبوطة عن تغير العزيمة عن طاعة الله تعالى واستمداد المعونة والرحمة من جهتها، وكانوا يقولون: ﴿ مَا تَعْبُدُهُمْ إِلَّا لِيُقَرِّبُونَا إِلَى اللَّهِ زُلْفَى ﴾ هذا إلى ما اتّخذ بعض هؤلاء من بناء المساجد والبيع والصوامع ونصب الحاريب والقناديل فيها وكلّ ذلك يُعدّ النّفس وتبّتها على الطّاعة واستبقاء للمنيب في الإنابة والعبادة. (٨)

[١٤] رسالة في أقسام العلوم العقليّة

[القسم الخامس لعلوم الإلهيّ]: [...] والدّلالة على ارتباط الأرضيات بالسّماويات بالملائكة العاملة والملائكة العاملة بالملائكة المبلّغة الممثّلة وارتباط الكلّ بالأمر الذي ما هو ﴿ إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلِمَاحٍ بِلْبَصَرٍ ﴾. [...] وأنّ مجراه الحقيقيّ على مقتضى الخير المحض وأنّ الشّرّ فيه ليس بمحض بل هو بحكمة ومصلحة فهو من جهة خير. (١١٤)

[١٥] رسالة في السَّعادة (التَّحفة)

وأما الأجرام البسيطة التي دون فلك القمر فإنَّما لما كانت بعيدة عن الصَّغو متضادَّة في الصَّورة لم تصلح لقبول ذات الفيض. (١٥)

فإنَّ النَّفس النَّاطقة إذا طابقت هذه القوَى في افعالها الدَّاتيَّة فإنَّها وإن لم تكن في ذاتها دنيَّة إذ هي غير مستقبحة فيما خالاً السَّبين فإنَّها دنية بالإضافة إلى أفعال القوَّة التَّطقيَّة كدناءة ذواتها عند ذات أكسبتها عادات تقدِّم ذكر أضرارها بها. (١٨-١٩)

[١٦] كتاب الهداية

ولأنَّه يعلم ذاته فيعلم أنَّ عنه كلَّ وجود، فيعلم عن ذاته كلَّ وجود كلَّ جزئيِّ بنوع كليِّ، وكما نصفه بعد. وليست الصَّور المعقولة المعلومة تتكثَّر كأجزاءٍ في ذاته، إذ ليس علمه علماً نفسياً نطقياً، بل عقليِّ فوق العقليِّ، بل قريب ممَّا أوَّماً إليه حالك عنه مخاطبة إنسان إيتاك بشيءٍ مفصل فيه مواضع كثيرة يحتاج أن تجيب عنه، فيأتيك في ذهنك أمر وحدانيِّ تكون معه متيقِّناً بأنَّك عالم بجميع جواب ذلك. وذلك هو العلم العقليِّ البسيط. ثمَّ إذا خاطبت تفصَّل ذلك في ذهنك صوراً فصوراً على ولاءٍ وترتيب. فهذا هو العقل النَّفسيِّ الذي النَّفسُ موضوع له وهو كمال النَّفس. فأما الأوَّل فهو علم وعقل على سبيل أنَّه مبدأ لفيضان هذه الصَّورة عنه مجرَّدة: تارة في النَّفس، وطوراً بتوسَّطها في المادَّة. (٢٦٦-٢٦٧)

على أنَّ الهداية فائضة، والأصوب في كلِّ أمر والأسلك إلى الصَّلاح فيه معقولٌ في الجنبه العالية. وإنَّما لا يُقبَل الفيضُ الهادي لسبب في القابل وربَّما التَّضرُّع كاسباً للنَّفس استعداد كاملاً لقبول تلك الهداية - كالفكرة في إفادتها للاستعداد لقبول الفيض الفاعل للمعرفة، أو مُوقِعاً. في الأسباب المتعلِّقة بالعرض زيادة استعداد، فيكون ما لا يكون لو لا التَّضرُّع. (٢٩١-٢٩٢)

فيلطلب كلٌّ من النَّاس الاستكمال بأن يتصوَّر نسبة الأمور إلى الموجودات المفارقة، فيستعدُّ بذلك الاستكمال الأكمل عند المفارقة. وليحتل أن لا تعلق به هيئة بدنيَّة. وذلك بأن يستعمل هذه القوَى على التَّوسُّط: أمَّا الشَّهوة فعليِّ سيرة العفة. وأمَّا الغضب فعليِّ سيرة الشَّجاعة. فإنَّ التَّوسُّط سلبٌ من وجه فمن فارق وهو على هذه الحالة اندرج في اللدَّة الأبدية، وانطبع في هيئة الجمال الذي لا يتغيَّر مشاهداً فيه الحقُّ الأوَّل وما يترتَّب بعده. فكلٌّ ذلك يتصوَّر في ذاته. وهو كما ذاته من حيث هو النَّفس النَّاطقة وهو الملك الحقيقي وإن لم يشعر به في البدن. (٣٠٤-٣٠٥)

[۱۷] رسالة الخطبة التوحيدية

وحكمه هيأت لكل شيء أسباب فعالة، ورحمته تهدي كل شيء إلى خصائص كماله. (۲۳۲)

وخلقت الإنسان ذا نفس ناطقة، إن زكاها بالعلم والعمل، فقد شابه لها جواهر أوائل العلل، وإذا اعتدل مزاجه، وعدم الأضداد، فشاكل به ﴿السَّعِ الشَّدَادُ﴾. (۲۳۳)

[۱۸] الهيات من دانشنامه علائی

و حال عالمی واجب الوجود بهمة چیزها چون حال آن یکی خاطر دان بچیزهای بسیار بلکه از آن عالی تر و یگانه تر و مجردتر که آن خاطر را پذیرایی بود که اندر وی بود آن خاطر و آن واجب الوجود مجرد است. (۸۸)

و لیکن بنفس خویش که معنی نیکویی بودن هر چیزی بود چنان که باید، و عنایت وی آنست که دانسته است که مثلاً مردم را اندامها چگونه باید تاورا نیکوتر بود و مر آسمانها را جنبش چگونه باید تا او را نیکوتر بود و نظام خیر بوی بود بی آنکه دیگر بار ورا قصد و طلب و آرزو و غرض بود که این بوی اندر خور نبود. (۹۵-۹۶)

و واجب الوجود آنست که هستی همه چیزها از وی است و همه چیزها را هم فریضة هستی وی داده است و هم آنچه بیرون از فریضة وی چنانکه ما اندر این باب کتابی خواهیم کردن اگر زمانه مهلت دهد و این معنی اندر قرآن بچند جایگاه گفته است: یکی آنجا که گوید: ﴿رَبُّنَا الَّذِي أَعْطَى كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلْقَهُ ثُمَّ هَدَى﴾، و نیز آنجا که گوید: ﴿وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَى﴾، و نیز آنجا که گوید: ﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَنِي فَهُوَ يَهْدِينِ﴾، و حکیمان مر آفرینش فریضة را کمال اول خوانند و آفرینش زیادت را کمال ثانی خوانند. پس واجب الوجود حکیم مطلق است. (۱۰۰)

نیکویی و فایده رسیدن از چیزی بچیزی دو گونه بود: یکی معاملت و یکی جود. اما معاملت آن بود که چیزی بدهد و چیزی بستاند و این چیز که بستاند نه همه عینی بود چه باشد که نام نیکو و شادی و دعا بود

و بجملة چیزی از آنچه بوی رغبت بود بستاند و هرچه اندر وی عوضی بود بحقیقت معاملت بود هرچند که عامه مردم معاملت آنرا خوانند و شناسند که آخريانی بآخريانی بود و نيکنامی را و شکر را عوض ندانند وليکن خردمند داند که هرچه چیزی بود که اندر وی رغبت افتد آن فايده بود. و اما جود آن بود که نه از قبل عوض و مکافات بود و برابر کرداری نبود و این آن بود که از چیزی نیکی آید بخواست وی بی غرضی که او را بود، و فعل واجب الوجود چنین است پس فعل وی جود محض است. (۱۰۰-۱۰۱)

عقل آنرا خواندیم که جز آنچه او راست چیزی نپذیرد و بدهد و نفس بپذیرد از عقل و بدهد، و جسم بپذیرد و ندهد، و اندر این سه قسم تمامی اقسام بود. پس این هر سه گونه دانسته آمد از شاید بود هستی، و سپس از این شاید بود را به بود بریم. (۱۱۶)

و پدید آمد که نیکی آنجاست که اثر خیر اول رسد و بدی آنجاست که آن اثر نرسد و آن اثر را پذیرا نبود و نه بسبب دیگر. (۱۶۵)

[۱۹] رسالة في معرفة النفس الناطقة وأحوالها

فهو إذن جوهر فرد روحاني، بل هو نور فائض على هذا القالب المحسوس بسبب استعدادده وهو المزاج الإنساني. وإلى هذا المعنى أشير في الكتاب الإلهي بقوله: ﴿فَإِذَا سَوَّيْتُهُ وَنَفَخْتُ فِيهِ مِنْ رُوحِي﴾، فالتسوية هو جعل البدن بالمزاج الإنساني مستعداً لأن تتعلّق به النفس الناطقة. (۱۸۴-۱۸۵)

والعناصر أربعة: النار والهواء والماء والأرض، وحصلت منها المواليد الثلاثة وهي المعادن والتّبات والحيوان والإنسان الذي هو أكمل الحيوانات، وهو بنفسه يشبه الملائكة، ويمكن أن يبقى بقاء السّرمذ إذا تشبّه بها في العلم والعمل، ويصير هو أيضاً أحسن من البهائم والسّباع إذا اتّصف بأخلاقها، ﴿أَخْلَدَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ﴾ ﴿وَاتَّبَعَ هَوَاهُ﴾ ﴿وَكَانَ أَمْرُهُ فُرُطًا﴾. وأما إذا تنزّه عن طريقي الإفراط والتّفريط في الأخلاق، وتوسّط بينهما فلم يكن شبقاً ولا خامداً في القوّة الشّهوانية بل يكون عفيفاً، فإنّ العفة توسّط الشّهوة، ولا يكون أيضاً متهوراً ولا جباناً بل يكون شجاعاً بحسب القوّة الغضبية، فإنّ الشّجاعة تتوسّط بين التّهوّر والجبانة. وكذلك له حكمة في المعيشة، وهي حسن التّدبير فيما بينه وبين غيره. (۱۹۰)

[٢٠] رسالة في العشق

كلّ واحد من الهويّات المدبّرة، لما كان بطبيعته نازعاً إلى كماله، الذي هو خيريّة هويّته المنبيلة عن هويّة الخير المحض، نافرأ عن النقص الخاصّ به، الذي هو شرّيته الهيولانيّة والعدميّة، إذ كلّ شرّ فمن علائق الهيولى والعدم. [...] فإذا جملة الموجودات لا تعرى عن ملابسة كمال ما، وملابستها لها بعشق ونزاع في ما توجد متأخّدة بكاملها ملازمة لها. [...] فمن الواجب في حكمته وحسن تدبيره أن يغرز فيها عشقاً كلياً حتّى يصير بذلك مستحفظاً لما نال من فيض الكمالات الكليّة. (٢٤٤-٢٤٥)

والثانية أنّ الإنسان قد يصدر عن مفرد نفسه الحيوانيّة أفعال وينفعل لمفردتها انفعالات كالإحساس والتّخيّل والجماع والمواثبة والمخارية، إلّا أنّ نفسه الحيوانيّة، لما اكتسبت من البهائم مجاورة الناطقة، تفعل هذه الافاعيل بنوع أشرف وألطف، فتستأثر من المحسوسات ما كان على أحسن مزاج وأقوم تركيب، لا تتنبّه الحيوانات الأخرى له، فضلاً عن أن يستأثرها. (٢٥٥)

وقد يظهر أيضاً عن ذاته آثار وافاعيل بحسب اشتراك النّطقيّة والحيوانيّة كتصرف قوّته النّطقيّة وقوّته الحسيّة لينتزع من الجزئيّات بطريق الاستقراء أموراً كليّة، وكاستعانتها بقوّة المتخيّلة في تفكّره حتّى يتوصّل بذلك إلى ادراك غرضه في الأمور العقليّة. (٢٥٦)

والثالثة أنّ في كلّ واحد من الأوضاع الإلهيّة خيريّة، وكلّ واحدة من الخيرات مأثورة، لكنّ من الأمور الخيريّة الدنيويّة [صار ما يضادّ] إثاره بما يعلوه في المرتبة. (٢٥٦)

وعرفت أنّ كلّ ما قرب من المعشوق الأوّل فهو أقوم نظاماً وأحسن اعتدالاً. (٢٥٧)

ومهما أحبّ الصّورة المليحة باعتبار عقليّ على ما أوضحناه، عدّد ذلك وسيلة إلى الرّفعة وزيارة في الخيريّة، لولفه بما هو أقرب في التأثير من المؤثّر الأوّل والمعشوق المحض، وأشبه بالأمور العالية الشريفة، وذلك ممّا يؤهله لأنّ يكون ظريفاً وفتى لطيفاً. ولذلك لا يكاد أهل الفطنة من الظرفاء والحكماء، ممّن لا يسلك طريق [المتعسّفين] والإقحام، يوجد خالياً عن شغل قلبه بصورة حسنة إنسانيّة. (٢٥٨)

بل لن يخلص العشق النّطقيّ ما لم تنقمع القوّة الحيوانيّة غاية الإنقماع. (٢٥٩)

ثمّ النفوس الإلهية من البشرية والملائكية لا تستحقّ إطلاق التّأله عليها ما لم تكن فائزة بمعرفة الخير المطلق، إذ من البيّن أنّ هذه النفوس لن توصف بالكمال إلّا بعد الإحاطة بالمعقولات المعلولة، ولا سبيل إلى تصوّر المعقولات المعلولات ما لم تتقدّم عليها معرفة العلل بالحقيقة، وخاصّة العلة الأولى، [...] كما لا سبيل إلى وجود المعلولات ما لم يتقدّم عليها وجود ذوات علل، خاصّة العلة الأولى. (٢٦١)

ولا محالة أنّ لها عشقاً غريزياً في ذاتها للحقّ المطلق أوّلاً، ولسائر المعقولات ثانياً، وإلا فوجودها على استعدادها الخاصّ بكاملها معطل، فإذن المعشوق الحقّ للنفوس البشرية والملائكية هو الخير المحض. (٢٦٤)

[٢١] الإلهيات من كتاب الشفاء

فيكون الواجب الوجود هو الحقّ بذاته دائماً، والممكن الوجود حقّ بغيره، باطل في نفسه. (٣٨)

ولو أنّه لم يكن معه ولا منه ما بالقوّة لكانت الكمالات التي تجب للأشياء حاضرة فما كان شراً بوجه من الوجوه. (١٤٢)

فإن كان دائم الوجود كان معلوله دائم الوجود، فيكون مثل هذا من العلل أولى بالعلية لأنّه يمنع مطلق العدم للشيء فهو الذي يعطي الوجود التام للشيء. فهذا هو المعنى الذي يسمّى «إبداعاً» عند الحكماء وهو تأييس الشيء بعد ليس مطلق، فإنّ للمعلول في نفسه أن يكون «ليس» ويكون له عن علته أن يكون «أيس». (٢٠٣)

واللذة هي الخير الحسيّ، والتخييليّ، والحيوانيّ، بالحقيقة، وهي المظنونة خيراً، بحسب الخير الإنسانيّ. فإذا كان المبدأ تخيلاً حيوانياً فيكون خيره لا محالة خيراً تخيلاً حيوانياً. فليس إذن هذا الفعل خالياً عن خير بحسبه، وإن لم يكن خيراً حقيقياً أي بحسب العقل. (٢٢٤-٢٢٥)

فإنّه مثلاً لما كان يجب في الغاية الإلهية - التي هي الجود - أن يؤتى كلّ ممكن الوجود وجوده الخيريّ. (٢٢٥)

ولفظ «الجود» وما يقوم مقامها موضوعها الأوّل في اللغات إفادة المفيد لغيره فائدة لا يستعوض منها بدلاً، وأنّه إذا استعاض منها بدلاً قيل له مبيع أو معاوض، وبالجملة معامل. ولأنّ الشكر والتناء والصيت وسائر الأحوال المستحسنة لا تعدّ عند الجمهور من الأعواض، بل إمّا جواهر وإمّا أعراض يقررونها في موضوعات يظنّ أنّ المفيد غيره فائدة يربح منها شكراً هو أيضاً جواد وليس مبيعاً ولا معاوضاً، وهو في الحقيقة معاوض؛ لأنّه أفاد واستفاد سواء استفاد عوضاً مالياً، إمّا من جنسه، وإمّا من غير جنسه، أو شكراً، أو ثناء يفرح به، أو استفاد أنّ صار فاضلاً محموداً، بأنّ فعل ما هو أولى

وأحرى الذي لو لم يفعله لم يكن جميل الحال في فضيلته. لكنّ الجمهور لا يعدّون هذه المعاني في الأعواض، فلا يمتنعون عن تسمية من يحسن إلى غيره بشيء من هذه الخيرات المظنونة أو الحقيقية التي يحصل له بذلك ثناء، جواداً؛ ولو فطنوا لهذا المعنى لم يسموه جواداً، إذ الواحد منهم إذا أحسن إليه لعوض وإن كان شيئاً غير المال، ففطن له، استخفّ المتة أو أنكرها وأبى أن يكون المحسن إليه جواداً إذ كان فعله لعلّة. فإذا حقّق وحصل معنى «الجود» كان إفادة الغير كمالاً في جوهره أو في أحواله من غير أن يكون بإزائه عوض بوجه من الوجوه، فكلّ فاعل يفعل فعلاً لغرض يؤدي إلى شبه عوض فليس بجواد، وكلّ مفيد للقابل صورة أو عرضاً وله غاية أخرى يحصل بالخير الذي أفاده إياه فليس بجواد. (٢٣١-٢٣٢)

ويرجع آخر الأمر إلى غرض يتصل بذاته ويعود على ذاته ويرجع إلى ذاته. (٢٣٣)

ومع ذلك فالشّر يدلّ في كلّ شيء بوجه ما على عدم الكمال الذي له، والخير على وجوده. (٢٣٩)

فإذن كلّ شيء إلا الواحد الذي هو لذاته واحد، والموجود الذي هو لذاته موجود؛ فإنّه مستفيد الوجود عن غيره، وهو «أيس» به، و«ليس» في ذاته، وهذا معنى كون الشيء مبدعاً أي نائل الوجود عن غيره، وله عدم يستحقّه في ذاته مطلق، ليس إنّما يستحقّ العدم بصورته دون مادّته، أو بمادّته دون صورته، بل بكلّيته. (٢٧٢)

فالكلّ إذن بالقياس إلى العلة الأولى مبدع، وليس إيجاداً لما يوجد عنه إيجاداً يمكن [يمنع] العدم يمنع ألبيته من جواهر الأشياء بل إيجاداً يمنع العدم مطلقاً فيما يحتمل السرمد، فذلك هو الإبداع المطلق، والتأيس المطلق ليس تأيساً ما، وكلّ شيء حادث عن ذلك الواحد، وذلك الواحد محدث له إذ المحدث هو الذي كان بعد ما لم يكن. (٢٧٢)

فقد وضح أنّ الأوّل لا جنس له، ولا ماهية له، ولا كيفية له، ولا كمية له، ولا أين له، ولا متى له، ولا نداء له، ولا شريك له، ولا ضدّ له، تعالى وجلّ، وأنّه لا حدّ له، ولا برهان عليه، بل هو البرهان على كلّ شيء، بل هو إنّما عليه الدلائل الواضحة، وأنّه إذا حقّقه فإنّما يوصف بعد الإنيّة بسلب المشابهات عنه، وبإيجاب الإضافات كلّها إليه، فإنّ كلّ شيء منه وليس هو مشاركاً لما منه، وهو مبدأ كلّ شيء وليس هو شيئاً من الأشياء بعده. (٢٨٣)

فالخير بالجملة هو ما يتشوّقه كلّ شيء في حدّه ويتمّ به وجوده، والشّر لا ذات له، بل هو إمّا عدم جوهر، أو عدم صلاح حال الجوهر. فالوجود خيريّة، وكمال الوجود خيريّة الوجود. والوجود الذي لا يقارنه عدم - لا عدم جوهر، ولا عدم شيء للجوهر، بل هو دائماً بالفعل - فهو خير محض، والممكن الوجود بذاته ليس خيراً محضاً؛ لأنّ ذاته بذاته لا يجب له الوجود بذاته، فذاته تحتمل العدم، وما أحتمل العدم بوجه ما فليس من جميع جهاته بريئاً من الشّر والنقص، فإنّ ليس الخير المحض إلا الواجب الوجود بذاته. (٢٨٤)

وسائر الأشياء فإنّ ماهياتها كما علمت لا تستحقّ الوجود، بل هي في أنفسها وقطع أضافتها إلى واجب الوجود تستحقّ العدم؛ فلذلك كلّها في أنفسها باطلة، وبه حقّه، وبالقياس إلى الوجه الذي يليه حاصلة، فلذلك ﴿كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ إِلَّا وَجْهَهُ﴾. (٢٨٤)

وليس يجوز أن يكون واجب الوجود يعقل الأشياء من الأشياء. [...] ونحن قد بيّنا في كتب أخرى أنّ كلّ صورة محسوسة وكلّ صورة خياليّة فإنّما تدرك من حيث هي محسوسة أو متخيّلة بألة متجزّئة، وكما أنّ إثبات كثير من الأفاعيل للواجب الوجود نقص له، كذلك إثبات كثير من التعلّقات، بل واجب الوجود إنّما يعقل كلّ شيء على نحو كليّ، ومع ذلك فلا يعزب عنه شيء شخصي، و﴿لَا يَعْزُبُ عَنْهُ مِثْقَالُ ذَرَّةٍ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَلَا فِي الْأَرْضِ﴾. وهذا من العجائب التي يحوج تصوّرها إلى لطف قريحة. (٢٨٧-٢٨٨)

ثمّ يجب أن يعلم أنّه إذا قيل عقل للأوّل قيل على المعنى البسيط الذي عرفته في كتاب النفس، وأنّه ليس فيه اختلاف صور مرتبة متخالفة كما يكون في النفس على المعنى الذي مضى في كتاب النفس؛ فهو لذلك يعقل الأشياء دفعة واحدة من غير أن يتكثّر بها في جوهره، أو تتصوّر في حقيقة ذاته بصورها، بل تفيض عنه صورها معقولة، وهو أولى بأن يكون عقلاً من تلك الصوّر الفائضة عن عقليّته، ولأنّه يعقل ذاته، وأنّه مبدأ كلّ شيء، فيعقل من ذاته كلّ شيء. (٢٩١)

وإن جعلت هذه المعقولات أجزاء ذاته عرض تكثّر، وإن جعلتها لواحق ذاته، عرض لذاته أن لا يكون من جهتها واجب الوجود لملاصقته ممكن الوجود. [...] فينبغي أن تجتهد جهداً في التخلّص من هذه الشبهة، وتحفظ أن لا تكثّر ذاته، ولا تبالى بأن تكون ذاته مأخوذة مع إضافة ما ممكنة الوجود، فإنّها من حيث هي علّة لوجود زيد ليست بواجبة الوجود بل من حيث ذاتها. (٢٩٤)

لكنّ ليس مراد الأوّل هو على نحو مرادنا حتّى يكون له فيما يكون عنه غرض. (٢٩٤-٢٩٥)

فواجب الوجود ليست إرادته مغايرة الذات لعلمه، ولا مغايرة المفهوم لعلمه، فقد بيّنا أنّ العلم الذي له بعينه هو الإرادة التي له. وكذلك قد تبين أنّ القدرة التي له هي كون ذاته عاقلة لكلّ عقلاً، هو مبدأ لكلّ لا مأخوذاً عن الكلّ، ومبدأ بذاته، لا يتوقّف على وجود شيء. وهذه الإرادة على الصوّر التي حقّقناها التي لا تتعلّق بغرض في فيض الوجود، لا تكون غير نفس الفيض وهو الجود. فقد كنّا حقّقنا لك من أمر الجود ما إذا تذكّرت علمت أنّ هذه الإرادة نفسها تكون جوداً، وإذا حققت تكون الصّفة الأولى لواجب الوجود أنّه « إنّ » وموجود. ثمّ الصّفات الأخرى بعضها يكون المعنى فيها هذا الوجود مع إضافة، وبعضها هذا الوجود مع سلب، وليس ولا واحد منها موجّباً في ذاته كثرة البتّة ولا مغايرة. (٢٩٥-٢٩٦)

وإذا قال له: جواد، عناه من حيث هذه الإضافة مع السلب، بزيادة سلب آخر، وهو أنه لا ينحو غرضاً لذاته. (٢٩٦)

ولا يمكن أن يكون جمال أو بهاء فوق أن تكون الماهية عقلية محضة، خيرية محضة، بريئة عن كل واحد من أنحاء النقص، واحد من [كل] جهة، فالواجب الوجود له الجمال والبهاء المحض، وهو مبدأ جمال كل شيء وبهاء كل شيء. وبهاؤه هو أن يكون على ما يجب له، فكيف جمال ما يكون على ما يجب في الوجود الواجب؟ (٢٩٧)

وأيضاً مبدأ الكل ذات واجبة الوجود، وواجب الوجود واجب ما يوجد عنه. (٣٠٢)

بل أن يكون المقصود هو التشبه بالأول تعالى - بقدر الإمكان - في أن يكون على أكمل ما يكون في نفسه، وفيما يتبعه من حيث هو تشبه بالأول، لا من حيث هو يصدر عنه أمور بعده حتى تكون الحركة لأجل ذلك بالمقصود الأول، كيلا! (٣١٥)

وهذه الحركة كأتمها عبادة ما ملكية أو فلكية. (٣١٦)

ونقول بالجملة: لا يجوز أن يكون منها شيء لأجل الكائنات؛ لا قصد حركة؛ ولا قصد جهة من حركة، ولا تقدير سرعة وبطء، بل ولا قصد فعل البتة لأجلها، وذلك لأن كل قصد فيكون من أجل المقصود، فيكون أنقص وجوداً من المقصود. (٣١٩)

وإنما يفيد الصحة مبدأ أجل من الطبيب، وهو الذي يعطي المادة جميع صورها، وذاته أشرف من المادة. (٣٢٠)

والشيء الذي هو أولى بالشيء فإنه يفيد كمالاً ما، إن كان بالحقيقة فحقيقياً، وإن كان بالظن فظنياً: مثل استحقاق المدح وظهور القدرة وبقاء الذكر؛ فهذه وما أشبهها كمالات ظنية، أو الريح، أو السلامة، أو رضى الله تعالى وتقدس وحسن معاد الآخرة؛ وهذه وما أشبهها كمالات حقيقية لا تتم بالقاصد وحده. (٣٢٠)

ولا يجوز أن يكون له مبدأ بوجه من الوجوه ولا سبب لا الذي عنه، ولا الذي فيه أو به يكون، ولا الذي له، حتى يكون لأجل شيء، فلهذا لا يجوز أن يكون كون الكل عنه على سبيل قصد منه كقصدها لتكوين الكل ولوجود الكل فيكون قاصداً لأجل شيء غيره. (٣٢٦)

وليس كون الكل عنه على سبيل الطبع بأن يكون وجود الكل عنه لا بمعرفة، ولا لرضى منه. (٣٢٧)

فهو عاقل لنظام الخير في الوجود، وأنه كيف ينبغي أن يكون، لا عقلاً خارجاً عن القوة إلى الفعل، ولا عقلاً منتقلاً، من معقول إلى معقول؛ فإن ذاته بريئة عما بالقوة من كل وجه، [...] بل عقلاً واحداً. (٣٢٧)

فيجب أن يعلم أنّ العناية هي كون الأول عالماً لذاته لما عليه الوجود في نظام الخير، وعلة لذاته للخير و الكمال بحسب الإمكان، وراضياً به على النحو المذكور، فيعقل نظام الخير على الوجه الأبلغ في الإمكان. فيفيض عنه ما يعقله نظاماً وخيراً على الوجه الأبلغ الذي يعقله فيضاً على أتمّ تأدية إلى النظام، بحسب الإمكان، فهذا هو معنى « العناية ». (٣٣٩)

فالشرّ بالذات وهو العدم ولا كلّ عدم، بل عدم مقتضى طباع الشيء من الكمالات الثابتة لنوعه وطباعته، والشرّ بالعرض هو المعدوم، أو الحابس للكمال عن مستحقّه. (٣٤٠)

مثال الأول وقوع سحب كثيرة وتراكمها، وإضلال جبال شاهقة تمنع تأثير الشمس في الثمار على الكمال. ومثال الثاني حبس البرد من النبات المصيب لكماله في وقته، حتّى يفسد الاستعداد الخاصّ وما يتبعه. (٣٤١)

وجميع سبب الشرّ إنّما يوجد فيما تحت فلك القمر. وجملة ما تحت فلك القمر طفيف بالقياس إلى سائر الوجود. (٣٤١)

فإفاضة الخير لا توجب أن يترك الخير الغالب لشرّ يندر، فيكون تركه شرّاً من ذلك الشرّ. لأنّ عدم ما يمكن في طباع المادة وجوده إذا كان عدماً شرّاً من عدم واحد. (٣٤٢)

ولا تجد شيئاً ممّا يقال له شرّ من الأفعال إلّا وهو كمال بالقياس إلى سببه الفاعل له، وعسى إنّما هو شرّ بالقياس إلى السبب القابل له، أو بالقياس إلى فاعل آخر يمنع عن فعله في تلك المادة التي هو أولى بها من هذا الفعل، فالظلم يصدر مثلاً عن قوّة طلابة للغلبة وهي الغضبيّة مثلاً، والغلبة هي كمالها، ولذلك خلقت من حيث هي غضبيّة، يعني أنّها خلقت لتكون متوجّهة إلى الغلبة، تطلبها وتفرح بها، فهذا الفعل بالقياس إليها خير لها، وإن ضعفت عنه، فهو بالقياس إليها شرّ لها، وإنّما هي شرّ للمظلوم، أو للنفس النطقية التي كمالها كسر هذه القوّة والاستيلاء عليها، فإن عجزت عنه كان شرّاً لها. (٣٤٤)

فالكلّ إنّما رتّب فيه القوى الفعالة والمنفعلة السماوية والأرضية الطبيعيّة والنفسانيّة، بحيث تؤدي إلى النظام الكلّي مع استحالة أن تكون هي على ما هي عليه ولا تؤدي إلى شرور. فيلزم من أحوال العالم بعضها بالقياس إلى بعض أن يحدث في نفس ما صورة اعتقاد رديء أو كفر أو شرّ آخر في نفس أو بدن، بحيث لو لم يكن كذلك لم يكن النظام الكلّي يثبت، فلم يعبأ ولم يلتفت إلى اللوازم الفاسدة التي تعرض بالضرورة. وقيل: « خَلَقْتُ هُوَلاًءَ لِلنَّارِ وَلَا أُبَالِي، وَخَلَقْتُ هُوَلاًءَ لِلْجَنَّةِ وَلَا أُبَالِي »، وقيل: « كُلُّ مُيسَّرٍ لِمَا خُلِقَ لَهُ ». (٣٤٦-٣٤٧)

والحكماء الإلهيون رغبتهم في إصابة هذه السعادة أعظم من رغبتهم في إصابة السعادة البدنيّة، بل كأنهم لا يلتفتون إلى تلك، وإن أعطوها، ولا يستعظمونها في جنة هذه السعادة التي هي مقارنة الحقّ الأول. (٣٤٨)

يجب أن تعلم أن لكل قوة نفسانية لذة وخيراً وأذى وشرّاً يخصّها. [...] ويشترك كلّها نوعاً من الشّركة في أنّ الشّعور بموافقتها وملائمتها هو الخير واللّذة الخاصّة بها. (٣٤٨)

ولهذا يجب أن لا يتوهّم العاقل أنّ كلّ لذة فهي كما للحمار في بطنه وفرجه، وأنّ المبادئ الأولى المقرّبة عند ربّ العالمين عادمة اللّذة والغبطة، وأنّ ربّ العالمين ليس له في سلطانه وخاصّيته البهاء الذي له وقوته الغير متناهية أمر في غاية الفضيلة والشرف والطيب نجله عن أن نسميه لذة، وللحمار والبهايم حالة طيبة ولذيذة، كإلا بل أيّ نسبة تكون لما للعالية إلى هذه الحسيّة؟ (٣٤٩)

إنّ النفس الناطقة كما لها الخاصّ بها أن تصير عالماً عقلياً مرتسماً فيها صورة الكلّ والنظام المعقول في الكلّ والخير الفائض في الكلّ مبتدئة من مبدأ الكلّ سالكة إلى الجواهر الشّريفة الرّوحانية المطلقة ثمّ الرّوحانية المتعلّقة نوعاً ما بالأبدان، ثمّ الأجسام العلوية بمبيئاتها وقوامها، ثمّ كذلك حتّى تستوفي في نفسها هيئة الوجود كلّها، فتقلب عالماً معقولاً موازياً للعالم الموجود كلّها، مشاهدة لما هو الحسن المطلق والخير المطلق والجمال الحقّ المطلق، ومتحددة به، ومنتقشة بمثاله وهيئته، ومنخرطة في سلوكه، وصائرة من جوهره. (٣٥٠)

وكأنّه ليس يتبرأ الإنسان عن هذا العالم وعلائقه إلّا أن يكون أكد العلاقة مع ذلك العالم فصار له شوق إلى ما هناك وعشق لما هناك فصدّه عن الالتفات إلى ما خلفه جملة. (٣٥٤)

وملكة التّوسّط ملكة كأنّها موجودة للقوة الناطقة وللقوى الحيوانية معاً، أمّا القوى الحيوانية فبأنّ تحصل فيها هيئة الإذعان؛ وأمّا القوى الناطقة فبأنّ تحصل فيها هيئة الاستعلاء والانفعال، كما أنّ ملكة الإفراط والتّفريط موجودة للقوة الناطقة وللقوى الحيوانية معاً، ولكنّ بعكس هذه النسبة. ومعلوم أنّ الإفراط والتّفريط هما مقتضى القوى الحيوانية، وإذا قوىّت القوى الحيوانية وحصل لها ملكة استعلائية حدثت في النفس الناطقة هيئة إذعائية وأثر انفعاليّ قد رسخ في النفس الناطقة من شأنها أن يجعلها قويّة العلاقة مع البدن شديدة الانصراف إليه. وأمّا ملكة التّوسّط فالمراد منها التّنزيه عن الهيئات الانتقادية وتبقيّة النفس الناطقة على جبلتها مع إفادة هيئة الاستعلاء والتّنزه، وذلك غير مضادّ لجوهرها ولا مائل بها إلى جهة البدن، بل عن جهته، فإنّ المتوسّط يسلب عنه الطّرفان دائماً. (٣٥٤)

[٢٢] الأخلاق والانفعالات النّفسانية (من الحكمة العروضية)

« الصّدّاقة » هي حالة بين اثنين، يكون كلّ واحد منهما يحبّ الخير للآخر من أجل الآخر، لا لنفسه، ويكون كلّ واحد منهما يُحِبُّ ويُحَبُّ. (٢٤)

[٢٣] كتاب التعليقات

فتكون الغاية في فعله ذاته. (١٥)

فإن قيل: فهل كان يصح وجود ذلك الشيء من دون الدعاء وموافاته لذلك الدعاء؟ قلنا: لا، لأنّ علتهما واحدة وهو البارئ؛ وهو الذي جعل سبب وجود ذلك الشيء الدعاء. [...] فإنّ انبعاثنا للدعاء يكون سببه من هناك، ويصير دعاؤنا سبباً للإجابة. وموافاة الدعاء لحدوث الأمر المدعوى لأجله هما معلولاً علّة واحدة، وربّما يكون أحدهما بواسطة الآخر. (١١٢-١١٣)

ونحن إذا أردنا أن نعلم شيئاً وتستعدّ النفس لقبول معرفة ذلك من العقل الفعّال بإزالة المانع العائق لها عن هذا الطلب فيتخصّص استعدادها لذلك. (٢٢٣)

« الرؤية » هي أن تشغل النفس قواها بشيء من مذهب ما تطلبه ليتّم استعدادها لقبول الصورة المطلوبة عند واهب الصور. (٢٢٦)

« الجود » هو أن يفيد الجائد غيره كمالاً لا لغرض خارج عن الجود. (٣٠٢)

لا يصحّ أن يكون البارئ ينفعل عن الدعاء. بل إن كان الأمر المدعوى له هو في معلومه، كان الدعاء مستجاباً؛ وإن لم يكن، لم يكن مستجاباً. لكنّه ربّما كان في معلومه أن يكون سبب ذلك الأمر الدعاء. (٤٤٧)

[٢٤] كتاب المبدأ والمعاد

وذلك إيجاد الكلّ؛ فمعنى واحد منه هو إدراك وتهيؤ للإيجاد. فالحياة منه ليست تتمّ بقوتين، ولا الحياة منه غير العلم، ولا شيء من ذلك غير ذاته. [...] فبان أنّ المفهوم من الحياة والعلم والقدرة والجود والإرادة المقولات على واجب الوجود مفهوم واحد، وليست لا صفات ذاته ولا أجزاء ذاته. (٢٠-٢١)

وإذا كان كذلك كان وجود لوازمه الصّادرة عنه هو وجوب وجودها، وأيضاً هو علمه بوجوب وجودها. (٢١)

وأنته مُنزّه عن تعقّل الفسادات، وعن تعقّل الأعدام، كالشّرّ والنقص، فإنّ مُتعقّل العدم ومدرك العدم إنّما يتعقّله إذا كان بالقوّة، فإنّ البصير إنّما يرى الظلمة إذا كان بصيراً بالقوّة، لا بالفعل. (٣٢)

ولا أيضاً وجود الموجودات عنه على نحو خال عن الإرادة، فتكون تابعة لوجوده من غير أن تكون هناك إرادة وجود؛ وهذا محال. [...] بل الحقّ أمر بين الأمرين، وهو أنّ الكلّ يلزمه مع رضاه وإرادته لوجود الكلّ منه تبعاً عنه. فلا وجوده لأجل ما يوجد عنه، ولا وجود الكلّ عنه على سبيل التبع الذي لا إرادة فيه ألبتة، وقد قلنا: إن إرادته تعقله الخير الكائن عنه على نظامه فقط، لا قصد كقصدنا. (٣٢-٣٣)

والإسكندر يُصرّح ويقول في رسالته التي في مبادئ الكلّ: إنّ محرّك جملة السّماء واحد لا يجوز أن يكون عدداً كثيراً، وإنّ لكلّ كرة محرّكاً ومشوقاً يخصّصه. (٦٢)

فنقول: إنّ قوماً لما سمعوا ظاهر قول الإسكندر إذ يقول: إنّ الاختلاف في هذه الحركات وجهاتها يشبه أن يكون للعناية بالأمور الكائنة الفاسدة التي تحت فلك القمر، وكانوا سمعوا أيضاً وعلموا بالقياس أنّ حركات السّماوات لا يجوز أن تكون لأجل شيء غير ذواتها، ولا يجوز أن تكون لأجل معلولاتها، أرادوا أن يجمعوا بين المذهبين. (٦٢)

وأما الإبداع فإعطاء الوجود دائماً ومنع العدم دائماً. (٧٧)

فإذا كانت كذلك كانت عناية الله مشتملة على الجميع. (٨٥)

فإذا امتزجت العناصر امتزاجاً قريباً من الاعتدال حدث الإنسان، وتجتمع فيه جميع القوى النباتية والحيوانية، وتزداد نفساً تسمى « ناطقة ». (٩٦)

وغاية كمال الإنسان أن يحصل لقوته النظرية العقل المستفاد ولقوته العملية العدالة، وهي هنا يجتم الشرف في عالم المعاد. (٩٩-١٠٠)

فإنّ النفس الإنسانية ليس فعلها الذي يختصّ بها إدراك المعقولات فقط. بل لها بمشاركة البدن أفعال أخرى لها بحسبها سعادات، وذلك إذا كانت هي على ما ينبغي، وذلك أن تكون تلك الأفعال سائقة إلى العدالة. ومعنى « العدالة » أن تتوسط النفس بين الأخلاق المتضادة فيما تشتهي ولا تشتهي، وفيما تغضب ولا تغضب، وفيما تدبّر به الحياة ولا تدبّر. (١٠٩)

فإنّ الهيئة الاستيلائية ليست هيئة غريبة من جوهر النفس، بل من طبع التجرد والتفرد عن المادّة ولواحق المادّة، والهيئة الإذعائية هي الغريبة المستفادة من المادّة المضادة لما عليه مقتضى جوهر النفس. فسعادة النفس في كمال ذاتها من الجهة التي تخصّها هو صيرورتها عالماً عقلياً، وسعادتها من جهة العلاقة التي بينها وبين البدن أن يكون لها الهيئة الاستيلائية. (١١٠)

ونحن في الدنيا وفي البدن قد نلتدّ بعض اللدّة بإدراك الحقّ، إلّا أنّها ضعيفة خفيفة خاملة لعلّة البدن. وإنّما يمكننا أن نتوصّل إلى هذه السعادة إذا فارقنا البدن على الحقيقة. (١١٢-١١٣)

[٢٥] رسالة في الدّعاء

سبحانك اللهم! سائر الموجودات تنطق بلسان الحال والمقال. إنّك المعطي كلّ شيء منها ما هو مستحقّه بالحكمة، وجاعل الوجود لها بالقياس إلى عدمها، نعمة ورحمة. فالذّوات منها والأعراض مسبّحة بالآثك، شاكرة فواضل نعمائك ﴿وَإِنْ مِنْ شَيْءٍ إِلَّا يُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِهِ وَلَكِنْ لَا تَفْقَهُونَ تَسْبِيحَهُمْ إِنَّهُ كَانَ حَلِيمًا غَفُورًا﴾، فسبحانك اللهم وتعاليت! لما كان الوجود لذاتك واجباً، كان الإمكان لوجود غيرك ضربة لازب. (٢٩٧)

اللهم إنّك سجنت نفسي في سجن من العناصر الأربع، ووكلت بافتراسها سباعاً من الشّهوات جوعاً، وأوجبت عليها رضاها والانقياد معها إلى هواها وقزبها بالعالم ﴿الْمَغْضُوبِ عَلَيْهِ﴾. [...] وتعطفّ عليها بالرحمة التي هي بك أليق، وبالكرم الفاضل الذي هو منك أجدر وأخلق، وأمننّ عليها بالتوبة العائدة بها إلى عالمها السّماويّ، وعجّل لها بالأوبة إلى مقامها القدسيّ، وأطلّع على ظلماتها شمساً من العقل الفعّال، وأمطّ عنها ظلمات الجهل والضلال، واجعل ما في قواها بالقوّة كائناً بالفعل، وأخرجها من ظلمات الجهل إلى نور الحكمة وضياء العقل. ﴿اللَّهُ وَلِيُّ الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا يُخْرِجُهُمْ مِنَ الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا أَوْلِيَاؤُهُمُ الطَّاغُوتُ يُخْرِجُونَهُمْ مِنَ النُّورِ إِلَى الظُّلُمَاتِ وَأُولَئِكَ أَصْحَابُ النَّارِ هُمْ فِيهَا خَالِدُونَ﴾. اللهم أر نفسي صور الغيوب الصّالحة في منامها، [وأبدلها] من الأضغاث رؤيّة الخيرات والبشرى الصّادقة في أحلامها، وطهرّها من الأوساخ التي تأثرت بها من محسوساتها وأوهامها، وأمطّ عنها كدر الطّبيعة. (٢٩٧-٢٩٨)

إنّك لا إله إلّا أنت، علّة الأشياء، ونور الأرض والسّماء! امنحني فيضاً من العقل الفعّال، يا ذا الجلال والأفضال، هدّب نفسي بأنوار الحكمة، وأوزعني أن أشكر على ما أوليتني من النّعمة، أرني الحقّ حقّاً وألهمني إتباعه، والباطل باطلاً وجنّني اعتقاده واستماعه. هدّب نفسي من طينة الهيولى إنّك أنت العلّة الأولى! [...] وانقلني إلى عالمك المتحدّ المحض البسيط، إنّك على ما تشاء قادر، و﴿بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّحِيطٌ﴾. [...] اللهم هدّب بروح القدس الشّريفة نفسي وأنزّ بالحكمة البالغة عقلي وحسّي واجعل الملائكة بدلاً من عالم الطّبيعة أنسي. [...] اللهم قوّ نفسي على قهر الشّهوات الفانيّة، وارفغ نفسي إلى منازل النّفوس الباقية، واجعلها من جملة الجواهر الشّريفة النّفيسة الصّافية في جنات عالية، برحمتك يا أرحم الرّاحمين! (٢٩٨-٢٩٩)

[٢٦] كتاب الإشارات والتنبهات

انظر إلى حكمة الصانع، بدأ فخلق أصولاً، ثم خلق منها أمزجةً شتى وأعدّ كلّ مزاج لنوع، وجعل إخراج الأمزجة عن الاعتدال، لإخراج الأنواع عن الكمال؛ وجعل أقربها من الاعتدال الممكن، مزاج الإنسان، لتستوكره نفسه النّاطقة. (٣١٦-٣١٨)

هذا الاتّصال علته قوّة بعيدة، هي «العقل الهيولي» وقوّة كاسبة هي «العقل بالملكة» وقوّة تامّة الاستعداد لها أن تُقبّل بالنّفس إلى جهة الإشراق - متى شاءت - بملكة متمكّنة وهي المسماة بـ«العقل بالفعل». (٣٧٧)

فلا واجب وجود غيره. (٤٦٤)

واجب الوجود لا يُشارك شيئاً من الأشياء في ماهيّة ذلك الشّيء؛ لأنّ كلّ ماهيّة لما سواه، مقتضية لإمكان الوجود. (٤٧٧)

بل الوجود الواجب له، كالماهيّة لغيره. (٤٨٠)

فإذن الجواد، والملّك الحقّ، لا غرض له، والعالِي لا غرض له في السّافل. (٥٥٩)

اعلم أنّ ما يقال: من أنّ فعل الخير واجب حسن في نفسه، شيء لا مدخل له في أن يختاره الغنيّ، إلّا أن يكون الإتيان بذلك الحسن يُنزّهه، ويُمجّده، ويُزكّيه، ويكون تركه يُنقص منه ويثلمه. وكلّ هذا ضدّ الغنى. (٥٦٠)

الأمر الممكنة في الوجود: منها أمور يجوز أن يتعرّى وجودها عن الشّرّ، والخلل، والفساد أصلاً. (٧٣٠)

ولا تُصغ إلى من يجعل النّجاة وفقاً على عدد، ومصروفةً عن أهل الجهل والخطايا صرفاً إلى الأبد؛ واستوسع رحمة الله. (٧٤١)

فكمال الشّهوة مثلاً: أن يتكيّف العضو الذائق، بكيفيّة الحلاوة، مأخوذةً عن مادّتها. ولو وقع مثل ذلك، لا عن سبب خارج، كانت اللذّة قائمة. وكذلك الملموس، والمشموم، ونحوهما. وكمال القوّة الغضبيّة: أن تتكيّف النّفس، بكيفيّة غلبة، أو بكيفيّة شعور بأذى يحصل في المغضوب عليه. وكمال الوهم: التّكيّف بمياءة ما يرجوه، أو ما يذكره. وعلى هذا حال سائر القوَى. وكمال الجوهر العاقل: أن تُتمثّل فيه جليّة الحقّ الأوّل، قدر ما يُمكنه أن ينال منه ببهائه الذي يخصّه. (٧٦٣-٧٦٤)

فإذا نظرت في الأمور وتأملتتها، وجدت لكل شيء من الأشياء الجسمانية: كمالاً، يخصه. وعشقا إرادياً، أو طبيعياً، لذلك الكمال. وشوقاً طبيعياً أو إرادياً إليه إذا ما فارقه، رحمة من العناية الأولى على النحو الذي هي به عناية. (٧٨٧-٧٨٨)

المعرض عن متاع الدنيا وطيباتها يخص باسم: « الزاهد ». والمواظب على فعل العبادات، من القيام والصيام ونحوهما، يخص باسم: « العابد ». والمتصرف بفكره إلى قدس الجبروت، مستديماً لشروق نور الحق في سره، يخص باسم: « العارف ». وقد يتركب بعض هذه مع بعض. (٧٩٩-٨٠٠)

الزهد عند غير العارف معاملة ما، كأنه يشتري بمتاع الدنيا، متاع الآخرة. وعند العارف تنزه ما، عما يشغل سره عن الحق، وتكبر على كل شيء غير الحق. والعبادة عند غير العارف معاملة ما، كأنه يعمل في الدنيا لأجرة يأخذها في الآخرة، هي الأجر والثواب. وعند العارف رياضة ما، لهيمه وقوى نفسه المتوهمة والمتخيلة ليجرها بالتعويد عن جناب الغرور، إلى جناب الحق. فتصير مسألة للسر الباطن، حين ما يستجلي الحق لا تنازعه. (٨٠١)

العارف يريد الحق الأول لا لشيء غيره، ولا يؤثر شيئاً على عرفانه. وتعبده له فقط، ولأنه مستحق للعبادة، ولأنها نسبة شريفة إليه. لا لرغبة أو رهبة. وإن كانتا فيكون المرغوب فيه أو المرهوب عنه. هو الداعي. وفيه المطلوب. ويكون الحق ليس الغاية، بل الوسيلة إلى شيء غيره هو الغاية. وهو المطلوب دونه. (٨١٠-٨١٥)

المستحلّ توسيط الحق مرحوم من وجه؛ فإنه لم يطعم لذة البهجة به، [فيستعطفها]، إنما معارفته مع اللذات المخدجة، فهو حنون إليها غافل عما وراءها. (٨١٦)

وإنما يعبد الله ويطيعه، ليحوّله في الآخرة شبعه منها، فيبعث إلى: مطعم شهوي، ومشرب هنيء، ومنكح بهي. إذا بعث عنه فلا مطمح لبصره في أولاه وأخراه، إلا إلى لذات قببه وذذبه. والمستبصر بهداية القدس في شجون الإيثار، قد عرف اللذة الحق، وولى وجهه سمتها مترحماً على هذا المأخون عن رشده إلى ضده. وإن كان ما يتوخاه بكده، مبدولاً لا بحسب وعده. (٨١٧-٨١٨)

الأول: تنحية ما دون الحق عن مستن الإيثار. والثاني: تطويع {النفس الأمارة} {لتنفس المطمئنة}، لتنجذب قوى التخيل والوهم، إلى التوهّمات المناسبة للأمر القدسي؛ منصرفاً عن التوهّمات المناسبة للأمر السفلي. (٨٢١)

والثالث: تلطيف السر للسر. [...] فيعين عليه: الفكر اللطيف، والعشق العفيف الذي يأمر فيه شمائل المعشوق، ليس سلطان الشهوة. (٨٢٢، ٨٢٦-٨٢٧)

وإن لحظ نفسه فمن حيث هي لحظة، لا من حيث هي بزيتها. وهناك يحق الوصول. (٨٣٤-٨٣٥)

العارف هَشُّ بَشٌّ، بَسَامٌ، يُعَجِّلُ الصَّغِيرَ، من تواضعه، مثل ما يُعَجِّلُ الكَبِيرَ، وينبسط من الخامل، مثل ما ينبسط من التَّبِيهِ. وكيف لا يهَشُّ، وهو فرحان بالحقِّ، وبكلِّ شيءٍ فَإِنَّهُ يرى فيه الحقَّ. وكيف لا يُسَوِّى، والجميع عنده سواسية؟ أهل الرِّحمة قد شغلوا بالباطل. (٨٤٣)

وهو يرتاد البهاء في كلِّ شيءٍ؛ لأنَّه مزِيَّةٌ حظوة من العناية الأولى، وأقرب إلى أن يكون من قبيل ما عكف عليه بهواه. (٨٥٠)

[٢٧] رسالة في إثبات النبوات وتأويل رموزهم وأمثالهم

وقوله ﴿مَشْكَاةٌ﴾ فهو عبارة عن العقل الهيولانيِّ والنَّفْسِ النَّاطِقَةِ، لأنَّ المشكاة متقاربة الجدران، جيِّدة التَّهَيُّؤِ للاستضاءة، لأنَّ كلَّ ما يقارب الجدران، كان الانعكاس فيه أشدَّ والضوء أكثر. (٤٩-٥٠)

و﴿المَصْبَاحُ﴾ هو عبارة عن العقل المستفاد بالفعل، لأنَّ النُّورَ، كما هو كمال للمشفِّ، كما حدَّته الفلاسفة، ومخرج له من القوَّة إلى الفعل، كذلك العقل المستفاد كمال للعقل الهيولانيِّ ومخرج له من القوَّة إلى الفعل. ونسبة العقل المستفاد إلى العقل الهيولانيِّ كنسبة المصباح إلى المشكاة. (٥٠)

﴿يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ﴾ يعني بها القوَّة الفكرية التي هي موضوعة ومادَّة للأفعال العقلية كما أنَّ الدَّهْنَ موضوع ومادَّة للسَّراج. ﴿لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةَ﴾: «الشرق» في اللُّغة حيث يشرق منه النُّور و«الغرب» في حيث يفقد فيه النُّور. فانظر كيف راعى التَّمثِيلَ وشرائطه اللَّائِقَ به، حين جعل أصل الكلام النُّور، بنى عليه وقرنه بآلات النُّور ومعادنها. فالرَّمز بقوله ﴿لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةَ﴾ ما أقول: إنَّ الفكرية على الإطلاق ليس من القوَّى المحضة النَّطْقِيَّةِ التي يشرق فيها النُّور على الإطلاق. فهذا معنى قوله ﴿شَجَرَةٍ...لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ﴾. ولا هي من البهيمية الحيوانية التي يفقد فيها النُّور. ويمثِّلُ بالغرب على الإطلاق، فهذا معنى قوله ﴿شَجَرَةٍ...لَا غَرْبِيَّةَ﴾. (٥١)

[٢٨] علم النفس من كتاب الشفاء

وإما محرّكة بأتمّ فاعلة: والمحرّكة على أتمّ باعثة هي القوّة النزوعيّة الشوقيّة وهي القوّة التي إذا ارتسمت في التخيّل الذي سنذكره بعد صورةً مطلوبة أو مهروب عنها بعثت القوّة المحركة الأخرى التي نذكرها على التحريك، ولها شعبتان: شعبة تسمّى « قوّة شهوانيّة » وهي قوّة تبعث على تحريك تقرب به من الأشياء المتخيّلة ضروريّة أو نافعة طلباً للذة. وشعبة تسمّى « [قوّة] غضيبيّة » وهي قوّة تبعث على تحريك تدفع به الشّيء المتخيّل ضاراً أو مفسداً طلباً للغلبة. (٥٦-٥٧) وهذه هي التي تسمّى إذا استعملها العقل تسمّى « مفكّرة »، وإذا استعملها قوّة حيوانيّة تسمّى « متخيّلة ». (٢٣٠)

ويكون « التعلّم » طلب الاستعداد التامّ للاتّصال به، حتّى يكون منه العقل الذي هو البسيط فتفيض منه الصّور مفصلة في النفس بتوسّط الفكرة، فيكون الاستعداد قبل التعلّم ناقصاً والاستعداد بعد التعلّم تاماً. وإذا تعلّم يكون من شأنه أنّه إذا خطر بباله ما يتصلّ بالمعقول المطلوب، وأقبلت النفس على جهة النّظر، وجهة النّظر هو الرجوع إلى المبدأ الواهب للعقل اتّصل به. (٣٣٧)

فيجب أن يكون أوّل تعلق النفس بالقلب وليس يجوز أن تتعلّق بالقلب ثمّ بالدماغ فإنّها إذا تعلقّت بأوّل عضو صار البدن نفسانيّاً وأما الثاني فإنّما تفعل [فيه] لا محالة بتوسّط هذا الأوّل. فالنفس تحيي الحيوان بالقلب لكن يجوز أن تكون قوى الأفعال الأخرى تفيض من القلب إلى الأعضاء الأخرى. (٣٥٨-٣٥٩)

[٢٩] رسالة في الكلام على النفس الناطقة

اعلم أنّ الإنسان مختصّ من بين سائر الحيوانات بقوّة درّاكة للمعقولات، تسمّى تارة « نفساً ناطقة »، وتارة « نفساً مطمئنّة »، وتارة « نفساً قدسيّة »، وتارة « روحاً روحانيّة »، وتارة « روحاً أمريّاً »، وتارة « كلمة طيبة »، وتارة « كلمة جامعة فاصلة »، وتارة « سرّاً إلهيّاً »، وتارة « نوراً مدبراً »، وتارة « قلباً حقيقيّاً »، وتارة « لبّاً »، وتارة « هُيَّ »، وتارة « حجاً ». (١٩٥)

وقد تبين في العلوم [الطبيعيّة] أنّ الأجرام العلويّة ليست من امتزاج هذه العناصر الأربعة، وهي عادمة هذه الأضداد بالكليّة، وكان المانع عن قبول الفيض الإلهيّ - وأعنى به الإلهام الرّبانيّ الذي يقع دفعة فيكشف به حقيقة من الحقائق العقليّة - إنّما هو ملابسة هذه الأضداد. فلذلك كلّما يكون المزاج أقرب إلى الاعتدال كان الشّخص أكثر استعداداً

لقبول هذا الفيض. وإذا كانت الأجرام العلوية عرية عن الأضداد بالكلية كانت قابلة للفيض الإلهي. وأما الإنسان، وإن اعتدل مزاجه غاية الاعتدال، فليس يخلص عن شوائب الأضداد. ولا جرم ما دامت النفس الناطقة متعلقة بالبدن لا يصفو قبول الفيض الإلهي، ولا تنكشف له المعقولات بأسرها وجملتها تمام الانكشاف، لكنه إذا بذل جهده في التزكية العلمية واكتسب ملكة الاتصال بالفيض الإلهي، أي بالجوهر العقلي الذي يكون الفيض الإلهي بواسطته - ويسمى هو في لسان الشرع « ملكاً » وفي لسان الحكمة « عقلاً فعلاً » - واعتدل مزاجه، وعدم هذه الأضداد المانعة من قبول الفيض الإلهي، فقد حصل له مشابهاة ما بالأجرام الفلكية، فشابه بهذه التزكية ﴿السبع الشداد﴾، أي الأفلاك السبعة. (١٩٧-١٩٨)

[٣٠] علم النفس من كتاب النجاة

والذي يجب أن يعرف حتى ينحل به هذا الشك أن الأجسام العنصرية يمنعها صرفية التضاد عن قبول الحياة. وكلما أمعنت في هدم صرفية التضاد وردته إلى التوسط الذي لا ضد له، جعلت تقرب إلى شبه الأجسام السماوية فتستحق بذلك القدر لقبول قوة محيية من المبدأ المفارق المدبر، ثم إذا ازدادت قرباً من التوسط، ازدادت قبولاً للحياة، حتى تبلغ الغاية التي لا يمكن أن يكون أقرب منها إلى التوسط، وأهدم للطرفين المتضادين، فتقبل جوهرًا مقارب الشبه من وجه ما للجوهر المفارق. (٤٢)

[٣١] رسالة في سرّ القدر

إذ لو كان العالم لا يجري فيه إلا الصلاح المحض لم يكن هذا العالم، بل كان عالماً آخر. (٣٠٣)

وكان بقاء النفس في النقص هو البعد عن الله تعالى وهو « اللعنة » و« العقوبة » و« السخط » و« الغضب »، فيحصل لها ألم بذلك النقص. (٣٠٣)

[٣٢] رسالة في الأجرام العلوية (بيان جوهر النفس)

المواد للأجسام العالمية صنفان صنف يختص بالتهيؤ لقبول صورة واحدة لا ضد لها فيكون حدوثها على سبيل الإبداع لا التكوين وفقدتها على سبيل الفناء لا الفساد. (٢٦٧-٢٦٨)

[٣٣] الورد الأعظم

اللَّهُمَّ أَنْتَ الْأَزَلُ الْأَوَّلُ، يَا أَوْلَىٰ بِمَا لَا أَوَّلَ! اجْعَلْ عَقْلِي يَعْقِلُ السَّابِغَاتِ، وَفِكْرًا ثَابِتًا فِي الْمَلَكُوتِ، وَإِصْرَفْ هَمِّي عَنِ الْأَعْرَاضِ الْفَانِيَةِ إِلَىٰ سِيرَةِ الطَّلَبِ الْبَاقِيَةِ، وَتَجَاوَزْ عَنِ حَقِيرِ جَنْبِي. (٣٢٠)

[٣٤] رسالة العرشية (الحقائق علم التوحيد)

فواجب الوجود كمال بالفعل المحض لا يشوبه نقص، وكلّ كمال له ومنه ومسبوق لذاته وكلّ نقص، ولو بالمجاز منتف عنه، ثمّ كلّ كمال وجمال من وجوده بل من آثار كمال وجوده. فكيف يستفيد كمالاً من غيره؟ (٨٥)

كلّ كمال يكون لغيره معدوم ومنتظر، وهو له وجود حاضر. (٨٥)

وبهذا يظهر أنّ صفاته لا تكون زائدة على ذاته. [...] فإن قيل أنّ صفته غير زائدة على الذات بل هي داخلية في تقويم الذات، والذات لا يتصور وجودها دون تلك الصفات، فتكون الذات مركبة فتنجزاً به الوحدة. (٨٥)

وأما بيان لا علة له غائية وكمالية. لأنّ العلة الغائية ما يكون لأجلها الشيء. والحقّ الأوّل جلّ وعلا لا يكون لأجل شيء، بل كلّ شيء لأجل كمال ذاته وتابع لوجوده، ومستفاد من وجوده. (٨٦)

فتبين أنّه لا [علة غائية له]، وبه يظهر أنّه جواد محض وأنّه كمال حقّ وبه يظهر معنى غنائه، وأنّه لا يستحسن شيئاً ولا يستقبح شيئاً، لأنّه لو استحسن شيئاً، أو استقبح شيئاً، لوجد ذلك المستحسن ودام ولا نعدم، ذلك المستقبح وبطل. (٨٧)

ووجب أن يعلم أنّ صفاته ترجع إلى سلب أو إضافة أو مركب منهما. (٨٨)

ومن هاهنا يعلم معنى العناية من أنّها لا ترجع إلى ميل وقصد بتخصيص واحد من الخلق بخير دون غيره. (٩٣)

والعلم لا تعدد فيه ولا كثرة، ﴿ وَمَا أَمْرُنَا إِلَّا وَاحِدَةٌ كَلِمَةٍ بِالْبَصْرِ ﴾، بل التعدد إنّما يقع في حديث النفس والخيال والحسن. (٩٥)

فإنه إذا قيل حقّ فمعناه راجع إلى وجوب وجوده فإنّ الشّيء إمّا أن يكون واجب الوجود، أو ممتنع الوجود، أو ممكن الوجود. فواجب الوجود هو الحقّ المطلق. والممتنع الوجود هو الباطل المطلق. والممكن الوجود هو باعتبار نفسه باطل، وبالتنظر إلى موجبه واجب وبالتنظر إلى رفع سببه ممتنع فيمتنع ويعدم، فيكون بالالتفات إلى السبب وعدم السبب ممكناً. (٩٦)

فإذا ثبت أنّه واجب الوجود وأنّه واحد وأنّه لا علّة له، وأنّه تامّ الوجود ولا يفوت منه كمال. وإذا عرفت هذا فيعلم أنّ جميع ما سواه هو فعله، وأنّه صدر عنه لذاته وأنّه لا يشترط أن يسبقه عدم وزمان، لأنّ الزّمان تابع للحركات وهو من فعلها. نعم يشترط سبق العدم الدّائمي لأنّ ﴿كُلُّ شَيْءٍ هَالِكٌ﴾ ومنعدم في نفسه، إمّا وجوده من الخالق جلّ وعلا، والذي لذاته يكون سابقاً على ما يستفيد من غيره. (٩٧-٩٨)

إنّ الله تعالى هو القديم فحسب لأنّه غير مسبوق بعدم وليس وجوده من غيره، والحادث كلّ ما سواه لأنّه مسبوق بالعدم، ووجوده بالأوّل، عظمت قدرته! (٩٩)

وأما الشّرور فيجب إضافتها إلى الأشخاص، والأزمان والطّباع وسيأتي لهذا زيادة شرح وتفصيل، وأنّه متى حصل نقص في آحاد نوع ما، كان ذلك النقص عائداً إلى ضعف في القابل وقصور في المستعدّ. وإلا فالفيض عام من غير بخل به ولا منع منه. (١٠٣)

فإذا كلّ ما في الوجود فهو كما ينبغي. فعدله فضل، وفضله عدل. ولتعلم أنّه لا معقب لحكمه ولا راد لقضائه. نعم ينبغي أن تتلطف في إضافة الخير والشّر إليه، وهذا إمّا يعلم بعد أن نتوسّط بتقسيم حاصر. (١٠٣)

وعلى الجملة فجميع ما في الكائنات من الخير لا يتأتّى بدون الماء. ولكنّ علم قطعاً أنّه إذا وقع فيه إنسان غرق. (١٠٥)

[٣٥] رسالة في دفع الغمّ من الموت (ابن مسكويه، تهذيب الأخلاق)

ولذلك جزم الحكماء الحكم بأنّ الموت موتان: موت إراديّ وموت طبيعيّ. وكذلك الحياة حياتان: حياة إراديّة وحياة طبيعيّة. وعنوا بالموت الإراديّ إمّارة الشّهوات وترك التّعرّض لها، وعنوا بالحياة الإراديّة ما يسعى لها الإنسان في الحياة الدّنياويّة من المآكل والمشارب والشّهوات. وبالحياة الطّبيعيّة بقاء النّفس السّرمدية في الغبطة الأبديّة بما تستفيده من العلوم، وتبرأ به من الجهل، ولذلك وصّى أفلاطون الحكيم طالب الحكمة فقال: «مُتْ بِالْإِرَادَةِ نَحْيِ بِالطَّبِيعَةِ». (٢٧٥)

[٣٦] الإسكندر الأفروديسي، رسالة في العناية

واجب في أمر العناية التمسك برأي خاصّة منفرد به، عندما يحذر من الكذب الموجود في كلّ واحد من ذينك الرّأيين، كأنّه لا سبيل له إلى وجود رأي يحسب ما أرى أصدق وأوضح غير الرّأي الذي يقول به أرسطوطاليس. (١٠)

على أنّ المعنى المفهوم من القول بذلك هو أنّها موجودة في الذي عنه تكون العناية. وذلك أنّ العناية هناك توجد في الذي عنه تلك العناية بالأشياء التي تكون بها عناية، وهذا الذي العناية موجودة فيه وعنه تكون، هو الجسم الإلهيّ بأسره على ما يوجد بحسب رأيه، جميع الجسم الذي ينتهي عند فلك القمر، وهو السّبب في أمر العناية بالأشياء التي هاهنا. (١٥)

وكان القول بأنّ عناية الله الجارية هذا المجرى يؤوّل إلى هذا المعنى وهو أن يكون وجود الله عزّ وجلّ من أجل الأشياء التي هاهنا. [...] وهذا الرّأي مع ما قد تبين أنّه غير واجب، فقد تبين أيضاً أنّه غير ممكن. [...] فليس فعل الإلهيّة إذن الذي لها على القصد الأوّل نظام العالم والأشياء التي تكون عنها هاهنا وسلامتها، ولا أيضاً يكون عنها هذه الأمور من غير علمها بها وعن غير إرادتها. [...] وليس يجرى كون هذه الأشياء هذا المجرى عن غير علم الإلهة ولا أيضاً عن علم غير إرادتها. (١٦-١٧)

[٣٧] الإسكندر الأفروديسي، رسالة في مبادئ الكلّ

فيحصل إذن ممّا قلنا أن تكون الشهوة التي في هذه إنّما تكون بالاختيار والاختيار الحقيقيّ الفاضل هو محبة الخير وذلك أنّ الاختيار على الإطلاق إنّما هو محبة الخير أو ما يُظنّ أنّه خير والاختيار الحقيقيّ الذي هو محبة الخير إنّما هو موجود في الله عزّ وجلّ وحده وذلك أنّ الشّيء المتشوّق بحسب رأي أرسطوطاليس هو الشّيء الذي يُظنّ أنّه خير والمختار المرتضي من الأشياء هو الخير الأوّل فسبب حركة هذا الجسم الإلهيّ الطّبيعيّة إذن هو الاشتياق إلى الخير الحقيقيّ والشّهوة في هذه الأشياء إنّما تكون بالعقل وذلك أنّ الاختيار فيها ليس يكون بقوة من القوى المنفصلة من قبل أنّه ليس فيها منذ أول الأمر شيء منها لكنّها من حيث يتصوّر بالعقل يتشوّق إلى الشّيء المتصوّر بالعقل والمتوهّم. (ص. ٥٠)

[۳۸] علي بن أبي طالب (بحار الأنوار)

[قال عليّ عليه السلام]: إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ رَكَّبَ فِي الْمَلَائِكَةِ عَقْلاً بِلا شَهْوَةٍ، وَرَكَّبَ فِي الْبَهَائِمِ شَهْوَةً بِلا عَقْلِ، وَرَكَّبَ فِي بَنِي آدَمَ كِلْتَيْهُمَا، فَمَنْ غَلَبَ عَقْلُهُ شَهْوَتَهُ، فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ مِنَ الْمَلَائِكَةِ، وَمَنْ غَلَبَتْ شَهْوَتُهُ عَقْلَهُ فَهُوَ شَرٌّ مِنَ الْبَهَائِمِ. (۲۹۹).

[۳۹] علي بن أبي طالب (نهج البلاغة)

[قال عليّ عليه السلام]: إِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَغْبَةً فَنِلَتْ عِبَادَةُ التُّجَّارِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ رَهْبَةً فَنِلَتْ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ، وَإِنَّ قَوْماً عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ شُكْراً فَنِلَتْ عِبَادَةُ الْأَحْرَارِ. (۶۴۸)

[۴۰] فریدالدین عطار نيسابوری، تذكرة الأولياء

رابعه گفت بد بنده بود که خداوند خویش را از بیم و خوف عبادت کند یا بطمع مزد بس ایشان گفتند تو چرا می پرستی خدای را طمع بهشت نیست؟ گفت « الجار ثم الدار » گفت ما را نه خود تمامست که دستوری داده اند تا او را برستیم اگر بهشت و دوزخ نبودی او را طاعت نباستی داشت استحقاق آن نداشت که بی واسطه تعبّد او کنند؟ (۶۹)

خداوندا ! اگر تو را از بیم دوزخ می پرستم در دوزخم بسوز، و اگر به امید بهشت می پرستم، بر من حرام گردان. و اگر برای تو تو را می پرستیم، جمال باقی دریغ مدار. (۷۳)

[۴۱] أبو یزید البسطاميّ (شطحات الصّوفيّة)

أهل المعرفة مع الله تعالى على ثلاثة مقامات: فقوم طلب الله عزّ وجلّ من حيث الغفلة عنه؛ وقوم هربوا من الله سبحانه من حيث العجز عنه؛ وقوم وقفوا فيما لا طلب لهم ولا هرب لهم عنه. (۱۰۲-۱۰۳)

قال أبو يزيد: أشدّ المحجوبين عن الله ثلاثة بثلاثة: الزاهد بزهده، والعابد بعبادته، والعالم بعلمه. ثمّ قال عُقَيْبُ قوله: مسكينٌ الزاهد! قد تلبس الزهد وجري في ميدان الزهاد، ولو علم قلة الدّنيا وفي أيّ شيء زهد، وكم مقدار ما زهد فيه! وأين يقع هو في الدّنيا من الزاهدين! إنّ الزاهد يلحظ فيبقى عنده فلم يرجع بطرفه إلى غيره. وأمّا العابد فهو الذي يرى منّة الله عليه في العبادة أكثر من العبادة حتّى تغرق عبادته في المنّة. وأمّا العالم فلو علم أنّ جميع ما أبدى الله من العلم سطرّاً من اللّوح المحفوظ فكم عليمٌ هذا العالم من ذلك العلم وبكن عمل فيما علم؟ ثمّ قال أبو يزيد: العالم الذي يكون علمه الله، يأخذ عنه إذا ما شاء كيف شاء بلا تحفظ ولا كتب. ويكون هؤلاء الثلاثة ذوي شيء إلى يوم القيامة. (١٥٥)

[٤٢] أبو نصر الفارابيّ، كتاب مبادئ آراء أهل المدينة الفاضلة

مثل أنّا بإعطائنا المال لغيرنا نستفيد من غيرنا كرامة أو لذة أو غير ذلك من الخيرات، حتّى تكون تلك فاعلة فيه كمالاً ما. فالأوّل ليس وجوده لأجل غيره، ولا يوجد بغيره، حتّى يكون الغرض من وجوده أن يوجد سائر الأشياء، فيكون لوجوده سبب خارج عنه، فلا يكون أوّلاً، ولا أيضاً بإعطائه ما سواه الوجود ينال كمالاً لم يكن له قبل ذلك خارجاً عما هو عليه من الكمال، كما ينال من يجود بماله أو شيء آخر، فيستفيد بما يبذل من ذلك لذة أو كرامة أو رئاسة أو شيئاً غير ذلك من الخيرات؛ فهذه الأشياء كلّها محال أن تكون في الأوّل، لأنّه يسقط أوّليته وتقدّمه، ويجعل غيره أقدم منه وسبباً لوجوده، بل وجوده لأجل ذاته. (٩١)

[٤٣] أبو حامد الغزاليّ، تهافت الفلاسفة

فإنّ قال قائل: قد فصلتم مذاهب هؤلاء، أفنتقطعون القول بكفرهم ووجوب القتل لمن يعتقد اعتقادهم؟ قلنا: تكفيرهم لا بد منه في ثلث مسائل: [إحداها] مسألة قدم العالم وقولهم إنّ الجواهر كلّها قديمة، والثانية قولهم إنّ الله لا يحيط علماً بالجزئيات الحادثة من الأشخاص، والثالثة في إنكارهم بعث الأجساد وحشرها. فهذه المسائل الثلث لا تلائم الإسلام بوجه ومعتقدهما معتقد كذب الأنبياء، وإهمّ ذكروا ما ذكروه على سبيل المصلحة، تمثيلاً لجماهير الخلق وتفهمياً وهذا هو الكفر الصّراح الذي لم يعتقد أحد من فرق المسلمين. (٢٢٦)

[٤٤] أفلوطين، كتاب « أثولوجيا » منسوب إلى أرسطاطاليس

قلنا: العقل هو الأشياء كلها كما قلنا مراراً. فإذا عقل العقل ذاته فقد عقل الأشياء كلها. فإن كان هذا هكذا، قلنا إن العقل إذا رأى ذاته فقد رأى الأشياء كلها، فيكون هو ما هو بالفعل لأنه إنما يلقي بصره على ذاته، لا على غيره. وذلك أنه إذا كان العقل في عالمه العقلي، لم يلق بصره على شيء من الأشياء التي دونه إلا على ذاته فقط. (٣٢-٣٣)

[٤٥] رابعة العدوية (شهيدة العشق الإلهي)

وقال لها [سفيان] الثوري يوماً: [...] ما حقيقة إيمانك؟ قالت [رابعة]: ما عبدته خوفاً من ناره ولا حباً لجنّته، فأكون كالأجير السوء [...]. بل عبدته حباً له وشوقاً إليه. (١١٨)

وقالت لسفيان الثوري: ما تعدّون السخاء فيكم؟ قال أما عند أبناء الدنيا فمن يجود بماله، وعند أبناء الآخرة من يجود بنفسه. قالت: أخطئتم. قال لها: فما السخاء عندكن؟ قالت: أن تعبدته حباً له لا طلب جزاء ولا مكافأة. (١٣٨)

[٤٦] جعفر الصادق (الأصول من الكافي)

[قال جعفر الصادق عليه السلام]: إِنَّ الْعِبَادَ ثَلَاثَةٌ: قَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ خَوْفًا فِتْلِكَ عِبَادَةُ الْعَبِيدِ، وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى طَلَبَ الثَّوَابِ فِتْلِكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَجْرَاءِ، وَقَوْمٌ عَبَدُوا اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ حُبًّا لَهُ فِتْلِكَ عِبَادَةُ الْأَخْرَارِ، وَهِيَ أَفْضَلُ الْعِبَادَةِ. (٨٤)

[٤٧] شرح تامسطيوس لحرف اللام

وقد تبين من جميع ذلك أن الله هو المبدأ الأول وأنه يعلم ذاته وجميع الأشياء التي هو لها مبدأ معاً، وأنه إذا كان مالكا لذاته فهو أيضاً مالك لجميع الأشياء التي قوامها به. والعقل والمعقول منه واحد. فالعقل الأول يعقل العالم، وذلك أنه - إن تكثّر - إذا عقل ذاته، عقل أنه ما هو، فقد تعقل من ذاته أنه علّة جميع الأشياء ومبدؤها. (٢١)