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CHAPTER TWELVE

TAQLĪD OF THE PHILOSOPHERS: AL-GHAZĀLĪ'S INITIAL ACCUSATION IN HIS *TAHĀFUT*

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In an address to the Indian Muslims written during his last visit to the subcontinent in 1882, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1255–1315 A.H./1838–1897 C.E.) outlined the importance of philosophy (*falsafa*) for the development of Islam. The Muslims, who in the earliest period of their history had already developed glory, splendor, and greatness, showed humiliation during the reign of the second ʿAbbāsid caliph al-Manṣūr (r. 136–158 /754–775), and lowered their heads in order to learn the philosophical sciences from their non-Muslim subjects. Nevertheless, the philosophical movement that sprang from the translation of Greek philosophy was, despite the positive impact it had on Muslim culture, insufficient for producing human perfection. Al-Afghānī states:

> The reason for this was that they believed the Greek and Roman philosophers were all possessors of absolute reason, followers of pious habits, and endowed with celestial powers and true revelations, and that the scope of their senses and mental powers was above the scope of the senses of other men. Therefore, accepting their words like a celestial revelation, they followed them completely. They followed them in arguments and proofs just as the masses follow their leaders in object and aims.[1]

Al-Afghānī accuses the classical Muslim philosophers of having slavishly emulated their predecessors in antiquity and of not having developed a critical attitude towards their arguments and their proofs.

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[1] The text is translated into English in Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism* 109–122, 115. The original Persian text "Favāyid-i falsafa" was published in a collective volume *Maqālāt-i Jamāliyya*, Calcutta 1884; cf. Kudsi-Zadeh, *Sayyid Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī. An annotated bibliography* 13f., no. 91.5. Al-Afghānī's pupil Muḥammad ʿAbduh repeats this criticism in his *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* 363f. He highlights the *falāsifa*'s search for "pure thinking" (*al-fikr al-maḥḍ*) and criticizes their admiration for Aristotle and Plato and their emulation (*taqlīd*) of them.

Such an attitude is likened to the masses' uncritical following of their political leaders and, according to al-Afghānī's judgment, grounded in the Muslim philosophers' conviction that the Greek philosophers were endowed with "absolute reason."

Al-Afghānī's accusation against the philosophers of classical Islam goes back to al-Ghazālī's (d. 505/1111) book on the "Incoherence of the Philosophers" (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*) where it has a specific role which is not evident in al-Afghānī's address. The *Tahāfut* contains an overall argument that starts with a similar accusation against a "group" of al-Ghazālī's contemporaries who follow the teachings of the more eminent philosophers (*falāsifa*). This group emulates the teachings of the philosophers and it is this uncritical emulation (*taqlīd*) that leads them to their disregard for revealed religion.

Starting from al-Ghazālī's statements in his autobiography, I will show in this study that al-Ghazālī understood the *Tahāfut* as the very first response (*radd*) to peripatetic philosophy produced by a Muslim theologian. I will also show that the strategy that al-Ghazālī chose in order to respond to the challenges of peripatetic philosophy does— in most cases—not focus on a refutation of the truth of the *falāsifa*'s teachings. The overall argument of the *Tahāfut* directly addresses the *falāsifa*'s epistemological disregard for revealed knowledge and analyses the reason for this neglect. It finds the reason in the *falāsifa*'s claim that knowledge in metaphysics and the natural sciences is demonstrative (apodeictic). It is this claim that many arguments in the *Tahāfut* aim to destroy. In conclusion it will be shown why many discussions within the *Tahāfut* focus on epistemology and why a refutation of the *falāsifa*'s teaching from the point of view of Muslim theology makes the *tahāfut*, i.e. the self-imposed collapse of the *falāsifa*'s edifice, evident.

1 *The* Tahāfut's *strategy as a response* (radd) *to the* falāsifa

In his autobiography "Deliverance from Error" (*al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*), al-Ghazālī describes the composition of his earlier book on the "Incoherence of the Philosophers" (*Tahāfut al-falāsifa*).[2] Here, the

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[2] Al-Ghazālī's sincerity regarding the actual historical events and developments described in his *Munqidh* has often been called into question (cf. al-Baqarī, *I'tirafāt al-Ghazālī* 145f., van Ess, Quelque remarques sur le Munqid min aḍ-ḍalāl 60ff., and

Tahāfut is called a "response to" (*radd 'alā*) peripatetic philosophy. Al-Ghazālī's report on the process that led to the composition of the *Tahāfut* starts with his puzzlement over the fact that no man of religion and no theologian (*mutakallim*) had ever devoted his efforts to writing a *radd* to the teachings of the philosophers (*falāsifa*).[3] They had written no more than scattered words on this subject entangled in other contexts and had only been concerned with the most obvious contradictions and corruption of philosophy. Despite his initial astonishment, al-Ghazālī comes up with an explanation for this lacuna in Islamic literature. To write a *radd* before one has developed a most thorough understanding of the teachings of a specific *madhhab* is like a stab in the dark. At this point al-Ghazālī decided to make himself ready for the writing of such a refutation. He reports how he started to read the philosophical books over and over again and how he studied peripatetic philosophy in his spare time and without a teacher, while at the same time being heavily involved with his duties at the Niẓāmiyya in Baghdad. At the end of this effort stood the firm conviction that the teachings of the *falāsifa* were full of deception (*khidā'*), delusion (*talbīs*) and fancy (*takhyīl*). Subsequently he took on the writing of the *Tahāfut*.[4]

Books that bear the title *Kitāb al-Radd 'alā . . .*, "Response/Reply to . . ." had been written since the 2nd/8th century, so *radd* became "the normal term in classical Islamic literature to denote a response to an adversary, intended to refute his statements or opinions."[5] There has never been a specific instruction on how such a response had to appear. The lists of books that bear such a title reveal that no limitation was given to the topic and the material of a response and no particular school or group of authors had developed a specialization

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Fück, Die Bekehrung al-Ġazālīs 134ff.). The *Munqidh* should be regarded as an idealization of al-Ghazālī's intellectual quest written in hindsight of actual events that were most probably prompted by more than just academic decisions.

[3] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* 18.3ff. In the *Tahāfut* 6.6 (the *Tahāfut* is quoted in Maurice Bouyges' edition), al-Ghazālī also describes the book as a *radd*.

[4] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* 18.15ff., 23.19. Similar words had been used by al-Ghazālī earlier in the introduction to his *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*, 2.8f. In this book, written much closer in time to the *Tahāfut* than his autobiography, al-Ghazālī also stresses the need for proper understanding and uses the same metaphor of a "throw into the darkness and into error (*ramy fī l-'amāya wa-l-ḍalāl*)" for those who do not take charge of this prerequisite.

[5] See Daniel Gimaret: art. "Radd," in: *EI*[2] viii, 363a.

in this genre.[6] Having said this, it is also true that a refutation in the tradition of Kalām literature followed a particular strategy that was closely connected with the origins of Kalām in the religious disputations of the 2nd/8th century.[7] The technique of refutation in traditional Kalām would be to "talk" with the opponent citing his positions ("*in qīla...*") and bringing one's own responses ("*fa-naqūlu...*") in order to force the opponent—who is present in the text as an anonymous adversary—to further concessions that would reduce his positions to meaningless alternatives.[8] This strategy aims at making it evident that the opponent's teachings are either logically inconsistent or lead to conclusions that are undesirable, even for their author. Both results would show that these teachings are fundamentally flawed.

The *Tahāfut* follows this scheme which was not only used in books of refutation but became a distinctive feature of Kalām literature. However, dialogue seems to be the only convention to which the *Tahāfut* complies. In fact, the reference to the genre of *radd* books in the *Munqidh* merely points to the fact that the *falāsifa*'s teachings had never been thoroughly refuted and still stood as a challenge to Islam when al-Ghazālī first read philosophical books. Subsequently, this challenge was taken up by our scholar who, by the time of the *Munqidh*'s composition around 501/1107, understood his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*—published twelve years earlier[9]—as the decisive Islamic response to peripatetic philosophy.

The book is arranged in three basic parts. After an introductory part that consists of five different prefaces, each devoted to a specific aspect, the main section divides into 20 discussions, composed as literary dialogues with the *falāsifa*. Each discussion is devoted to one single element of the *falāsifa*'s philosophical system that al-Ghazālī chooses to criticize. He argues with the *falāsifa* on 16 questions in metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*) and four in the natural sciences (*tabī'iyyāt*). Only questions in these two disciplines are considered problematic by al-Ghazālī. In the third and the fifth preface of his book, al-

Ghazālī lays down his opinion that the two remaining disciplines of peripatetic philosophy, logic and mathematics, do not contain anything opposed to Islam.[10] The third main part of the book is the short *khātima*. In this conclusion of less than one page al-Ghazālī condemns three of the *falāsifa*'s key teachings as unbelief (*kufr*), a judgment that is for him identical to apostasy from Islam and thus punishable by death.[11] The other 17 teachings discussed in the book are considered *bida'*, i.e. heretical innovations that are considered false but nevertheless tolerated views.

The structure of the work reveals immediately that the refutation in the strict sense of the word lies in the discussion of the 20 *masā'il*. In each of these 20 chapters al-Ghazālī takes up one specific position of the *falāsifa* and questions it. The strategy chosen in each of the 20 discussions is not uniform. In fact, each follows its own dynamic, which has in many cases been analyzed by scholars.[12]

The *radd*, however, is in no way limited to the rejection of these 20 positions. First of all, the *khātima* (conclusion) forms a vital part of the refutation. It may be the most long-lasting and decisive part of this process, since it forbids every Muslim to voice any of the three condemned opinions. For the reader of the *Tahāfut*, however, this judgment appears somehow suddenly on the very last page of the book, without much preparation in the main text. The *khātima* is the legal assessment of a previous philosophical discussion that never explicitly touches the criteria for tolerated and non-tolerable opinions in Islam.

If each of the 20 discussions and the *khātima* has a specific role in the process of the refutation, is there also a role for the five-fold

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[6] Cf. the list in Sezgin, *GAS* i, 903f., for instance, or in the index of Tajaddod's edition of Ibn al-Nadīm's *Kitāb al-Fihrist* 109–111.

[7] van Ess, *Theologie und Gesellschaft* i, 48–55.

[8] van Ess, The Beginnings of Islamic Theology 89.

[9] The *Tahāfut* was published in Muḥarram 488/January 1095; cf. the dating by Maurice Bouyges in his *Essai de chronologie des oeuvres de al-Ghazali* 23 and in the introduction to his edition of the text.

[10] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 8f., 14f.

[11] Cf. my Toleration and Exclusion: al-Shāfi'ī and al-Ghazālī on the treatment of apostates, esp. 350–354.

[12] Works that focus on the argumentative strategy in the *Tahāfut* include Perler/Rudolph *Occasionalismus* 63–105; Marmura, Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrection and Causality in Tahafut and The Iqtisad; *idem*, Avicenna's Theory of Propehcy in the Light of Ash'arite Theology; *idem*, Ghazālī and the Avicennan Proof from Personal Identity for an Immaterial Self; *idem*, Al-Ghazālī's Second Causal Theory in the 17th Discussion of the Tahāfut; *idem*, Ghazali and Demonstrative Science; *idem*, The Logical Role of the Argument from Time; Alon, Al-Ghazālī on Causality; Goodman, Did Al-Ghazâlî deny causality?; Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam* index; Behler, *Die Ewigkeit der Welt* 146–179; Hourani, The dialogue between al-Ghazālī and the philosophers on the origin of the world; Abū Rīdah, *Al-Ghazālī und seine Widerlegung der griechischen Philosophie* 98–188; Obermann, *Der philosophische und religiöse Subjektivismus* 55–85; de Boer, *Die Widersprüche der Philosophie nach al-Gazzālī*.

introduction to the book? In this paper I shall analyze the five intro-
ductions and focus on the accusations therein based on the *taqlīd* of
the *falāsifa*.[13] These accusations may be regarded as the religious part
of a broader argument that is directed not against the philosophical
or theological views of those who follow the Arabic philosophers,
but ultimately against their religious worship. Its starting point is the
observation that these followers do not acknowledge the authority of
the religious law (*sharī'a*) and its ritual duties. The aim of the over-
all argument of the *Tahāfut* is to convince these people of the author-
ity of the revelation and the *sharī'a* that is derived from it. The
argument that leads to such an acknowledgment relies for its full
verification on the main part of the text, and particularly the first
discussions of the *Tahāfut* on the eternity of the world respond to its
demands. The reasoning, however, commences on the first pages of
the *Tahāfut* and seems to embrace the following chapters, connect-
ing them and holding them together.

2   The taqlīd *of the* falāsifa

It has already been said that the introductory part of the *Tahāfut* is
divided into five parts. It begins with a preface that bears no title.
Four short chapters follow that are numbered, starting with "first
muqaddima" in some manuscripts.[14] The introductions (*muqaddima*) num-
bered "second," "third," and "fourth" follow after this "first." Each
of the five introductory texts is devoted to a particular point that al-
Ghazālī intends to make before entering into the main part of the
Tahāfut. In fact, the title of "*muqaddima*" for these five short texts
should be taken literary. They are "premises" of the overall argu-
ment of the *Tahāfut*. The one headed "first *muqaddima*" stresses the
differences amongst the philosophers—a point whose importance will
become apparent—and gives *en passent* an overview of the historical
development of the movement. It explains the role of Aristotle as its
founder, and of al-Fārābī (d. ca. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/

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[13] So far two attempts have been made to understand the introductory part of
the *Tahāfut* as part of al-Ghazālī's refutation, Marmura's *Al-Ghazali on Bodily
Resurrection and Causality in Tahafut and The Iqtisad* 48f., and Frank's *Al-Ghazālī
on Taqlīd. Scholars, Theologians, and Philosophers* 244–251.
[14] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 8.1, although most of the mss. used by Bouyges in his edi-
tion have just *muqaddima*.

1037) as those who continued the tradition in Islam.[15] The second
muqaddima gives an introduction to kinds of possible disputes between
mutakallimūn and *falāsifa*, and alerts the reader to some likely errors
in dealing with the *falāsifa*'s teachings. The third *muqaddima* points
to the dialectical character of the book. Nothing in the *Tahāfut*, al-
Ghazālī says here, is stated in order to uphold the truth, but rather
in order to "render murky what they are convinced of."[16] The remain-
ing two introductory chapters—the fourth *muqaddima* and the initial
preface—shall be subjected to a closer reading.

M.E. Marmura in his translation of the *Tahāfut* calls the initial
preface, i.e. the very first portion of the book that has no title, the
"religious preface" and that shall be maintained here. Indeed the
discussion of this first preface contains a fierce accusation against
the religious practices of one "group," or better the lack of these
practices, and explains this deficit with their practice of *taqlīd*, i.e.
the emulation or uncritical repetition of other people's opinions. The
accusation of *taqlīd* has a long tradition within Ash'arite Kalām.
Earlier Ash'arites saw a clear opposition between *taqlīd* and knowl-
edge (*'ilm*, *ma'rifa*) in the sense that the one excludes the other. In
this respect, the Ash'arite school was an heir to a Mu'tazilite notion
according to which true belief (*taṣdīq*) involves assent in the form of
the ratification of the tenets of belief. Such an assent would be impos-
sible to achieve without a proper knowledge of the objects of reli-
gious speculation, e.g. the nature of God, the order of the world, or
the nature and end of human existence.[17] For earlier Ash'arites, belief
(*taṣdīq*) requires knowledge (*'ilm*), and knowledge excludes *taqlīd*. The
emulation of other people's sayings is an insufficient means of acquir-
ing the understanding necessary to form the basis of belief. If the
tenets of belief are not completely understood, there can be no valid

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[15] Ibid. 8.8, 9.5. Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī are denied the title of *falāsifa*, but dubbed
"amongst the *mutafalsafa* in Islam" which is unclear in its meaning, but most prob-
ably a more pejorative expression than *falāsifa*.
[16] Ibid. 13.11.
[17] On this element of the theology of some Mu'tazilites like Bishr ibn al-Mu'tamir
(d. 210/825), al-Murdār (d. 226/841), and Thumāma (213/828), see van Ess, *Theologie
und Gesellschaft* iii, 109, 139–142, 167 and his *Erkenntnislehre* 45ff. Unlike in early
Ash'arism, the notion that knowledge is a necessary pre-condition to belief was not
unanimously accepted amongst the Mu'tazilites. The various positions within this
school are laid down in a doxographic report in al-Baghdādī's *Tafsīr asmā' Allāh
al-ḥusnā* fol. 220b. The Qādī 'Abd al-Jabbār, for instance, discusses the Mu'tazilī
positions on *takfīr al-'awāmm*, "to charge the (non-educated) mass of the people with
unbelief" and rejects this notion in his *al-Mughnī* xii 530–533.

ratification of them, and thus no belief. Only if one indulges in independent reasoning does one acquire knowledge whose truth can be accepted in an act of ratification (*taṣdīq*).[18]

Like earlier Ashʿarite writers al-Ghazālī considers *taqlīd* and knowledge to be in a certain opposition to each other. But for him this opposition is not exclusive. Knowledge can be achieved by emulating other people. In fact, most people rely heavily—some entirely—on this form of acquiring knowledge. Al-Ghazālī regards this kind as an inferior knowledge to the one gained by independent reasoning. In fact, it does not count as "real knowledge," but is rather a "knowledge in the broad sense."[19] Compared to his predecessors, al-Ghazālī raised the stakes when it comes to the conditions "real knowledge" has to fulfill. The question of knowledge, however, is of far less significance to his theology, since knowledge ceases to be a necessary condition for belief. Whether one has real or only broad knowledge is of no theological consequence when it comes to the notion of belief.[20] In his book "Restraining the Common People from the Science of Kalām" (*Iljām al-ʿawāmm ʿan ʿilm al-kalām*), a treatise written late in al-Ghazālī's life on the dangers of making ordinary people acquainted with Kalām, he expresses the view that belief is not connected to the development of knowledge:

> Firmly rooted belief (*al-taṣdīq al-jāzim*) rests neither on inquiries nor on the capacity to bring forward arguments.[21]

When it comes to the class of learned people, however, al-Ghazālī's relationship between *taqlīd* and knowledge is still heavily influenced by the notions developed in the earlier Ashʿarite school. Emulating other people's thoughts is considered a grave mistake for those who

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[18] Al-Baghdādī's *Tafsīr asmāʾ Allāh al-ḥusnā* fol. 220b; Frank, Knowledge and Taqlīd; Gimaret, *La doctrine d'al-Ashʿarī* 482f.; cf. also my *Apostasie und Toleranz* 208ff., 214.

[19] This distinction is used by Frank, Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd 208 and it is not prompted by any usage in the writings of al-Ghazālī, but probably by al-Juwaynī's words reported by al-Anṣārī, *al-Ghunyā* fol. 6a ult.: *ʿilm wa-maʿrifa ʿalā sabīl al-tasawwuʿ*. On this notion in al-Ghazālī, cf., for instance, *Iḥyāʾ* iii, 1371.4ff.

[20] Al-Ghazālī requires a mere understanding (*fahm*) of the subject matter of *taṣdīq*; cf. Frank, Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd 219f.

[21] Al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 116.6f. Parallel passage in *Iḥyāʾ* i, 211.9ff. Cf. also *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 203 on the motive that one hears seldom of a conversion caused by the better argument of a *mutakallim*. Conversions are caused by other reasons than the arguments of the *mutakallimūn*. (The *Fayṣal* is quoted in Sulaymān Dunyā's edition.)

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are capable of independent reasoning. There should be no doubt that, in the case of the *ʿawāmm*, i.e. the ordinary people, *taqlīd* is not only tolerated but welcomed, since an acquaintance with independent thinking would run the risk of having this group of people fall into unbelief.[22] A scholar or someone who considers himself a *mutakallim* must, however, accept the religious imperative to reason independently. In his book on "The Criterion of Distinction" (*Fayṣal al-tafriqa*), also a work from his late period, al-Ghazālī says that this imperative is not an obligation imposed to achieve the state of a believer, a *muʾmin*, as in earlier Ashʿarite theology. Nevertheless, he finds strong words for those who follow slavishly the arguments even of such eminent teachers as al-Bāqillānī or al-Ashʿarī.[23] In the *Fayṣal* he puts forward two objections against *taqlīd*:

> If you treat this subject rightly you may come to the conclusion that whoever limits truth to one specific theologian (*nāẓir*) comes fairly close to unbelief and to hypocrisy. Firstly, he comes close to unbelief, since he places this one theologian in the position of the Prophet, who is infallible. Belief is something that is constituted only by consent with the Prophet, and to contradict the Prophet necessarily constitutes unbelief. Secondly, it comes close to hypocrisy, because it is the duty of every single theologian to speculate (*naẓar*), and emulation of an authority is for him forbidden. How can he say [to his pupil], "You must speculate but nevertheless follow my authority." Or, "You should inquire (*yanẓur*) but while following your own inquiries you should not develop positions that would deviate from mine. Everything that I hold is an argument for the truth, and therefore you should accept it as such an argument. Everything that you hold is doubtful, and therefore you should consider it doubtful."[24] Is there not a huge difference between him who says, "Emulate me only in my *madhhab*!" and him who says, "Emulate me both in my *madhhab* and in the way I argue for it!" Is this not hypocrisy?[25]

Two aspects become apparent in this passage. First, the only source of emulation that should rightfully be followed is the prophets, since their infallibility puts their judgment above ordinary humans. Second,

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[22] Al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 67f., 109f., *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 203.20ff.

[23] Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 131.

[24] The last four sentences are corrupt in the edition of Sulaymān Dunyā. My reading follows ms. Berlin We 1806 (Ahlwardt 2075) and ms. Istanbul, Shehid Ali Pasha 1712 fol. 3a (cf. Samīḥ Dughaym's edition of the text p. 53). Cf. my German translation of this text in al-Ghazālī, *Über Rechtgläubigkeit und religiöse Toleranz* 58, 94.

[25] Al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 133.15ff.

although *taqlīd* itself does not constitute unbelief, it violates the self-declared ethics of religious scholarship and replaces both the authority of the prophets and that of reason with that of someone less eminent.[26] This replacement bears the danger of unbelief, depending on how far the teachings of the emulated persons deviate from those of the prophets. These two aspects are, in fact, one general objection to the use of *taqlīd* according to which it belittles or may even diminish the authority of the two sources through which God has given humans knowledge in the science of *uṣūl al-dīn*: revelation (Quran and *ḥadīth*) and the individual capacity to come to right conclusions.[27] Whoever indulges in theology should rest his judgment entirely on these two sources.

Reading these lines from his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* one gets the impression that al-Ghazālī is mainly at odds with the more conservative or rather less open-minded elements of his own profession. This is indeed how Western scholars understood these pages of the *Fayṣal*.[28] But al-Ghazālī's understanding of "real knowledge" is bound to stricter conditions than that of his predecessors in the Ashʿarite school, and this leads him to accuse groups of scholars of *taqlīd* who had not had this accusation leveled against them by any previous author.[29] Most striking is the case of the followers of *falsafa*. On first sight there seems little connection between the charge of blind emulation and peripatetic philosophy, since the latter presents itself as the purest and strictest form of reasoning using the tool of demonstration (apodeixis). Al-Ghazālī's charge of *taqlīd* is brought forward on the very first page of his *Tahāfut al-falāsifa* where he refers precisely to the claimed apodeixis of the philosophical method. The beginning of the *Tahāfut* (right after the *khuṭba*) reads:

> I saw a group of people who—being themselves convinced (*yaʿtaqidūna*) to be distinct from the companions and peers by virtue of a special clever talent (*fiṭna*) and quick wit (*dhakāʾ*)[30]—have rejected the duties

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[26] A third criticism is added in the second book of al-Ghazālī's *Iḥyāʾ* i, 211.9ff. where it is said that belief founded on mere *taqlīd* (the "belief of the *ʿawāmm*") tends to vary in its firmness like a thread on a spindle.

[27] It need not be stressed that the latter knowledge comes to the soul from God. Cf. Frank, Knowledge and Taqlid 226.

[28] Cf. Frank, *Al-Ghazālī and the Ashʿarite School* 76ff.

[29] Frank, Al-Ghazālī on Taqlīd 232ff.

[30] It has been noted by Janssens, Al-Ghazzālī's Tahāfut: Is it Really a Rejection of Ibn Sīnā's Philosophy 2 that the use of *dhakāʾ* in this passage is prompted by

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of Islam regarding acts of worship, who have disdained religious rites pertaining to the office of prayer and the avoidance of prohibited things, who have belittled the devotions and ordinances prescribed by the divine law, and who have not stopped [their transgressions] in the face of prohibitions and restrictions. More than this, they have entirely cast off the reins of religion through multifarious beliefs, following therein a troop "who rebel away from God's way, intending to make it crooked, who are indeed unbelievers in the hereafter (Q 11:19)."

There is no basis to their unbelief other than emulation (*taqlīd*) of what they hear and what is most familiar (to them), such as the emulation of the Jews and the Christians, since their upbringing and that of their children has followed a religion other than that of Islam (*ghayr dīn al-Islām*).[31]

The initial charge of the *Tahāfut* is prompted by the group's lifestyle, which, according to al-Ghazālī, lacks acknowledgment of the ritual duties of the Islamic religion. The reason for this un-Islamic lifestyle is twofold. It is—according to the very first sentence—prompted by the hubris of this group to be cleverer than their peers. According to the last sentence of this passage it is due to their practice of *taqlīd*. The fact that the children of the Jews and the Christians almost exclusively follow the religions of their parents is a subject that occupied al-Ghazālī in other of his writings, most notably in his *Munqidh*. Since the initial disposition, the *fiṭra* of every human, would lead him to become a monotheist, the continuous existence of polytheism (including Christianity, for instance) needs to be explained. This explanation had already been provided by a *ḥadīth* that says, "Every infant is born endowed with the *fiṭra*, but the parents make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Zoroastrian."[32]

The repeated hearing of the alleged truths within these religions leads—in al-Ghazālī's view—to the acceptance of wrong convictions. If the non-Muslims would, however, give up their *taqlīd*, and start to question their traditions, they would soon find out about the truth of Islam and give up their false creeds.[33] The explanation in the

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Aristotle's *Posterior Analytic* 89b 10. (Cf. Badawī, *Manṭiq Arisṭū* ii, 426.) Quick wit (*ankhinoia*) is the ability to hit upon the "middle term."

[31] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 4.3ff. I am using Michael E. Marmura's English translation, but altering it where necessary. On al-Ghazālī's use of *bal* as a conjunction between two sentences, for instance, cf. passages in his *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 176.6–7, 187.19, 202.9f.

[32] Wensinck, *Concordance et indices* v 180.

[33] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 11.1ff. On the connection between *taqlīd* and remaining in the Jewish faith cf. also *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 117.15ff.

Munqidh for the existence of Christian and Jewish communities is the background for the discussion of a popular movement of peripatetic philosophy within Islam:

> The source of their unbelief is their hearing of high-sounding names such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and their likes, and the exaggeration and misguidedness of groups of their followers in describing their minds, the excellence of their principles, the exactitude of their geometrical, logical, natural, and metaphysical sciences [. . .].[34]

The group described here has created a tradition that is almost as forceful as the ones of non-Muslim religions. Their belief in the intellectual superiority of the founding fathers of their tradition puts them in the same situation as Christians and Jews, for instance, who, for their practice of *taqlīd*, cannot see that the convictions they grew up with are wrong.[35] As said earlier, *taqlīd* for al-Ghazālī leads to the replacement of the prophets' authority with the lesser authority of those emulated, in this case the Greek philosophers. But there is an additional reason why the *taqlīd* of this group leads to a thorough disregard for, and neglect of, the religious duties of Islam. The ultimate reason for the group's disregard for revealed religion is their opinion that Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and those like them denied revealed religion:

> [. . .] they (*scil.* the group) say about them (*scil.* the ancient philosophers and their likes) that concurrent with the sobriety of their intellect and the abundance of their merit is their denial of revealed laws and religious confessions and their rejection of the details of the religions and faiths, and they are convinced that the [religious] laws are composed [by man] and that they are embellished tricks.[36]

This group of people thus "embrace unbelief through *taqlīd*" and are heretics (*mulḥida*).[37] But since *taqlīd* in itself does not lead into unbelief, it is the content of what is emulated that is the source for the unbelief of this group. In this case, the group denies revealed religion because they are convinced that the ancient philosophers denied it. But who is this group? Throughout the whole religious

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[34] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 5.1ff.

[35] It is one of the characteristics of *taqlīd* that the *muqallid* is unaware of following it and convinced that he is knowledgeable and in possession of the truth, al-Ghazālī, *Iljām al-ʿawāmm* 117.11ff.

[36] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 5.6ff.

[37] Ibid. 7.2 and 6.9.

preface, the people who hold this opinion appear only in the third person plural and are not given a name except for "a group" (*ṭāʾifa*). In a later passage of the *Tahāfut*, al-Ghazālī contrasts the views of the *falāsifa* with those of "their masses,"[38] and it seems most likely that this distinction is also applied in the beginning of the religious preface. The "group" seems to be those who read the books of the *falāsifa* and were misguided by some of their ambiguities. It is clear that the accusations are leveled against contemporaries of al-Ghazālī.[39] Indeed, the "leaders and the heads of the *falāsifa*" are explicitly excluded from the allegation of heresy. They are

> [. . .] innocent of the imputation that they deny the religious laws. They believe in God and His messengers, but they have fallen into confusion in certain details beyond these principles, erring in this straying from the correct path, and leading others astray.[40]

The accusation of unbelief and *ilḥād* (most accurately translated as "heresy") is directed only against those who emulate the leading philosophers, and it is this group of *muqallidūn* who are falsely convinced that their leaders taught that religious laws are man-made. The leaders themselves, it is implied, did not come up with this particular teaching. Nevertheless, their teachings are not free from blame, since the errors they made led others astray. In order to deal with the group of his contemporaries and to restrain their arrogant

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[38] Ibid. 21.3f. (*jamāhīruhum*).

[39] It is thus not an accurate description when Jules Janssens in his recent article, Al-Ghazzālī's Tahāfut: Is it really a rejection of Ibn Sīnā's Philosophy, p. 7, concludes that the book's targets "appear to have been ancient philosophy, especially its metaphysics, and the uncritical acceptance thereof." The lively intellectual discussion in the book suggests otherwise. For instance, in the course of the 20th discussion al-Ghazālī genuinely alters his position from the one expressed in other books in order to make it more appealing for people with an education in peripatetic philosophy (cf. *Tahāfut* 364.4 with al-Ghazālī *al-Iqtiṣād fī l-iʿtiqād* 214.2; on this see Marmura, Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrection and Causality 51–57). This flexibility points to the fact that he is indeed dealing with "living" individuals, and not with the authors of philosophical books from the past, such as Ibn Sīnā. The readers addressed in al-Ghazālī's book are Ibn Sīnā's students, their students, and those who were attracted to his or their positions. In addition, a distinction needs to be made between the supposed readership of the book and the *falāsifa* of the title, who are indeed named, being Aristotle, Plato, and Galen (*Tahāfut* 8.2–9, 21.3–10). Given al-Ghazālī's reliance on Ibn Sīnā, both al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā must be included in the class of *falāsifa* although in the introductions they are rather polemically dubbed *mutafalsafa* (*Tahāfut* 9.5f.). In other places, however, the title of a *faylasūf* is not withheld from Ibn Sīnā (cf. e.g. *Tahāfut* 176.7).

[40] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 7.4ff.

disregard for revealed religion, al-Ghazālī decided to address the teachings of the heads and leaders:

> [. . .] I took it upon myself to write this book in refutation (*radd*) of the ancient philosophers, to show the incoherence (*tahāfut*) of their creed (*ʿaqīda*) and the contradiction of their words in matters relating to metaphysics, to uncover the dangers of their doctrines and their shortcomings [. . .].[41]

By now it has become clear that what al-Ghazālī says here in the religious preface of the *Tahāfut* does not agree with its *khātima* where *everybody*[42] is condemned for unbelief—with the penalty of death— who is convinced of the three quoted positions. There can be no doubt that the "leaders and heads of the *falāsifa*" are included. In fact, Aristotle, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Sīnā would surely be included, since they all taught, for instance, the pre-eternity of the world. The "certain details beyond the principles of religion" where the prominent *falāsifa* erred and strayed, that were mentioned at the beginning of the book, have become major points of accusation and *kufr* by its end. The only way to reconcile the initial, religious preface with the *khātima* is to argue that there is an inconsistency between the two parts of the book. It seems impossible to explain this discrepancy without referring to a change in al-Ghazālī's judgment.

3 *Apodeixis as the basis of the* falāsifa's *convictions*

The concluding element of the *Tahāfut*'s initial accusation is in the last introduction (or "premise") headed "fourth *muqaddima*." This introduction refers to the one particular element within the teachings of the prominent *falāsifa* that led their group of followers to go astray and fall into unbelief. In the religious preface it had already been said that the second reason for the un-Islamic lifestyle of the *falāsifa* was—in addition to their uncritical "emulation of what their hear and what is most familiar to them"—their conviction that they were "distinct from the companions and peers by virtue of a special clever talent and intelligence."[43] This hubris goes back to the

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[41] Ibid. 6.5ff.
[42] Ibid. 376.3f. (. . . *al-qawl bi-takfīrihim wa-wujūb al-qatl li-man yaʿtaqidu iʿtiqādahum*).
[43] Ibid. 4.3f.

claims they make in their logic. The fourth *muqaddima* deals with the merits of logic for a methodologically sound conduct of the sciences and with the truth that can be found in every logical proposition. Nevertheless, it also deals with the exaggerated pride the *falāsifa* take in their logic. In fact, one of the most preposterous tricks the *falāsifa* use in order to parry any attempts to criticize their teachings in metaphysics is to point to the necessity of the prior study of logic and mathematics.[44] In this way they throw the cloak of a sound logical method around their most problematic teachings and win over new followers whose uneasiness with the *falāsifa*'s metaphysics is overshadowed by their fascination with the seemingly complicated field of logic and by their trust in it.

Here, the most basic problem for al-Ghazālī is the *falāsifa*'s claim that they conduct metaphysics in a demonstrative way. Al-Ghazālī's criticism of this philosophical position is brought forward in a single passage at the end of the fourth *muqaddima*:

> We will make it plain that in their metaphysical sciences they have not been able to fulfill the claims laid out in the different parts of the logic and in the introduction to it, i.e. what they have set down in the *Kitāb al-Burhān* on the conditions for the truth of the premises of a syllogism, and what they have set down in the *Kitab al-Qiyās* on the conditions of its figures, and the various things they posited in the *Isagoge* and the *Categories*.[45]

The method and technique of apodeixis is taught in the section called *Kitāb al-Burhān* of the logical books of a *faylasūf*. Since all logical books in the peripatetic tradition follow the canon of the *Organon*, the *Kitāb al-Burhān* would be the equivalent to the *Posterior Analytics*. This part aims at explaining how the use of sound syllogisms that employ premises whose truth has either been proven through other syllogisms or is self-evident through intuition leads to judgments that are indisputable. The *Kitab al-Qiyās* within a philosopher's textbooks

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[44] Ibid. 14.5ff.
[45] Ibid. 16.8ff. This passage has been mistranslated in the English translation of Sabih Ahmad Kamali (p. 10). Marmura in his translation (p. 9) renders the *mādda* of a syllogism as its "matter" and not as its premise. (On *mādda* as "premise," cf. al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* 130, 182, and Marmura, Ghazālī and Demonstrative Science 194.) Marmura's translation, however, stresses the notion of demonstration, and in his article Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection 48f., he rightly points to the connection with al-Ghazālī's rules for the interpretation of revelation, according to which the literal sense of revelation can only be interpreted if a demonstration shows that it is impossible for it to be true (cf. n. 54).

of logic (equivalent to the *Prior Analytics*) would explain how to form the figures of sound syllogisms, and the *Isagoge* as well as the *Categories* (sometimes also referred to as *Kitāb al-Madkhal* and *Kitāb al-Maqūlāt*) are concerned with defining the subjects of scientific inquiry. These four books together were the textbooks for the apodictic method in the sciences.

With apodeixis comes the claim of scientific indubitability[46] and the sense of being in possession of an infallible scientific method. For the "group" (*tā'ifa*) mentioned in the religious preface of the book, i.e. the "masses of the *falāsifa*," this sense grows to a conviction in a superior knowledge and intelligence over their peers in the religious sciences. The religious sciences cannot claim to have a foundation on proven premises, but they advance from axioms such as the belief in the essential qualities of God or the belief in the veracity of his messenger. These premises cannot be logically proven or deduced from proven principles, but are accepted through revelation. A science that uses syllogisms and premises that are accepted by those to whom they are addressed is, according to Aristotle's classification, a dialectical science.[47] Religious sciences can only be conducted as dialectical sciences.

The general classification of sciences into dialectical and apodictical ones was accepted by al-Ghazālī.[48] Mathematics and to a certain extent also the natural sciences count for him as apodictical sciences that yield necessary knowledge which is indeed indubitable.[49] In the second introduction al-Ghazālī defends the apodictical character of the description that a solar eclipse is caused by the moon coming between the observer and the sun. Since this is the case, the religious scholars should not take issue with such a description unless they want to make themselves ridiculous and lose credibility,

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[46] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 13.9f. "Let it be known that (our) objective is to alert those who think well of the philosophers and believe that their ways are free from contradictions [. . .]."

[47] Aristotle, *Topica*, 100a.30.

[48] Like al-Ghazālī, later Muslim jurists held that the basic difference between a logical *qiyās* (syllogism) and a juridical *qiyās* was the status of its premises. Ibn Taymiyya, for instance, also shared al-Ghazālī's suspicions about the possible accomplishments of the syllogistic method. On al-Ghazālī's and Ibn Taymiyya's position on these two issues cf. Hallaq, *A history of Islamic legal theories* 139f.

[49] On the possibility of apodeixis in the natural sciences cf. footnote 55 and Marmura, Ghazali and Demonstrative Science 188f., 191f., where the following statement is discussed.

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for these matters rest on demonstrations, geometrical and arithmetical, that leave no room for doubt.[50]

The passage from the fourth *muqaddima* quoted above suggests that al-Ghazālī aims at refuting the *falāsifa*'s claim that their metaphysics follows the demonstrative method. This assumption is supported by two short passages from the part of the *Munqidh* where al-Ghazālī describes the results of his studying and criticizing the books of the *falāsifa*. The first passage from the *Munqidh* deals with metaphysics:

> The majority of their errors (*aghālīt*) are in metaphysics. [Here,] they are unable to fulfill apodeixis (*burhān*) as they have set it out as a condition in the logic. This is why most of the disagreements amongst them are in (the field of) metaphysics.[51]

The second passage from the *Munqidh* explains how the useful nature of peripatetic logic is brought into disrepute by the *falāsifa*'s claims in metaphysics:

> Indeed, the philosophers are themselves bringing some injustice (*zulm*) into this science (*scil.* logic). This is that, in order to arrive at apodeixis, they bring together conditions known to lead undoubtedly to certain knowledge. But when they finally arrive at the religious aims (*maqāṣid dīniyya*), they cannot fulfill these conditions, but remain extremely negligent [in applying them].[52]

If the metaphysics of the *falāsifa* cannot accomplish the claims brought forward in the textbooks for demonstrative science, it must subsequently be counted amongst the dialectical sciences. The acceptance of the relegation of metaphysics to the same class as that of the religious sciences would put an end to the arrogant sense of superiority amongst the masses of the *falāsifa*. This, in turn, would prevent any further shunning of religion. The reasoning behind this accusation seems to be that theology (*ʿilm al-kalām*) and metaphysics are for al-Ghazālī on the same epistemological level.[53] According to the classification of sciences based on Aristotle's *Organon* both are dialectical sciences, since both rely on accepted premises that cannot be

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[50] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 11.8f. (*barāhīn handasiyya ḥisābiyya la yabqā maʿahā rayba*).

[51] Al-Ghazālī, *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl* 23.14f.

[52] Ibid. 22.21ff.

[53] Al-Ghazālī characterizes Kalām in his *al-Mustaṣfā* 5.*ult.* and 6.10f. as the science amongst religious sciences that is concerned with general notions (*kullī*) and looks into "the most general of things and that is being (*aʿamm al-ashyāʾ wa-huwa al-mawjūd*)," mirroring Ibn Sīnā's definition of metaphysics, e.g., in his *al-Najāt* 235.

proven. Given this basic equality, the religious sciences, however, are ultimately superior to metaphysics, since its un-proven premises are supported by revelation. This additional authority tips the scales in favor of religion. Whoever is compelled to accept the conclusion of a syllogism, even if its premises are not proven or self-evident, should be even more compelled to accept the statements of revelation in those areas where demonstration is—according to al-Ghazālī—just not possible.[54]

The five introductions to the *Tahāfut* thus conclude in an explanation according to which this book is not only about truth and error, but—amongst other things—about the epistemological status of the *falāsifa*'s metaphysics and, to a lesser extent, that of the natural sciences.[55] Nowhere else is this more apparent than in the first *masʾala* of the *Tahāfut* on the pre-eternity of the world. This discus-

[54] Marmura in many of his publications stresses that for al-Ghazālī the literal sense of revelation can only be interpreted if a demonstration (*burhān*) shows that it is impossible (cf. for instance his Al-Ghazali on Bodily Resurrection 49 or his review article Ghazalian Causes and Intermediaries 91). This rule forms indeed the cornerstone of what al-Ghazālī himself called the "rule or interpretation (*qānūn al-taʾwīl*)" in his later writings (al-Ghazālī, *Fayṣal al-tafriqa* 184). On this rule, cf. my *Apostasie und Toleranz* 304–319.

[55] Some of the questions discussed in the four *masāʾil* on the natural sciences do not touch the question of demonstration (*burhān*). As in the case of the afterlife (20th discussion) the *falāsifa* did not claim that their convictions were based on *burhān*. The same seems to be true for the 19th discussion on the impossibility of the soul's perishing after it has been created. Particularly problematic is al-Ghazālī's denial of the necessary connection between a cause and its effect. This is discussed in the 17th *masʾala*. Marmura, in his Ghazali and Demonstrative Science, suggests that al-Ghazālī's position includes the denial of causality as an ontological principle inherent in cause and effect, but nevertheless upholds the claim of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. Those who do natural sciences interpret God's "habit" to arrange things in a causal manner as being the epistemological principle of causality. According to al-Ghazālī, they have every reason to do so, since God is not only the immediate creator of events in the outside world, but also the immediate creator of our knowledge of it. (This argument is also discussed by Ulrich Rudolph in Rudolph/Perler, *Occasionalismus* 86f.). Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System* 63–77, goes further and says that al-Ghazālī held that God cannot interfere in his creation once it is created. This presumption would—in the given philosophical systems—open the possibility of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. Rudolph (in Rudolph/Perler, *Occasionalismus* 84–96) stresses that al-Ghazālī presents two causal theories in the 17th discussion which both seem to lead to an acknowledgment of the possibility of necessary knowledge in the natural sciences. However, for al-Ghazālī there are still elements in the *falāsifa*'s natural sciences that are claimed to rest on demonstration, but do, in fact, not. In the 18th discussion it is his declared aim to deny "their ability to prove through rational demonstration that the human soul is a self-subsistent spiritual substance (*fī taʿjīzihim ʿan iqāmat al-burhān al-ʿaqlī ʿalā anna l-nafs al-insānī jawhar rūḥānī qāʾim bi-nafsihī*)," cf. *Tahāfut* 297.

sion begins almost immediately after the passage from the fourth *muqaddima* quoted above, with a seemingly minor reference to the fact that the ancient philosophers did not teach the pre-eternity of the world unanimously. Plato disputed the world's pre-eternity and Galen expressed a non-committal position and admitted that for him the world's pre-eternity or temporal origination was probably unknowable.[56] This allusion to a disagreement amongst the philosophers— and most notably between Aristotle and Plato—is not only a rhetorical device, but also a powerful argument in al-Ghazālī's overall strategy of the *Tahāfut*.[57] If the world's pre-eternity were a conclusion based on apodeixis, all those who know how to conduct demonstrative science (and most notably Aristotle and Plato) would agree upon it. Disagreement amongst philosophers clearly indicates that the matter under discussion cannot be settled in an indisputable manner.[58]

The issue at stake in this first *masʾala* is not whether the world is pre-eternal or temporally originated, but whether the world's pre-eternity is a subject that can be decided in an indubitable manner by using apodeixis. Al-Ghazālī is convinced that the world's creation or eternity is a matter left to a dialectical discussion based on revelation. His strategy aims at relegating the *falāsifa*'s statements on the world's pre-eternity to the same level as that of theological speculation. Al-Ghazālī's vivid doubts about the claims of the *falāsifa* are expressed in the repeated question:

> Do you know this through the necessity of reason or through speculating about it?[59]

[56] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 21.3ff. Here al-Ghazālī also says that, despite the disagreement of the ancient *falāsifa*, the "masses (*jamāhīr*) of them, both ancient and modern" uphold the pre-eternity of the world.

[57] It already appears in the first *muqaddima*, *Tahāfut* 8f.

[58] Already Aristotle in *Topica*, 104b.4ff, mentions that dialectical problems are those on which members of the wise class of men disagree among themselves, and amongst these kinds of problems is the question as to whether or not the world is eternal (*aidios*). Later Ibn Rushd in his *Faṣl al-maqāl* 20 accepts the force of al-Ghazālī's objection and defends the position of the philosophers by saying that the disagreement is limited to the role of time, and whether its past is infinite or finite. This disagreement does not affect their consensus, which in Ibn Rushd's view is even shared by the *mutakallimūn*. They all agree on the division of beings into three classes: beings created and originated in time, a being not created and not preceded by time, and beings created but not preceded by time. Here, exactly as in his small treatise on the subject (extant in Hebrew, cf. Kogan, Eternity and Origination), Ibn Rushd clearly tries to limit the disagreement to questions of terminology.

[59] Al-Ghazālī, *Tahāfut* 29.10 (*taʿrīfūnahū bi-ḍarūrat al-ʿaql aw naẓarihī?*). This sentence is followed by a methodological passage on the significance of disagreement

4   *Conclusions*

In the *Kitāb al-Khazarī*, a book written less than fifty years after the *Tahāfut*, the Andalusian Jewish philosopher Yehuda Halevi (d. ca. 1143 C.E.) reports of a competition held by the king of the Khazars. Proponents of the four most important religious traditions of the time were invited to interpret a dream of the king while he declared his readiness to convert to the religion whose representative gave the most convincing explanation. Apart from the three monotheistic religions Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, the fourth sage attempting to convert the king is a *faylasūf*. In fact, this *faylasūf* presents his epistemological and ethical system as the "religion of the *falāsifa*."[60] All three of the propositions that al-Ghazālī condemned as *kufr* in the *khātima* of the *Tahāfut* are present in the *faylasūf*'s creed. His homily also contains a passage that mirrors al-Ghazālī's initial accusations from the *Tahāfut*. The *faylasūf* says that if the king of the Khazars decides to follow the *falāsifa* in their religion he will reach a step,

> which is the utmost and the remotest of all and the one that the perfect human hopes for after his soul is cleansed of doubt and after he has acquired the sciences according to what they really are (*'alā ḥaqā'iqihā*). Then, the soul will become like an angel and it will be on the lowest level of the incorporeal heavenly realm (*malakūtiyya*), and this is the level of the active intellect.[61]

To master the apodictical sciences and to exclude doubts is only one of the lower steps in the intellectual development towards the union with the active intellect. Once the *faylasūf* has reached this union, he will be, according to the philosophical spokesman in Halevi's *Kitāb al-Khazarī*, in the company of Hermes, Asclepius, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle.[62]

If we follow al-Ghazālī and accept that there was an emulative tradition of philosophy, one of the most fundamental tenets of this tradition was the conviction that metaphysics can be conducted apodictically and produce indubitable knowledge on important questions

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amongst scholars for the claim to know something apodictically. The interrogation into the alleged necessity (*darūra*) of the *falāsifa*'s position appears countless times in the first discussions.

[60] Halevi, *Kitāb al-Radd wa-l-dalīl* 6.9 (*dīn al-falāsifa*).
[61] Ibid. 4.19–5.1.
[62] Ibid. 5.5.

such as the pre-eternity of the world. Such knowledge was, according to the *falāsifa*'s convictions, unknown to the religious scholars who were not versed in the apodictical method. For al-Ghazālī, however, the *falāsifa*'s belief in their scientific superiority was simply *taqlīd*. If they had started to doubt what they were told by their teachers, they would have begun to question the coherence of their epistemological system and find that key arguments used in metaphysics were neither based on previously proven premises nor self-evident. When al-Ghazālī tries to cast doubts on the results of philosophical metaphysics in the first discussions of the *Tahāfut* he aims to lead his philosophically educated readers to the discovery that the arguments in metaphysics and in the natural sciences cannot comply with the rules set out in the *Organon*. In the case of the Jews and the Christians, the God-given calling (*fiṭra*) to follow the right religion is obscured by the children's upbringing. Similarly, the students of philosophy neglect the truth of the revelation because of their most basic belief in a superior truth. This is why a *radd*, a refutation of the philosophical tradition becomes a proof of their *tahāfut*, a proof of the incoherence and inconsistency of the *falāsifa*'s epistemological edifice.

If this is the overall argument in the *Tahāfut*, or at least one that connects the accusation of the introductions with the first discussions in metaphysics, it does not require for its validation a proof of the falsehood of the *falāsifa*'s positions. In fact, the argument is validated by making it evident that the *falāsifa* are incapable of demonstrating apodictically (*'an burhān*) the truth of some of their positions in metaphysics and the natural sciences that are relevant in a religious debate. Thus al-Ghazālī makes his task of refuting the *falāsifa* much easier. Instead of having to prove the falsehood of the *falāsifa*'s positions, he only needs to show that the scientific achievements of the most venerated philosophers of his time still leave someone, who has studied their epistemological system and who has accepted their underlying logical principles, with ample opportunities to doubt.

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