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JOURNAL OF ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Mission Statement

The *Journal of Islamic Philosophy* encourages the academic study of Islamic philosophy. The journal provides a unique peer-reviewed forum for scholars interested in the philosophical study of diverse topics in Islamic philosophy. Classical Islamic philosophy of past masters will be re-examined with a new focus. The underlying issues regarding the many ethical, metaphysical, existential, and epistemological challenges posed by western philosophy will be explored in comparison to Islamic philosophy. We hope to serve as an impetus toward the renewal of the rich and dynamic spirit of Islamic philosophical discourse in the current era.

Journal of Islamic Philosophy

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Contributors

Mashhad Al-Allaf is an associate professor in the department of Humanities and Social Sciences at the Petroleum Institute University and Research Center in Abu Dhabi.

Omar Kassem is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies with a doctorate in monetary economics.

Mustafa Yidiz is an associate professor at the Department of Philosoph in the Faculty of Arts of Erciyes University, Kayseri, Turkey.

Mostafa Younesie is Assistant Professor in the Political Sciences Department in Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran.

Nadir Rahil Najaf is a Ph.D, Research Associate, at the Institute of Philosophy and Law in Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences of The Republic of Azerbaijan, Baku..

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Abbreviations of Journals and References

BJMES	*British Journal of Middle East Studies*
IJMES	*International Journal of Middle East Studies*
JAOS	*Journal of the American Oriental Society*
JIP	*Journal of Islamic Philosophy*
CAP	*Classical Arabic Philosophy, An Anthology of Sources*, trans. Jon McGinnis and David C. Reisman (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, 2007).
CCAP	*The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, ed. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
EI²	*Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd edition, ed. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel and W. P. Heinrichs (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1960–2006).
EIr	*Encyclopaedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982–).
EP	*The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards, 4 vols. (New York: Collier Macmillan, 1967).
HIP, Corbin	Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993).
HIP, Nasr and Leaman	*History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge, 1996).
HIP¹, Fakhry *HIP²*, Fakhry	Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970; 2nd edition 1983).
HMP, Sharif	*A History of Muslim Philosophy*, ed. M. M. Sharif (Wiesbaden: O. Harrasowitz, 1963)
MPP	*Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi (New York: Free Press, 1963).

REP	*The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy,* ed. Edward Craig, 10 vols. (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

Short forms of frequently-cited works

Afnan, *Avicenna*	Sohail M. Afnan, *Avicenna: His Life and Works* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1958).
Alfarabi, trans. Mahdi	*Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. Muhsin Mahdi (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).
Arberry, *Avicenna*	A. J. Arberry, *Avicenna on Theology* (London: John Murray, 1951).
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Avicenna, *Metaphysics*, trans. Marmura	Avicenna, *The Metaphysics of Healing*, trans. Michael Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2005).
Avicenna, *Najāt*, trans. Rahman	*Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI*, trans. Fazlur Rahman (Westport, CT: Hyperion, 1952).
Bouyges, *Essai*	Maurice Bouyges, *Essai de Chronologie des œuvres de Al-Ghazali* (Beirut: Imprimerie Catholique, 1959).
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Frank, *Creation*	Richard M. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1992).

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Griffel, *Ghazālī*   Frank Griffel, *al-Ghazālī's Philosophical Theology* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

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Gohlman, *Ibn Sīnā*   William E. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1974).

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Ibn Khaldūn, trans. Rosenthal   Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, 3 vols. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1967).

Leaman, *Medieval Islamic Philosophy*   Oliver Leaman, *An Introduction to Medieval Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

Macdonald, *Muslim Theology*   Duncan B. Macdonald, *Development of Muslim Theology, Jurisprudence and Constitutional Theory* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926).

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Editorial

Macksood Aftab

*R*eason, logic and philosophy have been the essential tools in the development of the Islamic sciences throughout the ages. Rationality has been key to the interpretation of the primary sources of Islam namely the Qurʾān and *Sunna*. The emphasis on reason plays a key role even in the orthodox tradition of Islam, that of Ashari and Maturidi theology. This has historically allowed Muslims to place theology not only in the context of modern issues and challenges, but also allowed Islam to serve as the basis of a wider worldview. A worldview which allows for the contextualization of reason and revelation into a coherent whole. Rationality was thus integrated into Islamic sciences across the board including hadith, law, theology and even practical disciplines such as medicine.

This is reflected in a popular medical tract from the 11th century which has survived entitled, *The Key to Medicine and a Guide for Student*s by Abū Al-Faraj ʿAlī ibn al-Husayn ibn Hindū (1019–1032 CE). In this book, the author dedicates several initial chapters to laying out the premises, framework and worldview of medicine and why it should be practised. In these chapters the author tackles issues such as divine causation and the role of the physician. For example, distinguishing the role of the physician from that of God's in healing he writes,

> Our observation of these matters has shown us that there is something that causes action and reaction, and a power which brings about an affect and the acceptance of that effect. This power is known as nature and constitution. It is the power with which God, the Exalted, has endowed these bodies, in order to bring out the impossible and make the universe complete, bringing forth life, death,

health and illness, so that God's will and order should prevail.[1]

This points to the importance allocated to understanding the philosophy of medicine in medical training at the time. This training preceded clinical training in the practice of medicine. It is well known that Ibn Sīnā's *Canon of Medicine* was the primary text used for medical training around the world for over five centuries. But according to Ahmad Dallal, the primary achievement of Ibn Sina was not in the clinical domain. Rather it was in his elucidating a distinctive worldview for medicine arising from the Islamic tradition. He writes,

> Ibn Sina produced a unified synthesis of medical knowledge that derived its coherence from the relentlessly systematic application of logic and theoretical principles[2].

Philosophy was thus thoroughly integrated into the Islamic sciences across the board. This Journal seeks to revive this particular tradition of Islam which has been so integral to all of its academic disciplines throughout its history. We are pleased to bring you our 10th volume, published in 2016 after a brief hiatus. In addition to an article on the enormously influential Ghazālī, this issue contains an article on the early Muslim philosopher of science Jābir and several articles related to one of the earliest Muslim philosophers Al-Farābī.

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1   Abu Faraj Ibn Hindu, *Key to Medicine and a Guide to Students*, translated by Dr. Aida Tibi. UK: Garnet, 2011.

2   Dallal, Ahmad. I*slam, Science, and the Challenge of History.* Yale University Press, 2010, 36–38.

CONCEIVING RELIGION: AL-FĀRĀBĪ AND AVERROES ON THE CONCEPTS OF *"MILLAH"* AND *"SHARĪʿAH"* [1]*

Mustafa Yildiz

Introduction

1. *The General Framework of al-Fārābī's Approach to Philosophy and Religion:* Among the most important characteristics of al-Fārābī's chosen terminology are that it considers some religious concepts not only under the light of the philosophies of Plato and Aristotle but also in accord with meanings found in the terminology of the Qurʾān. This situation could be seen as a foregone conclusion and as part of his efforts to establish a union between religion and philosophy.

In the case of al-Fārābī's conception of *millah* (religion), his teachings appear to have been formed by drawing on the conception of happiness that Aristotle had seen to be the ultimate aim for all citizens. Hence, according to Aristotle, happiness is an activity of the soul in accordance with the best and most perfect (or complete) virtue in a perfect life. But what is the best and most perfect virtue? Aristotle answers this question at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by arguing that the best and most perfect virtue is theoretical wisdom (*sophia*) exercised in theoretical study or contemplation (*theôria*) of universal and necessary truths about the universe.[2] In addition he writes that, "for even if the good is the same for a single person and for a city, the good for the city is a greater and more complete thing both to achieveand to preserve; for while to do so for one person

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2   T. H. Irwin, "Conceptions of Happiness in the Nicomachean Ethics", in *The Oxford Handbook of Aristotle*, edited by Christopher Shields, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 495.

on his own is satisfactory enough, to do it for a nation or for cities is finer and more godlike."[3]

Yet, for al-Fārābī, the concept of *millah* designates principles of unity that are not limited, as they are for Aristotle, to those characterizing the community of the Greek city-state. For al-Fārābī *millah* refers to the common principles of a broadly conceived community that all society can share regardless of personal and cultural differences among individuals. He refers at the same time to the possibility of different virtuous *millah*s under the one virtuous state (*maʿmūra*). Even though al-Fārābī concentrates on the concept of *madīnah* (city) in his political philosophy, this is due to the fact that the city is the first level and the prototype of perfect societies. In fact, according to al-Fārābī,

> There are three kinds of perfect society, great, medium and small, the great one is the union of all the societies in the inhabitable world; the medium one the union of one nation in one part of the inhabitable world; the small one the union of the people of a city in the territory of any nation whatsoever... The city, then, in which people aim through association at co-operating for the things by which felicity in its real and true sense can be attained, is the excellent city, and the society in which there is a co-operation to acquire felicity is the excellent society; and the nation (*ummah*) in which all of its cities co-operate for those things through which felicity is attained is the excellent nation. In the same way, the excellent universal state (*al-māʿmūra al-fādila*) a will arise only when all the nations (*umam*) in it co-operate for the purpose of reaching felicity.[4]

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3   Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translation by Christopher Rowe, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 1094b 8-11.

4   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Madinah al-Fāḍilah*, edited by Albert Nasri Nāder, (Beirut: Dār el-Mashreq, 1991), 117-118; *Fārābī on the Perfect State*, translation and commentary by Richard Walzer, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 229-231.

In this respect, the concept of *millah* in al-Fārābī corresponds to the principles of the notions and actions of a nation (*ummah*). At the same time, his concept of *al-māᶜmūra* anticipates Ibn Khaldun's concept of *umrān al-ᶜalam*. However Ibn Khaldun dismisses al-Fārābī's theory of the state as a political utopia, something "rare and remote", irrelevent to real life.[5]

2. *The General Framework of Averroes' Approach to Philosophy and Religion*: As for Ibn Rushd or Averroes, however, his political consideration develops in a different direction. While Fārābī tries to establish a philosophical system which is integrated into the broader cultural fabric of the Islamic world without at the same time compromising philosophy itself, the purpose of Averroes, especially in *Fasl al-Maqāl,* is to justify philosophy from the view point of religion or Islamic jurisprudence. Of course, within the framework of this point of view (which is in part clearly defensive), philosophy must respond to it. However, it must be said that this defense makes up only a part of his philosophy. The terms employed by Averroes at the beginning of *Fasl al-Maqāl* and *al-Kashf an-Manahij al-Adillah* are in this regard important. He speaks here as a "jurist (*faqīh*), leader (*imam*), judge (*qadī*) and uniquely learned (*ᶜallāma al-awhad*)"[6] to consider a matter just from the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence.

However, the problem is not restricted to the legitimacy of philosophy from the perspective of *sharīᶜah*. Instead, the main concern of Averroes is the political confusion caused by the epistemological crisis of multiple interpretations from different religious perspectives (such as *ashᶜariyya, mūtazila, bātiniyya, sūfiyya* etc.) in the Islamic World.

Averroes tries to solve this turmoil by reference to a reliable epistemological background. According to him, the key to the situation's

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5   Dimitri Gutas, "Fārābī and Greek Phılosophy", in *Encyclopedia Iranica*, Ehsan Yarshater, (New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press), 221.

6   Averroes, *Fasl al-Maqāl* (*Decisive Treatise*)*,* translated by Charles E.Butterworth*,* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Yough University, 2001), 1.*al-Kashf an-Manahij al-Adillah fi 'Aqāid al-Millah*, edited by Mohammed Abede Al-Jāberī, (Beirut: 1998), 99.

resolution is to turn to the main sources of human knowing, which are *sharīʿah* and the works of Aristotle. Hence, Averroessets forth a political order in which these two disclosures of truth are compatible. But the problem for *sharīʿah* is the propogation of theological inter-pretations leading to conflicts and even civil wars. In this direction, the *sharīʿah* should be purified of the interpretations of ill-informed theologians and be made sovereign in its apparent meaning before the eyes of the public. The problem for philosophy is the dissocia-tion of Aristotle's philosophy from Neo-Platonist interpretations. And in this way, the philosophy of Aristotle should be made its essential disposition. In other words, it may be said that from the Averroes' point of view there was an internal conflict within both philosophy and religion: one inside philosophy between a genuine Aristotelianism and Neoplatonism and one inside religion between false or harmful religious interpretation and proper or beneficial religious interpretation. Averroes' attempt to resolve these conflicts is to return to the main sources.

With his radical attitude, Averroes takes a critical stance against all the intellectual systems that made up of the spirit of Islamic world, especially *kalām*, the philosophy of Avicenna, al-Ghazāli, and Sufism. In this context, the works of Averroes include a strong criticism as well as defense. Undoubtedly, he tries to purge Neopla-tonism from philosophy with a series of commentaries on the works of Aristotle. Advocating *sharīʿah*, he draws attention to the aim of Lawgiver (*Shārīʿ*) and the principles of intellect against the com-ments of theologians in *Kashf ʿan Manahij al-Adilla*. The juridical point of view in his two-way effort is the most important feature distinguishing him from other Islamic philosophers. Indeed, his juridical duties inevitably had an effect on the nature and form of his defense of philosophy and criticism of theology. In fact, among his works of *Fasl al-Maqāl*, *Kashf ʿan Manahij al-Adilla* and *Tehāfut at-Tahāfut* are clearly dated 1179-80, i.e. during his second period as Qadi of Seville, henceforth capital of al-Andalus.[7] However, it can

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7   See, for example, Dominique Urvoy, *Ibn Rushd* (*Averroes*)*,* translated by Olivia Stewart*,* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 71.

be assumed that Averroes' approach in these works is rhetorical in order to be recognized the philosophy in the political life.

3. *The Aim of This Article*: On the basis of this general framework, here I aim to elucidate how the concepts of *dīn*, *millah* and *sharīʿah* differ from each other. In particular, I intend to show why al-Fārābī preferred the concept of *millah* instead of *dīn* or *sharīʿah* and why Averroes preferred *sharīʿah* instead of *dīn* or *millah*. Study of these diverse choices in vocabulary will reveal much about the character of their philosophical understandings of religion as well as their philosophy. The methodological procedures and key choices made by these thinkers in their understandings of religion and philosophy can be helpfully elucidated by considering how their chosen conceptual vocabularies and their accounts of the meanings of key concepts such as *dīn*, *millah* and *sharīʿah* manifest quite distinct approaches to the issues.

The Etymological meanings of the concepts of *millah*, *dīn*, and *sharīʿah*

It is useful to begin by reviewing the meanings of *dīn*, *millah* and *sharīʿah* in the Qurʾān and early Arabic dictionaries. First of all, it should be noted here that all three words are Qurʾanic. The word of *dīn* etymologically means "penalty, obedience, provision, creed and mainstream". In relation to these meanings, *dīn* is used in the Qurʾan with reference to both God and man. When *dīn* has been used in the Qurʾān in reference to God, it means "prevalence, subjugation, bring someone to account, awarding or infliction"; when used in reference to human beings, it means "subjection, realizing his weakness, submission, worship".[8] Connecting these meanings, we see that *dīn* means the law, regularity and the way that regulated relationships between man and God. In this respect there is no way to say that *dīn* could be understood to vary in accordance with circumstances of time and place.

As for *sharīʿah*, according to the earliest Arabic dictionaries the verbal form of the root *sh-r-ʾ* means "entry into something" ("the water-bearer went into the water"), and the *sharīʿah* meaning "the

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8   Ibn Manzur, *Lisān al-Arab*, (Beirut:1994), Vol. VIII, 169-171.

way to the water" or "a place on the bank of a river where animals can enter the water",[9] is used in Islamic literature with the sense of "to keep track of the open road", making a reference to the "divine road" in the context of religion. Indeed, just as water is the source of life and cleanliness for human beings, similarly those who enter correctly on the road of *sharīʿah* quench their thirst and cleanse themselves plentifully.[10] Thus, a further lexical source is the Qurʾān itself where the verbal occurrences have God as their subject: "He has ordained (*sharaʿa*) for you of religion (*dīn*) what He enjoined upon Noah and that which We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what We enjoined upon Abraham and Moses and Jesus - to establish the religion and not be divided therein…"; "Or have they other deities who have ordained (*sharaʿa*) for them a religion (*dīn*) to which Allah has not consented?...".[11] And in the nominal forms it refers to something appointed by God for humankind: "Then We put you, [O Muhammad], on an ordained (*sharīʿah*) way concerning the matter [of religion]; so follow it and do not follow the inclinations of those who do not know"; "And We have revealed to you, [O Muhammad], the Book in truth, confirming that which preceded it of the Scripture and as a criterion over it…".[12] The Qurʾanic (and therefore normative) image is thus of God going into the world in revelation and by means of His revelation establishing an access to His realm.[13] However, the word of *sharīʿah* has also been used to mean law and judgment in a special meaning derived from the foregoing senses. When these laws are related to the nature of behavior, they are considered secondary and practical provisions, the subject of science of *Fiqh,* which is often translated as *jurisprudence* in English. When these laws are related to the nature of creed, they are

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9   Ibid., 175; Ahmad Ibn al-Khalil, *Kitāb al-ʿAyn*, edited by Abdallah Darwish, (Baghdad: Matbaʾat al-ʾĀm, 1968), Vol. I, 263.

10   Al-Raghib al-Isfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fi Gharīb al-Qurʾān*, (Beirut: 1992), 258.

11   Qurʾān, 42: 13, 21

12   Qurʾān, 45: 18; , 5:48

13   A. Kevin Reinhart, "Islamic Law as Islamic Ethics", The Journal of Religious Ethics, Vol. 11, No. 2 (Fall, 1983), 188

considered fundamental and theological provisions, subjects of the
science of *Kalām, which* is often translated as *theology* in English.[14]

As regards the word of *millah*, it is derived from the saying
"*amlaltu al-kitāb* / I have written the book" originally, and afterwards
it is taken to refer to "dictation of prophet to the people" or "the
method that the prophets ally to".[15]

Al-Millah in the Philosophy of Al-Fārābī

With reference to the etymology of *dīn*, it could be said that dīn
(religion) in the sight of God is limited to Islam ("Indeed, the
religion in the sight of Allah is Islam")[16] and contains a sense of
absoluteness and stableness. But it is clear that al-Fārābī does not
prefer the concept of dīn.

Regarding al-millah, al-Fārābī himself claims that this term is
used for something that is inherently multiple and changeable with
regard to time and place, although the virtuous city is only one in his
view.[17] In this respect al-Fārābī may be using the concept of millah
instead of dīn to prevent a superficial objection that might come
from traditional jurists and theologians. In fact, while dīn appears in
Qur'an only with reference to God, millah does not refer to God, but
rather is used with reference to the Prophet Abraham or ancestors.
Further, sometimes it is used to refer to infidelity such as "infidelity
is one millah". So the word of millah should not be interpreted as
referring to God and there is no way to say "millatu'llah (the millah
of God)". Similarly, it refers only to the founding leader of society,
not the other individuals of the society.[18]

In this respect, al-Fārābī exhibits an approach compatible
with Plato who brings the "first ruler (al-raīs al-awwal)" into the

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14   Ali al-Tahānawī, *Kashāf Isṭilāḥ al-Funūn wa al-ᶜUlūm*, (Beirut: 1996), Vol. I,
     1018.

15   Ibid, Vol. II, 1639.

16   Qurʾān, 3:19.

17   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Madinah al-Fāḍilah*, 147-148; *al-Siyasa al-Madaniyya* Also
     Known as the Treatise on the Principles of Beings, edited by Fauzi M. Najjar,
     (Beirut: Dār al-Mashreq, 1993), 86.

18   Tehānevī; *Keshāfü Istilāh al-Funūn wa'l-ᶜUlūm*, Vol. II, 1639.

forefront regarding legislation.[19] This situation also relates to why he did not prefer to the word of sharīʿah.[20] In fact, however, the sharīʿah is used in Qur'an with reference to God. That is, sharīʿah refers to the divine origin of the laws.[21] On the other hand, as can be seen in the definition of Fārābī's conception of millah, there is a reference to the human aspect of the law:

> Millah is opinions and actions determined and restricted with stipulations and prescribed for a community by their first ruler (al-raīs al-awwal), who seeks to obtain through their practicing it a specific purpose with respect to them or by means of them.[22]

This reference clearly indicates that the society would be formed according to aim of the founder of the state and its highest ruler.[23]

Yet on the basis of this is it possible to reach the conclusion that, with his emphasis on the first ruler who determines the actions and options in society with the millah (laws) that he makes, al-Fārābī

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19   Plato; *The Republic*, translated by Allan Bloom, Second edition, (Basic Books, 1991), 484b.

20   E. I. J. Rosenthal claims in his *Political Thought in Medieval Islam* that there are certain differences between Plato's ideal regime and the ideal state of Muslim philosophers. According to him, although the law had a central role in the thought of both, there is a fundamental difference in their understanding of the concept of law: while the *nomos* of Plato was based on a myth and centered on the rational man, *sharīʿah* was based on revelation centred on God. (E. I. J. Rosenthal, *Political Thought in Medieval Islam*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1958), 116-117). To me, this approach can be true for Kindī and Averroes, but it must be re-evaluated for al-Fārābī and Avicenna. This is because according to al-Fārābī and Avicenna the revelation is nothing more than the highest act (*fiʿil*) of intellect and this revelation is continuous and uninterrupted. Truth is intellectual knowledge and this knowledge is at the same time divine. They do not make a distinction between human and divine knowledge such as al-Kindī and Averroes do.

21   Qur'ān; Surat al-Māʾidah, 5: 48, Surat ash-Shūraa, 42: 13-21, Surat al-Jāthiyah, 45: 18.

22   Al-Fārābī; *Kitāb al-Millah*, 43. for English translation see: *Al-Fārābī The Political Writings,* translated and annotated by Charles E. Butterworth, (Ithace and London: Cornell University Press, 2001), 93.

23   See for details ibid, 43-44.

has only a secular perspective? On the contrary, al-Fārābī states that God is the governor of the virtuous city, just as He is the governor of the universe. But His governance of the universe comes true in one way, whereas His governance of the virtuous city comes true in another way. There is a relationship and a cohesiveness between the two kinds of governing,[24] not only with respect to the meaning of the concept of revelation (wahy) in al- Fārābī, but also insofar as the governor of the state should take as a guiding example the Governor of the universe and follow His traces in the universe while managing the community.[25]

Still, it is also equally impossible to say that al-Fārābī presented a theological political philosophy. On the contrary, here we see something specific to the tradition of Islamic thought. Accordingly, state government is based on the divine knowledge, but it is an absolutely human phenomenon.

Furthermore, according to the descriptions of Sayyid Sharif Jourjānī, sharīʿah is employed in terms characterizing it as a form of dīn (religion) and is also grouped with terms such as millah.[26] In this respect, it can be said that al-Fārābī prefers using millah to characterize the social unity that brings together opinions, beliefs, and actions.[27] In fact, in al-Fārābī's philosophy, millah is presented as an image of philosophical usage that includes theoretical and practical senses regarding all the principles and values in a community. In this respect, the concept of millah is more appropriate than the concepts of dīn or sharīʿah for signaling the legal system existing in all states, whether it is referred to a divine origin or not.

In other words, al-Fārābī does not differentiate between human knowledge (philosophy) and divine knowledge (religion). Both of them come from the same source which is the "active intellect (*al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*)":

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24 Ibid., 65

25 Ibid.,65-66.

26 Sayyid Sharif Jourjānī; *al-Kitāb al-Tāʿrifāt,* (Istanbul: 1318), 72

27 Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Millah*, 46; for English translation see: *Al-Fārābī The Political Writings,* , 97.

> Since it has been made clear that the Active Intellect is
> the cause of the potential intelligibles becoming actual
> and of the potential intellect becoming actual; and that
> it is the rational faculty whichis made to become actually
> intellect; and that there are two forms (species) of the
> rational faculty, theoretical and practical....[28]

This text is crucial for us to understand the relationship between philosophy and religion. This is because, in his *Kitāb al-Millah*, al-Fārābī says that just as philosophy is partly theoretical and partly practical, so it is with religion. The practical things in religion are those whose universals are in practical philosophy. Therefore, all virtuous laws are subordinate to the universals of practical philosophy. The theoretical opinions that are in *millah* have their demonstrative proofs in theoretical philosophy and are taken in *millah* without demonstrative proofs. Therefore, the two parts of which *millah* consist are subordinate to philosophy.[29]

Then, *millah* consists demonstrative truth and so it is unthinkable that a conflict between philosophy and theology would arise. However, *millah* is the imaginative expression of intelligibles (*māᶜqūlāt*).

> And when the natural disposition is made the matter of
> the Passive Intellect which has become actually intellect,
> and the Passive Intellect the matter of the Acquired
> Intellect, and the Acquired Intellect the matter of the
> Active Intellect, and when all this is taken as one and
> the same thing, then this man is the man on whom the
> Active Intellect has descended. When this occurs in both
> parts of his rational faculty, namely the theoretical and
> the practical rational faculties, and also in his represen-
> tative faculty, then it is this man who receives Divine
> Revelation, and God Almighty grants him Revelation
> through the mediation of the Active Intellect, so that the

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28   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, 112, for English translation see: *Fārābī on the Perfect State*, 219

29   Al-Fārābī; *Kitāb al-Millah*, 46-47; for English translation see: *Al-Fārābī The Political Writings*, 97.

emanation from God Almighty to the Active Intellect is passed on to his Passive Intellect through the mediation of the Acquired Intellect, and then to the faculty of representation. Thus he is, through the emanation from the Active Intellect to his Passive Intellect, a wise man and a philosopher and an accomplished thinker who employs an intellect of divine quality, and through the emanation from the Active Intellect to his faculty of representation a visionary prophet..."[30]

Admittedly, the philosopher, the one who knows truth demonstratively, is portrayed as the lawgiver and founder of the *millah*, and again *millah* is described in terms of figurative representation and the imitation of abstract truth. In the virtuous state, the philosopher is a king who legislates practices as well as beliefs. Now, however, the philosopher par excellence seems to be only a conduit for revelation from on high. His inspiration (*wahy*) is said to come from the Active Intellect, the heavenly substance which is responsible for imparting knowledge to man. The Active Intellect, in turn, is dependent ultimately on God for its action, if not for its being, so that it is God who is really responsible for the religion revealed to His prophet, introducing traditional terms as synonyms for the philosopher king.[31]

Thus, the distinction between the philosopher and the public is also presented in Tahsīl al-Saʿādah:

Once the images representing the theoretical things demonstrated in the theoretical sciences are produced in the souls of the multitude and they are made to assent to their images, and once the practical things (together with the conditions of the possibility of their existence) take hold of their souls and dominate them so that they are unable to resolve to do anything else, then the theoretical

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30   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Madīnah al-Fāḍilah*, 125; for English translation see: *Fārābī on the Perfect State*, 219

31   Alfred L. Irvy, "Al-Fārābī", in *Religion, Learning and Science in the Abbasid Period*, edited by M.J. Young, J. D. Latham, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 385.

and practical things are realized. Now these things are *philosophy* when they are in the soul of the legislator. They are *millah* when they are in the souls of the multitude. For when the legislator knows these things, they are evident to him by sure insight, whereas what is established in the souls of the multitude is through an image and a persuasive argument. Although it is the legislator who also represents these things through images, neither the images nor the persuasive arguments are intended for himself. As far as he is concerned, they are certain. He is the one who invents the images and the persuasive arguments, but not for the sake of establishing these things in his own soul as a religion for himself. No, the images and the persuasive arguments are intended for others, whereas, so far as he is concerned, these things are certain. They are a religion for others, whereas, so far as he is concerned, they are philosophy. Such, then, is true philosophy and the true philosopher.[32]

But a question arises here regarding the concept of true philosophy or the true philosopher: If the philosopher is a prophet at the same time, what is the case of a philosopher who does not have representations of intelligibles or does not teach these intelligibles to the public? Al-Fārābī, following Plato, answers this question insofar as that true philosopher after reaching this stage not made use of by society, for the fact that he is of no use to others is not his fault but the fault of those who either do not listen or are not of the opinion that they should listen to him. "Therefore the prince or the *imam* is prince and *imam* by virtue of his skill and art, regardless of whether or not anyone acknowledges him, whether or not he is obeyed, whether or not he is supported in his purpose by any group; just as the physician is physician by virtue of his skill and his ability to heal the sick, whether or not there are sick men for him to heal,

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32   Fārābī, *Kitāb Taḥṣīl al-Saʿādah*, edited by Jāfar Āl Yāsīn, (Beirut: Dar al-Andalus, 1981), 94; for English translation see. *The Attainment of Happiness,* in *Philosophy of Plato an Aristotle*, translated by Muhsin Mahdi, (Ithaki, New York: Cornell Paperbacks, 2001), 47.

whether or not he finds tools to use in his activity, whether he is
prosperous or poor, for not having any of these things does not do
away with his nature as a physician."[33]

   As we shall see, the meaning of the philosopher in al-Fārābī
is so powerfully evident that this situation saparates him from
Averroes. The philosopher of al-Fārābī is neither just a scientist
trying to understand nature nor a man trying to interpret religion.
Furthermore, he is the founder of the state and the lawgiver. He is
kingly and linked to revelation from God.

> Indeed, he determines the actions and opinions in the
> virtuous religion by means of revelation. This occurs in
> one or both of two ways: one is that they are all revealed
> to him as determined; the second is that he determines
> them by means of the faculty he acquires from revela-
> tion and from the Revealer, may He be exalted, so that
> the stipulations with which he determines the virtuous
> opinions and actions are disclosed to him by means of
> it. Or some come about in the first way and some in the
> second way.[34]

   Furthermore, al-Fārābī investigates the theoretical basis of the
constitution of state which is beyond the scope of Plato's Republic.
For this, he attempts to establish a solid relationship between millah,
which is inherently indigenous, and philosophy, which is universal.
There is no doubt that many law-givers have enacted a law at various
times and in different parts of the world. However, the primary
problem is, for al-Fārābī, what is the criterion to be used to determine
which millah (religion) is virtuous millah?

   According to al-Fārābī, the philosophy that is based on dialectics
or sophistic methods is a kind of pseudo-philosophy or nascent
philosophy and these types of philosophy precede the true phi-
losophy that is established on the basis of rational demonstration,
just as the flowers of a tree precede its fruits. In turn, demonstrative

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33   Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-Saʿādah*, 95-97; for English translation see. *The Attainment
     of Happiness,* 48-49

34   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Millah*, 44; for English translation see: *Al-Fārābī The
     Political Writings,* 94.

philosophy precedes millah just as the user of the tools precedes the tools. In the same vein, the millah precedes kalam (theology) and fiqh (jurisprudence). In other words, tradition (sunnah) means the establishment of millah in society through the tools of argumentative kal*a*m and guiding fiqh. Hence, tradition depends on millah while millah depends on philosophy.[35]

In brief, for al-Fārābī the development of religion follows the development of philosophy. Historically, for him, philosophy first arose when inquiry was limited to rhetorical methods. A further stage beyond rhetorical investigation involved the application of dialectic. Next, following the gradual realization that dialectic is in sufficient, a third stage commenced which led to completion of philosophy by the addition of demonstration. Al-Fārābī identifies this stage as the one which existed at the time of Plato. Finally, in the days of Aristotle, scientific investigation completed both theoretical and practical philosophy.[36]

Although his historical account is without a sure foundation, al-Fārābī asserts that each of these stages produced a *millah* that corresponds to the kind of philosophy then available. However, only millah that is completely based on philosophy is virtuous. A religion founded in accordance with a philosophy that is not yet demonstrative will, like that philosophy; contain a mixture of true and untrue options and correct and incorrect beliefs. Thus, virtuous millah can exist only after the emergence of a philosophy based on demonstration.[37]

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35   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, edited by Muhsin Mahdi, (Beirut: Dar al-Mashreq, 1969), 131-132.

36   Ibid., 153.

37   Ibid.,153-154. According to Paul E. Walker,"this historical pattern applies also to Islam. Islam emerged at a time when Aristotle's perfection of philosophy was established fact. Yet, in another sense, Islam came before philosophy in terms of the advancement of philosophical methods strictly within the cultural heritage of Arabian tribes to whom Muhammad preached. But situation of Muhammad is only one of many complex examples that seem to involve the transfer of philosophy (or transfer of religion) from one nation to another. In another situation, the lawgiver in question, al-Fārābī admits, may have gone abroad, learned philosophy or a religion, and then returned to institute

In this context, al-Fārābī determines that the raison d'etre of virtuous millah is to teach the theoretical and practical issues in philosophy to the society in general, in accordance with their conception.[38] So, although it is impossible for the truth to be known as truth in its complete reality for the general population, is necessary that the transmission of the philosophical issues which contain theoretical knowledge be verified by demonstration and practical knowledge deduced by argument be conveyed to the general public at a level they can understand. So, this common millah brings together the opinions, beliefs and actions of the individuals within a community and renders their divisions harmonious, linked together, and well-arranged, and at that point they will promote one another in their actions and help one another to live up to the ultimate happiness.[39] In other words millah is not the truth itself, but the imitation of philosophical or demonstrative truth.

It can be seen clearly here that there is an assumption underlying al-Fārābī thoughts regarding inequality between philosophers and the general public in the comprehension of truth. However, this does not mean that the majority of society would be bereft of truth. Indeed, a unity among philosophers or governers and the public can be ensured sufficient for the people to understand the philosophical truth through *millah*. For it to be otherwise would leave just two alternatives:

First, it is claimed that there is no way for the general public to achieve happiness if the truth is valid only for a certain segment

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a religion for his own people. Such a development might occur at any stage. But what exactly does al-Fārābī imply in the case of Islam? That is an especially awkward question which al-Fārābī certainly did not answer it directly. Is the actual relationship of perfect philosophy to the religion of Islam merely hypothetical, both for us and for him? An answer may be that the meeting of Muhammad and Aristotle did not and does not produce only one result but rather severel, each of which is equally useful." (Paul E. Walker, "Al-Farabi on Religion and Practical Reason", in *Religion and Practical Reason*, edited by Frank E. Reynolds and David Tracy, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 107-108.

38   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, 131.

39   Al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Millah*, 66.

of society (elitism). Secondly, it is assumed that there is no absolute truth, placing knowledge beyond human understanding (sophism or skepticism).

Neither approach is suitable for political unity in al-Fārābī's philosophy. While al-Fārābī proclaims that truth is knowable only for an elite minority, he also remarks that the remainder of society could grasp examples of truth. Obviously, this situation is different from Plato's "Noble Lie".[40] According to Plato the "Noble Lie" is a religious lie that is fed to the masses to keep them under control and happy with their situation in life for the sake of the whole of society. But in al-Fārābī, millah is not a lie, but imaginative representations of truth received in its scientific reality from the "Active Intellect".

However, as all readers of Plato know, imitations are always many and the original they imitate should be one.[41] For al-Fārābī, millah is inherently multiple. In other words, the virtuous city is always one; but virtuous millah is multiple because the truth is expressed for each community in their own best-known representations. There is no millah that expresses the truth as truth since it is expressed only through representation. The immediate content of truth is expressed only in philosophy. Therefore, the accuracy of a millah depends on the philosophical level that millah has attained in society.[42]

It must also be added that the borders of the virtuous city of al-Fārābī extend beyond the borders of the city-state of Plato and Aristotle and reach up to the world-state. So, the main problem, for Al-Fārābī, is how multiple forms of virtuous millah will exist harmoniously under the administration of a single state. If the rulers are philosophers, this is the sovereignty of truth in administration. But, for such a wide-spread state the needed foundations must be based on a pluralist judicial system.

Al-Fārābī asserts that the philosopher, who is the perfect person in all respects in the community, should administer, and that

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40   Plato, *Republic*, 414b-c

41   Joshua Parens, *An Islamic Philosophy of Virtuous Religion*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006), 78.

42   Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-Saʿādah*, 87-91.

philosophy should guide all human activities, sciences and arts. Thus, any *millah*, for al-Fārābī, is a part of a philosophy and so it will always be below philosophy. Also, jurisprudence (*al-ilm al-fiqh*) and theology (*al-ilm al-kalām*) are below the *millah* in order to be established the tradition (*al-sunnah*). According to him the rule of jurisprudence is to enable human beings to judge the determination of whatever was not definitely determined by the Lawgiver, on the basis of things that were explicitly determined by him.[43] A jurist should make an effort to judge rightly by considering the purpose of the Law-giver with the *millah* he had legislated for the community to which he gave that *millah*. As for theology, al-Fārābī says it is an art that defends the principles of the *millah* against attacks from various sources such as disbelievers or the followers of the unvirtuous *millah*s.[44] Al-Fārābī thus sees theology as an apologetic and local discipline.[45] Therefore, theology is insufficient for universal administration. However, al-Fārābī affirms different theologies (Jewish, Christianand Islamic theology and the latter including *Sunnī* and *Shiʿī* theology) as long as these are under the administration of philosophy. This contrasts with the view of Averroes who, as we shall see, considers theology (one or more) as a trouble- making and divisive discipline.

For al-Fārābī the political rule of *millah* is inseparable from philosophy and the proposal of al-Fārābī is for a social order based upon philosophical truth, albeit one expressed in different ways through various images across all segments of community. Still it should be noted that, according to al-Fārābī as well as Averroes, true philosophy is always based on demonstration (*burhān*). But for al-Fārābī there is no problem regarding the legitimacy of philosophy from the view point of religion; on the contrary, the problem is the

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43   Al-Farābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, edited by Usman Amin, (Cairo: Dār al Fikr al-ʿArabi, 1949), 107.

44   Ibid, p. 109-110

45   See more about information regarding the position of *fiqh* and *kalām* in the Al-Fārābī's classification of sciences, Osman Bakar, *Classification of Knowledge in Islam*, (Cambridge: Islamic Text Society 1998), 143-147.

legitimacy of religion from the view point of philosophy. That is, philosophy stands over and in judgment of religion.

In sum millah, in the sense of the imaginative manifestation of the truth in different ways and in different communities, means the principles of faith and the views shared among all the members of a community. In this sense, it sometimes may correspond to the community that accepts these principles. A possible result of this situation is that the different virtuous millahs could be in a very large of piece of land under the command of the same virtuous state. Such a universal state has to be based on a system of multiple forms of laws. Herein al-Fārābī would have us think that the virtuous state extends beyond the boundaries of time and space as long as it is based on demonstrative philosophy.

The solution offered by al-Fārābī, declaring the universality of philosophy and politics based on intellect, conceives of jurisprudence and theology as bridges between administrators and the public. According to him millah is imaginative expression of the philosophical truth; fiqh and kalām are charged with the function of "understanding" (literally, fiqh means understanding) and "defending" (literally, kalām means word or discussion) being part of the millah as the arts serving philosophy from below it. Kalām or theology is needed for the prevention and protection of millah and the non-philosophic masses from corrupt beliefs. Similarly, fiqh or jurisprudence is a necessary discipline insofar as it is part of political philosophy. The art of jurisprudence is that by which a human being is able to infer, from the things the lawgiver declared specifically and determinately, things he did not specifically declare. And he is able to aspire to a verification of that on the basis of the purpose of the lawgiver in the millah (religion) he legislated with the respect to the ummah (nation) for which it was legislated. The art of dialectical theology is a disposition by which a human being is able to defend the specific opinions and actions that the founder of the millah declared and to refute by arguments whatever opposes it. Just as philosophy is divided into the theoretical and the practical, every millah has two sections. Again in this connection, these two

arts are divided into two parts: a part with respect to opinions and a part with respect to actions.[46]

*Hence, al-*Fārābī *propounds a doctrine based on the principle of the unity of truth, authorizing the successive king-philosophers, each one of whom has the same qualities as the first ruler, to solve all the problems that occur or may occur in the community. This system assumes that there is one truth and [that] it can be achieved only via intellect.*

*In this context, revelation is nothing more than the highest level of intellect which Avicenna later calls holy intellect (*al-aql al-qudsī*). So, for al-*Fārābī as well as Avicenna, religious knowledge is a kind of philosophical knowledge conveyed and presented in ways different from what is appropriate for philosophy itself. Furthermore, temporal and geographic changes require some changes in the content of revelation. Certainly, this case constitutes a problem from the viewpoint of the orthodox juridical system, and this problem does not escape Averroes' notice, as he is not only a philosopher but also a jurist.

Sharīʿah in Averroes' efense of Philosophy

In light of the considerations mentioned immediately above, it is clear that Averroes' political attitude developed in a very different direction, though he did draw on some particular aspects of the analyses of al-Fārābī. Averroes seizes upon the unity of truth and regards intellectual life as the highest aim, adhering to the common Aristotelian philosophical doctrine. However, in doing so he assumes a contradiction between intellectual life and social life, just as Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Tufayl had before him.[47] While Al-Fārābī, tried to

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46   Al-Fārābī, *Iḥṣāʾ al-ʿUlūm*, 107-108; *Kitāb al-Millah*, 52.

47   Before Averroes in Andalus philosophy, Ibn Bajjah or Avempace (d. 1138) focused on the tension between the philosopher and social life in his work of *Tadbīr al-Mutawaḥḥid* (*Governance of Solitary*) rather than the principles of the political life. According to him, the philosopher may exist in society in either a virtuous or a non-virtuous city. A virtuous city is one whose members are all complete in knowledge, while in a non-virtuous city the contrary is the case. If philosophers exist in a nonvirtuous city, they must live in isolation from the rest of society, for their complete knowledge makes them 'strangers'

base the necessity of the philosopher's position as administrator of a hierarchically structured community on the hierachichal structure of the universe. Averroes tries first to give a rightful place to philosophy (with his works of *Fasl al-Maqāl*, *al-Kashf an Manāhij al-Adillah* and *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*) in social life and secondly to give it a superior place (with the works of *Commentary of Plato's Republic* and commentaries of Aristotle's works) in political life.

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or 'weeds/*nawābit*', that is, those whose true opinions are contrary to the opinions of society. While isolation from society is not natural or essential for a human being in the natural or virtuous city, it is accidental to one's nature but must be practised in order to preserve oneself from the corruption of the non-virtuous cities.

As for the story of Ibn Tufayl or Abubacer (d. 1185) is "essentially a thought experiment about a mythical man named Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzan, which translates as 'Alive, son of Awake,' who spent the first 50 years of his life on an island in the Indian Ocean without any human contact. In spite of his isolation, or maybe because of it, Hayy slowly learns through careful observation, serious reflection, and the rigorous employment of reason first about himself, then animals, the material world, the movement and nature of the Heavens, and then the existence of God. Eventually, with great effort, Hayy obtains the mystical union with Ultimate Reality –he Being Who exists without cause – through a total annihilation of his own selfhood. Soon after his mystical vision the story shifts, for Hayy encounters Absāl, a Muslim who came to the island seeking solitude. The two men fascinate each other. Hayy is enthralled by Absāl's description of Islam and the message of the Prophet, which Hayy recognizes is in full accord with what he has learned through his philosophical study. Likewise, Absāl is spellbound by Hayy's description of his mystical visions, which he understands to be fully in line with revelation. Absāl quickly becomes Hayy's student and the pupil convinces the teacher to return with him to his home, so his Muslim countrymen can also benefit from Hayy's spiritual insights. Although Hayy is received with great affection and many initially sought his wisdom, the people of Absāl's island quickly ignored his message for they are incapable of rising above the literal meaning of things. Hayy's profound wisdom is unable to break their attraction to their passions, and they resoundingly reject Hayy's teaching as incomprehensible and his demanding method of self-discipline and meditation as impractical. Rather than condemn the unenlightened Muslims, Hayy and Absāl return to the isolated island where they live out their days contemplating Allah." (Michael R. Miller, "Alive and Awake in Allah", New Blackfriars, Vol. 87, Isuue 1011 (2006) 476.

This may have been a response to the Almohad's (*al-Muwahhidûn*) new orientation to religion and education based on the teachings of the reformer, al-Mahdī ibn Tumart. Although insistent on strict adherence to religious law, Ibn Tūmart's teachings were at the same time equally insistent on the essential rationality of the existence and unity (*tawhīd*) of God and his creation as well as the rationality of the Qur'ān and its interpretation. This approach was embraced –even exploited– by Averroes in his own writings on dialectical theology and thereby played a role in the development of his thought on the nature of religious law and revelation in relation to philosophy founded on the powers of natural reason.[48]

Hence, Averroes does not regard religious knowledge precisely as a kind of philosophical knowledge as we have seen in al-Fārābī. In other words, there is *sharīʿah* (the revelation of God) as a completed system outside of philosophy, in the background of his thinking; and, consequently, the problem regarding social life is to understand it rightly and to determine how it is to be taken in reference to the different groups of people in society.

Within this framework, while philosophy is presented as an activity based on human effort, the *sharīʿah* is seen as a divine knowledge in terms of its source and is viewed as distinctively concerned with the social and political spheres. Hence, the philosophy, as an individual human endeavor and activity, has no assertive role regarding the administration of social and political life.

Is it possible to reach such a conclusion? On the one hand, Averroes can be interpreted as advancing the pessimistic approach that developed in direction of it not being possible for the intellectual life socially in this world, a view which arose in the philosophy of Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Tufayl.

On the other hand, the philosopher, according to Averroes, cannot live in society as the stranger (*mutawaḥḥid*) of Ibn Bajjah. Also he cannot seek isolation and go to stay on his island as the

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48   Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes: Religious Dialectic and Aristotelian Philosophical Thought", in *The Cambridge Companion to Arabic Philosophy*, eds. Peter Adamson and Richard C. Taylor, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 180.

protagonist *Ḥayy* of Ibn Tufayl's imaginary account. Averroes is tied strictly to Aristotle's approach and does not separate the philosopher from social and political life. On the contrary, he first looks for a way in which the philosopher may live in the community and second he tasks the philosopher with a political charge to develop something for the public that could be an alternative to *kalām* through true interpretation of *sharīʿah*. Probably, the steadiest way of this, for Averroes, was to show that there is no conflict between *sharīʿah* and philosophy, whereas Fārābī's approach was to see religious knowledge as a kind of philosophical knowledge.

If, therefore, one looks to the extensive literature of Averroes from the point of political philosophy, it can be seen that his approach at first appearance is more juridical than philosophical. He asks, at the beginning of the *Fasl al-Maqāl*, whether philosophy and sciences of logic are permitted, forbidden or ordered by the religious law (*sharīʿah*).[49]

If the problem is presented in this way, the inevitable result is that the solution of social problems lies within the broad scope of jurisprudence (*fiqh*). In this context, Averroes wrote many works focusing on the *fiqh*, the most famous being his *Bidāyat al Mujtahid wa Nihayāt al-Muqtaṣid* in which he shows the way to be *mujtahid*[50] for solving the social problems setting forth the principles of *fiqh*.[51] For this reason, when evaluating Averroes' opinion on the social position of the philosophers, one must not neglect his identity as a Muslim judge. In fact, opposing Al-Fārābī under the influence of this identity, Averroes regards philosophy not as an activity that creates law but, on the contrary, as an activity under the law. In other words, while al-Fārābī demonstrates an approach based on continuity of revelation regarding the regulation of social life,

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49   Averroes, *Faṣl al-Maqāl,* 1.

50   *Ijtihād* (literally means "struggle" or "striving") is a technical term of the Islamic Law meaning the process of making a legal decision by interpretation of the sources of the law, the Quran and the Sunna. A person entitled to *ijtihād* is called *mujtahid.*

51   See, Averroes, *Bidāyāt al-Mujtahid* (*The Distinguished Jurist's Primer*), translated by Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee, (Lebanon: Garnet Publishing Limited, 1996).

Averroes clings to jurisprudence for the solution of new problems emerging in the social sphere.

In this regard, the legitimacy of the juridical syllogistic is beyond the scope of the discussion. But must the same principles be used not only in regard to religious subjects but also in regard to philosophical subjects so different from religion such as physics, metaphysics and psychology? In this context, Averroes provides a legal defense for intellectual syllogistic reasoning equivalent to a juridical syllogism that is not itself the subject of discussion or question.[52]

In this way Averroes primarily focuses on the purpose of the *sharīʿah*. According to him, the intent of the *sharīʿah* is only to teach the true science and true practice to people.

> True science is cognizance of Allah and of all the existing things as they are, especially the venerable ones among them; and cognizance of happiness in the hereafter and of misery in the hereafter. True practice is to follow the actions that promote happiness and to avoid the actions that promote misery; and cognizance of these actions is what is called practical science.[53]

However, even though Averroes made such a determination, he is aware that the main problem remained unsolved. The main problem is not that of including *sharīʿah* within such knowledge as disclosure of truth; on the contrary, the problem is that of holding the content of some religious pronouncements and texts open to interpretation. Indeed, scripture itself certifies this, for example, in this way: "It is He who has sent down to you, [O Muhammad], the Book; in it are verses [that are] precise - they are the foundation of the Book - and others unspecific."[54] At this point, the problem that occupied Averroes's mind is whether or not *sharīʿah* undermines the unity of believers by having apparent and inner aspects.

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52   Averroes, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, 3

53   Ibid, 23

54   Qurʾān, 3:7.

According to Averroes this issue does not arise from the text itself, but in the manner in which theologians approached it. In fact *sharīʿah* confirms the unity of truth and thereby the unity of believers with a discourse that appeals to all classes of people: "And you firmly to the rope of Allah all together and do not become divided. And remember the favor of Allah upon you –when you were enemies and He brought your hearts together and you became, by His favor, brothers."[55] Hence, according to Averroes, "the reason an apparent and an inner sense are set down in the Law is the difference in people's innate dispositions and the variance in their innate capacities for assent. The reason apparently contradictory senses are set down is to alert 'those well-grounded in science' to the interpretation that reconciles them."[56]

Moreover, the opinion of Averroes is that this takes place due to intellectual confusion in the Islamic world, due to interpretations of the apparent senses without discriminating between meanings apparent and inner, and due to propagation of these interpretations to the people with impunity. Thus, different sects with different interpretations, attempting to interpret the apparent sense of *sharīʿah*, have asserted these interpretations as constituting the original religion that all people were meant to uphold, and in such a way that whoever deviates from them is either an unbeliever or a heretic.[57] In this context, it is far from easy to understand what is apparent and what is inner. This problem which Averroes tries to solve is itself still reflected in the present Islamic world and has generated a structure that has alienated Muslims from within Islam.

Averroes' approach under these circumstances is literalist to the point of reminding us of what is found in the *Zāhirī* School and Ibn Hazm.[58] He goes against both the approach of theologians that

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55   Qur'an, 3: 103

56   Averroes, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, 10

57   Averroes, *al-Kashf*, 100.

58   The *Zāhirī* School of Law was founded by Abū Sulayman Dāwūd ibn ʿAlī ibn Khālāf, who was born in Kūfah in approximately 270 (815) and died in Baghdad in 270 (884). The main teaching of this school was the importance of maintaining the literal meaning of outward (*zāhir*) aspect of the texts making

could notreach the objective level due to their use of the method of *jadal* (dialectic) as foundational and the use of the subjective experiences of the Sufis as also foundational. Thus, he makes an effort to promote objectivity adhering to literal means of the text, at least as far as level of the comprehension of the masses of unsophisticated human beings. Inthis respect, Averroes has a viewpoint intended to protect the political function of *fiqh*, since this function is sufficient to achieve an objective ground in the sight of public who must understand the *sharīʿah* at the level of apparent meaning.

However, unlike Ibn Hazm, Averroes advocates the view that the *sharīʿah* has an inner sense as well and uses this inner sense as the base for the legality of philosophy. So much so is this the case that, according to Averroes, if the chief purpose is the happiness of all people, the discourse of *sharīʿah* as well has to take into account the diversity of temperaments among people and has to have a feature that can appeal to people at all levels. In other words, "since what is intended by the *sharīʿah* is, indeed, to teach everyone, therefore, it is obligatory that the *sharīʿah* comprise all the methods of bringing about assent and all the methods of forming a concept."[59] In other words, "*sharīʿah* consists of two parts: external and interpreted, and the external part is incumbent on the masses, whereas the interpreted is incumbent on the learned."[60]

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up the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. Therefore, the *zāhirīs* were hostile to any attempt at applying human reasoning, whether by analogy (*qiyās*), *istiṣḥāb, istiḥsān*, or *taqlīd*, in interpreting Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth*. Ibn Hazm was a prominent member of this *Zāhirī* school, which by his time had reached its zenith in Spain. As a member of the *Zāhirī* school he held to the literal meaning in interpreting the texts and declared that there is no hidden meaning (*bāṭīn*) in them. For him, it was the literal meaning that had to be accepted and any attempt to trace the hidden meaning was useless. (For this school's account, see. Al Makin, "The Influence of Zāhirī theory on Ibn Hazm's Theology: The Case of His Interpretation of the Antropomorpic Text 'The Hand of God'", *Medieval Encounters* 5, no. 1 (March 1999): 112-20; Arnaldez, R. "Ibn Hazm." In *The Encyclopedia of Islam, new edition,* edited by B. Lewis, (Leiden, The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1971) 790-99.

59   Averroes, *Faṣl al-maqāl,* 24.

60   Averroes, *al-Kashf*, 99; for English translation see: *Faith and Reason in Islam*, translated by Ibrahim Y. Najjar, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001), 17.

As already indicated, Averroes thinks that the *sharīʿah* has a content speaking to both the public and some educationally elite individuals. Indeed, the most important difference between his *sharīʿah* and Fārābī's *millah* is at this point. Fārābī's *millah* speaks to only masses; its function is the persuasion and subjection of those who could not think with demonstrative reasoning. However, the character of Averroes'*sharīʿah* has more content,, enabling it to speak to philosophers and non-philosophers alike. According to him, one of the properties of *sharīʿah* is its availability to the broad array of the faithful.

In this context, the distinction between apparent and inner understandingsof the Qur'an and the necessity of taking into consideration the different ways of thinking among various levels of people is evident within Averroes' approach.

Drawing on the thought of Ibn Bajjah, Averroes talks about three classes of people with respect to the *sharīʿah*: the rhetorical class, the dialecticians, and the demonstrative class.[61] This is because of the need for the appeal of the *sharīʿah* to people who can think only rhetorically; as for the hidden part; it is for people who are demonstrative by nature and art, which is in the art of philosophy. Interpretation pertains to philosophers because they have competence in using demonstrative methods.The duty of the public about the hidden meaning of *sharīʿah* is to understand through its appealing meaning and to avoid being drawn into confusing interpretations.[62]As for the path of theologians, it conflicts with that of both the public and the philosophers, according to Averroes. This is because they neither understand the *sharīʿah* with apparent meaning as the public do nor can they use the demonstrative method as philosophers do to understand the hidden meaning. In this way, it is clear that the dialecticians or theologians are unnecessary and

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61   Compare with: Ibn Bajjah, "Tadbīr al-Mutawahhid", ed. Majid Fakhry, in *Resāil Ibn Bajjah al-Ilāhiyya* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1991), 79-80; Ibn Bajjah, "Ittisal al-Akl bi'l-Insān", ed. Majid Fakhry, *Resāil Ibn Bajjah al-Ilāhiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Nahār, 1991), 165-67

62   Averroes, *al-Kashf*, 99.

even harmful to society.[63] Thus, Averroes defines the theologians as posing a genuine danger to the state and to the purity of Islam and suggests to the ruler that there be a ban on the publicizing of their activities.[64] This point is the other important difference between al-Fārābī and Averroes. While al-Fārābī maintains the necessity of theology for the establishment and protecting of *millah*, Averroes points out its disruptive effect.

Yet it is clear that the problem is even more complicated. Averroes proposes that the *sharīʿah* has a hidden aspect which can be understood only by philosophers, on the one hand, but on the other hand he sticks to the necessity of the political function of *fiqh* and makes the *kalām* non-functional.

But another problem raises here concerning his other works in which he comments on the works of Aristotle and *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut* which perhaps can help us regarding this issue. As Averroes wrote in *al-Kashf*, this hidden meaning is nothing more than "reflection upon existing things consideration of them by intellect insofar as they are an indication of the Artisan". [65]However, the starting point of that way asspecific to the philosophers is not the Qur'an or other religious sources; rather it is to think about being and all beings in nature.

In this context, his statement of 'the *sharīʿah* specific to the philosophers' at the beginning of his *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics of Aristotle* is a key for understanding correctly his opinion on this issue:[66]

> The *sharīʿah* specific to the philosophers is the investigation of all beings, since the Creator is not worshipped

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63   Averroes, *Faṣl al-maqāl,* 30.

64   A. Adil Amin Kak, *The Attitude of Islam Toward Science and Philosophy*, (New Delhi: Sarup&Son, 2003), 25.

65   Averroes, *al-Kashf*, 120. Averroes gives reference these verses of the Qurʾān about this issue: 86:5-6; 88:17-20; 46:184; 6:75; 3:191.

66   For extensive interpretation of this statement see Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes on the Sharīʿah of the Philosophers", in *the Muslim, Chiristian and Jewish Heritage: Philosophical and Theological Perspectives in the Amrahamic Traditions*, edited by Richard C. Taylor & Irfan Omar, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 2012), 283-304.

by worship more noble than the knowledge of those
things that He produced which lead to the knowledge
in truth of His essencemay He be exalted!..[67]

This statement directing ourview from Scripture to nature and
the Creator presents the viewthat demonstrative syllogismis not
based on Scripture. Obviously, Averroes separates the demonstrative
inference specific to philosophers from the dialectical inference
specific to the theologians (*mutakallimūn*). Philosophy is definitely
not an activity dependent on Scripture. The premises used in dem-
onstration are not premises found in Scripture. On the contrary,
"demonstration in general is a sure or certain syllogism giving
knowledge of the thing as it is in regard to existence in the way in
which it is existent...."[68] Thus, according to Averroes the premises
used in demonstration are pure rational knowledge which the human
intellect deduced from experience of the natural world.

Furthermore, the aim of a human being is to reach theoretical
and practical perfection using the faculty of the intellect. In accord
with Aristotelian tradition, Averroes depicts the acquiring of this
kind of perfection as "conjunction with the active intellect" (*al-ittisāl
bi al-ʿaql al-faʿāl*) and according to him the way of conjunction
is theoretical research and study. This is because the intellect is
"nothing but the perception of the order and arrangement of all
existing things"[69]

In this case, must there be a choice between carrying out the
duties of *sharīʿah,* on the one hand, and, on the other hand, trans-
mitting intellectual understanding for theoretical perfection with
research related to nature and existence? According to Averroes

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67   Averroes, *Tafsīr mā bāʿd al-ṭabīʿa*, edited by Maurice Bouyges, (Beirut: Dār
al-Mashreq, 1991), I, 10.

68 والبرهان بالجملة هو قياس يفيد علم الشيء على ما هو عليه فى الوجود بالعلة التى هو بها
"موجود ... »

Averroes, *Talkhīṣ manṭiq Arisṭū..Talkhīṣ al-burhān*, edited by G. Jihami, (Beirut:
Dār al-Fikr al-Lubnānī, 1992), 373.

69 «... إذ كان عقله ليس شئًا أكثر من النظام والترتيب الذى فى جميع الموجودات»

Averroes, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, edited by Sulayman Dunyā, (Cairo: Dār al-Maʾāref,
1950), 528.

this is not an optional issue; on the contrary, this issue is related to the differentiation between the natural dispositions and abilities of people. Obviously, the natural ability needed for acquiring theoretical perfection is not same for everyone and human beings become different "due either to a deficiency in his innate disposition, poor ordering of his reflection, being overwhelmed by his passions, not finding a teacher to guide him to an understanding of what is in them, or because of a combination of all more than one of these reasons."[70]

In that case, the most important difference between religious and philosophical discourse is related to the method used for the expression of truth. According to Averroes, philosophy uses demonstration based on the intellect while *sharīᶜah* has a content which is made up of sensitive, imaginative, and intellectual forms of knowledge. Therefore, while *sharīᶜah* speaks to all human beings, philosophy speaks to only an elite minorty. In this respect Averroes shares the solution of the Peripatetic tradition of Islamic philosophy since Abu Bakr al-Rhazes regarding the problem of necessity of religion. Averroes says that:

> The religions are, according to the philosophers, obligatory, since they lead towards wisdom in a way universal to all human beings, for philosophy only leads a certain number of intelligent people to the knowledgeof happiness, and they therefore have to learn wisdom, whereas religions seek the instruction of the masses generally. Not withstanding this, we do not find any religion which is not attentive to the special needs of the learned, although it is primarily concerned with the things in which the masses participate.[71]

Hence, according to Averroes, *sharīᶜah* with regards to speak all people has a wider content than philosophy in that it makes its message more widely available than is possible for philosophy. It can do things which demonstration cannot such as teaching the

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70   Averroes, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 7.

71   Averroes, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, 867.

masses, contributing to the happiness of the whole community. *Shariʿāh* makes it possible for all people to attain an understanding of truth. In this respect Averroes agrees with al-Fārābī that the religion generates the happniess of the people. But, differently from al-Fārābī, Averroes does not focus on the particular characteristics of first ruler and he has no philosophical theory of revelation as do al-Fārābī and Avcienna. The *sharīʿah* as a complete system had come to prominence because of the importance of determining how the different levels of people must understand it.

In short, the division between *sharīʿah* suitable for the non-philosophical populace and philosophy has been due to the diffe-rences of audiences and participants. The *shariʿāh* itself in the broad sense consists in all the theoretical knowledge that the philosopher has, but only the *sharīʿah* suitable for the non-philosophical populace can embody this knowledge in a law and convince the general public that this is a law that should be followed.

> Every *sharīʿah* exists through inspiration and is blended with intellect. And he who holds that it is possible that there should exist a natural *sharīʿah* based on intellect alone must admit that this *shariʾāh* must be less perfect than those which rise from reason and inspiration.[72]

This means that *sharīʿah* contains the philosophical truth, and so the content of prophetic law (*sharīʿah*) is not in confilict with the content of the philosophical *sharīʿah* as demonstrative (*burhan*).

> Since this Law is true and calls to the reflection leading to cognizance of the truth, we, the Muslim community, know firmly that demonstrative reflection does not lead to differing with what is set down in the Law. Fortruth does not oppose truth; rather, it agrees with and bears witness to it.[73]

He hereby sticks to the principle of "the unity of truth" just as al-Fārābī. He does not disconnect philosophy from religion. On the contrary, he tries to reunite these two ways that Ghazali had

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72   Averroes, *Tahāfut at-Tahāfut*, 869

73   Averroes, *Faṣl al-Maqāl*, 8-9.

separated, but now as the expression of the same truth. However, unlike al-Fārābī, he presents this unity in a different way, namely by developing a doctrine of interpretation (*tāwil*).

This situation can be compared by associating it with the opinion of Spinoza regarding the language of the Scripture. According to Spinoza, Scripture teaches only very simple doctrines and inculcates nothing but obedience. Scripture has a common language and this common language inculcates obedience. There is no language transcendent to this purpose in its content. The book which must be read by philosophers is that of nature itself.74

It can be seen here that the approach of Spinoza is closer to al-Fārābī. However, that difference should take the following into consideration: Spinoza claims that the prophets were not endowed with perfect intellect, but with an extraordinary power of imagination and that God did not reveal to them any philosophical truths or mysteries.75 In spite of that, according to al-Fārābī the prophet is a philosopher as well. Al-Fārābī describes the "*al-raīs al-awwal*" ("the first ruler") as both prophet and philosopher by arguing that the meaning of *philosopher*, *lawgiver*, *king*, and *leader* corresponds to different aspects of one and the same person who is *al-raīs al awwal*.76

As for Averroes, there is a semantic field transcending beyond this common language and open only to philosophers. The apparent aspect of Scripture speaks to the understanding of the general public and its inner aspect is accessible only to philosophers. In other words, philosophy is present in Scripture immanently. *Sharīʿah* is a way to render truth accessible to the masses, and where a hidden meaning exist it is up to the philosophers to discover it and keep it to themselves, while the remaining people must acknowledge a literal understanding of Scripture.

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74   Benedictus Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, translated by Samuel Shirley, (Leiden, New York, Köbenhavn, Köln: E.J Brill, 1989), 214-219.

75   Ibid, 73, 214.

76   Al-Fārābī, *Taḥṣīl al-Saʿādah*, edited by Jafar al-Yāsin, (Beirut: Dār al-Menāhil, 1992), 92-94.

Within this content, Averroes does not discuss the problem of the priority of philosophy or religion in the sort of historical perspective raised in Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Hurūf*. So, if we compare Aristotle's influence on al-Fārābī and Averroes we see that the opinions of al-Fārābī were close to the *Book Λ* of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and that the the opinions of Averroes were close to the *Book a.* In that case we encounter two different readings of Aristotle. The text that affected al-Fārābī is as follows:

> The ancients of very early times bequeathed to postority in the form of a myth a tradition that the heavenly bodies are gods and the divinity encompasses the whole of nature. The rest of the tradition has been added later as a means of persuading the masses and as something useful for the laws and for matters of expediency...[77]

The stuation mentioned here is related to that the section subsequently added to the tradition of philosophy regarding the persuasion of the masses.

Unlike the point of view that philosophy is prior to *millah*, Averroes focuses on the holism of *sharī'ah* as a complete system and claims that the same *sharī'ah* speaks to both the general public with its apparent aspect and to philosophers with its inner aspect. If we return to Aristotle, we might see that Averroes has taken a reference as follows:

> The way we receive a lecture depends on our costom; for we expect a lecturer to use the language we are accustomed to, and any other language appears not agreeable but rather unknown and strange because we are not accustmed to it; for the customary is more known. The power of custom is clearly seen in the laws, in which the mythical and childish beliefs prevail over our knowledge about them, because of custom. Some people do not accept statements unless they are expressed mathematically; others, unless they are expressed by way of

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77   Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Translated by Hippocrates G. Apstle, (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1966), 1074b 1-5.

examples; and there are some who demand that a poet
be quoted as a witness. Again, some demand accuracy in
everything, while others are annoyed by it, either because
they are unable to follow connections or because they
regard it as petty.[78]

It seems that this condition is related to addressing the people's
ability to understand in accordance with their natural strength,
capabilities and habits. In fact, "For a carpenter and a geometer look
for the right angle in different ways: the one looks for it to the extent
to which it is useful towards his product, while the other looks for
what it is, or what sort of thing it is, for his gaze is on truth."[79] So,
it can be considered that the distinction between the philosophers
and the public partially consists in the desire for the truth as truth
or for its utility. In other words, *sharīʿah* has a versatile expression
and function. It allows for the understanding of the truth as truth
for philosophers, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, it enables
the configuration of the social order in a healthy way for the masses.

However, the issue of the relationship between philosophy and
religion is not completely solved yet, whether it is interpreted by
al-Fārābī or by Averroes. This is because the suggestion of al-Fārābī
requires the rulers to be philosophers continuously. But this opinion
contradicts human reality, so it remains at a utopian level. As to
Averroes, he had not yet answered what is to be done when a conflict
comes up between the evidence and study of nature, that is, the
shariʾāh specific to the philosophers, and the pronouncements of
religion, that is, the *sharīʿah* specific to the masses.

If we go back to Ibn Tufayl in the context of this problem, there
is no way to say that his attempt to move philosophy away from
societal life to its own island is sufficient because in that he does not
adhere to the social nature of human beings, at least in the context
of the Aristotelian tradition. In this respect, in order to understand
Averroes's thought regarding inner and apparent meaning of *sharīʾah*,
it is very important to keep in mind the other two characters besides

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78   Ibid, 995a 1-10.

79   Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, translation by Christopher Rowe, (New York:
      Oxford University Press), 1098a 28-33.

Hayy in the story of Ibn Tufayl, one named Absāl and the other Salāmān. Both had taken instruction in this religion andaccepted itenthusiastically. Both held themselves duty-boundto abide by all its laws and precepts for living. They practiced their religion together; and together, fromtime to time, they would study some of that religion's traditional expressions describing God —exalted be He— the angels He sends, and the character of resurrection, reward and punishment. Absāl, for his part, was the more deeply concerned with getting down to the heart of things, the more eager to discover spiritual values, and the more ready to attempt a more or less allegorical interpretation. Salāmān, on the other hand, was more anxious to preserve the literal and less prone to seek subtle intensions. On the whole he avoided giving too free a rein to his though. In Averroes' thought, Hayy, who had learned the truth from observation of nature, and Absāl, who had learned the truth from the inner meaning of Scripture, correspond to two types of philosopher, and Salāmān, who is consist in the apparent meaning of the Scripture, corresponds to the jurist. In fact, the truth which Hayy acqired from the solitary philosophical journey that included the observations of nature and beings does not conflict with the religious tradition in Salāmān's country at the level of inner meaning, which is Absāl's comprehension. This epistemological correspondence, however, has no reciprocity at the political level, which is Salāmān's comprehension. According to Ibn Tufayl, philosophy is forced to withdraw to its own island away from the masses and away from their governor, Salāmān, who see the truth only in religious texts and its apparent meaning. One cannot transmit philosophical truth to the people except by the apparent means of the *shari'āh* suitable for their level of understanding. In other words, philosophy does not have enough strength to enlighten the masses; more precisely, the masses do not possess the ability to understand the truth as truth.80

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80   Ibn Tufayl, *Ḥayy bin Yakzān*, edited by Albert Nasrī Nāder, (Beirut: Dār al-Mashreq, 1996), 9-104; for English translation see. *Ibn Tufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yakzan*, translated by Lenn Evan Goodman, (New York: Twayne Publisher, 1972), 156-166.

To this point, Averroes can be said to take a step further and not oblige philosophy to withdraw. If there is a conflict, it lies completely at the apparent level; so it is needed to interpret *sharīʿah* with the way of demonstration. Thus, Averroes develops a doctrine of interpretation that will convert the apparent conflict to inner coherence. The resolution of conflict between *sharīʿah* and demonstrative truth is to be to be found in rhetorical or dialectical discourse in the *sharīʿah* because of the inability of the public to understand the truth as truth. Averroes' teaching of interpretation draws attention to the need to appeal to philosophy in order to eliminate the conflict. Where demonstrative truth appears to conflict with the sense of *sharīʿah*, then the philosophers know that the passages must be interpreted allegorically so as to cohere with the demonstrative truths. So the philosopher will pursue the inner meaning going beyond the apparent sense of *sharīʿah*.81

Averroes asserts that there is but one truth and that the primary way that truth is to be attained is through philosophical demonstration. Truth attained in other ways such as through rhetorical or dialectical argumentation is attained in an accidental way since there cannot be a suitable understanding of the proper and per se causes of the purportedly true conclusion.82 If the only way to reach the truth is demonstrative, this task belongs to the philosopher alone. This is because philosophers are best able to understand correctly the allegorical passages in the *sharīʿah* on the basis of demonstration. In this respect it can be said that Averroes' doctrine of interpretation includes a superiority of philosophy over the apparent sense of Scripture. Averroes claims that one must look for in an inner sense behind the apparent meaning. Hereby, "Averroes, working in the philosophical shadow of al-Fārābī, constructed a theory of interpretation which had at its center the absolute primacy of philosophy and its infallible method of demonstration."83

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81   Averroes, *Faṣl al-Maqāl, 20, 25*

82   Richard C. Taylor, "Truth Does Not Contradict Truth: Averroes and the Unity of Truth", *Topoi,* Vol. 19, (Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2000), 10.

83   Richard C. Taylor, "Averroes on the Sharīʾah of the Philosophers", 300.

From this viewpoint it can also be said that Averroes tries to associate reason with revelation through the interpretation of *shariāh* while taking as a principle the unity of truth. So, the interpretation means to reveal the demonstrative truth that exists behind the rhetorical or dialectical discourse of *sharīʾah*.84

Thus, the *sharīʾah* specific to philosophers, that is, the research and study of beings, coalesces with the philosophy intrinsic to the interpretation of *sharīʾah*. Obviously, the meaning of philosophy in Averroes explains this and it displays itself as a new scientific level that can be an alternative to *ilm al-kalām* (theology). In this respect it is possible to see in Averroes, unlike al-Fārābī, that philosophy can be added to religion and so united to reason and revelation under the roof of *sharīʾah*.

It should be noted regarding this attitude that the most important effect can be seen in Maimonides, who is vehemently criticized nearly four centuries later by Spinoza in his *Theologico-Political Tractatus*, ch. 7. In fact, according to Spinoza, Scripture should be interpreted on its own terms and passages that clearly contradict reason must be understood in accordance with their clearly irrational meaning. Of course, Spinoza was able to reject Maimonides' position regarding the allegorical interpretation of Scripture because, unlike him, Spinoza was not committed to the reasonableness of the biblical text.85 On the contrary, if that theory were correct, it would follow that the common people, for the most part knowing nothing of logical reasoning or without the leisure to pursue it, would have to rely solely on the authority and testimony of philosophers for their understanding of Scripture and would, therefore, have to assume that philosophers are infallible in their interpretations of Scripture. This would indeed be a novel form of ecclesiastical authority, with

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84 Iysa A. Bello, *The Medieval Islamic Controversy Between Philosophy and Orthodoxy,* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1989), 68.

85   Warren Zev Harvey, "On Maimonides Allegorical Readings of Scripture", in *Interpretation and Allegory*, edited by John Whitman, (Boston-Leiden: Brill, 2003), 181-182.

very strange priests or pontiffs, more likely to excitemen's ridicule than veneration.86

However, beyond the criticisms of Spinoza on Maimonides, the conception of Averroes has an aspect that exceeds this situation. In fact, according to Averroes, the interpretation of *sharīʿah* has to stay apart in itself. In other words, Averroes, who found only philosophers sufficient to interpret the *sharīʿah*, obviously emphasizes that the public should understand it by the apparent meaning.87 In other words, the philosophers should not present these interpretations to common people. If the purpose of the Lawgiver (*shāʿrī*) is the happiness of all people, it is appropriate that the common people be content with a belief that the apparent meaning requires. So, then, according to Averroes, the philosophers do not constitute a clergy; on the contrary, he emphasizes that the reason for the disruption of union in Islamic history is the spread of the multiple and differing religious interpretations to the multitude who cannot understand them.88

Thus, Averroes holds to the ancient doctrine that philosophy (and hence the philosophical interpretation of the Scripture) should not be open the multitude. In fact, as Ibn Nadīm confirmed, philosophy in Ancient Greek had excluded those who are not competent and permitted only those whose natures are sufficient.89 To Averroes also, "those interpretations should be established only in books using demonstrations. For if they are in books using demonstrations, no one but those adept in demonstration will get at them."90 Those who make this mistake are *mutakallimūn* (theologians), especially al-Ghāzālī. Therefore, it is "obligatory for the imams of the Muslims is that they ban those of his books that contain science from all but those adept in science, just as it is obligatory upon them to ban demonstrative books from those not adept in them."91

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86   Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, 157.

87   Averroes, *Faṣl al-maqāl,* 103-104.

88   Ibid, 29-30.

89   Ibn Nadīm, *Kitāb al-Fihrist*, edited by Rıza-Teceddüd, (Beirut), 302

90   Averroes, *Fasl al-maqāl,* 21.

91   Ibid, 22.

Thus Averroes does not envisage a meeting between philosophers and masses at the intellectual level, but rather he sees that as something undesirable if not impossible. The reason for this, according to him, is included in the purpose of the interpretation. In fact, the purpose of the interpretation "includes two things: the rejection of the apparent sense and the establishing of the interpretation. Thus, if the apparent sense is rejected by someone who is an adept of the apparent sense without the interpretation being established for him, that leads him to unbelief if it is about the roots of the *sharīʿah*".92

If we apply here Plato's cave metaphor, it could be thought that we meet an attitude similar to

consistent with the attitude of the philosopher who returns to the cave after obtaining the truth in order to stimulate his friends and to provide them with something of the same experience. But here there is a very fine distinction: As distinct from the people who are living at a sensorial level in Plato's cave, the people living in Averroes' cave have been watching the imaginative reflection of the truth, though not truth itself. Al-Fārābī's philosopher had returned to the cave and gave them *millah* which is the expression of truth that they can easily understand. To go beyond this level, which is called *sharīʿah* (as its apparent sense for the majority of the populace) in the philosophy of Averroes, leads only to their losing existing belief because of their going beyond their borders of their own powers. Hereby, Averroes recommends that the public stay at the apparent level of the text.

Conclusion

These reflections upon al-Fārābī's and Averroes' philosophical works reveal that the two philosophers agree on the meaning of philosophy. Undoubtly, several philosophical questions raised in the works of al-Fārābī were reflected in the philosophy of Averroes. Especially, for both philosophers, true philosophy is based on demonstration. However, the most problematic issue among them is that of the relationship between religion and philosophy. Al-Fārābī

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92   Ibid, 26.

explicates this relationship while focusing on the concept of *millah*, Averroes focuses on the concept of *sharīʿah*.

The concept of *millah* in al-Fārābī, even if it is true *millah*, is not a universal property. There is no hidden meaning in it: it speaks to those who cannot understand philosophical truth. So, *millah* includes only rhetorical and dialectical discourse. From this point of view, for al-Fārābī, there is no any attempt to propound the legitimacy of philosophy. On the contrary, according to him, the important problem is the legitimacy of religion in relation to philosophy or demonstration. *Millah* may change according to circumstances of time and space. But true *millah*, in principle, is based on demonstration in every place and everytime. So, al-Fārābī exhibits an approach that delegates to demonstrative philosophy the right to evaluate all religious and ideological discourses that may appear in a society.
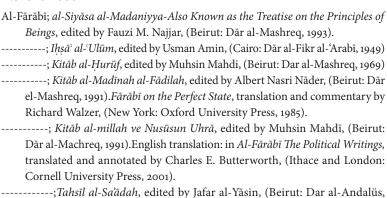
As for Averroes, he thought religion possesses a universal character. It has both apparent meaning for the majority of people and inner meaning for philosophers. From this point of view, Averroes tries to open a legitimate space for philosophy. Thus Averroes tries to close the gulf between philosophy and religion that emergenced in Islamic thought with the criticism of al-Fārābī and Avicenna by Ghazālī.

However, the problem for Averroes is not only the legitimacy of philosophy from the view point of religion. An even more important issue is the political confusion caused by the epistemological crisis in the Islamic world. Averroes tries to eliminate this political chaos by starting out from a solid epistemological foundation. The epistemological foundation is a return to the main sources of absolute truth, which are *sharīʿah* and the works of Aristotle. In this way Averroes adopts a political order in which these two truths can live together. He thus develops a perspective for maintaining the political rule of *fiqh* (jurisprudence). However, even though jurisprudence is necessary as discipline-specific for application to human behavior, it is not enough for the maintenance of social and political life in peace. In fact, the theoretical foundation based on human behavior should also be the object of careful study. Because

human actions and behaviors, when not founded on a theoretical foundation, either will take shape randomly or will determined by those with political power. The first one would not result in proper or reasonable social life but rather only in confusion; the latter would make a despotism inevitable. In this case, what is needed all the more is to identify the principles of thought and faith suitably accompanied by jurisprudence which sets out the principles of proper human behavior.

Averroes reasons that dialectics, the method used by theologians, cannot fulfill this need because of its inadequacy for reaching precise knowledge. Further, he associates the confusion and conflicts in the Islamic World with the conflicts that arise in the field of theology (*kalām*). For Averroes, such a basis can only be properly established by philosophy using the method of demontration. According to Averroes, religion and philosophy are two different fields but they do not represent two truths. He states that religion and philosophy are both considered one truth. If religion gives true knowledge and calls for the acquisition of truth, then philosophy is not contradictory to religion. On the contrary, for the achievement of the common purpose of reaching the truth they should live together in the same political environment. In this Averroes would have implicitly referred to the criterion of true religion; that is, true *sharīʿah* promotes and orders philosophy.

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