

M. Cüneyt Kaya (ed.), *Islamic Philosophy: History and Problems [İslâm Felsefesi: Tarih ve Problemler]*, İstanbul: İSAM Yayınları, 2013, 869 pages, ISBN: 978-605-4829-05-7

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It is observed that new works are now being written in regard to the need for a unique and comprehensive book on Islamic philosophy which can be used as a course book in Turkish universities, refined from the issues of existing oriental literature which reflect Turkish knowledge in this field. Among them is *Islamic Philosophy: History and Problems*, a book published by ISAM in October 2013 under the editorship of M. Cüneyt Kaya. This comes to the forefront as it enables learning of the subject from a specialist and handles Islamic philosophy using both philosopher-centered and problem-centered reading methods without dilemma.

What makes this sizable, 869-page book special is that it contains different fundamental details that a reader wanting to deeply learn Islamic philosophy might need. The book is divided into chapters which handle the individual contributors to Islamic philosophy as well as describing the subject in the scope of the different disciplines of philosophy such as logic, metaphysics and ethics in addition to using both a philosopher-centered and problem-centered writing style, as mentioned above. The book further stands out by having two individual chapters concerning the transition of ancient sources to the Islamic world and the history of the education of philosophy in the Islamic world. Lists such as “Greek Philosophical Works Translated into Arabic” and “Bibliography of Works of Islamic Philosophers Published and Translated into Turkish” annexed to the book and the advanced reading suggestions at the end of each chapter increase the source value of this book for those who study in the field of Islamic philosophy.

The book begins with the article “On the Nature of Islamic Philosophy” written by the editor of the book, M. Cüneyt Kaya. Kaya offers a framework on the nature of Islamic philosophy described in the book by summarizing the discussions on the concept of Islamic philosophy. Kaya also provides short descriptions on the nature of such concepts such “Islamic philosopher” and “classical era” which are often men-

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tioned in the book. Following this introduction, the article “Transmission of Greek Philosophy into Islamic World: Three Major Transformational Phases of Aristotelian Philosophy,” written by İbrahim Halil Üçer, attempts to reveal the ancient linear heritage of the Islamic world after clarifying the stages Aristotelian thought went through. The author’s finding which reads “Contenting transmission of said ancient resources to mentioning only a list of translations will lead to a deficient understanding of the subject. If it is attempted to reveal the impact and quality of the era of translation, this can be done through a skeptical examination method” is highly important and true.

Following the first two chapters describing the nature of Islamic philosophy and the heritage it inherited, the chapters forming the historical part of the book start. In these chapters, fifteen names are individually scrutinized in terms of their contribution to Islamic philosophy: al-Kindī, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, al-Fārābī, İkhwān al-Şafā, Ibn Miskawayh, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Bājja, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Rushd, Suhrawardī, Fahkr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, Naşır al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Ibn al-Arabī and Şadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī respectively. Another different property of the book is that there are sub-chapters describing the impact of a philosopher on later philosophers in some chapters constructed to summarize the life and works of the philosopher, his outstanding theories, and his approaches in general. Indicating the impact of al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, İkhwān al-Şafā, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Rushd, Suhrawardī, Ibn al-Arabī and al-Qunawī in literature and philosophy education, these sub-chapters provide an impression on the historical progress and continuity in Islamic philosophy, and this seems to minimize the disadvantage of leading the reader to comprehend the connections of philosophical development in the history of philosophy via a disconnected manner.

Each philosopher in the book is written about by authors known for their academic work in Turkish literature regarding the particular philosopher. This can have two consequences that might be deemed positive and negative. A positive consequence is that the author who examined and studied the subject in detail beforehand reflects a processed knowledge, not a raw one. A negative consequence is the probability that the article in the book might turn into a repetition of the author’s earlier publications on the subject. Nevertheless, considering the overall information provided and especially the bibliography and advanced reading list at the end of each article concerning a philosopher, it should be mentioned that the book is a very good starting point for the Islamic philosophers it covers.

The book also draws attention by giving attention to Ibn al-Arabī and Şadr al-Dīn al-Qunawī among the names described individually because we have not seen names that are considered to be mystic examined individually in Islamic philosophy books before. However, giving credit to these names in this book increases the

book's value, considering their contributions to Islamic philosophy. Furthermore, the chapter written by Ekrem Demirli also describes the contact of philosophy with sufism over Ibn al-Arabī and al-Qunawī and thus an inter-penetration of the sciences in the post-classical era. Demirli also partially summarizes the nature of philosophy merged with sufism by attempting to demonstrate the contributions of Ibn al-Arabī and al-Qunawī through several metaphysical issues.

The “problematic” part of the book deals with logic, psychology, metaphysics, ethics and politics in Islamic philosophy. Also, the chapters written by academicians with publications in the relevant discipline do not have a standard content construction and the articles which feature the points each author wishes to underline are given in the book. The article written by Ömer Türker on the metaphysical problems handled in Islamic philosophy supports the following claim which is highly important in terms of the historiography of Islamic philosophy: According to Türker, the common opinion that Muslims have inherited emanationist metaphysical understanding is extremely weak because at the time of translation the Neo-Platonic texts mistakenly refer to Aristotle. Türker suggests that the adoption of emanationist philosophy is a conscious selection made by al-Fārābī himself. Therefore, it is not an accidental embodiment caused by a wrong transmission but an adoption of a system by an Islamic philosopher, which he believed explained the God-universe-human relationship in the most accurate way possible. Türker believes that al-Fārābī's not mentioning emanation theory in his texts describing Aristotelian philosophy supports his suggestion.

The last chapter of the study is an article written by Mustakim Arıcı with respect to the education of philosophy. It is highly important and accurate that this subject is covered and discussed as an individual chapter in the book as it contains many issues that are disputed in the literature. While seeking an answer to the question of how philosophical education existed in the Islamic period, Arıcı inquires into which way the education of philosophy continued after al-Ghazzālī and al-Rāzī, and he refers to the disputed subject of to what extent philosophy in the Islamic world maintained its existence in the post-classical period. With regards to the quality of philosophical education in the classical period, the author underlines that a corporate philosophical education is not present in that period and indicates individual learning stages cited by al-Kindī and al-Fārābī, and suggested by Ibn Sinā in his autobiography. The author also mentions madrasas, the places where philosophical education was given and refers to the discussions on whether Nizāmiyya Madrasa is the first madrasa in terms of corporate education as well as claims of the removal of rational sciences from madrasas and its negative impacts.

Concerning the post-classical period, Arıcı proposes four basic aspects: to concentrate on some issues through books on commentary and annotation styles written about the works such as *Hidāyat al-ḥikme* and *Ḥikmat al-ayn*, to conduct studies on the reproduction of certain works by way of al-Ishārāt annotations and Tahāfut literature, to write Ishrāqī philosophical texts, and to reveal irfanī school products. He also suggests that the development of philosophy in this period could be read through these four aspects. Arıcı's findings seems quite important in the sense that they enable one to understand the post-classical period of Islamic philosophy which is often ignored in our minds as a "complicated period."

The first annex in the book is the first part dealing with translations. This annex is the Turkish translation of the list of "Greek Philosophy Books Translated into Arabic" which was issued in 2010 by Dimitri Gutas. This list compiles all the existing and up-to-date information known with respect to the periods of translation. It is also extremely meaningful to present this work to Turkish readers in terms of providing both an overall opinion as well as detailed information on the process of transmission. The second annex of the book is a list of classical books on Islamic philosophy translated into Turkish. This list, prepared by M. Cüneyt Kaya, presents these works with their publishing house details and page numbers.

The book entitled *Islamic Philosophy: History and Problems* is a candidate for filling a major gap in the field with its chapter selections, annexes and the bibliographical details it presents as well as handling many of the philosophers who contributed to Islamic philosophy, moreover, handling the issues separately at the skeptical level. The book gives as much space as possible to the post-classical period, but it must be noted that a local source is still needed which will examine other names of those who contributed to the field after the thirteenth century as well as their contributions in greater detail. Considering the change Islamic philosophy went through in the post-classical period, the new issues and movements brought by contact with the kalām and sufism await being examined in a problem-centered manner and greater detail. Furthermore, the sciences of nature and mathematics are missing as mentioned in the introduction of the book. Therefore, there is still a serious need for books which will consider Islamic scientific history in addition to Islamic philosophy and deal with the developments in this field in line with the development of the philosophical sciences. In conclusion, *Islamic Philosophy: History and Problems* make us think that we should be hopeful that new studies to fill the deficiencies mentioned will also be conducted.