

Mehmet Sami Baga. *İslam Felsefesinde Cisim Teorisi: Hikmetü'l-Ayn Geleneği* [Body Theory in Islamic Philosophy: The Tradition of Hikmat al-'ayn]. Istanbul: ISAM Yayınları, 2020. 360 pages. ISBN: 9786257672009.

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Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) should be credited as the leading figure of Islam's late classical period covering the 13<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> centuries. While the post-13<sup>th</sup>-century period is sometimes referred to as the post-Ghazālī Era to indicate the changing progress of the debates in *falsafa* and *kalām*, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's works were the ones that deepened al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) critics of both disciplines and reached their epistemological limits within the framework of the *taḥqīq* (verification) method. In recent years, studies both in Turkey and abroad have provided gradually stronger evidence for this conviction. The increase in the problematical and monographic works on the post-13<sup>th</sup>-century are owed to the conclusion that *falsafa* and *kalām* had acquired a new language and method with al-Rāzī and that the process after him was notably different than what had preceded him.

Mehmet Sami Baga's *İslam Felsefesinde Cisim Teorisi: Hikmetü'l-Ayn Geleneği* [Body Theory in Islamic Philosophy: The Tradition of Hikmat al-'ayn] is one such work to that effect and was published in 2020 as part of Türkiye Diyanet Foundation Centre for Islamic Studies' (ISAM) Late Classical Period Project. The study is based on Baga's doctoral dissertation and aims to reveal how body theory has been handled in the context of Najm al-Dīn 'Alī ibn 'Umar al-Kātibī's (d. 675/1277) *Hikmat al-'ayn*, its commentaries, and glosses. Connected to the Avicennian tradition through Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663/1264), al-Kātibī's

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book emerged as an indicator of the theoretical literature and popularization of the methodological framework al-Rāzī had developed. Hence, *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* attempts to construct the most possible demonstrative proof by sorting out the proofs for approaches to the theoretical issues dealt with in *falsafa* and *kalām*. The ambiguity over al-Kātibi's preference resulting from his occasional indicating the weaknesses of a strong proof shows the influence of al-Rāzī's writing style and method.<sup>1</sup> This approach from al-Kātibi points out the limits he had reached concerning the possibility of attaining certain knowledge and thus aims to guide his successors toward what is missing at the next step and what the cruxes are. As a medium-level instructional text, *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* is a concise book representing a certain tradition of dealing with the theoretical issues that led to the production of its commentaries and glosses over time. Baga states that he has taken into account four of the six available commentaries in order to clarify al-Kātibi's approach to body theory. The first two of these are Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli's (d. 726/1325) *Īdāh al-maqqāsid* and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī's (d. 710/1311) *Kitāb al-Fawā'id*, both of whom were al-Kātibi's students. The other two commentaries were written by Ibn Mubārak-Shāh (d. after 784/1382) and Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Tālīshī. Baga writes the importance of al-Ḥilli's commentary to have stemmed from both being the first commentary and its impact on subsequent commentaries. Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjānī's (d. 816/1413) gloss on Ibn Mubārak-Shāh's commentary has also been used as a source in the book, in view of the fact that al-Jurjānī's interpretation of al-Kātibi had been informed by al-Kātibi's commentaries on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's texts. The reason given for the selection of the mentioned commentaries is their distinctness regarding their varying interpretations of body theory and their representative value. One issue that the author should certainly have justified is his reason for examining body theory in the context of *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* and its commentaries. Baga's ultimate justification for this is that body theory relates to many issues in both physics and metaphysics and is an understudied field.<sup>2</sup> In fact, issues like the eternity of the world, the effect the existentiational principle had on the occurrence of physical reality, the beatific vision of God (*ru'yat Allāh*), the possibility of bodily resurrection, and the soul-body relation can only be addressed upon clarifying the approaches of both *falsafa* and *kalām* regarding body theory.

1 Mustakim Arıcı, "Necmeddīn el-Kātibi," *İslam Düşünce Atlası*, ed. İbrahim Halil Üçer (Istanbul: Konya Büyükşehir Belediyesi Yayınları), II, 646.

2 Although *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* and its commentaries are not studied sufficiently in proportion to their significance, the current literature continues to grow. The following article is an example for the evaluation of the post-classical texts in the context of physical theory and the importance of *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*: Jon McGinnis, "Pointers, Guides, Founts and Gifts: The Reception of Avicennan Physics in the East", *Oriens* 41-3/4 (2013): 433-56.

Studies on *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* in the post-Rāzī period gained importance, given the relative scarcity of studies dedicated to physical theories in *falsafa* and *kalām*. In this context, the author divides the book into four parts, in according with the issues al-Kātibī dealt with in body theory. Chapter 1 is “Definition of Body and Its Parts.” It examines the body and other related conceptual clusters and then analyzes the definition of body and its classifications.

Departing from the Aristotelian and Neoplatonist conceptions of the definition of body, Ibn Sinā considered matter and the bodily form as “the causes of quiddity,” and this conceptual scheme had a direct impact on how he defined body. Through the bodily form as “the appropriateness for tridimensionality,” the body is defined as a combination of “the form of contiguity appropriate for assuming three dimensions” and matter. This criticism is aimed at the definition of body as “that which actually has three dimensions” and was developed on the grounds of the existence-quiddity distinction (62). However, al-Rāzī criticized Ibn Sinā by pointing out the problems of the new definition of body, which the latter had complemented and upon which had based the consideration of quiddity. Al-Rāzī argued that it is not a definition providing certain knowledge. According to al-Rāzī, body cannot be defined because its quiddity is conceived self-evidently (*awwali*). This is because human beings requisitely know the body in the external world to be tridimensional, have mass, and occupy space and can therefore distinguish a non-body from a body. Seeking a definition of a thing that is self-evidently known is impossible (71). Baga writes that al-Kātibī did not deal with the definition of body as an issue or furthermore even provide a definition of body in *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*. Although al-Kātibī appeared to follow the Avicennian Peripatetic view, especially when considering the entire book, al-Kātibī was a thinker who had maintained al-Rāzī’s method and way to approach the issues. According to the author, al-Rāzī’s rejection of the possibility of defining body can be said to have led Kātibī to not provide a definition. However, Baga argues that, given al-Kātibī’s rejection of *kalām*’s atomistic (*al-juz’ alladhī lā yatajazzā*) theory of body, attributing the preference of the philosophers’ definition to al-Kātibī is more plausible.

Chapter 2 is titled “Body as a Problem of Metaphysics: The Theory of Substance-Accident and Body.” This chapter is dedicated to the quiddity of body and tackles the substantiality of body and its relation to accident on the basis of the Aristotelian substance-accident distinction. Included in this discussion are the substantiality of matter and form as the basic components of body, the substantiality of body that emerges from the combination of matter and form, and how the quiddity of special form within the framework of *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*. The author traces a series of issues regarding the essential, unchanging meaning

of substance and its carrying of accidents in the Aristotelian and Neoplatonist philosophy within the Avicennian framework as filtered through al-Rāzī's method. Baga says that al-Kātibī had followed Ibn Sinā's proof of matter (*hayūlā*) in terms of argument structure. By combining the proof against atomism and the proof of matter, al-Kātibī emphasized corporeal integrity to not emerge if matter is not accepted. Baga concludes that *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* and its commentaries maintained the understanding of hylomorphic substance, which is based on the quiddity of body as being comprised of matter and form. Discussions about the proof of form are not found in the book, yet the context of this problem is given in connection with the substantiality of form and its relation to matter. Indeed, Baga states al-Kātibī's presentation of the form-matter relation to be in line with the Avicennian explanation, according to which "matter is in need of form for perpetuity, form is in need of matter for constitution," thus making either one the cause of the other's realization (161). Attention also needs to be drawn to the commentators' objections apart from the main structure. Ibn Mubārak-Shāh's objections to the substantiality of special form and his opinion that the relation of special form to matter is identical with the implication of accidents should be evaluated in this context. Baga indicates the source of this radical objection against the Avicennian doctrine on the substantiality of form to have been al-Suhrawardī's critique.

After examining the quiddity of body, its coming into existence is the subject of Chapter 3, "Body from Metaphysics to Physics: Divine Emanation and the Emergence of Body." Baga prefers to approach the subject by separating the issues related to the existence of body and those related to the quiddity of body by following the framework of Ibn Sinā's existence-quiddity distinction. As a matter of fact, Chapter 3 studies the principles al-Kātibī had presented for the theory of emanation and then examines how he had discussed the emergence of body in the supralunar and sublunar realms within the context of the principle of divine emanation and causality. Although the coming of body into existence corresponds to the physical in terms of being in the external world, a corporeal existence cannot be pondered without the principle of existence as conferred by divine emanation. Therefore, the author's choice of the title "Body from Metaphysics to Physics" here is meant to distinguish it from the previous title and may cause confusion about the content of body. Namely, just as the quiddity of body as an issue belongs to metaphysics, the coming of body into existence is likewise an issue of metaphysics, given that it is connected to the existentiatio principle. Here, one can speak of physicality based on metaphysics. Baga also says that body, insofar as it is subject to motion and rest, is examined in physics. Therefore, the existence and quiddity of body are investigated and demonstrated metaphysically. Baga states al-Kātibī

and the commentators to have adopted the explanatory framework of the theory of emanation; and the proofs and the process of argumentation are what they objected to rather than the theory's claims and main propositions. The only exception to this is Ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥilli's objection, which takes into account the *kalām* model for explaining the occurrence of body through the creation of the freely acting God.

"Bodies insofar as they are subject to motion and rest" are investigated in physics. Investigating body insofar as it is subject to motion and rest likewise means investigating the changes body undergoes. In this context, Chapter 4, "Natural Bodies as the Subject of Natural Philosophy," addresses the issues directly related to body within the science of physics. However, the author states that the issues related to the quiddity and structure of body as mentioned in *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*'s chapter on metaphysics are treated once again and in more detail in the chapter on physics. For this reason, Chapter 4 is initially based on a context that draws attention to the discussions on the structure of the natural body. The reason behind the author's preference is to follow *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*'s ordering of subjects. Nonetheless, due to the proofs discussed here being rather related to the quiddity and structure of body, addressing them in Chapter 2 would be preferable for an easier read. This chapter examines the conception of body in the Avicenna Peripatetic theory as "the contiguous substance, potentially infinitely dividable and composed of the unity of matter and form" based on the *kalām* atomist understanding of body and the critique of its arguments. According to Baga, body as "the potentially infinitely dividable contiguous substance," as inherited most maturely from the legacy of Ibn Sinā and body as consisting of "finite and absolutely indivisible particles," as represented by the mainstream *kalām* atomism are analyzed through the arguments and counterarguments presented in the text. Baga writes that al-Kātibī followed three stages when examining the proofs for both theories. First, al-Kātibī presented the proof for his preferred theory. Second, he demonstrated the impossibilities and contradictions implied by adopting the other theory. Third, he refuted the proof for the other theory by showing its weakness (285). al-Kātibī espoused the understanding of hylomorphic corporeal substance in *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* and declared a position through the critique of atomism.

Chapter 4's second main issue is an examination of the essential and accidental attachments of body as a result of its realization in the external world in order to reveal how this Avicennian distinction was addressed in *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* and its commentaries. The essential attachments of body are shape and spatial occupation. The natural body that realizes in the external world by taking special form has mass and shape. A body with these dimensions occupies a space. Therefore, when a natural body is stripped off from all accidents attached to itself, shape and spatial occupation

remain and are inseparable from the body. In the context of *Ḥikmat al-'ayn*, the issue of accidents attached to body insofar as the body undergoes motion was mostly discussed in terms of how natural motions occur, inclination as the power that creates motion, and how motion and rest differ from each other while making no mention of differences in qualitative, quantitative, spatial and positional motions.

Throughout the book, Baga illustrates how al-Rāzī applied the method of *taḥqīq* and at the same time deals with al-Kātibī's and his commentators' approach to body theory. The basic assumptions about the quiddity and existence of body appear to maintain the Avicennian position, yet these assumptions are subjected to a series of methodological analyses on whether or not they provide demonstrative knowledge. As Baga emphasizes, one ought to consider two points in investigating what kind of a critical approach this method involves: (i) Do these criticisms imply the rejection of the main and secondary claims of the Avicennian theory of body and the necessity of adopting other positions in response to this, and (ii) should the criticisms be interpreted only as a dissection of the deficiencies in the validity of arguments and in yielding certain knowledge? The author underlines this problem to be part of the issue of how the post-al-Rāzī Peripatetic philosophy should be handled. Thus, what transpires throughout the book is not the determination of the final opinions and assumptions of al-Kātibī and commentators regarding various aspects of body but rather the presentation and criticisms of the Avicennian views filtered through al-Rāzī. This approach highlights how *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* adopted the principles of the Avicennian theory of body and that the criticisms toward whether the proofs therefore are demonstrative and not intended for a theoretical rejection. Instead, they are on the contrary aimed at complementing the gaps in proving the theory. Indeed, Baga quite appropriately focuses on the way al-Kātibī and the commentators dealt with arguments and counter-arguments rather than on their ultimate positions beyond the basic assumptions. As Baga states, this attitude is compatible with the result al-Rāzī's method of *taḥqīq* intended, in which the Peripatetic and *kalām* claims of certainty are investigated in all dimensions, and the arguments of both approaches are dissected in utmost detail. Hence, the method itself is not suitable for reaching an ultimate determination. In this sense, new studies are clearly needed for understanding how the method in question had been applied and articulated in the post-Rāzī period through the varying practices of writing texts and commentaries. Baga's work on the theory of body in the *Ḥikmat al-'ayn* tradition merits attention in terms of both its contribution to research on the physical sciences and for exemplifying the interpretive and critical approach of the late classical period.