Edited by
Rahim Acar and M. Cüneyt Kaya

Philosophy of Religion in Islam

A Reader of Classical Sources

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Editors-in-chief
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Short Biographies of the Authors of the Selected Texts

Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (Rhazes or Rhasis) (d. 313/925) was an Islamic thinker who, emulating the example of the Hellenistic physician and philosopher Galen (d. *c*. 216 CE), became competent first in medicine and then in philosophy to the extent that he earned the title "the Galen of the Arabs." Like Galen, he reflected his experience in the experimental field to his views on metaphysics and natural philosophy and was therefore accused of deism (heresy). In his work *al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī* (*Spiritual Medicine*), in which he interpreted ethics as "the treatment of the soul," he presented an ethical thought that focused on the treatment of vices. His thoughts on the fear of death and grief in this work contain the manifestations of his Epicurean understanding of pleasure, and in this respect, it represents a different approach to the issue of death among the schools of Islamic thought.

Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī (d. 322/933–4) is one of the leading figures who systematized the theological views of the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿism. He made great efforts to spread the Ismāʿīlī cause, especially through his activities in the region of Ray. In his work *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa* (*The Sings of Prophethood*), he aimed to show the necessity of prophethood and the inadequacy of reason in obtaining the truth against the philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925).

Al-Ālūsī (d. 1270/1854) is an exegete known for his exegesis *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* (*The Spirit of Meanings*). Although *Rūḥ al-maʿānī* is often perceived as one of the important texts of allusive (*ishārī*) exegesis, al-Ālūsī's main contribution to the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān with this exegesis is his powerful summarization of the commentary-supercommentary (*sharḥ-ḥāshiya*) literature. The issues that we encounter in approximately 80 supercommentaries on *al-Kashshāf* (*The Revealer*) and 400 supercommentaries on *Anwār al-tanzīl* (*The Lights of Revelation*), the majority of which were written during the Ottoman period, were largely revised by al-Ālūsī on the axis of rhetoric and subjected to a critical evaluation in accordance with his critical approach (*taḥqīq*).

Al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/935–6) was the founder of Ashʿarism. According to tradition, he was a member of the Muʿtazilite school until the age of forty, but later abandoned the approaches of Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī (d. 303/916), one of the leaders of the Baṣrian Muʿtazilites. After this stage, he developed the Sunnī method of theology, and the scholars who followed him established the school of Ashʿarism, named after him. Although dozens of works belonging to different branches of science are attributed to al-Ashʿarī in the sources, today we have only his works on the science of theology. One of his most important works is his history of the sects, *Maqālāt al-islāmiyyīn wa-ikhtilāf al-muṣallīn*

(*Teachings of the Muslims and the Differences of the Worshippers*), in which he conveys the views of the early sects in detail and objectively. In addition, *al-Ibāna ʿan uṣūl al-diyāna* (*Clarification of the Fundamentals of Religion*), which he wrote immediately after leaving the Muʿtazilite school, summarizes the principles of the belief prevalent among Muslims.

Al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013) was a prominent Ashʿarite theologian and Mālikī jurist who lived prior to al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). He was born in Basra and became famous with the title "Qāḍī" because he worked as a *qāḍī* in Baghdād. Sent as an envoy to Byzantium by the Būyīd rulers, he engaged in debates with numerous Christian clergymen, earning their appreciation. Making significant contributions to the development of *Ahl al-sunna* thought in the tenth century, al-Bāqillānī primarily focused on dialectical theology in his scholarly pursuits. He rose to prominence in this field with his works *al-Tamhīd* (*The Clarification of the Principles*), *al-Inṣāf* (*The Moderation*), and *al-Bayān* (*The Explanation*), which explored the subject of miracles. Additionally, he authored works on the history of religions, the science of Qurʾānic interpretation, and the methodology of jurisprudence.

Al-Biqāʿī (d. 885/1480) is mostly known for his works in the field of the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān. But he is also known for his criticisms of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. 632/1235), and al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111). Al-Biqāʿī's exegetical works on the relationship between the verses and *sūra*s of the Qurʾān are particularly prominent. Al-Biqāʿī's contribution to this field has been in the form of inheriting and enriching this literature through Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210). In this respect, al-Biqāʿī and his exegesis have become the focus of more attention in the contemporary period with the increasing interest in the Qurʾānic inimitability (*iʿjāz*), versification, and correspondence.

Bursawī (d. 1137/1725) was a Sufi writer who adhered to the conceptual accumulation that developed within the framework of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) after Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) and to the institutional continuity after the thirteenth century, when the *pīr* (elders) of the *ṭarīqa*, Sufi order, showed founding activity. In terms of the interpretation of the Sufi memory shaped in the Ottoman period, he gave examples of all types of related literature and treated different styles and teachings in his works. The encyclopedic sum which he put forward in his exegesis *Rūḥ al-bayān* (*The Spirit of Explanation*), his encompassing comments inside the commentary he wrote on *Mathnawī* (*Rhyming Couplets*), and the systematical approach of *Faraḥ al-rūḥ* (*The Contentment of the Spirit*) which he wrote as a commentary on *Muḥammadiyya* (*Muhammadan Reality or Things Related to Muhammad*) can be cited among Bursawī's important contributions to the literature as a Sufi commentator.

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) was an Ashʿarite scholar who came to the forefront with his writings on theology, philosophy, the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān, and jurisprudence. He is the first and most influential figure in the history of Islamic thought during the period in which the works and ideas predating al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) underwent reinterpretation, marking a significant transformation in thought and content. Specifically, within the realm of theology, there

was a notable infusion of philosophical influence during this period. From his time onward, almost no issue in philosophy and theology books could be dealt with independently of his views, criticisms, and determinations. This is why, theologians and philosophers after al-Rāzī referred to him with the title of "Imam." With his prominent works on theology, *al-Muḥaṣṣal* (*The Compendium*), *al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya* (*Higher Issues*), *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl* (*Ultimate Points in Justification of Principles*), *Kitāb al-arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*Forty Points Concerning Religious Principles*), *Asās al-taqdīs* (*The Foundation of Declaring God's Transcendence*), and *Lawāmiʿ al-bayyināt* (*Brillant Proofs*), he provided new approaches to theology pertinent to content, organization of content and methodology, and became the source of an approach that would later be known as the "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī school."

Al-Fārābī (Alpharabius, Alfarabius, or Avennasar) (d. 339/950) was the founder of the Peripatetic school in the Islamic philosophical tradition and the first great systematic philosopher of his period. He was the author of pioneering ideas in Islamic thought, particularly in the domains of logic, ethics, and politics. His works involved a reinterpretation of the ideas of Plato and Aristotle, contributing significantly to the intellectual landscape of Islamic philosophy. After Aristotle, who was described as "*al-Muʿallim al-awwal*" (the first teacher/master), he was nicknamed "*al-Muʿallim al-thānī*" (the second teacher/master) especially because of his contributions to logic. His theory of prophethood, which he put forward regarding the conception of religion, was followed by many Islamic thinkers after him and formed a perspective unique to the Islamic philosophical tradition. With his theory of "*milla*" (religion) in *Kitāb al-ḥurūf* (*The Book of Letters*) and *Kitāb al-milla* (*The Book of Religion*), he presented a unique approach to the political and social function of religion. In his *Kitāb ārāʾ ahl al-madīna al-fāḍila* (*Al-Farabi, on the Perfect State*, or *The Opinions of the People of the Perfect City*), he not only presented an ideal state but also addressed many of the issues related to God and the world that are currently studied within the discipline of philosophy of religion with his pioneering ideas.

Al-Fazārī (d. 190/806) was one of the leading scholars of the Ibāḍīs in Kūfa. Although his exact date of birth is unknown, he lived in the second/eighth century and died in 190/806 in Yemen. It is reported that he and the Shīʿite theologian Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam (d. 179/795) were business partners, with him instructing Ibāḍī students while Hishām ibn al-Ḥakam taught Shīʿite students in their shop. Shortly after Hārūn al-Rashīd acceded to the throne, he migrated from Kūfa to Baghdād at the invitation of the Vizier Yaḥyā ibn Khālid al-Barmakī and participated in the debates organized by the Vizier in the palace. Due to the investigations launched by Hārūn al-Rashīd against some theologians in Baghdād in 179/795, al-Fazārī had to migrate to Yaman, where there was an Ibāḍī community. In the following period, a group of Ibāḍīs called "Nukkār" (disbelievers) followed him in the faith. Ibn Ḥajar claims that the Ibāḍīs derived their sect from him, while Ibn Ḥazm considered his followers to be the closest branch of the Khārijīs to *Ahl al-sunna*. Six of his treatises (*Kitāb al-qadar* [*The Book of Predetermination*], *Kitāb fī al-radd ʿalā Ibn ʿUmayr* [*The Book on Refutation of Ibn ʿUmayr*], *Kitāb al-radd ʿalā al-Mujassima* [*The Book of Refutation of the Corporalists*], *Kitāb al-futyā* [*The Book of Legal Opinion*], *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* [*The Book of Monotheism*], *Kitāb man rajaʿa an ʿilmihi wa-fāraqa al-Nabī wa-huwa ʿalā dīnihi* [*The Book*

about *Whoever Reneges on His Knowledge and Departs from the Prophet while Remaining in His Religion*]), discovered in manuscript copies in a private library in 2003, have been published under the title *Early Ibadi Theology: Six Kalām Texts by ʿAbdallāh b. Yazīd al-Fazārī*.

Al-Ghazālī (**Algazelus or Algazel**) (d. 505/1111), even though he was an Ashʿarite theologian and Shāfiʿī jurist, is better known in the history of Islamic thought for his criticism of philosophy and Baṭinīyya and his relationship with Sufism. In his autobiographical work *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl wa-l-mufṣiḥ bi-l-aḥwāl* (*Deliverance from Error*), he described in detail his search for the truth between theology, philosophy, esotericism, and Sufism. In this quest, al-Ghazālī found theology inadequate as a remedy for his own troubles and argued that the "innocent imām," which is the central conception of the truth of Baṭinīyya, was incompatible with the basic principles of Islam. In his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* (*The Incoherence of the Philosophers*), which he wrote to criticize the Peripatetic philosophy embodied in the philosophy of Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), he revealed the inconsistencies in the teachings of philosophers within the framework on twenty issues and claimed that philosophers went beyond the boundaries of religion due to three of these issues (the eternity of the universe, God's ignorance of particulars, and the afterlife would only be spiritual). In Sufism, the last stop of his search for truth, al-Ghazālī found the balanced attitude he wanted to establish between faith, knowledge, and practice. He thought that the problem of "soullessness" experienced by the religious sciences could only be solved through Sufism and outlined its general framework in his masterpiece *Iḥyāʾu ʿulūm al-dīn* (*The Revival of the Religious Sciences*).

Ibn Ḥazm (d. 456/1064) was an important representative of the Ẓāhirī school of jurisprudence in Andalusia and produced important works in various fields, such as language, literature, and history of religions. Ibn Ḥazm, acknowledging both a natural-rational and a religious-spiritual source for knowledge, analyzed the perspectives of philosophers and theologians on this matter. In his *Risālat marātib al-ʿulūm* (*A Treatise on the Hierarchy of Sciences*), he emphasized the importance of rational sciences, especially linguistics and logic, in understanding religious texts while confirming the superiority of religious sciences. In his *Kitāb al-fiṣal fī al-milal wa-l-ahwāʾ wa-l-niḥal* (*Book of Critical Examination of Religions, Opinions and Creeds*), he evaluated the views of various religions, and within Islam, the views of various theological schools and philosophers on metaphysical issues such as the existence of God, the creation of the universe, human freedom, and moral virtues. According to Ibn Ḥazm, the sources of the rulings that form the basis of a Muslim's beliefs and behaviors are the texts of religion and the consensus of the community, as well as the necessary knowledge derived from the senses and reason. In terms of how to understand the Qurʾānic texts, Ibn Ḥazm argued that the literal meaning of the text should be taken as the basis and that analogy (*qiyās*) is invalid.

Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) was a historian and philosopher who lived in the classical period of Islamic philosophy. Ibn Miskawayh, who wrote a comprehensive work of history titled *Tajārib al-umam wa-taʿāqib al-himam* (*Experiences of Nations and Continuity of Endeavors*), came to the forefront of the philosophical tradition with his writings on metaphysics and ethics. The metaphysical views he presented in his *al-Fawz al-aṣghar* (*The Greatest Victory*) focus on the proof

of God and the relationship between God and the universe. Ibn Miskawayh's most famous work is undoubtedly his work on ethics, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, in which he displays an eclectic approach that shows that he takes into consideration not only the views of Plato (d. 347 BC) and Aristotle (d. 322 BC) but also Stoic, Galenic, and Neo-Platonic views. He dealt with the theoretical aspect of ethics in this work and its practical aspect in *al-Ḥikma al-khālida* (*Book of the Eternal Wisdom*), in which he narrated Indian, Persian, Greek, and Arabic wisdom, thus showing that he had the idea of eternal wisdom, which is the understanding that common wisdom can emerge in different cultures at different periods. Ibn Miskawayh also wrote short treatises focusing on topics such as death, pleasure, justice, and reason.

Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 595/1198) was the last great figure of the Islamic philosophical tradition in Andalusia and a prominent Mālikī jurist. His voluminous commentaries on the works of Aristotle (d. 322 BC) were instrumental in introducing the Latin world to the Aristotelian corpus through their Hebrew and Latin translations, and in earning him the reputation of "the great commentator." His admiration for Aristotle and his desire to understand and explain his philosophy in its original form led Ibn Rushd to adopt a critical attitude toward his predecessors' interpretations of Aristotle. Ibn Rushd, who responded to al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) criticisms of Islamic philosophers with his work *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut* (*The Incoherence of the Incoherence*), analyzed the relationship between religion and philosophy independently in his work *Faṣl al-maqāl fī taqrīr mā bayna al-sharīʿa wa-l-ḥikma min al-ittiṣāl* (*On the Harmony of Religion and Philosophy*) and showed the inconsistency of Ashʿarite theology's methods of justifying Islamic beliefs in general in his *al-Kashf ʿan manāhij al-adilla fī ʿaqāʾid al-milla* (*Exposition of the Methods of Proof Concerning Religious Creeds*).

Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 428/1037) was a physician and philosopher whose profound impact extended to both the Islamic and Latin worlds. In his comprehensive philosophical encyclopedic works, exemplified by his magnum opus *al-Shifāʾ* (*The Book of Healing*), he adeptly presented the philosophical and scientific knowledge of his time to readers through innovative classifications, conceptualizations, and analyses. His views on the relationship between God and the universe, God's attributes, and the afterlife led him to be accused of blasphemy by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) under the name of *falāsifa*. On the other hand, his distinction between existence and essence, his classification of existence based on the concepts of necessary and contingent, his thought experiment on the soul as being a spiritual substance, the various arguments he developed to demonstrate God's existence, the inevitability of evil in this world, and the necessity of divine perfection for the creation of the world have continued to be adapted and used at various levels by thinkers from different traditions, especially by al-Ghazālī, who criticized him severely.

Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) was a Salafist scholar and *mujtahid* whose views and criticisms influenced the development of Islamic thought. He endeavored to reconstruct the theological tradition of the *aṣḥāb al-ḥadīth* (the people of tradition) through his extensive scholarly knowledge and thought. His goal was to establish it as a viable alternative to other influential traditions like theology and philosophy, leading him to initiate a substantial critique in this direction. As reflected in his voluminous and diverse works, he was not merely a scholar of tradition, jurist, or expert in

Islamic creed (*ʿaqāʾid*), but also a thinker well-versed in the history of Islamic thought. He engaged with his contemporary issues and made notable contributions to these discussions. Among his more than fifty works in the field of theology are *al-ʿAqīda al-Wāṣiṭiyya* (*The Creed Dedicated to al- al-Wāṣiṭī*), *Minhāj al-sunna al-nabawiyya* (*The Way the Prophetic Tradition*), *Muwāfaqat ṣarīḥ al-maʿqūl li-ṣaḥīḥ al-manqūl* (*Darʾ taʿāruḍ al-ʿaql wa-l-naql*) (*The Conformity between the Demonstrative Truths and Reliable Traditions*), *al-ʿAqīda al-Ḥamawiyya* (*The Creed for the People of Hama*), *al-Risāla al-Tadmuriyya* (*The Creed of Palmyra*, or *Tadmuriyya Creed*), and *Iqtiḍāʾ al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm* (*Requisites of the Straight Path*).

Ibn Ṭufayl (**Abubacer Aben Tofail**) (d. 581/1185) was an Andalusian physician and philosopher known for his critical approach to the preceding tradition of Islamic philosophy. In contrast to the Peripatetic tradition, which followed Aristotelian philosophy and centered on theoretical thought along the lines of pure logic, he tried to draw the framework of the Illuminationist tradition (*mashriqī*) that included spiritual experience and competence. His work *Ḥayy ibn Yaqẓān* (*The Living Son of the Awake*), written within this framework, became famous as an island story that questions the possibilities of the ascent of the simple mind from the physical world to the metaphysical realm. In this work, he also vividly portrayed the nature of religion and different conceptions of religion. Ibn Ṭufayl thereby pointed toward a new understanding of philosophy that expanded the Peripatetic tradition, reaching its peak with Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037), by incorporating spiritual experience. This marked the precursor of the Illuminationist tradition.

Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) is a central and decisive figure in the history of Sufi thought in every aspect. He pioneered the formation of the theory of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), which has become synonymous with his name, and the formation of a school (Akbarism) around this theory, which includes a very large community of Sufi thinkers in the history of Islamic thought. With Ibn al-ʿArabī, the Sufi thought internalized many new concepts and contents. A prolific writer, Ibn al-ʿArabī elaborated his teachings on knowledge and existence, prophethood and sainthood, ethics and politics in his encyclopedic works *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (*The Meccan Revelations*) and *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*The Ringstones of Wisdom*).

Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201) was a Ḥanbalī scholar who wrote many works in almost every field of Islamic sciences such as history, biographical literature, jurisprudence, prophetic traditions, the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān and the principles of faith and was also prominent in philosophy and linguistic sciences. In his most voluminous work in the field of the principles of faith, *Talbīs Iblīs* (*The Devil's Deception*), he criticized the understanding of some Islamic groups, especially Sufis, in terms of the fundamentals of religion (*uṣūl al-dīn*). He displayed a tendency toward rationalism in the fundamentalist-rationalist divisions, struggles, and debates seen within Ḥanbalism, and although he criticized the theologians on the one hand, he adopted the theological method in general terms. He wrote *Kitāb akhbār al-ṣifāt* (*Book of Reports on the Divine Properties*) or *Dafʿu shubhat al-tashbīh* (*Elimination of the Doubts of Anthropomorphism*) with the aim of refuting Ibn Ḥāmid (d. 403/1012), Abū Yaʿlā al-Farrāʾ (d. 458/1066), and his jurisprudence teacher Ibn al-Zāġūnī (d. 527/1132), whom he explicitly mentioned by their names. He claimed that they

put forward inappropriate views on the principles of religion and authored works that brought disgrace to their school. According to him, these scholars had lowered themselves to the level of the common people by attributing attributes to meanings perceived by the senses. Due to his rationalist and theological stance, Abū al-Faḍl al-ʿAlthī (d. 634/1236–7) accused him in a treatise of forsaking the views of his earlier years, which he had defended, and adopting rationalism, *ijtihad*, and interpretation (*taʾwīl*). Al-ʿAlthī alleged that he turned to theological forms of argumentation and went as far as labeling him a "secret Muʿtazilite."

Ibn al-Malāḥimī (d. 536/1141) was the last great Muʿtazilite theologian in the Khwārazm region, which is considered to be the stronghold of the late Muʿtazilism that did not mix with Shīʿism. He represented the Ḥusayniyya school against the Bahshamiyya school, especially on fundamental theological issues such as the relationship between essence and attributes, will, human actions, prophethood, and resurrection in the afterlife. In *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*The Reliable Book on the Fundamentals of the Religion*), which is recorded to have been written in four volumes but has survived incompletely, Ibn al-Malāḥimī dealt with the views of the Ḥusayniyya school in a comprehensive manner and summarized *al-Muʿtamad* in *Kitāb al-fāʾiq fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*The Book of Excellence on the Fundamental Principles of Religion*). In *Tuḥfat al-mutakallimīn fī al-radd ʿalā al-falāsifa* (*A Gift for the Theologians in Refutation of the Philosophers*), which he wrote about a quarter of a century after al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, the first refutation of Peripatetic philosophy, and the only known work in this field in Muʿtazilite thought, he criticized Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) in particular and characterized philosophical thought as blasphemy. In *al-Tajrīd fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (*Abridgement of the Principles of Islamic Law*), Ibn al-Malāḥimī summarized Abū al-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī's (d. 436/1044) *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-fiqh* (*The Reliable Book on the Fundamentals of the Islamic Law*). There are also two other works attributed to Ibn al-Malāḥimī, namely *Jawāb al-masāʾil al-Iṣfahāniyya* (*A Response to Iṣfahān Discussions*) and *Kitāb al-ḥudūd* (*The Book of Definitions*).

Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ was a philosophical community that emerged in Basra in the sixth/tenth century. The full name of the community is "Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ wa-khullān al-wafāʾ" (Brothers of purity and friends of loyalty). *Rasāʾil Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ* (*Encyclopedia of the Brethren of Purity*), which consists of fifty-one treatises, and its summary, *al-Risāla al-jāmiʿa*, are the primary sources for determining the views of the Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ. The members of the community and the authors of the treatises are said to be five people, including Zayd ibn Rifāʿa, Abū Sulaymān Muḥammad ibn Maʿshar al-Bustī al-Maqdisī (al-Muqaddasī), Abū al-Ḥasan ʿAlī b. Hārūn al-Zanjānī, Abū Aḥmad al-Mihrijānī, and al-ʿAwfī. The treatises are encyclopedic in nature, ranging from religion to cosmology, psychology, mathematics, astronomy, and metaphysics. The authors, who apparently had a Shīʿite orientation, argued that religion had been polluted by ignorance and thought that this could only be overcome through philosophy. It is noteworthy that the teachings of Ikhwān al-ṣafāʾ, in addition to Aristotelian elements, also include Pythagorean and Platonic elements, and that they made a special effort to associate religious teachings and concepts with the philosophical tradition.

Al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) was one of the most prominent representatives of the Baṣrian Muʿtazilite theology and also distinguished himself with his works in Arabic literature. Living in a vibrant intellectual environment during the Abbasid period, al-Jāḥiẓ was summoned to Baghdād by al-Maʾmūn (d. 218/833), where he wrote important works under the patronage of statesmen. In addition, al-Jāḥiẓ benefited from the translation movements that gained momentum in this period and developed his theological thought with the contribution of Greek philosophy and ancient cultures. The primary masterpiece of al-Jāḥiẓ, celebrated for both his literary prowess and style, is *Kitāb al-ḥayawān* (*The Book of the Animal*), primarily dedicated to the field of zoology. Additionally, he authored numerous treatises on theology and the history of sects, with a special emphasis on *al-ʿUthmāniyya* (*Supporters of ʿUthman*). Al-Jāḥiẓ further contributed to various works encompassing language, literature, and ethics. Al-Jāḥiẓ, who was also notable for references to his physical characteristics and ethics, stands as one of the most important thinkers from the golden age of Islamic thought, with his works enduring to the present day.

Al-Jīlī (d. 832/1428) is one of the prolific authors of the theoretical expansion after Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240) in the history of Sufism, best known for his work *al-Insān al-kāmil* (*The Perfect Man*). The point of departure of his collection, which on the one hand organizes and annotates Ibn al-ʿArabī's legacy and on the other hand claims to modify and criticize him in some details of metaphysical issues, is "sainthood" (*wilāya*) and "true nature of Muḥammad" (*ḥaqīqāt Muḥammadiyya*) within the context of divine names and their manifestations. Al-Jīlī, who uses poetry extensively as a stylistic feature in his works, has also produced texts that attempt to establish a connection between the belief structures in the world and the ways in which the truth manifests itself in human beings. Moreover, in this respect, he has contributed to the theoretical extensions of Sufi literature.

Al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085) was an important Ashʿarite theologian and Shāfiʿī jurist who was also al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) teacher. He had to reside in the Hijaz region for a period during the reign of the Great Seljuk vizier al-Kundurī due to the tribulation (*miḥna*) experienced by the Ashʿarites. Consequently, he became known as "Imām al-Ḥaramayn." Al-Juwaynī played a pivotal role in popularizing the Ashʿarite school of thought in and around Nīshāpūr. Following the death of Tughril Beg (d. 455/1063), when Alp Arslan (d. 465/1072) ascended to power, he served as a professor (*mudarris*) in the madrasa built for him, training numerous students. Particularly recognized for his contributions to theology and jurisprudence, al-Juwaynī's works, including *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn* (*Summa on the Principles of Religion*), *al-ʿAqīda al-Niẓāmiyya* (*The Niẓāmī Creed*), and *Kitāb al-irshād* (*A Guide to Conclusive Proofs*), are foundational texts for the *Ahl al-sunna* faith in the realm of theology. In the field of jurisprudence methodology, his works *al-Burhān* (*The Proof*) and *al-Waraqāt* (*A Short Introduction*) are considered among the most significant.

Al-Kirmānī (d. after 411/1020) was one of the leading missionaries (*dāʿī*) of the Ismāʿīlī branch of Shīʿism. He was highly respected during the reign of the Fāṭimid Caliph al-Ḥākim bi-Amr Allāh and played an influential role in establishing the official view of the Fāṭimid call on leadership (*imāma*) and preventing extremist interpretations. Among the works he wrote to explain the Ismāʿīlī doctrine, *Rāḥat al-ʿaql* (*Peace of Mind*) stands out with its Neo-Platonist elements.

Al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) was the founder of the Māturīdī school of thought, one of the two important branches of the *Ahl al-sunna*, and a scholar known for his works in the fields of theology, jurisprudence, and the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān. Born in the town of Māturīd in Samarqand, al-Māturīdī became a student of Abū Ḥanīfa's (d. 150/767) disciples who came to this region at a time when the political authority of the Abbāsids had weakened considerably. Al-Māturīdī criticized various currents that had spread into the region, especially the Muʿtazilites, from a Sunnī perspective and became the pioneer of an important school of thought due to his ideas and method. His most important works that have survived to the present day are his extensive Qurʾānic exegesis titled *Taʾwīlāt al-Qurʾān* (*Interpretations of the Qurʾān*) and *Kitāb al-tawḥīd* (*Book of Monotheism*), which is one of the most important texts of Māturīdī theology. His works on the history of sects and the methodology of jurisprudence have survived only through indirect references.

Al-Nāblusī (d. 1143/1731) was a multifaceted Sufi who wrote nearly three hundred works on different subjects with differing volumes. He was also a jurist, theologian, commentator, and scholar of prophetic traditions. In addition to his commentaries on Ibn al-ʿArabī's (d. 638/1240) *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's (d. 632/1235) *Dīwān*, and ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī's (d. 832/1428) *al-Insān al-kāmil*, he distinguished himself through his handling of controversial theoretical and practical issues within Sufism. He contributed to the theoretical debates that developed within the framework of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*) with his work *al-Wujūd al-ḥaqq* (*The Real Existence*), which deals with the theological-philosophical aspects of the subject. He also authored a series of works in response to criticisms of Sufi practices. Notably, his *al-ʿUqūd al-luʾluiyya* (*Pearl-Necklaces*) stands out as an exemplary work in which he defended the *Mawlawī samāʿ* (sacred dance or ritual) and addressed *Mawlawī etiquette*.

Al-Nasafī (d. 508/1115) was an important theologian who explained the views of al-Māturīdī (d. 333/944) and systematized the school of thought he founded. In this respect, he is regarded as the second founder of the Māturīdī school of thought. Belonging to a family of famous religious scholars, al-Nasafī lived in Samarqand and Bukhārā and was educated by Ḥanafī-Māturīdī scholars. He is known for being the teacher of important scholars such as Najm al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Nasafī (d. 537/1142), who was famous for his treatise on ʿAqāʾid, and ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Samarqandī (d. 539/1144). In addition to theology, he also made significant contributions to Ḥanafī jurisprudence and the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān. His most important work is *Tabṣirat al-adilla* (*Clarifying the Evidence*), which deals with Māturīdī theology in detail. His works *al-Tamhīd* (*The Clarification of the Principles*) and *Baḥr al-kalām* (*Ocean of Discussions*) are the summaries of *Tabṣira*.

Najm al-Dīn Rāzī (also known as Dāya) (d. 654/1256) is recognized as one of the prominent Sufi writers who came to the forefront with his writings on the accumulated knowledge transferred from Baghdād and Khorasān basins to Anatolia in the thirteenth century when Sufi activities came to the fore with institutional features characterized by the tariqas. Najm al-Dīn Rāzī's detailed and reasoned treatment of the Sufi attitude, molded under the guidance of Najm al-Dīn Kubrā

(d. 618/1221), the founder of a Sufi order, along with its theoretical and practical extensions and consequences, significantly expanded Rāzī's sphere of influence in his own century. Furthermore, his continuous production of writings in both Arabic and Persian, mutually supporting each other, contributed to the broader impact of his ideas. Rāzī's collection of works, particularly his work *Mirṣād al-ʿibād* (*The Path of God's Bondsmen*), holds significant representational power in terms of encapsulating the underlying principles central to the cognitive and ethical transformation of human beings associated with Sufism. This influence can be traced through the following centuries.

Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār (d. 416/1025) was a late Muʿtazilite theologian and Shāfiʿī jurist. He also wrote works in the fields of the sciences of interpretation of the Qurʾān, prophetic traditions, and the history of religions. As the leader of the Basra school during his lifetime, Qāḍī ensured the continuation of the Muʿtazilite tradition by compiling and systematizing all the accumulated knowledge of the sects before him. His twenty-volume encyclopedic theological work *al-Mughnī* (*Plenitude*) is considered to be the most important Muʿtazilite source that has survived to the present day because it contains both the ideas of the Basra school to which Qāḍī belonged, the different opinions within the Muʿtazila, and the opinions of other schools of theology. Although Qāḍī ʿAbd al-Jabbār adhered to Muʿtazilite principles and the line of Abū Hāshim al-Jubbaʾī (d. 321/933), he tried to soften some of the school's views to a more moderate line in order to correct the image of the Muʿtazilites that was damaged after the *miḥna* (ordeal). Through the students he trained, his ideas continued to be influential both within the school and in Shīʿī/Zaydī circles.

Al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350) is recognized as one of the important commentators of the Akbarī school. He studied *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* in Tabrīz with ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736/1335) and wrote a commentary on *Fuṣūṣ* entitled *Matlaʿ khuṣūṣ al-kilam fī maʿānī Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (*The Origin of the Character of the Speech in the Meanings of the "Ringstones of Wisdom"*). His *Muqaddamāt* (*Presuppositions*), a summary presentation of the basic propositions of the Akbarī school's understanding of existence and knowledge, which precedes the commentary, is an influential text in the related literature. Interpreting Ibn al-Fāriḍ's (d. 632/1235) *al-Tāʾiyya* (*The Poem That Is Rhyming in "Ṭ"*) and *al-Mīmiyya* (*The Poem That Is Rhyming in "Mīm"*) odes with content along the lines of Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), al-Qayṣarī discussed the reality and nature of time in *Nihāyat al-bayān fī dirāyat al-zamān* (*The Utmost Elucidation Concerning Knowledge of Time*) from a philosophical-Sufi perspective. He also served as a professor (*mudarris*) in the first madrasa built after the conquest of Nicaea by Orhan Gazi.

Al-Qiyā al-Harrāsī (d. 504/1110), known for his unwavering adherence to the Shāfiʿī school of jurisprudence, authored one of the most incisive and powerful texts in the literature of *Aḥkām al-Qurʾān* (*The Rules of al-Qurʾān*). His aim was to defend the views of al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) against various approaches within the Shāfiʿī school itself, as well as the legal decisions of other schools of jurisprudence in this exegesis. In this context, he intricately presented the foundations of Shāfiʿī jurisprudence in the field of the science of interpreting the Qurʾān. However, al-Harrāsī's work is distinguished by its linguistic and procedural analysis that goes beyond this framework.

Al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274) is one of the pioneering Sufis who contributed to the construction of Sufism into a theoretical structure. Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), to whom he was a direct student, played a major role in shaping his thoughts. He read many of Ibn al-ʿArabī's works directly from him, especially *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*. Important representatives of the Akbarī school such as Muʾayyad al-Dīn al-Jandī (d. *c.* 691/1292), Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300), and ʿAfīf al-Dīn al-Tilimsānī (d. 690/1291) were in the study circle of al-Qūnawī. Constructing Sufism as a metaphysics (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*), al-Qūnawī elaborated on this perspective in his works *Miftāḥ al-ghayb* (*The Key to the Hidden*) and *Iʿjāz al-bayān* (*The Inimitability of Expression*) and dwelt on the problems of Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428/1037) philosophy in *al-Murāsalāt* (*The Correspondence*), a collection of his correspondence with Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 672/1274).

Al-Rāghib al-Isfahānī (d. early fifth/eleventh century) was a thinker known for his works in the fields of the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān, Arabic language, and ethics. Despite the wide influence of his works, little is known about his life. His alphabetical dictionary of the Qurʾān, *al-Mufradāt* (*The Dictionary*), is his most widespread work. His exegesis, the entirety of which has not survived to the present day, and his introduction to this work on the methodology of the science of interpretation of the Qurʾān are noteworthy. In his *al-Iʿtiqādāt* (*The Creeds*), he examines theological issues using the philosophical tradition. His ethical work, *al-Dharīʿa ilā makārim al-sharīʿa* (*The Means to the Noble Virtues of the Revealed Law*) and *Tafṣīl al-nashʾatayn wa-taḥṣīl al-saʿādatayn* (*Elucidation of the Kinds of Life and Two Kinds of Happiness*), was a source, particularly for al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) and had a widespread influence.

Ṣaffār al-Qummī (d. 290/903) was an early Shīʿite scholar of *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence who lived during the reigns of the tenth Imām ʿAlī al-Hādī, the eleventh Imām Ḥasan al-ʿAskarī, and the period of occultation (*ghayba*) that began with al-ʿAskarī's death and died in Qum in 290/903. Although more than thirty of his works are mentioned in bio-bibliographical sources, only his *Baṣaʾir al-darajāt* (*Discrimination of Levels*) has survived. This work consists of ten chapters and a narration of 1881 prophetic traditions with repetitions. Although this work is the oldest systematic source of the collection of *ḥadīth* narrations that form the Imāmiyya Shīʿa's understanding of leadership (*imāma*) and the intellectual foundations of Twelver Shīʿism in the early periods, it has not received the expected attention in the "Imāmī" circles.

Al-Shahrastānī (d. 548/1153) lived during the Seljuk period and was a theologian and historian of religions and sects. He taught at the Niẓāmiyya Madrasa. Although he is generally accepted as a Sunnite-Ashʿarite theologian in the classical world, the view that al-Shahrastānī was an Ismāʾīlī theologian who concealed his true views predominates among modern historians of theology. His works in the field of theology and the history of religions and sects are quite remarkable. In his work *Nihāyat al-iqdām fī ʿilm al-kalām* (*The End of Steps in the Science of Theology*), he compared and evaluated the views of theologians and philosophers on issues such as the creation of the universe, the unity of God, and divine attributes. In his book *Muṣāraʿat al-falāsifa* (*The Struggle with Philosophers*), which he wrote to criticize Ibn Sīnā's views, he examined Ibn Sīnā's distinction between existence and essence and his conceptualization of necessary existence. Al-Shahrastānī

attempted to show that Ibn Sīnā's understanding of God as an essentially necessary being was contradictory.

Al-Shāṭibī (d. 790/1388) was a Mālikī jurist and linguist who lived in Granada, Andalusia. He wrote important works on the methodology of jurisprudence, *ḥadīth*, and Arabic grammar. His *al-Iʿtiṣām*, on the theme of adherence to the *sunna* and abstaining from innovations, is among the most widely read texts of this genre. He wrote a commentary on Ibn Mālik al-Ṭāʾī's (d. 672/1274) poetic work on Arabic grammar known as *al-Alfiyya* under the title *al-Maqāṣid al-shāfiya* (*Satisfactory Purposes*), in which he explained the main purposes (*maqāṣid*) of the Arabic language in light of Ibn Mālik's views. Al-Shāṭibī's most important work that earned him his main fame is *al-Muwāfaqāt* (*The Reconciliation of the Fundamentals of Islamic Law*). Although this work is a text about the methodology of jurisprudence, unlike other works in the field, it focuses on the principles and foundations of religious rulings and the main purposes of religion (*maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*). *Al-Muwāfaqāt* contributed significantly to the deepening of the idea of welfare (*maslaḥa*) in Islamic jurisprudence and thus gained a distinct position in the literature of methodology. Al-Shāṭibī strengthened the *maqāṣid*-based writing that had been developing for some time. Although the book did not attract much attention in the classical period, its readership increased in the modern period when the search for new ijtihad accelerated, and methodological debates increased. The book, which has become one of the central texts of contemporary Islamic jurists, is frequently cited in the context of the evaluation of jurisprudential rulings based on the idea of welfare and paving the way for contemporary interpretations.

Al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) is considered the founding imām of one of the four major Sunnī schools of jurisprudence. He was born in Gaza, spent his early years of education in Mecca, studied under Imām Mālik (d. 179/795) in Medina for many years, then traveled to Yemen and Iraq, met Ḥanafīs and other scholars, and lived his last years in Egypt. Al-Shāfiʿī criticized certain aspects of jurisprudential formations such as Mālikism, which was built on the practice of the people of Medina (ʿamal ahl al-Madīna), and Ḥanafism, which came into existence with the systematization of the jurisprudence of legal decisions (*fiqh al-raʾy*) and proposed a new understanding of jurisprudence in line with his own views. He presented the principles of this understanding in his book *al-Risāla* (*The Treatise on the Foundations of Islamic Jurisprudence*), which is recognized as the founding text of the methodology of jurisprudence and represents a serious turning point in Islamic legal thought. Al-Shāfiʿī conveyed his views on jurisprudence in various texts, and the collection of these texts compiled by his students and followers is known as *al-Umm*. His other works on various topics of the methodology of jurisprudence, such as prophetic traditions, practice (ʿamal), consensus (*ijmāʿ*), analogy (*qiyās*), and juristic preference (*istiḥsān*), are also included in this collection. Al-Shāfiʿī influenced his opponents as well as his followers in many ways, and his works are considered among the sources that shaped the science of prophetic traditions as well as jurisprudence.

Preface

In this work, we have gathered texts authored by individuals from the classical period of Islamic intellectual traditions. The texts address the fundamental issues discussed in the philosophy of religion. We have tried to present their theories and explanations in a manner accessible to individuals living in contemporary cultural settings, enabling them to consider these in their search for truth regarding philosophical-religious questions. The works, ideas, and theories produced by the members of different scholarly disciplines, which were developed during the classical period of medieval Islamic thought, are usually treated within the confines of a specific discipline and from a historical perspective. While this kind of work is undoubtedly important, examining those works simply from a disciplinary and historical perspective makes it difficult to see their connection to theories produced by members of different disciplines. Similarly, evaluating these works solely from a historical perspective diminishes their benefit to contemporary students and individuals contemplating philosophical and religious problems discussed in our time. In this anthology, we have endeavored to compile texts featuring discussions aimed at understanding and interpreting religious beliefs. These texts were selected on the basis of two criteria: their relation to the philosophy of religion and their representation of major trends in medieval Islamic thought. By adopting this approach, our intention was to assemble the ideas of Muslim thinkers from the classical period in a way that can be easily related to contemporary discussions in the philosophy of religion.

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Rahim Acar
M. Cüneyt Kaya

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