

Richard C. Taylor & Irfan A. Omar (eds.), *The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical & Theological Perspectives*, Milwaukee, Wisconsin: Marquette University Press, 2012. 339 pages. ISBN: 978-0-87462-811-1.

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*The Judeo-Christian-Islamic Heritage: Philosophical & Theological Perspectives* is an edited volume composed of papers presented at the conference titled “The Muslim, Christian and Jewish Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Explorations in Abrahamic Traditions” organized in Marquette University in 2007. The book includes a dozen articles discussing various issues such as the origin of language and the question of first language to the discussions of medieval Muslim, Christian and Jewish thinkers and the initiation of Dara Shikuh to combine Islamic and Hindu doctrines in the Indian subcontinent.

In the words of editors, the volume, composed of articles discussing philosophical and theological issues, “explores in some detail important moments of the bridging of ideas and doctrines across the boundaries both of distinct religious traditions and of differing languages and cultures.” One of these moments of bridging and interaction appeared with the translation of many Greek and Syriac texts into Arabic. Many works were later translated from Arabic to Latin, therefore a second period of interaction emerged. A third period of interaction mentioned in the book came with the translation of Hindu texts into Persian. These interactions took place between religious groups. We can talk about a theological focal point concerning the culture growing among three Abrahamic religions. Some of these articles are devoted to Islamic thought, and some of them to the interactions in understanding and interpretation of religious beliefs of the thinkers from different religions.

Deirdre Dempsey’s article titled “The Question of ‘first language’ in Arabic, Syriac, & Hebrew Texts” and Thérèse-Anne Druart’s article titled “Islam & Christianity: One Divine & Human Language or Many Human Languages” are devoted to the origins of language and the issues of language-thought relations. In these articles, the authors examine the principal theories through medieval Arabic, Syriac and Hebrew texts con-

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cerning the issues of the origins and essence of language, concerning the debates on whether this origin is revelation or human nature, and identification of the first language of humanity.

The book includes important articles examining the works of Muslim philosophers and discusses various aspects of their role in Jewish and Christian thought. James T. Robinson, in his article titled “Al-Farabi, Avicenna & Averroes in Hebrew: Remarks on the Indirect Transmission of Arabic-Islamic Philosophy in Medieval Judaism”, aims at showing that the interaction between the works of these three Muslim philosophers and Jews were especially through indirect ways (such as summarizing their ideas, presenting them in encyclopedic studies and using with some changes in literary works). The author tries to show that these indirect transfers of philosophical ideas were more innovative and more effective than their direct translation into Hebrew.

In medieval scholastic Europe, it was hardly possible to read Aristotle by disregarding Ibn Rushd or to propose philosophical theories without encountering Ibn Rushd. Bernardo Carlos Bazán, in his article titled “Thomas Aquinas’s *Summa contra Gentiles* and Averroes’s *Great Commentary on De Anima*”, examines one of the masters of medieval Christian thought, Thomas Aquinas’ encounter with Ibn Rushd. The author seeks to answer the questions why Aquinas’ criticisms in his books of *Commentary on the Sentences* and *Summa Contra Gentiles* against Ibn Rushd’s idea of intellect were not able to convince Latin Averroist philosophers and why he needed to repeat his ideas in his book *The Unity of the Intellect against the Averroists*. The author states that Aquinas was misunderstood because in his early works he was not sufficiently clear on his ideas about the character of the human soul and its relationship with the body and on the provision of human individuality. He also pursues how Aquinas acquired clarity for his ideas through his later works.

A work focusing on the medieval Christian thought in the book is Jörg Alejandro Tellkamp’s article titled “Albert the Great on Structure & Function of the Inner Senses”. In this article, the author considers whether Albert the Great was physicalist or not in consideration of his argument that internal senses were organic faculties of the brain. The author examines carefully the change in Albert’s approach between *De Homine* (written circa 1242) and *Commentary on the De Anima* (published circa 1254-1257). According to this, it is important to note that even if Albert placed internal senses into the brain’s ventricles, he placed them in the brain’s three ventricles varying hierarchically from concrete to abstract according to their functions. According to the author, this hierarchical placement shows in a sense a ranking from the physiological to the psychological and also shows that all mental representations cannot be reduced to sensual representations.

An interesting article in the book is Mehdi Aminrazavi's article titled "He Who Knows Himself Knows His Lord': Reflections on Avicenna's Suspended Man Argument." Aminrazavi proposes that Ibn Sinā's argument of *al-rajul al-mu'allaq*, which proves the directness of self-consciousness, is deeper than often assumed. Ibn Sinā intended to show that self-consciousness of the human soul was independent from the body. The soul's self-knowledge occurs directly without any mediation of the body or any other material thing. The existence of the soul and self-awareness is one and the same thing. Aminrazavi argues that this identity of consciousness and existence and the existence of human soul and its consciousness of its existence imply human being's direct consciousness of the Existence or of the divine reality. The basis of this is that God's Being is the ultimate pure existence. Therefore, self-consciousness possesses direct knowledge of itself and thereby also direct knowledge of Being as pure existence. This is encapsulated in the prophetic tradition "the one who knows himself knows his God." One result of Aminrazavi's interpretation is that it supports the coherence between philosophical knowledge in the sense of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sinā and religious knowledge, or knowledge of God. Despite the argument's strength, whether it is in fact possible to intuitively move from the knowledge of existence to the knowledge of God requires further debate.

Deborah Black, in her article titled "Avicenna on Individuation, Self-Awareness, & God's Knowledge of Particulars", examines individuation which is one of the mostly debated issues of Islamic philosophy and the issue of the knowledge of particulars in the context of Ibn Sinā's philosophy. In the article, Black argues that Ibn Sinā did not sufficiently utilize his ideas on the difference between one unique thing and other examples of its kind. Black emphasizes Ibn Sinā's term "*ma'nā shakhsi*", which he used to explain the individuality of human souls if not all individuals. Besides, considering that the human being's self-consciousness occurs without referring to the body, Black states that at least the individuality of some particulars does not depend on the matter, therefore Ibn Sinā's philosophical treasure makes it possible to argue that at least some particulars can be known rationally.

Luis Xavier López-Farjeat's article titled "Faith, Reason & Religious Diversity in al-Fārābī's *Book of Letters*" examines an issue that is closely associated with al-Fārābī: the relationship between philosophy and religion and the explanation of multiple religions. López-Farjeat underlines that al-Fārābī views philosophy and religion as two distinct forms of knowledge that denote and express the same reality. Therefore, the relationship between the rational-philosophical reality and its religious-symbolic expression is a kind of relationship between the universal and the particular just as the relationship between logic and a particular form taken in the grammar of natural languages. The author argues that al-Fārābī solved a possible incoherence between reason and belief and between different religions by build-

ing the relations between philosophy and religion as such. López-Farjeat questions whether al-Fārābī's model is successful. Is al-Fārābī's understanding of religion or his conception of religion coherent with what other thinkers and Muslim intellectuals accept? Do multiple religions merely exemplify multiple symbolic expressions while they share the same truth? Is al-Fārābī's view of "one truth multiple expressions" a type of "rational religion?" The article includes important research on this issue, which occupies a significant place in classical Islamic thought. Considering the contemporary reverberations of religious plurality, the author's analysis becomes even more important.

Although Michael E. Marmura's article "Avicenna & Traditional Islamic Belief" was published elsewhere, it is worth republishing again. Marmura argues in the article that the basic factor for viewings some of Ibn Sīnā's theories contrary to the Islamic belief and for accusing Ibn Sīnā with blasphemy was his approach to the relationship between philosophy and religion. As seen also in Luis Xavier López-Farjeat's article, the way al-Fārābī approaches the relationship between philosophy and religion is followed by Ibn Sīnā. According to Ibn Sīnā, ordinary people should take religious teachings literally even if they are not literally true, but the philosopher knows their true meaning. Marmura's argument that Ibn Sīnā was accused of blasphemy, because of his understanding of the relationship between religious and philosophical truth is an argument deserving serious consideration.

The article, titled "Averroes on the Sharī'ah of the Philosophers" of Richard C. Taylor, closely follows a common axis with Luis Xavier López-Farjeat and Michael Marmura's articles. They all deal with the relationship between philosophy and religion. Taylor reminds us that Ibn Rushd states in his exegesis to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that philosophers have their own law and even religion. Taylor examines in his article how Ibn Rushd establishes the relationship between philosophy and religion in his *Faṣl al-maqāl* and how he applies this methodology in other works. Therefore, he shows that Ibn Rushd's argument for the law or religion of philosophers is not an accidental phenomenon but reverberates throughout his corpus. In order to prove this argument, Taylor states that according to Ibn Rushd's perspective philosophical research is a kind of worship and even the most superior and purest form of worshipping. Ibn Rushd views philosophy as a method, which only those having sufficient intelligence and education should apply. In fact philosophy uses the tools to reach truth itself rather than understanding accidentally the religious doctrines based on rhetoric and dialectic. Taylor points out that Ibn Rushd benefited from the path that al-Fārābī opened in interpreting the relationship between philosophy and religion, i.e. the different interpretations of religious doctrines and their relations with philosophy.

Unlike other articles Irfan A. Omar's article, "Delhi's Debates on Ahl-i Kitāb: Dara Shikuh's Islamization of the Upanishads", takes the important issue of cul-

tural interaction within Islamic civilization, with an eastern culture in India during the Mughal Period rather than the West. Omar observes that departing from the concept of *ahl al-kitāb* in the Qur'an, Dara Shikuh, a Mughal prince from the seventeenth century, goes beyond the given position that accepts Hindus within the category of *ahl al-kitāb*. Omar states that Dara Shikuh considers that certain phrases of the Quran such as "protected book" (59: 77-79) refer to Upanishads and as such Upanishads are the source of the Quran. Omar argues that Dara Shikuh's interpretations have suffered from certain difficulties with regard to the common criteria in the science of exegesis. Omar's discussions show that Dara Shikuh's effort is an interesting example for pluralistic understanding and interpretation of religious diversity or occasional inclining from tolerance as expected from the members of different religions to eclectic approaches.

Phillip C. Naylor's article, "Islamic Humanism in the Thought of Ibn Khaldun & Malik bin Nabi", is quite an interesting and timely article, with respect to the contemporary academic and political conditions. Naylor's article draws attention to the false Western perspective in academic-intellectual discussions about shared human values and underlines a different understanding from a Muslim perspective on the same subject. The author states that both thinkers take the Quranic understanding of human nature into account to develop individual ethics and creating a nation. He emphasizes that both thinkers are interested in the birth and growth of civilization and for both of them "humanism is the foundational element of being a Muslim."

All the articles in the book are worth reading examining and thinking given the importance of their subjects, richness of their analyses and academic values. The articles of López-Farjeat, Taylor and Marmura are considerably useful studies both to understand classical Islamic thought and to relate them with current discussions. It is obvious that the perspective of philosophy and religion relations adopted by al-Fārābī and followed by Ibn Sinā and Ibn Rushd is related to the issue of interpreting religious beliefs from a "realist" or "non-realist" perspective. Besides, these perspectives are closely connected to the discussions on the issue of religious diversity. In the context of religious diversity, Omar's article uncovers a considerably important discussion on interpreting different religions and relations between their members. The first three articles seek a model leading to religious pluralism from a philosophical point of view, whereas Omar's article highlights a pluralistic approach from a religious ground. Naylor's article, which draws attention to important aspects of the humanism and humanity in both Islamic and Western perspective, is important for its theoretical-philosophical approach as well as for it provides clues concerning intercultural relations in the contemporary world. This publication is quite timely, in our contemporary world where Islamophobia and creation of enemies by rejection of cooperation is on the rise.