

The Philosopher Responds
Volume One

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المجلد الأوّل



The Philosopher Responds
An Intellectual Correspondence
from the Tenth Century

Volume One

ABŪ ḤAYYĀN AL-TAWḤĪDĪ
ABŪ ‘ALĪ MISKAWAYH

Edited by

BILAL ORFALI and MAURICE A. POMERANTZ

Translated by

SOPHIA VASALOU and JAMES E. MONTGOMERY

Volume editor

DEVIN J. STEWART



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Introduction

The present book is unusual in having not one, but two authors. It is the result of a collaboration between two figures, both of whom were outstanding contributors to that remarkable flowering of cultural and intellectual life that took place in the Islamic world during the fourth/tenth century under the Buyid dynasty.

Military men of Persian extraction and Shi'ī sympathies, the Buyids rose to power with the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate and ruled over large parts of the eastern Islamic lands for over a century (320–454/932–1062). A time of economic distress and social insecurity, of religious and ideological rivalries, this period nevertheless saw an outpouring of creative energy that would shape Islamic intellectual history for centuries to come. Intellectual possibilities that had already dawned crystallized and solidified. The engagement with the legacy of classical antiquity, already begun in Abbasid times, intensified, and the concerted efforts to translate and study the works of major philosophical and scientific thinkers of the ancient world—Aristotle and Plato, Euclid and Ptolemy, Hippocrates and Galen—ministered to a climate of rationalistic inquiry that is one of the hallmarks of that period. The distinctive form of literary refinement known as *adab*, whose standard-bearers were the secretaries, scribes, and other members of the administrative apparatus of the state, blossomed alongside this philosophical culture.

The ruling class had a large hand in galvanizing this activity, not only through active patronage but also through the spirit of tolerance they nurtured in the face of new ideas and existing antagonisms. During the heyday of Buyid rule, the courts of princes and viziers in key cities across Iraq and western Iran—notably Baghdad, Rayy, Isfahan, and Shiraz—became nerve centers of intellectual activity, lodestones for philosophers, scientists, and literati competing for recognition and support. Many of the luminaries from this period who have become household names for students of Islamic intellectual history, including our own two authors, were shaped and fostered by this social milieu.

This book forms part of the rich legacy left behind by that historical moment—a moment in which many have read the contours of an Islamic “Renaissance” or humanistic Enlightenment. Taken simply, the book consists of a series of wide-ranging questions posed by the litterateur Abū Ḥayyān al-Tawḥīdī to the philosopher and historian Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh. The Arabic title of the book, *al-Hawāmil wa-l-shawāmil*, makes this dual character somewhat clearer than

its English rendering. *Hawāmil* are camels that have been left free to wander without bridle or burden—such are al-Tawḥīdī’s questions. In answering them, Miskawayh seeks to contain (*shamila*) these wandering questions and bring them home as a good “herder” and “steward” would.

Al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh: Life and Works

How did this collaborative work come about, and what is its precise character? A brief overview of the careers of both men will provide some context for answering these questions. Abū ‘Alī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Ya‘qūb Miskawayh was born in Rayy around 320–35/932–47, with one biographical report placing his death in 421/1030. He served as a secretary (which was his training) and a librarian under a series of ruling figures in the Buyid courts. His first appointment to the service of the vizier al-Muhallabī (d. 352/963) in Baghdad was followed by appointments at the court in Rayy under the vizier Abū l-Faḍl Ibn al-‘Amīd (d. 360/970), his son Abū l-Fatḥ (d. 366/976), and the emir ‘Aḍud al-Dawlah (d. 372/983). Many of his patrons were men of great cultural accomplishment whose courts served as lodestones of intellectual activity. The galvanizing effect of this environment would register clearly in Miskawayh’s own output. As a historian, Miskawayh is best known for his multivolume work *The Experiences of the Nations* (*Tajārib al-umam*), which includes important first-person accounts of events that took place within his own lifetime. Yet it is to his philosophical work that he no doubt owes the greatest part of his reputation. His philosophical output includes *The Degrees of Happiness and the Classification of the Sciences* (*Tartīb al-s‘ādāt wa-manāzil al-‘ulūm*) and *The Minor Triumph* (*al-Fawz al-aṣghar*), and tackles key philosophical questions about the nature of God, the nature of the soul, and prophecy. His most celebrated work, however, is *The Refinement of Character* (*Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*), in which the ethical focus that forms the hallmark of his intellectual orientation comes into full fruition. Synthesizing Aristotelian, Platonic, Neoplatonic, and Galenic ideas that had become available to Arabic readers through translation from Greek and Syriac sources over the preceding two centuries, this work offers an account of virtuous character, its relation to happiness, and the means of educating it, an account that would prove widely influential to later writers in ethics. In developing his philosophical ideas, Miskawayh builds on the work of his predecessors, notably Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī (d. between 247–52 and 861–66), and refines it in new ways.

Miskawayh's elder by a few years, Abū Ḥayyān 'Alī ibn Muḥammad ibn 'Abbās al-Tawḥīdī is thought to have been born between 310/922 and 322/934, either in Iraq or in Fars; the date of his death is given as 414/1023. After a traditional education, which included instruction in the philological and religious sciences in Baghdad, he worked as a copyist before launching a series of concerted attempts to find patronage in courtly circles. He would spend several years between Baghdad and Rayy pursuing this quest without success, first approaching the elder Ibn al-'Amīd, then his son, and finally the vizier al-Ṣāhib Ibn 'Abbād (d. 385/995), in whose service he spent three discontented years before finding temporary patronage in Baghdad with the vizier Ibn Sa'dān (d. 374/984–85). His inability to attain the worldly success he felt he merited—which many have attributed to his difficult character—left him impoverished and produced a lasting embitterment that is reflected in much of his work, tinging it with a pessimism and “tragic sense of life” that makes for its distinctive voice and personal immediacy.

His literary output is shaped by the philosophical interests he acquired through interaction with leading philosophers of his time, including Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974) and, more notably, Abū Sulaymān al-Sijistānī (d. ca. 375/985), whose study sessions he assiduously attended. It is also shaped by, and shines a brilliant light on, the social context in which learned exchange took place in his time. One of his best-known works, *The Book of Enjoyment and Conviviality* (*Kitāb al-Imtā' wa-l-mu'ānasah*), is a lively, stylized account of the evening conversations between al-Tawḥīdī and Ibn Sa'dān, covering philosophical, literary, scientific, and other topics. Another work, *Conversations* (*al-Muqābasāt*), documents a number of exchanges featuring the philosophers Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī and al-Sijistānī, among other figures. Other well-known works include the literary compilation *Insights and Treasures* (*al-Baṣā'ir wa-l-dhakhā'ir*), the treatise *On Friendship and Friends* (*al-Ṣadāqah wa-l-ṣadiq*), a work lampooning the two viziers Ibn al-'Amīd and Ibn 'Abbād (*Dhamm akhlāq al-wazīrayn*), and the mystical work *Divine Intimations* (*al-Ishārāt al-ilāhiyyah*).

The Philosopher Responds in Context

How can we locate the present book in the work and life of these two thinkers? Even this brief outline of their respective biographies has suggested convergences of social context and intellectual interests that would not make such a collaboration improbable. Although we do not know for certain where the two men first met, whether in Rayy or Baghdad, the learned and courtly circles in

which they both moved provided ample opportunity. It has been speculated that they may have met as early as the 340s/950s during the period of Miskawayh's first appointment in Baghdad.¹ A learned exchange within the pages of a book, similarly, seems fully at home in the dialogic spirit of the intellectual culture they shared in, so vividly portrayed in al-Tawḥīdī's work.

Taken as a philosophical exchange in particular—and, as we will see in a moment, the book has a distinct philosophical focus—there was even more specific precedent available. The Aristotelian *Problemata* literature, at least partly translated into Arabic by that time, had offered a clear model for the way philosophical topics might be explored in a question-and-answer format.² Even more directly, other eminent philosophers had appropriated this format in initiating learned correspondence of different kinds. A good example is the correspondence that took place between Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī and the Jewish scholar Ibn Abī Sa'īd al-Mawṣilī, in which the former offered his response to fourteen questions on logic, physics, and metaphysics put to him by the latter.³ The philosopher-historian Miskawayh and al-Tawḥīdī, that wide-ranging intellectual whom one biographer, Yāqūt al-Ḥawamī (d. 626/1229), memorably called the “philosopher of the litterateurs and the litterateur of the philosophers,” had a number of well-marked tracks in which to tread in opening their conversation.⁴

There will be something more to say about the nature of this exchange and its peculiar type of conversation in a moment. Yet, certainly, when it comes to anchoring the work chronologically within the careers of the two writers, forming a clear view of its genesis is not an entirely straightforward task. It seems reasonable to suppose, as many of those approaching the question have done, that the work belongs to a relatively early stage in the writing career of both thinkers, predating their major writings. As has been aptly pointed out, for example, Miskawayh—ever the academic in his hearty appetite for citing his own past work—only makes reference to a single existing work, the *Minor Triumph*, which was likely written at the behest of 'Aḍud al-Dawlah (r. 338–72/949–83). One of the strongest hypotheses, advanced by Mohammed Arkoun, would locate the composition of the book during the time of Miskawayh's service to the latter, in the period between 367/977 and 372/983, when al-Tawḥīdī would have also been in Rayy at the court of Ibn 'Abbād. Arkoun speculates that al-Tawḥīdī may have composed his questions during his sojourn in Rayy between 367/977 and 370/980 and that Miskawayh may have responded to them between 370/980 and 372/982. It is during his service to an emir who was himself a philosopher and patron of

the intellectual elite, he suggests, that Miskawayh was most likely confirmed in his philosophical vocation and would have felt especially motivated to compose a work that would help cement his philosophical credentials. Al-Tawḥīdī, on his end, would have hoped to extract some benefit through the support of his well-positioned interlocutor.⁵ This chronological hypothesis has not gone uncontested. Arkoun himself would later revise his view, framing the more open-ended hypothesis that the whole work was composed after 375/985, when al-Tawḥīdī would have left Rayy for Baghdad.⁶ Erez Naaman dismisses this proposal, pointing out that nowhere in the book does al-Tawḥīdī refer to his revered teacher al-Sijistānī, whom he would already have met by that time. His own view is that the work was composed earlier, in the late 350s/960s or 360s/970s.⁷

Taken on its own, the debate about the chronology of the work might seem of relatively narrow interest. What makes it both especially intriguing and elusive is its enmeshment with the way we understand the relations between the two thinkers, the motivations that drove them, and thus the spirit and nature of the exchange. These questions contribute to the somewhat enigmatic character of the book as a whole.

One of the principal interpretive levers used for approaching the relations between the two men is the remarks made by al-Tawḥīdī about Miskawayh in a number of works, notably *Enjoyment and Conviviality*. Many of these remarks bear the unmistakable mark of al-Tawḥīdī's barbed tongue. In a well-known passage, he characterizes Miskawayh as "a pauper among the affluent and a stutterer among the eloquent" who only has a smattering of knowledge, having wasted many opportunities to learn and having been overly obsessed with the study of alchemy. He's covetous, a miser, and a hypocrite, naturally vicious in character.⁸ In introducing the 1951 edition of the present book, Ṣalāḥ Raslān must have had these disparaging comments in mind when he suggested that al-Tawḥīdī's aim in initiating this exchange was to taunt Miskawayh and to reveal his intellectual inadequacy by confronting him with a barrage of challenging questions—not unlike what al-Jāḥiẓ, one of al-Tawḥīdī's idols, had done in a work entitled *The Square and the Round (al-Tarbī' wa-l-tadwīr)* that was addressed to one Aḥmad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb.⁹

In arguing for his later chronological hypothesis, Arkoun takes an explicit stance against this view of the book's spirit. This view, he suggests, conflicts with the "serenity and even affectionate tone" of Miskawayh's responses. In the preface to the book, he points out, we hear Miskawayh seeking to console his

ever-lamenting interlocutor, who must have opened his correspondence with an all-too-familiar complaint. “You began your letter with a lament about the sorry times we live in.” You are not alone in your suffering, Miskawayh rejoins: “Your lament falls on the ears of one who himself laments, and your tears are shed before one who is equally tearful. There is a lump in every man’s throat, and a mote in every man’s eye.” And in Arkoun’s revised view, we can make the greatest biographical sense of this spirit of fellowship through shared suffering after 375/985.¹⁰ Naaman, likewise, draws on a specific reading of the book’s spirit and what it reveals about the relations between the two men in framing his own chronological hypothesis. He comments on the “admiring” tone of the book—“you are a storehouse of arcane learning and recondite wisdom,” al-Tawḥīdī tells his respondent at one place as he lays a challenging question at his feet, and I have “fixed my hopes on seeing it answered by you” (§147.1)—and on the “unequal scholarly authority” and “student-teacher relationship” the work evokes. This deferential attitude, he suggests, conflicts with the negative view of Miskawayh voiced in *Enjoyment and Conviviality*, and argues for an earlier composition date when al-Tawḥīdī’s view of the philosopher was still rose tinted.¹¹

Yet, to the extent that these chronological conjectures pivot implicitly or explicitly around specific readings of the tone of the book and what it reveals about the state of the relations between the two men, no conjecture seems immune to questioning. For one, even al-Tawḥīdī’s characterization of Miskawayh elsewhere does not provide unequivocal witness, which might be bookmarked to track his changing view and used as a cast-iron basis for definitive chronologies. As some have pointed out, this characterization, in *Enjoyment* and elsewhere, is riddled with ambiguities, and even within the boundaries of a single work offers contradictory testimony. In one place al-Tawḥīdī derides Miskawayh’s eloquence and knowledge, and in another he praises him for his intelligence and poetic compositions. A desire to shine before his audience, and jealousy of Miskawayh’s worldly successes, certainly did not make al-Tawḥīdī a stable or impartial witness here.¹² Turning to the evidence of the present book, what one reader will hear as al-Tawḥīdī’s admiring tone, a reader more impressed by his acerbic remarks in *Enjoyment* may hear as ironic. What one reader will hear as the affectionate tone of Miskawayh’s consolation, another will hear as so much rebuking or haranguing.

This last reading, or hearing, in fact dovetails with impressions generated by other parts of the book, where we find Miskawayh reacting to the content and

form of al-Tawḥīdī's questions with an asperity that borders on condescension, sometimes going so far as to land a few sharp *ad hominem* blows on the ethical character of his questioner as expressed in his flawed questions. A good example appears in §§4.1–14. In his question, al-Tawḥīdī opens with a query about renunciation (*zuhd*), which might be paraphrased most simply as follows. Why do people praise renunciation of the world, yet still we see them running headlong after worldly things? It is an interrogative pattern—"Why x, yet/when y?"—that can be seen at work in many of al-Tawḥīdī's questions, which are often structured by a quest for reasons twinned to an observation of paradox.

Yet, rather than confining himself to this particular question, al-Tawḥīdī begins to pull a new question out of the end of the first. The request for causes and reasons suddenly makes him think of causes and reasons generally, and makes him want to ask what these are. Another turn of phrase sparks a question about the nature of time and place, and about the difference between different concepts of time. Having hurtled breathlessly from one grand question to another, he finally throws up his hands in ecstatic wonderment at the grandeur of these matters, at the chastening limits of human power and understanding, and at the majesty of God. "Good God! This is a topic to make your mouth dry, to press your cheek to the ground, to plunge the soul into a state of ferment, to make the glutton choke on his next bite, to reveal the emptiness of claims to knowledge, and to make one confess the limits of one's adequacy and power. It is a topic that proves the unity of Him who encompasses these mysteries and truths" (§4.2). Taking the podium, Miskawayh begins by dryly objecting to this irresponsible heaping of questions, and proceeds to diagnose it as a manifestation of ethical malaise, no less—of al-Tawḥīdī's "vanity" and "conceit"—completing the point with an image calculated to deliver a poisonous sting. In putting this question, he tells al-Tawḥīdī, you went about "like a proud stallion . . . lustily swishing your tail back and forth, running sidelong across fields, swaggering in your pride and pressing ahead with your extravagance until I feared you would trip yourself up in the swell of your volubility" (§4.4).

Even without this pathologizing tenor, we often find Miskawayh taking issue with the form and content of al-Tawḥīdī's questions and sparing al-Tawḥīdī little of his own barbed tongue in conveying his dissatisfaction. In numerous places, he rejects or corrects the premises of al-Tawḥīdī's questions. In others, he declares them vulgar and unworthy of consideration, as when al-Tawḥīdī asks him about the meaning of certain popular sayings (§157.1) or about the

origins of different human customs (§44.1). This is a question to which “I cannot offer a response,” Miskawayh replies, and then grandly continues: “I would not want it should someone offer to provide it for me, nor would I consider it real knowledge” for there “would be no advantage to be gained from it” (§44.2). In other questions, he objects to al-Tawḥīdī’s manner of expressing himself. The author of these questions, he remarks in one place, “follows a rhetorical style, and does not proceed the way the logicians do in investigating a question” (§86.2). In making these criticisms, he often switches from addressing al-Tawḥīdī in the second person to addressing him in the third, as if he were no longer in the room.

The last point raises a question about Miskawayh’s understanding of his audience to which we will be returning. Might it have been this superior tone and bare-knuckle treatment that *later* seeded al-Tawḥīdī’s own truculent comments about the philosopher? One may only speculate. Yet this kind of exchange illustrates the reasons why, even though the overall tone or spirit of the work is difficult to determine and offers a shaky foundation for factual conjectures about its genesis, it is difficult to keep it from occupying a central place in one’s engagement with the book. As Arkoun remarked, the interest of the book does not lie simply or exclusively in the intellectual content of the questions, but also, at least in part, in the spirit or perspective in which these questions are posed and answered—and thus in the often striking contrast between the two spirits or perspectives we find juxtaposed as question and answer.¹³

Al-Tawḥīdī’s Questions

This is by no means to deny the interest of the intellectual content as such. The best way of getting at the spirit of the exchange, in fact, is to start by considering its content, and by taking a closer look at the nature of al-Tawḥīdī’s questions. His questions, true to their name (*hawāmīl*, “the wandering herd”), do not appear to follow any particular order, and wander freely across a wide array of topics. Several questions relate to topics that fall solidly within the philosophical curriculum broadly conceived. There are questions of natural science, about why mountains exist (§165.1) and why the sea is located on one side of the earth and not another (§167.1). There are questions of medicine or physiology, such as why epilepsy is so hard to treat (§37.1). There are questions of philosophical psychology, such as why the souls are three in number (§166.1). There are questions about the methods of philosophical inquiry, about why we inquire into objects

by asking four types of questions—whether, what, which, and why (§159.1). There are questions about practices or crafts allied to the philosophical domain, about what physiognomy is (§63.1), what alchemy is, and why people pursue it (§151.1). There are also broad questions about the nature of key concepts or entities whose interest transcends philosophical boundaries, about what knowledge is (§50.1), what injustice is (§29.1), and what dreams are (§48.1). Many of these questions were hot topics among intellectuals of al-Tawḥīdī’s day, and were discussed not only by philosophers but also by dialectical theologians (*mutakallimūn*) and by members of other disciplines. Several of the questions al-Tawḥīdī brings up were staples of debate in different intellectual circles, such as his question about the possibility of conflict between reason and the religious Law (§147.1) or about the relative merits of prose and poetry (§142.1). The latter is one of many that attest to al-Tawḥīdī’s literary and philological interests. A further set of questions that focus on the meanings of words, and on the distinctions between closely related words, flag these philological interests even more systematically. It is all the questions just enumerated that make this book a kind of *Wunderkammer* showcasing not only the remarkable diversity of al-Tawḥīdī’s interests, but the intellectual interests of his age more broadly.

Yet these kinds of erudite questions are joined to another, larger, family of questions that is rather harder to categorize, and harder to read in a spirit of mere detached “erudition.” If we insisted on categorizing them, we might label many of them as questions of an ethical kind, particularly if we connect this term to its root—*ethos*: custom, character—and take it in a sense sufficiently broad to include psychological or social phenomena.¹⁴ Several of them share in the “Why . . . yet/despite” paradoxical structure picked out above. Why do people extol discretion and the keeping of secrets—and yet broadcast secrets for all to hear? (§2.1) Why are men of knowledge prone to conceit, even though knowledge naturally begets humility? (§7.1) Why are men of quality prone to envy, even though they know envy to be vile? (§23.1) Why do people disparage avarice, even though they’re avaricious? (§42.1) Many of these questions derive their edge from an observation of the chasm between moral ideals and actual practice in human life.

Things are different with another group of questions, which target aspects of human behavior that do not carry obvious moral significance, and in which the question “Why?” is more open. Why do people long for the past, even when the past was filled with suffering? (§6.1) Why is it that when a person sees a

beautiful picture or hears a pleasing tune, he says, “By God, I’ve never seen or heard anything like that before,” even though he knows he has heard and seen better things? (§51.1) Why do people experience fear in the absence of anything fearful? (§70.1) Why do we find it easier to spontaneously conjure extreme hideousness in the eye of our imagination than to conjure exquisite beauty? (§98.1) Why is laughter contagious? (§101.1) Why do some people prefer company when they are anxious and aggrieved, and others prefer solitude and remote places? (§121.1) Why do we feel embarrassed when we see someone embarrass himself? (§145.1) Why do we hate hearing the same thing twice? (§146.1) Here we see al-Tawḥīdī as a sharp-eyed observer of human life with an instinct not only for outright curiosities but also for those everyday phenomena that seem so ordinary we would normally be little inclined to question or remark them. Al-Tawḥīdī remarks them, and is plunged into wonder: “There are things about human beings . . . that carry us to the ends of wonder and plunge our hearts into perplexity” (§98.1).

The same flair for surprise at the ordinary is exhibited in many of al-Tawḥīdī’s questions. It is this surprise—this constant ability to step back from what is familiar and no longer take it for granted—that gives many of his questions their special savor, and makes the questions an experience in their own right for the reader. The surprise itself, the remarking of the hitherto-unnoticed fact, is already an offering, regardless of the way it may or may not then be resolved. A masterpiece of this kind of programmatic surprise—of what we may call al-Tawḥīdī’s practice of defamiliarization—is the question he poses about the human response to music. Why is it, he asks (§155.1), that “people in a transport at singing and delighted by a musical performance stretch out their hands, move their heads, and sometimes get up and drift about—dancing, making impassioned sounds, crying out, and sometimes even running and wandering here and there distractedly?” Al-Tawḥīdī observes the human response to music with the eyes of someone who might have just landed from the moon and was seeing it for the first time. His questions go to the heart of even more central social practices elsewhere, as when he picks out the practice of honoring the sons of illustrious fathers or grandfathers and not the reverse—why *must* it work that way? (§80.1).

The questions that issue from this defamiliarizing perspective are often profound, as when al-Tawḥīdī asks about the reasons why we take pleasure in beauty (§52.1), why we feel the state of ill-being and not the state of well-being

(§100.1), or why it is easier for doubt rather than certainty to take root in our minds (§128.1). At other times they seem so maddeningly strange as to verge on the trivial or nonsensical, as when he asks why people need to acquire knowledge but not ignorance (§15.1), or why people don't grow young again after they've grown old (§45.1).

The curiosity or surprise at work in al-Tawḥīdī's questions is of different kinds, as the above suggests. The surprise that is built on an observation of the gap between real and ideal—*is* and *ought*—is not of the same kind as the surprise provoked by many of the other phenomena listed above. In the latter set, as Elias Muhanna notes, the surprise seems more genuine and less rhetorical.¹⁵ It also seems freer, in the sense of not carrying the obvious marks of a personal investment.

This investment is easier to pick out in the first type of questions, aligning itself far more closely with what we know of al-Tawḥīdī's character and standing concerns—above all, the attitude of “moral protestation” that suffuses his work, his condemnation of hypocrisy in all its forms, and his penchant for delving into the darkest nooks and crannies of human behavior to sleuth out ethical foibles. This biographical link is emblazoned even more strongly elsewhere, where it is impossible to hear the questions in impersonal accents and not to hear, only flimsily veiled under the sophisticated literary style, the visceral concerns of al-Tawḥīdī the living and breathing man. On no less than four occasions, he poses the question of suicide in different formulations. “What causes a person to take his own life when failures crowd him, when poverty besieges him, when circumstances defy his power and capacity, when his demands and desires meet with closed doors, when passionate love oppresses him and shows itself recalcitrant to cure?” (§56.1; see §§24.1, 57.1, 74.1). It is hard to miss the passionate undertone of this lyrical phrasing, with its rising crescendo of successive restatements, and inevitably a rhetorical air clings to it. It is also hard to miss in another question, particularly as al-Tawḥīdī explicitly points us to its importance by announcing it as the “queen of all questions” (§88.1). Put pithily: Why do the worthy fail, and the unworthy succeed? Taken bookishly, it is the theological question of theodicy, or one of its strands—the age-old question of why virtue and happiness do not coincide. Taken viscerally, it is the question of al-Tawḥīdī's life. Al-Tawḥīdī's saturnine temper and personal anxieties seep through his lyrical, complex prose.

It is all the features outlined above—the passionate element and personal undertone of many of the questions, the ethical (in the broad sense) focus of many, their orientation to familiar everyday phenomena—that set al-Tawḥīdī’s questions off from the types of questions that feature in other instances of question-and-answer works or forms of learned correspondence with which we might think to align them. Their content sets them apart, for example, from the Greco-Arabic genre of *Problemata physica*, which is dominated by questions of a scientific nature. Their lack of specialization sets them apart from the type of exchange we find in a model of learned correspondence mentioned earlier, that between Yaḥyā ibn ‘Adī and Ibn Abī Sa‘īd al-Mawṣilī, insofar as the latter’s questions range over points of physics, metaphysics, and logic, raising subtle problems that presuppose a shared grasp of key philosophical texts.¹⁶ It also sets them apart from the questions put to Miskawayh himself by another (unidentified) correspondent in a different work, the *Epistle on the Soul and the Intellect* (*Risālah fī l-Nafs wa-l-‘aql*), many of which again have the aspect of *aporias* or *shukūk*, presupposing some philosophical foundations.¹⁷ Al-Tawḥīdī is not raising philosophical doubts of this kind. And if his questions seem far from the *dialectical* usage of the question-and-answer genre, they also have an uncertain relationship to its *didactic* usage, in which questions straightforwardly reflect a position of ignorance and answers aim to bring enlightenment.¹⁸

Miskawayh’s Responses

One of the most striking aspects of the transition that occurs as Miskawayh rises to the podium, in this respect, is the rather more definite terms in which he reconfigures this relationship, assimilating the exchange more recognizably to a didactic format. Arkoun rightly picks up on Miskawayh’s teacherly tone,¹⁹ and if there is any truth in what Naaman says about the unequal student-teacher relation the work evokes, it is from Miskawayh’s answers that this most strongly derives.

Miskawayh approaches al-Tawḥīdī’s questions as an opportunity to inform and instruct. The voice he speaks in is very much that of the well-schooled philosopher representing his discipline and seeking to convey the solid results of its investigations. In many ways, his view of his task and the spirit in which he pursues it is well captured by the title of his half of the book (*al-shawāmīl*, “the ones that contain”). To al-Tawḥīdī’s rhapsodic and wandering questions, Miskawayh proposes to bring order and containment. The sense of order

registers stylistically in the first instance, as al-Tawḥīdī's flowery prose cedes to Miskawayh's more direct, sedate, and austere mode of expression. This style in turn reflects a deeper attitude of intellectual confidence and a robust trust in the ability to provide the answers. It is the confidence of a philosopher aware of standing with his back against centuries of venerable philosophical inquiry. "Philosophical inquiries have shown" is one of Miskawayh's favorite ways of opening a reply.

In responding to al-Tawḥīdī's questions, Miskawayh thus unveils for his readers, in bite-sized segments, large parts of the edifice of philosophical knowledge as he understood it to stand in his day. The brevity of the replies seems to have been a condition stipulated by al-Tawḥīdī, and Miskawayh often refers to this condition when justifying his reluctance to probe topics at greater length.²⁰ Many of the philosophical ideas he presents synoptically in the book can be found developed more fully in other works, such as the *Minor Triumph* and the *Refinement of Character*. This includes, above all, his understanding of philosophical psychology, which pivots around a Platonic conception of the soul as consisting of three parts or powers—the irascible, the appetitive, and the rational—and of the ethical task as a matter of ordering these powers or faculties correctly, that is, with reason in the ruling seat. The virtues or excellences that arise from the proper ordering of these powers are understood, in an Aristotelian fashion, as means between extremes. The realization of the specifically human perfection is tied to the perfection of reason in both its practical and, above all, its intellectual aspects. This understanding is anchored in a Galenic physiology that views the human body as depending on a mixture of four humors that need to be constantly maintained in balance, and whose precise configuration is reflected in the ethical and psychological characteristics of different individuals.

These are some of the chief aspects of the philosophical understanding that Miskawayh unfolds in response to al-Tawḥīdī's questions. Yet, given the very particular spirit in which many of the latter are posed, one of the most interesting questions for the reader is how fully or directly these responses meet them not only in their content, but also in their spirit. To the extent that this spirit is one of wonder, it is clear that Miskawayh, as a true Aristotelian, sees his task not as that of meeting it, but indeed of dislodging it. Wonder, as Aristotle indicated at the opening of the *Metaphysics*, is the result of ignorance, and more specifically ignorance of the cause of something (982b–983a)—a definition that Miskawayh echoes in one of his responses (§16.5). Once knowledge has been

acquired, wonder loses its purpose and place. In responding to al-Tawḥīdī's questions, Miskawayh thus aims to supply the knowledge that will function as the natural solvent of al-Tawḥīdī's wonder, as he signals directly in many places. The contagious effect of laughter will no longer seem wondrous or surprising (*laysa bi-'ajab*) once a person realizes that the soul is in reality one (§101.2). Once al-Tawḥīdī has grasped the right account of "interpretive effort" (*ijtihād*) in the religious law, he "will no longer be amazed" by the differences between juridical opinions (*lam ya'riḍ laka al-'ajab*, §153.6).

Yet, even if the philosopher may legitimately regard wonder as something to be eliminated by explanation, one is sometimes inclined to question whether Miskawayh has put his finger on the precise quality of al-Tawḥīdī's motivating passion. "What does the soul seek in this world?" al-Tawḥīdī asks in one place. He continues with pathos: "Man is a mystery to man" (§68.1). It is this sighing remark that Joel Kraemer had in mind when he described al-Tawḥīdī's humanism as "a sober acceptance of man's ambiguity" rather than a "joyful celebration of man's grandeur."²¹ The term "man," Miskawayh expounds in replying, "has been appointed to designate the entity composed of a rational soul and a natural body." The philosopher who has properly assimilated the fruit of his predecessors' labors and confidently grasped the nature of human beings can dispel any appearance of mystery in the topic. Yet those who have felt the personal angst and existential concerns seeping through al-Tawḥīdī's questions will wonder whether this was a response quite calibrated to meet the spirit in which they were posed.²²

A sense of tension between the spirit of the questions and the spirit of the replies is more sharply felt on other occasions. In places, for example, Miskawayh seems unable to take al-Tawḥīdī's questions seriously, and appears more disposed to criticize their actuating wonder than to take active steps to dispel it. This is particularly the case faced with those of al-Tawḥīdī's questions that focus on self-evident or familiar aspects of human life, which are harder to treat as straightforward cases of "ignorance" that can be removed through an informative account. (Here we may also see the root of the temptation some readers may feel to hear al-Tawḥīdī's questions as ironic, and his intention as one to taunt—though not by inquiring after abstruse matters, but after insultingly simplistic ones.) Why do people who have something to hide become anxious, so much that they virtually give themselves away? (§104.1) Your question, Miskawayh tersely replies, "only provokes perplexity (*ḥayrah*) in people who do

not acknowledge the reality of the soul” (§104.2); nobody who knows the first thing about the topic could be surprised by this fact. Why do people grow more hopeful the older they grow? (§94.1). Rather than respond directly, Miskawayh gives a deconstructive genealogy of the wonder that drove it (apparently ignorant of the fact that Aristotle himself had dignified the topic with a discussion in the *Rhetoric*).²³ “This question took an act of the soul and connected it with an act of nature, of the sort that depends on the body and the bodily mixture, and then a comparison was struck between the two, though they are distinct and do not resemble each other. This is why it provoked a sense of astonishment” (§94.2). Why do those who die young outnumber those who die old? “There is little to wonder at” in this, as “it would indeed be worthy of wonder if the opposite obtained” (§96.2). Elsewhere, his impatience becomes clearer. “The merest reflection suffices to answer this question,” he says in one place (§80.2), after the briefest of replies. “Your question answers itself,” he curtly says elsewhere (§76.2). Several times he describes al-Tawḥīdī’s questions as “too obvious” to be worth the toil of serious response (e.g., §§1.11, 4.11, 38.2). Sometimes his only way of dealing with an almost absurd or trivial-sounding question about self-evident things is by converting it into a different question. A good example is Question 15, where al-Tawḥīdī asks—and here we translate as literally as possible—why people need to “learn knowledge” (*yata’allama l-ilm*) rather than “learn ignorance” (*yata’allama l-jahl*). Miskawayh deals with this extraordinary question by hearing it as an invitation to provide a philosophical overview of the nature of knowledge.

Yet the sharpest contrast probably emerges in those questions broadly called “ethical,” particularly those paradoxical “Why . . . yet . . . ?” questions, which reveal al-Tawḥīdī’s preoccupation with the gap between the real and the ideal in human life. Arkoun has aptly spoken of the “passion for teaching in which all of Miskawayh’s works abound.”²⁴ In Miskawayh’s responses to these questions, we see this passion take a powerful moral form that gives us a clear glimpse of the future author of the *Refinement*. Asked why people behave one way or another, Miskawayh’s response is often to simply state that they shouldn’t. Asked why the real and the ideal diverge, Miskawayh often responds by correcting al-Tawḥīdī’s notion of the real to tip it more firmly into the domain of the ideal. The *really* learned man will never be conceited. *Real* men of quality are not prone to envy. If one tells secrets or breaks promises or displays avarice even though one shouldn’t—well, all that can be done is to simply reassert that one shouldn’t,

and to explain why one nevertheless does through a closer analysis of the soul, which reveals the existence of different powers that compete for supremacy, the highest often losing out to the lowest. Miskawayh's response is thus to reassert the idealistic viewpoint that al-Tawḥīdī interrogates by referring to the observed facts. It is this dimension of the exchange that has prompted Arkoun to state that a "misunderstanding" runs through the entire book.²⁵

The difference between the spirit or perspective of the questions and responses can be overstated. As Arkoun himself emphasizes, for example, it would be wrong to write this up as a contrast between a passionate, experiential, personal perspective and a dispassionate, abstract, impersonal one. The ethical views Miskawayh outlines here and elsewhere also carried lived or experiential significance for him: They were ideals meant to guide his *own* conduct. This is a personal dimension he makes crystal clear in the *Refinement*, and is also evident in the so-called "oath" or "covenant" (*'ahd*) with which he announced his philosophical conversion.²⁶ Even more basically, both questioner and respondent are united in at least one set of fundamental values—an aspiration to uncover rational answers, and a belief in the possibility of obtaining them. Yet the differences in intellectual temper that divide the two thinkers remain real, and they form an integral part of the reader's experience of the book and of the interest with which one approaches it. If we want to read on even after we discover our authors in a state of "misunderstanding," it is not only because the questions and the answers as such engage us, but also because this misunderstanding is interesting.

Audience and Method of Composition

So much for the content of the work. What can we say about its method of composition? This question is in fact closely connected to a question (and indeed puzzle) about its intended audience. The book opens with a preface in which Miskawayh, addressing al-Tawḥīdī in the second person, acknowledges the questions he has sent to him and outlines the method he will follow in responding to them. His replies will be brief, and for further detail, he will refer his reader to books where they can be found more fully elaborated. Taking this preface at face value, it seems plausible that al-Tawḥīdī sent all of his questions to Miskawayh at a single stroke, though in places Miskawayh expresses his readiness to receive new ones (e.g., §16.6). The body of Miskawayh's responses suggests that he likewise delivered them all together. He occasionally refers back to his earlier responses, particularly when he wishes to avoid repetition. Unlike

other forms of learned correspondence we are familiar with—such as the famous exchange between Avicenna (d. 428/1037) and al-Bīrūnī (d. ca. 440/1048)—there is no evidence that any follow-up took place between the two men after the initial answers were given. There is only one instance in the entire work that provides the tantalizing suggestion of a counter-response having been offered by al-Tawḥīdī.²⁷

One aspect of Miskawayh's preface that is so obvious it may not strike us immediately is that we have no independent access to al-Tawḥīdī's initial letter, which Miskawayh responds to in the preface, except through the summary Miskawayh provides. The point applies, in fact, to al-Tawḥīdī's questions as a whole, and reflects an important aspect of the book's composition that enters the reader's experience repeatedly throughout the book. While in many places it seems clear that al-Tawḥīdī's questions have been quoted verbatim, in many other places it is equally evident that Miskawayh has intervened in that section of the text that is marked out in the translation as al-Tawḥīdī's speaking part. Sometimes, instead of quoting a question in full, he reports it in truncated form, paraphrases it, or summarizes parts of it (see, e.g., §§4.3, 68.1, 165.1, 173.1). Often, this reflects an overt dismissal of the value of the remarks summarized or left unreported. On occasion, the interventions are so drastic that the reader is only allowed the barest access to al-Tawḥīdī's question. An example is §157.1, which Miskawayh expresses so much disdain for that not only does he refuse to answer it; he doesn't even fully quote it.

One challenging consequence of this practice is that it is sometimes difficult to disentangle al-Tawḥīdī's remarks from Miskawayh's interventions and determine whose voice we are hearing. A particularly acute example of this is §149.1, though there are many others. In several cases, the editorial work makes the logical flow of the question harder to follow, though Miskawayh's responses are usually a good guide for identifying the core thread of questioning. Such heavy-handed editorializing has a bearing on how we understand Miskawayh's view of the audience of this written exchange. On the one hand, as already mentioned, there was a sufficiently established precedent of question-and-answer works of different types—and even more broadly, of composing works at the behest of particular individuals while offering them to the wider public—that it is reasonable to suppose Miskawayh likewise intended this work for wider consumption. On at least one occasion, he refers to it as a “book” (§151.4).²⁸ In a passage that is of special importance for reconstructing his understanding of his audience,

he apologizes for his brevity in answering a particular question and remarks: “I pray that the statements to which I have confined myself will suffice for those perusing [*al-nāzīr*] the present questions; for I have been addressing my answers to a reader who [*man*] already has a purchase on these subjects and so commands respect. Whoever is not at this level must school himself well in these subjects first, and only then, God willing, peruse these answers” (§146.2).

While it could be debated whether the terms that feature in the first part of this passage (“those perusing,” “a reader”) should be translated in the singular or the plural, the last statement makes it clear that Miskawayh expected the work to find readers beyond the single questioner he is most immediately addressing. This remark also illuminates Miskawayh’s conception of his audience on another level, suggesting that despite the book’s synoptic character, he thinks of his reader not as the beginner, the young disciple, or the amateur (as Arkoun, for one, proposes), but as a person with a certain degree of intellectual accomplishment.²⁹ The fact that he is not addressing himself exclusively to al-Tawḥīdī but speaking beyond him to a wider audience appears to find confirmation at several junctures of the text where one sees Miskawayh abandoning the second-person pronoun (“you”) and referring to al-Tawḥīdī in the third person (e.g., §§57.3, 86.2, 128.2). The fact that in many of these cases Miskawayh is implicitly conveying a negative view of al-Tawḥīdī’s questioning (giving this grammatical shift an expressive significance) leaves the point untouched.

At the same time, this widened conception of Miskawayh’s intended audience is hard to square with some of his editorial interventions. In several places, these interventions leave the question opaque in ways that seem to presuppose that the reader would have independent means of access to al-Tawḥīdī’s questions beyond the access Miskawayh provides.³⁰ On those occasions, it is as if Miskawayh had lost sight of his wider audience and was addressing himself more narrowly to al-Tawḥīdī. One possible conjecture, more compatible with the broader view of his audience, is that Miskawayh indeed expected that al-Tawḥīdī’s questions would circulate separately.

Labeling the Questions

These puzzles about the book’s audience and method of composition bring us to a related issue. Readers will notice that several of the questions—particularly early on in the book—carry labels of different kinds. Some are very specific, e.g., on the meaning and origin of injustice (§29.1) or on why some dreams are

true and other false (§47.1). Most of them, however, speak to broad categories. The main categories are: “ethical” (*khuluqiyyah*), “relating to (voluntary) choice” (*ikhtiyāriyyah*), “natural” (*ṭabīʿiyyah*), “voluntary” (*irādiyyah*), and “linguistic” or “lexical” (*lughawiyyah*). Occasionally we see these labels being combined, e.g., “natural-ethical” or “natural-linguistic.” What is the function and significance of these labels? And to which of our two authors may we ascribe the initiative of affixing them to the questions? The function of these labels, in fact, is not entirely transparent. With the exception of the questions tagged as “linguistic”—which predictably focus on issues of a philological kind—a closer examination of the labels of the questions against their content does not enable one to confidently assign a clear meaning to each label and demarcate it sharply from the others.

Certainly, there are broad patterns to be observed. The questions labeled “ethical” tend to focus on aspects of human behavior that carry ethical significance, and sometimes straightforwardly relate to excellences or defects (virtues or vices) of character.³¹ (Examples: on why men of knowledge tend to be conceited [§7.1] and on why men of virtue and reason feel envious toward their equals even though they know envy is blameworthy [§23.1].) The questions labeled “natural”—contrary to what we might anticipate—also tend to focus on human behavior, with the perhaps discernible distinction that this behavior usually does not carry apparent ethical significance. (Examples: on why people long for the past [§6.1]; on why people want to know what other say about them in their absence [§12.1]; and on why people end up loving particular months or days and why they form different conceptions of different days [§28.1].) Those labeled as “questions of voluntary choice” often seem to revolve around value judgments or responses of approval/disapproval to different kinds of things. (Examples: on why it is bad to praise people in their presence [§11.1]; on why people disapprove of young people who act as if they were older [§13.1]; and on why it is unseemly to eulogize long-term friends and acquaintances [§17.1].) The paucity of questions labeled “volitional” makes it harder to speak of distinct patterns.

Yet all of the patterns one discerns are shot through with exceptions. The category of “natural questions” is probably the best example, incorporating a number of questions that fit a little more predictably under that heading, such as ones relating to medicine or physiology. (Examples: on why blind people are often endowed with unusual powers [§18.1] and on why epilepsy is so hard to treat [§37.1].) It will also be clear that the content of many of these variously

labeled questions is remarkably similar, with most focusing on human behavior. The seams between topics seem thin, and sometimes the label settled on one question may not strike the reader as the most suitable one based on its apparent semantic pattern. Moreover, the pattern is made harder to discern by the ricocheting style of al-Tawhīdī's questioning, which sometimes leaves in doubt which of the multiple strands of his questions the label is intended to reflect. No less puzzlingly, nearly a third of the way into the list of questions (after §§49.1–6), the labels come to an abrupt end.

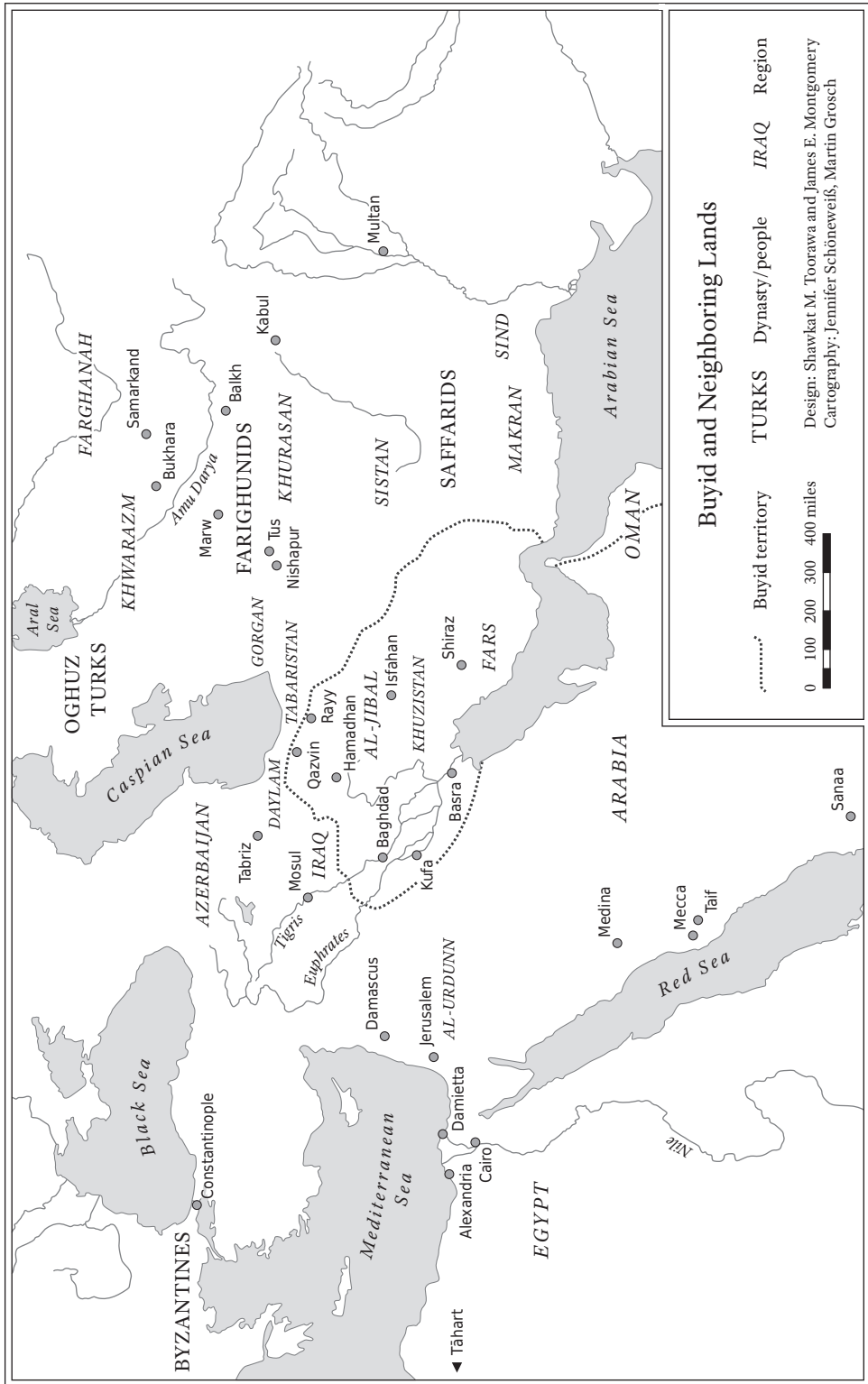
What to make of all this? It might help if we could say with greater definiteness who was responsible for assigning these labels in the first place, even if it would not entirely resolve the conundrum. Most of those who have reflected on the issue have credited the labels to al-Tawhīdī. One of the strongest arguments in favor of this hypothesis is the one offered by Elias Muhanna, who suggests that had the labels been added by the hand of a copyist, he might have taken greater care to ensure the adequacy of a given label to its multilayered question.³² Yet one must wonder whether there is *any* single label that would be capacious enough to reflect and encompass all the threads of al-Tawhīdī's thinking.

My own sense is that the labels should be ascribed either to a copyist or to Miskawayh himself. The desire to order, systematize, and categorize certainly seems far more of a piece with what we see of Miskawayh's intellectual temper, and his evident interest to situate his enterprise against recognizable rubrics and intellectual formats. Besides this psychological evidence, there is also the evidence of the questions and answers themselves. It is striking that in a number of cases, the labels do not reflect the content of the questions nearly as well as they reflect the answers. In the label for §3.1, for example, literally rendered as "A composite question about the secrets of nature and the letters of the language," the term "letters" (*hurūf*) does not appear in the question itself, and appears for the first time in the reply. §33.1 carries the label "A psychological (*nafsāniyyah*) question," a label that seems mystifying if one looks only at the question, which asks for an explanation of certain kinds of coincidence. ("Why does a person who is the subject of conversation unexpectedly appear at the very moment he is being mentioned?") Miskawayh, however, builds his reply precisely on considerations about the nature of the soul (*nafs*). Likewise, it is noteworthy that some of the questions labeled "ethical" are given a distinct ethical inflection, and connected more directly to the excellences or defects of character, in Miskawayh's reply rather than in al-Tawhīdī's question (§§27.1–3 is an example).

Introduction

This hypothesis doesn't rule out the possibility that it was a copyist, rather than Miskawayh himself, who assigned the labels; it only argues against their being the work of al-Tawḥīdī. Why the abrupt stop? Did the meticulous categorizer, toiling over the wild garden of al-Tawḥīdī's questions, reach a point where he threw up his hands at their untamable profusion and simply gave up? Short of clinching evidence, one may only speculate. But for the reader of the present questions, there could be no greater commendation than such a defeat.

Sophia Vasalou



Buyid and Neighboring Lands

	Buyid territory	TURKS	Dynasty/people	IRAQ	Region
.....					
0 100 200 300 400 miles					

Design: Shawkat M. Tocrava and James E. Montgomery
Cartography: Jennifer Schöneweis, Martin Grosch

Note on the Text

The Manuscript

Like many important works of Islamic intellectual history, the existence of the present book owes itself to the survival of a unicum manuscript: MS Aya Sofya 2476, housed in the Süleymaniye Library in Istanbul. The editors worked from a high-resolution scan that was obtained from the Library.

The manuscript has 170 folios and is written in a clear, legible, and refined *naskhī* script with fourteen to sixteen lines per folio. The text is written in black ink. The first ten folios of the manuscript are well vocalized. In the subsequent portions of the manuscript, vocalization is less frequent. The scribe has marked out the various questions and answers: by elongating the letter *sīm* in the word *المسئلة* (“question”) and the letter *bāʾ* in *الجواب* (“response”). The end point of questions is marked by a dotted circle or a *hāʾ*. There are occasional marginal notes, which indicate the subtopics of questions and provide textual emendations.

Scholarly attention was first drawn to this manuscript by Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī (d. 1974) during a research visit to the Aya Sofya library in Istanbul. Al-Ṭanjī brought the manuscript to the notice of Aḥmad Amīn (1886–1954), who, having previously edited Tawḥīdī’s *Book of Delight and Conviviality*, confirmed this text’s importance.³³

At the time of his work on this project, Amīn was a towering figure in the study of Islam. His sweeping narrative of the rise of Islam and the intellectual history is a testament to his broad vision, eloquence, and deep familiarity with the literary heritage.³⁴ In 1914, he founded the Committee on Authorship, Translation, and Publication (*Lajnat al-Taʿlīf wa-l-Tarjamah wa-l-Nashr*), and remained at its head until his death.

Amīn enlisted the aid of Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣaqr (1915–89), who was three decades his junior, to assist him in the preparation of the edition of the *Hawāmil*. Although the *Hawāmil* was one of his early scholarly projects, Ṣaqr had distinguished himself through his deep knowledge of Arabic language and literature evident in such works as the *Sharḥ Dīwān ‘Alqamah al-Faḥl* (fl. sixth c. AD) and an edition of the *Deaths of the Ṭalībids* by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (d. ca. 363/973).³⁵ Amīn and Ṣaqr completed their work on the *Hawāmil* in 1951.

These editors remained hopeful that another copy of the work would come to light, but to date no other manuscript of the work has been identified.

Manuscripts often have their own stories to tell in the notes that adorn their front pages, and MS Aya Sofya 2476 is no exception. Folio 1 verso contains a bequest deed of the Ottoman Sultan Maḥmūd II (r. 1808–39) along with the seal of his inspector of pious bequests (*awqāf*) that signals the work's accession.

Prior to this, the manuscript circulated in private hands in Ottoman Syria. Ownership notes on folio 2 recto indicate that the volume had been the possession of a certain Abū Bakr ibn Rustam ibn Aḥmad al-Shirwānī (d. 1135/1723), a noted bibliophile and administrator of the Ottoman period.³⁶ Before this, the manuscript appears to have been housed in Aleppo in northern Syria. On the lower left-hand margin of the manuscript, there is a record of the book's loan in the eighth/fifteenth century between two scholars resident in Aleppo.

The most prominent name on the title page is al-Ḥusayn ibn Sulaymān ibn Rayyān (702–70/1302–69), who was an administrator and man of letters of the seventh/fourteenth century residing in Aleppo.³⁷ Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī (d. 764/1363) considered him among the finest poets composing in the *bullayq* form.³⁸ Al-Ṣafadī noted that Ibn Rayyān also maintained an interest in rational sciences (*‘aqliyyāt*), and his possible ownership or reading of this book may be understood in this light.³⁹

Prior to this, the earlier history of the manuscript is difficult to establish. A sole ownership note at the top right-hand corner of the first folio suggests that this manuscript was in existence in the mid-fifth/eleventh century. The note states that a certain Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm al-Bilī/al-Sabīlī/al-Masīlī (?) is the first known owner of this text. Amīn and Ṣaqr relied upon this note, dated to 440/1048, as the *terminus ante quem* for the copying of the manuscript, placing it at a remove of one or two generations from the lifetimes of its authors. The note, however, may not be authentic, as it predates the other evidence on the manuscript by two centuries.

The Edition

The notes to the edition refer to MS Aya Sofya as the الأصل and ط refers to the printed edition of Amīn and Ṣaqr of Cairo 1951. The principles in establishing the Arabic edition were as follows:

- Vowels have been added to the text. Poetry and Qur'anic passages have received full vocalization.

- Consonantal *shaddahs* have been included.
- Punctuation has been restricted to periods at the end of sections and question marks.
- The Aya Sofya manuscript presents Miskawayh's answers without interruption. However, there are marginal notes that identify subdivisions of the question. We have chosen to restore these marginal notes as subheadings.
- Poetic citations are typeset as poetry and the identity of the meter is provided.

The Translation

The present book represents the first full-length English translation of the text. An English translation of al-Tawhīdī's questions was recently offered by Elias Muhanna and a French translation of select extracts can also be found in the work of Mohammed Arkoun. More recently, a full-length translation appeared in Italian.⁴⁰

One of the largest challenges of translating the text stems from the fact that the present edition, like the first edition published in 1951, is based on a single manuscript, which is the only manuscript known to us. While the script is beautifully clear and in most respects the manuscript is of an excellent standard, it also has a number of weaknesses, the most obvious being that it is incomplete. The first page of the manuscript announces 180 questions, but the text breaks off in the middle of the response at §175.2, and it resumes with a disconnected passage that is evidently a response to a different question.⁴¹ Besides this obvious lacuna, there are a number of junctures throughout where the text appears flawed, notably passages where the syntax is disturbed in ways that make the meaning hard to follow. Lacking additional manuscripts, we have no means of correcting the text and locating alternative readings. Faced with passages of this kind, the translator's best option is to translate them as faithfully and conservatively as possible and pass on the ambiguity and breadth of interpretive choice to the reader, so that she can make up her mind independently. The same applies to those cases where the opacity is less obviously the result of textual flaws, and more a reflection of stylistic habits.

A more interesting, and somewhat more tractable, challenge is posed by the simple yet important fact that the present book is an exchange between two thinkers, each of whom is interpreting the words of the other no less than the

reader is interpreting theirs. Both because al-Tawḥīdī's questions are written in a highly distinctive literary style and because they are the expression of an intellectual temper that is unlike Miskawayh's in many respects, it is not a foregone conclusion that Miskawayh will always interpret them in the way that seems (to us, as interpreting readers) correct or most natural—or that, even if he interprets them “correctly,” he will answer them in the way al-Tawḥīdī's question most readily invited. This creates a challenge for the translation, which needs to preserve enough continuity between the language of question and answer to enable the reader to track their relationship, while adapting the language to reflect the fact that its meaning has changed between question and answer. An example of this shifting meaning can be seen in §119.1, which quotes a remark made by the caliph al-Ma'mūn on the difficulty of chess. “I wonder at myself,” the caliph says. “I have the ends of the earth under my power [*udabbiru āfāq al-arḍ*], yet I cannot master a small square.” Miskawayh replies by offering some general remarks on the nature of crafts and the need for practice. “Since chess is a craft that conforms to this pattern,” he concludes, “neither deliberative power [*tadbīr*], nor good imagination, nor excellent judgment suffices without the addition of active engagement and practice.” The term *tadbīr*, exercise of power, is the lexical link that holds the entire question-and-answer sequence together; yet in answering the question, Miskawayh has effected a not insignificant shift in its meaning.

Besides these local challenges, the most demanding aspect of the translation has been deciding how to negotiate the subset of questions—and they are no small number—that center on the meanings of Arabic terms. This type of discussion is a key focus in two long questions (§§1.1 and 34.1) and forms an element of a number of others. Already a first challenge, in fact, is deciding whether to read these questions as philological questions about the meaning of words, or to read them as ontological questions about the nature of things. Is al-Tawḥīdī asking what the Arabic word *quwwah* means, for example, or about what capacity or power *is* (§34.1)? Is he asking what the word *‘illah* means, or what a cause *is* (§4.1)? The seams between the linguistic and the ontological parsings of the question are not always easy to mark—after all, the seams are in themselves porous—but in many places it seems clear that al-Tawḥīdī's questions are best understood in the first sense. That being granted, the challenge is then how to convey in English a discussion that is essentially lexicographical in kind.

One approach entertained was to retain the target words in Arabic. A strong argument in favor of this approach was that in the majority of cases, it is impossible to locate English equivalents whose meanings dovetail with the explanations Miskawayh provides for the Arabic terms, enough indeed to be used for every single appearance of the relevant term. Insofar as semantic correspondence fails, translating the Arabic means a discussion that has the form of an English lexicographical exercise without its proper content. The sense of paradox is perhaps heightened by the fact that many of the terms Miskawayh is asked to define (distinguishing between ostensibly synonymous expressions in the process) are not technical terms but words that belong to ordinary language—words like “to give” or “to seek,” to be “joyful” or “lucky.” The alternative, however, was long tracts of English translation dominated by transliterated Arabic terms, which would be alienating to the general reader. The decision was thus taken to translate the terms, in the hope that this will put the general reader in the best position to follow the discussion and appreciate its character. Therefore Arabic is rarely introduced into the translation, where the discussion involves an appeal to the morphology or etymology of the terms.

Among the decisions taken regarding the translation of specific terms, one that is perhaps worth a brief comment concerns the translation of the key philosophical term *quwwah*, which may strike some readers as lying slightly off the beaten track. “Power”—the translation adopted throughout this book—is a natural choice for many uses of the term, but not the most common translation for its usage in the context of philosophical psychology, where it is usually translated as “faculty” (e.g., *al-quwwah al-ghaḍabiyyah*, the irascible faculty, *al-quwwah al-shahwiyyah*, the appetitive faculty). Yet the decisions that might appear most natural in the context of an open discussion of ideas may not be the ones that appear most appropriate in the context of the translation of complete texts. In approaching the latter, one is forced to pay closer heed to the overall linguistic environment and the different ways in which particular terms are deployed within it. Having taken this overall environment into account, part of the reason “faculty” seems dissatisfying is that it forces one to draw uncomfortably sharp distinctions between different uses of the term—ones that sometimes stand only a stone’s throw apart in the text—on the basis that one of them enjoys a place in Miskawayh’s philosophical psychology that is sufficiently serious or systematic for it to be dignified with a more technical translation, whereas another doesn’t. When *quwwah* refers to the core aspects of the human soul as tabulated in the

Platonic tradition—anger, appetite, reason—“faculty” comes naturally. Yet what about those cases where Miskawayh refers to other, rather more expansive, aspects or capacities of the soul, such as the *quwwah* of giving and the *quwwah* of receiving (§2.2)? What about the case in which the term is used to refer to the soul itself, and indeed also to the body (§4.5)? What if the mention of the *quwwah* of anger is succeeded, moments later, by a reference to the *quwwah* of jealousy (§§95.3–4)? Is jealousy a “faculty” in a sense sufficiently similar to anger? The choice of “power” as a translation reflects the translator’s discomfort with the necessity of drawing such sharp distinctions, and her sense that it is the more inclusive term that best passes on the full gamut of semantic possibilities to the readers and allows them to take their own decisions about how to “hear” particular terms—just as Miskawayh’s reader, confronted with a single Arabic term, would have had to.

No doubt other translators would approach such challenges differently. Be that as it may, our hope is that the present translation will help open up this distinctive intellectual exchange for English-speaking readers and allow them to look as lucidly as possible into the mirror it holds to the minds of two great thinkers of their time—and indeed, to the entire cultural era they represent.

Note that, throughout the text the translators have added descriptive titles to each of the topics addressed in the correspondence between al-Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh; and pious phrases have been omitted after their first occurrence, with an exception made for pious phrases addressed by one author to the other. Renderings of Qur’anic passages generally follow the translation by A. J. Arberry.

Notes to the Introduction

- 1 See Naaman, *Literature and the Islamic Court*, 268n37.
- 2 For more on the reception of this literature, see Filius, “The Genre *Problemata* in Arabic,” and “La tradition orientale des *Problemata Physica*.”
- 3 For a helpful survey of the different types of question-and-answer works, see Daiber, “Masā’il wa-Adjwiba.”
- 4 *Mu’jam al-udabā’*, 5:1924.
- 5 See the discussion in Arkoun, “L’humanisme arabe (part I),” 75–78.
- 6 Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 110–12.
- 7 Naaman, *Literature and the Islamic Court*, 267–69n37. Naaman provides a very helpful overview of the competing chronological hypotheses offered by different scholars.
- 8 See al-Tawḥīdī, *Al-Imtā’ wa-l-mu’ānasah*, 1:35–36, and see also Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 39–48, for a more exhaustive documentation and analysis of al-Tawḥīdī’s remarks about Miskawayh.
- 9 *Al-Hawāmil wa-l-shawāmil*, ed. Amīn and Ṣaqr, Introduction, 29.
- 10 Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 110–11.
- 11 The quote is from Naaman, *Literature and the Islamic Court*, 240, read against the remarks at 267–69n37.
- 12 For discussion of these points, see Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 39–48.
- 13 Arkoun, “L’humanisme arabe (part I),” 78–79.
- 14 The book as we have it in fact assigns its own set of labels to some of the questions. We will come back to this point.
- 15 See his comments in “The Scattered and the Gathered,” 255–56; and see generally 251–58 for a more detailed overview of the different types of questions.
- 16 See the discussion of this exchange in Pines, “A Tenth Century Philosophical Correspondence.”
- 17 In his edition of the epistle—“Deux épîtres de Miskawayh”—Arkoun entertains the possibility that this correspondent may also have been al-Tawḥīdī (12n6), but the stark stylistic differences alone make that seem highly unlikely.
- 18 For the distinction between these uses, see Daiber, “Masā’il wa-Adjwiba,” though Daiber also brings out its porousness. Many of the above features also make it hard to speak of a substantial affinity to al-Jāḥiẓ’s *The Square and the Round* in either content or intention, despite the thematic breadth they share. Many of the questions that feature in the latter appear to have a deliberately recondite or “unanswerable” character, as Robert Irwin notes (*Penguin Anthology of Classical Arabic Literature*, 100; though see

- Montgomery, “Al-Ġāhiz and Hellenizing Philosophy,” for a very different reading of the nature and aims of the book). It is perhaps worth noting, nevertheless, that a number of al-Tawhīdī’s questions overlap with al-Jāhiz’s; see, e.g., the more general questions at *Al-Tarbi‘ wa-l-tadwīr*, 39 (§68).
- 19 Arkoun, “L’humanisme arabe (part II),” 74.
 - 20 See the Preface and Conclusion of the book, and also, e.g., the remarks at §§29.3, 88.3.
 - 21 Kraemer, *Humanism in the Renaissance of Islam*, 222.
 - 22 For another discussion of Miskawayh’s relationship to the passions of inquiry and an attempt at a more positive characterization of the curiosity or wonder at work in his thought, see also Arkoun’s thoughtful remarks in *L’humanisme arabe*, 216–21.
 - 23 We have in mind the remarks in *Rhetoric* Book 2, chapters 12–13, where Aristotle discusses the character of the young and the old; their diverging relationship to hope is a central theme of that discussion. Compare the remarks in the extant Arabic version: *Aristotle’s Ars Rhetorica*, 120.18–125.7.
 - 24 Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 206.
 - 25 Arkoun, “L’humanisme arabe (part I),” 84.
 - 26 See the remarks in *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 50. Cf. Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 34–35, and see 81ff. for a translation and discussion of the oath.
 - 27 That single instance is §162.6, where Miskawayh refers to (without quoting verbatim) a subsequent question asked by al-Tawhīdī, which appears to *challenge* the account Miskawayh has just provided, and more specifically his claim that the ratio for currency conversions must be ten to one. Another instance that seems to breathe the faintest whiff of responsiveness into the composition process is found in §§96.4 and 97.1. In replying to the first question, Miskawayh employs a comparison or analogy (*mithāl*) (§96.4), and it then seems like a curious coincidence that the next question focuses precisely on the attraction of seeking analogies or likeness.
 - 28 See §110.1, though it is ambiguous whether this particular remark is in Miskawayh’s or al-Tawhīdī’s voice; and see also §153.1, in al-Tawhīdī’s voice this time.
 - 29 Arkoun, *L’humanisme arabe*, 208–10.
 - 30 §89.1 is a striking example of this, but far from being the only one.
 - 31 The translators take a somewhat different view of this category than the one followed by Muhanna in his otherwise very helpful discussion of the problem in “The Scattered and the Gathered,” 251ff.
 - 32 Muhanna, “The Scattered and the Gathered,” 252n10. Cf. Aḥmad Amīn’s remarks in the first edition of the *Hawāmil*, p. *tā*’.
 - 33 Al-Tawhīdī, *al-Imtā‘ wa-l-mu’ānasah*, 3 vols.

- 34 Amīn, *Fajr al-Islām*; idem, *Ḍuhā al-Islām*; idem, *Zuhr al-Islām*.
- 35 Ṣaqr, *Sharḥ Dīwān ‘Alqamah al-Fahl*; al-Iṣfahānī, *Maqātil al-Ṭalibiyīn*.
- 36 On him, see Ayman Fu’ād Sayyid, “Les marques de possession sur les manuscrits,” 20. The editors would like to express their gratitude to Dr. Boris Liebrecht for his help with identifying this individual and his assistance in reading the ownership notes on the title page.
- 37 For his life and *maqāmāt*, see Maurice A. Pomerantz, “An Epic Hero in the Maqāmāt?” 99–103; for a translation of one of his more piquant examples of *bullayq* poetry, see Adam Talib, “Caricature and Obscenity,” 281–83.
- 38 *Bullayq* is a strophic form commonly used for ribald poems; on the form, see Talib, “Caricature and Obscenity,” 281n18.
- 39 Al-Ṣafadī, *al-Wāfi bi-l-wafayāt*, 12:376–77.
- 40 See the work by Muhanna and Arkoun already cited. The book has been translated into Italian by Lidia Bettini as *Il libro dei cammelli errabondi e di quelli che li radunano*.
- 41 One interesting question, of course, is whether the announced number takes into account Miskawayh’s editorial manipulations, which sometimes involve deleting entire questions or amalgamating them with others.

الهوامل والشوامل
المجلد الأول

The Philosopher Responds

Volume One

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وإياه أستعين

- ١٠٠ أعانك الله على درك الحق وشرح صدرك له وأعانك من سفه الباطل وصرف وجهك عنه ووفر من العلم حظك وأجزل من المعارف قسمك وجعل لك في السعادة نصيباً من سعيك وعلى الخير دليلاً من نفسك وزين في عينك الإنصاف والتسليم للحق وكره إليك الظلم والمراء في الباطل وأثار بك دفائن الحكمة وأوضح لك غوامض العلم وألهمك كلمة العدل لتؤثرها في أمورك وأحوالك وتقف عندها في أقوالك وأفعالك.
- ٢٠٠ قرأت مسألتك التي سألتني أجوبتها في رسالتك التي بدأت بها فشكوت فيها الزمان واستبطأت بها الإخوان فوجدتك تشكو الداء القديم والمرض العقيم فانظر حفظك الله إلى كثرة الباكين حولك وتأس أو إلى الصابرين معك وتسل فلعمري أيك إنمّا^٣ تشكو إلى شك وتبكي على باك في كل حلق شجي وفي كل عين قذى وكل أحد يلتمس من أخيه ما لا يجده أبداً عنده ولو كان حد الصديق^٤ ما رسمه الحكماء حين قالوا صديقك آخر هوانت إلا أنه غيرك بالشخص فبهيات منه إني لأظن الأبلق العقوق والعنقاء المغرب والكبريت الأحمر أسر مطلباً وأقرب وجوداً منه.
- ٣٠٠ وبعد فإني أرى لك إذا أحببت معايشة الناس ومخالطتهم وآثرت لذة العمر وطيب الحياة أن تسامح أخاك وتعالط فيه نفسك حتى تُغضي له عن كل حق لك وترى له عليك ما لا يراه لنفسه وأن تأخذ بأدب بشار فإنه نعم الأدب وموعظة النابغة فعمت الموعظة ولا تعود عشيرك وجليسك استماع شكواك فيأنس به ثم لا يُشيك ولا تكثر عليه من العتب فيألفه ثم لا يُعتبك.

١ الأصل: أعا... فه. ٢ الأصل: حفظك إلى. ٣ الأصل: وتسل إنمّا. ٤ الأصل: شجي وكل. ٥ الأصل: عنده الصديق.

In the name of God, the Merciful. I ask God for assistance.

May God help you attain the truth and open your heart to it. May He preserve you from the folly of false views and help you avoid them. May He give you knowledge as you deserve and grant you a generous portion of learning. May He grant you happiness in the efforts you take and guide you to the good. May He make you appreciate the beauty of decent conduct and conceding truths, and may He rouse your repugnance to unjust conduct and disputing untruths. May He help you unearth treasure troves of wisdom and shine a beacon for you into the darker reaches of knowledge. May He inspire you to just words, that you may choose them in all your affairs and concerns, and make them your custom in all you say and do. 0.1

I have read the questions you have asked me to answer. You began your letter with a lament about the sorry times we live in, and about the unintelligent people who surround us, harping on an old complaint and a malady without chance of cure. God bless you! Look at all the people weeping around you and take comfort; look at those suffering with you and find solace. I assure you in the strongest terms that your lament falls on the ears of one who himself laments, and your tears are shed before one who is equally tearful. There is a lump in every man's throat, and a mote in every man's eye. We all seek from our fellow men things we can never hope to receive. The philosophers have defined a "friend" by saying: A friend is another person who is you but is not you by being a separate individual.¹ Alas, if that is so, then I believe it will be easier to find a pregnant stallion, a phoenix, or red sulfur on this earth. 0.2

My advice to you is that if you wish to live among people and be part of their mix, and if you would like to lead a pleasant and agreeable life, you would do well to be forbearing toward your fellow men and prepared to put yourself in the wrong, so that you disregard every claim you have on them and instead grant them the sort of rights over you that they do not expect for themselves. You should take to heart the rule of conduct spelled out by the poet Bashshār—for it is an excellent rule of conduct—and the admonition given by the poet al-Nābighah—for it is an excellent admonition.² And you should not accustom those who share your company and your dinner table to listen to your complaints so that they grow so used to them that they no longer seek to assuage them, and you should not reproach them so frequently that they grow so familiar with them as to no longer seek to reproach you. 0.3

- ٤٠٠ هذا إن لم يكن عنده لك أكثر مما عندك له ولم تجم منه على صدر محتش وعراً وقلب ممتلىء دماً فإنك حينئذ تهيج بلا بله وتثير ضغائنه وتذكره ما تناساه كرمماً أو تكرمماً وطواه حاملاً أو تحملاً. وهذا إن أنصفك فلم يتسرع إليك وصدقك فلم يتكذب عليك. ومن عرف طبع الزمان وأهله وشيئة الدهر وبنيه لم يطمع في المحال ولم يتعرض للممنوع ولم ينتظر الصفو من المعدن الكدر ولم يطلب النعيم في دار المحنة.
- ٥٠٠ وأنت إذا لم تجد من نفسك وهي أخص الأشياء بك مساعدةً لك على رضاك ولا من أخلاط بدنك وهي أقرب الأمور إليك موافقةً لهواك فكيف تلتبسها من غيرك وتطلبها من سواك؟ استعد بالله من الشيطان ووساوسه ومن دنس الجهل وملابسه واستعن بالله يعنك واستكفه يهك ولا قوة إلا به. هذا مبلغ ما رأيت من وعظك وحضرتي من نصحك وأرجو أن يوافق ما توخيتك لك ورجوته فيك من القبول والامتثال إن شاء الله.
- ٦٠٠ وهأنذا آخذ في أجوبة مسائلك التي سميتها هوامل ومجتهد في ردها عليك برعاة حفظة وولاية يقظة محلولة العقال موسومة الأعفال ومؤمل أن تجد بها من الحكمة ضالتك ومن العلم بغيتك وطلبتك فقضي بعد الظفر منها إلى برد اليقين فيها إن شاء الله.
- ٧٠٠ وشرطنا إذا تكلمنا في مسألة أن نبين عوبصها ونشرح مشكلها فإذا تعلق ذلك بكلام مسبوق إليه مقرر وأصل محكوم به مثبت قد شرحه غيرنا وبينه لا سيما رجل مشهور بالحكمة عالي الدرجة فيها أرشدنا إليه ودللنا على موضعه فإني رأيت فعل ذلك أولى من تكلف نسخه ونقله والتكثير به مع ذكره إيماءً واختصاراً وبالله التوفيق.

This assumes that he does not have more complaints and reproaches against you than you have against him, and that you are not launching an attack against a breast already filled with resentment and a heart festering with spite. For in that case you will stir up and arouse his pent-up anger, by reminding him of things he had chosen to forget, be it out of good grace or in an attempt to be gracious, things that he had swept under the carpet, be it out of clemency or in an attempt to be clement. That is if he treats you fairly, and does not rush to do you some evil, and if he is truthful and does not tell you barefaced lies. Anyone who understands the nature of this age and its people, and the character of this time and its children, will not aspire to what is in itself unreasonable and will not set out to achieve what is unattainable, and he will not expect to find clarity in turbid waters or bliss in a world of tribulation. 0.4

If your own soul does not help you achieve contentment, even though the soul is what is most properly your own, and if the humors of your own body are not in harmony with your wishes, even though they lie closest to you, how can you seek such things from someone else, and solicit them from your fellow? Seek refuge in God from Satan's wiles and from the impurities and confusions of ignorance. Ask for God's help and He will help you; ask Him to meet your needs and He will do so—strength comes from God alone. This is the sum total of the counsels and admonitions I can offer you, and I hope they meet with your acceptance and assent as I trust they will, God willing. 0.5

Now I turn to answer your questions. You call them a "Wandering Herd." Therefore, I have striven to return them to you in the care of attentive herders and watchful stewards, unhobbled and with their hides branded. My hope is that herein you will find the wisdom you are searching for and the knowledge you are seeking, so that through their acquisition you may savor the pleasure of certainty, if God so wills it. 0.6

The procedure we will adopt in this work is as follows. In the discussion of a given question, we will aim to clarify what is abstruse and explain what is obscure. If that happens to touch on matters that have already been discussed and firmly established, or on recognized and reliably known principles that have been explained and clarified by others, especially when these others have a solid, established reputation for wisdom, we will point to these principles and indicate where they can be found, while providing brief synopses. I think this is preferable to the bother of copying and reproducing them and going on at length. God alone gives success. 0.7

المسألة الأولى وهي لغوية

- ١٠١ قلت أعرك الله ما الفرق بين العجلة والسرعة؟ وهل يجب أن يكون بين كل لفظتين إذا تواقعتا على معنى وتعاورتا غرضاً فرقاً لأنك تقول سرّ فلان وفرح وأسر فلان ومرح وبعد فلان ونزح وهزل فلان ومرح وحج فلان وصدّ ومنع فلان وردّ وأعطى فلان وناول ورام فلان وحاول وعالج فلان وزاول وذهب فلان ومضى وحكم فلان وقضى وجاء فلان وأتى واقترب فلان ودنا وتكلم فلان ونطق وأصاب فلان وصدق وجلس فلان وقعد ونأى فلان وبعد وحضر فلان وشهد ورغب عن كذا وزهد وهل يشمل السرور والحبور والبهجة والغبطة والفكه والجذل والفرح والارتياح والبجح على معنى واحد أو على معان مختلفة؟ وخذ على هذا فإنّ بابه طويل وحبله مثني وشكله كثير. فإن كان بين كل نظيرين من ذلك فرق يفصل معنى من معنى ويفرّ مراداً من مراد ويبين غرضاً من غرض فلم لا يشترك في معرفته كما اشترك في معرفة أصله؟ وعلى هذا فما الفرق بين الغرض والمعنى والمراد وما هو ذا وقد تقدّم أنّها؟ وما الذي أوضح الفرق بين نطق وسكت وألبس الفرق بين نطق وتكلم وبين سكت وصمت؟

الجواب

- ٢٠١ قال أبو علي أحمد بن محمد مسكويه لما كنا نحتاج في الجواب عن هذه المسألة إلى ذكر السبب الذي من أجله احتيج إلى الكلام المصطلح عليه والحاجة الباعثة على وضع

On the differences between a number of similar words—a linguistic question

You asked, may God show you favor: What is the difference between the terms *swiftness* and *haste*? When two words share a single meaning and converge on a single import, should there always necessarily be a difference between them? For we say “he was delighted” and “was glad,” and “he was exuberant” and “was merry.” Again, one says “he was distant” and “went far away,” “he jested” and “joked,” “he blocked” and “thwarted,” “he restrained” and “drove off.” We also say “he gave” and “handed over,” “he sought” and “strived,” “he applied himself to something” and “occupied himself with something,” “he went” and “left.” We say “he judged” and “ruled,” “he came” and “arrived,” “he approached” and “advanced,” “he talked” and “spoke,” “he was accurate” and “was right.” We say “he sat down” and “took a seat,” “he kept away” and “kept at a distance,” “he was present” and “attended” something, “he was uninterested” and “was indifferent.” Do the terms “delight,” “joy,” “happiness,” “rapture,” “gaiety,” “cheerfulness,” “gladness,” “pleasure,” and “rejoicing” have exactly the same meaning, or do their meanings differ? Use this as your model for dealing with all the other cases, because the subject is substantial—its topics are tied up in endless knots and it has numerous interrelated instances. And if between each such pair of similar things there *is* a difference that separates one meaning from another, distinguishes one signification from another, and demarcates one import from another, then why isn’t this difference common knowledge, the way the basic notion is? Building on that: What is the distinction between the terms “aim,” “meaning,” and “intention” I just used? Why is it that the difference between “to speak” and “to be silent” is obvious, whereas the difference between “to speak” and “to talk,” and “to be silent” and “to be mute,” is so elusive?

1.1

Miskawayh’s response

In order to answer this question, we must say something about the reason why a linguistic convention is required, about why people are driven to posit names

1.2

الأسماء الدالة بالتواطؤ والعلّة الداعية إلى تأليف الحروف التي تصير أسماء وأفعالاً وحروفاً بالاتفاق والاصطلاح والأقسام التي تعرض لنا بموجب حكم العقل قدّمنا بيان ذلك أمام الجواب ليكون توطئة له وليسهل علينا هذا المطلب ويبين عن نفسه ويعين على ما اعتاص منه .

٣٠١ فأقول إنّ السبب الذي احتيج من أجله إلى الكلام هو أنّ الإنسان الواحد لما كان غير مكفّ بنفسه في حياته ولا بالغ حاجاته في تمتّة بقائه مدّته المعلومة وزمانه المقدّر المقسوم احتاج إلى استدعاء ضروراته في مادة بقائه من غيره ووجب بشريطة العدل أن يعطي غيره عوض ما استدعاه منه بالمعاونة التي من أجلها قالت الحكمة إنّ الإنسان مدنيّ بالطبع . وهذه المعاونات والضرورات المقتسمة بين الناس التي بها يصحّ بقاؤهم وتمّ حياتهم وتحسن معاشهم هي أشخاص وأعيان من أمور مختلفة وأحوال غير متّفقة وهي كثيرة غير متناهية وربما كانت حاضرة فصحت الإشارة إليها وربما كانت غائبة فلم تكف الإشارة فيها فلم يكن بدّ من أن يفرع إلى حركات بأصوات دالة على هذه المعاني بالاصطلاح ليستدعيها بعض الناس من بعض وليعاون بعضهم بعضاً فيتمّ لهم البقاء الإنسانيّ وتكمل فيهم الحياة البشرية .

٤٠١ ولما كان الباريّ جلّ وعزّ بلطيف حكمته وسابق علمه وقدرته قد أعدّ للإنسان آلة هي أكثر الأعضاء حركة وأوسعها قدرة على التصرف ووضعها في طريق الصوت وضعاً موافقاً لتقطع ما يخرج منه مع النفس ملائماً لسائر الآلات الأخر المعينة في تمام الكلام كانت هذه الآلة أجدر الأعضاء باستعمال أنواع الحركات المظهرة لأجناس الأصوات الدالة على المعاني التي ذكرناها . وقد بلغت عدّة هذه الأصوات المفردة المقطعة بهذه الحركات المسماة حروفاً ثمانية وعشرين حرفاً في اللغة العربية ثمّ ربّكت كلّها ثنائياً وثلاثياً ورباعياً وجميعها متناهية محصاة لأنّ أصولها وبسائطها محصورة معدودة فالمرّكات منها أيضاً محصورة معدودة .

١ الأصل: وكان . ٢ الأصل: الصوت موافقاً .

that signify through common accord, and about why people are impelled to conjoin letters so as to produce nouns, verbs, and particles by way of agreement and convention. We must also say something about the logical categories that are imposed on us through the necessity of reason. We thus begin by offering a few words on this subject by way of preface, to make our task easier and to serve as clarification in itself and as assistance for obscurer points.

The reason why speech is needed is that individual human beings are not self-sufficient in their lives and cannot satisfy what they need to survive over the determinate time that has been allocated to them. They thus need to solicit their vital necessities from others during the span of their continued existence, and justice demands that they give others something in exchange for what they obtain from them, which they do through mutual assistance. This is why the philosophers said: Human beings are political by nature. The ways people offer each other assistance, the vital necessities they share—which make it possible for them to survive, to stay alive, and to live well—are particulars and concrete individuals of several different kinds, and circumstances of a disparate sort, and they are many in number—in fact, they are infinite. Sometimes they are physically present, and it is possible to point to them; sometimes they are physically absent, and it will not be possible to point to them. It will then be necessary to have recourse to sonic movements that signify those things by way of convention, so that people can solicit them from one another and provide mutual assistance, enabling humankind to survive and human life to be perfected.

1.3

In the subtlety of His wisdom, and through His prior knowledge and power, God equipped human beings with an organ that surpasses all other bodily members in its agility and the range of its powers, positioning it, in terms of how sound is produced, at a location that allows it to break up the sound that emerges with the breath, one consistent with all the other organs that contribute to the production of speech. This organ is the bodily member best suited to apply a variety of movements in order to produce the different kinds of sounds that signify the things we have mentioned above. In the Arabic language, the number of individual sounds broken up by these movements—which we call “letters”—comes to twenty-eight, which are then organized in clusters of two, three, and four. These clusters constitute a calculable number of finite groups, because the basic ingredients and simple elements out of which they are formed are circumscribed in number, and so the things that are formed from them must also be circumscribed in number.

1.4

٥.١ ولما كانت قسمة العقل توجب في هذه الكلم إذا نظر إليها بحسب دلالتها على المعاني أن تكون على أحوال خمس لا أقل منها ولا أكثر وُجِدَتْ منقسمة إليها لا غير وهي أن يتفق اللفظ والمعنى معاً أو يختلفا معاً أو تتفق الألفاظ وتختلف المعاني أو تختلف الألفاظ وتتفق المعاني أو تتركب اللفظة فيتفق بعض حروفها مع بعض المعنى وتختلف في الباقية.^٢ وهذه الألفاظ الخمس^٣ هي التي عدّها الحكيم في أول كتبه المنطقية وتكلم عليها المفسرون وسمّوها المتفقة والمتباينة والمتواطئة والمترادفة والمستتقة وهي مشروحة هناك ولكن السبب الذي من أجله احتج إلى وضع الكلام يقتضي قسمًا واحدًا منها وهو أن تختلف الألفاظ بحسب اختلاف المعاني وهي المسماة المتباينة فأما الأقسام الباقية فإن ضرورات دعت إليها وحاجات بعثت عليها ولم تقع بالقصد الأول وسنشرح ذلك بعون الله وتوفيقه.

٦.١ وقد تقدّم البيان أن المعاني والأحوال التي تتصور للنفس كثيرة جداً وأنها بلا نهاية. فأما الحروف الموضوعية الدالة بالتواطؤ والمركبات منها مفتاحية محصورة محصاة بالعدد. ومن الأحكام البيّنة والقضايا الواضحة بدائه^٤ العقول أن الكثير إذا قُسم على القليل اشتركت عدة منها في واحدة لا محالة فمن ههنا حدث الاتفاق في الاسم وهو أن توجد لفظة واحدة دالة على معان كثيرة كلفظة العين الدالة على العين التي يُصير بها وعلى عين الماء وعين الركبة وعين الميزان والمطر الذي لا يقلع أياماً وأشباهه من الأسماء كثيرة جداً ولم يقع هذا الفعل المؤذي إلى الإلباس والإشكال وإلى الغلط والخطأ في الأعمال والاعتقادات باختيار بل باضطرار طبيعي كما بينّا وأوضحنا.

٧.١ وعرض بعد ذلك أن أصحاب صناعة البلاغة وصناعة الشعر والسيبغ وأصحاب البلاغة والخطابة وهم الذين يحتاجون إلى الإقناعات العامية في مواقف الإصلاح بين العشائر مرة والحض على الحروب مرة والكف عنها مرة وفي المقامات الأخر التي يُحتاج فيها إلى الإطالة والإسهاب وترديد المعنى الواحد على مسامع الحاضرين

١ ط: وبعض. ٢ ط: الباقي. ٣ ط: الخمسة. ٤ الأصل: بداية؛ ط: بيداثة. ٥ ط: هم.

When reason considers these words from the perspective of how they signify meanings, it decrees that only five situations are logically possible, and accordingly words fall into one of the following five categories: Word and meaning converge; word and meaning diverge; the words converge and the meanings diverge; the words diverge and the meanings converge; the word is a composite, and the letters and meaning converge to a certain extent, but diverge in the remainder. These are the five types of terms that the Philosopher enumerated at the beginning of his logical books and that commentators have discussed, designating them in turn as “homonyms,” “heteronyms,” “synonyms,” “polyonyms,” and “paronyms.” A fuller account of them can be found in those sources.³ But only one of these categories is required for the purpose for which speech was needed, which is that words should vary with the meaning, which corresponds to “heteronymous” terms. The other categories arose out of particular constraints and specific needs, and did not arise from the primary purpose, as we will show with God’s help. 1.5

We have established that the things and situations the soul represents to itself are very many in number—that in fact they are infinite. By contrast, the posited letters that signify by common accord and the composites that are formed out of them are finite, limited, and circumscribed in number. It is crystal clear and intuitively obvious that when a large number of things are distributed over a smaller number of things, several will end up being shared by the latter. This is how the phenomenon of homonymy arises, which is when a single term signifies a number of different meanings. Take for example the word that denotes the eye we see with, a spring of water, the hollow of the knee, an overweight gold coin, and the kind of rain that continues for days. The examples could be multiplied. This feature—which leads to confusion and ambiguity and to errors and misjudgments in what people do and think—was not the product of voluntary choice but of natural necessity, as we have explained. 1.6

Then those who practice the craft of rhetoric, the craft of poetry and rhymed prose, and the arts of eloquence more broadly look askance at the use of the same word over and over again, because they need to produce popular persuasion in different contexts—for example, in making peace between tribes; in rousing people to, or making them desist from, war; or in any other situation in which it is necessary to dilate on a topic and to reiterate a single idea to an audience so that it sinks into their minds and stamps itself indelibly 1.7

ليتمكن من النفوس وينطبع في الأفهام لم يستحسنوا إعادة اللفظة الواحدة مراراً كثيرة ولا سيما الشاعر فإنه مع ذلك دائم الحاجة إلى لفظ يضعه مكان لفظ دال على معناه بعينه ليصح به وزن شعره ويعدل به أقسام كلامه. فاحتج لأجل ذلك إلى أسماء كثيرة دالة على معنى واحد. وهذا العارض الذي عرض للألفاظ المترادفة كأنه مناصب للقصود الأول في وضع الكلام مخالف له وقد دعت الحاجة إليه كما تراه ولولا حاجة الخطباء والشعراء وأصحاب السجع والموازنة إليه لكان لغواً باطلاً. ولما كانت المسألة متعلقة بهذين القسمين من الكلام اقتصرنا على شرحهما^٢ وعولنا بمن نشط للوقوف على الأقسام الأخرى على الكتب المصنفة فيها لأهل المنطق لأنها مستقصاة هناك.

٨٠١ وإذا قد فرغنا من التوطئة التي رماها أمام المسألة فإننا نأخذ في الجواب عنها فقول إن من الألفاظ ما توجد متباينة وهي التي تختلف باختلاف المعنى وإيها كان القصد الأول بوضع اللغة ومنها ما توجد متفقة وهي التي تتفق فيها الفاظ واحدة بعينها ومعانيها مختلفة ومنها ما توجد مترادفة وهي التي تختلف ألفاظها ومعانيها واحدة. وهذان القسمان حدثا بالضرورة كما بينا. وربما وجدت ألفاظ مختلفة دالة على معانٍ متقاربة وإن كانت أشخاص تلك المعاني مختلفة وربما دلت على أحوال مختلفة ولكنها مع اختلافها هي لشخص واحد فلاجل ذلك يستعملها الخطيب والشاعر مكان المترادفة لموضع المناسبة والشركة القريبة بينها وإن كانت متباينة بالحقيقة. ومثال ذلك ما يوجد من أسماء الداهية فإنها على كثرتها نعوت مختلفة ولكنها لما كانت لشيء واحد استعملت كأنها معنى واحد وكذلك أسماء الخمر والسيف وأشباهاها وأنت إذا أنعمت النظر واستقصيت الروية وجدت هذه الأشياء مختلفة المعاني ولكنها لما كانت أوصافاً لموصوف واحد أجريت مجرى الأسماء الدالة على معنى واحد وذلك عند اتساع الناس في الكلام وعند حاجتهم إلى التسميح وترك التكلف والتجوز في كثير من الحقائق. ولولا علمي بثقافة فطنتك وإحاطة معرفتك وسرعة تطلعك بفهمك على ما أومأت إليه لتكلفت لك الفرق بين معاني ألفاظ الخمر والشراب والشمول

١ ط: ولم. ٢ الأصل: شرحه.

on their understanding. This is especially true of poets, who are furthermore in a constant need of words that may serve in the place of other words bearing the same meaning, in order to get the meter right and arrange the structure of their speech more felicitously. It thus becomes necessary that several terms signify a single meaning. This phenomenon, which pertains to polyonyms, seems to conflict with the primary purpose behind the institution of speech. Yet, as you can see, it arises in response to a need. Had orators, poets, and those composing in rhymed prose and meters not needed it, it would have been completely pointless. We have confined our explanation to these two categories because they are connected with the present question, and we refer anyone interested in learning more about the other categories to their extensive, in-depth examination in books on logic.

So much for our prefatory remarks. We can now address the question proper. Our response is as follows: There are heteronyms—words that vary with the meaning. These were the primary purpose behind the institution of language. There are homonyms—single words that each bear different meanings. Then there are polyonyms—different words that bear the same meaning. We have shown that these last two categories arose from necessity. Sometimes different words bear kindred meanings though they differ in their specifics, and sometimes they denote different qualities yet pertain to a single thing. This is why orators and poets use them as if they were polyonyms, on account of the affinity and close association between them, even though they are actually heteronyms. A good example is the profusion of terms used to designate the notion of “catastrophe”; they represent distinct qualifications, but as they refer to a single thing, they are deployed as if they had the same meaning. Something similar holds for the different terms for “wine,” “sword,” and the like. If you take a close and thorough look, you will see that these things have different meanings. But as they are qualifications attributed to a single subject, they are treated as though they were terms that signified the same meaning. This happens when people allow themselves a certain license in their speech, when they need some latitude, to avoid constraints and be less stringent with the facts. Had I not been assured of your refined intelligence, your critical acumen, and your nimble mind, I would not have alluded to the meaning of these matters but would have gone to the trouble of explaining the distinction between the meanings of the words “wine,” “drink,” “liquor,” “alcohol,” “inebriant,” and other terms belonging to

1.8

والراح والقهوة وسائر أسمائها وبين معاني ألفاظ السيف والصمصام والحسام وباقي ألقابه ونعوته وكذلك في أسماء الدواهي ونعوتها ولكي رأيت تجشم ذلك فضلاً وإطالة وتكثيراً عليك بما لا فائدة لك فيه .

- ٩٠١ فينبغي لنا إذا وجدنا ألفاظاً مختلفة ومعانيها متفقة أو متقاربة أن ننظر فيها فإن بنهنا على موضع خلاف في المعاني حملنا تلك الألفاظ على مقتضى اللغة وموجب الحكمة في وضع الكلام فجعلها من الألفاظ المتباينة التي اختلفت باختلاف المعاني . وهي السبيل الواضحة والطريقة الصحيحة التي يسقط معها سؤال السائل وشك المتشكك . فإن لم يقع لنا موضع الخلاف في المعاني ولم يدلنا عليه النظر حملناه على الأصل الآخر وصرناه إلى القسم الذي بيناه وشرحناه من الضرورة الداعية في الشعر والخطابة إلى استعمال الألفاظ الكثيرة الدالة على معنى واحد . فلما وجدت المسائل التي صدرت في هذه الرسالة قد مثل فيها بألفاظ بعينها تكلفت الكلام فيها ليستعان بها على نظارها فإنها عند التصفح كثيرة واسعة جداً والله الموفق .

الفرق بين العجلة والسرعة^٢

- ١٠٠١ أما الفرق بين العجلة والسرعة فإن العجلة على الأكثر تستعمل في الحركات الجسمانية التي تتوالى وأكثر ما تجيء في موضع الذم فإنك تقول للرجل عجلت عليّ وعجل فلان على فلان فيعلم منه أنه ذمّ وأنت لا تفهم^٣ هذا المعنى من أسرع فلان . وأيضاً فإنك لا تستعمل الأمر من العجلة إلا لأصحاب المهن الدينية ولا تقوله إلا لمن هو دونك . فأما السرعة فإنها من الألفاظ المحمودة وأكثر ما تجيء في الحركات غير الجسمانية وذاك أنك تقول فلان سريع الهاجس وسريع الأخذ للعلم وقد أسرع في الأمر وأسرع في الجواب ﴿وَاللَّهُ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ﴾ وفوس فلان أسرع من الريح وأسرع من البرق ويقال في الطرف سريع وفي القضاء سريع والفلك سريع الحركة ولا يستعمل بدل هذه الألفاظ

١ ط: ولما . ٢ ط: سقط العنوان . ٣ الأصل: تفهم من هذا .

the same class; between the meanings of the words “sword,” “saber,” “blade,” and the rest of the appellations and qualifiers belonging to the same class; and between the different terms and qualifiers used to signify “catastrophe.” But I took the view that this would be gratuitous labor, prattling verbiage that would bring you no benefit.

Therefore, we need to probe different words whose meanings converge or are closely related, whenever we come across them. If we notice a point of distinction between their meanings, then we attribute these words to the imperatives of language and to the exigencies of the wisdom behind the institution of speech, classing them with the heteronyms that vary with the meaning. This is the clearest way and soundest method for dissolving questions and doubts. If, on the other hand, we do not succeed in uncovering a semantic distinction and probing does not bring one to light, then we attribute this to the other principle, and put it down to the category we clarified and explained, namely, the need that arises in poetry and rhetoric for using many words that signify a single meaning. I have taken it upon myself to discuss the specific terms that were used to illustrate the questions in the epistle, so as to provide a stepping-stone for dealing with similar cases—a closer look will reveal that there is a superabundance of these. God alone grants success.

1.9

The distinction between “haste” and “swiftness”

The distinction between “haste” and “swiftness” is as follows: “Haste” is mostly applied to a sequence of physical movements and is mostly used in a disapproving sense. When you say to someone “you were hasty with me” or “he was hasty with him,” it is understood that this is an expression of disapproval. This is not the case when you say “he was swift.” Also, we only use “haste” to frame commands in addressing people who work in lowly occupations, and we only use it with our inferiors. By contrast, “swiftness” is a term of approval, and is mostly applied to nonphysical movements. For example, you use it to say that a person catches on swiftly and is swift to learn, that he was swift to command and swift to reply. God is described as «swift at reckoning».⁴ You use it to describe a horse as swifter than the wind and swifter than lightning. A glance is said to be swift, justice is swift, the heavens are swift-moving. “Hasty” could not be used in their place, nor could it be deployed in any of these contexts. The difference is clear, but people use

1.10

عجل ولا تصرف لفظة العجلة في شيء من هذه المواضع. وهذا فرق واضح ولكن الاتساع في الكلام وتقارب المعنيين يجعل الناس على وضع إحدى الكلمتين مكان الأخرى.

الفرق بين السرور والفرح^١

- ١١.١ وأما قولهم سرّ فلان وفرح وأسر ومرح فإنّ الفرق بين السرور والفرح وبين الأشر والمرح ظاهر فإنّ الأشر والمرح لا يُستعملان إلا في الذمّ والعيب وأما السرور والفرح فليسا من ألفاظ الذمّ ووضوح الفرق ههنا أظهر وأبين من أن يُحتاج فيه إلى تكلف شرح وبيان. فأما السرور والفرح وإن كانا متقاربين في المعنى فإنّ أحدهما وهو السرور لا يُستعمل إلا إذا كان فاعله بك غيرك. وأما الفرح فهو حال تحدث بك من غير فاعل وتصريف الفعل منهما يدلّ على صحّة ما ذكرناه وذلك أنك تقول سررت وسرّ فلان ولا يُستعمل فيه إلا لفظ فعل الذي هو وإن لم يُسمّ فاعله فهو فعل غيرك. فأما قولك فرحت وفرح فلان فليس تقتضي اللفظة فاعلاً آخر.

الفرق بين بعد ونزح^٢

- ١٢.١ وأما بعد فلان ونزح فبينهما أيضاً فرق وذلك أنّ البعد في المسافات على أنواع وإن كان يجمعها هذا الاسم فإنّ الأخذ في الطول والعرض والعمق مختلف الجهات وإن كان الجنس واحداً فلما اختلفت الجهات وكانت كلّ واحدة منها خلاف الأخرى وجب أن تختلف الألفاظ الدالة عليها فلفظة البعد وإن كان كالجنس مستعملة في كلّ واحدة من الجهات فإنه يختصّ بالأخذ طويلاً. وأما لفظة نزح فإنه يختصّ بالأخذ عمقاً فأصله في البرّ وما جرى مجراها من العمق ثمّ حملهم الاتساع في الكلام وأنّ العمق أيضاً بعد ما على أن أجروه مجرى الطول.

١ ط: سقط العنوان. ٢ ط: سقط العنوان.

the two terms interchangeably due to loose usage and the proximity between their meanings.

The distinction between “delight” and “gladness”

When people say “he was delighted,” or “glad,” or “exuberant,” or “merry,” the distinction between “delight” and “gladness” on the one hand, and between “exuberance” and “merriness” on the other, is plain. This is because “exuberant” and “merry” are only used pejoratively, in disapproval, while “delight” and “gladness” are not terms of disapproval. The distinction is too obvious and clear to require the further comment. “Delight” and “gladness” are terms similar in meaning. “Delight” is only used when this state has been induced in a person by someone else. “Gladness,” by contrast, is a state that arises without the agency of another. The inflection of the respective verbs provides evidence for the soundness of this point. For the passive is always used: “I was delighted” and “he was delighted,” and thus indicates an action produced by someone else, even if that person is not named. By contrast, when you say “I was glad” and “he was glad,” the terms do not require the presence of another agent.

1.11

The distinction between “to be distant” and “to go far away”

There is also a distinction between the expressions “he was distant” and “he went far away.” There are a variety of ways in which something can be distant, even if the term “distant” encompasses them all. When one proceeds by way of length, width, or depth, the dimensions differ, even if the general category is the same. As the dimensions differ and each is distinct from the other, so the words used to signify them necessarily differ. Although the term “distance” is used to refer to each dimension, as if it were the general category, it more narrowly applies to when one proceeds by way of length. The term “far away,” by contrast, more narrowly applies to when one proceeds by way of depth. Its origin is connected with wells and other things that resemble them in depth. Then loose usage, combined with the fact that depth is also a kind of distance, led to it being used as a description of length.

1.12

الفرق بين الهزل والمزاح^١

- ١٣.١ وأما هزل فلان ومزح فبينهما فرق وذلك أن الهزل هو ضدّ الجدّ وهو مذموم فأما المزح فليس بمذموم. كان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم يمزح ولا يقول إلا حقاً ولم يكن يهزل. ويقال فلان حسن الفكاهة مزاح يُوصف به ويمدح فإذا هزل عيب وذمّ.

الفرق بين حجب وصدّ^٢

- ١٤.١ فأما قولهم حجب فلان وصدّ فإنّ الحجاب معنى سابق وكأنه سبب للصدود ولما كان الصدود هو الإعراض بالوجه وأتما يقع هذا الفعل بعد الحجاب منه صار قريباً منه فاستعمل مكانه وبين المعنيين تفاوت.

- ١٥.١ فأما الألفاظ الأخر التي ذكرت بعد فإنّ المتأمل لها يعرف الفرق بينها بأدنى تأمل ولذلك تركت الكلام فيها. إذ كان أعطى أصله من عطا يعطو وأتما عُدّي بالهمزة كما تقول قام فلان وأقامه غيره. وأما ناول فهو فاعل من النول وحاول فعل من الحول. وهذه الأشياء من الظهور بحيث يُستغنى عن الكلام فيها.

الفرق بين الجلوس والتعود^٣

- ١٦.١ وأما قولهم جلس فلان وقعد فإنّ الهيئة وإن كانت واحدة فإنّ الجلوس لما كان بعقب تكاء واستلقاء والتعود لما كان بعقب قيام وانتصاب أحبوا أن يفرقوا بين الهيئتين الواقعتين بعقب أحوال مختلفة. والدليل على أنّهم خالفوا بين هاتين اللفظتين لأجل الأحوال المختلفة قبلهما^٤ أنك تقول كان فلان متكاً فاستوى جالساً ولا تقول استوى قاعداً. ولست أقول إنّ هذا الحكم واجب في كلّ لفظتين مختلفتين

١ ط: سقط العنوان. ٢ الأصل: سقط العنوان. ٣ ط: سقط العنوان. ٤ الأصل: بعقت. ٥ الأصل: قبلها.

The distinction between “to jest” and “to joke”

There is a distinction between the expressions “he jested” and “he joked,” because speaking in jest is the opposite of speaking in earnest, and is regarded with disapproval, whereas joking is not regarded with disapproval. The Prophet used to joke, and he would speak nothing but the truth; but he never spoke in jest. When people describe someone as a joker with a good sense of humor, they mean this in a positive sense. By contrast, if someone jests, he attracts blame and disapproval. 1.13

The distinction between “to block” and “to thwart”

In the expressions “he blocked” and “he thwarted,” “blocking” possesses semantic priority, because it is, as it were, the cause of the thwarting. To thwart someone is to turn away from him, and this action comes after one has blocked, so the latter term, being close in meaning, is used in place of the former, though their meanings do not coincide. 1.14

I have refrained from commenting on the other terms you mentioned right after these ones, as it takes no more than a moment’s reflection to uncover the distinctions between them. The term “to give” derives from the verb “to receive,” which acquires a transitive meaning through the addition of a prefix; the same happens with “to rise” and “to make someone rise.” “To hand over” (*nāwala*), by contrast, follows a specific verbal paradigm, just as “to strive” (*hāwala*) does. These things are too evident to need further discussion.⁵ 1.15

The distinction between “to sit down” and “to take a seat”

In the expressions “he sat down” and “he took a seat,” the form of the act is the same, but the term “to sit down” is used when one sits after having been reclining or lying down, whereas the term “to take a seat” is used when one sits after one had risen to one’s feet or had been standing up. People thus like to differentiate between the two formal acts, each of which is preceded by a different set of circumstances. The fact that people distinguish between these two words on the basis of the circumstances that precede them is demonstrated by the fact that one says “he was reclining and sat up straight,” and not “he took a seat straight.” In making this point, I do not mean to say that this rule 1.16

إذا دلنا على معنى ولا هو حتم عليك ولا ضربة لازب لك بل قد قدمنا أمام هذه المسألة
ما جعلنا لك فيه فسحة تامة ورخصة واسعة إذا لم تجد الفرق واضحاً بيننا أن تذهب
بهما إلى الاتفاق في الاسم الذي هو أحد أقسام الألفاظ التي عددناها.

الفرق بين الغرض والمراد^١

١٧٠١ ثم قلت في آخر المسألة ما الفرق بين المعنى والمراد والغرض؟ وبينهما فروق بيّنة وذلك
أن المعنى أمر قائم بنفسه مستقل بذاته وأما يعرض له بعد أن يصير مراداً وقد يكون
معنى ولا يكون مراداً. فأما الغرض فأصله المقصود بالسهم ولكنه لما كان منصوباً لك
تقصده بالحركة والإرادة صار كالغرض للسهم فاستعملت هذه اللفظة ههنا على
التشبيه.

الفرق بين الصمت والسكوت^٢

١٨٠١ وأما قولك في خاتمة المسألة ما الذي أوضح الفرق بين نطق وسكت وألبس الفرق بين
سكت وصمت؟ فما أعجبه من مطالبة وأغربه من مسألة. كيف لا يكون الفرق بين
المتضادين اللذين هما في الطرفين والحاشيتين وأحدهما في غاية البعد من الآخر وأضح
من الشئيين المتقاربين اللذين ليس بينهما إلا بُعد يسير وأمد قريب يخفى على الناظر
إلا بعد حدة النظر واستقصاء التأمل؟ على أن الفرق بين صمت وسكت أيضاً غير
ملتبس لأن السكوت لا يكون إلا من متكلم ولا يقع إلا من ناطق. وأما الصمت فليس
يقع إلا عن نطق لا محالة لأنه يقال جاء فلان بما صاء وصمت يعني به ضروب المال
الحى منه والجماد. ولا يقال في المال صامت إلا لما كان غير ذي حياة ولا نطق ولا
صوت كالذهب والفضة وما جرى مجراها من الجمادات. وأما المال الذي هو ماشية
وحيوان فلا يقال له صامت ولا يقال للصامت من المال ساكت لأن السكوت إنما

١ ط: سقط العنوان. ٢ ط: سقط العنوان.

necessarily holds true of every pair of words that signify a given meaning, and you should not take it as an ironclad principle that applies inexorably to all cases. If the difference between the meaning of two terms is not clear, the discussion we prefaced this question with provides ample latitude and scope for you to take the view that the terms converge, which is one of the categories of words that we enumerated.

The distinction between “aim” and “intention”

Toward the close of your question, you asked: What is the distinction between “meaning,” “intention,” and “aim”? There are indeed clear distinctions between these terms. Meaning is something that subsists in itself as an independent thing, which may then happen to become the object of an intention. Something can be a meaning without forming anybody’s intention. The word “aim” originally referred to the target of an arrow. But insofar as it forms one’s object and the end of one’s movements and intentions, it resembles the aim of an arrow, so this word is used here by way of analogy. 1.17

The distinction between “silence” and “muteness”

You wrote at the conclusion of your question: “Why is it that the difference between ‘to speak’ and ‘to be silent’ can easily be made plain, whereas the difference between ‘to be silent’ and ‘to be mute’ is so elusive?” What a singular request; what a strange question! For how can the difference between two contraries that lie at the extremes and outermost boundaries of a spectrum and are divided by an enormous distance not be clearer than that between two similar things which are divided by a negligible distance and a sliver of space that only reveals itself to the inquirer after keen reflection and deep meditation? Yet the distinction between “to be silent” and “to be mute” is in any case not all that elusive. The expression “to be silent” can only be applied to subjects capable of speech and possessed of language. In the case of the expression “to be mute,” by contrast, the capacity for speech is not a necessary precondition. For there is the expression “He brought things that cry out and things that are mute,” meaning he brought a variety of assets that included both animate and inanimate things. The only assets to which the term “mute” is applied are those that are not living and that lack the ability to speak or utter a sound, 1.18

يكون عن كلام أو صوت وقد يقال في الثوب إذا أخلق سكت الثوب وإنما ذلك على التشبيه كأنهم لما وجدوه جديداً يُصَوِّت ويُقَعِّعُ شَبْهَهُ بِالْمَتَكَلِّمِ ثُمَّ لَمَّا أَمْسَكَ عِنْدَ الْإِخْلَاقِ شَبْهَهُ بِالسَّائِكِ وَهَذَا مِنْ مَلْعِ الْكَلَامِ وَطُرْفِ الْمَجَازِ.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٢ لم تحاث الناس على كتمان الأسرار وتبالموا في أخذ العهد به وحرّجوا من الإفشاء وتناهوا في التواصي بالطي ولم تنكتم مع هذه المقدمات؟ وكيف فشيت وبرزت من الحجب المضروبة حتى نثرت في المجالس وحلّدت في بطون الصحف وأوعيت الأذان ورُويت على الزمان؟ ومن أين كان فشوها مع الاحتياط في طيها؟ نعم ومع الخوف العارض في نشرها والندم الواقع من ذكرها والمنافع الفائتة والعواقب المخوفة والأسباب المتلفة؟

المجواب

٢٠٢ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله قد تبين في المباحث الفلسفية أنّ للنفس قوتين إحداهما معطية والأخرى آخذة فهي بالقوة الآخذة تستثبت المعارف وتشتاق إلى تعرف الأخبار وبها يوجد الصبيان أول نشوئهم محيّن لسماح الخرافات فإذا تكهّلوا أحبوا معرفة الحقائق وهذه القوة هي انفعال وشوق إلى الكمال الذي يخصّ النفس

١ الأصل وط: تستثيب.

On why people commend the keeping of secrets yet still disclose them

such as gold and silver and the like. Other assets such as cattle and animals, on the other hand, are not described as mute. Assets described as mute are not described as silent, because “silence” refers back to prior speech or sound. True, one might say of a garment that has been worn out: “the garment fell silent.” But that is by way of analogy. It is as though people noticed that a new garment rustles and makes other sounds, and so compared it to something that speaks; then they likened it to something that had fallen silent, when it had been worn out and ceased to produce these sounds. But that is merely a turn of fine language and a fancy metaphor.

On why people commend the keeping of secrets yet still disclose them—an ethical question

Why is it that people always exhort each other to keep secrets—going to great lengths to take oaths to keep them safe, decrying their divulgence as indecent, and adjuring each other to silence—yet then, despite all these precautions, they let secrets become public knowledge? How is it that secrets get out into the open and escape the protective veils wrapped around them, so that they are scattered abroad in social gatherings and immortalized in the pages of books, poured out for all to hear and recounted from one generation to the next? Why do people divulge them despite the care they take to have them concealed—indeed, despite the fear we feel about spreading them, the regrets we experience over uttering them, and the forfeited benefits, dreaded consequences, and wrecked relations their revelation entails?

2.1

Miskawayh’s response

As philosophical inquiries have shown, the human soul has two powers, one a power to give and the other a power to receive. Through the power to receive, it establishes different kinds of knowledge and longs to learn new facts. This is the power that makes young people delight to hear fables early in their lives and to learn truths once they mature. This power involves passivity and a longing for the perfection that properly belongs to the soul. Through the power to give, on the other hand, the soul spreads its information among others and

2.2

وهي بالقوة المعطية تفيض على غيرها ما عندها من المعارف وتفيده العلوم الحاصلة لها وهذه القوة ليست انفعالاً بل فاعلة. وهاتان القوتان موجودتان للنفس بالذات لا بالعرض فكل إنسان يحرص بإحدى قوته على الفعل وهو الإعلام وبالأخرى على الانفعال وهو الاستعلام ولما كان ذلك كذلك لم يمكن أن يفعل المنفعل ولا يفعل الفاعل ولا أن يفعل الفاعل ولا يفعل المنفعل لأنهما جميعاً للنفس بالذات.

٣٠٢ قد ظهر السبب الداعي إلى إخراج السرّ وهو أنّ النفس لما كانت واحدة واشتاقت بإحدى قوتها إلى الاستعلام واشتاقت بالأخرى إلى الإعلام لم ينكتم سرّ بته وهذا هو تدبير إلهي عجيب ومن أجله نُقلت الأخبار القديمة وحُفظت قصص الأمم وعنى المتقدمون بتدوين ذلك وحرص المتأخرون على نقله وقراءته ولذلك ضرب الحكماء فيه المثل وخرموا عليه القول وقطعوا به الحكم وقالوا لا ينكتم سرّ وإنما يتقدّم ظهوره أو يتأخر وتقول العامة أي شيء ينكتم؟ ثم تقول في الجواب ما لا يكون.

٤٠٢ فحقيق على صاحب السرّ أن لا يستودعه إلا القادر على نفسه والقاهر لزوجاتها عند حركاتها وشهواتها بل المجاهد لها المعتاد عند الجهاد غلبها وقهرها وإنما يتم للإنسان ذلك بمخاطبة قوة العقل الذي هو أفضل موهبة الله تعالى وأكبر نعمة له على العبد وبه فضل الإنسان^٢ على سائر الحيوان ولولا هذا الجوهر الكريم الذي هو مسيطر على النفس ومشرف عليها لكان الإنسان كسائر الحيوانات غير الناطقة في ظهور قوى النفس منه مرسلّة من غير رقبة ومهملة بغير رعية ولكنه بهذا الجوهر النفيس في جهاد للنفس عظيم. ومعنى قولي هذا أنّ الإنسان دائماً في جهاد النفس بقوة عقله لأنه محتاج إلى ردعها به وإلى ضبطها ومنعها من شهواتها الرديئة حتى لا يصيب منها إلا بمقدار ما يطلقه العقل ويحدّه لها وما يرسمه ويبيحه إياها. ومن لم يحم هذا الجهاد دائماً مدّة عمره فليس ممّن له حظّ في الإنسانية بل هو خلع كالبهيمة

١ الأصل: عليها. ٢ ط: فَضَّلَ الْإِنْسَانُ.

shares the knowledge it has acquired. This power does not involve passivity but is active in kind. Both powers belong to the soul essentially, not accidentally. Through one of his powers, thus, every human being has a keen desire to act—that is, telling people what one knows—and through another of his powers, to be passively affected—that is, asking people about what they know. Given this, it is impossible that the passive aspect be mobilized without the active aspect also being mobilized, or that the active aspect be mobilized without the passive aspect also being mobilized; because both of them belong essentially to the soul.

The reason why people divulge secrets is now plain. For as the soul is a single entity, which both longs to ask for knowledge through one power and craves to impart knowledge through another, no secret is immune to disclosure. That is part of the wonderful providence with which God governs the world, as it explains how factual reports come to be passed down from ancient times and how the histories of different nations come to be preserved, why earlier generations take an interest in recording such facts and why later generations exhibit a keen desire to transmit and absorb them. This is why it has become a byword among philosophers and why they have put their view trenchantly and categorically in stating, “No secret can be concealed forever; sooner or later it will come out.” It is also why ordinary people ask, “What can be concealed?” To which they reply, “That which will never be.” 2.3

So it behooves someone who has a secret to entrust it only to the kinds of people who have mastery over themselves and who know how to rein in the capricious movements and appetites of their soul, who in fact battle their soul and are accustomed to win this battle and to bring their soul to heel. This is something human beings achieve through the power of reason, the highest gift they have received from God, the greatest bounty He has bestowed on them, and the basis of the distinction he has granted them over other animals. Were it not for this noble substance, with its rule and oversight over the soul, human beings would be in the same condition as all those nonrational animals in whom the powers of the soul operate freely and unchecked, without restraint or supervision. By contrast, human beings wage mighty battles against their soul through this precious substance. What I mean by this is that human beings are battling their soul through the power of their reason. For they need reason to restrain their soul, to bring it under control, and to stand in the way of their base appetites, so that they only partake of these appetites to 2.4

المهملة التي لا رقيب عليها من العقل. وإذا انحط الإنسان عن رتبته العالية إلى رتبة ما هو أدنى منه فقد خسر نفسه ورضي لها بأخسر المنازل هذا مع كفره نعمة الله وردّه الموهبة التي لا أجلّ منها وكرهيته جوار بارئه ونفوره من قربه. وقد شرح الحكماء هذا المعنى واستقصوه وعلموا الناس جهاد النفس في كتب الأخلاق فمن اشتاق إلى معرفة ذلك فليأخذه من هناك.

٥٠٢ فانفعالات النفس وأفعالها بحسب قوتها كثيرة وهي الشهوات الموجودة في الناس وليس يخلو منها البشر ولكنها فيهم بالأكثر والأقل فجاهدة العقلاء لها مختلفة والجهال هم المسترسلون فيها غير المجاهدين لها. وإخراج السر من جملة هذه الشهوات وهو متعلق بالإخبار والإعطاء وإذا كان لحفظ السر هذا الموقع من المجاهدة للنفس لأنها تحرص في إظهاره على أمر ذاتي لها وإنما يقمعه العقل ويمنعها فأخلق به أن يكون صعباً شديداً جارياً مجرى غيره من شهوات النفس التي يقع الجهاد فيها. وربما وجدت إحدى هاتين القوتين في بعض الناس أقوى والأخرى أضعف فإن من الناس من يحرص على الحديث ومنهم من يحرص على الاستماع ومنهم الضنين بالعلم ومنهم السخح به ومنهم الحريص على التعلّم والاستفادة ومنهم الكسلان عنه وعلى هذا يوجد بعضهم أحرص على إخراج السرّ وبعضهم أثبت وأحسن تماسكاً.

٦٠٢ وكان لنا صديق صاحب سلطان قريب المنزلة منه فكان يقول لصاحبه إذا كان لك سرّ تحبّ كتمانته وتكره إذاعته فلا تطلعني عليه ولا تجعلني موضع ولا تبليني بحفظه فإنه أجد له في صدري وخرّاً كوخز الأثافي ونخس الأسته. وسمعتة يقول اضلعت على سرّ للوزير فجعل لي على كتمانته وطيه مالاً والطافاً حملت إليّ في الوقت ففرمت على الوفاء له وحدثت نفسي به ووطنتها عليه فبت بليلة السليم وأصبحت وقدماً فلم أجد حيلةً لما أجد من الكرب غير أنني ذهبت إلى ناحية من الدار خالية فيها

١ الأصل: هو. ٢ ط: فإني.

the degree that reason allows and determines, prescribes and permits. People who do not wage this battle unremittingly throughout their lives have no title to be deemed human; they are as wanton as animals that roam at will without the oversight of reason. When human beings abandon their high estate for that of lower beings, they forfeit their souls and consign them to the most injurious station, even as they deny God's bounty, refusing His most exalted gift, and reveal how averse they are to drawing near to their Creator. Philosophers have probed this topic at length, giving instructions to people about this inner battle in their ethical works; so let those who wish to learn about such matters turn to those sources.

The passions that affect the soul and the actions it carries out depending on their power are many. These are the appetites that people experience. No human being is ever free of them, but some have more and some less, so the degree to which rational beings must battle against them differs. The ignorant are those who abandon themselves to them and do not engage them in battle. Divulging a secret is one such appetite, which has to do with sharing information and with giving. If this is the relation in which the keeping of secrets stands to the struggle against the soul—so that an essential characteristic of the soul makes it ardently desire to reveal them, and the soul is only restrained and prevented by reason—it is fitting that this should be difficult and arduous, as is the case with other appetites that one must struggle against. One of these two powers may sometimes be stronger in some people and weaker in others. For there are people who love to speak and people who love to listen; there are people who are tightfisted with their knowledge and people who share it liberally; there are people who are keen to learn and acquire knowledge, and people who are slack to do so. Similarly, there are people who have a strong urge to disclose secrets, and others who are more steadfast and self-possessed.

2.5

We used to have a friend who kept company with a ruler and enjoyed high office, and who used to say to his companion, "If you happen to have a secret you would like to keep quiet and would hate to see trumpeted abroad, then please do not share it with me or hold me to the onerous demand of keeping it. It will jab and pierce my heart like an awl or a spearhead." I also heard him say, "I once discovered a secret kept by the vizier, and he gave me money and favors in exchange for my silence, putting them instantly at my disposal. I determined to keep my pledge, and I talked it through with myself and braced myself for the task. That night it was as if I had been bitten by a snake, and

2.6

دولاب خراب فحيت من كان حولي ثم قلت أيها الدولاب من الأمر والقصة كذا وكذا وأنا والله أجد من الراحة ما يجده المتقل بالحل إذا خفف عنه وكأني فرغته من وعاء ضيق إلى أوسع منه ثم لم ألبث أن عادت الصورة في ثقله وجثومه على قلبي إلى أن كفيته بظهوره من جهة غيري.

٧٠٢

وهذا الذي قد نثره هذا الرجل قد نظمه الآخر فقال [طويل]

وَلَا أَكْثَرُ الْأَسْرَارِ لَكِنْ أَنْهَمَا وَلَا أَدْعُ الْأَسْرَارَ تَعْلِي عَلَى قَلْبِي
وَإِنَّ قَلِيلَ الْعَقْلِ مَنْ بَاتَ لَيْلَةً تُقَلِّبُهُ الْأَسْرَارُ جَنَبًا إِلَى جَنَبِ

يُروى وَإِنَّ عَيْنَ الرَّأْيِ.

وقد سبق المثل المضروب بالملك الذي كأن أذنه أذن حمار فإن صاحب ذلك المثل أراد أن يبالغ في الوصاة بحفظ السر فأخبر أن الشجر والمدر غير مأمون على السر وأنه يتم به فكيف الحيوان؟ وهذا كما تقول العامة للحيطان أذان.

وأما قول الشاعر [طويل]

وَإِخْوَانُ صِدْقٍ لَسْتُ مُطَّلِعَ بَعْضِهِمْ عَلَى سِرِّ بَعْضِ غَيْرِ أَيْ جَمَاعِهَا
يَظَلُّونَ شَيْئًا فِي الْبِلَادِ وَسِرُّهُمْ إِلَى صَخْرَةٍ أَعْيَا الرِّجَالَ أَنْصَادِهَا

وقول الآخر [بسيط]

وَأَكْثَرُ السَّرِّ فِيهِ ضَرْبُهُ الْعُنُقِ

فكلام لا يصح ودعوى لا تثبت فاسمعه سماعاً وإياك والاعتذار به.

On why people commend the keeping of secrets yet still disclose them

when I got up the next morning I burned with fever. I could find no other way of alleviating my distress than to go to an empty part of the house where a rickety old closet stood, and, after sending everyone away, to say to the closet: ‘O closet, this is how things happened . . .’ By God, this made me experience the relief a person feels when a heavy burden has been lifted off him. It was as if I had emptied a small container into a larger one. However, the sense of being weighed down soon returned to press on my chest, but luckily I found relief when the secret was disclosed by someone else.”

Someone else expressed in verse what this person expressed in prose:

2.7

I do not keep secrets but divulge them,
nor do I let secrets stew in my heart—
Only the dim-witted spend their nights
tossed by secrets from side to side

(Or as another version has it: “Only the dupes . . .”)

And then there is the saying about the king with ears like a donkey’s. In order to emphasize the importance of keeping secrets, its author suggested that if even the trees and the soil cannot be trusted but will betray secrets, how can animals succeed? As the folk say: “Even the walls have ears.”

Now, one poet said:

Brothers in honesty, I impart not the secret of one to the other,
though I possess them all—
My brothers may be scattered through the lands,
but their secret is entrusted to a rock that men cannot cleave.⁶

Someone else remarked:

I keep secrets that make heads roll.⁷

Such talk is unsound and the claim does not stand firm. So pay close attention and be careful not to be deceived by it.

مسألة مركبة من أسرار طبيعية وحروف لغوية

١٠٣ وهي لم صار اسم من الأسماء أخفّ عند السماع من اسم حتى إنك لتجد الطرب يعتري سامع ذلك؟ أفأريت^١ بعض من كان يهوى الجحترى ويخفّ لحديثه ويتعصب لقرئضه يقول ما أحسن تشييب الجحترى بعلوة وما أحسن اختياره علوة ولا يجد هذا في سلمى وهند وفرتنا ودعد. وهذا عارض موجود في الأسماء والكنى والشمائل والحلى والصور والبنى والأخلاق والخلق والبلدان والأزمان والمذاهب والمقاتلات والطرائق والعادات وإذا بحثت عن هذا الباب فصله بالبحث عما ثقل على النفس والسمع والطبع من هذه الأشياء فإنه إن كان قبولها لعلّة فمجبها لعلّة وإن كان وصلها لسبب فصودوها لسبب.

الجواب

٢٠٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الاسم مركب من الحروف والحروف عددها ثمانية وعشرون وتركيبه يكون ثنائياً وثلاثياً ورباعياً وخماسياً. والأولى في جواب هذه المسألة أن تتكلم في الحروف المفردة التي هي بسائط الأسماء ثم بعد ذلك في الأسماء المركبة منها ليبين موضع استحلاء السامع للحروف المفردة ثم لمرج هذه الحروف وتركيبها ثم لوضع اللفظة إلى جانب اللفظة حتى تصير منها خطبة أو بيت شعراً أو غير ذلك من أقسام الكلام فإن مثل ذلك مثل العقود والسموط المؤلفة من خرزات مختلفة في القد واللون والجوهر والخرط. وقد علم أن للعقد المنظوم من الخرز^٢ ثلاثة مواضع أحدها مفردات تلك الخرز واختيار أجناسها وجواهرها والثاني موقع النظم الذي يجعل للحبة إلى جانب الحبة قبولاً آخر وموضعاً من النفس ثانياً والثالث وضع كل واحد من هذه العقود في

١ ط: أنا رأيت. ٢ الأصل وط: النفس.

On why certain names are more pleasing than
others—a composite question about the secrets
of nature and the letters of the language

My question is: Why is it that one name falls more lightly on the ears than another, so that the very sound of it provokes people to delight? I have known people enamored of the poet al-Buḥturī who are transported by his words and zealously champion his verse to say: How fine al-Buḥturī's love poems to 'Alwah are, how right he was to have chosen the name 'Alwah. Yet they do not have the same experience with the names Salmā, Hind, Fartanā, or Da'd. This is a phenomenon one encounters with names and cognomens, fine qualities and ornaments, outer forms and inner frames, ethical traits and natural builds, places and epochs, schools of thought and doctrines, practices and customs. If you investigate this topic, then join it to an investigation of that class of things that on the contrary weigh heavily upon one's soul, ears, and natural bent. For if there is a reason why one case is acceptable, then there must also be a reason why another case is objectionable; if there is a cause that makes one case agreeable, there must also be a cause that makes another case disagreeable.

Miskawayh's response

Names are composed of letters. There are twenty-eight letters, and each name can be composed of two, three, four, or five letters. The best way to respond to this question is to discuss the individual letters that form the basic units of names first, and then to discuss the names composed from them. That way one can clarify in turn why someone takes pleasure in hearing individual letters, then in their combination and composition, and finally in the positioning of one word next to another so as to form a public oration, a poetic verse, or some other category of speech. One may liken this to necklaces and pendants made up of beads that vary in size, color, type of stone, and setting. We know that the necklace made up of beads involves three aspects. One pertains to the individual beads, and to the choice of varieties of beads and types of stone. The second pertains to their arrangement, through which one bead placed next to another produces a different response in, and has a further type of purchase on, the soul. The third pertains to the proper positioning of each necklace, be it on the

خاص موضع من النحر والرأس والرند والصدر . وإذا كان هذا المثال صحيحاً وكانت الحروف الأصلية كالحرز وهي مختلفة اختلافاً طبيعياً لا صنع فيها للبشر ولا يظهر فيها أثر للصناعة ولا رية للحذق والمهارة كان القسمان الباقيان من النظم والتركيب هما موضع الصناعة وفيهما يظهر أثر الإنسان بالحذق وجودة البصر والثقافة .

٣.٣ وبيان ذلك أن الحروف الثمانية والعشرين يطلع كل واحد منها من مطلع غير مطلع الآخر وذلك من أقصى الرئة إلى أدنى الفم على ما قسمه أصحاب اللغة وبينه الخليل وغيره وعلى خلاف بينهم في مخارجها ومواضعها وموضعنا هذا لا يليق بشرح هذا الكلام فإنه يعوقنا عن قصدنا وبغيتنا . ونقول إن الصوت إنمائية بآلة هي الرئة وقصبتها لأنها مستطرق الهواء والصوت إنما هو اقتراع في الهواء ولما لم يكن للهواء طريق في الإنسان إلا من الرئة وقصبتها والمدخل إليها من الفم ولا مخرج له إلا من هذه الجهة جعل الاقتراع الذي هو الصوت في هذه المسافة حسب بعض الأصوات أقرب إلى الرئة وأبعد من الشفة وبعضها أقرب إلى الشفة وأبعد من الرئة والوسائط بين هذين الموضوعين كثيرة . فالنفس وهو الهواء إذا خرج من الرئة إلى أن يبلغ إلى الشفة له مسافة بين أقصى الحلقوم وبين منتهى الفم والإنسان مقتدر على تقطيع هذا الهواء بالاقتراعات المختلفة في طول هذه المسافة فيخرق هذا الهواء مرة في أقصى الحلقوم ومرة في أدناه ومرة في غار الفم إلى أن يصير لها ثمانية وعشرين موضعاً .

٤.٣ ومثال ذلك مثل مزمار فيه ثقب متى أطلق الإنسان فيه النفس وخرق موضعاً بإصبع إصبع اختلفت الأصوات في السمع بحسب قربه وبعده . ولا يكون المسموع من الاقتراع الذي يحدث عند الثقب الأخير المسموع من الاقتراع الذي يحدث عند الثقب الأول . وكذلك سائر الاقتراعات التي بين هذين الثقبين مختلفة المواقع من السمع لا يشبه واحد الآخر فيقال لبعضها حاداً وبعضها حلو وبعضها جهير وبعضها لين . وكل واحد من هذه الأصوات له أثر في النفس وموقع منها ومشاكلتها . وليس للسائل أن يكلفنا بحسب هذا البحث الذي نحن فيه أن نتكلم في سبب قبول النفس

neck, the head, the forearm, or the chest. If this analogy is sound, the original letters are like beads, which vary naturally in ways that cannot be influenced by human effort and can bear no trace of human craftsmanship and no suggestion of skill and dexterity. It is thus in the other two forms of arrangement and composition that craftsmanship has an effect and in which the skill, keen vision, and refinement of human beings can be expressed.

Let me explain. Each of these twenty-eight letters originates from a different physical location, ranging from the deepest part of the lung to the front-most part of the mouth. This has been classified and clarified by the scholars of language and by the grammarian al-Khalil and others, even though they disagree over the points of issue and positions of different letters. This is not the place to enter into the details of this topic, as it will only deflect us from our aim and purpose. Pressing on, then: Sound is produced through a particular set of organs; that is, the lungs and the windpipe, which is where the air is struck; for sound is a form of impaction in the air. The only way in which air can enter a person is through the lungs and the windpipe, which is accessed through the mouth; and the only way in which air can leave is through the same route. The impaction that constitutes sound thus only occurs in this area. Some sounds are closer to the lungs and farther from the lips, while others are closer to the lips and farther from the lungs, with many gradations in between. From the moment it exits the lung to the moment it reaches the lips, the breath—which is the air—has to cross a distance that extends between the deepest part of the throat and the tip of the mouth. Human beings have the capacity to break up the air through different types of impaction along the length of this distance. Sometimes they pierce this air in the back of the throat, sometimes in the front, or sometimes inside the oral cavity, up to a total of twenty-eight locations.

3.3

One may liken this to a reed pipe pierced with a row of holes; when a person blows into it and his breath passes out of the instrument at a particular point determined by the successive movements of one's fingers, the sounds one hears vary depending on how near or how far that point is. The sound of the impaction that occurs at the last hole is not the same as the sound of the impaction that occurs at the first hole. Similarly, the remaining impactions between these two holes strike the ears differently, and do not resemble one another. Thus, one calls one sound "harsh" and another "sweet," one "sonorous" and another "gentle." Each of these sounds leaves an impression on the soul, has

3.4

بعض الأصوات أكثر من بعض لأن هذا النظر والبحث يتعلق بصناعة الموسيقى ومباينها ومعرفة أقدار النغم المختلفة بالنسب التي هي نسبة المساواة ونسبة الضعف ونسبة الضعف والنصف وأشباهاها. وهذه النسب بعضها أقرب إلى قبول النفس من بعض حتى قال بعض الأوائل إن النفس مركبة من عدد تأليفي.

٥٠٣ فلما كانت قصبه الرئة كقصبه المزمار وتقطع الحروف فيها كحرق الصوت بالمزمار في موضع بعد موضع وكانت الأصوات في المزمار مختلفة القبول عند النفس كانت الحروف كذلك أيضاً لا فرق بينها وبينها بوجه ولا سبب. فقد بان أن الحروف أنفسها مفردة لها مواقع من النفس مختلفة فبعضها وقع عندها من بعض. وإذا كانت بهذه الصفة وهي مفردات وبسائط كان تركيبها أيضاً مختلفاً في قبول النفس سوى أن للتركيب والتأليف تعلقاً بالصناعة كما ضربنا به المثل في نظم الخرز ونظم الأصوات في الموسيقى لأن الموسيقار ليس يعمل أكثر من تأليف هذه الأصوات بعضها إلى بعض على النسب الموافقة للنفس فمؤلف الحروف يجب أن يؤلفها أيضاً ويمزجها مزجاً موافقاً من الثنائي والثلاثي وغيرهما إذا أحب أن يكون لها قبول من النفس.

٦٠٣ فقد تبين إلى هذا الموضع سبب خلاف هذه الحروف مفردة ثم مركبة وأنه بحسب هذا البيان يجب أن يكون بعض الأسماء أحسن من بعض وأعذب في السمع وأقرب إلى قبول النفس وبعضها أبعد في هذه الأشياء. وبقي الاعتبار الثالث الذي هو نظم الكلم بعضه إلى بعض ووضعه في خواص مواضعه ليصدق المثل الذي ضربناه في الخرز والعقود ثم وضع كل عقد حيث يليق به. وههنا تظهر صناعة الخطابة والبلاغة والشعر وذلك أنه إذا اختار المختار الحروف المؤلفة بالأسماء حتى لا يكون فيها مستكره ولا مستنكر ووضعها من النظم في مواضعها ثم نظمها نظماً آخر أعني وضع الكلمة إلى جنب الكلمة موافقاً للمعنى غير قلق في المكان ولا نافر عن السمع فقد استتمت له الصناعة إما شعراً وإما خطبة وإما غيرهما من أقسام

١ الأصل: فإذا.

an effect on it and an affinity to it. Given the type of inquiry we are pursuing, our questioner has no title to demand that we discuss why the soul is more receptive to some sounds than to others. That type of investigation and inquiry pertains to the craft of music and its foundations and to the knowledge of the measurements of notes that differ according to their proportional relations—namely, the relation of equal, weak, half, and the like.⁸ The soul is more receptive to some of these proportional relations than to others, such that one of the ancients said, “The soul is composed from a harmonic number.”⁹

Since the windpipe is like the shaft of a reed pipe, and the way the letters are broken up in it resembles the way the sound pierces through different points of the reed pipe, and since the soul responds with varying degrees of receptivity to the sounds of the reed pipe, the same thing applies to the letters, so that there is no aspect or ground to distinguish between the one and the other. It has thus been made clear that the individual letters themselves affect the soul in different ways, and some affect it more strongly than others. If they have this quality taken as individuals and as simples, then the receptivity of the soul will also differ when they are in a composed state, except that their composition and combination involves a degree of craft, as illustrated by our analogy with the arrangement of beads and the arrangement of sounds in music. For what the musician does is to combine these sounds according to proportional relations that are agreeable to the soul. The person who combines letters must therefore also combine them and create an agreeable blend made up of two, three, or more letters, if he wishes them to be received well by the soul.

Thus far, we have explained why these letters differ, taken individually and in combination. On the basis of this account, it follows that certain names will be more beautiful than others, more pleasing to the ear and more easily received by the soul, while others will be less likely to achieve this. So as to bear out the analogy we coined with the beads and the necklaces and the placing of each necklace where befits it, there is a third consideration, one that concerns the arrangement of words next to one another and the positioning of them where they belong. This is where the craft of oratory, rhetoric, and poetry makes an appearance. For if one selects the letters that are combined to form names in such a way as to exclude everything odious and disagreeable, arranges them in the places where they belong, and deploys them by placing one word next to another in a way that accords with the meaning, is not awkwardly situated, and is not repellent to the ear, then he has achieved as much

3.5

3.6

الكلام. ومتى دخل عليه الخلل في أحد هذه المواضع الثلاثة اختلت صناعته وأبت النفس قبول ما نظمه من الكلام بحسب ذلك فقد لخصنا وشرحنا هذه المسألة تلخيصاً وشرحاً كافياً إن شاء الله.

٧٠٣ فأما سؤالك في آخر مسألتك أن أصل هذا البحث بالبحث عما ثقل على النفس والسمع والطبع فقد فعلت ذلك فظهر في أثناء كلامي وذلك أنه إذا بان سبب أحد الضدين^٢ بان سبب الضد الآخر. والأصوات المستكرهة التي ليس لها قبول في النفس كثيرة ولا عناية للناس بها فتولّف وإنما تجدها مفردة بالاتفاق كصيرير الباب وصوت الصفر إذا جرّده الصفّار وما أشبههما فإن النفس تتغير من هذه فتشعر وربما قام له شعر البدن وحدث بالنفس منه دوار حتى ينكر الإنسان حاله وهو معروف بين.

مسألة اختيارية

١٠٤ لم تواصى الناس في جميع اللغات والنحل وسائر العادات والمثلل بالزهد في الدنيا والتقليل منها والرضا بما رجا به الوقت وتيسر مع^٣ الحال؟ هذا مع شدة الحرص والطلب وإفراط الشره والكلب وركوب البرّ والبحر بسبب ربح قليل ونائل نزر حتى إنك لا تجد على أديمها إلا متلفتاً إلى فانيها حزينا أو هائماً على حاضرها مفتوناً أو متمنياً لها في المستقبل معنى وحتى لو تصفّت الناس لم تجد إلا متحسراً عليها أو متخيّراً فيها أو مسكراً منها. وأشرفهم عقلاً أعظمهم خبلاً وأشدّهم فيها إزهاداً أشدّهم بها انعقاداً وأكثرهم في بغضها دعوى أكثرهم في حبها بلوى. وهات السبب في ذلك والعلة. وعلى ذكر السبب والعلة فما السبب والعلة؟ وما الواصل بينهما إن كان واصل؟ وهل ينوب أحدهما عن الآخر؟ وإن كانت هناك نيابة أفهي في

١ الأصل: كما؛ وصوابه في الحاشية. ٢ الأصل: إذا بان أحد سبب. ٣ الأصل: الوقت مع.

On why people preach renunciation but do not practice it; on reasons, causes, time, and place

as he can by way of craftsmanship, be it poetry, a public oration, or some other form of speech. Whenever a defect infiltrates one of these three levels, the craftsmanship becomes defective, and the soul recoils from the speech that has been arranged on that basis. We have given a synoptic account and sufficient explanation of the present topic, God willing.

As for what you requested at the end of your question—that I join this investigation to an investigation of those things that weigh heavily on one’s soul, ears, and natural bent—I have obviously done that in the course of my discussion. For to elucidate the reason for one of two contraries is to elucidate the reason for the other. The odious sounds to which the soul is not receptive are many, and people do not care for them enough to combine them. They are instead encountered fortuitously as individual units, the way one hears the creaking of a door, the sound of copper being stripped by a coppersmith, and the like. The soul undergoes a change at such sounds and shudders all over, and sometimes the very hair on one’s body stands on end and one experiences a sense of vertigo to the point where one feels uncomfortable. But this is well known and obvious.

3.7

On why people preach renunciation but do not practice it; on reasons, causes, time, and place—a question relating to voluntary choice

Why is it that people of all languages and creeds and all other customary beliefs and religious traditions counsel each other to adopt an attitude of renunciation toward worldly goods, of frugality and contentment with what is to hand at a given time and situation, even as people avidly seek them out and try to obtain them with extreme covetousness and greed, foraying over land and sea for the sake of some minor profit and paltry gain, to the point that one can hardly find a single person on the face of this earth who is not thinking back wistfully to those worldly things he has lost, doting rapturously on those he possesses, or yearning anxiously for those he may possess in future, and to the point where if you were to scrutinize people you would find none but are stricken into grief or perplexity or stupor by them? Those with the noblest intelligence are the very ones who are the most fatuous, those most vigorous in commending renunciation of worldly goods are the most grasping, and those who most strongly claim to hate them are most highly afflicted by their love. Give me the reason

4.1

كلّ مكان وزمان أو في مكان دون مكان وزمان دون زمان؟ وعلى ذكر المكان والزمان ما الزمان وما المكان؟ وما وجه التباس أحدهما بالآخر؟ وما نسبة أحدهما بالآخر؟ وهل الوقت والزمان واحد؟ والدهر والحين واحد؟ وإن كان كذا فكيف يكون شيئان شيئاً؟ وإن جاز أن يكون شيئان شيئاً واحداً هل يجوز أن يكون شيء واحد شيئين اثنين؟

٢٠٤ هذا أيدك الله فنّ ينشّف الريق ويضرع الخدّ ويجيش النفس ويقبئ البطن ويفضع المدعي ويبعث على الاعتراف بالتقصير والحجز ويدلّ على توحيد من هو محيط بهذه الغوامض والحقائق ويبعث على عبادة من هو عالم بهذه السرائر والدقائق وينهى عن التهمك والتهمان ويأمر بالتناصف والتواصف ويبين أنّ العلم بحر وفات الناس منه أكثر من مدركه ومجهوله أضعاف معلومه وظنه أكثر من يقينه والخافي عليه أكثر من البادي وما يتوهمه فوق ما يتحققه والله تعالى يقول ﴿وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ﴾. فلو استمرّ المعلوم^٢ بالنبي لما علم شيء ولولا الإيضاح بالاستثناء لما بقي شيء لكنه جلّ وعزّ نفى بلا على ما يقتضيه التوحيد ونفى بالأ ما يكون حلية ومصلة للعبيد.

٣٠٤ ثمّ أتبع المسألة من تنقّص الإنسان وذمّه وتويحّه ما أستغني عن إثباته.

المجواب

٤٠٤ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله هذه المسألة موشحة بعدة مسائل صعبة وقد جعلتها مسألة واحدة ولعلّ التي صيرتها أذناً هي أشبه بأن تكون رؤوساً. وقد عرض

١ الأصل: التحكّم. ٢ الأصل: العلوم.

On why people preach renunciation but do not practice it; on reasons, causes, time, and place

and the cause. Speaking of reasons and causes, what is a reason and a cause? What is the connection between the two, if such a connection exists? Can one substitute for the other? And if it can, can it do so at every place and time, or only at one place but not another, and one time but not another? Speaking of place and time, what is time and what is place? What kind of enmeshment does the one have with the other, and what is the bearing between them? Is a moment the same thing as time? Is perpetuity the same thing as a period? If so, how can two things be one and the same thing? And if two things be a single thing, can a single thing be two things?

Good God! This is a topic to make your mouth dry, press your cheek to the ground, to plunge the soul into a state of ferment, to make the glutton choke on his next bite, to reveal the emptiness of claims to knowledge, and to make one confess the limits of one's adequacy and power. It is a topic that proves the unity of Him who encompasses these mysteries and truths, leads you to worship the One who knows these occult and subtle things, prohibits scorn and mutual derision, and commands mutual respect and fairness. It shows that knowledge is a boundless sea, for what eludes people exceeds what is attained, what remains unknown is many times what is known, what is presumed to be true is greater than what is known with certainty to be so, what is obscure is much more than what is apparent, and what is imagined goes far beyond what is rigorously ascertained. God says, «They comprehend not anything of His knowledge save such as He wills».¹⁰ Had the knowledge referred to in this verse remained subject to negation, nothing whatsoever would have been known, and had the exceptive clause not provided clarification, nothing whatsoever would have been left. But through the word “not,” God negated what is required by His divinity, and through the word “save,” He left what tends to the enjoyment and welfare of His servants.

4.2

Your question continued with denunciations and reproaches of human deficiency that I will leave to one side, without loss.

4.3

Miskawayh's response

This is a question imbricated with several difficult questions, yet you have subsumed them all under a single heading, and those questions you added at the tail end look like they ought rather to have been headlines. In putting your question, you succumbed to a fit of vanity and conceit, and like a proud

4.4

لك فيها عارض من العجب وسامح من التيه فخطرت خطران الفحل ومشيت العرضنة ومررت في خيلائك ومضيت على غلوائك حتى أشفتك أن تعثر في فضل خطابك فلوتركت هذا الغرض للمتكلم على مسائلك ووفرت هذا المرض على المحب لك. ارفق بنا أبا حيان رفق الله بك وأرخ من خناقنا وأسغناريقنا ودعنا وما نعرفه في أنفسنا من النقص فإنه عظيم وما بلينا به من الشكوك فإنه كثير ولا تبكتنا بمجهل ما علمناه وفوت ما أدركناه فنبعثنا على تعظيم أنفسنا وتمنعنا من طلب ما فاتنا فإنك والله تأثم في أمرنا وتبجح فينا أسأل الله أن لا يؤخذك ولا يطالبك ولا يعاقبك فإنك بعرض جميع ذلك إلا أن يعفو ويفر فإنه ﴿أَهْلُ التَّقْوَى وَأَهْلُ الْمَغْفِرَةِ﴾ .

٥٤ أما أولى المسائل فالجواب عنها أن الإنسان لما كان مركباً من نفس وجسد واسم الإنسانية واقع على هذين الشيئين معاً. وأشرف جزأي الإنسان النفس التي هي معدن كل فضيلة وبها بعينها يرى الحق والباطل في الاعتقاد والخير والشر في الأفعال والحسن والقبیح في الأخلاق والصدق والكذب في الأقاويل. وأما جزؤه الآخر الذي هو الجسم وخواصه وتوابعه فهو أرذل جزأيه وأخسهما وذلك أنه مركب من طبائع مختلفة متعادية ووجوده في الكون دائماً لا لبث له طرفة عين بل هو متبدل سيال ولهذا سُمي عالمه العالم السوفسطائي. وهذه مباحث محققة مشروحة في مواضعها وإنما ذكرنا بها لحاجتنا في جواب المسألة إليها. فإذا كان الإنسان مركباً من هذين الجزأين ومزجاً من هاتين القوتين وكان أشرف جزأيه ما ذكرناه وهو النفس التي ليس وجودها في كون ولا هي مترتبة من أجزاء متعادية متضادة بل هو جوهر بسيط بالإضافة إلى الجسم وهي قوة إلهية غنية بذاتها وجب أن يكون شغل الإنسان بهذا الجزء أفضل من شغله بالجزء الآخر لأن هذا باق وذاك فان وهذا جوهر واحد وذاك جواهر متضادة وهذا له وجود سرمدى وذاك لا وجود له إلا في الكون الذي لا ثبات له.

١ ط: وبعينها.

stallion you roamed about, lustily swishing your tail back and forth, running sidelong across fields, swaggering in your pride and pressing ahead with your extravagance until I feared you would trip yourself up in the swell of your volubility. Shouldn't you leave this to the person tasked with discussing your question, and spare your respondent this malady? Show some mercy, Abū Ḥayyān, and God will show you mercy; let go of our throat and allow us to breathe. Leave us to our own shortcomings—for we know only too well that they are immense—and to our own struggle with doubt, for it is great. Do not censure us for being ignorant of things we know, and for not understanding what we have attained, thereby driving us to make pretensions and preventing us from seeking what we lack. You are behaving sinfully and treating us wrongfully. I pray to God not to hold your offence against you, or call you to account, and punish you for it. For unless He pardons and forgives, you are in danger of this: «He is worthy to be feared, worthy to grant forgiveness».¹¹

The answer to the first question is as follows. Human beings are a composite of soul and body, and the designation “human” refers to these two elements taken together. The noblest of these two parts is the soul, which is the source of every excellence and in itself the means whereby human beings discern which beliefs are right and wrong, which actions are good and evil, which character traits are admirable and repugnant, and which statements are true and false. The other part—the body with all its particularities and appurtenances—is the more base and vile of the two. This is because it is composed of different internecine natural elements and it is always found in a state of becoming, never enduring for longer than the twinkle of an eye. It is in flux, perpetually changing, and that is why its world has been called a sophistic world.¹² These matters have been rigorously examined and explained in their proper places, and we refer to them only insofar as answering the present question requires. If, then, human beings are composed of these two parts and form a mixture of these two powers and their highest part is the one we mentioned—namely, the soul, which does not have its existence in the realm of becoming and is not composed of internecine conflicting parts, but is rather a simple substance in comparison to the body and a self-sufficient divine power—it follows that it is better for human beings to preoccupy themselves with this part rather than the other. For this endures, whereas that perishes; this is a single substance, while that is many conflicting substances; this exists eternally, while that only exists in a state of becoming with no stability.

4.5

٦٠٤ وفي عدنا فضائل النفس وفتائن الجسم خروج عن غرض هذه المسألة. والذي يكفي في الجواب عن هذه المسألة بعد تقرير هذه الأصول والإقرار بها أن الإنسان إذا أحسّ بهذه الفضائل التي في نفسه والذات التي في جسمه وجب عليه أن يستكثر من الفضائل ليرتقي بها إلى درجات الإلهيين ويقلّ العناية بما يعوق عنها. ولما كان الشغل بالحواسّ وخصائص الجسم عائقاً عن هذه الفضائل والعلوم الخاصّة بالإنسان استتبع أهل كلّ ملة الانهماك فيه وصرف الهمة والبال إليه وأمروا بأخذ قوته الذي لا بدّ له منه في مادّة الحياة وصرف باقي الزمان بالهمة إلى تلك الفضائل التي هي السعادة.

٧٠٤ وهذا المعنى يلوح للنظر ويبين له بياناً جلياً إذا نظر إلى فرق ما بين الإنسان وسائر الحيوانات لأنة إنما فضلها بخاصّة النفس لا بخواصّ الجسد لأنّ خواصّ الجسد للحيوانات أتمّ وأغزر^١ وقد علم أن الإنسان أفضل منها وأعني بخواصّ الجسد الأيدّ والبطش والقدرة على الأكل والشراب والجماع وما أشبه ذلك فإذا تامة الإنسان وفضيلته إنما هي بهذه المزية التي وجدت له دون غيره فالمستزيد منها أحقّ باسم الإنسانية وأولى بصفة الفضيلة ولهذا يقال فلان كثير الإنسانية وهو من أبلغ ما يُمدح به. ومن أحبّ الاطلاع على تلك الأصول والاستكثار منها وبلوغ غاية اليقين فيها فليأخذ من مظانه.

٨٠٤ فأما حرص الناس مع شعورهم بهذه الفضيلة وكلهم على الدنيا بركوب البرّ والبحر لأجل الملاذّ الخسيسة فلأنّ الجزء الذي فينا معاشر البشر من الجسم الطبيعي أقوى من الجزء الآخر. وعرض لنا من تجاذب هاتين القوتين ما يعرض لكلّ مركب من قوى مختلفة فيكون الأقوى أبداً أظهر أثراً فلأجل ذلك انجذبنا إلى هذا الجزء مع علمنا بفضيلة الجزء الآخر. ونحن وإن علمنا أن هذا كما حكيناها وتيقنا هذا المذهب تيقناً

١ الأصل: وأغزر.

A survey of the excellences of the soul and the deficiencies of the body would take us far from our present purpose. Having established and acknowledged these principles, it will be enough for answering this question to say that the person who perceives the excellences attaching to his soul and the defects attaching to his body must seek to augment these excellences so that he may raise himself to the ranks of divine beings and must reduce his concern for things which impede that possibility.¹³ Insofar as preoccupation with the senses and with the particularities of the body impedes the virtues and modes of knowledge that are distinctive to human beings, all religions have deemed it reprehensible to abandon oneself to them and devote one's concern and attention to them, commanding that one take as much nourishment as is indispensable for one's material existence, and that one devote the rest of one's time to the pursuit of those virtues in which happiness lies. 4.6

This point emerges plainly and with the utmost clarity when one considers the difference that separates human beings from other animals. For the superiority of the former over the latter is grounded in the particularity of the soul, not the particularities of the body. Even though human beings are superior to them, as we know, the bodily particularities with which animals are endowed are more complete and extensive—and by bodily particularities I refer to strength, force, the ability to eat, drink, copulate, and the like. So the perfection and excellence of human beings comes from this special distinction that they possess to the exclusion of other beings. Anyone with a greater share of it has a greater claim to be called “human,” and is worthier of being described as excellent. Thus, one says, “He is a man of great humanity,” and this constitutes one of the highest forms of praise. Whoever wishes to acquaint himself with these fundamental principles, increase his understanding, and attain the highest conviction may look them up where he would expect to find them. 4.7

The answer to the question why, despite their awareness of this excellence, people ardently seek out and covet worldly goods, foraying over land and sea for the sake of paltry pleasures, is as follows. As human beings, the part of us which consists in our natural body is stronger than the other part. We experience a constant contest between these two forces, a common feature of things composed of different forces. In such cases, the strongest force will always have the more visible effect. This is why we are drawn to this part despite our knowledge of the excellence of the other. Even if we know that things are as we have represented, and are convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt, we are 4.8

لا ريب فيه فإننا في جهاد دائم فربما غلب علينا هذا الجزء وربما ملنا إلى الجزء الآخر بحسب العناية.

٩٠٤ وسأضرب في ذلك مثلاً من العيان والحس وهو أن المريض والناقة والخارج عن مزاج الاعتدال قد يتقن أنه بالحمية وترك الشهوات يعود إلى الصحة والاعتدال الطبيعي وهو مع ذلك لا يمتنع من كثير من شهواته لشدة مجاذبتها له وغلبتها على صحيح عقله وثاقب فكره ونصيحة طبيبه حتى إذا فرغ من مواجهة تلك الشهوة وأحسن بالأم ندم ندامة يظن معها ألا يعود أبداً ثم لا يلبث أن تهيج به شهوة أخرى أو هي بعينها وهو في ذلك يعظ نفسه ويديم تذكيرها الألم ويشوقها إلى الصحة ولا ينفعه وعظ ولا تذكير للعلة التي ذكرها قبل من شدة مجاذبة الشهوة الحاضرة حتى ينال شهوته ثانياً ثم هذه حال مستمرة به ما دام مريضاً. وكذلك هو أيضاً في حالة الصحة يتناول من الشهوات ما يعلم أنه يخرج عن مزاج الاعتدال ولا يأمن هجوم الأمراض عليه فيجمله سوء التحفظ وشدة مجاذبة الطبيعة إلى مخالفة التمييز ومشاركة البهائم فإذا رأيت هذا المثل صحيحاً ووجدته من نفسك ضرورة اطلعت على ما قدمناه وفهمته فهماً بيناً وعذرت من زهدك في الدنيا وإن خالفك إليها ومن نصحك بتركها وإن أخذ هو بها واستكثر منها.

الفرق بين السبب والعلة

١٠٠٤ فأما ما اعترض في المسألة من ذكر السبب والعلة والمسألة عن الفرق بينهما فإن السبب هو الأمر الداعي إلى الفعل ولأجله يفعل الفاعل. فأما العلة فهي الفاعلة بعينها ولذلك صار السبب أشد اختصاصاً بالأشياء العرضية وصارت العلة أشد اختصاصاً بالأمور الجوهرية. والحكماء قد أطلقوا لفظ العلة على البارئ تقدس اسمه وعلى العقل

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locked in a perpetual battle, in which one part gains the upper hand on occasion, while at other times we incline toward the other part, depending on the care we take.

Let me illustrate this with an analogy taken from everyday experience. Someone who is ill, convalescing, and whose humoral mixture is out of balance, knows for certain that by following a diet and restraining his appetites he can recover his health and natural equilibrium. Despite this, he indulges many of his appetites, because their allure is too powerful and they get the better of his rational judgment and his physician's counsels. When the pain returns upon his gratification of his desires, he experiences a sense of remorse that makes him think he will never do this again. Yet it is not long before another appetite—or even the very same one—flares up in him. Even as he keeps admonishing himself, constantly reminding himself of the pain he will incur and of the desirability of health, admonitions and reminders are of no use, on account of what we have already mentioned: the powerful allure of present appetite. So, once again, he gratifies his appetite. This goes on without respite for as long as his illness lasts. The same thing occurs during times of health, when one satisfies appetites that one knows will disturb the balance of the humoral mixture and leave one vulnerable to illness. Deficient restraint and the powerful allure of nature lead one to defy one's sound judgment and to behave like a beast. If this analogy strikes you as sound, and if you find it compelling, you will have gained an insight into what was said above and you will have understood it clearly. You will now make allowances for those who would have you renounce worldly pleasures yet then turn to them themselves, and for those who advise you to abandon them yet then partake of them themselves, and indeed do so to excess.

4.9

The distinction between reasons and causes

Let's address the question regarding reasons and causes and their difference. A reason is that which motivates an act and for the sake of which an agent acts. A cause, in contrast, is that which acts itself. That is why reasons pertain more particularly to accidental things, whereas causes pertain more particularly to things having to do with the substance. The philosophers have used the term "cause" to refer to the Blessed Creator, to the intellect, the soul, and nature. They have thus spoken of the "first cause" and of second, third, and

4.10

والنفس والطبيعة حتى قالوا العلة الأولى والعلّة الثانية والثالثة والرابعة وقالوا أيضاً العلة القريبة والعلّة البعيدة في أشياء تتبناها من كتبهم. وعلى أن هذه المسألة بجهة من الجهات تتخل إلى المسألة الأولى وتعود إليها لأنها يجوز أن توجد في المتبينة اسمائها بضر من الاعتبار وفي المترادفة اسمائها بضر آخر من الاعتبار وقد مرّ هذا الكلام مستقصى فلا وجه لإعادةته.

١١،٤ وأما الزمان والمكان فإنّ الكلام فيهما كثير قد خاض فيه الأوائل وجادل فيه أصحاب الكلام الإسلاميون وهو أظهر من أن ينشّف الريق ويضرع فيه الخد ولا سيما وقد أحكم القول فيه الحكيم وناقض أصحاب الآراء فيهما وبين فساد المذاهب القديمة وذكر رأي نفسه ورأي أستاذه في كتاب السماع الطبيعي وكلّ شيء وُجد لهذا الحكيم فيه كلام فقد شفى وكفى وقد فسّر كلامه فضلاء أصحابه المفسرين ونُقل إلى العربية وهو موجود. وأنا أذكر نصّ المذاهب لما تقتضيه مسألتك في عرض المسألة الأولى وأترك الاحتجاج لأنه مسطور وإذا دلت على موضعه فقرئ منه كان أولى من نقله إلى هذا المكان نسجاً. أما الزمان فهو مدّة تعدّها حركات الفلك وأما المكان فهو السطح الذي يحوز المحويّ والحايوي.

الفرق بين الزمان والدهر والحين والوقت

١٢،٤ وأما الفرق الذي سألته بين الوقت والزمان والدهر والحين فإنّ الوقت قدر من الزمان مفروض مميّز من جملة مشار إليه بعينه. وكذلك الحين هو مدّة أطول من الوقت وأفسح وأبعد وأتما تقترن أبداً هاتان اللفظتان بما يميّزهما ويفصلهما من جملة الزمان الذي هوكلّ لهما فيقال وقت كذا وحين كذا فينسب إلى حال أو شخص أو ما أشبه ذلك فإذا أريد بهما الإبهام لا الإفهام قيل كان كذا أو يكون كذا في حين أو وقت فيعلم السامع أن المتكلم لم يؤثر تعيين الوقت والحين وهما لا محالة معينان محصلان.

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fourth causes, and they have likewise spoken of “proximate” versus “remote” causes in describing things that you will find fully expounded in their books. Yet this question, in one respect, resolves back into the very first question we answered, because these terms may be classed with heteronyms through one type of consideration, and with polyonyms through another. There’s no need to go over it again as we have already discussed this topic at length.

Much has been said about time and place. It was a topic of discussion for the ancients, and it has been the subject of debate among the dialectical theologians of Islam. It is too obvious to “make your mouth run dry and press your cheek to the ground,” all the more since the Philosopher treated it decisively, dismantling the different views taken on it, debunking the old doctrines, and specifying in the *Physics* his own view and the view of his teacher Plato. Whenever that philosopher has discussed a topic, there is no need to look further because he has covered the topic completely. His discussion has been commented upon by eminent members of his circle, has been translated into Arabic, and is available to read. Here I will mention the gist of the doctrines as the question appended to your first question requires, and I will leave detailed arguments aside, since they can be found in writing. It is preferable that I indicate the relevant sources and that these be read directly than that I should copy them out here. Time is a duration measured through the motion of the celestial sphere.¹⁴ Place is the surface that encompasses both what is contained and what contains.¹⁵

4.11

The distinction between time, perpetuity, period, and moment

Regarding the difference between moment, time, perpetuity, and period, a moment is a definite amount of time that is distinguished from the larger totality of time as a particular. Similarly, a period is a duration that is longer, more extensive, and farther-reaching than a moment. Both terms appear in conjunctions that distinguish and separate them from the totality of time, which forms their encompassing whole, so that one speaks of “the moment that,” or “the period when,” relating them to a particular situation, person, or the like. If one wishes to be deliberately vague instead of conveying something clearly, one says: “such-and-such happened or will happen at a certain period or moment.” One’s listener then infers that one has preferred not to specify the moment or period, even though these are necessarily specific and determinate. Perpetuity,

4.12

فأما الدهر فليس من الزمان ولا الحين ولا الوقت في شيء ولكنه أخصّ بالأشياء التي ليست في زمان ولا مقدرة بحركات الفلك لأنها أعلى رتبة من الأمور الطبيعية. فأقول نسبة الزمان إلى الأمور الطبيعية كنسبة الدهر إلى الأمور غير الطبيعية أعني ما هو فوق الطبيعية.

١٣٤٤ وهذا القدر من الكلام كاف في الإيماء إلى ما سألت عنه وإن أحببت التوسع فيه فعليك بالمواضع التي أرشدناك إليها من كلام الحكيم ومفسري كتبه فإنه مستقصى هناك. وهذه المواضع أبقاك الله إذا نظر فيها الإنسان وعرفها حتى معرفتها تنبه على حكمة بارئها ومبدئها وصارت أسباباً محكمة ودواعي قوية إلى التوحيد وليس معرفتنا بها وإحاطتنا بعلمها إلا من نعمة الله علينا وإفاضته الخير بها علينا وهي مما شاء أن نحيط به من علمه ولم يكن علمنا بالزمان والمكان والوقت والآن إلا كسائر ما علمناه الله. ووراء هذه المواضع سرائر ودقائق لا يبلغها العقل الإنساني ولم يطمع في إدراكها أحد قط وهناك يحسن الاعتراف بالضعف البشري والعجز الإنساني وسائر ما تكلم فيه أبوحيان ورمى الإنسان به من الذلة والقلة فيقع حينئذ على استه ويستحي من الفسولة والذل عند الحاجة إلى خالق الخلق وبارئ الكل.

١٤٤٤ فأما هذه المواضع التي تكلمنا فيها فهي مواضع الشكر له والتحدث بنعمته والتعجب من حكمته والاستدلال بها على جوده وقدرته وفضه بالخير على برئته ومسألته الزيادة منها والحرص على نيل أمثالها بالنظر والنخص وإدامة الرغبة إلى واهبها ومنيلها بإفاضة أشباهها وأشكالها مما هو موضوع للبشر وميسر لهم وهم مندوبون له مبعوثون عليه بل أقول إنه مأخوذ على الإنسان الكامل بالعقل أن لا يقعد عن السعي والطلب لتكميل نفسه بالمعارف ولا يبني ولا يفتر مدة عمره عن الزيادة من العلوم التي بها يصير من حزب الله الغالين وأوليائه الفائزين الآمنين الذين ﴿لَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ﴾. فأما القوم الذين يفنون أعمارهم في قبية الذهب والفضة ويجعلون سعيهم كله مصروفاً إلى الأمور الزائلة الفانية من اللذات

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on the other hand, has absolutely nothing to do with time, period, or moment. It more specially concerns those things that do not exist in time and are not measured through the motion of the celestial sphere, because they belong to a higher order than that of natural things. I would put it as follows: The relation of time to natural things is like the relation of perpetuity to nonnatural things—and that is to say, to what is above nature.

These remarks are sufficient to provide your question with an indicative response. If you wish to learn more about it, you should consult the sources we have pointed out to you—the discussions of the Philosopher and his commentators—where it is examined in depth. God bless you, anyone who attains a sure knowledge of these matters through study will be enlivened by them to the wisdom of the One who created them and brought them into being, and they act as firm causes and powerful motives that lead one to acknowledge the unity of God. It is only on account of the bounty of God and the good He chooses to diffuse among us through such means that we can come to know and comprehend these matters: They belong to the part of God's knowledge that He willed us to comprehend. Our knowledge of time, place, the moment, and the present instant is of a piece with everything else that God has enabled us to know. Behind such matters, however, lie occult and subtle mysteries inaccessible to human reason that no one has ever aspired to grasp. It is right and proper to acknowledge the weakness and impotence of human beings in such matters, as well as the things Abū Ḥayyān mentioned and the humbling limitations of human nature he decried. That is when we must sit on the ground and bow our heads in shame at our lowliness and abjectness, in view of our need for the Creator of the world and the Originator of all things.

4.13

By contrast, God is to be thanked for the matters we have discussed, for in order to discuss them we must speak of God's bounty and wonder at His wisdom, taking them as proofs of His generosity and power and of the good He diffuses in His creation, asking Him to increase our share of them, and ardently pursuing similar forms of knowledge through inquiry and examination. We must always hope that the One who confers them on us and puts them within our reach will diffuse more of the like, for they are things that have been assigned and made available to human beings and that it is their mission and task to attain. I will go further and say that human beings, who are perfected through reason, are duty bound not to cease striving and seeking to perfect themselves through learning. For as long as they live they must struggle tirelessly and unflaggingly to increase

4.14

الجسمانية والشهوات البدنية فهم الذين قد بعدوا من الله وصاروا في حرب الشيطان فوقعوا في الأحران الطويلة والخوف الدائم والحسرة المبين إذ كانوا أبدأ من مطلوبهم على إحدى حالتين إما أسف على فائت ونزاع إليه أو لهف على مفقود وحرز عليه. لأن الأمور التي يطلبونها لا ثبات لها ولا نهاية لأشخاصها ولا وجود بالحقيقة لها وإنما هي في الكون والاستحالة والتقل بالطلع. نسأل الله الواحد الذي نخلص إليه رغباتنا ونرفع أيدي نفوسنا له ونسجد بهممنا وعقولنا أن يفيض علينا الخير المطلوب منه الذي نشتاق إليه لذاته لا لغيره وأن ينير عقولنا لنذكر بها حقيقة وحدانيته وعجائب مبروءاته ويفضي بنا إلى السعادة القصوى التي خلقنا لها^١ من أقصر الطرق وأهدى السبل صراط الله المستقيم فإنه أهل ذلك ووليّه والقادر عليه.

مسألة اختيارية

- ١٠٥ لم طلبت الدنيا بالعلم والعلم ينهى عن ذلك؟ ولم لم يطلب العلم بالدنيا والعلم يأمر بذلك؟ وقد يقول من ضعفت غريزته وساء أدبه وجرؤ مقدمه قد رأينا من ترك طلب الدنيا بالعلم ورأينا من طلب العلم بالدنيا. فليعلم أن المسألة ما وضعت هناك ولا فرضت كذلك ولو سدّد هذا المعارض فكره عرف الفحوى ولحق المرعى ولم يعارض بادرًا بشائع ولم يناقض نادرًا بذائع.

١ الأصل: خلقنا له. ٢ الأصل: أقصد.

the knowledge that gives them membership of the victorious party of God and His close allies, those who triumph to the end, are granted safety, and «shall have no fear on them and shall not sorrow».¹⁶ Those people, by contrast, who devote their lives to the acquisition of gold and silver and who expend all their effort on ephemeral and transient bodily pleasures and carnal appetites have distanced themselves from God as members of the party of Satan, laying themselves open to many sorrows, perpetual fear, and evident loss. Their relationship to the object of their desire is always one of two states: either wistfulness and pining for missed opportunities, or grief and desolation over lost possessions. For the things they seek have no stability, an infinite number of particulars, and no real existence, it being their nature to be in a state of becoming, change, and flux. We pray to the one God—the object of our heartfelt desires, to Whom we stretch out our souls, and before Whom our thoughts and hopes prostrate themselves—to diffuse among us the good we seek from Him, which we yearn for not as a means to something else but for its own sake, and to illuminate our minds so that we may perceive the reality of His oneness and the wonders of His creations, leading us to the highest happiness for which we were created by the shortest path and the best-guided way, the straight path of God. For He has a title to that, authority over it, and the power to carry it out.

On why people seek worldly goods through knowledge
but do not seek knowledge through worldly
goods—a question relating to voluntary choice

Why is it that people seek worldly goods through knowledge even though knowledge forbids that? Why do they not seek knowledge through worldly goods even though knowledge commands that? A brash and fractious fellow with questionable common sense might object, “We know people who have given up seeking worldly goods through knowledge and people who have sought knowledge through worldly goods.” But let it be clear that this is not the point of the question. Should the person who makes such an objection get his thoughts in order, he would see what the question really aims at, and he would not compare unexpected events with widespread phenomena, nor would he contradict a rarity on the basis of a commonplace.

5.1

المجواب

٢٠٥ أما طلب الدنيا فضروري للإنسان لما ذكرناه فإن وجوده بأحد جزأيه طبيعي ولا بد من إقامة هذا الجزء بماذته لأنه سيال دائم التخلل ولا بد من تعويض ما يتخلل منه. ولم ينه العلم عن هذا المقدار فقط وإنما نهى عن الزيادة على قدر الحاجة إذ كانت الزيادة مذمومة من جهات أحدها^١ أنها تؤدي إلى تفاوت الجسم الذي سعينا لحفظ اعتداله والثاني أنها تعوقنا عما هو أخص بنا من حيث نحن ناس أعني الجزء الآخر الذي هو فضيلتنا^٢. فن طلب بالعلم من الدنيا قدر الحاجة في حفظ الصحة على الجسد فهو مصيب تابع لما يرسمه العقل ويأمر به العلم. ومن طلب أكثر من ذلك فهو مفرط مسرف. وموضع الاعتدال من الطلب هو الصعب وهو الذي ينبغي أن يلتقى فيه أهل الحكمة والعلم وتقرأ له كتب الأخلاق ليُعرف الاعتدال فيلزم ويُعرف الإفراط فيحذر.

٣٠٥ ولا بد مع هذه الجملة التي ذكرناها وإن دللنا فيها على المواضع التي يرجع إليها من أدنى كشف وبيان فتقول إن الناس لما اختلف نظرهم بحسب جزئهم فناظر إلى الطبيعة وناظر إلى العقل وناظر فيهما معاً اختلفت مقاصدهم وصارت أفعالهم تلقاء نظرهم. وقد علم أن الناظر في أحد جزأيه دون الآخر مخطئ لأنه مركب منهما معاً والناظر فيهما مصيب إذا قسط لكل واحد منهما قسطاً من نظره وجعل له نصيباً من سعيه على قدر استحقاق كل واحد منهما وبحسب رتبته من الشرف والضعفة.

٤٠٥ أما الناظرون بحسب الجزء الطبيعي فإنهم انحطوا في جانب الطبيعة وانصرفوا بجميع قوتهم إليها وجعلوا غايتهم التصوى عندها ولذلك جعلوا العقل آلة في تحصيل أسبابها وحاجاتهم فاستعبدوا أشرف جزأيهم لأخسهما^٣ كمن يستخدم الملك

١ الأصل: إحداهما. ٢ ط: فضيلة. ٣ الأصل: لأخسها.

Response

Human beings are inescapably required to seek out worldly goods, for reasons we have already mentioned. They have a natural existence through one of their two parts, and this part needs to be properly sustained in its material substance, because it is in flux and in a constant state of dissolution, and the elements that dissolve need to be replaced. Knowledge does not prohibit the acquisition of this basic amount; rather, it prohibits exceeding the strict measure of one's need. There are several reasons why such excess is reprehensible. First, it puts the body into a state of disharmony, when our object is to preserve its balance. Second, it prevents us from realizing that which is more distinctive of us as human beings—I mean the second part, that which constitutes our excellence. So, the use of knowledge to seek such amount of worldly goods as is strictly needed in order to preserve the health of the body is appropriate and in conformity with what reason dictates and knowledge commands. Seeking more than that is immoderate and exceeds the proper bounds. Seeking worldly goods in a balanced way is the most difficult achievement. You must have recourse to wise and knowledgeable people, and read books of ethics, to know what constitutes right balance and so adhere to it, and what constitutes excess and so steer clear of it. 5.2

Having provided this general perspective and indicated the sources that can be consulted, however, we need to add a basic further exposition and explanation. People vary according to the part of themselves they pay attention to. Some pay attention to the natural part, others to the intellect, and yet others to both. Consequently, people's aims vary, and their actions depend on the part they pay attention to. It is clear that it is misguided to only pay attention to one part to the exclusion of the other, because human beings are composed of both. It is right to pay attention to both if each is given a share of attention and a quota of effort in proportion to its merits and the loftiness or baseness of its rank. 5.3

Those who regard things according to the natural part plunge into the domain of nature, dedicating themselves to it with every ounce of their power and making it the locus of their ultimate end. They make the intellect an instrument for obtaining the effects and satisfying the needs of nature, thereby subjugating their highest part to the lowest one, as a king might be put in the service of his slave. However, those who regard things according to the intellectual part neglect the part that belongs to them by nature. They regard things from 5.4

لعبده. وأما الناظرون بحسب الجزء العقلي فإنهم أغفلوا النظر في أحد جزأيهم الذي هو طبيعي لهم ونظروا نظراً إلهياً فطمعوا وهم ناس مركبون أن ينفردوا بفضيلة العقل غير مشوب بنقص الطبيعة فاضطروا لأجل ذلك إلى إهمال الجسد وهو مقرون بهم^١ والضرورة تدعو إلى مقيماته من المصالح أو إلى إزاحة علته في حاجاته وهي كثيرة فظلموا أنفسهم وظلموا أبناء جنسهم. أما ظلمهم لأنفسهم فتركوا النظر لأحد قسميهم الذي به قوامهم حتى التمسوا مصالحها بتعب آخرين فظلموهم بترك المعاونة إياهم والعدل يأمر^٢ بمعونة من يسترشد بمعونته والتعب لمن يأخذ ثمرة تعب. وبهذه المعاونة تتم المدينة^٣ ويصلح معاش الإنسان الذي هو مدني بالطبع وهؤلاء هم الذين تسموا بالزهاد وهم طبقات وفي الفلاسفة منهم قوم وفي أهل الأديان والمذاهب والأهواء منهم طوائف وفي شريعتنا الإسلام منهم قوم وسموا أنفسهم بالصوفية وقال منهم قوم بتحريم المكاسب.

٥٥ واذ قد بينا غلط الناظر في أحد جزأيه دون الآخر فلنذكر المذهب الصحيح الذي هو النظر^٤ في الجزئين معاً وإعطاء كل واحد منهما قسطه طبيعة وعقلاً. فنقول إن الإنسان كما ذكرناه هو مركب من هاتين القوتين لا قوام له إلا بهما فيجب أن يكون سعيه نحو الطبيعي منهما والعقلي معاً. أما السعي الطبيعي فغاية الإنسان فيه حفظ الصحة على بدنه والاعتدال على مزاج طبائعه لتصدر الأفعال عنه تامة غير ناقصة وذلك بالتماس المآكل والمشرب والنوم واليقظة والحركة والسكون والاعتدال في جميع ذلك إلى سائر ما يتصل بها من الملابس والمسكن الدافعين أذى القهر والحر والأشياء الضرورية للبدن ولا يلتبس غاية سواها أعني التلذذ والاستكثار من قدر الحاجة لطلب المباهاة واتباع النهمة والحرص وغيرهما من الأمراض التي توهم أن غاية الإنسان هي تلك. وأما سعيه العقلي فغايته فيه أيضاً حفظ الصحة على النفس لأنها ذات قوى ولها أمراض بترتد هذه القوى بعضها على بعض وحفظ

١ الأصل: وهم مقرون بهم. ٢ الأصل: وإلى. ٣ الأصل: وط: بأمر. ٤ ط: المدينة. ٥ ط: الناظر.

a divine perspective and aspire—composite human beings though they are—to partake exclusively of the excellence of the intellect, unblemished by the deficiencies of nature. This forces them to neglect the body, even though it is conjoined to them and necessity bids them to pursue the benefits that sustain it, or to remove the impediments created by its multiple needs. They thus wrong themselves and their fellow human beings. They wrong themselves because they disregard the part through which they are sustained, trying to secure their welfare through the sweat of another’s brow, thereby wronging them by failing to help them in return. For justice demands that you help the person whose help you enlist, and that you labor in the service of those who offer you the fruits of their labor. It is through such help that polities are realized and the livelihood of human beings—who are political by nature—is put into good order. These are the people who call themselves “ascetics,” and they are made up of a number of different classes. There is a group among the philosophers, and several factions among the exponents of different religious beliefs, creeds, and sectarian views. There is also a group in our own religion of Islam who call themselves Sufis, some of whom have declared that it is forbidden even to earn a living.

Having established the misguidedness of those who focus on the one part to the exclusion of the other, we may now outline the correct approach, which is to pay regard to both parts and to give each part—nature and intellect—its proper due. We therefore say as follows. Human beings are composed from these two powers, as we have mentioned, and can only subsist through them. Therefore, their efforts must be directed both toward what is natural and toward what is intellectual. In terms of natural effort, the objective of human beings must be to preserve the health of their bodies and to maintain the mixture of their natural elements in a balanced state, so that the acts that issue from them are complete and not deficient. This is achieved by seeking out, in a balanced way, food and drink, sleep and wakefulness, and motion and rest—to say nothing of the other adjuncts such as clothing, shelter to protect against cold and heat, and the things the body requires. They must entertain no other end, such as pleasure and exceeding the strict measure of need, out of a desire for ostentation and at the bidding of greed, cupidity, or any of those other maladies that make us falsely believe that this is what humans must aspire to. Their intellectual effort must also be directed at the preservation of the health of the soul, since it comprises a number of different powers and is susceptible to maladies

5-5

الاعتدال هو طَبَّهَا والاستكثار من معلوماتها هو قوتها وسبب بقائها السرمدِي وسعادتها الأزلِيَّة.

- ٦٥ وفي شرح كل واحد من هذه الفضائل طول وهذا القدر من الإيماء كاف فليكن الإنسان ساعياً نحو هذين الجزأين بما يصلح كل واحد منهما ويحفظ على نفسه الاعتدال فيهما من غير إفراط ولا تفريط فإنه حينئذ كامل فاضل لا يجد عليه أحد مطعناً إلا سفيه لا يكثر له أو جاهل لا يُعاب به وبالله التوفيق.

مسألة طبعية

- ١٠٦ ما السبب في اشتياق الإنسان إلى ما مضى من عمره حتى إنه ليحنّ حنين الإبل ويكي بكاء المتامل ويطول فكره بتخيله ما سلف؟ وبهذا المعنى هتف الشاعر فقال
[كامل]

لَمْ أَبْكُ مِنْ رَمَنٍ دَمَّتْ صُرُوفُهُ إِلَّا بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ حِينَ يَزُولُ

وقال آخر [خفيف]

رُبَّ يَوْمٍ بَكَتُ مِنْهُ فَلَمَّا صِرْتُ فِي غَيْرِهِ بَكَتْ عَلَيْهِ

وقال الآخر [متقارب]

وَأَرْجُو غَدًا فَإِذَا مَا أَتَى بَكَتْ عَلَى أَمْسِهِ الذَّاهِبِ

هذا العارض يعترني وإن كان الماضي من الزمان في ضيق وحاجة وكره وشدة وما ذاك كذلك إلا لسرّ للنفس الإنسان غير شاعر به ولا واجد له إلا إذا طال فحسه وزال نقصه واشتدّ في طلب العلم تشميره واتّصل في اقتباس الحكمة رواحه وبكوره

when some of these powers surpass the others. The preservation of the balanced state constitutes its therapy, and the increase of knowledge constitutes its power and its means of attaining everlasting life and eternal happiness.

A detailed discussion of each of these excellences would require a great deal of space, but this amount suffices by way of brief exposition. So let people strive after that which secures the welfare of both parts, maintaining a balanced approach, without overshooting or undershooting the mark. For it is then that they will have attained a perfect and excellent state. Only fools who are to be ignored or dolts who should not be heeded will reproach them. God alone grants success. 5.6

On why people long for the past—a natural question

Why do people long for the earlier part of their lives, so that they cry like she-camels after their young and weep as if the world could not contain them, dwelling on images of things past? This is what one poet expressed when he exclaimed: 6.1

Though the cruelty of a time makes me weep
I weep even more to see its passing

Or as another said:

Many a day that brought me to tears
made me tear up anew when the next day dawned

And as another said:

I pine for the morrow, and when it comes
I weep over the day that has just gone

This feeling is present even when the past was full of poverty and need, distress and affliction. The reason for this must lie in some mysterious trait of the soul that human beings are unaware of. They can only uncover it if they inquire long and hard; free themselves from their deficiencies; throw themselves heart and soul into the pursuit of understanding, harvesting wisdom night and day without cessation; and if they have greater respect for fine words than for comely maidens and greater love for burnished ideas than for heaped

وكانت الكلمة الحسنة أشرف عنده من الجارية العذراء والمعنى المقوم أحب إليه من المال المكوم وعلى قدر عنايته يحظى بشرف الدارين ويتجلى بزينة المحلين.

الجواب

٢٠٦ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله ليس يشتاق إلى الشباب والصبا إلا أحد رجلين إما فاقد شهواته ولذاته التي سورتها وحدتها وقت الشباب وإما فاقد صحته في السمع والبصر أو بعض أعضائه التي قوتها ووفرها من الصبا وحين الحدائة. والمعنى الأول أكثر ما يتشوق فإن المكتهل والمجتمع ومن بلغ الأشد الذي لا ينكر شيئاً من حواسه لا يتشوق إلى الصبا والشيخ لا يعدم من نفسه ورأيه وقوة عقله شيئاً مما كان يجده في شبابه اللهم إلا أن يهرم ويلحقه الخرف فينئذ لا يذكر بشيء من التشوق ولا يوصف به ولا يُحجج برأيه.

٣٠٦ وههنا سبب ثالث يشوق إلى الصبا وهو أن الأمل حينئذ في البقاء قوي وكان الإنسان ينتظر أمامه حياة طويلة فكأنما مضى منها زمان تيقن أنه من أمده المضروب وعمره المقسوم فاشتاق إلى أن يستأنف به طمعاً في البقاء السرمد الذي لا سبيل للجسد الفاني إليه. إلا أن المعنى الأول هو الذي ذهب إليه الشعراء فأكثروا فيه وقد صرحوا به وذكره في أشعارهم. والمتشوق إلى شهواته صورته عند الحكماء صورة من أعتق فاشتاق إلى الرق أو صورة من أفلت من سباع ضارية كانت مقرونة به فاشتاق إلى معاودتها. وذلك أن الشاب تهيم به قوى الطبيعة عند الشهوة وعند الغضب حتى تغمر عقله فلا يستشير لبه ولا يكاد يظهر أثر العقل عليه إلا ضعيفاً. وقد بينا فيما تقدم من المسائل أن فضيلة الإنسان وشرفه في الجزء الإلهي منه وإن كان الجزء الآخر ضرورياً له. فقد بان أن السن التي تضعف فيها قوى الطبيعة حتى يقتدر عليها العقل فيزمتها ويجرها ذليلة طائعة غير متأية ولا هائجة أفضل الأسنان

١ الأصل: حواسه. ٢ ط: السرمدى. ٣ ط: عنده.

gold. The measure of their dedication will determine the honor they reap, and the graces they enjoy in this world and the next.

Miskawayh's response

Two kinds of people long for lost youth and childhood: those who have lost the carnal appetites and pleasures at their most full-blooded and keenest in youth, and those who have suffered a decline in their hearing and sight or in any of the other bodily functions at the height of their power and in their prime, during childhood or their early years. The first aspect most often arouses the sense of longing, because those in the middle of their lives, who have reached the full vigor of maturity, do not long for their childhood, and old men do not lack any of the psychological features, capacity for judgment, and intellectual acuity they used to possess during their youth—unless, to be sure, they have grown decrepit and senile, but in that case they are not said to have a sense of longing of any kind (this is simply not ascribed to them), and their views are not taken into consideration. 6.2

There is a third reason that makes people long for their childhood—this is when one's hopes for a continued existence run highest. It is as if people expect to have a long life ahead of them, and when part of their life passes, it dawns on them that this has been taken out of their appointed span and predetermined length of existence. They then long to go back to the beginning, out of a craving to live forever that cannot be satisfied through the perishable body. But it is the first aspect that poets have given voice to at length, addressing it blatantly in their poems. In the view of the philosophers, longing for the carnal appetites is like longing for servitude after manumission, or like longing to fall into the clutches of vicious beasts after one has escaped from their claws. For the powers of nature run riot in the young when appetite and anger seize them and overwhelm their reason, so that they take no counsel from their understanding and reason manifests itself but feebly. As we explained in our previous answers, the excellence and dignity of human beings is vested in their divine part, even though the other part is necessary. Thus, it is clear that the best age of all is the age at which the powers of nature grow weak, allowing reason to bring them under its power and rein them in so that they are led meekly and 6.3

والرجل الفاضل الصالح لا يشق من أشرف أسنانه إلى أخسها. والدليل البين على أن الأمر على ما حكيناه أن الشاب العفيف الضابط لنفسه القوي على قمع شهواته مسرور بسيرته وإن كان في جهد عظيم ومحكوم له بالفضل مشهود له به عند جميع أهل العقل وأنه إذا كبر وأسن لم يشق إلى الشباب لأن ضبطه لنفسه وقعه لشهواته أيسر عليه وأهون.

٤٠٦ ومن كان فلسفي الطريق شريعي المذهب لم يعرض له هذه العوارض أعني التلهّف على نيل اللذات والأسف على ما يفوته منها والندم على ما ترك وقصر فيها بل يعلم أن تلك انفعالات خسيصة تقتضي أفعالاً دينية وأن الحكماء رضي الله عنهم قد يتنوّ ذرائعهم وسطروا الكتب في ذمّها وأن الأنبياء صلوات الله عليهم قد نهوا عنها وحذروا منها وكتب الله تعالى وتقدّس ناطقة بجميع ذلك مصدقة له. فأبي شوق يحدث للفاضل إلى التقص وللعالم إلى الجهل وللصحيح إلى المرض؟ وإنما تلك أعراض تعرض للجهال الذين غايتهم الانهماك في الطبيعة والحواس وطلب ملاذها الكاذبة لا التماس الصحة ولا بلوغ السعادة ولا تكميل الفضيلة الإنسانية ولا معتبر بهؤلاء ولا التفات إلى أقوالهم وأفعالهم.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٧ لم اقترن العجب بالعالم والعلم يوجب خلاف ذلك من التواضع والرقّة وتحقير النفس والزراية عليها بالجز؟

الجواب

٢٠٧ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما العالم المستحق لهذه السمة فليس يلحقه العجب ولا يبلى بهذه الآفة وكيف يبلى بها وهو يعرف سببها وأنها مرض سببه مكاذبة النفس؟

submissively, recalcitrant or restive no longer. At his most honorable age, the virtuous, upright man will not long for the most debased age. The surest proof of our position is that temperate, self-disciplined youths who have the power to subdue their appetites are pleased with their course of conduct, even if it entails great struggle, and are judged to be virtuous by all people of sound reason. When they grow old, they do not long for their youth, because self-discipline and the subduing of physical appetites now come to them so easily and with little strain.

Yet those who follow a philosophical path and adhere to religious Law are not beset by such impulses—I mean wild cravings to take pleasure, grief over pleasures missed, and regret over pleasures given up or inadequately indulged. They know that these are base passions that call forth vile actions, and that the philosophers have made their defects clear and devoted entire books to discrediting them, just as they know that the prophets have issued prohibitions and warnings against them, and that the books sent down by God give expression and provide testimony to all this. Could the virtuous man long for deficiency, the learned man for ignorance, and the healthy man for illness? These, rather, are impulses that beset ignorant people whose aim is to immerse themselves in nature and the senses, and to obtain their meretricious pleasures, not to seek health or attain happiness, nor to perfect human excellence. Such people are of no account, and their words and deeds should not be listened to. 6.4

On why men of knowledge tend to be conceited—an ethical question

Why are men of knowledge habitually given to conceit, even though true knowledge demands the opposite qualities of humility, gentleness, disregard of self, and a self-deprecating recognition of one's weakness? 7.1

Miskawayh's response

Men of knowledge truly worthy of the name do not succumb to the affliction of conceit. How could they, when they know its cause, and are aware that it is a malady caused by self-deception? For conceit occurs when a person judges 7.2

وذلك أن حقيقة العجب هي ظن الإنسان بنفسه من الفضل ما ليس فيه وظنه هذا كذب ثم يستشعره حتى يصدق به فيكون صورته صورة من يرى رجلاً في الحرب شجاعاً يجمل على الأبطال ويظهر فضيلة شجاعته فيكفي العدو ويعني القرن وهذا الرأي عنه بمعزل ناكص على عقبيه ناء بجانبه وهو في ذلك يدعي تلك الشجاعة لنفسه فهو يكذبها في الدعوى ثم يصير مصدقاً بها وهذا من أعجب آفات النفس وأكاذيبها لأجل أن الكذب فيه مركب فقد يكذب الإنسان غيره ليصدقه الغير فيموه نفسه عليه فأما أن يموه نفسه بالكذب ثم يصدق فيه نفسه فهو موضع العجب والعجب. ولأجل هذا التركيب الذي عرض في الكذب صار أشنع وأقبح من الكذب نفسه البسيط المعروف. وإذا كان العالم الفاضل لا يقتزن به آفة الكذب البسيط لمعرفته بقبحه لا سيما إذا استغنى عنه فهو من الآفة المركبة أبعد. فلذلك قلت إن العالم لا يعجب فقد صارت هذه المسألة مردودة غير مقبولة. فأما ما يعرض من العجب لمن يظن أنه عالم فليس من المسألة في شيء.

مسألة

١٠٨ ما سبب الحياء من القبح مرة وما سبب التبيح به مرة؟ وما الحياء أولاً فإن في تحديده ما يقرب من البغية ويسهل درك الحق؟ وما ضمير قول النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم الحياء شعبة من الإيمان؟ فقد قال بعض العلماء كيف يكون الحياء وهو من آثار الطبيعة شعبة من الإيمان. والإيمان فعل يدل أن آمن يؤمن إيماناً وهناك يقول حيي الرجل واستحي فيصير من باب الانفعال أي المطاوعة. وهل يُجد الحياء في كل موضع أم هو موقوف على شأن دون شأن ومقبول في حال دون حال؟

١ الأصل: أثار؛ والتصحيح من الهامش.

that he possesses merit that he does not in fact possess. His judgment is false, but he persists until he comes to believe it. He is then like someone who sees a man fighting courageously in war against redoubtable fighters, bravely fending off enemies and killing opponents, while he keeps himself aloof from the battle. He lies to himself and claims the other man's courage for himself, until eventually he comes to believe it. This fault is one of the most extraordinary deceptions the soul perpetrates, because in this case the act of lying is composite. One person might lie to another and get the other to believe him in order to mislead him. But it is indeed the essence of conceit and a cause for amazement that one should mislead *oneself* through lies and then believe oneself. Its composite character makes this kind of lie fouler and more repugnant than the simple lie we are familiar with. If men of virtue and knowledge are not given to the simple lie because they know it to be repugnant—especially since they have no need for it—they will be even less susceptible to the composite fault. This is why I said men of knowledge cannot be conceited. So this question is disqualified and ruled inadmissible. The kind of conceit that affects people who think they are knowledgeable falls entirely outside our concern.

On why people are sometimes ashamed and sometimes proud of wrongdoing; on the meaning of shame

Why are people sometimes ashamed of doing wrong, while at other times they boast of it? What *is* shame, to begin with? Defining it may bring us nearer to the goal and make it easier to attain the truth. What is the hidden meaning of the Prophet's saying, "Shame is one of the branches of belief"? Certain scholars have questioned how it is possible that shame, which is an effect of nature, should be a branch of belief. For belief is a mode of action. This is clear from how one speaks of a person as "believing" using an active verbal form, whereas one speaks of a person as "being ashamed" using a reflexive verbal form marking it out as a passive response, that is, a form of submission. Is shame praiseworthy in all circumstances, or does it depend on certain parameters? Is it only acceptable in certain conditions?

8.1

المجواب

٢٠٨ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما الحياء الذي أحببت أن نبدأ به أولاً فحقيقته انحصار نفس مخافة فعل قبيح يصدر عنها. وهو خلق مرضي في الأحداث فإنه يدل على أن نفسه قد شعرت بالشيء القبيح وأسفقت من مواقعه وكرهت ظهوره منه فعرض لنفسه هذا العارض. وإحساس النفس بالأفعال القبيحة ونفورها عنها دليل على كرم جوهرها ومطمع في استصلاحها جداً. قال صاحب الكتاب في تدبير المنزل ليس يوجد في الصبي فراسة أصح ولا دليل أصدق لمن أثر أن يعرف نجابته وفلاحه وقبوله الأدب من الحياء. وذلك لما ذكرناه من علة الحياء وبيّناه من أمره. فأما المشايخ فلا يجب أن يعرض لهم هذا العارض لأنه لا ينبغي لهم أن يحذروا وقوع فعل قبيح منهم لما سبق من علمهم ودربتهم ومعرفتهم بمواضع القبيح والحسن ولأن نفوسهم يجب أن تكون قد تهذبت وأمنت ووقع شيء قبيح منهم فلذلك لا ينبغي أن يعرض لهم الحياء. وقد بين الحكيم هذا في كتاب الأخلاق.

٣٠٨ فقد ذكرنا الحياء ما هو وأنه انفعال وأنه يحسن بالأحداث خاصة وذكرنا سبب حسنه فيهم. فأما المسألة عن سبب التبتج بالقبيح فمسألة غير لازمة لأن هذا العارض سببه الجهل بالقبيح وليس يعرض إلا للجهال من الناس والدليل على ذلك أنهم إذا عرفوا القبيح أنه قبيح اعتذروا منه وتركوا التبتج به. وإنما يتبتج به حين لا يعلم وجه قبحه وهو في تلك الحال إذا تبتج به خرج له وجهاً مموهاً في الحسن فيصير تبتجه بالحسن الذي خرج به أو موه به فإذا يتقن أنه قبيح أو ليس بموه وجه الحسن فيه عدل عنه واستحبي منه وترك التبتج به.

٤٠٨ فأما قوله عليه السلام الحياء شعبة من الإيمان فكلام في غاية الحسن والصحة والصدق وكيف لا يكون شعبة منه وإنما الإيمان التصديق بالله عز وجل والمصدق به مصدق بصفاته وأفعاله التي هي من الحسن في غاية لا يجوز أن يكون فيها وفي درجتها شيء من المستحسنات لأنها هي سبب حسن كل حسن وهي التي تفيض

Miskawayh's response

Shame—which you wished us to begin with—consists in fact in a contraction of the soul through fear that a wrongful act proceed from it. It is an ethical trait that is becoming in young people, for it shows that they perceive what is wrong and are anxious not to perpetrate it, unwilling that it issue from them. Consequently, this effect comes over them. A sense of repulsion at wrongful actions is a sign of the nobility of the soul's substance and raises great hopes for its betterment. The author of the *Book on Estate Management*¹⁷ said: "Shame is the soundest physiognomic feature and truest sign for those who would know whether a boy will distinguish himself, succeed in life, and respond well to the education of his character." This is due to the cause and nature of shame as we have just explained. Old men, on the other hand, should not be susceptible to this effect, because they ought not to be worried about acting wrongfully, on account of their knowledge, experience, and awareness of what is right and wrong, and since their souls should have been disciplined and secured against the possibility of doing wrong. For this reason they should not be susceptible to shame. The Philosopher made this clear in the *Ethics*.¹⁸ 8.2

So, we have discussed what shame is, that it is a passive effect, and that it is a good thing for young people in particular to have it. We have also stated why it is good for them. The question why one boasts of doing wrong is not essentially related to this one. For this phenomenon is caused by ignorance of what is wrong, and it only affects ignorant people. So, when people realize that a given act is wrong, obviously they apologize and boast no more. Boasting occurs when there is no awareness of what makes an act wrong. In such a situation, the boast is the consequence of falsely discerning in an act something that makes it good—the boast is actually a boast about the good that is read into the act or falsely represented as having. Once it is realized for certain that the act is wrong, or it is no longer falsely represented as having the feature that makes it good, then the boasting stops and shame is felt. 8.3

The Prophet's saying, "Shame is one of the branches of belief," is fine, sound, and truthful. How could it not be one of its branches, when belief is giving credence to God, and giving credence to Him is to give credence to His attributes and acts, characterized by such extreme goodness that none of the things we judge to be good can match them or attain their level? They are the cause of the goodness of every good, and they diffuse goodness to everything, 8.4

بالحسن على غيرها إذ كانت معدنه ومبدأه وإنما نالت الأشياء كلها الحسن والجمال والبهاء منها وبها. وكذلك جميع أوامر الله تعالى وشراعه وموجبات العقل الذي هو رسوله الأزل وويكفه عند جميع خلقه الأقدم. ومن عرف الحسن عرف ضده لا محالة ومن عرف ضده حذره وأشفق منه ففرض له الحياء الذي جردناه ولخصناه. وصديقك أبو عثمان يقول الحياء لباس سابغ وحجاب واق وستر من المساوي أخو العفاف وحليف الدين ومصاحب بالتصنع ورفيق من العصمة وعين كائلة يزود عن الفساد وينهى عن الفحشاء والأدناس. وإنما حكيت لك ألفاظه لشغفك به وحسن قبولك كل ما يشير إليه ويدل عليه.

مسألة طبعية

- ١٠٩ ما سبب من يدعي العلم وهو يعلم أنه لا علم عنده؟ وما الذي يجعله على الدعوى ويدنيه من المكابرة ويحوجه إلى السفه والمهاترة؟

الجواب

- ٢٠٩ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله سبب ذلك محبة الإنسان نفسه وشعوره بموضع الفضيلة فهو لأجل المحبة يدعي لها ما ليس لها لأن صورة النفس التي بها تحسن وعليها تحصل ومن أجلها تسعد هي العلوم والمعارف وإذا عريت منها أو من جلها حصلت له من المقابح ووجوه الشقاء بحسب ما يفوتها من ذلك. ومن شأن المحبة أن تعطي المساوي وتظهر المحاسن إن كانت موجودة وتدعيها إن كانت معدومة فإذا كان هذا من فعل المحبة معلوماً وكانت النفس محبوبة لا محالة عرض لصاحبها عارض

١ الأصل: حمل.

since they are its origin and point of beginning. Things acquire their goodness, beauty, and splendor from them and through them. The same principle applies to all the commands and laws that God has given, and to the requirements of reason, His first messenger and oldest deputy among all of His creatures. Whoever knows what is good necessarily knows its contrary, and whoever knows its contrary looks upon it with wariness and fear. He is thus exposed to the experience of shame that we outlined and described in summary fashion. Your beloved Abū ‘Uthmān al-Jāhiz¹⁹ has said: “Shame is a garment that envelops you, a veil that screens you against evil. It is the brother of virtue, the ally of the faith, a companion in rectitude, a protective chaperone, and a vigilant eye—it fends off corruption and prohibits immorality and defilement.” I quote his words because I know how enthusiastic you are about him, and how eagerly you welcome any argument he proposes.

On why people claim to have knowledge they lack—a natural question

Why do some people claim to have knowledge when they know that they do not have this knowledge? What is it that drives them to press that claim, makes them fight to defend something they know is untrue, and leads them to grasp at foolish and abrasive words?

9.1

Miskawayh’s response

The reason for this is self-love and awareness of where excellence is to be found. Self-love means that people claim to possess what they don’t. For knowledge and learning render the soul good, and are the means whereby it realizes and attains happiness. Without this, or without most of it, the soul becomes prey to repugnant qualities and to different types of unhappiness, all in proportion to what it lacks. Love tends naturally to conceal bad qualities, to display any good qualities that are present, and falsely to claim their presence if absent. Since we know this is how love behaves, and since our own soul is necessarily an object of love, we experience the effects that love usually involves. So there is nothing remarkable in people falsely claiming to possess

9.2

المحبة فلم ينكر ادعاء الإنسان لها المعارف التي هي فضائلها ومحاسنها وإن لم يكن عندها شيء من ذلك.^١

مسألة طبيعية

- ١٠١٠ ما سبب فرح الإنسان بخير يُنسب إليه وهو فيه؟ وما سبب سروره بجميل يُذكر به وليس فيه؟

الجواب

- ٢٠١٠ عن هذه المسألة هو الجواب عن المسألة التي قبلها لأن الخير المختص بالنفس هو العلوم الصحيحة والأفعال الصادرة بحسبها عنها. فإذا اعترف للإنسان^٢ بأن نفسه فاضلة خيرة وجب أن يسرّ لمحبوبه وقد شهد له بالجمال والحسن فلذلك يسرّ إن دُكر بجميل ليس فيه للعلة التي ذكرناها في المسألة الأولى.

مسألة اختيارية

- ١٠١١ لم قبح الثناء في الوجه حتى تواطؤوا على تزييفه؟ ولم حسن في المغيب حتى تُمّي ذلك بكل معنى لأن الثناء في الوجه أشبه الملق والحديعة وفي المغيب أشبه الإخلاص والتكرمة أم لغير ذلك؟

١ في الهامش: قلته كيف لا ينكر ادعاءه ذلك وهو كاذب فيه والكذب قبيح لا محالة. ٢ ط: الإنسان.

the kinds of knowledge that constitute the excellences and good qualities of the soul, even if they possess none of them.²⁰

On why it pleases people when others ascribe
good qualities to them—a natural question

Why do people rejoice when others ascribe to them good qualities they actually possess? And why are they pleased when others describe them as having fine qualities they do not possess? 10.1

Response

The answer to this question is the same as the previous answer. For the good that properly belongs to the soul consists in sound knowledge and the actions that issue from it in accordance with that knowledge. So if the excellence or goodness of someone's soul is acknowledged by others, we necessarily rejoice for what we love, because its fineness and goodness have received recognition. We rejoice when others describe us as having fine qualities we do not possess, for the reason discussed in the previous question. 10.2

On why it is bad to praise people in their presence
and good to praise them in their absence—a question
relating to voluntary choice

Why is it bad to praise people in their presence, so that it is universally dismissed as specious? And why is it good to praise them in their absence, so that it is ardently wished for? Is it because praising people in their presence suggests the intention to flatter and deceive, whereas praising them in their absence suggests a sincere intention to honor, or is there some other reason? 11.1

المجواب

٢٠١١ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله لما كان الثناء في الوجه على الأكثر إعارة شهادة بفضائل النفس وخديعة الإنسان بهذه الشهادة حتى صار ذلك لاغتراره وتركه كثيراً من الاجتهاد في تحصيل الفضائل وغرض فاعل ذلك احتراز مودة صاحبه إلى نفسه بإظهار مودته له ومحبتة إياه صار كالمكر والحيلة فذم وعيب. فأما في المغيب فإنما حسن لأن قصد المثني في الأكثر الاعتراف بفضائل غيره والصدق عنه فيها. وفي ذلك تنبيه على مكان الفضل وبعث للموصوف والمستمع على الزيادة والإدمان وحض على أسبابه وعمله. وربما كان القصد خلاف ذلك أعني أن يكون غرض المثني في المغيب مخادعة المثني عليه والطمع في أن يبلغه ذلك عنه فيتفق عليه ويستميله ويستجرح به منافعه وهو حينئذ شبيه بالحالة الأولى في المكر ومستقيم. وربما قصد الأول في الثناء والمدح في الوجه الصدق لا الملق فيصير مستحسناً إلا بقدر ما يظن أن الممدوح يغتر به فيقصر في الاجتهاد.

٣٠١١ فقد تبين أن الثناء يحسن بحسب قصد المثني وأغراضه وبحسب صدقه فيه وكذبه وعلى قدر استصلاحه للمثني عليه أو استفساده ولكن الأمر محمول على الغالب في الظن والعادة فيه. ولما كان الأمر على الأكثر كما ذكرناه وعلى ما حكيناه قبح في الوجه وحسن في المغيب وإن جاز أن يقع بالصدف فيحسن في الوجه ويقبح في المغيب.

Miskawayh's response

Praising a person in his presence usually involves giving testimony to his virtues and leads to the person being deceived by this testimony, so that, carried away, he abandons much of his effort to acquire the virtues. In this case, the praise is aimed at winning the person's affection by displaying affection and love for him. Hence, it constitutes a kind of crafty and scheming behavior, and is censured and disapproved of. Praise given in a person's absence, in contrast, is proper because its intention is usually to truthfully acknowledge the virtues of someone else. In the process, attention is called to where virtue lies, and both the object of one's praise and the audience are galvanized to acquire ever more virtue and make it their constant practice, and they are incited to supply its means and causes. Sometimes the intention may be different; I mean, when the aim of the person praising someone in his absence is to deceive the object of his praise, hoping to gain his favor and derive personal advantages, if the praise reaches him and he is taken in by the pretense. This case then resembles the first in its craftiness, and it too is reprehensible. Sometimes the intention behind eulogizing another person to his face is to speak truthfully, not to flatter. In that case it is appropriate, except insofar as one supposes that the object of one's praise may be carried away by it and become remiss in his moral efforts. 11.2

It is thus clear that the value of praise depends on the intention and aims of the person performing the eulogy, on his honesty or dishonesty, and on whether the praise is expected to benefit or harm its object. Yet our assessment is based on prevailing assumption and dominant practice. Since the account we have given is what usually holds true, it is generally wrong to praise a person in his presence and proper to praise him in his absence, even if it is possible that things may be reversed, so that it may be proper to praise a person in his presence and wrong to praise him in his absence. 11.3

مسألة طبيعِيّة

١٠١٢ لم أحبّ الإنسان أن يعرف ما جرى من ذكره بعد قيامه من مجلسه حتى إته ليحنّ إلى أن يقف على ما يؤنّ به بعد وفاته ويحبّ أن يطلع على حقيقة ما يكون ويقال؟ وكيف لم يتصنع لفعل ما يحبّ أن يكون منسوباً إليه مرتيناً به؟ هذا ومحبته لذلك طبيعة لو رام زواله عنها لما أطاق ذلك وإن كابر طباعه وأراد خداعه.

الجواب

٢٠١٢ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله قد تقدّم لنا في بعض هذه الأجوبة التي مضت أن للنفس قوتين إحداهما هي التي بها يشتاق الإنسان إلى المعارف واستبانتها ولما كانت هذه المعرفة عامّة له في سائر الأشياء كانت بما يخصّه في نفسه التي هي محبوبته ومعشوقته أولى. فالإنسان يشتاق إلى هذه المعرفة بالطبع الأوّل والقوّة التي هي ذاتية للنفس ثمّ يترى هذا الشوق ويشتلع ويقوى لأجل اختصاصه بمعرفة أحوال نفسه المحبوبة. فأما تصنعه لفعل ما يحبّ أن يكون منسوباً إليه فإنه ليس يتركه إلا أن يعترضه عارض آخر من شهوة عاجلة تقاومه هي أغلب عليه وأشدّ مجاذبة له كما ضربنا به المثل فيما تقدّم من علم المريض بحفظ الصحة وحاجته إليها ثمّ إيثاره عليها نيل شهوة دنيّة عاجلة وإن فاتته الصحة المؤثّرة في العاقبة. ولولا هذه الشهوات الدنيّة المعترضة على السعادات المؤثّرة ما تميّز الفاضل من الناقص ولا مُدح العفيف وذمّ النهم وكما حينئذ لا نتفع بالأداب والمواعظ وكان لا يحسن منا التعب والرياضة فيما على الطبيعة فيه كلفة ومشقّة. وهذا بين كاف في جواب المسألة.

١ الأصل وط: فبهى.

On why people want to know what others say about them in their absence—a natural question

Why do people want to know what others say about them when they leave their company, so much so that they even long to find out what will be said at their funeral oration, keen to learn the particulars of the event and the speech? And why don't they apply themselves to do the kinds of praiseworthy deeds they would like to be known for, despite the fact that their love of this is so deeply ingrained that they could never shake it off, even if they tried to defy and trick their own nature? 12.1

Miskawayh's response

As set forth in some of our earlier responses, the soul has two powers, one of which is the power that makes human beings long to possess knowledge securely. Since the knowledge in question extends generally over all types of things, it is all the more fitting that it should extend to our own soul, which is the object of human love and passionate attachment. Humans thus long for knowledge through their original nature and through a power that is essential to the soul, and this longing increases, becoming more powerful and intense because it specifically pertains to the knowledge of things to do with their beloved soul. They only fail to apply themselves to do the kinds of deeds they would like to be known for if some other impulse gets in the way, such as a competing immediate appetite with a stronger hold over them and greater attraction to them. See our earlier example of the sick person who knows that he needs his health and how to stay healthy and who nevertheless prefers to satisfy an immediate, inferior appetite, even if this means forfeiting the state of health that is his long-term preference. Were it not for these inferior appetites that get in the way of preferred forms of happiness, the excellent person could not be distinguished from the deficient one and the temperate person would not be praised, the glutton blamed. We would then derive no profit from instruction and moral admonition, and there would be no merit in toil and exertion over things that naturally involve hardship and strain. This is a sufficiently clear response to the question. 12.2

مسألة اختيارية

١٠١٣ قال لم حُقم الشاب إذا تشايخ وأخذ نفسه بالزماتة والمتانة وآثر الحد وأقشع من الهزل ونبا عن الحنا وسدد طرفه في مشيه وجمع عطفه في قعوده وشقق في لفظه وحدق في لحظه؟

المجواب

٢٠١٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله السبب في ذلك أن الشاب إذا تشايخ فإنما يظهر أن لا حركة لطبعته نحو الشهوات وهذه القوة والطبيعة هي في الشباب على غاية التمام والتزايد لأنها في حال النشوء ولا تزال متزيدة إلى أن تبلغ غايتها وتقف ثم تنقص على رسم سائر قوى الطبيعة^١ فإذا ادعى الشاب مرتبة الشيخ التي قد انحطت فيها هذه القوة علم أنه كاذب فاستتبع منه الكذب والرياء في غير موضعه ومن غير حاجة إليه. والكذب إذا كان صراحاً وغير خفي وكان صاحبه يأتيه من غير^٢ حاجة إليه ازداد مقت الناس له واستدل به على رداءة جوهر النفس. فإن اتفق لهذا الشاب أن يكون صادقاً أعني أن تكون طبيعته ناقصة وشهوته خامدة استدل على نقصان طباعه وبرئى من عيب الكذب إلا أنه يكون مرحوماً لأجل نقص بعض طباعه عما فطر عليه الناس ويصير بالجملة غير مذموم ولا معيب إذا كان صادقاً. وأما إن كان صادقاً في ضبط نفسه مع حداثة سنه والتهاب شهواته ومنازعة قواه إلى ارتكاب اللذات فإن مثل هذا الإنسان لا يلبث أن يشتهر أمره ويعظم ذكره ويصير إماماً معصوماً أو نبياً مبعوثاً أو ولياً مستخلصاً. وليس يخفى على الناس المتصفين بحركات الصادق من حركات الكاذب وأفعال المتصنع من أفعال المطبوع. على أن هذا الشاب الصادق الذي استثنينا به إنما يوجد في القرانات الكثيرة والأزمدة المتفاوتة والأكثر هو ما قدمنا الكلام فيه فلذلك سبق الناس إليه بالحكم عليه.

١ الأصل: الطبيعية. ٢ ط: من.

On why people disapprove of young people who act as if they were older—a question relating to voluntary choice

Why do people consider it idiotic when young men act like old men, comporting themselves gravely and stiffly, showing a predilection for seriousness and a horror of banter, shunning obscene language, fixing their eyes ahead when they walk and hunching over when they sit down, meticulously enunciating their words and staring at things with a squint?²¹ 13.1

Miskawayh's response

When young men act like old men, they are signaling that their nature is not driven toward physical appetites, whose power and nature are at their fullest and sharpest extent during youth, when they are still developing. These appetites continue to increase to their maximal extent, and then they begin to decrease, following the pattern of all the powers of nature. So we know that a young man is lying when he claims the status of an old man in whom this power has declined, and we deem his lie and his inappropriate and unnecessary dissembling repugnant. A bald and absolutely unnecessary lie attracts greater opprobrium and provides evidence of the base substance of one's soul. Should the young man in question happen to be honest—that is, should that nature be deficient in him and his appetites blunt—he is absolved of the charge of lying, because there is evidence of a deficiency in his natural elements. The reason he is treated with indulgence is on account of the deficiency of some of his natural elements relative to the natural constitution of human beings; so, if he is honest, he will not be blamed or reproached. If, however, this person is honestly capable of controlling himself despite his young age, his inflamed appetites, and the inclination of his natural powers toward the pursuit of pleasure, it will not be long before his name is on everyone's lips and his renown spreads, and he will emerge as an infallible religious leader, a prophet sent from God, or an elect saint. People of discrimination have no trouble distinguishing the conduct of an honest person from the conduct of a liar, and the actions of a dissimulator from the actions of one acting true to his nature. Yet this honest young man is very much the exception: He is only encountered over many generations and across the eons. What we have discussed constitutes the general rule, and that is why people are quicker to judge on that basis. 13.2

٣٠١٣ فأمّا المسألة التالية لهذه وهي قولك وعلى هذا لم تُخفّ شيخ تفتى وحرك منكبيه وحضر مجالس اللهو وطلب سماع الغناء وأثر الخلاعة وأحبّ المجون؟ وما المجون والخلاعة حسب ما جرى ذكرهما؟ فإنّ الجواب عنها شبيه الأولى لأنها عكسها وذلك أنّ الشيخ إذا ادعى تزيد قوی طبيعته في حال الشيخوخة لم يخل من كذب يُمقت عليه لا سيما وكذبه إنما هو في ادعاء شرور ونقصانات كان ينبغي له لو كانت موجودة له أن يمجدها أو صدق يوتخ عليه إذا لم يقهر هذه القوّة الغالبة عليه في الزمان الطويل الذي مدّله فيه ويُنَبِّه في مثله على الفضائل ويُمكّن فيه من رياضة النفس واستكمال التأديب فخاله أقبح من حال الشاب الذي سبق الكلام فيه ولذلك هو أمقت وأقبح صورة عند ذوي العقول. فأمّا المجون فهو المسارعة إلى فعل ما تستدعيه النفس الشهوانية من غير مشاورة للعقل ولا مراقبة للناس. وأمّا الخلاعة فاشتقاقه من خلع العذار الذي يضبط به العقل أفعاله. ولفظة العقل شبيهة بذلك لأنه من العقل وكذلك الحجر.

مسألة خلقية

١٠١٤ لم خُصّ اللئيم بالحلم وخصّ الجواد بالحدة وهل يجتمع الحلم والجود وهل تقترن الحدة واللؤم وما حكمهما في الأغلب؟ فإنّ الثابت على وجه غير المتقلب إلى وجه.

Let us take your next question: “Furthermore, why do people consider it foolish when old men act like juveniles, flouncing about theatrically, attending amusement parties, seeking out singing, and showing a preference for wantonness and a penchant for licentious behavior? And what constitutes wantonness and licentiousness in this connection?” The answer is similar to the first, in that it is simply its reverse. For when an old man claims that the powers of his nature are enhanced in his old age, one of two things holds true. Either he is lying and deserves our condemnation—especially since his lying involves laying claim to evils and deficiencies that he ought to have disavowed, even if he did possess them. Or he is telling the truth and deserves censure, insofar as he has failed to conquer the power that has dominated him during the long time he has been given to do so, to come to an awareness of the virtues and to train his soul and complete its edification. His situation is worse than that of the young man we discussed above, and is therefore more abhorrent and more repugnant in the eyes of those endowed with reason. Licentiousness is when one rushes to do the biddings of the appetitive soul without taking counsel from reason and without due regard for opinion. Wantonness, in contrast, is so termed because it derives from the notion of one’s throwing off the bridle with which one’s reason controls one’s actions. The term for “reason” (*‘aql*) has a similar bearing, as it derives from the rope used to hobble a camel (*‘iqāl*). The same thing applies to another term for reason, “hindrance” (*hijr*).²²

13.3

On why mean people tend to be mild-tempered and generous people volatile—an ethical question

Why is a mild temper characteristic of mean people and a volatile temper characteristic of generous people? Can a mild temper coexist with generosity and a volatile temper coexist with meanness? What holds true of these two as a general rule? For it is not the same for something to possess a feature stably and for something to acquire a feature through change.

14.1

المجواب

٢٠١٤ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله أظنك أردت بالبخيل اللئيم وبينهما فرق^١. وقد تكلمت على مرادك لأنّ باقي الكلام يدلّ عليه. فلعمري إن ذلك في الأكثر كذلك وإن كان قد ينعكس الأمر فيوجد حلیم جواد وبخيل حديد إلا أنّ الأوّل أن يكون الجواد حديداً وذلك أنّ البخيل هو الذي يمنع الحق من مستحقّيه على ما ينبغي وفي الوقت الذي ينبغي وكما ينبغي فإذا منع البخيل الحق على الوجه التي ذكرت صار ظالماً وإذا أحسّ بهذه الرذيلة من نفسه وجب أن يصبر على المتظلمين وهم الزامون لأنّه من الين أن البخيل إذا ذمّه الذام فإنما يذكره مواقع ظلمه وإخراج الحق الذي عليه على غير الوجه التي ينبغي. وإذا كان الذام صادقاً والبخيل يعرف صدقه بما يجده من نفسه فيجب أن يحلم لا محالة لموافقة الصدق ولأنّ النفس بالطبع تسكن عند الصدق وتستخذي له. فالأشبه بالنظام الطبيعي أن يكون البخيل حلماً لما ذكرناه وربما عرض ضدّ ذلك وهو إذا كان البخيل جاهلاً بالحقوق التي تجب عليه على الشرائط التي ذكرناها فإذا جهل ذلك لم يعرف صدق من يصدقه عنه ولا ظلمه وإنصافه فيعرف قبح أفعاله فيعرض له رذيلتان إحداهما منع الحق والأخرى الجهل بموضع الحق وربما عرض للجاهل الحدة والنزق والعدول عن الحلم لما ذكرناه وأخبرنا السبب فيه.

٣٠١٤ فأما قولك لم خصّ الجواد بالحدة فسألة غير مقبولة لأنّ الجواد ليس يختصّ بالحدة وذلك أنّ حقيقة الجود هو بذل ما ينبغي في الوقت الذي ينبغي على ما ينبغي ومن كانت له هذه الفضيلة لم يُنسب إلى الحدة لأنّ الحديد لا يميّز هذه المواضع فهو يتجاوز حدّ الجواد وإذا تجاوزه سُمّي مسرفاً ومبذراً ولم يستحقّ اسم المدح بالجود. ولكن لما كانت لغة العرب وعادتها مشهورة في وضع الجود موضع السرف والتبذير حتى إذا كان الإنسان في غاية منهما كان عندهم أشدّ استحقاقاً لاسم الجود خني عليهم

١ ط: فوق.

Miskawayh's response

It seems to me that by “mean” you mean “avaricious,” though they are not the same thing. I have based my discussion on this understanding, as it is supported by the rest of your remarks. I do agree that this is indeed generally the case, even though the situation is often reversed and you can meet a generous person with a mild temper or an avaricious person with a volatile one. But it is more appropriate for a generous person to have a volatile temper, for an avaricious person is someone who denies others the things they are entitled to under the right conditions, at the right time, and in the right manner. The avaricious person who denies other people their entitlements in these respects is unjust. If he perceives this defect in himself he must necessarily be forbearing toward people who complain, that is, who criticize. Obviously, criticism directed against an avaricious person must remind him of the injustice he has committed, and of his failure to fulfill his obligations as he ought to have. If the avaricious person immediately recognizes the truth of the criticism, he must necessarily be mild toward his critic, because his critic's words conform with the truth, and the soul naturally submits itself to and finds repose in the truth. Thus, for these reasons, it is in greater accord with the natural order that the avaricious person should be mild-tempered. Sometimes the opposite situation may arise, namely, that the avaricious person be ignorant of the obligations he must fulfill under the conditions we enumerated. Then he will not recognize when someone is speaking truthfully about him or when he is being unjust and when just, so as to be able to recognize that his acts are wrong. He is then afflicted with two defects: One of them is his withholding from others their entitlements, the other his ignorance of their entitlements. An ignorant person like this may then be vulnerable to volatility and impetuosity and may fail to be mild, for the reasons we have set out. 14.2

On the other hand, your question “Why is a volatile temper characteristic of generous people?” is disallowed, because the generous person is not characterized by a volatile temper. To be generous is to spend the right amount, at the right time, in the right manner, and the person who possesses this virtue cannot be volatile. For the volatile person cannot make these distinctions, so he exceeds the measure of the generous person, and then he is called prodigal and extravagant and does not deserve the laudable qualification of generosity. Yet it is a well-known feature of the Arabic language and Arab custom that they 14.3

موضع الفضيلة ومكان المدح وصارت الحدة المقترنة بالمبذّر والمسرف على حسب موضوعهم محمودة لأنها لا تمكّن من الروية فيأدر صاحبها إلى وضع الشيء في غير موضعه فيُسمّى مسرفاً عند الحكماء. وقد تبيّن في كتب الأخلاق أن الجود الذي هو فضيلة وسط بين طرفين مذمومين أحدهما تقصير والآخر غلو. فأما جانب التقصير من الجود فهو الذي يُسمّى البخل وهو مذموم وأما الجانب الذي يلي الغلو فهو الذي يُسمّى السرف. والواجب على من أحب استقصاء ذلك أن يقرأه من كتب الأخلاق فإنها تستغرق شرحه.

مسألة طبعيّة واختيارية

- ١٠١٥ لم كان الإنسان محتاجاً إلى أن يتعلّم العلم ولا يحتاج إلى أن يتعلّم الجهل؟ لأنه في الأصل يوجد جاهلاً؟ فما علة ذلك؟ فيأثارة علته يتمّ الدليل على صحته.

الجواب

- ٢٠١٥ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله قد تبيّن في المباحث الفلسفية أن العلم هو إدراك النفس صور الموجودات على حقائقها ولما قال بعض الأوائل إن النفس مكان للصورة استحسنه أفلاطون وصوّب قائله لأن النفس إذا اشتاقت إلى العلم الذي هو غايتها نقلت صورة المعلوم إلى ذاتها حتى تكون الصورة التي تحصلها مطابقة لصورة المنقول منه لا يفضل عليها ولا ينقص منها وهو حينئذ علم محض. وإن كانت الصورة المنقولة إلى النفس غير مطابقة للمنقول فليس بعلم. وهذه الصورة كلما كثرت عند

١ ط: أفلاطون.

treat prodigality and extravagance as equivalent to generosity, so that in the Arab view the more prodigal and extravagant a person is, the more he deserves to be called generous. As a result, the Arabs failed to grasp where excellence lies and what deserves to be praised, and the volatility associated with wasteful and prodigal persons came to be deemed praiseworthy based on their custom. Yet this is not laudable for it does not allow for deliberation, and it leads a person to put things precipitately where they do not belong. This is the kind of person philosophers call prodigal. It has been shown in books of ethics that the generosity that constitutes a virtue is a mean between two blameworthy extremes, one of which involves deficiency while the other involves excess. Avarice is on one side of generosity, the blameworthy side that involves deficiency; prodigality is on the other side, that which is just short of excess. These matters are explained exhaustively in books of ethics, which anyone who wishes for greater detail should read.

On why people need to acquire knowledge but not ignorance— a question relating to nature and voluntary choice

Why do people need to acquire knowledge, whereas they do not need to acquire ignorance? Is it because ignorance forms their original state? And what is the cause of that? The sound argument is provided through addressing the cause. 15.1

Miskawayh's response

Philosophical inquiries have shown that knowledge consists in the soul's perception of the forms of existents as they really are. When one of the ancients described the soul as a place of forms, Plato expressed his approval of this view and declared that its exponent had hit the mark. For when the soul longs for the knowledge that constitutes its proper end, it transfers into itself the form of the object known, such that the form it obtains corresponds exactly to the form of the object from which it has been transferred. This then constitutes pure knowledge. If the form transferred into the soul does not correspond exactly to the object from which it has been transferred, it does not constitute knowledge. The greater the number of forms the soul accumulates, the greater its capacity to secure additional forms. In this respect, the soul is opposed to the body. 15.2

النفس قوية على استنبات غيرها. والنفس في هذا المعنى كالمناصب للجسد وذلك أن الجسد إذا حصلت فيه صورة ضعف عن قبول صورة غيرها إلا بأن تنجي الصورة الأولى منه أو تتركب الصورة الأولى والثانية الواردة فتختلط الصورتان ولا تحصلان ولا إحداهما على التمام وليست النفس كذلك.

ولما كانت نفس الإنسان هيولانية مشتاقة إلى الكمال^١ الموضوع لها بأن تصوّر بصورة الموجودات كلها أعني الأمور الكليّة دون الجزئية وكانت قوية على ذلك وكانت صورة الموجودات فيها غير مضيّفة بعضها مكان بعض بل هي بالضدّ من الأجسام في أنها كلما استنبتت صورة في ذاتها قويت على استنبات أخرى وخلصت الصور كلها بعضها من بعض وذلك بلا نهاية كان الإنسان محتاجاً إلى تعلّم العلم أي إلى استنبات صور الموجودات وتحصيلها عنده. فأما الجهل فاسم لعدم هذه الصور والمعلومات ونحن في اقتناء هذه الصور محتاجون إلى تكلف واحتمال مشقة وتعب إلى أن تحصل لنا فأما عدمها فليس ممّا يتكلف ويحشّم بل النفس عادمة لذلك. ومثل ذلك من المحسوس صورة لوح لا كتابة فيه وإثبات الكتابة وصور الحروف يكون بتكلف فأما تركه بحاله فلا كلفة فيه إلا على مذهب من يرى صور الأشياء موجودة للنفس بالذات^٢ وإنما عرض لها النسيان وإنّ العلم تذكر وإزالة لآفة النسيان عن النفس. ولو كان الأمر كذلك لكان جواب المسألة بحسب هذا المذهب بيتاً في أن التعب بإزالة آفة واجب وتركه مأوفاً لا تعب فيه. لكن^٣ هذا المذهب غير مرغوب فيه والشغل به في هذا الموضوع فضل لأنه ليس من المسألة في شيء وإن كان الكلام قد جرّ إليه ولكننا ندلّ على موضعه فليؤخذ من هناك وهو كتب النفس. فقد تبين أن العلم تصوّر النفس بصورة المعلوم والتصوّر تفعل من الصورة والجهل هو عدم الصورة فكيف يُستعمل التفعل من الصورة في عدم الصورة؟ هذا محال.

١ الأصل وط: الكلام. ٢ الأصل: بالذات. ٣ ط: ولكن.

For when a particular form obtains in the body, it becomes incapable of receiving another, unless the first form is effaced or unless the first and the supervening second forms are combined, producing a blend of the two forms, in which case neither of them is fully present. Things are otherwise with the soul.

The human soul is material and longs for the perfection that is assigned to it, attained by acquiring the form of all existents, by which I mean universals rather than particulars. It has the capacity to achieve that: the addition of the form of existents to it does not involve the displacement of some forms by others. Rather, in contrast to bodies, whenever the soul secures one form in itself it is capable of securing another, keeping all of them clear and separate from one another *ad infinitum*. Given all this, human beings need to acquire knowledge, that is, to secure the forms of existents and bring them into their possession. Ignorance refers to the absence of these forms and objects of knowledge. As we procure these forms, we need to exert ourselves and endure hardship and strain until we have acquired them. Their absence, by contrast, requires no exertion or arduous undertaking; these things are absent from the soul. The tangible analogy is a tablet that contains no writing; in order to write on it and to trace out the forms of the letters one must exert oneself, whereas leaving it as it is involves no exertion. Unless, indeed, one follows the doctrine that the soul essentially contains the forms of things but has forgotten them, so that knowledge is a matter of recollecting and of eliminating the defect of forgetfulness from the soul.²³ In this case, the response to the question on the basis of this doctrine is clear, for the elimination of a defect inevitably involves strain, whereas leaving the defect untouched does not. Yet this doctrine is not to be commended, for reasons that it would be gratuitous to address in this context because it has nothing to do with the question proper, even though the discussion led us to it. But we can refer to the sources where it can be found discussed, namely, the books about the soul. These sources can be consulted directly. It has thus been made plain that knowledge consists in the soul's acquiring the form of the object known. The term "acquiring the form" (*taṣawwur*) derives from the term "form" (*ṣūrah*) and conforms to the morphological pattern *tafa'ul*. Ignorance consists in the absence of a form, so how could a word of the *tafa'ul* pattern derived from the word for "form" be used to refer to the absence of a form? That is impossible.²⁴

15.3

مسألة طبعية

١٠١٦ لم شارك المتعجب من نفسه المتعجب منه؟ مثال ذلك شاعر يفلق في قافية فيتعجب منه السامع حسب ما اقتضى بديعه فالشاعر لم يتعجب أيضاً وهو المتعجب منه؟ وهذا نجده في النظم والنثر والجواب والكتاب والحساب والصناعة. وعلى ذكر التعجب ما التعجب وعلى ماذا يدل؟ فقد قال ناس فيه كلاماً. قيل لبعض الحكماء ما أعجب الأشياء؟ قال السماء بكواكبها. وقال آخر أعجب الأشياء النار وقال آخر أعجب الأشياء اللسان الناطق وقال آخر أعجب الأشياء العقل اللاحق وقال آخر الشمس وقال أرسطوطالس 'أعجب الأشياء ما لم يُعرف سببه وقال آخر بل أعجب الأشياء الجهل بعلة الشيء. فعلى قياد ما قال أولئك كل شيء عجب وعلى وضع ما قال هذا الحكيم كل مجهول سببه فهو عجب كان ذلك من الحقيير أو من النفيس. وقال آخر أعجب الأشياء الرزق فإن مناطه بعيد وغوره عميق والعقل مع شرفه فيه حيران والعاقل مع اجتهاده سكران. وقال آخر لا عجب وصدق. فها هذا التفاوت والتباين وليس في الحق اختلاف ولا في الباطل اتلاف؟ وعلى ذكر الحق والباطل ما الحق والباطل؟ وينتظم في هذا الفصل قال بعض الأولين أعجب الأشياء إكداء الوافر ومنال العاجز. وقال آخر من الصوفية وشاهدته وناظرته واستفدت منه أعجب الأشياء بعيد لا يُحمد وقريب لا يُشهد وهو الحق الأحد.

٢٠١٦ وعلى ذكر الله تعالى بم يحيط العلم من المشار إليه باختلاف الإشارات والعبارات؟ أهو شيء يلصق بالاعتقاد؟ أم هو مطلق لفظ بالاصطلاح؟ أم هو إيماء إلى صفة من الصفات مع الجهل بالموصوف؟ أم هو غير منسوب إلى شيء برفان؟ فإن كان منوعاً بنعت فقد حصره الناعت بالنعته. وإن كان غير منوع فقد استباحه الجهل وزاحمه المعدوم. ولا بد من الإثبات إذا استحال النفي وإذا وقف الإثبات والنفي على

١ ط: أرسطوطاليس.

On why people who provoke admiration also feel wonder at themselves; on the nature of wonder; on describing and knowing God—a natural question

Why is it that people who provoke admiration in others participate in the wonder of their admirers? Take the poet who composes an exquisite verse and provokes his listener to wonder with his marvelous rhetorical figures. Why does the poet experience wonder, when he is the object of wonder? We encounter this phenomenon in poetry and in prose, in oral responsa and written compendia, in mathematical calculations and skilled crafts. Speaking of wonder, what *is* wonder? And what does it reveal? People have said different kinds of things about it. A philosopher was asked, “What is the most wondrous thing of all?” He replied, “The sky and the stars.” Another answered, “Fire,” another, “The tongue, which speaks,” and yet another, “Reason, which grasps.” Another replied, “The sun,” Aristotle said, “That whose cause is unknown,”²⁵ another said, “In fact, the most wondrous thing is ignorance of a thing’s ground.” So, if we followed this lead, everything should be worthy of wonder. On the basis of what the Philosopher said, everything whose cause is unknown should be worthy of wonder, be it worthless or precious. Another philosopher replied that “the most wondrous thing is human livelihood, for its foundation is deep; for all its dignity, reason is perplexed by it, and, for all their efforts, intelligent men reel before it.” Another reply was, “Nothing is worthy of wonder!”—and many affirmed the truth of his words. What is all this divergence and disparity, when truth harbors no discord and falsehood no concord? Speaking of truth and falsehood, what is truth and what is falsehood? One may also range this under the present rubric. One of the ancients said, “The most wondrous thing is that men of many endowments should be thwarted while men of limited abilities should succeed in their designs.” A Sufi whom I met, debated with, and learned from said, “The most wondrous thing cannot be denied for all its distance, yet cannot be espied for all its closeness, and that is the One True God.”

16.1

Speaking of God, what is it one knows regarding the Divine Being indicated through a variety of designations and locutions? Is it something that attaches to belief? Is it the unqualified sense of a conventional expression? Is it an allusion to a certain attribute, without any knowledge of the subject to which it applies? Or can knowledge not be spoken of in this connection at all?

16.2

المثبت الثاني فقد سبق إذاً كل إثبات ونفي. فإن كان سابقاً كل هذه الألفاظ وجميع هذه الأغراض فما نصيب العارف وما بقية ما ظفر به الموحد؟ هيهات هيهات. اشتد الغلط ورجع كل إلى الشطط وفات الله الفهم والفاهم^١ والوهم والواهم وبقي الخلق مع^٢ علم مختلف فيه وجهل مصطلح عليه وأمر قد يُبْرَم به ونهي قد صُجِر منه وحاجة فاضحة وحجة داحضة وقول مرزوق ولفظ ممتق وعاجل معشوق وأجل معوق وظاهر ملقوب وباطن ممرق. إلى الله الشكوى من غلبات الهوى وسطوات البلوى إته رحيم ودود.

المجواب

قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله هذه المسائل^٣ ذنب فيها صاحبها بمسائل أعظم منها وأبعد غوراً وأشد اعتياصاً وأصابه فيها ما كان أصابه قبل في مسألة تقدّمها فظهر لي في عذره أنه داء يعتريه ومرض يلحقه وليس من طغيان القلم ولا سلاطة الهذر ولا أشرّ الاقتدار في شيء كما أنه ليس من جنس ما يستخفّ المتكهن عند الكهانة ولا من نمط ما يعتري المتواجد من الصوفية وما أحسبه إلا من قبيل المسّ والخبل والطائف من الشيطان الذي يتعوذ بالله منه فلقد أطلق في سببائه القافية بما تسدّله الآذان وتُصرف عنه الأبصار والأذهان. ولولا أنه اشتكى إلى الله تعالى في آخرها من سطوات البلوى فاعترف بالآفة واستحقّ الرأفة لكان لي في مداواته شغل عن تسطير جواباته.

١ الأصل: الفهم والفهم. ٢ ط: مع الخلق. ٣ الأصل: المسائل التي.

If He is qualified by a qualification, then the qualifier has limited Him through the qualification. If He is not qualified, then He becomes fair game for ignorance and invites comparison with nonexistent things. If negation is impossible, affirmation becomes necessary. If affirmation and negation depend on the person doing the affirming and negating, then God will have preceded every affirmation and negation. And if He preceded all these expressions and intentions, then what is the role of the knower, and what is there for the person who believes in God's oneness to achieve? Alas! Alas! Great has been the clamor, much has been the error, and all views have run to excess. God has eluded the understanding of those who would understand and the imagination of those who would indulge their imaginations. People are left with knowledge no one agrees about and ignorance all partake in, with commands that aggrieve and prohibitions that vex, biting needs and crushing proofs, well-wrought words and high-flown locutions, immediate pleasures we long for and future goods we must toil for, external appearances that hang together and inner realities that are rent apart. To God we direct our complaint about the triumphs of capricious desire and the assaults of misfortune; for He is compassionate and loving.

Miskawayh's response

The author, succumbing to the same affliction as he did in an earlier question, appended to this question a number of questions that are grander, farther-reaching, and more abstruse than the main question itself. The only excuse I could find for him was to conclude that this is an ailment, a malady that overcomes him, and that it has nothing to do with an overweening pen, an impudent tongue that gets carried away, or an exuberant sense of mastery, just as it is not the type of thing that transports diviners in the act of divination, or that comes over Sufis cultivating rapturous states. On my reckoning it can only be a form of possession or insanity or impulse sent by Satan, against whom we must seek God's protection. For he filled his prose with rhyming cadences that repel the ears and offend the eyes and the mind. Had he not complained to God at the end about the assaults of misfortune, thereby acknowledging a defect and thus deserving mercy, we would have had our hands full treating his malady instead of penning replies to his questions.

16.3

٤٠١٦ افهم عافاك الله أنّ آثار النفس وأفعالها كلّها بديعة عند الحسّ وأصحابه ولذلك تجد أكثر الناس متعجبين من النفس نفسها متحيرين فيها ظانين بها ضروب الظنون وليس يخلون مع كثرة تفتنهم في هذه الظنون من أن يجعلوها جسماً على عاداتهم في الحسّ وتصوّره^١ المحسوسات ثم يجدون أفعال هذه النفس وآثارها غير مشبهة شيئاً من آثار الجسم وأفعاله فيزداد تعجبهم ولو أنّهم حصلوا مائة النفس لكان تعجبهم من آثارها أقلّ إذ كانت هي غير جسم ولو صحّ لهم أنّها غير جسم^٢ لم يكن بديعاً عندهم أن تكون آثارها غير جسمانية. ولما كان الشاعر المفلق والناظر في المسألة العويصة من الحساب وغيره من الصناعات إنّما يستدعي نظراً نفسانياً ووجوداً عقلياً ويحرك نفسه حركة غير مكانية ليظفر المطلوب غير جسمانيّ ثم وجد هذه الحركة من النفس مفضية بالإدمان والإمعان إلى وجود المطلوب عجب هو أولاً من هذه الحركة التي يجدها من نفسه ضرورة وليست مكانية على عادة الجسم في حركة الجسم ثم من وجوده^٣ المطلوب بعقب هذه الحركة عرض له هذا العارض من التعجب ولم يكن السامع أولى بهذا التعجب منه لأنهما قد اشتركا في الجهل بالنفس وآثارها وأفعالها فكل واحد منهما حقيق بالتعجب. فأما العارف بالنفس وجوهرها العالم أنّها ليست بجسم وأنّ آثارها وأفعالها لا يجب أن تكون جسمانية فإنه لا يعترض له هذا العارض في نفسه وكذلك صورة مستمعه إذا كان عالماً كالمه.

٥٠١٦ فأما التعجب نفسه الذي سأل عنه السائل في عرض مسألته الأولى فإنه حيرة تعرض للإنسان عند جهل السبب فكما كانت المعرفة بأسباب الموجودات أقلّ كانت المجهولات أكثر والتعجب بحسبها أشدّ وبالضدّ إذا كانت المعرفة بأسباب الموجودات أكثر كانت المجهولات أقلّ والتعجب بحسبها أقلّ ولذلك قال قوم كل شيء عجب وقال قوم لا عجب من شيء. فإنّ الطائفة الأولى اعترفوا بالجهل العام وزعموا أنّهم

١ ط: وتصوّره في. ٢ الأصل وط: جسم. ٣ ط: وجودها. ٤ الأصل: فإن كان: ط: فإن كانت.

I hope God will restore you to health! From the perspective of the senses and those who judge by them, the effects and acts of the soul are all marvelous. This is why most people wonder at, and feel perplexed by, the soul itself, coming up with all sorts of speculations about it. Despite their artful pursuit of such speculations, they invariably follow their usual practice in the domain of the senses and their way of conceiving sensible things, and make it out to be a body. Then their wonder increases when they discover that the acts and effects of the soul resemble none of the acts and effects of the body. Yet the wonder they feel at its effects would have been less had they grasped the nature of the soul. For it is not a body; and had they realized that it is not a body, there would be nothing marvelous about it having non-bodily effects. The poet who produces exquisite work and the thinker who reflects on some recondite question of mathematics or some other discipline engage in a reflective act of the soul and an intellectual mode of being, effecting a nonspatial movement of the soul in order to obtain a non-bodily result. They then discover that the desired result is produced by this movement of their soul performed with assiduity and dedication. Thereupon, they are themselves filled with wonder, first by this movement, which, they discover, proceeds from them necessarily and is not spatial as in the case of the body when it moves another body. They are then filled with wonder when the desired result follows upon this movement. In this response, they and their audience are equally liable to wonder, for they share the same ignorance regarding the soul and its effects and actions, so both groups have good reason to be amazed. In contrast, the person acquainted with the soul and its substance, knowing full well that it is not a body and that its effects and actions cannot be bodily, is not affected by this response in his soul, and the same applies to his audience, if they share in what he knows.

Wonder, included by my interlocutor in his presentation of his first question, is a form of perplexity that affects someone when he is ignorant of the cause of something. The less one knows about the causes of existing things, the greater the number of things one is ignorant of, and the stronger the wonder they excite. Conversely, if one knows more about the causes of existing things, there are fewer things one is ignorant of, and the wonder they excite is less. This is why some people said that everything is a source of wonder, while others said that one should wonder at nothing. The first group admits general ignorance and professes to be ignorant of the causes of things, while the

يجهلون أسباب الأمور والطائفة^١ الثانية ادعت لنفسها مرتبة^٢ عظيمة لأنهم زعموا أنهم يعرفون أسباب الأمور.

٦٠١٦ فأما قولك أعرتك الله عندما عدت^٣ أقوال المتكلمين في التجب ما هذا التفاوت والتبدين وليس في الحق اختلاف ولا في الباطل ائتلاف فالجواب إن التجب ليس بشيء له طبيعة ولا وجود له من خارج وإنما هو كما ذكرنا حيرة النفس عند جهلها السبب ولما كان ما يجمله زيد قد يعلمه عمرو ولم يُنكر تفاوتهما في العجب لأن كل واحد منهما متجب مما يجمل سببه ومجهول هذا هو بعينه معلوم هذا وإنما كانت تكون المسألة عويصة وبديعة لو كان لأمر ما وجود من خارج ثم اختلف فيه قوم فضلاء يُعتد بآرائهم ويُذكر تباينهم. وقال قوم منهم هوحى وقال آخرون هو باطل. على أن مثل هذا قد وقع في مسألة الخلاف وفي الزمان والمكان والقدم وأشباهها من المسائل فقال قوم هي جواهر لا أجسام لها وقال قوم هي أعراض وقال آخرون ليست أجساماً ولا جواهر ولا أعراضاً واحتج كل قوم بحج قوية إلا أن جميع هذه المذاهب تحزرت في زمان الحكيم واستقر قرارها ووضع مشكلها وبان صحتها من سقيها وليس من شأننا الإطالة في هذه المسائل فنذكرها ونحكيها. فإن أحببت معرفتها فقف عليها من مظانها وجرّد لها مسائل لفرد لها زماناً ونظراً إن شاء الله.

٧٠١٦ وأما سؤالك في آخر هذه المسألة بم يحيط علم الخلق من المشار إليه بقولنا الله باختلاف الإشارات والعبارات؟ مع سائر ما ذكرت فغير معترف بشيء منه ولا يقول أحده إنّه يحيط علمه بشيء من هذا ولا يلصق به كما ذكرت ولا يُعترف أيضاً بهذه النعوت فيه. والكلام في هذا الموضع لا يمكن استقصاؤه إذ كان جميع سعي الحكماء بالفلسفة إنما انتهى إلى هذا وإياه قصد بالنظر كله. وليس يمكن أن يتكلم فيه إلا بعد جميع المقدمات التي قدمت له ومهدت لأجله أعني الرياضيات والطبيعات ثم ما بعد الطبيعة من علم النفس والعقل ثم بعد معرفة جميع هذه الجواهر الشريفة يمكن

١ ط: فالطائفة. ٢ ط: مرية. ٣ الأصل: عدوت.

second group claims for itself an august status, for they profess to know the causes of things.

God keep you! In your list of the different views about wonder you asked why all the divergence and disparity when truth harbors no discord and falsehood no concord? Wonder is not something that has a specific nature, nor does it exist externally; rather, it consists, as we said, in the perplexity of the soul when a given cause is not known. 'Amr might know what Zayd does not know, so it is hardly surprising that they should diverge in the wonder they experience. For each of them wonders at something whose cause he does not know, and what is unknown to the one is the very thing that is known to the other. The issue would have been inscrutable and remarkable had it been a thing that existed externally and had excellent people worthy of having their opinions heard and their dissent noted been found to disagree over it, with some saying, "This is true," others, "This is false." Such a thing did indeed happen in the case of the question under discussion and in the case of time, place, eternity, and other related questions. Some people said that they are substances without bodies, while others said that they are accidents, and yet others said that they are neither bodies, nor substances, nor accidents. Each party came up with powerful arguments for its view. Yet all of these views were threshed out in the time of the Philosopher, when they were set firmly in place, their obscurities were dispelled, and what was sound was distinguished from what was infirm. It is not our task to dilate on these questions, quoting and discussing all these views. If you would like to learn about them, look them up in their proper places and assign them separate questions so that we can allocate time and reflection to each and every one, God willing.

16.6

You raised a query at the conclusion of this question—"What is it that people know regarding the Divine Being indicated through the word 'God' using a variety of designations and locutions?"²⁶ None of this is conceded—nobody claims to know any of this or that it attaches to it as you say, nor are these qualifications conceded in His regard. This topic is impossible to discuss in depth, as it forms the end of all philosophical endeavor and the objective of inquiry as a whole. It is not possible to discuss it without first acquiring all of the propaedeutic knowledge preparatory for it—that is, mathematics and physics, and after that, the aspects of metaphysics that relate to the knowledge of the soul and the intellect. Having learned about all these noble substances, one can come to know that they are affected by need, deficiency, and

16.7

أن يُعلم أنها محتاجة ناقصة متكررة مضطرة إلى سبب أوّلي وموجد قديم ومبدع ليس كهي في ذات ولا صفة فيكون هذا الجهل أشرف من كل علم سبقه وهو من الصعوبة والغموض بحيث تراه.

٨٠١٦ ولو كان إلى معرفة هذا الموضع طريق غير ما ذكرناه لسلكه القدماء وأهل الحرص على إشاعة الحكمة وإذاعتها فإنهم رضي الله عنهم ما أسفوا ولا بخلوا ولكن لم يجدوا إلى هذا المطلوب إلا طريقاً واحداً فسلكوه وسهلوه بغاية جهدهم ودلّوا عليه وأرشدوا إليه وهو غاية سعادة البشر. فمن اشتاق إليه فليتكلف الصبر على سلوك الطريق إليه صعباً كان أو سهلاً وطويلاً كان أم قصيراً على عادة المشتاق فإنه يسلك السبيل إلى الظفر بمحبوبه كيف كانت غير مفكر في الوعورة والبعث. ومن لم يُعط الصبر على هذا السلوك فليقتنع برخص الألفاظ والصفات المطلقة له في الشرائع الصادقة المعتادة وليصدق الحكماء والأنبياء والمقتدين بهم وليحسن الظن فليس يجد غير هذين الطريقين. والله ولي المعونة والتوفيق.

مسألة اختيارية

١٠١٧ لم إذا اشتدّ الأُنس واستحكمت التعمت الزلفة وطال العهد سقط التقرب وسبح الثناء؟ ومن أجله قيل إذا قدم الإخاء سقط الثناء. وهذا عيانه مشهود وخبره موجود.

الجواب

٢٠١٧ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله إنّ الثناء في الوجه وغير الوجه إنّما هو إعطاء المثني عليه حقوقه من أوصافه الجميلة والاعتراف بها له وإعلامه أنّ المثني قد شعر بها وأوجبها له وسلمها إليه ليصير ذلك له قرينةً ووسيلةً ولحديث بينهما المودة والمشاكلة

multiplicity, and that they require an original cause, an eternal creator that resembles them neither in His essence nor His attributes. This type of ignorance will be nobler than all the knowledge that preceded it, and it is indeed characterized by the difficulty and opacity you ascribe to it.

Were there another route to knowledge of this subject, it would have been followed by the ancients and people dedicated to the dissemination and propagation of wisdom. For they found only one route to this goal, though they neither set their sights low nor begrudged the effort. So they followed it, doing their utmost to smooth out its difficulties, pointing out the way for others, and guiding them to it. The ultimate happiness of human beings is vested in it, so let those who yearn for it muster the fortitude to follow the road that leads to it, be it difficult or easy, long or short. For this is the way of people who yearn for something: They follow the path calculated to secure the object of their desire whatever it may be, without regard for how rugged or how long it may be. Let those who have not been granted the fortitude to follow this path be content with the license to use the terms and attributes applied to Him customarily by the true revelation; let them put their trust and credence in the philosophers and the prophets and those who follow their lead, for these are the only roads to follow. Assistance and success rest with God. 16.8

On why it is unseemly to eulogize long-time friends and acquaintances—a question relating to voluntary choice

Why is it inappropriate to seek the other's favor and unseemly to give praise when intimacy deepens and grows firmly entrenched, when closeness ingrains itself and acquaintance lengthens? It is on account of this that people have said, "Longtime brothers dispense no praise." This is something widely attested and well known. 17.1

Miskawayh's response

Praise, in someone's presence or absence, is giving the object praised his due for his fine qualities, acknowledging his possession of them, and informing him that the eulogizer is not just aware of them but grants and concedes them to him. The purpose is to win his favor and gain intimacy, to establish affection and good relations, to create a bond of amity, and to consolidate their 17.2

وليستجلب الود وتستحکم المعرفة. فإذا حصلت هذه الأمور في نفس كل واحد منهما وعلم المثني عليه أن المثني قد أنصفه وسلم إليه حقه واعترف له بفضله ولم يخسره ماله وحدث المودة والمحبة التي هي نتيجة الإنصاف وثمرة العدل وقدمت هذه الحال وأتى عليها الزمان سمح تكلف إظهار ذلك ثانياً لذهاب الغرض الأول وحصول الثمرة المطلوبة بالسعي الأول. وتكلف مثل هذا عبث وسفه مع ما فيه من إيهاام ضعف اليقين بالثناء الأول وأنه احتاج إلى تطرية وتجديد شهادة لأن الشهادة الأولى كانت زوراً وظناً مرجحاً. وهذا توهين لعقد المودة التي شهد لها في المسألة بشدة الأسر واستحكام الأصل ووثاقة السبب.

مسألة طبيعية

١٠١٨ لم صار الأعشى يجد فائته من البصر في شيء آخر؟ كمن نجده من العميان من يكون ندي الحلق طيب الصوت غزير العلم سريع الحفظ كثير الباه طويل التمتع قليل الهم.

الجواب

٢٠١٨ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله إن للنفس خمسة مشاعر تستقي منها العلوم إلى ذاتها وكانت في المثل منافذ وأبواب لها إلى الأمور الخارجة عنها أو مثل أصحاب أخبار يردون إليها أخبار خمس نواح وهي منقسمة القوة إلى هذه الأشياء الخمسة. ومثالها أيضاً في ذلك مثال عين ماء ينقسم ما ينبع منها إلى خمسة أنهار في خمسة أوجه مختلفة أو مثال شجرة لها خمس شعب وقوتها منقسمة إليها. وقد علم أن هذه العين متى سُد مجرى ماء أحد أنهارها توفّر على أحد الأنهار الأربعة الباقية أو انقسم فيها بالسواء أو على الأقل والأكثر منها وليس يغور ذلك القسط من ماء النهر المسدود

١ الأصل: أوجوه.

mutual familiarity. If these things arise in the soul of both parties and the person praised realizes that the person praising him has treated him fairly, as is his due, acknowledging his excellence, and not cheating him of his rightful property, and if the two parties are established in the relationship of affection and love that is engendered through fairness and the fruit of justice, and if this state endures for a long time, there is no need to go to the trouble to make a second display of praise, because the original purpose has lapsed, and the original efforts have borne fruit. Such trouble would be pointless and foolish, to say nothing of how it implies that there are lingering doubts over the original praise, so that additional eulogies and repeated attestations are required because the original declaration was false, and little more than a shaky conjecture. This would involve a weakening of the very bond of affection that the question posited as being tight, secure, and robust.

On why blind people are often endowed with unusual powers—a natural question

Why is it that blind people make up for their lack of vision in other ways? For example, we find blind people who have sonorous diction, an agreeable voice, extensive knowledge, a good memory, great sexual prowess, an appetite for enjoyment, and a carefree nature. 18.1

Miskawayh's response

The soul has five avenues of perception through which it draws different kinds of knowledge into itself. One might liken these to windows and doors that give it access to things outside, or to messengers who bring the soul reports from five different quarters, its power being divided across these five routes. Or again, one might liken them to a spring of water that divides into five rivers flowing in five different directions, or to a tree with five branches, among which its strength is divided. One knows that if the course of one of the rivers becomes blocked, the water from the spring will be channeled into one of the other rivers or divided among them in equal or varying amounts, and the quota of water that would ordinarily flow down the blocked river will not be drained away, diminished, or lost. Similarly, if one of the branches of the tree is lopped off, the nourishment it was receiving from the base and roots of the 18.2

ولا يغيض ولا يضيع. وكذلك الشجرة إذا قُطعت شعبة من شعبها صار الغذاء الذي كان ينصرف إليها من أصول الشجرة وعروقها متوفرًا على شعبها الأربع الباقية حتى تبين في ساقها وورقها وأغصانها وفي زهرها وحبها وثمرها وقد عرف الفلاحون ذلك وأصحاب الكروم فإنهم يقضون من الشجر الشعب والأغصان التي تستمد الغذاء الكثير من الأصول ليتوفر على الباقي فيصير ثمرًا ينتفعون به. وكذلك صنعهم بالأشجار التي لا تثمر إذا أحبوا أن يغلظ ساق واحد منها ويستوي في الانتصاب ويسرع نموها كأشجار السرو والعرعر والذلب وأشباهاها مما يحتاج إلى خشبه بالقطع والنحت والتجريف فإنهم يتأملون أي الأغصان أولى بأن ينبت مستويًا غير مضطرب وأيًا أحق بالأصل الذي يمدّه بالغذاء فيقونه ويحذفون الباقية^٢ فينشأ^٣ ذلك الفصن في أسرع زمان وأقصر مدة لانصراف جميع الغذاء إليه.

وإذا كان هذا ظاهرًا من فعل الطبيعة فكذلك حال الأعشى في أن إحدى قوى نفسه التي كانت تنصرف إلى مراعاة حس من حواسه لما قُطعت عن مجراها توفرت النفس بها إما على جهة واحدة أو جهات موزعة فتبينت الزيادة وظهرت إما في الذهن والذكاء أو الفكر أو الحفظ أو غيرها من قوى النفس. وهذا يبين لك أيضًا باعتبار الحيوانات الأخر فإن منها ما هو في أصل الخلقة وبالطبع مضرور في أحد حواسه أو فاقد له جملة وهو في الباقيات منها أذكي من غيره جدًا كالحال في الخلد فإنه لما فقد آلة البصر صار^٣ أذكي شيء^٤ سمعًا وكالحال في النحل فإنه لما ضعف بصره كان أدهى من المبصرات شمسًا. وأنت تعرف ضعف بصر النحل والنمل والجراد والزناير وما أشبهها من الحيوانات التي لا تطرف ولم تخلق لها جفون وعلى أبصارها غشاء صلب حجري يدفع عنها الآفات بما يعرض لها في البيوت التي لها جامات زجاج فإن أحدها يظن أن الجام كوة نافذة إلى الهواء فلا يزال يصدمه إرادة للخروج إلى أن يهلك. فأما صدق شمه فهو ظاهر بما يقصده من المشمومات عن المسافة البعيدة جدًا.

١ ط: الباقي. ٢ الأصل: فينشوا. ٣ ط: كان.

tree is channeled into the remaining four branches, visible on their shafts, leaves, and shoots, and on the flowers, seeds, and fruit they produce. Farmers and vineyard cultivators know this only too well, for they prune away the branches and shoots that absorb a great deal of nourishment from the roots so that it can be channeled to the other parts of the tree and produce fruit they can enjoy. They do the same with trees that do not produce fruit when they want their trunks to grow straight and thick, and to make them grow faster, as with trees like evergreen cypresses, junipers, and plane trees, whose wood is used for cutting, hewing, and carving. They consider which branch is the most promising for straight growth without any kinks, and they retain the one that has the greatest need of the root that nourishes it, removing the rest. With the nourishment directed exclusively to it, that branch will develop in the shortest time.

If this is evident from the behavior of nature, the same applies to blind people. When one of the powers of their soul that was devoted to the upkeep of one of their senses is cut off from its course, the soul channels it in one direction or in many. A surplus then becomes visible in the mind and the intelligence, in reflection, in memory, or in some other power of the soul. You can also see this plainly in other animals. There are animals that are impaired in one of their senses or, through their original nature and constitution, are entirely without a given sense, and their remaining senses are far keener than in other animals. The mole is an example: It lacks the organ of vision, but its sense of hearing is exceptionally keen. Bees are another example: Their sight is weak, but they are far more skilled with their sense of smell than animals that can see. If you consider what happens to them in houses with glass windowpanes, you will soon realize how weak the sense of sight is among bees, ants, locusts, hornets, and the animals that cannot blink, not having eyelids, their eyes covered with a hard stony integument that protects them from damage. For they think the glass is an aperture that leads to the open air and, in order to get out, they crash against it until eventually they drop dead. The reliability of their sense of smell is clear from the way they can direct themselves toward odorous objects from a great distance.

18.3

٤٠١٨ فأما تمتع الأعمى بالباه وقلة الهم فإن سببه أيضاً فقد النفس إحدى آلتها التي كانت تقطعه عن هذه الأشياء بمراعاتها فإذا انصرفت إلى الفكر في شيء آخر قوي فعلها فيه. ولما كانت الاهتمامات بالمبصرات كثيرة ودواعي النفس إلى اقتنائها شديدة كالملبوسات وأصنافها والمفروشات وأنواعها والمتنزهات وألوانها وبالجملة جميع المدركات بالبصر ثم فقدته انقطعت عن أكثر الأشياء التي هي هموم الإنسان وأسبابه في الفكر واستخراج الحيل في تحصيلها وقت الطمع فيها وأسفه على فوتها إذا فاتته فقتل هموم الأعمى لأجل ذلك.

مسألة طبيعية واختيارية

١٠١٩ لم قال الناس لا خير في الشركة؟ وهذا نجده ظاهر الصحة لأننا ما رأينا مُلكاً ثبت ولا امرأة تم ولا عقداً صحح بشركة وحتى قال الله عز ذكره ﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا﴾ وصار هذا المعنى أشرف دليل في توحيد الله جل ثناؤه ونفى كل ما عداه.

الجواب

٢٠١٩ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله إنما صارت الشركة بهذه الصفة لأن كل من استغنى بنفسه وكفته قوته في تناول حاجته لم يستعن فيها بغيره فإذا عجز واحتاج إلى معاونة غيره اعترف بالنقص واستمد قوة غيره في تمام مطلوبه. ولما كان العجز مذموماً والنقص معيباً كانت الشركة التي سببها العجز والنقص معيبة مذمومة لأنه يُستدل بها على نقص المشاركين جميعاً وعجزهما. على أن الشركة للإنسان ليست مذمومة في جميع أحواله بل إنما تُذم في الأشياء التي قد يستقل بها غيره وينفرد باحتمالها سواء كالكتابة وما أشبهها من الصناعات التي لها أجزاء كثيرة وقد يجمعها

The cause of the sexual prowess or carefree temper blind people enjoy is once again the fact that the soul has lost one of the organs whose upkeep got in the way of these things; so when it directs its thought to something else, its effect on it becomes stronger. People care about many things that can be visually perceived—such as the various sorts of clothing, furniture, or amusements, and in general all that can be apprehended by the sense of sight—and the soul is under a powerful drive to acquire them. So, when it loses the sense of sight, it is cut off from most of the things that human beings care and think about, devising stratagems for obtaining them when they desire them and grieving for them when they lose them. As a result, the cares of blind people decrease. 18.4

On why people say that nothing good comes from partnership— a question relating to nature and voluntary choice

Why do people say, “Nothing good comes from partnership?” In our experience this is manifestly true. For we have never known of a kingdom to be firmly established, an affair to be accomplished, or a contract to be validly executed on the basis of partnership. Thus it is that God declared, «Were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they would surely go to ruin»,²⁷ the highest testimony to God’s unity and the nonexistence of any other gods. 19.1

Miskawayh’s response

Partnership attracts this characterization because if you are self-sufficient and have the power to satisfy your own needs you do not ask for anyone else’s help. So, if your power to do so falls short and you need someone else’s help, the admission of deficiency leads you to enlist another person to help you achieve what you want. Since powerlessness is deemed blameworthy, and deficiency is regarded with disapproval, partnership—the result of powerlessness and deficiency—is also deemed blameworthy and regarded with disapproval, as it reveals the deficiency and powerlessness of both partners. Yet among human beings, partnership is not deemed blameworthy in all situations. Rather, it attracts blame only in the case of things that can be achieved independently and single-handedly by others. An example is writing, or any other craft with 19.2

إنسان واحد فيستقل بها وينفرد بالصناعة أجمعها فإذا نقص فيها آخر واحتاج إلى الاستعانة بغيره ظهر نقصه وبأن عجزه ودخل في صناعته خلل. أو كاحتمال مائة رطل من الثقل فإن الإنسان الواحد يبكل له ويستقل به فإذا احتاج إلى غيره في احتماله دل على نقصه وعجزه وخوره. ثم يعرض في الأمر المشترك فيه من النقص والتفاوت لأجل القوى المختلفة والهمم المتباينة والأغراض المتضادة التي قد تعاورته ما لا يعرض في غيره من الأمور التي ينفرد بها ذو القوة الواحدة وتخلص فيها همة واحدة ويختصها غرض واحد فإن مثل هذا ينتظم ويتسق ويظهر فيه فضل بين على الأول.

فأما الأمور التي لا يبكل الإنسان الواحد لها ولا يستقل بها أحد فإن الشركة واجبة فيها كاحتمال حجر الرحي ومد السفن الكبار وغيرها من الصناعات التي تتم بالجماعات الكثيرة وبالشركة والمعونة فإن هذه الأشياء وإن كانت الشركة فيها واجبة لعجز البشر وكان الذم ساقطاً عن أهلها ومصرفاً عن أصحابها بما وضع من عذرهم فيها فإن المعلوم من أحوالها أنها لو ارتفعت بقوة واحدة وتمت بمدبر واحد كانت لا محالة أحسن انتظاماً وأقل اضطراباً وفساداً وأولى بالصلاح وحسن المرجوع. فالشركة بالإطلاق دالة على عجز الشريكين وعائدة بعد على الأمر المشترك فيه بالخلل والفساد عما يتم بالتفرد وإن كان البشر معذورين في بعضها^٢ وغير معذورين في بعضها.

وأما الملك البشري فإنه لما كان من الأمور التي ينتظم بتدبير واحد وأمر واحد وإن اشتركت فيه الجماعة الكثيرة فإنهم يصدرون عن رأي واحد ويصيرون كآلات للملك فتأخذ الكثرة ويظهر النظام الحسن كان الاستبداد والتفرد به أفضل لا محالة كما مثله فيما تقدم. فإذا اختلفت الجماعة التي تتعاون فيه ولم تصدر عن رأي واحد ظهر فيه من الخلل والوهن والتفاوت ما يظهر في غيره باختلاف الهمم وانتشار الكثرة المؤدي إلى فساد النظام المتأحد ثم يكون فساده أعم وأظهر ضرراً بحسب

١ الأصل: احتاج. ٢ ط: بعض.

several components that could be combined in a single person in such a way that the entire craft could be practiced single-handedly and independently. If someone is deficient in it and needs assistance, his deficiency and powerlessness become plain, and his craft defective. To take another example, a single person has the strength to carry a weight of twenty kilos on his own without any need of assistance; so if help is needed to carry it, his deficiency, powerlessness, and weakness are revealed. Moreover, things undertaken in partnership are affected by deficiencies and imperfections as a result of the different powers, diverging designs, and conflicting aims that enter into it; deficiencies that do not affect things undertaken single-handedly by a person acting on the basis of a single power, with a single design, and a single aim. For the latter can be conducted in an orderly and harmonious manner, and has a patent advantage over the first.

Partnership, on the other hand, is unavoidable with regard to things that a single person is not strong enough to do independently and unaided, such as carrying millstones, towing large ships, or other technical undertakings that are accomplished by large groups of people, through partnership and cooperation. Yet even if partnership is unavoidable in these cases because human power is limited, and even if those who pursue it attract no blame but are exempt on account of clearly extenuating factors, had it been possible for these things to be lifted through a single power and achieved through a single agency, we know that this activity would have been better ordered, less exposed to disturbance and disruption, and more likely to promote the good and to bring profit. Taken absolutely, thus, partnership reveals the powerlessness of the two partners and further introduces defects and disruption into tasks undertaken in partnership as compared with those accomplished separately, even though some cases are excusable and others not.

19.3

Human political rule is ordered well when a single agency and a single command are in place. Even if a group of people participate in it, they act on the basis of a single view and serve as instruments for the ruler, so that multiplicity is thereby unified and good order manifest. Hence, it is undoubtedly best that it should be in the hands of a single person and be exercised single-handedly, analogously to what was stated above. If the group of people cooperating in it disagree with each other and do not act on the basis of a single view, it becomes subject to the same defects, weaknesses, and imperfections that appear in other enterprises as a result of differences in people's designs

19.4

غناؤه وعائدته وعظم محله وجلالة موضعه . وقد أبان الله تعالى جميع ذلك بأخصر لفظ وأوجز كلام وأظهر معنى وأوضح دلالة في قوله عز من قائل بسم الرحمن الرحيم ﴿لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا﴾ صدق الله العظيم . سبحانه وجل ثناؤه ولا إله غيره .

مسألة اختيارية

- ١٠٢٠ لم فزع الناس إلى الوسائط في الأمور مع ما قالوه في المسألة الأولى من فساد الشركة والشركاء حتى إن جماهير الأمور ومعظم الأحوال في الشريعة والسياسة لا يتم ولا ينتظم إلا بوسيط يلجم ويسدي ويرتق ويفتق ويمسّن ويمجّل؟

المجواب

- ٢٠٢٠ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله لما كانت ضرورات الناس داعية إلى شركة الأحوال التي قدّمنا ذكرها في المسألة الأولى وكان كل إنسان يحب نفسه ويحب لها المنفعة ويحرص على الاستئثار بها دون صاحبه ظهر الفساد وحدث التظالم الذي ذكرته في المسألة المقدّمة ولم يبق أحد المشاركين في الأمر بصاحبه لأنه ذونصيب فيه ومحبة للمنفعة العائدة منه لنفسه وكان للهوى تطرق إليه وتسلق عليه فاحتاج إلى واسطة تكون حاله في ذلك الأمر برية من حالهما^١ ليعتدل حكمه ويصمّ رأيه ويعطي كلّ واحد قسطه ونصيبه من غير حيف ولا هوى . وليس يجب إذا كانت الشركة مذمومة أن يخلو منها الإنسان لأنه يضطرّ بالضعف البشري إليها كما ضربنا له المثل من الحمل الثقيل أو كثرة أجزاء الشيء المنظور فيه . وإن تُركت الشركة في مثل هذه الأمور وأهملت

١ الأصل: الأموال . ٢ ط: أناس . ٣ الأصل: حالها .

and the presence of multiplicity, which serves to corrupt the unified order. How generalized and openly deleterious its disruption is will then depend on the wealth and advantage involved and on how serious its stature and august its position is. God clarified all of that most economically in the tersest words possible, with the plainest notions and clearest proofs available, when He said, «Were there gods in earth and heaven other than God, they would surely go to ruin». May He be glorified and may His praise be extolled. There is no god other than He.

On why people use intermediaries despite the problems with partnership—a question relating to voluntary choice

Why do people have recourse to intermediaries despite what they say about partners and the harm wrought by partnership, as reported in the previous question? Thus, the vast majority of things both in the religious Law and the political domain are never achieved and put into order without an intermediary to weave and stitch, rend and mend, spruce and touch up. 20.1

Miskawayh's response

The exigencies of human life require people to act in partnership in the situations referred to in the previous question. Yet every human being, out of love of self and a desire for self-benefit, is keen to enjoy such benefits to the exclusion of his fellows. This produces the kind of corruption and mutual injustice I mentioned previously. Consequently, neither partner trusts the other, because each, with a stake in the matter, and out of desire for the benefit that will accrue to him, is vulnerable to blind desire and under its sway. As a result, they need an intermediary whose relationship to the matter is free from the defects of their relationship, so that, his judgment balanced and his opinion sound, he may give each his proper share without acting unjustly and without following the biddings of blind desire. The fact that partnership is blameworthy does not mean that human beings can do without it; for human weakness compels them to it, as we illustrated by reference to heavy weights or activities with many components. If people fail to work in partnership and to help one another, they forfeit them. Such forfeit is a forfeit of great benefits, so it is 20.2

المعاونة فات ذلك الأمر دفعة وفي فوته فوت منافع عظام فكان تحصيله على ما يقع فيه من الحلل أولى من تركه رأساً.

٣٠٢٠ وأكثر أمور البشر لا يتم إلا بالمعاونة والتشارك لجرهم عن التفرد ونقصهم عن الكمال وظهور أثر الخلق والإبداع فيهم فلما كان المتشاركون في الأمر أكثر عدداً والآراء أشد اختلافاً والأهواء أعرض مدخلاً كانت الحاجات إلى الوسائط أصدق والضرورة إليهم أشد. والسياسة من هذه الأمور أعني التي تكثر فيها الأهواء ويحتاج فيها إلى الاشتراك والتعاون فيحتاج فيه إلى من يصدق رأيه ويسلم من الهوى والعصبية فإن أمكن أن يكون الوسيط خلوياً من ذلك الأمر كان أجدر بالحكم العدل والرأي الصائب وإن لم يمكن ذلك اجتهد أن يكون حظه في الأمر أقل من حظ المختصين أو يكون أكثر ضبطاً للنفس وأقم للهوى وأكثر رياضة من غيره وكل ذلك ليسلم من داعي الهوى والميل معه والانصباب إليه لتتقق الكلمة ويحدث العدل الذي هو سبب التآحد وزوال التكرار.

مسألة طبيعية خلقية

١٠٢١ لم طال لسان الإنسان في حاجة غيره إذا عني به وقصر لسانه في حاجته مع عنايته بنفسه وما السر في هذا؟

الجواب

٢٠٢١ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله بنية الإنسان وتركيبه ومبدأ خلقه وقع على أنه ملك فكل إنسان له أن يكون ملكاً بما أعد له من القوى المساعدة عليه ولا ينبغي لأحد أن يقصر عن أحد في هذا المعنى إلا لآفة أو نقص في البنية. ولما عرض للواحد بعد الواحد أن يسأل غيره مع أن موضوعه موضوع الآخر ولم يكن بأن يحتاج إلى

١ ط: الكثرة.

On why people speak gladly about the needs of those they concern themselves with

better to form partnerships, their defects notwithstanding, than to avoid them completely.

Most human affairs can only be accomplished through mutual help and partnership, because human beings are unable to act in isolation, are imperfect, and manifestly are created and originated beings. The more people there are acting in partnership in a given affair, the more discordant their views, the more uncertain the influence of blind desires, and the more pressing the necessity of intermediaries. Political governance is one of the cases in which blind desires proliferate and in which partnership and cooperative action are needed—thus a person who can judge honestly, unencumbered by blind desire and partisanship, is required. The intermediary, if he is actually free of this, will be better equipped to form fair judgments and correct views. If not, he must ensure that he has a smaller stake than the contending parties, or has greater self-control and discipline, being more effective at keeping blind desires in check. This will ensure he does not succumb to or follow the impulses of blind desire. Concord will be achieved, and justice—which produces unity and eliminates multiplicity—will be done.

20.3

On why people speak gladly about the needs of those they concern themselves with yet keep quiet about their own needs—
a question relating to natural and ethical matters

Why do people speak so volubly about the needs of those they concern themselves with, yet are so reticent about their own needs despite their concern for themselves? What is the secret behind this?

21.1

Miskawayh's response

The basis on which human beings have been constructed, the principle on which they have been created, is that they are kings.²⁸ So, every human being is entitled to be a king in view of the auxiliary powers placed at his disposal, and everybody should be able to achieve this equally unless there is a defect or deficiency in his constitution. Everyone must have a sense of pride that prevents him from feeling abased, since everyone has to ask for help at different times, even though everyone's material basis is the same, and since

21.2

صاحبه أولى من أن يحتاج صاحبه إليه وجب أن تحدث له عزة نفس تمنعه من التذلل. ولهذه العلة وجب التمدن وحدث الاجتماع والتعاون وحسن بين الناس التعامل وأن يدفع الإنسان إلى صاحبه حاجته إذا^١ كانت عنده ليستدعي مثلها منه فيجدها أيضاً عنده. فالسائل إذا لم يكن معوضاً ولا معاملاً والتمس الرد من غيره من غير مقابلة عليه ولا وعد من نفسه بمثله كان كالظالم وأيسر ما فيه أنه قد حظ نفسه عن رتبة خلق عليها ونُذِب إليها فقصر^٢ لسانه واحترق نفسه. فأما إذا تكلم في حاجة غيره لم يعرض له هذا العارض فكأنه إنما يحيل بهذا التقص على من تكلم عنه فانطلق لسانه ولم تذلل نفسه.

مسألة طبيعية خلقية

١٠٢٢ ما سبب الصيت الذي يتفق لبعضهم بعد موته وأنه يعيش خاملاً ويشتهر ميتاً كعروف الكرخي؟

الجواب

٢٠٢٢ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله معظم السبب في ذلك الحسد الذي يعتري أكثر الناس لا سيما إذا كان المحسود قريب المنزلة من الحاسد أو كان في درجته من النسب أو الولاية والبلدية أو ما أشبهها فإن هذه النسب إذا تقاربت بين الناس فاشتركوا فيها ثم انفرد واحد منهم بفضيلة نافسه الباقون فيها وحسدوه إياها حتى يحلمهم الأمر على أن يحسدوه آخر الأمر ولذلك قيل أزهد الناس في عالم جيرانه لأن الجوار وكثرة الاختلاط سبب جامع لهم يتساون فيه فإذا انفرد أحدهم بفضيلة لحق الباقين ما ذكرته. وربما كان سبب زهدهم فيه غير هذا ولكن الأغلب ما ذكرته. فأما البعيد

١ الأصل: إلى صاحبه إذا. ٢ الأصل: وفقصر.

one person is as likely to need others as they are likely to need him. This is why the civic state is necessary, why communities and cooperation arise, and why it is good for people to enter into exchange with one another, with one person giving his fellow what he needs if he has it available, so that he may then receive its equivalent from him in turn. So it's tantamount to committing an injustice, if the person who solicits help does not compensate or enter into exchange with others, and if he does not offer anything in return or promise its equivalent. At the very least, he has demoted himself from the rank he was assigned to when created, so he becomes reticent and feels contempt for himself. But he does not experience this reaction when, by contrast, he talks about what another person needs. It is as though he has attributed this deficiency entirely to the person he is talking about, so his tongue loosens and he does not feel abased.

On why some people become famous after they die— a question relating to natural and ethical matters

What is the reason for the renown that comes to some people after their death, so that they spend their lives in obscurity and shoot to fame when they are dead, as for example Ma'rūf al-Karkhī did?

22.1

Miskawayh's response

This is predominantly due to the envy that besets most people, particularly when the person envied is close in status to the envier, or on a par with him, for example, in terms of lineage, political power, and geographical origin. For if people are similar in these external aspects and hold them in common, and then one of them comes into exclusive possession of a given excellence, the rest will vie with him over it and envy him for it. Eventually this leads them to repudiate him. That is why it has been said, "The last to recognize a scholar's merit are his own neighbors." Physical proximity and frequent association unite them and place them on the same footing, so they are prey to what I have said if one of them has exclusive possession of a given excellence. There may of course be other reasons for their failure to recognize his merit, but the cause I have described is the most frequent. On the contrary, it is easier for distant

22.2

الأجنبي فإنه لما لم يجمعه وإياه سبب خف عليه تسليم الفضل له وقل عارض الحسد فيه ولأجل ذلك إذا مات المحسود وانقطع السبب الذي بينه وبين الحساد أشووا يفضّلونه ويسامون له ما منعه إياه في حياته.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٢٣ ما الحسد الذي يعتري الفاضل العاقل من نظيره في الفضل مع علمه بشناعة الحسد ويقبح اسمه واجتماع الأولين والآخرين على ذمه؟ وإن كان هذا العارض لا فكاك لصاحبه منه لأنه داخل عليه فما وجه ذمه والإنحاء عليه؟ وإن كان مما لا يدخل عليه ولكنه ينشئه في نفسه ويضيق صدره باجتلابه فما هذا الاختيار؟ وهل يكون من هذا وصفه في درجة الكلمة أو قريباً من العقلاء؟ وقد قيل لأرسطاليس^١ ما بال الحسود أطول الناس غمّاً؟ قال لأنه يغمّ كما يغمّ الناس ثم ينفرد بالهم على ما ينال الناس من الخير.

الجواب

٢٠٢٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الحسد^٢ أمر مذموم ومرض للنفس قبيح وقد غلط فيه الناس حتى سموا غيره باسمه مما ليس يجري مجراه وهذا بعينه هو الذي غلط السائل حتى قال ما الحسد الذي يعتري الفاضل؟ لأن من يكون فاضلاً لا يكون حسوداً. وسنتكلم على الحسد ما هو لتعرف مآبته فيعرف قبحه ويوضع في موضعه ولا يخلط بغيره. فقول إن الحسد هو غم يلقى الإنسان بسبب خير نال مستحقه ثم يتبع هذا الانفعال الرديء أفعال أخر رديئة فمنها أن يتمنى زوال ذلك الخير عن المستحق ويتبع هذا التمني أن يسعى فيه بضروب الفساد فيتأذى إلى شرور كثيرة. فمن عرض له عارض الحسد الذي حدّدها فهو شرير والشرير لا يكون فاضلاً.

١ الأصل: لأرسطولس. ٢ الأصل: الخير الحسد.

strangers to concede his merit and feel less envy, as there is nothing that unites them. People begin to acknowledge excellence and to concede what they had denied during someone's lifetime, when the object of their envy dies and his relationship to them is terminated.

On why men of virtue and reason feel envious toward their equals even though they know envy is blameworthy—an ethical question

How is one to understand the envy that besets men of virtue and reason toward those who are their peers in terms of merit, even though they know that envy is vile and has a bad name and that both latter-day thinkers and thinkers of yore have converged on censuring it? If there is no way for a person to divest himself of this reaction because it takes him in its grip, then what are the grounds for censuring it so vehemently? And if it is not something that grips him but rather something voluntary he generates in himself and roils his spirits by producing, how can one understand his choice? Can people who answer to this description be classed among the *compos mentis* or come close to the status of rational men? Aristotle was asked, "Why do envious people dwell longest in sorrow?" He replied, "Because they feel sorrow at normal things, and a separate sorrow at the good that comes to others."²⁹

23.1

Miskawayh's response

Envy is a repugnant illness of the soul and a blameworthy trait. People have mistakenly applied the term "envy" to things that do not belong to the same class. This was precisely the mistake of my interlocutor, when he asked, "How is one to understand the envy that besets men of virtue?" For the man of virtue is not given to envy. Our discussion of envy will reveal its essential nature and thus its repugnant quality, putting it in its proper place and ensuring it is not confused with other things. We respond, then, as follows. Envy is a form of sorrow that comes over a person when a good thing comes to someone entitled to it. This foul passion is then followed by other foul acts, such as the wish that this good be withdrawn from the person who is entitled to it. This wish is then followed by many kinds of destructive exertions that result in numerous evils. So anyone who experiences envy in the sense that we have defined is evil, and an evil person cannot be excellent.

23.2

٣٠٢٣ ولكن لما كان هذا الغمّ قد يعرض للإنسان على وجه آخر غير مذمومة غلط فيه الناس فسّموه باسم الحسد. ومثال ذلك أنّ الفاضل قد يفتّم بالخير إذا ناله غير مستحقّه لأنّه يُوثر أن تقع الأشياء مواقعها ولأنّ الخير إذا حصل عند الشرير استعمله في الشرّ إن كان مما يُستعمل أو لم يُنتفع به بته. وربما اغتمّ الفاضل لنفسه إذا لم يصب من الخير ما أصابه غيره إذا كان مستحقّاً مثله. وإنما لم أسمّ هذا حسداً لأنّ غمّه لم يكن بالخير الذي أصاب غيره بل لأنّه حُرّم مثله. وإذا أثر لنفسه ما يجده لغيره لم يكن قبيحاً بل يجب لكلّ أحد إذا رأى خيراً عند غيره أن يتمناه أيضاً لنفسه لأنّ هذا الغمّ لا يتبعه أن يتمنى زوال الخير عن مستحقّه. وقد فرقت العرب هذين فسّموا أحدهما حسداً والآخر غابطاً. ونحن نؤدّب أولادنا بأن ندلهم على الأدباء وندبهم على فضائلهم فإنّ ذا الطبع الجيّد منهم يتمنى لنفسه مثل حال الفاضل ويسلك سبيله ويجتهد في أن يحصل له ما حصل للفاضل وبهذه الطريقة ينتفع أكثر الأحداث. وأمّا ذو الطبع الرديء فإنّه يفتّم بما حصل لغيره من الأدب والفضل ولا يسعى في تحصيل مثله لنفسه ولكنه يجتهد في إزالته عن غيره أو منعه منه أو يمجّده إياه أو يعيبه به فهو حينئذ حاسد شرير.

٤٠٢٣ فأما قولك إن كان هذا العارض لا فكالك لصاحبه منه لأنّه داخل عليه إلى آخر الفصل فإنّي أقول إنّ الانفعالات أعني ما لم يكن منها نحو الاستكمال كلّها مذمومة لأنّها من قبيل الهيولى ولذلك لو أمكن الإنسان أن لا ينفع بته لكان أفضل له ولكن لما لم يكن إلى ذلك سبيل وجب عليه أن يزيل كلّ ما أمكن إزالته من الانفعالات ليتمّ ويكمل وذلك بالأخلاق والآداب المرضيّة ويحصل له ذلك بسياسة الوالدين أولاً ثمّ بسياسة السلطان ثمّ بسياسة الناموس والآداب الموضوعّة لذلك

١ الأصل: إن هذا.

The term “envy” has mistakenly been applied when someone experiences this kind of sorrow for reasons that are not blameworthy. For example, a virtuous person may feel sorrow at the good that comes to the person who is not entitled to it, because he wishes things to happen as they ought, and because an evil person will put to evil purposes a good thing placed at his disposal, if it lends itself to such a purpose, or will derive no benefit from it whatsoever. Or, again, a virtuous person may feel sorrow on his own account when he does not receive the good that another person receives, if he is entitled to its like. The reason I do not apply the term “envy” to this reaction, however, is because his sorrow is not provoked by the good that the other has received, but because he has been deprived of its like. There is nothing wrong with someone wanting to have what another has; on the contrary, anyone who sees another enjoying something good should also desire to possess that good for himself—and this sorrow is not followed by the wish for the good to be withdrawn from the person entitled to it. The Arabs distinguished between these two types of person by using the term “envy” for the one and “admiration” for the other. The way we ourselves educate our children is by pointing out to them well-bred people and commending their virtues to them. Children with a good nature aspire to emulate the people of virtue, following in their footsteps, working as hard as they can to attain what they have attained. This method is beneficial for most young people. Children with a bad nature, in contrast, feel sorrow at the refinement and merit attained by others, and do not follow their lead. Rather, they try as hard as they can to deprive the other of it or to prevent him from possessing it; they deny his possession of it or reproach him for it. In that case they are envious and wicked.

My response to your remark “If there is no way for a person to divest himself of this reaction because it takes him in its grip,” until the end of that segment, is as follows. Passions—I mean those not directed toward the attainment of perfection—are blameworthy, for they are material in nature. That is why it would be better for human beings not to be subjected to passions at all, if that were possible. Yet, as that is unachievable, they are obliged to eliminate all the passions they have the power to eliminate, in order to attain a state of completion and perfection, something they do by acquiring congenial character traits and manners. This happens to them first through the directive influence of their parents, then through the directive influence of the ruling power, and then through the directive influence of the laws and the principles of conduct promulgated

فإن الإنسان يستفيد بهذه الأشياء صوراً وأحوالاً ثم تصير قنية ومملكة وهي المسماة فضائل وأداباً.

مسألة طبعية وخلقية

١٠٢٤ ما سبب الجزع من الموت وما الاسترسال إلى الموت؟ وإن كان المعنى الأول أكثر فإن الثاني أبن وأظهر. وأي المعنيين أجل الجزع منه أم الاسترسال إليه؟ فإن الكلام في هذه الفصول كثير الريع جم الفوائد.

الجواب

٢٠٢٤ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الجزع من الموت على ضروب وكذلك الاسترسال إليه وبعضه محمود وبعضه مذموم. وذلك أن من الحياة ما هو جيد محبوب ومنها ما هو رديء مكروه فيجب من ذلك أن يكون ضدها الذي هو الموت بحسبه منه ما هو حيال الحياة الحيدة المحبوبة فهو رديء مكروه ومنه ما هو حيال الحياة الرديئة المكروهة فهو جيد محبوب. ولا بد من تبين هذه الأقسام ليبين سبب الجزع والاسترسال وأيهما أعلى فأقول إن الحياة المقترنة بالآفات العظيمة والمحن الهائلة والآلام الشديدة مثل أن يسبى الرجل وأهله وولده ويملكهم قوم أشرار حتى يرى في أهله وولده ما لا طاقة له به ويسام في نفسه وجسمه ما لا صبر عليه ويقع في الأمراض الشديدة التي لا برء منها ويضطر إلى فعل قبيح بأصدقائه وبوالديه فهذا كله رديء مكروه وليس أحد يختار العيش فيه ولا يؤثر الحياة معه فضده إذاً جيد محبوب لأن الموت أمام هذه المحن في مجاهدة عدو يسوم هذا السوم موت مختار جيد. فيجب بحسب هذا النظر أن نقول إن تلك الحياة المكروهة يستحب فيها الموت الذي هي ضده فالاسترسال إلى هذا الموت جيد وسببه ظاهر.

١ الأصل: المهن.

for that purpose. For people derive outward forms and conditions from these things, and then they become entrenched as acquired possessions and stable states, which are the things that are called “virtues” and “good breeding.”

On why we fear death but sometimes welcome it—a
question relating to natural and ethical matters

Why do we fear death, and why is death sometimes welcomed? Even if the first is the more frequent, the second is both starker and more noticeable. Which should be held in the highest regard, fear or welcoming? There is much good to be harvested from a discussion of the topic. 24.1

Miskawayh’s response

The fear of death comes in many varieties, as does the welcome given to it; some are praiseworthy, others blameworthy—for some lives are excellent and desirable, while others are bad and odious. Therefore death, their contrary, should vary accordingly. Thus, the death that is set against an admirable life will be loathsome, while the death that is opposed to a loathsome life will be admirable. These categories need exposition, in order to explain why one fears or welcomes death and to determine which of the two is superior. Some lives are burdened with great evils, terrible travails, and immense pains, as when a man is taken captive with his wife and children by a wicked people, and he sees his wife and children experience terrible sufferings, and his mind and body are subjected to intolerable torments, or when he suffers from an incurable illness, or when he is forced to perpetrate some evil against friends and parents. Nobody would choose to go on living under such loathsome conditions, because death is an excellent choice when faced with these tribulations and such an implacable enemy. This consideration leads us to conclude that when life is loathsome, death—its contrary—is desirable. So this kind of death should be welcomed; the reason for this is obvious. 24.2

٣٠٢٤ وكذلك إذا عكست الحال فإن الحياة المحبوبة والعيش المضبوط التي معها صحة البدن واعتدال المزاج ووجود الكفاية من الوجوه الجميلة والتمكن بهذه الأشياء من السعي نحو السعادة القصوى وتحصيل الصورة المكتملة للإنسان مع مساعدة الإخوان الفضلاء وقرّة العين بالأولاد النجباء والعزّ بالعشيرة وأهل بيت الصالحين كلّه محبوب مؤثّر جيّد. ومقابله إذاً الذي هو الموت رديء مكروه لأنّ هذا الموت يتقطع به استكمال السعادة وإتمام الفضيلة ويفوته أمراً عظيماً كان معرضاً له. فالجزع من هذا الموت واجب وسببه بين.

٤٠٢٤ وهذا ضرب من النظر وباب من الاعتبار. وضرب آخر وهو أن البقاء بنفسه أمر مختار لأنّه وجود متصل والوجود كريم شريف وضده العدم رذل خسيس والرغبة في الشيء الكريم واجبة كما أنّ الزهد في الشيء الخسيس واجب. وإذا كانت حياة ما مقطوعة لا محالة ثمّ كان ذلك يفضي إلى حياة أخرى أبدية ووجود سرمدّي صار هذا الموت غير مكروه إلا بقدر ما يكره من الدواء المرّ إذا أدى إلى الصحة فإنّ العلاج المؤلم والدواء الكريه مختاران إذا أديا إلى صحّة طويلة وسلامة متصلة. فإن لم يكونا مختارين بالذات فهما مختاران بالعرض. فالإنسان المستبصر الذي يرى أنّ أخراه أفضل من دنياه وأجله خير له من عاجله يسترسل إلى الموت استرساله إلى الدواء الكريه والعلاج المؤلم ليفضي به إلى خير دائم وإن كان هذا الاختيار بالعرض لا بالذات وربما ظنّ ذلك ظناً نحسن أيضاً منه الاسترسال إليه بحسب قوّة ظنّه وما وقع إقناعه به كما يحسن في الدواء إذا قوي ظنّه بمعرفة واصفه له. فأما من خلا من هذا الاعتقاد والظنّ القوي فهو يجرع من الموت لأنّه عدم ما والعدم مهروب منه وهذا سبب صحيح وعلة ظاهرة.

٥٠٢٤ وهذا ضرب آخر من الاسترسال إلى الموت والجزع منه وهو أنّ من قوي ظنّه واستحكمت بصيرته في عاقبته ومعاده ولكنّه لم يقدم ما يعتقد أنّه يسعد به ولم يتأهب

١ الأصل: مختاران. ٢ الأصل: ما.

The same applies if the situation is reversed. For there are admirable lives and well-regulated modes of living in which the body is healthy, the humoral mixture is balanced, and basic needs are met in honorable ways, and this enables us to strive for ultimate happiness and to realize the form through which human beings are perfected, while enjoying the help of excellent companions, the satisfaction of having fine children, and the pride that comes from good kinsfolk and an upright family. All of this is admirable, worth having, and excellent. The death that is set against it will therefore be loathsome, because it interrupts the perfection of happiness and the consummation of virtue, and deprives one of the good one stood to enjoy. So such a death must be feared; the reason for this is obvious. 24.3

This is one way of considering matters, one angle of examination. Another approach is to say that the persistence of life is in itself preferable because it represents continued existence, and existence is a noble and precious thing, whereas its contrary, nonexistence, is a mean and base thing. What is noble must be desired, just as what is base must be avoided. If life must come to an end, nonetheless it leads to eternal life and to endless existence. Death then ceases to be odious, except in the way one might find odious a bitter medicine that brings health. Painful treatment and unpleasant medicine are to be preferred if they bring lasting health and continued well-being. Even if they are not preferable intrinsically, they are so extrinsically. Thus, discerning people who understand that the next world is superior and that the life to come is better than their present life welcome death as they would welcome unpleasant medicine and painful treatment, in order thereby to attain a permanent good, even if this choice is made on extrinsic rather than intrinsic grounds. Perhaps they may only suppose this to be the case, but they should still welcome death according to the strength of their supposition and the extent of their convictions. This is also the case with medicine when one entertains a strong supposition that the person prescribing it is knowledgeable. Without this belief and strong supposition, however, death is feared, because it is a kind of nonexistence, and nonexistence is something one recoils from. This is a valid explanation and clear cause. 24.4

Here is yet another reason why death is either welcomed or feared. People who, through strong supposition, have gained firm insight regarding the life to follow in the hereafter, yet who have not equipped themselves for it or made the sort of preliminary preparations that they believe would lead to their 24.5

بأهبتة ولا استعدّ له عدّة فهو يكره الموت ويجزع منه ولا يسترسل إليه . وبالضدّ من رأى أنّه مستعدّ لعدّته أخذ أهبتة فهو حريص عليه مسترسل إليه . وأنت ترى ذلك في أصحاب الأهواء المختلفة والديانات المتضادّة كالهند في تسرّعهم إلى إحراق نفوسهم وإقدامهم على ضروب المثل والقتل في أبدانهم وكالخوارج في حرصهم على الموت وبذلهم نفوسهم في مواقفهم المشهورة وحرورهم المأثورة وإنّ الرجل إذا طعن قع فرسه ليسبح في الرمح وينتهي إلى طاعنه ثمّ قرأ ﴿ وَجَعَلْتُ إِلَيْكَ رَبِّ لِتَرْضَى ﴾ ولذلك اتخذ أصحاب السلطان في صدور رماحهم حاجراً لئلاّ يسبح فيها المطعون فيصل إلى الطاعن . والصابرون على أنواع العذاب وضروب المثل وأقتل من أهل الأهواء أكثر من أن يُحصوا . وإنّما ذكرنا سبب الجرع من الموت والاسترسال إلى الموت وأيّهما يحسن وفي أيّ موضع وعلى أيّ حال .

مسألة طبيعيّة

١٠٢٥ لم كانت النجابة في الخفاف أكثر؟ ولم كانت الفسولة في السمان أكثر؟

الجواب

٢٠٢٥ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله هذه المسألة كأنّها عن الحال الأغلب والوجود الأكثر . والسبب فيه أنّه لما كانت الحرارة الغريزية سبب الحياة وسبب الفضائل التابعة للحياة أعني الذكاء والحركة والشجاعة وما أشبهها كانت الأبدان التي حظها منها أكثر أفضل . والحكم الصحيح في هذا أنّ الأبدان المعتدلة في النخافة والسمن والطول والقصر وسائر الكيفيات الأخر أفضل الأبدان . ولما كانت مسألتك مخصوصة بالنخافة والسمن خصّصنا الجواب أيضاً فتقول إنّ الحرارة إذا قاومت أخلاط البدن فأذابت فضول

١ الأصل: رماحهم لثلاث .

happiness, will not welcome death but will hate and fear it. Conversely, those who suppose that they have made adequate preparations will welcome it with open arms. This is evident among adherents of the various heretical groups and competing religions, the way the Hindus rush to commit themselves to the flames and carry out various kinds of bodily mutilation and slaughter, or the way the Kharijites pursued death with alacrity and gave up their lives in their famous battles. It is said that if a Kharijite were transfixed by a spear, he would spur on his horse to slide along the shaft of the spear, coming up against the one who had struck him, and then recite, «I have hastened, Lord, only that I may please Thee».³⁰ This is why the caliphal army attached lugs to the sockets of their spearheads, as a barrier to prevent a speared opponent from sliding along the shaft as far as the soldier who had impaled him. The adherents of heretical groups who endure different forms of torment, mutilation, and slaughter are too many to count. Still, we have described why death is feared and why it is welcomed and on what occasion and under what conditions each response is appropriate.

On why thin people tend to be noble and fat people ignoble—a natural question

Why are thin people more likely to be noble? And why are fat people more likely to be ignoble? 25.1

Miskawayh's response

This question seems to concern what usually holds true for the most part. Since innate heat is the cause of life and the cause of the excellences that are contingent on life—I mean intelligence, agility, courage, and the like—bodies with a greater share of it are superior. The correct way to view this is as follows: Bodies that are balanced with respect to thinness and fatness, tallness or shortness, and the other qualities are the most excellent. As your question is narrowly focused on thinness and fatness, we will also focus our reply with the following account. When heat combats the humors and succeeds in dissipating the excess moistures it contains and negating its contrary, the coldness 25.2

الرطوبات منه ونفت^١ البرد الغالب عليه الذي هو ضده كان ذلك سبباً للحركة واليقظة وسبباً للإقدام والنجدة. ويتبع هذه الأشياء سائر الفضائل اللازمة لها وذكو^٢ الحرارة التي في القلب وهي أول هذه الفضائل كلها. وإذا غلبت الرطوبات عليها أطفأتها وغمرتها وحالت بينها وبين أفعالها وعاقبتها^٣ عنها فكان ذلك سبباً للفسولة ولواحقها من الكسل والبلادة والجن وسائر الرذائل التي تتبعها.

٣٠٢٥ والنفخة والسمن وإن كانا جميعاً قد خرجا عن الاعتدال فأحدهما وهو النفخة خروجه عن الاعتدال بإفراط الحرارة التي هي سبب الفضائل وهي أولى بها من الطرف الآخر الذي ضدها أعني السمن الذي هو خروج عن الاعتدال إلى جانب البرد وعدم الحرارة المؤدي إلى بطلانها وزوالها. وقد تبين في كتاب الأخلاق أن أطراف الفضائل كلها مذمومة ولكن بعضها أقرب إلى المدح وإن كان البعد من الوسط فيهما واحداً. كان الاعتدال الممدوح بالجود والسخاء له طرفان أحدهما الخجل والآخر التبذير وهما جميعاً مذمومان وخارجان من الاعتدال إلا أن أحد الطرفين وهو التبذير أشبه بالجود من الطرف الآخر لأن أحد الطرفين بالإمعان يتأدى إلى بطلان الشيء الممدوح وعدمه والآخر يتأدى إلى الزيادة فيه بالإفراط. ولعمري إنهما في فقد الاعتدال سواء ولكن أحدهما أشبه به من الآخر وهذا موضع لا يدفع ولا ينكر.

مسألة طبيعية

١٠٢٦ لمكان القصير أخبث والطويل أهورج؟

الجواب

٢٠٢٦ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله هذا أيضاً طرفان لموضع الفضيلة وذلك أن الاعتدال من الطول والقصير هو المحمود ولكن الطول بالتفاوت في الخلق أقرب إلى الذم وذلك
١ الأصل: ونفت. ٢ الأصل: وذكر. ٣ الأصل: وعاقبتها. ٤ الأصل: جميعان. ٥ الأصل: الاعتدال ولكن.

On why short people tend to be crafty and tall people foolish

that prevails over it, this results in agility and alertness and in bold and intrepid activity. Then come the concomitant excellences and, the first among them, the intensification of the heat that resides in the heart. The moistures, if they prevail, drown it out, impeding it and preventing it from exercising its effects. Ignobleness, and its concomitants, such as laziness, mental torpor, cowardice, and all its attendant defects, ensue.

Though fatness and thinness represent deviations from a balanced state, thinness deviates by an excess of heat, which is the cause of excellences, and is thus more amenable than the opposite extreme—namely, fatness. Fatness is a deviation from a balanced state that tends toward coldness and the absence of heat, which counteracts and defeats these excellences. Books of ethics have demonstrated that the extremes of the excellences are all blameworthy, but, although they are similarly distant from the mean, some are closer to being praiseworthy than others. Thus, the state of balance that is lauded as generosity and liberality has two extremes: avarice and prodigality. Both, representing deviations from a balanced state, are blameworthy, but one, prodigality, is more similar to generosity than the other. For, taken too far, one of these extremes results in the nullification and negation of the thing praised, while the other results in an excessive increase of it. I declare that, in terms of a lack of balance, the two are on a par, but one is more similar to the state of balance than the other. This is a point that cannot be gainsaid or denied.

25.3

On why short people tend to be crafty and tall
people foolish—a natural question

Why do short people tend to be crafty, while tall people tend to be foolish?

26.1

Miskawayh's response

These also represent extremes relative to excellence, because a balance between tallness and shortness is what is laudable. But the tallness that results from an imperfection in one's natural constitution is closer to being blameworthy on account of the distance that separates the main organs from each other,

26.2

بعد الأعضاء الرئيسيّة بعضها من بعض لا سيما العضوان اللذان هما أظهر الأعضاء رياسة أعني القلب والدماغ فإن هذين يجب أن يكون بينهما مسافة معتدلة لتمكّن الحرارة التي في القلب من تعديل برودة الدماغ وحفظ اعتداله وبقاء الروح النفسانيّ الذي يتهذب في بطون الدماغ وتمكّن أيضاً برودة الدماغ من تعديل حرارة القلب وحفظ اعتداله عليه. وهذا الاعتدال إذا بعد أحد العضوين من الآخر تفاوت واضطرب نظامه وفسد التركيب وفسدت الأفعال الصادرة عن الإنسان ونقصت فضائله. وليس يعرض في قرب من التفاوت ما يعرض في بعد أحدهما من الآخر.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٢٧ لم صار بعض الناس إذا سئل عن عمره نقص في الخبر وآخر يزيد على عمره في الخبر؟

الجواب

٢٠٢٧ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله غرض الرجلين جميعاً أعني الناقص من مدة عمره والرائد فيها غرض واحد وإن اختلفا في الخبر. وربما فعل الرجل الواحد ذلك بحسب زمانين مختلفين أو بحسب حالين في زمان واحد وهو من رذائل الأخلاق لأنه يوهم بالكذب فضيلة لنفسه ليست فيها. وسبب هذا الفعل محبة النفس وذاك أن الإنسان يحب أن يعتقد فيه من الفضل أكثر مما هو ويجب أن يعذر في نقص إن وجد فيه. وهو إذا كان حدثاً وظهرت منه فضيلة أو نقيصة نقص من زمان عمره ليعلم غيره أن الفضيلة حصلت له في زمان قصير وأن ذلك لم يكن ليم له إلا بعناية كثيرة وحرص شديد ونفس كريمة وانصراف عن الشهوات الغالبة على أقرانه وترك اللعب الذي هو يستولي على لدائه وكلما كان الزمان أقصر كان إلى الفضيلة أقرب وكان

particularly the heart and the brain, the two organs that have the clearest governing role. For these two must be separated by only a moderate distance so that the heat that is in the heart can modify the coldness of the brain, retain the brain's balance, and preserve the psychic spirit that is distilled in the ventricles of the brain, and also so that the coldness of the brain can modify the heat of the heart and help it retain its balance. This balance is disrupted and disordered, the overall structure is ruined, ensuing actions are impaired, and the excellences decrease, if one of the two organs is positioned too far from the other. In contrast, the physical proximity of the two organs does not produce the same kind of imperfection that their distance does.

On why some people overstate and others understate their age—an ethical question

Why is it that when people are asked about their age, some understate, while others overstate their age? 27.1

Miskawayh's response

Both types—I mean the one who understates and the one who overstates his age—share the same aim, even if what they say differs. And sometimes a person may say different things at different points in time or in different circumstances at the same point in time. This reflects a defect of character—it is to use mendacity to suggest that one possesses an excellence one does not in fact possess. The reason for this is self-love; because people want others to believe they possess greater merit than they do, and want others to excuse them for any deficiencies they happen to have. If an excellence or a deficiency manifests itself in the young, then they understate their age so as to let others know that they have acquired the excellence in a short space of time and that they could only have achieved this with great solicitude, staunch dedication, and nobility of soul, and by renouncing the appetites that get the better of their peers and refraining from the levity that prevails among people of their age. The shorter the amount of time involved, the greater their affinity to excellence and the greater the wonder they excite. By contrast, others may excuse 27.2

التجّب منه أكثر. وإن كانت منه نقيصة عذر في فعله بقلة الحنكة والدربة وانظر
فلاحه ورجي تلافيه وإنابته.

٣٠٢٧ وإن الإنسان مرشح طول عمره لاقتناء الفضائل والاستكثار من المعارف ويجب^١
أن يكون أبداً بحال من الفضل تُستكثر في مثل سنه أن يبلغ إليها أو يجب من
كثرة تدريبه بالزمان القصير في الأمور التي يُحتاج فيها إلى الزمان الطويل. وأيضاً
فإن المتكهل^٢ وذا السنّ الكثير التجربة ممن صحب الزمان ولقي الرجال وتصرّف في
العلوم مهيب في النفوس جليل في الصدور موقر في المجالس مستشار في النوائب
مرجع إليه في الرأي. وهذه حال مرغوب فيها فإذا بلغ الإنسان من السنّ ما يحتمل
أن يدعي فيه هذه الدعوى أو يشبه نفسه بأصحاب هذه المراتب زاد في عمره لتسلم له
هذه المرتبة فتعقديه. فكل واحد من الرجلين أو الرجل الواحد في الزمانين أو الحاليتين
غايته في التكبّب بما ينقص من عمره التمويه بالفضل وادعاء رتبة ليست له. وهذا شرّ
ظاهر فتعاطيه شرير وأفاضل الناس لا يعترفهم هذا الشرّ لأنهم لا يتدنسون بالكذب
ولا يتكثرون بالباطل.

مسألة طبعيّة

١٠٢٨ لم صار الإنسان يحبّ شهراً بعينه ويوماً بعينه؟ ومن أين يتولّد للإنسان صورة يوم
الجمعة على خلاف صورة يوم الخميس؟ وقيل للروديّ وكان أمه وهو الذي وُلد أعمى
كيف اللون عندك؟ قال مثل الجمل.

١ ط: ويجب. ٢ ط: المكتهل.

the behavior of those who suffer from a deficiency as guilelessness and inexperience, in the anticipation that they will straighten themselves out, and the hope that they will mend their ways and turn from their errors.

Human beings have the capacity to cultivate the excellences and increase their knowledge as long as they live, and they always derive pleasure from possessing a higher degree of merit than people of their age are expected to attain, or from being admired for acquiring in a short space of time the expertise that normally requires a long time. Persons who have reached middle age or who have lived long enough to have amassed extensive experience—people who have witnessed the ebb and flow of entire epochs, who have consorted with men of note, and who have been active in fields of learning—arouse profound respect in people’s minds, provoke reverence in their hearts, and are treated with deference in social gatherings. Their counsel is sought out at difficult times, their opinions consulted. This status is much desired, so someone who is of an age at which he can plausibly make this claim or to assimilate himself to those who occupy these ranks exaggerates his age so that this status may be conceded to him and he can be considered to possess it. In mendaciously understating or overstating their age, both types, as well as the type who says different things at different times or in different circumstances, seek to present a false view of their merit and claim status they do not possess. This is patently wicked, so the perpetrator is wicked. The best people do not succumb to this kind of viciousness, because they do not sully themselves with lies or make false boasts.

27.3

On why people end up loving particular months
or days and why they form different conceptions
of different days—a natural question

Why do people come to love a particular month and a particular day? How is it that people form a conception of Friday different from their conception of Thursday? Al-Rūdakī, who was congenitally blind—that is, he was born blind—was once asked: What do colors look like to you? He answered: Like camels.

28.1

المجواب

٢٠٢٨ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله أما محبة الإنسان شهراً بعينه فلاجل ما يتفق له فيه من سعادة ما يحصل مأمول أو ظفر بمطلوب أو انتظار مرحو في وقت بعينه أو سرور بعقب غم أو راحة بعد تعب وربما استمر ذلك به وتكرّر عليه مدّة من عمره في وقت بعينه فأنس به وألفه وأحبّه لما يتفق له فيه ولذلك أحبّ صبيان المسلمين يوم الجمعة وأفوه بعد ذلك طول عمرهم وكرهوا يوم السبت لأنّ يوم الجمعة مفروض لهم فيه الراحة مرخص لهم اللعب ويتلوه يوم السبت الذي هو يوم تعبهم وعودهم إلى ما يكرهون من فقد اللعب. فأما صبيان اليهود فإتّما يعرض لهم ذلك في يوم السبت وما يليه وصبيان النصارى في يوم الأحد وما يليه وكذلك أيام الأعياد التي أطلق للناس فيها الراحة والزينة يقول النبيّ صلّى الله عليه وسلم أيام أكل وشرب وبغال. وهذه الأيام مختلفة في أصحاب الملل وكلّ قوم يحبّون الأيام التي هي أعيادهم التي أطلق لهم فيها الزينة والمتعة والراحة وأما من تساوت به الأحوال من الأمم التي ليست تحت شرع ولا لهم نظام في سيرتهم وأحوالهم كالزنج وأواخر الترك وأشباههم فليس يلحقهم هذا المعنى وليس يحبّون يوماً بعينه ولا شهراً ولا وقتاً مخصوصاً.

٣٠٢٨ فأما تولّد صورة يوم الجمعة على خلاف صورة يوم الخميس فإتّاه على ما أقول إنّ الزمان الأظهر الأعمّ الأشهر هو ما تحدّثه دورة واحدة من الفلك الأقصى أعني الذي يدير جميع الأفلاك ويحركها بحركة نفسه إلى غير جهة حركاتها وذلك من المشرق إلى المغرب من مفروضه إلى أن يعود إليها وهو في أربع وعشرين ساعة. وإتّما صار هذا الزمان أظهر للناس لما يظهر فيه من صباح يعرض ومساء يوم وليلة وسببهما ظهور الشمس في بعض هذه المدّة فوق الأرض وغيبتها في بعض تحت الأرض وتكرّر هذه الأدوار هي الأيام والليالي وفي كلّ دور منها للناس أفعال وحركات ومواليد ومعاملات ليست في الدورة الأخرى. ويتعلّق بأفعالهم هذه

Miskawayh's response

The reason people come to love one particular month is because of some happy incident they happened to have experienced during that time, as when they realized something they hoped for, obtained something they desired, anticipated the arrival of something they yearned for at a particular time, or experienced joy after grief or rest after toil. This experience may have persisted and been repeated over a period of their life at particular times, and so they warmed to that time, growing fond of it and coming to love it on account of what happened during it. This is why Muslim children come to love and develop a lifelong fondness for Fridays and to hate Saturdays. Because Friday is the day when they are required to rest and allowed to play, and it is followed by Saturday, which is a day when they must toil and stop the games they enjoy. Jewish children, by contrast, experience that in relation to Saturday and the next day, and Christian children in relation to Sunday and the next day. The same applies to feast days, on which people have been given permission to rest and dress up in their finery. The Prophet described them as “days on which one may eat and drink and dally with one’s womenfolk.” These days vary from religion to religion: Each group loves their own feast days, when they are permitted to dress up, enjoy themselves, and rest. By contrast, people for whom all circumstances are alike—people who are under no religious law and whose lives and circumstances are not governed by a particular order, such as the East Africans, the remote Turks, and the like—do not have this experience, and do not come to love any one particular day or month or specific time.

28.2

The explanation of why people develop a conception of Friday different from their conception of Thursday is as follows. The form of time that is most manifest, most general, and most familiar is that produced by a single revolution of the outermost celestial sphere, that is, the celestial sphere that causes all of the other spheres to revolve and that, through its motion, causes them to move in a direction other than the one to which their own motions tend, namely, from east to west, departing from a given point and returning to it in the course of twenty-four hours. This form of time is most manifest to people on account of the appearance of morning and evening, which go from light to dark, caused by the sun’s appearance above the earth for part of this period and its disappearance beneath the earth for another part. The repetition of these revolutions constitutes the days and nights. Each revolution contains

28.3

أحكام وأقضية في مدد معلومة وآجال مفروضة في مدة مضروبة يحتاجون فيها إلى نسبتها إلى دورة بعد دورة من الفلك الأقصى التي هي سبب لكون اليوم واليلة لتصح معاملاتهم وتصدق قضاياهم وتعين آجالهم المضروبة في أعمالهم ومعاملاتهم.

٤٠٢٨ وههنا زمان آخر تحدته دورة أخرى تختص بها الشمس في سيرها وذلك أن تبتدئ الشمس من نقطة مفروضة وتعود إليها بعينها بحركة نفسها دون تحريك المحرك الأول وهذه الدورة هي من المغرب إلى المشرق بخلاف تلك وتمّ الدورة الواحدة من هذه الحركة التي تخصّ الشمس في ثلاثمائة وخمسة وستين يوماً وربع يوم على التقريب وهذا هو زمان أيضاً ولكنه منسوب إلى حركة الشمس نفسها ويسمى سنة.

٥٠٢٨ وههنا زمان آخر قد تعارفه الناس أيضاً واشتهر بينهم وظهوره وإن لم يكن كظهور الشمس فهو تال له وهو ما يكون ويحدث بدورة واحدة من حركة القمر التي تخصّه دون تحريك المحرك الأول وتمّ الدورة الواحدة بهذه الحركة التي تخصّ القمر وهي أيضاً من المغرب إلى المشرق في ثمانية وعشرين يوماً ويسمى شهراً.

٦٠٢٨ فهذه الأزمنة الثلاث لما كانت ظاهرة مكشوفة تراها العيون لأجل تعلقها بالشمس والقمر اللذين هما أنور الكواكب وأبينها وأكبرها في الظاهر تعارفها الناس وتعاملوا عليها وحدثت صورة لكل دورة بحسب ما يقسطه الناس فيها من أعمالهم وبحسب ما يفشو فيها ويحدث من الأعمار والمواليد وبحسب نسبة حركاتهم إليها بمبدأ ومنتهى. وإذا نظر الإنسان إلى هذه الأدوار في أنفسها خالية من حركات الناس وأفعالهم ولم ينسب إليها حركة أخرى وفعلاً آخر لم يكن بينها فرق بته إلا بالتركز الذي لا بدّ فيه من العدد بالأول والثاني والثالث وإلى حيث انتهى الإحصاء فإن

١ الأصل: الذي لهما.

human actions, motions, new births, and transactions that are not to be found during another revolution. These actions are subject to rulings and ordinances that apply over specific time frames and involve temporal limits stipulated within a given time frame. These need to be referred to different instances of the revolutions of the outermost celestial sphere that produce day and night, so that people's transactions may be properly executed, their ordinances may be soundly applied, and the temporal limits assigned to their actions and transactions may acquire a specific reference.

There is another form of time, one produced by a revolution specific to the sun as it traces its course. In this case, the sun departs from a given point and returns to that same point through a motion of its own, without the first mover's imparting motion to it. Unlike the former, this revolution occurs in the direction of west to east. A single revolution produced by the motion specific to the sun takes approximately 365 days and a quarter of a day to complete. This is also a form of time, but it is related to the motion of the sun, and is called a "year." 28.4

Then there is a further form of time that people are also familiar with and have come to know well; and though it is not as manifest as that of the sun, it follows close on it. It is constituted by, and arises from, a single revolution of the moon produced by a motion specific to it and not owed to the motion of the first mover. A single revolution produced by the moon's specific motion—also from west to east—takes twenty-eight days to complete, and is called a "month." 28.5

These three forms of time can be seen; they are manifest and plain because they are connected with the sun and the moon—the most luminous and conspicuous stars, and the largest in appearance. With familiarity, people have thus come to work on their basis, and so there has arisen a conception of each revolution that reflects the activities people allocate to it, the lives and births that unfold and occur within it, and the relation that people's motions bear to it in terms of their starting and end points. If we consider these revolutions in isolation from human motions and actions, and do not refer any other motion or action to them, there is nothing whatsoever to distinguish between them except the distinction that arises through iteration, which necessarily involves numbers—one being first, second, third, and so on, as far as numbers can reach. But if we consider them according to their different circumstances, refer different actions and effects to them, and give them a numerical 28.6

نظر فيها بحسب الأحوال ونسب إليها أفعالاً وآثاراً ونظمها بالحساب حدثت صور مختلفة بحسب اختلاف الأمور الواقعة فيها المنسوبة إليها.

٧٠٢٨ فأما الأكمة الذي ذكرته في المسألة فإنَّ الفاقد حاسة من حواسه لا يتصور شيئاً من محسوساته لأنَّ التصوّر في النفس من كلّ محسوس إنّما يقع بعد الإحساس به وذلك أنّ هذه القوى من قوى النفس التي تأخذ العلوم من الحواس إنّما ترقّيها إلى قوة التخيل عن الحسّ فينثبث صورة المحسوس في القوة المتخيّلة وإن زالت صورة الحسّ وغابت فأما إذا فُقد الحسّ فكيف يترقى المحسوس إلى قوة التخيل؟ فبقي صار الأكمة لا يتخيل شيئاً من الألوان ولا يتصوره وكذلك إن فقد فاقد حسّ الشمّ والسمع من مبدأ ولادته لم يتخيل شيئاً من محسوساتهما لما قدّمناه. وحدثني بعض أهل التحصيل من المتفلسفين أنّه سأل رجلاً أكمة كيف يتصور البياض؟ فقال حلو. فكأنّه لما لم يجد صورة البياض في تخيله ردها إلى حاسة أخرى هو واجد لمحسوسها فسمّاها بها وظنّها إياها.

مسألة في حدّ الظلم

١٠٢٩

ما معنى قول الشاعر [كامل]

وَالظُّلْمُ فِي خَلْقِ النَّفْسِ فَإِنْ تَجَدَّ ذَا عِفَّةٍ فَلِعِلَّةٍ لَا يَظْلِمُ

وما حدّ الظلم أولاً؟ فإنّ المتكلمين يتفككون^١ في هذه المواضع كثيراً ولا ينصفون شيئاً وكأنهم في الغضب والخصام وسمعت فلاناً في وزارته يقول أنا أتلدّذ بالظلم فما هو هذا ومن أين منشأ أعني الظلم؟ أهو من فعل الإنسان أم هو من آثار الطبيعة؟

١ ط: يَنْفَكُونَ.

sequence, there arise different conceptions that reflect the different things that take place in them and are referred to them.

In the case of the congenitally blind person you mentioned in your question, those who lack a particular sense do not form concepts regarding any of the corresponding sensible objects, because concepts regarding sensible objects are only formed in the soul after the objects have been perceived by the senses. For these are among the powers of the soul that derive information from the senses, and they only raise this to the power of the imagination after receiving it from the senses. The form of the sensible object then becomes fixed within the power of the imagination, even if the form of the senses is eliminated and disappears. But when someone lacks a particular sense to begin with, how is it possible for the sensible object to be raised to the power of the imagination? It stands to reason that someone blind from birth should be unable to imagine colors or form any relevant concepts. Similarly, if someone lacks the sense of smell or hearing from birth, he cannot imagine any corresponding sensible object for the reasons we have outlined. A learned practitioner of philosophy once told me he had asked a man blind from birth how he conceived of whiteness, and he replied, "It is sweet." It is as if, having failed to discover the form of whiteness in his imagination, he resorted to another sense whose objects were available to him, and so designated the one through the other and took them to be identical.

28.7

On the meaning and origin of injustice

What did the poet mean when he said:

29.1

Injustice is ingrained in human nature, so if you find anyone abstaining from wrong, he does so for a special reason?³¹

What is the definition of injustice to begin with? For the dialectical theologians ply these topics with wild abandon without giving them their due, as if they were driven by anger and rivalry. I heard someone say during his tenure as vizier: "I delight in injustice." What is it and how does it originate—injustice, I mean? Is it a product of human action, or is it an effect of nature?

المجواب

٢٠٢٩ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الظلم انحراف عن العدل ولما احتج في فهمه إلى فهم العدل أفردنا له كلاماً ستقف عليه ملخصاً مشروحاً وهو في معنى الجور الذي هو مصدر جار يجور إلا أن الجور يُستعمل في الطريق وغيره إذا عدل فيه عن السمت والظلم أخص بمقابلة العدل الذي يكون في المعاملات فالعدل من الاعتدال وهو التسيط بالسوية وهذه السوية من المساواة بين الأشياء الكثيرة والمساواة هي التي توجد الكثرة وتعطيها الوجود وتحفظ عليها النظام وبالعدل والمساواة تشيع المحبة بين الناس وتآلف نياتهم وتعمد مدتهم وتتم معاملتهم وتقوم سننهم.

٣٠٢٩ وشرح هذا الكلام وتحقيق القول في مائة^١ العدل وذكر أقسامه وخصائصه بسط كثير لم أمن طوله عليك وخروجي فيه عن الشريطة التي اشترطتها في أول الرسالة من الإيجاز ولذلك أفردت فيه رسالة ستأتيك مقترنة بهذه المسألة على ما يشفيك بمعونة الله. ولو أصبنا فيه كلاماً مستوفى لحكيم مشهور أو كتاباً مؤلفاً مشروحاً لأرشدنا إليه على عادتنا وأحلنا عليه كرسماً ولكننا لم نعرف فيه إلا رسالة لجالينوس مستخرجة من كلام أفلاطون^٢ وليست كهاية في هذا المعنى وإنما هي حصة على العدل وتبين لفضله وأنه أمر مؤثر محبوب لنفسه وإذا عرفت العدل من تلك الرسالة عرفت منه ما عدل عنه ولم يقصد سمته. وكما أن إصابة السهم من الغرض إنما هو نقطة منه فأمّا الخطأ والعدول عنها فكثير بلانهاية فكذلك العدل لما كان كالنقطة بين الأمور

١ الأصل وط: تحقيق مائة القول في. ٢ ط: أفلاطون.

Miskawayh's response

Injustice is the departure from justice. Since it is necessary to understand the meaning of justice in order to understand the meaning of injustice, we have devoted a separate discussion to the former, which you will find succinctly presented and expounded.³² The meaning of the term "injustice" is similar to that of the term "inequity," which is the verbal noun of the verb "to be inequitable." "Inequity," however, is used in connection with following directions and other things, and refers to the act of deviating or straying from the course. "Injustice" represents the more proper antithesis of the kind of justice that concerns transactions between people. The term "justice" derives from "moderation," which means distributing with an equal measure, and this equal measure derives from the equality established among many things. The establishment of equality is what brings multiplicity into existence and preserves it in an ordered condition. Love spreads among people, their aims harmonize, their politics prosper, the transactions between them are successfully achieved, and their customs are sustained through justice and the establishment of equality. 29.2

A full exposition of these points, an investigation of the nature of justice, with an enumeration of its subdivisions and distinctive features, would have required a lengthy discussion that I fear would have struck you as excessive and would have violated the condition of brevity you stipulated at the opening of this epistle. This is why I have devoted a separate treatise to the topic, which you will find appended to this question, in the hope that, with God's help, it will meet your need. Had we come across a thorough discussion by a well-known philosopher or a separate work with detailed exposition, we would have indicated it as is our practice and we would have referred to it, for this is how we proceed. But we are only aware of one treatise by Galen, extracted from Plato's remarks, and it does not provide an adequate treatment of the topic, as it is merely an exhortation to justice and an elucidation of its merit, arguing that one should choose and love it for its own sake.³³ Once you have understood the nature of justice from that treatise, you will understand what deviates from it and does not pursue its course. When the arrow hits the mark, it only hits a single point, whereas there are an infinite number of ways to miss the mark and deviate from it. Similarly, justice is like a single point between things, dividing them right in the middle. It is thus possible to deviate from it 29.3

تقسمها بالسوية كانت جهات العدول عنها كثيرة بلا نهاية وعلى حسب القرب والبعد يكون ظهور القبح وشناعة الظلم.

٤٠٢٩ فأما قول الشاعر وَالظُّلْمُ فِي حَلْقِ النَّفُوسِ فمعنى شعري لا يحتمل من النقد إلا قدر ما يليق بصناعة الشعر ولو حملنا معاني الشعر على تصحيح الفلسفة وتنقيح المنطق لقلّ سليمه وانتهك حريمه وكما مع ذلك ظالمين له بأكثر مما ظلم الشاعر النفوس التي زعم أنّ الظلم في خلقها على أنّها لو ذهبنا نحتج له ونخرج تأويله لوجدنا مذهبا وأصبنا مسلكا ولكن هذه الأجوبة مبنية على تحقيقات مغالطة الشعراء ومذاهبهم وعاداتهم في صناعتهم.

٥٠٢٩ ثم أقول إنّ الظلم الذي ذكرنا حقيقته يجري مجرى غيره من سائر الأفعال فإن صدر عن هيئة نفسانية من غير فكر ولا روية سُمّي خلقاً وكان صاحبه ظلوماً وهذه سبيل غيره من الأفعال المنسوبة إلى الخلق لأنها صادرة عن هيئات وملكات من غير روية فأما إذا ظهر الفعل بعد فكر ورؤية فليس عن خلق مذموماً كان أم معدوماً وإذا لم يكن عن خلق فكيف يكون عن خلقٍ وإنما يستمرّ الفاعل على فعل ما برؤية منه فتحدث من تلك الروية الدائمة هيئة تصدر عنها الأفعال من بعد بلا روية فتسُمّي تلك الهيئة خلقاً فأما الشيء الصادر عن هذه الهيئة فإنه إن كان عملاً باقياً الهيئة والأثر سُمّي صناعة واشتقّ من ذلك العمل اسم يدلّ على الملكة التي صدر عنها كالنجار والحذاد والصانع والكتّاب فإنّ هذه الأعمال إذا صدرت من أصحابها بلا روية سُمّوا بهذه الأشياء ووصفوا بهذه الصفات فأما إن تكلف إنسان استعمال آلة التجارة والحداة والكتابة والصياغة فأظهر فعلاً يسيراً بروية وفكر فعلى سبيل حكاية وتكلف فإنّ أحداً لا يسمّي هذا نجاراً ولا كاتباً ولذلك لم يسمّ من عمل بيتاً وبيتين شاعراً ولا من خاط بسلك أو سلكين خياطاً. والصناعة كلّها تجري هذا المجرى فهذه الأعمال كما تراها والأفعال أيضاً التي لا تبقى آثارها جارية هذا المجرى وعلى هذه السبيل جرت أمور

an infinite number of ways. How stark the wrongdoing is and how opprobrious the injustice will depend on how near or far it lies from the mark.

The poet's remark that "injustice is ingrained in human nature" is an idea expressed in poetic form that cannot sustain a higher degree of critical scrutiny than befits the poetic craft. Were we to try correcting poetic notions using philosophical judgments and standards of logic as our touchstone, few sound views would survive, and the dignity of poetry would be trampled underfoot—not to mention that we would be doing it a greater injustice than the poet did to human beings when he claimed that injustice is ingrained in their nature. It is true that were we to set about constructing arguments for it and ferreting out finer interpretations, we would come up with some doctrine or other and hit upon some approach, but these responses would be built on reading truth into the fallacies, doctrines, and customs of poets in their craft. 29.4

To continue: Injustice, in the sense we have expounded, is similar to other acts in that if it issues from a disposition of the soul without thought or reflection, it is called a character trait, and its bearer is unjust. This holds good for other acts ascribed to traits of character, for they issue from dispositions and stable states without reflection. If, in contrast, the act emerges after thought and reflection, it does not arise from a character trait, be it blameworthy or praiseworthy. And if it does not arise from a character trait, how can it arise from nature? When agents repeatedly perform a certain act with reflection, that constant reflection produces a disposition from which acts subsequently issue without reflection; that disposition is called a character trait. If the thing that issues from this disposition is a type of work that has a durable form and leaves a durable effect, it is called a craft, and one derives a name from the work that refers to the stable state from which it issues—for example, "carpenter," "blacksmith," "goldsmith," "scribe." So if these works issue from their agents without reflection, these names are applied and these attributes are ascribed. Yet, nobody would call a person who might go to the effort of applying the tools of the carpenter, blacksmith, scribe, and goldsmith, and produce some simple action through reflection and thought, and thus by way of simulation and toilsome effort, a carpenter or a scribe. This is why a person who turns out a verse or two is not called a poet, and one who sews a thread or two is not called a tailor. All crafts conform to this principle, and the same thing applies to these works, as you can see, as well as to the acts that leave no durable effects. So too with character traits and the acts that issue from them; 29.5

الأخلاق والأفعال الصادرة عنها لأن الأخلاق هيئات للنفوس تصدر عنها أفعالها بلا روية ولا فكر .

٦٠٢٩ فأما الوزير الذي سمعته يقول أنا أتلدذ بالظلم فإن الاختيارات المذمومة كلها إذا صار منها هيئات وملكات صارت شرورا وسُمي أصحابها أشرارا . وليس يختص الظلم في استحقاق اسم الشرّ وخروجه عن الوسائط التي هي فضائل النفس بشيء دون أمثاله ونظائره وفقد هذه الوسائط هو شرور وذنابل تلحق النفوس كالشره والنخل والجن سوى أن الظلم اختص بالمعاملة وتُرك به طلب الاعتذار والمساواة . وهذه النسبة العادلة والمساواة في المعاملة قد بينها أرسطوطالس^٢ في كتاب الأخلاق وأن المعاملة هي نسبة بين البائع والمشتري والمبيع والمشتري وأن نسبة الأول إلى الثاني كنسبة الثالث إلى الرابع على التكافؤ وفي النسبة والتبديل فيها وعلى ما هو مشروح مبين في غيره من الكتب .

٧٠٢٩ فأما قولهم لا يزال الناس بخير ما تفاوتوا فإذا تساوا هلكوا فإنهم لم يذهبوا فيه إلى التفاوت في العدل الذي تساوى^٣ بينهم في التعايش وإنما ذهبوا فيه إلى الأمور التي يتم بها التمدن والاجتماع والتفاوت بالأحاد ههنا هو النظام للكل . وقيل إن الإنسان مديني بالطبع فإذا تساوى الناس في الاستغناء هلكت المدينة وبطل الاجتماع وقد تبين أن اختلاف الناس في الأعمال وانفراد كل واحد منهم بعمل هو الذي يحدث نظام الكل ويتم المدينة ومثال ذلك الكتابة التي كليتها تم باختلاف الحروف في هيئاتها وأشكالها وأوضاع بعضها عند بعض فإن هذا الاختلاف هو الذي يقوم ذات الكتابة التي هي كهيئة ولو استوت الحروف لبطلت الكتابة .

١ الأصل: هي . ٢ ط: أرسطوطاليس . ٣ ط: يساوي . ٤ الأصل: بينه .

for character traits are dispositions of the soul from which the corresponding acts issue without reflection or thought.

You mentioned the vizier you heard saying “I delight in injustice.” When blameworthy choices produce dispositions and stable states, they become evils and their bearers are called evil. In meriting the designation “evil” and in departing from the mean that constitutes the excellences of the soul, injustice does not possess a distinction not shared by similar traits. Evils and defects such as gluttony, avarice, or cowardice enter the soul, when the mean fails to be realized. What is peculiar to injustice is that it relates to transactions between people, and that it involves abandoning all concern for excuse and equality. In his *Ethics*, Aristotle has provided a clear exposition of this just relation and equality in transactions. He explains that a transaction involves a proportional relation between the seller and the buyer, and between the object sold and the object bought, and that the proportional relation of the first to the second is like the proportional relation of the third to the fourth in cases of reciprocal giving and exchange. This is also explained and set out clearly in other books by him.³⁴ 29.6

The well-known saying, “All will be well so long as there are disparities between people—should they become equal they would be brought to ruin,” does not refer to disparities in the justice that is realized equally among them for the purposes of coexistence. Rather, it refers to the kinds of things through which civic association and communal life are achieved; disparity on the level of individuals makes for order on the level of the whole. It has been said that human beings are political by nature. Political association would collapse and communal life would come to naught if all people became equal in their ability to satisfy their own needs. As has been shown above, people perform different types of work and each performs his own separate work, so this generates the order of the whole and makes political association possible. One might compare this to writing, which is made possible as a totality by the different forms and shapes of letters and the different ways of positioning them relative to each other. These differences are what give writing its proper form as a totality. Were all letters equal and alike, writing would come to naught. 29.7

مسألة زجرية ولغوية

- ١٠٣٠ لم صار الرجل إذا لبس كل شيء جديد قيل له خذ معك بعض ما لا يشاكل ما عليك ليكون وقاية لك؟ ألم تكن المشاكلة مطلوبة في كل موضع؟ وعلى ذكر المشاكلة ما المشاكلة والموافقة والمضارعة والمماثلة والمعادلة والمناسبة؟ وإذا وضع الكلام في هذه الألفاظ وضع الحق أيضاً في المخالفة والمباينة والمنافرة والمنابذة.

الجواب

- ٢٠٣٠ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله هذا فعل عاتي يذهب إلى صرف العين وعند القوم أن الشيء إذا بكل من جهاته أسرع العين إليه بالإصابة فإذا كان منه شيء منتقص أو ظاهر^١ فيه عيب سُغلت العين به عن الإصابة وكان ينبغي ألا^٢ تختلط هذه المسائل هذا الاختلاط فإني أرى المسألة الشريفة الصعبة إلى جانب الأخرى التي لا نسبة بينهما قلة وسهولة وليس للجبب أن يقترح السؤال وينظم الشكوك ولأجل هذا اضطرت إلى الكلام في جميعها على حسب مراتبها ولم أقل ذلك إبطاً للعين وأفعالها ولا زراية على الأصول التي بنت العامة عليها ولكن المسألة توجهت عن فعل عاتي وإن كان له أصل بعيد ورجع إلى أول وأُسند إلى حقيقة.

- ٣٠٣٠ فأما المسألة عن المشاكلة والموافقة فإن الشكل المثل وهي مفاعلة منه ولا فرق بينها وبين المماثلة على ما ذكره اللغويون وأنا أظن المثل أعم من الشكل لأن كل شكل مثل وليس كل مثل شكلاً. فأما الموافقة فمن الوقف والوقوف عليه^٣ في المسألة التالية لهذه المسألة ونحن نشرحه هناك مع ذكر البخت والجد. فأما المضارعة فهي المشابهة وهي مفاعلة من الضرع ومنه أصله واشتقاقه. فأما المعادلة والمناسبة فقد مر ذكرهما

١ الأصل: ظهر. ٢ الأصل: أن لا. ٣ الأصل: فن الوقوف: ط: فن الوقوف.

On the significance of a popular saying, and the meaning of certain words—a question about admonitions and about language

Why is it that people say to someone wearing clothes that are all new: “Take along something unlike what you’re wearing, to preserve you from harm”? Isn’t likeness desirable in every situation? And speaking of likeness, what is the meaning of the terms “likeness,” “accord,” “resemblance,” “similarity,” “equivalence,” and “affinity”? With a clear account of these terms, the truth regarding the terms “opposition,” “divergence,” “conflict,” and “contrariety” will also become clear. 30.1

Miskawayh’s response

The purpose of this popular practice is to ward off the evil eye. People believe that if something is perfect in every respect it quickly attracts the evil eye, whereas a lack or a visible defect will divert the evil eye and prevent it from causing harm. But you should not have mixed up these questions like this, for I see a difficult and lofty question side by side with another question, whose paltriness and simplicity bear no relation to the first. It is not for the respondent to propose questions and to frame doubts, so I have been forced to discuss all of them according to their rank. I do not say this to deny the evil eye and its effects, nor to pour scorn on the principles on which common people base their behavior. But the question took its point of departure from a popular practice, albeit one that has a distant foundation and can be traced back to a cause, and is based on certain facts. 30.2

Turning to the question about the terms “likeness” (*mushākalah*) and “accord,” the term “like” (*shakl*) means “something similar” (*mithl*), and “likeness” derives from it, adopting the morphological pattern *mufā’alah*. According to the scholars of the Arabic language, there is no difference between this term and the term “similarity” (*mumāthalah*). My view is that “similar” is broader than “like,” because every like thing is similar, but not everything similar is like. The term “accordance” (*muwāfaqah*) derives from “accord” (*waqf*), as will be discussed in the next question, where we will explain it as part of our account of the terms “luck” and “fortune.” “Resemblance” (*muḍāra’ah*) means alikeness, and it is produced using the morphological pattern *mufā’alah* from the term meaning “something resembling” (*dir’*), which is its root and 30.3

مستقصى في مسألة العدل. والعدل لما كان يماثل عدله بالموازنة صار قريب المعنى منه والمعادلة هي مفاعلة منه. وقلت في آخر المسألة إنه إذا وضحت لك هذه الألفاظ وضح بها ما بعدها فلذلك أمسكت عنها.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٣١ لم اشتدت عداوة ذوي الأرحام والقربى حتى لم يكن لها دواء لشدة الحسد وفراط الضغائن وحتى زالت بها نعم وبادت نفوس وانتهى إلى الجلاء والهلاك؟ وهل كان الجوار وما يُعوذ بالله منه في شكل هذه العداوة أم لا؟

المجواب

٢٠٣١ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله قد تقدم في مسألة حد الحسد وفي المعاني القريبة التي يغلط الناس فيها وفي ذكر أسمائها ما فيه غنى عن إعادته في جواب هذه المسألة لأننا ذكرنا هناك أن الاثنين أو الجماعة من الناس إذا اشتروا في أمر وجمعهم سبب فتساوا فيه مع تساويهم في الإنسانية ثم تفرّد من بينهم واحد بفضيلة حسده نظيره أو غبطه. وذوو الأرحام هم جماعة يشتركون في نسب واحد ولا يرى أحدهم للآخر فضلاً فإن انفرد واحد منهم بأمر نافسه الآخر. وأيضاً فإن موضوع الشركة في النسب هو الموازنة والمعاونة والتساوي في الأحوال وهذه حال منتظرة يتوقعها كل واحد من الآخر فإذا أخلف الظن كان أشد احتمالاً وأصعب علاجاً وصار بمنزلة الذين المحجود

١ الأصل: أسبابها.

the source of its derivation. The terms “equivalence” and “affinity” have already been treated thoroughly in the question about justice. Their meanings are closely related, for one half of a donkey pack (*‘idl*) is similar in weight to its counterpart on the other side; and the term “equivalence” (*mu’ādalāh*) derives from this term, on the morphological pattern *mufā’alah*. At the end of the question, you said that once these terms were clear to you then the other terms would also be clear, so I have refrained from discussing them.

On why relatives and kinfolk are prone to outbreaks of extreme hostility—a question of ethics

Why does animosity run so high among relatives and kinsmen that it defies remedy—so virulent is the envy and so extreme the spite—to the point where goods are destroyed and blood is shed, where people abandon their homes and are brought to ruin? Are the evils one fears from neighbors in the same class as this animosity or not? 31.1

Miskawayh’s response

Our earlier discussion about the definition of envy, the cognate notions that confuse people, and the different designations used make it unnecessary to cover the same ground in this answer. For we mentioned earlier that if a certain feature is shared by two people or a group of people, if they are united by a certain bond, with respect to which they are equal, even as they are equal with respect to their humanity, and if one person among them then happens to possess a good that the others do not have, he arouses the envy or desire for emulation of his peers. Relatives are a group of people who share a single line of descent and who do not consider anyone in the group to have a distinction over anyone else, so if one of them possesses a feature the others do not have, others vie against him. Moreover, ordinarily a common line of descent involves offering aid and assistance and sharing in the same conditions; every party expects this from the other as a matter of course, so it is harder to tolerate and more difficult to resolve when this expectation is violated—it is akin to the disavowal of a debt or the denial of a right. If this is claimed, it excites 31.2

والحق المغموط فإذا اقتضى ثقل وإذا ثقل تنوكر وإذا تنوكر ثارت قوة الغضب بالجميع والغضب يزرع الحقد ويبعث على الشرور.

٢٠٣١ وينضاف إلى هذا شدة العناية والتفقد للأحوال وهذا لا يكون مع البعداء ولا يمكن فيهم فتكثر وجوه المطالبات بالحقوق وادّعاؤها وإن لم تكن وتثور أسباب الغضب والغضب يُرى أكثر مما تراه الحال نفسها ويطلب كل واحد من صاحبه وينظر مثل ما يطلبه صاحبه وينظره وينتهي من العدد وكثرة الوجوه إلى حيث يتعذر دواؤه ويقع الإياس منه. والجوار أيضاً سبب قوي لأنه شركة ما تبعث على تفقد الأحوال وتلغ الحسد وجميع الأحوال التي ذكرناها في ذوي الأرحام إلا أن هناك عطفاً مرجحاً وإبقاء معلوماً^٢ لا يوجد مثلهما في الجوار فالشر إذا ثار منه صرف والحسد فيه محض لا مزاج للخير فيه ولا داعي إلى البقاء معه.

مسألة طبعية

١٠٣٢ لم غضب الإنسان من شرّ يُنسب إليه وهو فيه وما سبب غضبه من شرّ ينسب إليه وليس هو فيه؟ والصدق في الأول من باب المحبوب المحمود والكذب في الثاني من باب المذموم المكروه.

الجواب

٢٠٣٢ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله سبب ذلك محبة النفس وقد تقدّم شرحه والإنسان إذا ذُكر بشرّ هو فيه كره أن يظن له وإن فطن له أن يجبه أو يُغتاب به لأنه يعرف قبح الشرّ ويحب لنفسه التي هي حبيته أن تكون بريئة من كل عيب بعيدة من كل ذنب وذمّ فإذا رُميت بشرّ لحقه غمّ أولاً ثم محبة الانتقام ممن غمه. والغضب

١ الأصل: أسباب والغضب. ٢ الأصل: عطف مرجّو وإبقاء معلوم.

aggravation; if it excites aggravation, it is rebuffed; if rebuffed, everyone swells with anger, and anger sows rancor and incites to evil deeds.

Add to this the strong interest relatives take and the probing inquiries they make into each other's affairs, which is simply not possible with more distant parties. So people set about demanding their rights and claiming their dues even without any to speak of; the grounds of anger are stirred, and anger makes them think more than the facts themselves allow. Everyone makes demands and expects the kinds of things that the others demand and expect, until the number and variety of demands bring matters to a point where they are beyond remedy and hope. The bond between neighbors is also a strong one, because it is a commonality that incites probing inquiries into other people's affairs and sows envy and all the other conditions mentioned in connection with relatives. But among the latter, unlike among neighbors, we can expect affection and mercy to operate. The evils that flare up among neighbors are unalloyed and the envy is pure, with no admixture of good and no reason for forbearance. 31.3

On why people become angry when others impute evil to them—a natural question

Why do people get angry when an evil that is actually to be found in them is ascribed to them? And why do they get angry when an evil that is not to be found in them is ascribed to them? Yet in the first instance, telling the truth is desirable and praiseworthy, and in the second lying is blameworthy and odious. 32.1

Miskawayh's response

The reason is self-love, which has already been explained. If a person is reminded of an evil that is to be found in him, he shudders to think of it, and if he thinks about it, he shudders at the thought of being confronted with it or vilified for it. For he knows how repugnant evil is, and he wants his beloved soul to be fault-free and far from every offense and reproach. So if an evil is imputed, he is first seized by distress and then by a desire to take revenge on the person who caused him this distress. Anger consists in the movement of 32.2

حقيقته حركة النفس للانتقام وهذه الحركة تثير دم القلب حتى يغلي ولذلك يُحَدِّد الغضب بأنه غليان دم القلب شهوة الانتقام. فأما غضب الإنسان من شرّ ينسب إليه وليس هو فيه فبالواجب لأنه قصد بالظلم ليغمّ وفائدة الغضب وسبب وجوده في الإنسان هو أن ينتصر به من الظالم أو يمنعه ويضعه عن نفسه فإذا علم الإنسان أن قاصداً يقصده بالظلم أحبّ الانتقام منه وتحركت نفسه لذلك فحدث الغضب فقد استبان من الصدق والكذب جميعاً في هذه المسألة سبب هيج الغضب ومائتته أيضاً.

مسألة نفسانية

١٠٣٣ ما علة حضور المذكور عند مقطع ذكره وهو لا يُتَوَقَّع فيه؟ هذا كثير معهود وإن لم يكن من باب المعتاد المؤلف ولو كان من ذلك لسقط التجب وزال الإبكار ووقع الاشتراك. ومن هذا الضرب رؤية الإنسان بالالتفات من لم يكن يظنّ أنه يراه وكذلك تشبيهك بعض من يلحقه طرفك بمعهودك حتى إذا حدث نحوه لم يكن ذاك ثم إنك لا تلبث حتى تصادف المشبه به. وهل هذا كله بالاتفاق؟ وإن كان بالاتفاق فما الاتفاق؟ وهل الاتفاق هو الوفاق؟ وما الوفاق؟ حتى يكون البيان عنه بياناً عن الأول أو مطلعاً عليه أو مقرباً إليه.

الجواب

٢٠٣٣ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله إن النفس علامة بالذات دراية للأمر بلا زمان وذاك أنها فوق الطبيعة والزمان إنما هو تابع للحركة الطبيعية وكأنه إشارة إلى امتدادها ولذلك اشتق اسم المدة منه لأن المدة فعلة والامتداد افعال وأصلهما واحد من المدّ.

the soul toward revenge, and this movement excites the blood of the heart and brings it to a boil. That is why anger is defined as the boiling of the blood out of a desire for revenge. The anger a person feels about an evil ascribed to him but not in fact found in him is as it should be, for he has been targeted with an unjust action intended to cause him distress. The benefit of anger, the reason it exists in human beings, is that it helps them to avenge themselves against unjust people or fend them off and prevent them from doing harm. So, if a person knows that someone has targeted him with an unjust action, he feels a desire to take revenge on him, his soul moves in that direction, and anger arises. Thus, the reason why anger is inflamed in both cases—when the truth is told, and when lies are told—has been clarified, as has the nature of anger.

On why a person who is being talked about
suddenly appears out of nowhere; on the nature
of coincidences—a psychological question

Why does a person who is the subject of conversation unexpectedly appear at the very moment he is being mentioned? This is widely known to happen, even if it is not an everyday, familiar event—had it been, it would not strike people as astonishing and would not seem so momentous, but would be a commonplace. The same type of thing happens when we turn around and see someone we had not been expecting to see. It is similar when we glimpse someone we think looks like someone we know, yet a closer look reveals it isn't that person, and then moments later we run into the person he looked like. Is all of this a matter of coincidence? If it is, what *is* coincidence? Does “coincidence” (*ittifāq*) consist in “concord” (*wifāq*)? And what is concord? Clarifying the latter notion will clarify the former and provide insight into it, or render it more accessible. 33.1

Miskawayh's response

The soul knows by its essence and apprehends things timelessly, because it is above nature, and time is contingent on natural motion; it is, as it were, an indication of the extensiveness (*imtidād*) of the latter, which is why the term for “extent” (*muddah*) was derived from it. For the latter is of the morphological form *fu'lah* and the former of the form *ifti'āl*, the root of both being 33.2

ولما كانت النفس فوق الطبيعة وكانت أفعالها فوق الحركة أعني في غير زمان فإذن^١ ملاحظتها الأمور ليست بسبب الماضي ولا الحاضر ولا المستقبل بل الأمر عندها في السواء بالجميع^٢ فمتى لم تعقها عوائق الهيولى والهيوليات وحجب الحس والمحسوسات أدركت الأمور وتجلت لها بلا زمان وربما ظهر هذا الأمر منها في بعض المراتج أكثر حتى يرتفع إلى حد التكهن والإنذار بالأمور المستقبلية وهذا الإنذار ربما كان في زمان قريب^٣ وربما كان في زمان بعيد فكأنما كان أبعد والمدة أطول كان أمدع عند الناس وأغرب. ثم لا يزال يقرب الزمان ويقصر فيه حتى يتلوأ وقت الإنذار بلا كبير فاصلة وهذه الحال تعرض لمن يذكر الإنسان فيحضر المذكور عند مقطع ذكره ولم يكن ذكره سبباً لحضوره بل كان الأمر بالضد فإن قرب حضوره أشعر النفس حتى أنذرت به. وكذلك الحال في الرؤية بالالتفات فإن قرب المتلفت إليه هو الذي حرك النفس حتى استعملت آلة الالتفات. واستقصاء هذا غير لائق بشرطنا في ترك الإطالة ولولا ذلك لذكرنا أموراً بديعة من هذا الجنس وفي هذا القدر كفاية وبلاغ فيما سألت عنه.

فأما مسألتك عن الاتفاق وهل هو الوفاق وما الوفاق؟ فقد وعدنا^٤ بالكلام فيه في مسألة تبيء بعد هذه ولعمري إن الاتفاق هو الوفاق لأنه افتعال منه والأصل واحد والاشتقاق دال عليه وسنخبر عنه إخباراً كافياً عند ذكر البخت والجذ إن شاء الله.

٣٠٣

١ الأصل: فإذا. ٢ ط: في السواء. ٣ ط: وهذا الإنذار. ٤ الأصل: يتلوا. ٥ الأصل: وعدناك.

the substantive term for “extension” (*madd*). Since the soul is above nature and its actions are above motion—that is to say, independent of time—the way it regards things is not the product of past, present, or future—rather, for it everything is on the same plane. Unhindered by matter and material objects or by the barriers put up by the senses and sensible objects, it apprehends things, and things appear to it timelessly. This feature of the soul may be more pronounced in some humoral mixtures, even to the point of divinatory powers and the ability to foretell events. The events foretold sometimes lie in the near, sometimes in the distant, future; the more distant the time and the longer the interval, the more marvelous, the stranger people find it. The time draws nearer and nearer to the present and the distance grows shorter and shorter, until the events foretold are separated from the present by only a small margin of time. This is what happens to the person who speaks of someone who then appears at the very moment he is mentioned. It’s not the act of mentioning him that causes him to appear; rather the reverse: the proximity of his appearance apprises the soul and enables it to foretell it. The same thing applies to the case of turning around and seeing someone; the proximity of the person you turn around to see moves the soul and makes it direct the bodily apparatus to turn around. A deeper examination of this topic would not comport with our stipulation that we eschew lengthy exposition. Otherwise, there are marvelous things of this sort we could have brought up. This amount suffices for the purpose and provides an adequate account of the object of your inquiry.

We have promised to speak in a subsequent question to your question about coincidence, whether it consists in concord, and what accord is. I can assure you, however, that “coincidence” does indeed consist in “concord”; morphologically “coincidence” derives from it, and they have a single, shared root, as is indicated by the etymology.³⁵ We will give an adequate account of this when discussing “luck” and “fortune,” God willing.

33.3

مسألة تشتمل على نيف وعشرين مسألة طبيعية ولغوية وفيها الكلام في البخت والاتفاق

١٠٣٤ ما الخصائص الفارقة بين حقائق المعاني في ألفاظ دائرة بين أهل العقل والدين وهي أسماء طابقت أغراضها لكنها خفية الأصول جلية المعاني وهي ما القوة والقدرة والاستطاعة والطاقة^١ والشجاعة والنجدة والبطولة والمعونة والتوفيق واللفظ والمصلحة والتمكّن والحذلان والنصرة والولاية والملك والملك والرزق والدولة والجدّ والحظّ ولم أذكر البخت فإنه ليس من كلام العرب ومعناه قد التبس ببعض هذه الأشياء وكذلك المبخوت فأما المحدود والمحدود والمحظوظ والمحظي والجدّي فكل ذلك مراد به معنى ومرميّ به غاية ولكنّ البيان عنها عزيز والتحقيق فيها شديد.

الجواب

٢٠٣٤ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله وجدت في هذه المسائل مع اختلافها ما يتقارب وما يتباعد في المعاني فألفت الشكل إلى شكله ولم أراع تأليفها ونظمها. أمّا القوّة فاسم مشترك يقال على القوّة التي هي في مقابلة الفعل وهذا اسم خاصّ يستعمله الحكماء حسب ولا يعرفه الجمهور ومعناه أنّه الشيء الممكن أن يظهر فيصير موجوداً بالفعل فيقال الجرو مبصر بالقوّة والإنسان كاتب بالقوّة وإن لم يكن في الوقت كذلك ويقال على القوّة التي يشار بها إلى معان موجودة للنفس كقوّة الإبصار والإدراك والفكر والتمييز والغضب وما أشبهها^٢ ويقال على المعنى الذي في الحديد وأشباهه من الصلابة والامتناع على الثنيّ والكسر ويقال أيضاً على البطش والجلد الذي يختصّ الحيوان وأظنك إياها عنيت بالمسألة لأنها ذكرت مع الطاقة والقدرة وقد أصبت حدّاً يعمّ أكثر هذه الأسماء ويخصّ مسألتك وهو أنّ القوّة حال لذي القوّة تظهر عندما هي

١ الأصل وط: زيدت "فهو وفاء القوّة بالمحمول عليها". ٢ الأصل: أشباهها.

On the meaning of certain ordinary and technical terms—
a question comprising some twenty questions, natural and
linguistic, and including a discussion of luck and coincidence

What are the features that distinguish between the basic meanings denoted by different expressions used widely by people of reason and religion? These are terms that carry specific import, with obscure roots and crystal-clear meanings. What then is meant by the terms “power,” “control,” “ability,” “capacity,” “courage,” “bravery,” “valor,” “succor,” “granting a favorable outcome,” “grace,” “general good,” “being enabled,” “desertion,” “assistance,” “command,” “sovereignty,” “possession,” “provision,” “reign,” “fortune,” and “lot”? I have not mentioned “luck,” because the word does not belong to the Arabic language.³⁶ Its meaning has been confused with some of these terms, as has the term “lucky.” All the terms “fortunate,” “hapless,” “endowed with a good lot,” “possessing a good lot,” and “possessing good fortune” carry particular meanings and serve particular ends, but it is difficult to expound them and arduous to inquire into them. 34.1

Miskawayh’s response

Notwithstanding the diverse character of these questions, I found some notions to be more closely related and some less, so I have grouped the similar notions together and have not bound myself to the original arrangement. “Power” is an equivocal term used to refer to potentiality as against actuality. This is a specialized term only used by philosophers and not known to the generality of people. It refers to something that may possibly be manifested and enter actual existence. Thus one says a puppy has sight *in potentia*, or a person is a writer *in potentia*, even if this is not presently the case. It is also applied to the different elements the soul possesses, such as the powers of vision, perception, thought, discernment, anger, and the like. It is also used to refer to the quality that characterizes iron and similar objects, namely, firmness and insusceptibility to being bent or broken. It is also used to refer to the physical strength and hardiness that animals possess, and I believe this is what you had in mind in asking the question, because you mentioned this term alongside the terms “capacity” and “control.” I have hit upon a definition that encompasses most of these significations and is relevant to your question: “Power” is a state 34.2

قوة عليه فأما شرح هذا الحدّ بحسب ما يختصّ الحيوان فهو اعتدال في الأعصاب بين الرطوبة واليبوسة وذلك أنّ العصب إذا أفرط في الرطوبة استرخى عند العمل فتنبّي مستعمله ضعيفاً وإذا أفرط في اليبوسة انبتر وانقطع أو خشي عليه ذلك ولم عند العمل فكان مستعمله أيضاً ضعيفاً. وليس يُطلق اسم القوة إلا بالإضافة وعلى حسب موضوع ذي القوة فقد يقال رجل قويّ وجمل ضعيف كما يقال نملة قوية وفيل ضعيف.

فأما الطاقة فهي^١ وفاء القوة بالمحمول عليها وهي مستعملة في الحيوان وفي قوته خاصة وفي الأثقال الجسمانية. وقد تُستعمل أيضاً في الأثقال النفسانية تشبيهاً واستعارة فيقال فلان يطيق حمل مائة من^٢ أي في قوته وفاء بهذا الثقل إذا حمّله ويقال فلان لا يطيق^٣ الكلام ولا يطيق النظر ولا الغم والسرور فإن استُعمل في غير الحيوان فعلى المجاز البعيد. فأما القدرة فهي تمكن من إظهار هذه القوة عند الإرادة ولذلك تختصّ بالحيوان ولا تُستعمل في غيره البتة لما حدّدها به. وأما الاستطاعة فهي استفعال من الطاعة أي استدعاؤها هذا بحسب الاشتقاق ودليل اللغة فأما على الحقيقة فهي كلمة مستعارة وذلك أنك لا تستدعي طاعة شيء لك إلا وأنت تستحقها منه بالقدرة عليه. وتلخيص هذا الكلام أنك إذا قلت استطعت كذا وأنا أستطيع الأمر أي إذا استدعيت طاعته أجابني وهي تؤول إلى معنى القدرة وإن كانت أقدم منها بالذات وكان بينهما فرق من هذا الوجه لأن النفس هي التي تستدعي طاعة الشيء بالقدرة عليه وتحكم بإجابته لها وهذه المعاني مضمّنة لفظة الاستطاعة واشتقاق الاسم دالّ عليه فتأملته تجده واضحاً إن شاء الله.

فأما الشجاعة فهي استعمال قوة الغضب بقدر ما ينبغي وفي الوقت الذي ينبغي وفيما ينبغي وعلى الحال التي تنبغي وهي خلق يصدر عنه هذا الفعل على ما يجده

١ الأصل: فهو. ٢ الأصل: منّا. ٣ ط: يطيق. ٤ ط: العصب.

of the entity that possesses it which manifests itself when confronted with its specific object. To clarify this definition as it pertains to animals: It consists in a balance between moisture and dryness in the nerves. For excess moisture in the nerves makes them flaccid when they are worked, and the one working them is then called weak. Excess dryness, in contrast, makes them snap and break or creates the risk of that, and makes them hurt when they are worked, and the one working them is also weak. The term “power” is only ever used relatively and in accordance with the standards relevant to its particular subject. One might thus speak of “a strong man” and a “weak camel,” just as one might speak of a “strong ant” and a “weak elephant.”

“Capacity” consists in the adequacy of a power to the demand placed on it; it is used in connection with animals and their strength more specifically, and in connection with corporeal burdens. It might also be used in connection with burdens of the soul by way of comparison and metaphor. One thus says, “So-and-so is capable of lifting forty kilos,” meaning his power is adequate to this weight when placed on him. One also says, “So-and-so is not capable of speaking,” “is not capable of rational speculation,” or “is not capable of bearing sorrow and joy.” When used in connection with inanimate beings, it is by way of extremely figurative speech. “Control” is the ability to manifest this power when one wills; this is why it pertains exclusively to animals and is not used in connection with anything else whatsoever on account of the definition we have given. “Ability” (*istiṭā’ah*) derives from the word for obedience (*tā’ah*), adopting the morphological form that indicates a request for obedience, according to the rules of derivation and the evidence of language. The basic meaning of this expression is metaphorical, based on the idea that we can only demand obedience from something when we have a claim to expect it on account of our control over it. The gist of this is that if you say “I was able to do such and such a thing” or “I am able to do this,” you mean “If I demand obedience from it, it will offer it to me.” The notion of ability goes back to that of control, even though the latter is essentially prior to the former; in this respect there is a distinction between the two. For the soul demands obedience from something on account of its control over it, and decrees that it must respond affirmatively to it. These elements are implicit in the word “ability,” and this is proved by the derivation of the term. So dwell on this, and you will find it clear, God willing.

“Courage” is the employment of the power of anger in the right measure, at the right time, for the right object, and in the right circumstance. It constitutes

34.3

34.4

العقل وهي حال واسطة بين طرفين مذومين أحدهما زيادة بالإفراط والآخرى زيادة بالتفريط. فأما من جانب الزيادة فأن تُستعمل بأكثر مما ينبغي في سائر شرائطها فتسبى تهوراً وأما من جانب التقصان فأن تُستعمل بأقل مما ينبغي في سائر شرائطها فتسبى جنباً. والشجاعة لفظة مدح كالجود والعفة وما جرى مجراها وأول ما يظهر منها أثرها في الإنسان نفسه إذا قُمت شهواته فاستعمل منها قدر ما يحده العقل بسائر شرائطها ثم يظهر أثرها في غيره إذا قصد آخر بضم أو ظم فإنه يدفعه عن نفسه بالشروط المذكورة من غير إفراط ولا تفريط. وأما الجدة فهي في معنى الشجاعة أعني أنها لفظة مدح وتؤدى عن معناها إلا أنها بحسب اللغة مأخوذة من الارتقاع والرجل الجدد كأنه المرتفع عن الضيم الذي علا عن مرتبة من يستدل ويمتن كالنجد من الأرض الذي هو ضد الغور.

وَأَمَّا البطولة وإن كانت في معنى الشجاعة فإنها مختصة بما يظهر في الغير ولا تُستعمل في قهر الإنسان شهوات نفسه وهي تابعة للفروسة كما يقال فارس بطل وأخلق بالبطولة أن تكون عائدة إلى معنى البطلان لأن صاحبها أبداً متعرض لذلك من الفرسان لا سيما والعرب لا يميز بين الشجاعة الممدوحة وبين الزيادة فيها المذمومة بل عندها أن الإفراط هو الشجاعة. فأما ما سميناه نحن شجاعة فهو بالإضافة إلى ما سمت به جبن كما فعلوا ذلك في السخاء والجود فإنهم استعملوا هذا المذهب بعينه. وأقول إن الشجاعة ربما أدت إلى بطلان الحياة وكان الموت حينئذ خيراً جيداً ممدوحاً لما وقع بحسب الشجاعة أعني على ما حده العقل وكما ينبغي وعلى سائر الشروط لأنه لو قصر صاحبها أعني الشجاعة لكان مذموماً جباناً كما بينا وأوضحنا وكما تقدم من شرحنا معنى الموت الجيد والحياة الرديئة فيما تقدم.

فَأَمَّا المعونة فهي إمداد القوة بقوة أخرى من جنسها خارجة عنها والخذلان ترك هذا الإمداد مع التمكن منه فإذا كانت المعونة من الشركان نافعة مرة وضارة مرة لجهلهم

١ الأصل: منهما.

a character trait from which this action issues in accordance with reason, and is a mean state between two blameworthy extremes, one going too far in the direction of excess and the other going too far in the direction of deficiency. Excess occurs when this power is employed more than is right with respect to all the various conditions; this is called “rashness.” Deficiency occurs when it is employed less than is right with respect to all the various conditions; this is called “cowardice.” “Courage” is a term of praise, like generosity, temperance, and the like. The first manifestation of its effect relates to the person, and this is when it subdues his appetites and he only employs them as determined by reason, in accordance with all the various conditions. It also manifests its effect on others, when one person subjects another to injustice and wrongdoing, and he repulses him, in accordance with the aforementioned conditions, without excess or deficiency. “Bravery” is similar to “courage”; it is a term of praise that expresses the same meaning. But from a linguistic perspective, it comes from the notion of “elevation.” The man who is called “indomitable” is, as it were, elevated above wrongdoing, rising above the level of those who are abased and despised, like a highland, which is the contrary of a lowland.

Though “valor” is similar to “courage,” it specifically concerns actions relating to others, and is not used of a person’s conquest of his appetites. Moreover, it is an adjunct of horsemanship; one thus speaks of a “valiant horseman.” The notion of “valor” (*buṭūlah*) is appropriately grounded in that of “destruction” (*buṭlān*), for horsemen who possess this quality are constantly exposed to that fate, particularly given the fact that Arabs do not distinguish between the courage that is praiseworthy and the excess that is blameworthy, but rather consider the excess to constitute courage. What we call “courage” constitutes cowardice by their standards, as with liberality and generosity, for their approach to these is the same. I will add that sometimes courage leads to the destruction of life, and death is then good, excellent, and praiseworthy, having occurred in accordance with courage, that is to say, according to what reason determines, in the right manner, and on the basis of the other conditions. For should anyone fall short, I mean with respect to courage, he would be blameworthy and cowardly, as we have explained and clarified, and as emerged from our earlier exposition of the good death and the bad life.

“Succor” is the support of one power through an extraneous power of the same category. “Desertion” is the failure to provide this support despite having the means to do so. “Succor,” when it proceeds from human agents, can be either

34.5

34.6

بعواقب الأمور ولكن اسم المعونة اسم مدح لأنّ المعمول عليه بين الناس هو النيّة والقصد في الوقت لا عواقب الأمور. فأما إن كانت من الله تعالى فليست إلا نافعة غير ضارة لعلمه بالعواقب ولأنّ الله تعالى لا يفعل إلا الخير والنافع وهو متعال عن الشّرّ مزمّه عنه جلّ ذكره وتقدّس اسمه وعلا علوّه كبيراً عما يقول الظالمون. وإذا تبيّن ما المعونة وكيف تقع من البشر ومن البارئ تعالى فقد تبيّن ضدها الذي يسمّى الخذلان فلا معنى لإطالة الكلام فيه. فأما اللطف والمصلحة فلفظتان مختصتان بأصحاب الكلام وإن كانتا أيضاً معروفين عند الجمهور ومعناهما عند القوم معروف وأنت أبقاك الله ربّان شعبان من كلامهم ومعانيهم وأغراضهم غير محتاج أن تتكلّف لك إيضاح شيء منها زادك الله وأمتع بالنعمة فيك.

v.٣٤ وأما التمكين فهو تفعيل من الإمكان والإمكان في الشيء هو جواز إظهار ما في قوته إلى الفعل وطبيعته بين الواجب والممتنع وذلك أنك إذا تصوّرت طبيعة الواجب كان طرفاً وإبازائه في الطرف الآخر أعني ما هو في غاية البعد منه طبيعة الممتنع وبينهما طبيعة الممكن ولأجل هذا صار للممكن عرض كبير ولم يكن وللواجب لا للممتنع عرض^٢ لأنّ بين الطرفين مسافة تحتل الانقسام الكثير. فأما الطرف فلا مسافة له والمسافة التي بين هذين الطرفين أعني الواجب والممتنع إذا لحظت وسطها على الصّحة فهو أحقّ شيء وأولاه بطبيعة الممكن وكلّما قربت هذه النقطة التي كانت وسطاً إلى أحد الطرفين كان ممكناً بشرط وتقييد فقل يمكن قريب من الواجب وممكن بعيد منه وكذلك يُقال في الممكن القريب من الممتنع والبعيد منه فأما إذا كان في الوسط فهو ممكن على الإطلاق وحينئذ ليس هو بالواجب أولى منه بالممتنع ولا هو بأن يظهر من قوته إلى الفعل أولى من أن يبقى بحاله في القوّة.

١ ط: غرض. ٢ ط: غرض.

beneficial or harmful, on account of their ignorance of the consequences of things. But “succor” is a term of praise, for according to common usage it is the intention and aim one has at the time of acting, not its consequences, that is the focus. Succor from God, in contrast, is ever beneficial, never harmful, because of His knowledge of the consequences of things, and because He only does what is good and beneficial, being too exalted to do evil and beyond its reach—august is His mention, sanctified His name, too lofty for what the miscreants say! So, if we have clarified what succor consists in and what form it takes when effected by human beings and when effected by God, we have also clarified “desertion,” its contrary, and there is no need to elaborate on it. “Grace” and “the general good” form the preserve of dialectical theologians, even though people generally are also familiar with them and aware of their meaning. You—God keep you—have steeped yourself in their notions and discussions, so you do not need me to take the trouble to clarify to you anything that pertains to them. May God increase your knowledge and grant you enjoyment of His blessings.

“Enabling” (*tamkīn*) derives from “possibility” (*imkān*), which is the possibility that what is contained by something as a potentiality emerge into actuality. Its nature lies between the necessary and the impossible. The nature of the necessary can be envisaged as an extreme, and at the opposite extreme—I mean the point farthest from it—lies the nature of the impossible, while the nature of the possible lies in between. This is why the possible has a wide compass, which neither the necessary nor the impossible have, for between the two extremes there extends a space that can be divided at many points, whereas the extremes do not occupy any space. Within the space that extends between these two extremes—the necessary and the possible—turn your attention to the point that lies exactly in the middle—this is what is most entitled and best fitted to be identified as the nature of the possible. Whenever the middle point approaches one of the extremes, it is the possible subject to a condition and qualification; and thus, people speak of a possible close to the necessary and a possible far from it. Similarly, they speak of a possible close to the impossible and one far from it. In contrast, if it lies in the middle, it is possible absolutely, and in that case there is no overriding reason for it to be associated with the necessary rather than with the impossible, nor is there an overriding reason for it to emerge from potentiality to actuality instead of remaining in its current state of potentiality.

34.7

٨٠٣٤

فالتمكن هو مصدر مكن تمكيناً كما تقول كرم تكريماً وكلّم تكليماً والإمكان مصدر أمكن إمكاناً كما تقول أكرم إكراماً والممكن مفعل منه كما تقول مكرم وأما الاسم الذي منه اشتق هذا الفعل فلم يُستعمل في اللغة ولا جاء منه ذلك لأنّ الشيء لا فعل له إلا الفعل المتعدي بالهمزة فإذا قلت في الشيء هو ممكن فكأنك قلت إن هذا الشيء الذي في القوة ولم يُستعمل له اسم وهو في التقدير وتقديره الممكن قد أعطاك ذاته وجعل من نفسه بحيث تخرجه إلى الفعل بالإرادة والإمكان مصدر أمكن الشيء من ذاته فأما التمكين فهو فعل شيء آخر بك إذا جعلك من هذا الشيء بحيث تخرجه إلى الفعل بالإرادة وهو مصدر مكن وهذا التشديد يجيء في مثل هذا الموضع من اللغة إذا أريد به تكرير الفعل وتأكيده كما تقول ضرب وضرب وشدّ وشدّد وقد يجيء التمكين بمعنى آخر وهو أن يكون تعبيراً مشتقاً من المكان كما تقول مكنت الحجر في موضعه إذا وفّيته حقه من المكان ليلزمه ولا يضطرب ومنه تمكّن الفارس من السرج وتمكّن الإنسان من مجلسه وتمكّن الإنسان من الأمير من هذا على التشبيه والاستعارة وبين هذا المعنى والمعنى الأول بون بعيد كما تراه.

٩٠٣٤

وأما الرزق فهو وصول حاجات الحيّ إليه بما هو حيّ وههنا أشياء توصل إلى هذه الحاجات وهي عوض منها ونائبة عنها أعني ما يتعامل عليه فجعلت كأنها هي وسميت أيضاً أرزاقاً لما أدت إليها والأصل الأول قال الله تعالى ﴿وَلَهُمْ رِزْقُهُمْ فِيهَا بُكْرَةً وَعَشِيًّا﴾. ولما كانت أسباب الوصول إلى الحاجات كثيرة فمنها قريب ومنها بعيد ومنها طبيعي ومنها غير طبيعي وغير الطبيعي منها اتفاق ومنها غير اتفاق وغلط الناس ضرورياً من الغلط منها أنهم راموا أن يجعلوا الأسباب الكثيرة سبباً واحداً ومنها أنهم راموا في الأسباب البعيدة القرب فلما خفي عنهم ذلك

١ الأصل: ونائب.

“Enabling” is the noun of the verb “to enable.” The principal parts of the verb are thus “to enable/enabling,” as in “to honor/honoring” and “to speak/speaking.” “Possibility” is the noun of the verb “to make possible.” The principal parts of the verb are thus “to make possible/possibility,” as in “to show honor/honoring.” The term “that which is possible” adopts the same morphological pattern as “that which honors.” The noun from which the verb theoretically derives is not used in the Arabic lexicon, nor does it come from it. For the thing has no verb connected with it other than the verb expressed with the transitive prefix. So if you say that a certain thing is possible, it is as though you were saying that this thing which exists *in potentia*—for which there is no ordinary noun in use, but which exists virtually, and its virtual meaning is “that which is possible”—has given itself to you, and has put you in the position to make it actual through your voluntary choice. “Possibility” is the noun from the expression “something gave power over itself.” “Enabling” is an action performed on someone by something else whereby it puts him in the position to make that thing actual through voluntary choice. It is the verbal noun of “to enable,” and the geminate verb form appears at this kind of lexical juncture to signify iteration and intensity of action, the way one says “he hit” and “he thrashed,” “he was firm” and “he demanded emphatically.” The term “enabling” can also carry another sense, namely, as a verbal noun deriving from the term “place,” the way we say, “I established the stone in its position,” when we give it the amount of space it requires so that it sticks firmly to the spot. In the same sense, we speak of a horseman as being “firmly fixed” in the saddle, and of a person as being “firmly established” in his seat. Talk of a person “establishing himself” with an emir falls in the same class by way of comparative and figurative use. As you can see, there is a vast difference between this meaning and the first.³⁷

34.8

“Provision” consists in a living being’s attainment of what it needs as a living being. There are things that lead to the attainment of these needs, substituting for them and serving in their place—I am referring to the bases of human exchanges—and they are assigned the same status and are also called “provisions” insofar as they conduce to them. But the foundation is the former. God said: «There they shall have their provision at dawn and evening».³⁸ There are many causes through which these needs are obtained, some proximate, some remote, some natural and some nonnatural, and among the non-natural, some that depend on chance and some that do not. Consequently, people have fallen into several kinds of error. One error is their attempt to

34.9

ولم يجدوه حيث طلبوه لحقتهم الحيرة وبقدر جهلهم بالسبب عرض لهم التجب من الأمر .

١٠٠٣٤ فأما الدولة فن قولك دال الشيء بين القوم وتداولوه بينهم إذا اعتوروه بالمعاطاة قال الله تعالى ﴿ كَيْ لَا يَكُونَ دُولَةً بَيْنَ الْأَغْنِيَاءِ مِنْكُمْ ﴾ أي ليتناوره الكل ولا يخص قوماً دون قوم وهي لفظة محتصة بالأمور الدنيوية المحبوبة لا سيما في الغلبة وأسبابها أيضاً كثيرة فمنها بعيد ومنها قريب ومنها طبيعي ومنها غير طبيعي وغير الطبيعي منقسم إلى الإرادي والاتقائي وكل واحد من هذه الأقسام أيضاً ينقسم وتبعده علىه وتقرب وتخلط ويتركب ضروب التراكيب فإذا فقد الجمهور وجود سببه عرض لهم فيه من الحيرة والتجب ما عرض في الرزق .

١١٠٣٤ فأما التوفيق والاتفاق والموافقة والوفاق فقد مرّ ذكر كل واحد منها منفرداً وفي مسائل متفرقة ووعدنا الكلام عليها في هذا الباب مع ذكر البخت والجد لأنها أشكال وقرائب وهذه الألفاظ الأربعة التي عدناها متقاربة المعاني وهي مشتقة من الوفاق وهي من ألفاظ الإضافة لأنها لا تقع إلا بين شيئين أو بين أشياء ويقال هذا وفق هذا أي لفته وطبقه وملائمه ويستعمل في كل متلائمين من جسمين وخلقين وغيرهما وفي المثل وافق سنن طبقة وافقه فاعتقه فقولك وافق فاعل من الوفاق وهذا الوزن يجيء في كلام العرب لما كان بين اثنين وكان كل واحد منهما وافق الآخر وهو موافق كما قيل ضارب صاحبه فهو مضارب . والاتفاق افتعال من الوفاق وهذا الوزن يجيء فيما لم يكن فاعله خارجاً منه كما يقال اقترب واعتلق واضطرب . والأصل في

reduce many causes to a single cause, and another is their search for proximity in remote causes. When that proved elusive, and they failed to uncover it where they sought it, they were plunged into perplexity, and the wonder they felt at the matter was proportionate to their ignorance of the cause.

“Mastery” comes from the expression “a certain thing passed in turns among people” and “they passed it in turns among themselves,” when they give it to each other alternately. God said: «so that it be not a thing taken in turns among the rich of you»,³⁹ that is to say, so that everyone takes it in turns and it does not become the sole preserve of one set of people to the exclusion of another. It is a term that pertains to mundane objects of desire, particularly the achievement of domination. Its causes are also numerous, some remote and some proximate, some natural and some nonnatural. Among the non-natural, some depend on volition and some on chance. Each of these divisions admits of further subdivisions, involving causes that are remote, proximate, or mixed, and entering into different types of compounds. So when the multitude fails to discern the cause, they are struck by the same sense of perplexity and wonder that they experience with provision. 34.10

The terms “granting a favorable outcome,” (*taufīq*), “coincidence,” (*ittifāq*), “accord,” (*muwāfaqaḥ*), and “concord” (*wifāq*), have been mentioned above discretely and in a number of different questions, and we promised to treat them in this section, along with the terms “luck” and “fortune,” for they are all similar and closely connected. The first four terms listed are close in meaning and derive from the term “agreement” (*wafq*). They belong to the class of relational terms, for they are only used to speak of the relation between two or more things. We say that a certain thing is in agreement with another, meaning that it conforms to it, corresponds with it, and is congruent with it. This is applied to any pair of things that exhibit congruence, whether bodies, character traits, or other things. As the saying has it, “Shann accorded with Ṭabaqaḥ,” that is, fell in with him and embraced him.⁴⁰ So the term “to accord” (*wāfaqa*) derives from “accordance” (*wafq*) and adopts the verbal morphological pattern used in Arabic when there are two entities at issue. Each of these entities is said to accord with the other, and is said to be accordant with it, as when we say that a person “contended with,” and is “contending with” another. The term “coincidence” derives from “accordance,” on the morphological pattern used when the subject itself is affected by the action, the way we say that a person or thing “drew near,” “held fast,” or “became disturbed.” 34.11

اتفق واتفق وكل هذا مشتق من الوفق ولا هذا الوزن يجيء فيما لم يكن فاعله إلا الذي ذكرناه.

١٢٠٣٤ فإذا اجتمع شيان أو أشياء على ملاءمة بينهما بسبب إرادتي^٢ مجهول وكان منهما موافقة لإرادة إنسان ما كان اتفاقاً له ولا بد أن يكون فيه قسط من الإرادة^٣ ونصيب من القصد والاختيار فإن لم يكن للإرادة فيه نصيب وإنما وقع بسبب طبيعي مجهول وكان فيه أمر نافع لإنسان كان بختاً له. ولما كانت الأمور بعضها يتم بأسباب طبيعية وبعضها بأسباب إرادية وبعضها يترتب فيكون تمامه بأسباب طبيعية وأسباب إرادية وكل واحد منهما يتم منه أمر واحد محبوب أو مكروه وإن اختلفت أسبابه بحسب إنسان إنسان ونحو غرض غرض خلف بين أسمائها ليدل بها على اختلاف أسبابها. وما كان من الأمور له سبب طبيعي بعيد أو قريب إلا أنه مجهول ثم عرض أن يكون نافعاً لإنسان من غير إرادة ولا قصد سبب بختاً وما كان من الأمور له سبب إرادي بعيد أو قريب إلا أنه مجهول ثم عرض له أن يكون نافعاً لإنسان موافقاً لغرض له وإرادة سبب اتفاقاً ولا يشتق للإنسان اسم من هذين إلا بعد أن يتكرر له أمر أعني أنه إنما يسمى مبخوتاً إذا عرض له مرات كثيرة أن تحدث أفعال طبيعية لأسباب لها مجهولة فيتم بها أغراض مطلوبة محبوبة وأيضاً فإنما يسمى موافقاً إذا عرض له مرات كثيرة أن تقع أفعال إرادية لأسباب لها مجهولة فيتم بها له أغراض جميلة محبوبة.

١٢٠٣٤ وأنا أكشف هذين المعنيين بمثلين ليصح أمرهما وينكشف على أي رأيك تستعني أن تفهم معنى البخت لأنك لم تجده في كلام العرب كأنك حضرت على نفسك أن تفهم حقيقة إلا أن تكون في لفظ عربي فإن عدت لغة العرب رغبت عن العلوم لكأن أيدك الله لا نترك البحث عن المعاني في أي لغة كانت وبأي عبارة حصلت فأقول أما مثال البخت فإن يسقط حجر من مكان عال فيصيب رجلاً في عضوله تخبر منه

١ ط: وهذا الوزن لا يجيء. ٢ ط: إرادي. ٣ الأصل: قسط الإرادة. ٤ الأصل: البخت. ٥ الأصل: عالي. ٦ الأصل: فيصيد حلاً، وصوابه من الهامش.

So these terms derive from the term “accordance.”⁴¹ On this pattern, it is only used when the subject has the characteristic mentioned.

It is said to be a matter of coincidence when a relation of congruence unites two or more things through an unknown voluntary cause, and these things are in accord with someone’s volition; there must be an element of volition and some intention and choice involved. If volition is not involved and it has arisen through an unknown natural cause, but brings a person some benefit, it is a matter of “luck” for him. Since some things are brought about through natural causes, some through voluntary causes, and some through compounds—through both natural and voluntary causes—and since each of these may bring about something desirable or undesirable, even though its causes can vary from one person to another and from one purpose to another, contrasting names are used to refer to them in order to indicate the different kinds of causes involved. “Luck” is applied to those things with an unknown natural cause, remote or proximate, that happen to benefit a person independently of any volition or intention on his part. “Coincidence” is applied to those things with an unknown voluntary cause, remote or proximate, that happen to benefit a person and accord with a purpose or volition of his. Qualifiers that derive from these two terms are only applied to a person after something has happened to him repeatedly. That is, he is only called “lucky” if it has often been the case that natural acts occurred through unknown causes and brought about desirable and attractive ends. Similarly, a person is called “well-favored” if it has often been the case that voluntary acts occurred through unknown causes and brought about fine and desirable ends.

34.12

I will clarify these concepts using two examples, so as to set them out fully, in the open. I notice you asked to be exempted from having to understand the meaning of “luck” because you have found it does not belong to Arabic. It is as though you have forbidden yourself a truth unless it were clothed in Arabic words, so that if Arabic had not existed, you would have no desire to learn. But—may God grace you with His support—we never abandon the search for meanings, regardless of the language in which they happen to be found and the expression they happen to receive. To continue, then. The following is an example of luck: If a stone should happen to fall from an elevated place and strike a man on some part of his body, bursting open his veins and making blood flow; if the man had previously been in need of bloodletting, then the falling of the stone that burst open the vein and made blood flow would act as a

34.13

عروق ويخرج منه دم فإن كان الرجل محتاجاً قبل ذلك إلى إخراج الدم صار سقوط الجرح الذي فجر العرق وأخرج الدم سبباً لصحته ومنع المرض عنه فهذا بخت جيد فإن كان عرض للرجل أشياء كثيرة تشبه هذا فهو مبعوث وإن كان خروج الدم غير نافع للرجل ولا كان به حاجة قبل ذلك إلى إخراجِه بل تعجل بسقوط الجرح الألم وبخروج الدم سقوط القوة والوقوع في مرض كان غير مستعد له فهو بخت رديء. وأمّا المثال في الاتفاق فإن يخرج إنسان من منزله بإرادة وقصد إلا أنّهما كانا منه نحو التماس الحاجة فلي في طريقه ذلك صديقاً كان يهوى لقاءه أو غريباً كان يطلبه فلا يجده فهذا اتفاق جيد فإن عرض للرجل مثال لهذا كثير فهو موفق وإن كان لقاءه أيضاً وافق عدواً كان يهرب منه أو غريباً كان متوارياً عنه فهو اتفاق رديء والرجل إذا دام عليه مثل هذا غير موفق.

ولمّا كانت أسباب الحركات الإرادية إمّا تكون من خواطر وعوارض للنفس ليست بإرادة إذ لو كانت عن إرادة لوجب من ذلك وجود إرادات لا نهاية لها وهذا محال كانت هذه الخواطر والعوارض التي هي آثار وأفعال منسوبة إلى فاعل وقد قلنا إنّ فاعلها غير الإنسان فهي إذن فعل غيره لا محالة فإن كانت مؤذية إلى خيرات ومنافع كانت منسوبة إلى الله تعالى وهو التوفيق تفعل من الوقوع وهذا التوفيق ربّما فعله الله تعالى بالعبد من غير مسألة وربّما كان بعد مسألة وتضرع إلا أنّ الناس كافة يرغبون إلى الله تعالى فيها ويسألونه إياها دائماً في كل زمان فإذا سحخت هذه العوارض والخواطر للنفس وفزعت^٢ إلى حركات يتمّ بها وبغيرها أمر واحد مختار لإنسان ما نحو عرض جيد له كان توفيقاً وكان الرجل موفقاً.

فأمّا الجذ فكأنه اسم شامل لهذين المعنيين جميعاً لأنّ الإنسان إن وفق وبخت فهو مجدود وإن انفرّد أيضاً بأحدهما فهو مجدود أيضاً. وأمّا الحظ فهو القسم والنصيب ولمّا كان لكل إنسان نصيب من السعادة وقسط من الخير مقسوم له من الفلك

١ الأصل: التاء؛ وصوابه من الهامش. ٢ الأصل: فزعت.

cause of health and help preserve him from illness. This would constitute good luck. The man would be considered lucky if many such things happened to him. Should the flow of blood not be beneficial and the man have no prior need to have it let, but if, on the contrary, the falling of the stone caused immediate pain and the flow of blood made his power sag and made him succumb to an unanticipated illness, this would constitute bad luck. An example of coincidence is if a person should leave his house driven by a particular volition and intention—relating to the pursuit of some necessary business—and on his way he should meet a friend whom he had been wishing to meet, or an adversary he had been looking for and failing to find. That would constitute a good coincidence, and if many such things happened, the man would be considered well-favored. Should the encounter be with an enemy he was fleeing or an adversary he was trying to elude, then this would be considered a bad coincidence, and if he repeatedly experienced this kind of thing he would be considered ill-favored.

Now the causes of voluntary movements are thoughts that arise and states that occur within the soul but are not produced by volition, for if they came about through volition, this would necessitate the existence of an infinite number of volitions, and that is inconceivable. These thoughts and states that constitute effects and acts must be attributed to an agent, yet we have said that human beings are not their agent, and thus they must necessarily constitute the act of some other being. They are to be attributed to God if they lead to benefits and good things. This is the “granting of a favorable outcome,” which derives from the term “accordance.”⁴² God sometimes grants a favorable outcome without being asked, and sometimes after having been asked and supplicated—though all people perpetually request these things from God. So when these states and thoughts occur within the soul and it has recourse to movements that, in conjunction with other movements, bring about a single choiceworthy thing for someone in accordance with an excellent end of his, it constitutes the granting of a favorable outcome and the man is considered well-favored. 34.14

“Fortune” would appear to be an inclusive term that ranges over both meanings, for a person is considered fortunate if he is granted a favorable outcome and has luck, and is also considered fortunate if he only enjoys one of these two things. “Lot” refers to one’s share and portion. As everyone has a portion of happiness and a quota of good allotted to him from the celestial sphere depending on when he is born, everything of the kind that comes to him is attributed to his lot. “Hapless” means “held back,” and derives from the term 34.15

بحسب مولده كان ما يصيبه من ذلك منسوباً إلى الحظ. فأما المحدود فهو الممنوع واشتقاقه من الحد وهو المنع ويقال للبواب حداد من هذا وكان المحدود ممنوع مما يصيب غيره من الخير. والحظي والحدّي منسوبان إلى الحد والحظ كما يقال تيمّي وبكري.

١٦٠٣٤ فأما النصر فهو المعونة إلا أنه فيما أذى إلى الغلبة والقهر وقد قلنا ما المعونة فيما سلف. وأما الولاية فاسم مشترك وتصرفه بحسب تصرف اسم المولى أعني أنه يكون من فوق ويكون من أسفل إلا أن الحقيقة فيهما أنهما حال توجب اختصاصاً وتحققاً يدعو الأعلى إلى الحنو والشفقة والأسفل إلى النصيحة والطاعة. وإذا أخذ هذا الاسم بحسب الشريعة وأنه لفظ شرعيّ حد بقدر ذلك المعنى المشار إليه وإن كان الأصل ما ذكرناه.

١٧٠٣٤ فأما ملك الشيء فهو التفرد بنفاذ الحكم فيه. وهذا قد يكون بالطبيعة والشريعة وبالاصطلاح. أما بالطبيعة فملك الإنسان لأعضائه وآلاته الطبيعية وحركاته التي يصرّفها على إرادته. وأما بالشريعة فمثل ملك الرق بالسبي لمن خالف أصول الشرع. وأما بالاصطلاح فمثل المفاوضات التي تقع بين المتعاملين. فأما الملك فهو الملك إلا أنه أكثر عموماً وأظهر استيلاء وهو مع قهر ونفوذ الأمر فيه على طريق عموم المصلحة بالشفقة فإذا كان بحسب الشرع والقيام بقوانينه وإنفاذ أحكامه وحمل الناس عليه طوعاً وكرهاً ورغبة ورهبة ونظراً لهم كافة بلا هوى ولا عصبية فهو الملك الحقيقي الذي يستحقّ هذا الاسم ويستوجه بحسب معناه وإن لم يكن بحسب الشرع وشروطه التي ذكرناها فهو غلبة والرجل متغلب ولا يجب أن يسمّى ملكاً ولا صناعته ملكية ولا نفوذ أمره بحسب الملك. وقد استبان من هذا الكلام حقيقة الملك والفرق

١ الأصل: المعاضات.

which means “holding back.” This is why the term “door holder” is applied to a doorman.⁴³ The good that comes to other people is, as it were, “held back” from the person described as “hapless.” The terms “possessing a good lot” (*ḥaẓẓī*) and “possessing good fortune” (*jaddī*) are qualifiers that refer back to the terms “fortune” (*jadd*) and “lot” (*ḥaẓẓ*), the way we describe a member of the tribe of Tamīm as a “Tamīmī” and a member of Bakr as a “Bakrī.”

“Assistance” refers specifically to the type of succor that leads to domination and conquest. We have already discussed what “succor” means. “Command” is an equivocal term, and its inflection follows the inflection of the term “master, patron” or “servant, client”—that is to say, it has one meaning taken from the superior party and another taken from the inferior party.⁴⁴ But the fundamental meaning in both cases is a state entailing a privileged relationship and entitlements, which incites the superior party to show compassion and solicitude and the inferior party to offer honest counsel and obedience. If this term is taken in accordance with the religious Law and as a religious term, then it should be defined on the basis of the meaning indicated, even though the original sense is what we have mentioned. 34.16

“Possession” means to have exclusive effective authority over something. This may be established by nature, by the religious Law, and by convention. An example of possession established by nature is the ownership a person has over his limbs, his natural organs, and his movements, which he disposes in accordance with his will. An example of possession established through the religious Law is slave ownership that results from taking captive those who contravene the fundamentals of the religious Law. An example of possession established by convention is the negotiations between those engaged in transactions. “Sovereignty” is identical with possession but with a more general reach and a more manifest element of control; it also involves coercion. The implementation of power in its case follows general interest based on solicitude. True sovereignty, that which deserves the name and necessarily attracts it in accordance with its meaning, is if it operates in accordance with the religious Law—upholding its ordinances, carrying out its rulings, compelling people to obey it, whether it agrees or conflicts with their wishes, be it by exciting their desires or their fears, and considering all of them without caprice or bias. If it does not operate in accordance with the religious Law and its abovementioned provisions, it constitutes an act of usurpation and the man exercising it is a usurper. He must not be called a “king,” nor should his craft 34.17

بينه وبين المتعلّب وإن كان شرح ذلك يضيق عن هذا المكان لكن الإشارة إليه
كهاية 'بالغة'.

مسألة

١٠٣٥ ما معنى قول الناس هذا من الله وهذا بالله وهذا إلى الله وهذا على الله وهذا من
تدبير الله وهذا بتدبير الله وهذا بإرادة الله وهذا بعلم الله؟ وحكاية طويلة في إثر هذه
المسألة عن شيخ هذه المسألة عن شيخ فاضل مقرظ وجوابات له.

الجواب

٢٠٣٥ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله أمّا الناس ومقصدهم بهذه الحروف من المعاني فلا
يمكن أن يُعذّر له لكثرة وجوه مقاصدهم واختلاف آرائهم ومذاهبهم وليس من
العدل تكليفنا ذلك ولو ذهبنا نعدّد آراء الناس لطلال فكيف الاعتذار لهم وتأويل
أقوالهم وأنا أضمن بالجملة أن أعترفك وجه الصواب عندي في هذه المسائل وما أذهب
إليه وأجتهد لك في إيضاحه على غاية الاختصار والإيماء كما شرطته في الرسالة التي
صدّرت بها. فأقول إن جميع ما يطلق على الله تعالى ذكره من هذه المعاني وما يُنسب
إليه من الأفعال والأسماء والصفات إنما هو على المجاز والتسّميح وليس يطابق شيء من
حقائق ما نتعارفه بيننا بهذه الألفاظ شيئاً مما هناك. وأول ذلك أنّ لفظه من في هذه
المسألة تُستعمل في اللغة وبحسب ما قاله التحيّون لابتداء الغاية ولفظة إلى لانتهاى الغاية
والباء للاستعانة وكذلك سائر الحروف لها معان مبيّنة عندهم. ولست أطلق شيئاً
من هذه الحقائق في الله عزّ وجلّ إلا مجازاً فإني لا أقول إنّ لفعله ابتداء ولا نهاية

١ ط: كافية.

be called “kingship,” and the power he implements is not in accordance with sovereignty. The meaning of “king” and the difference between a true king and a usurper have emerged plainly from this discussion. A fuller explanation of that point would exceed the space allowed here, but a brief reference suffices.

On the meaning of certain prepositional expressions concerning God

What do people mean when they say, “This is from God,” “This is through God,” “This is for God,” “This is on God,” “This is by God’s arrangement,” “This is through God’s arrangement,” “This is through God’s will,” and “This is through God’s knowledge”? There is also a long report at the end of this question citing a highly lauded, distinguished teacher and mentioning some of his responses. 35.1

Miskawayh’s response

It is impossible to answer for people in general and for the meanings they attach to these prepositions, given the plethora of meanings they attach to them and the variety of their views and approaches. It is unfair to charge us with this task; merely cataloguing people’s views would be a lengthy venture, let alone answering for them and explaining their statements. What I can offer, taken in general, is to acquaint you with what I take to be the correct stance on these questions and with my own approach to them, and I will strive to set it out for you with the utmost brevity and succinctness, as stipulated in your prefatory epistle. I respond, then, as follows. All notions of this kind that are predicated of God and all acts, names, and attributes that are ascribed to Him are applied figuratively and by way of expansive usage—none of the literal meanings we ordinarily understand by these terms corresponds to anything that obtains in that domain. To begin with, according to the grammarians, the preposition “from” in these questions is used in ordinary language to denote the beginning of an aim, the preposition “for” to denote the end of an aim, and the preposition “through” to denote the means used. The other prepositions likewise bear meanings clearly expounded by the grammarians. I do not apply any of these literal meanings to God in anything but a figurative sense, for I do not say that His action has a beginning or an end or that He uses anything as 35.2

ولا له استعانة بشيء فطلق عليه الباء أعني أن يُقال هذا بتدبير الله ولا تدبير هناك ولا حاجة به إلى هذا الفعل ولا غيره.

وكذلك أقول في سائر الأفعال المنسوبة إليه وكذلك أقول في الأسماء والصفات ^{٣٠٥} التي أطلقت ورخص فيها صاحب الشريعة وإنما أتبع فيها الأثر وامتثل باستعمالها الأمر والآفن ذا الذي يُعطي حقيقة الرحمن الرحيم وغيرهما من الأوصاف في البارئ المتعالي عن الانفعالات وإنما الرحمة انفعال للنفس تصدر بحسبها أفعال محمودة بيننا وليس هناك شيء من هذه المعاني والحقائق ولكن لما كان الإنسان قدير الجهد والوسع وليس عليه ما لا يبي به ولا يطيقه أطلق أكرم الأسماء التي هي ممدوحة شريفة بيننا على الله تعالى كمثل السميع العليم والجبار العزيز وأشباهاها وأنا أعتقد أن الشرع خاصة أطلق لنا هذه الأسماء والصفات ولو خَلينا ورأينا لما أقدمنا على شيء منها أصلاً بوجه ولا سبب فإذا سمعنا بشيء من هذه الأسماء والأفعال والحروف منسوباً إلى الله تعالى نظرنا فيه فإن كان مطلقاً في الشريعة أطلقناه ثم تأملنا مراد قائله فإن كان خيراً وحكمة وعدلاً تركناه ورأيه وإن لم يكن كذلك ولا لائقاً بإضافة إليه أبطلناه وزيقناه وكذبنا قائله ونزّهنا بارئنا الواحد المتزه المتعالي عن هذه الأوصاف الباطلة.

^{٤٠٥} ثم إنّي وجدتك أيّدك الله تحكي في هذه المسألة جوابات عن شيخ فاضل ثني عليه وتسكن إلى قوله وتقع بأجوبته فأيت أن أقنع أنا أيضاً لك بها وذلك أنك ذكرت في آخر المسألة ما هذه حكايته طال هذا الفصل عن هذا الشيخ في معان متفرقة تجمع فوائد غريبة بالفاظ مختارة وتأليفات مستحسنه ولو أمكن أن يتلوكل ما تقدم مثل هذا لكان في ذلك للعين قوة وللروح راحة ولكن الوقت مانع من المفروض الموظف فضلاً عن غيره وأنا إلى إتمام الرسالة أحوج منّي إلى غيره.

١ الأصل: زيدت "ذكرت" في الهامش.

a means, so that the preposition “through” might be predicated of Him without qualification and one might say, “This is through God’s arrangement”; for there is no arrangement in His domain, nor does He have a need for this act or for any other act.

This is also my position regarding all other acts ascribed to Him, and it is likewise my position regarding the names and attributes predicated of Him, and that the Lawgiver has given us dispensation to use. My use of these names conforms to received report in acquiescence to command. Otherwise, who would dare apply, say, the qualifications “Merciful” or “Compassionate” literally to the Creator, who is exalted above the experience of passions? For mercy consists in a passion of the soul that causes praiseworthy acts to issue among us, whereas none of these elements and realities obtain in His domain. Yet, as human beings have limited abilities and powers and cannot be held to obligations they cannot meet and lack the power to discharge, they predicate of God the noblest of the names that carry praise and dignity among them, such as “Hearing,” “Knowing,” “Compeller,” and “Almighty.” It is my conviction that the religious Law specifically granted us permission to apply these names and attributes. Had we been left to our own judgments, we would not have ventured to use any of them through license or cause. So we examine closely any of these names, acts, or prepositions we hear ascribed to God. We permit their use when it is permitted by the religious Law, and we then reflect on what the speaker intended. If this involves goodness, wisdom, and justice, we let his view stand; we reject it if it does not, and is unworthy of being attributed to Him; we declare it spurious and its speaker a liar, and assert that our One Creator is above these false qualifications.

35.3

I then found you—may God grace you with His support—reporting under this question the responses of a distinguished teacher whom you showered with praise, whose statements you have confidence in, and whose responses you find satisfying, so I thought it best to also satisfy myself with them for your sake. For at the end of this question you wrote as follows, verbatim: The report in this section of the views of this teacher on a miscellany of topics, combining uncommon insights with choice words and agreeable compositions, has gone on at some length. If only everything that preceded could be succeeded by something similar—that would be a balm and a salve for the spirit. But the limits of time make it hard to realize what is imperative and mandated, let alone anything further, and above all I need to see this epistle to its completion.

35.4

مسألة

- ١٠٣٦ ما الإلف الذي يجده الإنسان لمكان يكثر التعود فيه ولشخص يتقدم الأُنس به؟ وهذا تراه في الرجل يألف حمامًا بل بيتًا من الحمام ومسجدًا بل سارية في المسجد. ولقد سمعت بعض الصوفية يقول حالفني حتى الربع أربعين سنة ثم إنها فارقتني فاستوحشتها ولم أعرف لاستيحاشي معنى إلا الإلف الذي عجنت الطينة به وطويت الفطرة عليه وصُغت الروح به.

الجواب

- ٢٠٣٦ الإلف هو تكرر الصورة الواحدة على النفس أو على الطبيعة مرارًا كثيرة. فأما النفس فإتما تتكرر عليها صور الأشياء إتما من الحس وإتما من العقل. فأما ما يأتيها من الحس فإنها تخزنته في شبيه بالخزانة لها أعني موضع الذكر وتكون الصورة كالغربة حينئذ فإذا تكرر مرآت شيء واحد وصورة واحدة زالت الغربة وحدث الأُنس وصارت الصورة والقابل لها كالشيء الواحد فإذا أعادت النفس النظر في الخزانة التي ضربناها مثلاً وجدت الصورة ثابتةً فعرفتها بعد أنس وهو الإلف. وهذا الإلف يحدث عن كل محسوس بالنظر وغيره من الآلات.

- ٣٠٣٦ فأما ما تأخذه من العقل فإنها تركب منه قياسات وتتج منها صوراً تكون أيضاً غريبة ثم بعد التكرر تنطبع فيقع لها الأُنس إلا أنه في هذا الموضع لا يُسمى إلفاً ولكن علماً ومملكة ولهذا يُحتاج في العلوم إلى كثرة الدرس لأنه في أول الأمر يحصل منه الشيء يسمى حالاً وهو كالرسم ثم بعد ذلك بالتكرر يصير قنية ومملكة ويحدث الاتحاد الذي ذكرناه. فأما الطبيعة فلائها أبداً مقتنية أثر النفس ومتشبهة بها إذ كانت كالظل للنفس الحادث منها فهي تجرى مجراها في الأشياء الطبيعية ولذلك إذا عود الإنسان

On the nature of the sense of familiarity we feel
toward particular places and people

What is one to make of the sense of familiarity a person experiences toward a place where he often sits, or an individual with whom he has been intimate for a long time? It is the same when a man acquires a familiarity with a specific bathhouse or indeed a specific room in a bathhouse, or with a specific mosque or indeed a specific column in a mosque. I heard a Sufi say: For forty years a quartan fever clung to me. When it left me I pined for it. The only sense I could make of my pining was the familiarity that had been kneaded into my very being, ingrained into my natural constitution, and branded upon my spirit. 36.1

Miskawayh's response

Familiarity consists in the recurrent exposure of the soul or nature to a single form. The soul is recurrently exposed to the forms of things either through the senses or through the intellect. It stores the forms that reach it through the senses in something akin to a storeroom—I'm referring to the location of memory—and at that point the forms are like strangers. The strangeness dissipates and intimacy ensues when a single thing and a single form recur several times and the form and its receptacle then become as one; and if the soul looks once more into the storeroom, following our analogy, it finds the form fixed there and recognizes it, having grown intimate with it. This is what familiarity consists in. Every sensible object produces such familiarity through sight and the other organs. 36.2

The soul composes syllogisms from what it takes from the intellect, and derives forms from these, which are also strangers. After recurrent exposure, they become imprinted on it, and it grows intimate with them, though in this context one does not speak of "familiarity" but of "knowledge" and of a "stable state." That is why the different branches of learning demand a great amount of study. For at first this produces what is called a condition, which is like a drawn mark, and subsequently, through recurrent exposure, this becomes an acquired possession and stable state, and the union that we have mentioned arises. Nature, for its part, always follows the lead of the soul and imitates it—being like a shadow to the soul generated by it—so it follows the same course in natural things. That is why, when human beings accustom their nature to 36.3

طبعه شيئاً حدثت منه صورة كالطبيعة ولهذا قيل العادة طبع ثان. وإذا تصفحت الأمور التي تُعتاد فتصير طبيعة وجدتها كثيرة واضحة أبين وأظهر من الإلف الذي في النفس كمن يعود نفسه الفصد والبول والبراز وغيرها في أوقات بعينها وكذلك الهضم في الأكل والشرب وسائر ما تُنسب أفعالها إلى الطبيعة.

مسألة طبيّة

١٠٣٧ لم صار الصرع من بين الأمراض صعب العلاج؟ وبسبب ذلك نرى الطبيب كاليأس من برئه ويقال إنه فيمن طعن في السنّ وأخذ بدنه في الخلوة أصعب وفي الصبيّ اللين العود الرطب الطين السريع الحيلولة أقرب مراراً وأسهل برءاً.

الجواب

٢٠٣٧ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله الصرع هو تشنج يحدث في الأعصاب ومبدأ العصب الدماغ لأنه من هناك ينبت في جميع البدن وسبب هذا التشنج بخار غليظ يكون من بلغم لرج وكموس غليظ يسد منافذ الروح التي في بطون الدماغ ولأنّ البخار وإن كان غليظاً فهو سريع التحلل تكون الإفاقة سريعة بحسب تحلله وهذا الانسداد ربّما كان من الدماغ نفسه وربّما كان باشتراك المعدة من بخار غليظ يرتفع إليه منها وهو الأكثر وربّما كان باشتراك عضو آخر. والعليل يحسّ قبيل وقت النوبة إذا كان من عضو غير المعدة كأنّ شيئاً ينشأ من هناك وينجذب إلى فوق فيربط الطبيب ذلك الموضع ويلفّ عليه عصائب قوية ليمنع البخار من الصعود إلى الدماغ.

٣٠٣٧ ولما كان الصبيّ ضعيف الدماغ رطبه كان سريعاً إلى قبول البخارات وحرارته في الشواء معمورة بكثرة الرطوبات وليس البخار بشيء أكثر من رطوبة كثيرة تضعف الحرارة عن تحليلها وإحالتها فلذلك كثرت البخارات في رأسه فحدثت منه السدد التي

something, a form akin to nature is produced. Hence the saying “Habit is a second nature.” An examination of the things that can grow habitual and become natural reveals that they are plentiful and clear—and in fact plainer and starker than the familiarity that is in the soul. This is the case, for example, when a person accustoms himself to phlebotomy or to urinating, defecating, and so on, at particular times; the same goes for digestion when eating and drinking and the other acts attributed to nature.

On why epilepsy is so hard to treat—a medical question

Why is epilepsy particularly recalcitrant to treatment compared with other illnesses? Physicians seem to despair of curing it. It is allegedly harder to treat among those of an advanced age whose bodies have begun to wear out, and easier to cure and more tractable among children, whose bodies are pliant, whose substance is moist, and who are quick to change. 37.1

Miskawayh’s response

Epilepsy is a convulsion that affects the nerves, and the nerves begin from the brain, whence they spread throughout the entire body. The reason for the convulsion is a thick vapor that arises from viscous phlegm, and a thick gastric juice that blocks the passageways of the spirit found in the interior ventricles of the brain. Since the vapor dissipates quickly despite its thickness, awareness is quickly regained as it dissipates. Sometimes this blockage arises from the brain itself, sometimes it involves the contribution of the stomach through a thick vapor that ascends to the former from the latter, and, most commonly, sometimes it involves the contribution of another bodily part. Shortly before a fit occurs, if it arises from a bodily part other than the stomach, the afflicted person feels as if something were coming out of that part and being driven upward. The physician then binds that area and wraps strong dressings around it so as to prevent the vapor from ascending to the brain. 37.2

Children have weak and moist brains, and so they are quick to yield to vapors. During the developmental stage, their heat is suffused by an abundance of moistures, and vapor is simply an abundance of moisture that heat does not have the power to dissipate and commute. That is why vapors proliferate 37.3

ذكرناها. والطيب الماهر لا يعالج الصبي بشيء من أدوية الصرع بل يتركه ويداوي
الموضع بإصلاح الغذاء فإن الطبيعة إذا قويت وجفّ فضول الرطوبات عن جميع
البدن وذكت الحرارة زال الصرع لنفسه لزوال السبب أعني البخار الكثير ولصلابة
جوهر الدماغ وقلة قبوله الآفات التي كان سببها رطوبته وضعفه وإنما غاية الطيب
إصلاح اللبن للمرضة بالغذاء الذي يعدّه حسب.

٤٠٣٧ فأما الطاعن في السنّ فإن أمره بالضدّ لأنّ ضعف آتاه كلّها يكون من قبل
الانحطاط وضعف القوى والأعضاء وليس يُنظر بها أن تترتّب في القوة بل هي في كلّ
يوم إلى نقصان والضعف فإذا قبل دماغه بخاراً غليظاً من نفسه أو من عضو آخر
صار مغيضاً له وازداد في كلّ نوبة قبولاً والحرارة التي هي سبب تحلّل البخارات أيضاً
تضعف عن التحليل فلذلك يقع اليأس منه ومن شأنّ المادّة التي تتصرف إلى موضع
البدن إذا عودته مراراً أن تتسع لها المجاري وتلزمها الطبيعة بالعادة التي ذكرناها في
المسألة المتقدّمة فالآلة تزداد ضعفاً والمادّة تزداد انصباباً والبخار يزداد كثرة للرطوبة
الغريبة التي تحدث في أبدان المستعدين لها واستحالتها بلغمًا في معدتهم والحرارة
تزداد ضعفاً على التحليل ولا يكاد يقبل التبرؤ لأجل ذلك.

مسألة

١٠٣٨ ما سبب محبة الناس لمن قلّ رزؤه حتّى إنهم ليهيئون الطعام الشهيّ له بالغرم
الثقيل ويحلمونه إليه في الجون على الرؤوس ويضعونه بين يديه وكلّما ازداد ذلك الراهد
تمنّعاً ازداد هؤلاء لاجحة فإن مات اتّخذوا قبره مصلىً وقالوا كان كثير الصوم قليل الرزء
وإذا عرض لهم من يأكل الكثير ويتذرّع في اللقم مقنوه ونبذوه وكرهوا قبره واستسرفوا

١ الأصل: بلغم. ٢ ط: البرء.

inside their heads, resulting in the blockages we have mentioned. Skillful physicians do not treat children using medications for epilepsy, but rather leave them be and minister to the area through dietary improvement. For if nature is fortified, the excess moistures in the whole body are dried out, and heat is kindled, then epilepsy automatically vanishes, because its cause—namely, the abundance of vapor—has vanished, and because the substance of the brain becomes firm and is little disposed to suffer impairments caused by its moisture and weakness. The physician's sole objective is, instead, through specially prepared food, to improve the milk of the woman breastfeeding the child.

The opposite applies to people of an advanced age. For the weakness of all their bodily organs stems from their decline and from the weakness of their powers and bodily parts; an increase in their power is not to be expected. Rather, every day that passes diminishes and weakens them further. Thus, if their brain is exposed to thick vapor arising from the brain itself or from another bodily part, vapor begins to collect in it, and it grows more vulnerable to the vapor with every fit. At the same time, heat—which causes the dissipation of vapors—is too weak to dissipate them. That is why one despairs of effecting a cure. When matter is channeled to an area of the body and returns repeatedly, the passageways through which it flows widen to accommodate it, and nature constrains it through the kind of habit we mentioned in the previous question. The organ grows weaker, the matter flows with greater facility, the vapor increases on account of the foreign moisture arising in the bodies of those who are disposed to its formation and to its commutation into phlegm in their stomach, and the heat grows less capable of exercising a dissipating effect. As a result, it becomes almost impossible to cure.

37.4

On why people are so enamored of ascetic individuals

Why do people love those who are abstemious in their enjoyments, so that they prepare delicious food for them at great cost, carry it to them on their heads in jars, and place it at their feet? The more strenuously the ascetic man demurs, the more importunate they become. When he dies, they make his grave a place of worship, saying that he was “one who fasted much and partook little.” By contrast, when confronted with people who gourmandize and eat to excess, they abhor and repudiate them, finding their presence loathsome

38.1

أدبه ولعلة ما هجر الناس زيارة مقابر الملوك والخلفاء ولجوا بزيارة قبور أصحاب البت والخلقان وأهل الضعف والمسكنة؟

الجواب

٢٠٣٨ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله ذاك لأنّ الإنسان بنفسه النامية يناسب النبات وبفسه المتحرّكة بالإرادة يناسب البهائم وبفسه الناطقة يناسب الملائكة فهو إنّما فضل وشرف بهذه النفس الأخيرة والاعتداء من خاصّة النبات وإن كان يعمّ الحيوان أيضاً لأجل ما فيه من القوّة النامية فأما النفس الناطقة فلا حاجة بها إلى الأكل والشرب ولما كانت الملائكة أشرف من الإنس لاستغنائها بذاتها عن الغذاء وبقاء جوهرها كان الإنسان المناسب لها بنفسه أكثر وأشرف من الإنسان الذي يناسب النبات والبهائم نسبة أكثر وكما أنّ الإنسان يستخفّ بالنبات والبهيمة ويستخدمها ويعظم الملائكة ويسبّحها فكذلك من الواجب في كلّ شيء كان مناسباً لتلك أن يكون مهاناً مستخفّاً به وكلّما كان مناسباً لهذا أن يكون معظماً مشرفاً. وهذا أبين من أن يُسقط فيه قول ويتكلّف له جواب ولكنّ لم نحبّ الإخلال بالمسألة رأساً فلذلك علّقنا فيه هذا القدر.

مسألة

١٠٣٩ لم صار بعض الناس يولع بالتبذير مع علمه بسوء عاقبته وآخر يولع بالتقتير مع علمه ببقع القالة فيه؟ وما الفرق بين الرزق والمملك؟ فقد قال لي شيخ من الفلاسفة وقد سمعني أشكوّ الحال يا هذا أنت قليل المملك كثير الرزق وكم من كثير المملك قليل الرزق احمد الله عزّ وجلّ.

١ الأصل: أشكوا.

and decrying the immoderation of their behavior. And why is it that people refuse to visit the tombs of kings and caliphs, but constantly visit the graves of the meek and wretched, and of those who went about in coarse and shabby garments?

Miskawayh's response

Human beings have an affinity to plants through their growing soul, an affinity to beasts through the soul that moves by voluntary choice, and an affinity to the angels through their rational soul. This last forms the basis of their eminence and dignity. The taking of nourishment is a distinguishing property of plants, though it also extends to animals on account of their power of growth. The rational soul, by contrast, has no need for food or drink. As angels are nobler than human beings on account of their essential lack of need for nourishment and the permanence of their substance, human beings who have a greater affinity to them through their soul are nobler than human beings who have a greater affinity to plants or beasts. Human beings regard plants and beasts with disdain and use them as they see fit, whereas they exalt and glorify the angels; thus, everything with an affinity to the former must necessarily be regarded with contempt and disdain, and everything with an affinity to the latter must be exalted and honored. This is too obvious to require extensive discussion or be worth the trouble of a response, but we did not wish to abandon the question entirely, so we commented on it to this extent. 38.2

On why some people squander their money despite the harmful consequences this entails while others are miserly even though this gives them a bad name

Why do some people eagerly squander their money despite knowing the dire consequences this begets, while others eagerly pinch every penny despite knowing the bad repute this attracts? And what is the difference between the notions of "provision" and "possession"? An established philosopher once heard me bemoaning my circumstances and said, "My dear fellow, you have little in the way of 'possession' but much in the way of 'provision.' There are many who have much 'possession' but little 'provision,' so praise the mighty and glorious God!" 39.1

الجواب

٢٠٣٩ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله قد تقدّم لنا في هذه المسائل كلام في السبب الذي يختار الناس له فعل ما تقبّع عاقبته مع علمهم بذلك وضربنا فيه المثل بالمرضى الذي يعلم أنّ تناول الغذاء الضارّ يبطل صحته فإنّ الغذاء إنّما احتيج إليه للصحة فيختار للشهوة الحاضرة أخذ الغذاء الضارّ بسوء ملكته وضبطه لنفسه وانقياده للنفس البهيمة وعصيانه للنفس الناطقة ولا وجه لإعادته وكذلك قد بينّا مائة الرزق والفرق بين الملك والرزق وإذا قرأته مما تقدّم جواباً لهذه المسألة.

مسألة خلقية

١٠٤٠ لم يكون بعض الناس لهجاً بطيياً ما يأتيه وكتمان ما يفعله ويكره أن يُطلع على شيء من أمره وآخر يظهر ما يكون منه ويُشيع به ويدلّ الناس على قليله وكثيره وما معنى قول النبي عليه السلام استعينوا على أموركم بالكتمان فإنّ كلّ ذي نعمة محسود؟

الجواب

٢٠٤٠ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله قد مضى أيضاً جواب هذه المسألة فيما تقدّم وقلنا إنّ للنفس قوتين تشتاقي بإحداهما إلى الأخذ وبالأخرى إلى الإعطاء وكما يعرض للنفس في الأموال الشحّ والسماحة كذلك يعرض لها في المعلومات فمرة تسحّ ومرة تضنّ وربما كان الإنسان شحيحاً بعلمه سمحاً بماله وبالضدّ وقد تقدّم جميع ذلك مستقصى حيث تكلمنا على السرّ فيما مضى.

On why some people keep their affairs private while others broadcast them for all to hear

Miskawayh's response

We have discussed in previous questions why people choose to do things that have dire consequences despite knowing this fact. We compared this to a sick person who knows that consuming harmful food will destroy his health—when the food is needed for the sake of health in the first place—and who chooses to consume the food as the result of an immediate appetite because he has a bad disposition and inadequate self-control, and capitulates to his beastly soul in defiance of his rational soul. So there is no need to go over the same ground again. Similarly, we have clarified the nature of “provision” and the distinction between it and “possession,” so if you read the preceding discussion, it may serve as a response to this question. 39.2

On why some people keep their affairs private while others broadcast them for all to hear—a question of ethics

Why are some people eager to conceal what happens to them, suppressing any mention of what they do, and are averse to anyone becoming privy to their affairs, while others openly reveal their circumstances and pursue this with alacrity, letting people in on everything, be it great or small? What is the meaning of the Prophet's saying, “Make reticence your helper in your affairs, for those who enjoy blessings provoke the envy of others”? 40.1

Miskawayh's response

This question was also answered above when we said that the soul has two powers; it longs to take through one, and to give through the other. The soul is as susceptible to stinginess and liberality with respect to information as it is with respect to material possessions: Sometimes it is lavish, at other times niggardly. A person may be stingy with his knowledge yet liberal with his material possessions, and sometimes the reverse is the case. This was addressed exhaustively when we discussed the topic of secrets earlier. 40.2

مسألة إرادية

- ١٠٤١ لم سبج مدح الإنسان لنفسه وحسن مدح غيره له؟ وما الذي يحب الممدوح من المادح؟ وما سبب ذلك؟

الجواب

- ٢٠٤١ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله المدح تزكية للنفس وشهادة لها بالفضائل ولما كان الإنسان يحب نفسه رأى محاسنها وخفي عليه مقابحها بل رأى لها من الحسن ما ليس فيها فقبح منه الشهادة بما لا يقبل منه ولا يرى له. فأما غيره فلاجل غربته منه وخلوه من آفة العشق صارت شهادته مقبولة ومدحه مسموعاً وربما كان هذا الغير يجري في محبة الممدوح مجرى الوالد والأخ والصديق الذي محله منه قريب من محل نفسه فعرضت له تلك الآفة بعينها أو قريب منها فقبح ثناؤه ومدحه ولم يقبل منه وإن كان دون قبح الأول أعني مادح نفسه لأن أحداً لا يبلغ في محبته غيره درجة محبته نفسه فأما ما يجده الممدوح من المادح فهو حلاوة الإنصاف وتأدية الحق وسماع الكلام الطيب في المحبوب الموافق للإرادة.

مسألة إرادية وخلقية ولغوية

- ١٠٤٢ ما سبب ذم الناس البخل مع غلبة البخل عليهم؟ وما سبب مدحهم الجود مع قلة ذلك فيهم؟ وهل الجود والبخل طبيعيان أو مكتسبان؟ وهل بين البخل والثلثم والشميع والمنوع والنذل والتوح والمسيك والجعد والكر فروع؟

On why self-praise is unseemly—a question about volition

Why is it considered unseemly for someone to praise himself, but proper for another to praise him? What does the person praised love about being lauded by the one who praises him? And what is the reason for that? 41.1

Miskawayh's response

To praise someone is to declare their outstanding nature and testify to their virtues. Since human beings love themselves, they see their good qualities but are blind to their bad qualities—they even see in themselves good qualities they do not possess. It is therefore considered repugnant for them to testify to things that cannot be accepted or seen in them. By contrast, the testimony of other people, who are at a remove and unencumbered by the defect of passionate love, is deemed admissible and their praise worthy of attention. Sometimes they may love the praised person with the love of a parent, brother, or friend, standing in a relation to him close to the relation in which he stands to himself; then they are vulnerable to the same defect or to something not far removed from it. In that case it is considered repugnant for them to eulogize, and such statements are unacceptable, though they are not as repugnant as in the first case—that is, the case of the self-praiser—since no one loves another person as much as he loves himself. What the person praised finds in the person praising him is the sweetness of having justice done to him, of receiving his due, and of hearing kind words regarding a beloved object congruent with one's will. 41.2

On why people disparage avarice even though they're avaricious; on the origin of avarice and generosity—a volitional, ethical, and linguistic question

Why do people disparage avarice despite the fact that avarice dominates them? Why do people praise generosity though it is rarely to be found in them? Are generosity and avarice natural or acquired? And is there any distinction between the terms “avaricious,” “mean,” “miserly,” “ungiving,” “vile,” “petty,” “stingy,” “tightfisted,” and “skinflint”? 42.1

المجواب

٢٠٤٢ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله أما سبب ذمّ الناس البخل فلأنّ البخل منع الحقّ من مستحقّه على الشروط التي تقدّم ذكرها وهو في نفسه أمر مستقيم عند العقل وليس يمنع من استقباحه غلبته عليهم وهو خلق مذموم ومرض للنفس مكروه وكما لا يمنعهم ذمّ أمراض البدن وإن كانت موجودة لهم كذلك لا يمنع ذمّ أمراض النفس وإن كانت غالبية عليهم. على أنّ الإنسان في أكثر الأمر يذمّ هذا العارض للنفس من البخل ولا يعترف أنّه موجود فيه إلا إذا كان منصفاً من نفسه عارفاً بما لها وعليها فقد سمعت جماعة من الأصدقاء يذمّون أنفسهم بأمر ويشكون أنّهم في جهد من مداواتها وحرص على إزالتها وأنّ العادة السيئة قد أفسدت عليهم كثيراً من أخلاقهم. وأمّا سبب مدحهم الجود فلأنّ الجود في نفسه أمر حسن محبوب وقد مرّ حدّه فيما مضى وهو في النفس كالصحة في البدن فالناس يؤثرونه ويمدحونه ووجد لهم أم لم يوجد.

٣٠٤٢ وأمّا قولك هل الجود والبخل طبيعيان أم مكسوبيان فإنّ الأخلاق بأجمعها ليست طبيعية ولو كانت كذلك لما عاجلناها ولا أمرنا بإصلاحها ولا طمعنا في نقلها وإزالتها إذا كانت قبيحة ولكانت بمنزلة الحرارة والإضاءة في النار وبمنزلة الثقل والارجحان في الأرض فإنّ أحداً لا يروم معالجة هذه الطباع ولا إزالتها ونقلها ولكنّا نقول إنّها وإن لم تكن طبيعية فإنّها بسوء العادة أو بحسنها تصير قربة من الطبيعة في صعوبة العلاج وإزالة الصورة من النفس ولسنا نسميها خلقاً إلا بعد أن تصير هيئة للنفس يصدر أبداً عنها فعل واحد بلا روية فأما قبل ذلك فلا يُسمّى خلقاً ولا يقال فلان بخيل ولا جواد إلا إذا كان ذلك دأبه. فأما الطفل والناشي فقد يكون مستعداً بمزاج خاص له نحو قبول خلق بعينه لكنه يؤدّب ويعوّد الأفعال الجميلة لتصير صورة لنفسه وهيئة لها يصدر عنها أبداً ذلك الفعل المحمود كما يكون مستعداً لقبول مرض بعينه

١ الأصل: على الإنسان.

Miskawayh's response

People disparage avarice because avarice consists in denying others the things they are entitled to on the conditions we mentioned earlier. Reason deems it to be repugnant in itself; its dominance does not prevent them from deeming it repugnant. It is a blameworthy character trait and an odious malady of the soul; just as there is nothing to prevent them from disparaging the maladies of the body even when present, there is nothing to prevent them from disparaging the maladies of the soul when dominant. Yet, unless people are honest with themselves and have cognizance of their merits and demerits, they largely disparage the avarice that afflicts the soul without acknowledging its presence in themselves. I heard a group of friends disparaging themselves for a number of moral defects, lamenting their great struggle to remedy them and ardent striving to remove them, bemoaning how bad habits had spoiled many of their character traits. Generosity is praised because generosity is in itself something good and beloved. Its definition has already been discussed; it is to the soul what health is to the body, so people value it and praise it, whether it is present in them or not. 42.2

You ask, "Are generosity and avarice natural or acquired?" Character traits as a whole are not natural. If they were, we would not be able to heal them, seek their improvement, or nourish hopes of altering them and eliminating them when bad. They would instead be like the heat and light emitted by fire or like the heaviness and downward inclination of the earth, and nobody seeks to heal these natural phenomena or alter or eliminate them. Yet, though generosity and avarice are not natural, we say that, through bad or good habit, they approximate nature in terms of the difficulty of treating them and eliminating their form from the soul. We only call them "character traits" when they have become a disposition of the soul from which a single act invariably issues without reflection. Before that, they are not called character traits, nor does one say that a given person is avaricious or generous unless that is his standing practice. A specific humoral mixture may predispose children and young people to acquire a particular character trait, but they can be disciplined and habituated to the performance of fine actions so that they become a form and disposition of their soul whence that type of praiseworthy act always issues. That is analogous to how they might be predisposed to succumb to a particular illness but can be treated with food and medicine until the predisposition is 42.3

فيعالج بالأغذية والأدوية إلى أن يُنقل من ذلك الاستعداد إلى ضده بتبديل المراج إلى أن يصح ولا يقبل ذلك المرض.

٤٠٤٢ وأما قولك هل بين الألفاظ التي عددها فوق فلعمري إن بينها فوقاً. أما البخيل والئيم فقد فرقنا بينهما فيما تقدم من أن اللؤم أعم من البخل لأن كل لئيم بخيل وليس كل بخيل لئيماً واللؤم لا يختص بالمال والأعراض حسب بل يكون في النسب والهمة والبخل خاص بالأخذ والإعطاء وأما المسيك والمنوع فاشتقاقهما يدل على معناهما وأما الجعد والكر فلفظتان مستعارتان مأخوذتان من الجادات وأما النذل والوتح فاسما مبالغة في الذم وكل واحد أبلغ من الآخر والندالة أبلغ من القلة والوتاحة وفي مثل للعامّة فلان مقدّم العرس وذكره بعينه أرسطوطالس^١ ودلني على أن تلك اللغة وافقت هذه اللغة في هذا المثل أو أخذه قوم عن قوم وهذا قد تجاوز البخل الذي هو منع الحق أهله على الشروط وانحطّ إلى^٢ غاية في معاملة نفسه أكثر من غاية البخيل في معاملة غيره.

مسألة إرادية وخلقية

١٠٤٣ وعلى ذمّ الناس البخل ومدحهم الجود^٣ ما سبب اجتماعهم على استئناس الغدر واستحسان الوفاء مع غلبة الغدر وقلة الوفاء؟ وهل هما عرضان في أصل الجورأم مصطلح عليهما في العادة؟

١ ط: أرسطوطاليس. ٢ الأصل: إلى إلى. ٣ الأصل: البخل الجود. ٤ الأصل وط: أهل.

reversed, their humoral mixture being modified until it becomes healthy and no longer inclined to succumb to that illness.

Regarding your question of whether there are any distinctions among the different terms you listed, I assure you there are indeed distinctions to be found. We previously distinguished between “avaricious” and “mean,”⁴⁵ with “meanness” being more inclusive than “avarice”—every mean person is avaricious, but not every avaricious person is mean. Meanness does not pertain exclusively to possessions and external effects but also concerns one’s pedigree and the quality of one’s ambition, whereas avarice pertains exclusively to giving and taking. The etymology of “stingy” and “ungiving” reveals their meaning.⁴⁶ “Tightfisted” and “skinflint” are terms that are used metaphorically and are taken from inanimate objects.⁴⁷ “Vile” and “petty” are terms that are used in a strongly pejorative sense, and each stronger than the rest, while “vile” is stronger than “small-minded” and “petty.” As the popular adage has it: “So-and-so pinches pennies at the marriage feast.” Aristotle refers to the very same adage, which proves to me that, with respect to this adage, his language agrees with ours, or alternatively that one people received it from the other. Such a person goes beyond avarice, which involves denying others what they are entitled to under specific conditions, and is so wretched as to treat his own self worse than an avaricious person treats others.

42.4

On why people blame treachery and praise fidelity
even though treachery predominates among
them—a volitional and ethical question

Speaking of disparagement of avarice and praise of generosity, what makes people unite in disapproving of treachery as despicable and approving of fidelity as admirable, even though treachery prevails and fidelity is rarely to be found? Are these qualities accidents that inhere in the original substance of things, or are they the product of conventional agreement?

43.1

الجواب

٢٠٤٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله سبب استحسان الناس الوفاء حسنه في العقل وذلك أن الناس لما كانوا مدنيين بالطبع اضطروا إلى أمور يتعاقدون على لزومها لتصير بالمعاونة أسباباً لتمام أغراض آخر وقد تكون هذه الأمور في الدين والسيرة وفي المودة والمعاملة وفي الملك والغلبة وبالجملة في كل ما يحتاج فيه إلى التمدن وما يتم بالمعاونات فتقدم لها أسباب تعقد بينهم حالاً يراعونها أبداً في تمام ذلك الأمر فإذا ثبت عليها قوم ولزموها تمت أغراضهم وإذا زالوا عنها وخاس بعضهم ببعض فيها انتقضت عليهم الأغراض وانتقضت عن بلوغ التمامات وبحسب الأمر المقصود بالتمام يكون حسن الوفاء وقبح الغدر فإن كان الأمر شريفاً كريماً عام النفع استُشنع الغدر فيه واستُحسن الوفاء وبالضد.

مسألة في مبادئ العادات

١٠٤٤ ما مبدأ العادات المختلفة من هذه الأمم المتباعدة فإن العادة مشتقة من عادي عود واعتاد يعتاد فكيف نزع الناس إلى أوائلها وجرؤا عليها؟ وما هذا الباعث الذي رتب كل قوم في الرئي وفي الحلية وفي العبارة والحركة على حدود لا يتعدونها وأقطار لا يتخطونها؟

الجواب

٢٠٤٤ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله لعمرى إن العادة من عادي عود فأما السؤال عن مبادئ العادات وكيف نزع الناس إلى أوائلها وما كانت تلك الأوائل ومن سبق إليها ورتبها

١ الأصل: في. ٢ ط: فيتقدم. ٣ الأصل: فوج.

Miskawayh's response

People approve of fidelity because it is known to be admirable through reason. People are political by nature, and thus are compelled to agree contractually among themselves to render certain matters binding, so that they may provide the conditions for accomplishing other ends through mutual help. These matters may pertain to religion, conduct, friendly relations, transactions, and sovereignty and domination—in a word, to everything requiring civic association and accomplished through acts of mutual assistance. They thus supply conditions that establish a set of terms among people which they always observe in accomplishing a given matter. If one group stands by and adheres to them, their ends are accomplished, whereas if they abandon them and break faith with each other, their ends are frustrated, and they fall short of accomplishment. Whether fidelity is admirable and treachery repugnant depends on the matter you propose to accomplish. If it is noble, dignified, and beneficial on a large scale, it is considered despicable to commit treachery and admirable to keep faith, and vice versa. 43.2

On the origin of the customs of different nations

What is the origin of the different customs found among the nations we see scattered across the world? The word for “custom” derives from the verb “to return” and the verb “to accustom oneself to.”⁴⁸ So how did people establish their customs at first and then make them their continual practice? What was the stimulus that caused every group of people to adopt a different kind of attire, style of adornment, mode of expression, and way of movement whose limits they do not transgress and whose domains they do not overstep? 44.1

Miskawayh's response

To be sure, “custom” does indeed derive from the verb “to return.” I cannot offer a response to the question about the origin of customs, about how people arrived at their first instances, what those instances were, and who was the first to reach them and to establish them for every group of people as regards 44.2

لكل قوم في الزمّي فأمر لا أضمن لك الوفاء به ولو ضمنه ضامن لي لما رغبت فيه ولا عدده علماء ولا كان فيه طائل.

مسألة طبيعّية

١٠٤٥ لم لم يرجع الإنسان بعدما شاخ وخرف كهلاً ثمّ شاباً غيراً ثمّ غلاماً صبيّاً ثمّ طفلاً كما نشأ وعلام يدلّ هذا النظم وإلى أيّ شيء يشير هذا الحكم؟

الجواب

٢٠٤٥ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله ليست الشيخوخة والهزم نهاية نشوء الإنسان ولا غاية الحركة الطبيعيّة أعني النامية فتروم أيّذك الله أن يعود الشيخ في مسالكها إلى المبدأ الذي تحرك منه بل ينبغي أن تعلم أن غاية النشوء والحركة إنما هي عند منتهى الشباب ثمّ حينئذ يوقف وذلك زمان التكهل ثمّ ينحط وذلك زمان الشيخوخة وذلك أنّ الحرارة الغريزيّة التي في الأجسام المركّبة من الطبائع الأربع ما دامت في زيادة قوتها فهي تُنشئ الجسم الذي هي فيه بأن تجتذب إليه الرطوبات الملائمة بدل ما يتحلل منها فتكون غذاءً له ثمّ تبقى بقية جذبتها^١ فضل القوّة فاضلة عن قدر الغذاء الذي عوض من المتحلل فزادتها في مساحة الجسم ومددت بها أقطاره فإذا تناهت القوّة وقفت فلم تزد في الأقطار شيئاً بل غايتها حينئذ أن تحفظ على ذلك الجسم أقطاره ومقداره بأن تعذّيه أعني أن تجتذب من الرطوبات مقدار ما يسري في الجسم عوضاً عما تحلّل بلا زيادة تنصرف إلى التزويد والتמיד. ثمّ إنّ الحرارة تضعف قليلاً وتأخذ في النقصان بعد أن تقف وقفة في زمان التكهل فيبتدئ البدن في النقص ويصير الإنسان إلى الانحطاط عن تلك الحركة الأولى فلا يزال الغذاء ينقص عن مقدار الحاجة فلا يفي

١ الأصل: وعلى ما. ٢ ط: جذبها.

their attire—I would not want it should someone offer to provide it for me, nor would I consider it real knowledge. There would be no advantage to be gained from it.

On why people don't grow young again after they've grown old—a natural question

Why is it that once human beings grow old and senile, they do not, following the way they developed, become middle-aged again, then inexperienced youths, then young striplings, and then children? What does this arrangement reveal; what does this order point to? 45.1

Miskawayh's response

Old age and middle age do not constitute the terminus of human development or the end of natural movement—that is, the movement of growth—such that you might propose (God grace you with His support) that an old man could follow its tracks back to where his movement took its departure from. Rather, you must know that the end of development and movement is when youth reaches its height; after that it pauses—this is middle age—and after that it declines—this is old age. For as long as the innate heat present in bodies composed of the four natures increases in power, it makes the body in which it is present develop by drawing into it suitable moistures that replace those that dissipate and serve as nourishment for the body. An amount of what is drawn in by the excess of power is left over, exceeding the amount of nourishment needed to compensate for that which dissipates. It adds this to the expanse of the body and uses it to extend the volume of its physical parts. It comes to a halt and ceases to add anything to the volume of the physical parts, when the power has reached its limits. At that point, its end is to nourish and so preserve the parts and extent of the body—that is, by drawing in an amount of moistures that distribute themselves through the body to compensate for those that dissipate, without any excess that might be channeled into increase and extension. Then the heat comes to a halt in middle age and grows a little weaker and begins to diminish; the body starts to diminish too and human beings experience a decline in that first movement. One's nourishment increasingly falls short of the amount needed, so that the moisture it replaces is not equal to the 45.2

ما يعتاض من الرطوبة بما تحلّل منها فهو كذلك إلى أن يهرم ويبلغ إلى الانحلال الذي هو مقابل التركيب الذي بدأ منه وهو الموت الصحيح الطبيعي.

٣٠٤٥ وهذه سبيل كل حركة قهرية في أنها بتبدئ بتزيد ثم تنتهي إلى غاية ثم تقف وقفة ثم تحظ ولما كان مزاج الإنسان وكل مركب من الطبائع المتضادة إنما كان بجامع جمعها وقاهر قهرها حتى ألفها مع تضادها ونفور بعضها من بعض صارت حركتها قهرية ومن شأن الحركة القهرية ما ذكرت من أمرها إذا لم يتبعها القاهر أبداً بقهر بعد قهر فوجب في حركة النشوء ما وجب في كل حركة من جنسها ولم يعد الشيخ كهلاً ثم شاباً ثم طفلاً لأن الحركة لم تقع على هذا النظام ولا الشيخوخة هي غاية الحركة بل هي غاية الضعف ونظير الطفولة ووسط زمان الإنسان الذي بين الطفولة والشيخوخة هو غايته ثم العود في الانحطاط والحركة يكون على سبيل ما بدأ به^١.

مسألة إرادية

١٠٤٦ ما الذي يجده الإنسان في تشبيه الشيء بالشيء حتى يخطر ذلك المعنى على قلبه ويلهج بذكره في قوافيه ونثره؟ ولم إذا لم يكن التشبيه واقعاً والمعنى فيه بارعاً أو رث الصدود ومنع من الاستحسان؟^٢

الجواب

٢٠٤٦ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الذي يجده الإنسان من ذلك هو السرور بصدق التخيل وحسن انتزاع الصور من المواد حتى تأحدت الصورة بعد أن كثرت المادة وذلك أن تشبيه الخوخة بالحمصة هو انتزاع الشكل الذي وُجد في مادتيهما وملاحظتهما

١ ط: بدأ. ٢ ط: منع.

moisture that dissipates. Things continue this way until we become decrepit and reach the point of decomposition, the reverse of the composition from which we began. This is what constitutes natural, proper death.

Every constrained movement follows this course; initially it increases, then reaches an extremity, then comes to a halt, and then it starts to decline. The humoral mixture of human beings and of every being composed from the mutually opposing natures is produced through a force that unites and constrains these elements, combining them harmoniously despite their mutual opposition and conflict; so their movement is constrained. Constrained movements tend to exhibit the pattern I have mentioned, unless the force that constrains them regularly applies to them one constraining act after another. What necessarily applies to the movement of development is thus what necessarily applies to every movement of its species. An old man cannot become middle-aged again, then young, then a child, because this is not the order followed by the movement, nor is old age the end of the movement, being, rather, the extremity of weakness and the counterpart of childhood. The middle period of human life, between childhood and old age, is the end, and then the decline and movement of old men follows the same course as in the beginning.

45.3

On the benefit people derive from likening some things to others—a question of voluntary choice

What do people gain from likening one thing to another, so that this element comes to their mind and they eagerly revisit it in verse and prose? And why is it that the likeness begets revulsion and stands in the way of acclaim if it fails to emerge, and the element is not skillfully chosen?

46.1

Miskawayh's response

What people gain is the joy they feel at the veracity of their imagination and at their ability to isolate forms from different kinds of matter, thereby unifying the form after it has been multiplied by matter. For to liken a peach to a chickpea is to isolate the shape that is found in their respective material bases and to regard the two as a single thing, despite the material difference between them

46.2

شيئاً واحداً وإن اختلفت به المواد في الكبر والصغر والرطوبة واليبوسة واللون والمذاق وغيرها من الأعراض والتفتن لذلك وتجريد الصور من المواد ورد بعضها إلى بعض من خاص فعل النفس فالسرور به سرور نفساني فذلك يلج به كما يلج بما يظفر إذا كان طبيعياً بل هذا أشرف وأفضل.

مسألة في الرؤيا

١٠٤٧ ما السبب في صحة بعض الرؤيا وفساد بعضها؟ ولم تصح الرؤى كلها أو لم تفسد كلها؟ وعلام يدل ترجحها بين هذين الطرفين؟ ففعل في ذلك سرّاً يظهر بالامتحان.

الجواب

٢٠٤٧ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله قد صحّ وثبت من المباحث الفلسفية أنّ النفس أعلى من الزمان وأن أفعالها غير متعلّقة بشيء من الزمان ولا محتاجة إليه إذ الزمان تابع للحركة والحركة خاصّة الطبيعة وإذا كان ذلك كذلك فالأشياء كلها حاضرة في النفس سواء الماضي والمستقبل منها فهي تراها بعين واحدة والنوم إنمّا هو تعطل النفس بعض آلتها إجمالاً لها أعني بالآلات الحواس وهي إذا عطلت هذه الحواس بقيت لها أفعال أخر ذاتية خاصّة بها من الحركة التي تسمى روية وجولاناً نفسانياً. وهذه الحركة التي لها في ذاتها تكون لها بحسب حالين إمّا الهياً وهو نظرها في أفقها الأعلى وإمّا طبيعياً وهو نظرها في أفقها الأدنى.

٣٠٤٧ وكما أنّها إذا كانت مستيقظة ترى بحاسة العين الشيء مرة روية جليلة ومرة روية خفية بحسب القوة الباصرة من الحدة والكلال وبحسب الشيء المنظور إليه في اعتدال المسافة وبحسب الأشياء الحائلة بينها وبينه من الرقة والكثافة. وهذه أحوال لا يستوي فيها النظر بل ربّما نظر الناظر بحسب واحدة من هذه العوارض

١ ط: تعطيل.

in terms of how large or small, or how moist or dry, each one is, or in terms of color, taste, and other accidents. Grasping this, abstracting forms from matter, and reducing some forms to others, are characteristic acts of the soul, and the joy experienced is a joy of the soul. That is why we show such eagerness for them, just as we show eagerness for natural attainments. Indeed, though, the acts of the soul are nobler and more excellent.

On why some dreams are true and others false

Why are some dreams true while others are false? Why aren't all dreams true, or all false? What does their oscillation between these two poles reveal? Perhaps there is a secret to this that yields to examination. 47.1

Miskawayh's response

Philosophical inquiries have demonstrated that the soul is above time and that its acts are in no way bound by or in need of time, for time is contingent on motion, and motion is proper to nature. Given this, all things are present to the soul regardless of whether they belong to the past or the future, and it sees them from a single perspective. Sleep consists in the soul's suspension of some of its organs with the purpose of giving them rest—and by "organs," I mean the senses. When it suspends these senses, it retains other acts that belong to it essentially and properly, including the movement called deliberation and a revolving of the soul. This movement, essential to the soul, can take one of two forms. It is either divine, which is the gaze it directs toward its highest horizon, or natural, which is the gaze it directs toward its lowest horizon.⁴⁹ 47.2

When awake, the soul can see with the eyes a given object clearly at one time and dimly at another, depending on how keen or fatigued the visual power is, how far or near the object of sight is, and how substantial or slender the objects that lie between them are. Under these conditions, the way objects are seen varies. A person may thus look at an animal under the influence of one of these contingent factors and think it is an inanimate object; he may think that a human being is a wild animal; or he may think that 'Amr is Zayd. With the removal of those impediments and hindrances, he perceives the things fully. It is similar when the soul is asleep, that is to say, when it is not 47.3

إلى حيوان فظته جماداً وربما ظنّه سبعاً وهو إنسان وربما ظنّه زيداً وهو عمرو فإذا زالت تلك الموانع وارتفعت العوائق أبصرها بصرًا تامًا كذلك حالها إذ كانت نائمة أي غير مستعملة آلة الحسّ إنّما ترى من الشيء ما يحصل من الرسم الأول أعني الجنس العالي الشامل الأشياء التي هو عام لها ثم لا يزال يتخلّص لها بصورة بعد صورة حتى تراه صريحًا بيّنًا فإن اتفق أن ترى من الشيء رسمه احتج فيما تراه إلى تأويل وعبرة وإن رآته مكشوفًا مصرحًا كانت الرؤيا غير محتاجة إلى التفسير بل يكون الشيء بعينه الذي رآته في النوم هو الذي ستره في اليقظة.

٤٠٤٧ وهذا هو القسم الذي لها بحسب نظرها الشريف الذي من أرقها الأعلى وبه تكون الإنذارات والرؤيا الصادقة التي هي جزء من النبوة. فأما القسم الآخر الذي لها بحسب نظرها الأدون من أرقها الأسفل فإنها تصفّ الأشياء المخزونة عندها من الصور الحسيّة التي إنّما استقتها من المبصرات والمسموعات بالحواس وهي منشورة لا نظام لها ولا فيها إنذار بشيء وربما رُكبت هذه الصور تركيبًا عبثيًا كما يفعل الإنسان الساهي أو العابث من أفعال لا يقصد بها غرضًا كالولع بالأطراف وبما يليها من الأشياء ولا فائدة له فيها. وهذه الرؤى لا تتأول وإنما هي الأضغاث التي سمعت بها.

مسألة

١٠٤٨ ما الرؤيا فقد جلّ الخطب فيها وهي جزء من أجزاء النبوة وما الذي يرى ما يرى؟ وما الذي يُرى ما يرى النفس أم الطبيعة أم الإنسان؟ وأكره أن أترقى إلى البحث عن النفس وتحقيق شأنها وما قال الأولون والآخرون فيها وإذا كان هذا مجرّدًا وعن الطاقة باررًا فما ظنك بالبحث عن العقل وأفقه أعلى وعالمه أشرف وآثاره ألطف وميزانه أشدّ اتصالاً وبرهانه أبعد مجالاً وشعاعه أقوى سلطاناً وفوائده أكثر عياناً؟

using the organ of sense perception. For it sees that aspect of an object that emerges from the first impression—I mean the high-level genus that encompasses the objects it ranges over—and then the object becomes progressively clearer to it, one form at a time, until it sees it plainly and distinctly. If it only happens to see the impression of an object, what it sees requires explanation and interpretation, but the dream does not require clarification if it sees the object clearly and distinctly, and the very thing it sees when asleep is what it will see when awake.

This part it possesses through the swift, noble gaze connected to its higher horizon, and it is the source of prognostications and veracious visions that form part of prophecy. The part that it possesses through the inferior gaze connected to its lower horizon involves it reviewing the store of sensible forms derived through the senses from objects of vision and hearing. These forms lie dispersed in no particular order and contain no indications of the future. Sometimes it may combine these forms haphazardly, the way an absentminded or idle person without a specific purpose might behave, as for example when he fiddles with his fingers and with things at hand that are of no particular use for him. These dreams do not admit interpretation, and are merely the «muddled» dreams you have heard people speak of.⁵⁰

47.4

On the nature of dreams

What are dreams? For they are an august topic, and one of the parts of prophecy. What is it that sees what is seen, and what is it that renders what is seen seeable? Is it the soul, is it nature, or is it the human being? I recoil from loftier inquiries about the soul and investigations of its nature and of what earlier and later thinkers have said about it. And if that defies one's ability and stands outside the pale of one's power, what should one say about inquiries into the intellect? For its horizon is even higher, its realm even nobler, its effects even subtler, its demonstrative force even more wide-ranging; its scales have an even firmer hold, its radiance imposes itself even more imperiously, and its benefits are even more evident.

48.1

المجواب

٢٠٤٨ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله إنَّ النفس ترى عند غيبة المرئيات ما تراه من حضورها وذلك بحصول صورها في الحسّ^١ المشترك وهذه حال يجدها الإنسان من نفسه ضرورة لا يمكنه أن يندفع^٢ عنها وإلا فمن أين لنا صورة بغداد وخراسان والبلاد التي شاهدناها مرة ثم منارلنا بها وصور أصدقائنا فيها وجميع ما نتذكره منذ الصبا لولا حصول هذه الصورة في الحسّ^٣ المشترك؟ لا سيما وقد تبين بيانا لا ريب فيه أنَّ البصر وسائر الحواسِّ إنما هي انفعالات من المحسوسات واستحالات إليها وهذه الاستحالة لا تثبت بعد زوال المحسوس المخيل فلولا هذا الحسّ^٤ المشترك العام الذي تثبت فيه صور المحسوسات ولا تزول لكَّا إذا أبصرنا شيئا أو سمعناه ثم زال عن بصرنا وسمعنا زالت عنا صورته البتة حتى لا يمكننا أن نعرف صورته إلا إذا وقعت أبصارنا وأسماعنا عليه ثانياً ولكَّا أيضاً مع أبصارنا له ثانياً وثالثاً لا نعلم أنه الأول وكذلك المسموعات.

٣٠٤٨ ولولا أننا نستثبت صورة المحسوسات أولاً وأولاً في هذه القوة أعني الحسّ^٥ العام المشترك لكَّا لا نستفيد بالقراءة ورؤية الرقص والحركات كلها التي تنقضي^٦ مع آتات الزمان شيئاً البتة لأنَّ البصر يستحيل^٧ بقراءة الحرف بعد الحرف وبالحركة بعد الحركة فلا تثبت الحالة الأولى من استحالاتها ولو ثبتت الأولى لما حصلت الثانية لكن الأمر بالضدِّ في وجودنا هذه الصور بعد مفارقتها كأنها نصب عيوننا تراه النفس. وهذه الرؤية التي تسمى تذكراً في اليقظة هي بعينها تسمى في النوم رؤيا ولكن هناك حال أخرى زائدة على حال^٨ اليقظة لأنَّ قوى النفس عند تعطيل الحواسِّ تتوفر على الرؤية فترى أيضاً الأشياء الآتية في الزمان المستقبل إما رؤية جلية وإما رؤية خفيفة كالرسم.

١ الأصل وط: الحاس. ٢ الأصل وط: يدفعني. ٣ الأصل وط: الحاس. ٤ الأصل وط: الحاس. ٥ الأصل وط: الحاس. ٦ ط: تتهيي. ٧ ط: مستحيل. ٨ ط: حالات.

Miskawayh's response

The soul sees objects of sight when absent as it does when present. This is a result of the forms being realized in the common sense, something that human beings recognize from experience with a sense of necessity they cannot deny. How else would we acquire an image of Baghdad or Khurasan or the countries we saw once, of our houses and the friends we had there, or of everything we remember since childhood, were it not for the fact that these forms are realized in the common sense? This is particularly so given that it has been established beyond doubt that vision and all other forms of sense perception are passive effects produced by sensible objects and changes wrought by those objects, and these changes do not endure after the disappearance of the sensible imagined object. So, were it not for this comprehensive common sense where the forms of sensible objects endure without disappearing, whenever we saw or heard something that disappeared from our sight or our hearing, its form would disappear for us completely, so that we would not know its form unless we chanced to see or hear it a second time. Moreover, we would not know that it was the same as the first were we to see it a second or third time. The same applies to the things we hear. 48.2

If we did not fix the forms of sensible objects one after the other in this power—I mean the comprehensive common sense—we would not be able to get anything whatsoever out of reading or out of seeing dance movements or movements that end at successive moments in time. For vision undergoes a change through the reading of each successive letter and through each successive movement, but the first state of change does not endure, for if it endured, the second would not be realized. But this is not what happens, for we continue to perceive these forms once gone as though they were right before our eyes and the soul could see them. The seeing called “memory” during wakefulness is called “dreaming” during sleep. Yet there is a further state that goes beyond the state of wakefulness, for with the suspension of the senses, the powers of the soul dispose themselves for seeing, and see the things that lie in the future, whether clearly or dimly, as a faint impression. 48.3

٤٤٨ واشتقاق هذه الألفاظ يدلّك أيها الشيخ اللغوي أيّدك الله أنّ المعنى فيها واحد لأنّ الرؤية والروية والرؤيا وإن اختلفت بالحركات فهي متّقة بالحروف وكذلك إذا قلت رأى فلان وارتأى وروى فهذه صورة الأسماء المشتقة وأنت تعرف أحكامها لدربتك بها وكذلك الحال في أبصر واستبصر وفي البصر والبصيرة. فأما لفظة النظر فإنّها استُعملت بعينها في الأمرين جميعاً من غير زيادة ولا نقصان فليل لما كان بالحسّ نظر ولما كان بالعقل نظر من غير تغيير لحركة ولا تبديل لحرف.

٥٤٨ فقد تبيّن ما الرؤيا وما الذي يرى وما الذي يُرى أمّا الرؤيا فهي ملاحظة النفس صور الأشياء مجردة من موادّها عند النوم وأمّا الذي يرى فالنفس بالآلة التي وصفناها وأمّا الذي يُرى فالصورة المجردة وقد مرّ في المسألة المتقدمة كيف يكون بعض المنام صادقاً وبعضه كاذباً وبعضه إنذاراً وبعضه أحلاماً وبعضه أضغاثاً ولكن بغاية الإيجاز لأنّنا لو شرحنا هذه المواضع لاحتجنا إلى تصنيف عدّة كتب نقرّر فيها الأصول ونلخص بعدها الفروع^١ ولكن الشرط سبق بغير هذا وسرعة فهمك أمتع الله بك وقبولك لما يُشار به تقتضي ما رأيناه وأيناه.

مسألة إرادية وخلقية

١٠٤٩ ما السبب في تصافي شخصين لا تشابه بينهما في الصورة ولا تشاكل عندهما في الحلقة ولا تجاوز بينهما في الدار كواحد من فرغانة وآخر من تاهرت وهذا طويل قويم وهذا قصير دميم وهذا شخت عجف وهذا عالج جلف وهذا أربّ أشعر وهذا أعر

١ الأصل وط: الحروف.

The etymological derivation of these terms shows you—you who are a master of language, may God grace you with his support—that they share the same meaning. For the terms “seeing” (*ru’yah*), “deliberation” (*rawiyyah*), and “dream” or “vision” (*ru’yā*) share the same root consonants despite the difference in their vocalization. Similarly, the verbs “he saw” (*ra’ā*), “he formed an opinion” (*irta’ā*), and “he deliberated,” (*rawwā*) speak to the pattern of etymologically related words. You are familiar with these principles, as you have been well schooled in them. The same applies to the terms “to catch sight of” and “to have insight, as in to be discerning,” “sight,” and “insight.”⁵¹ The term “to look” (*naẓara*) is used to convey both meanings without any alteration: The act performed through the senses is referred to as “looking,” as is the act of “seeing” performed through the intellect; both are designated by *naẓar*, with no change in the vowels or shift in the consonants.

48.4

So we have clarified what dreams are, what it is that does the seeing, and what it is that is seen. Dreams consist in the soul’s perception during sleep of the forms of things in abstraction from their matter. The soul does the seeing, with the organ we have described. The abstracted form is what is seen. The previous question noted that some dreams may be true while others are false, that some may foretell the future while others may be idle or «muddled», though we did so with the utmost conciseness. For an analytical explanation of these topics would require us to compose several books in order to establish the general principles and provide a summary account of the subsidiary details. But the contrary has been stipulated, and your quick mind and receptiveness to mere allusions demand such a premise and promise—may God prolong your blessings!

48.5

On why friendship arises between apparently dissimilar individuals—a volitional and ethical question

Why does reciprocal affection arise between two individuals who do not resemble each other in external appearance, are dissimilar in physical build, and do not dwell in physical proximity, so, say, one hails from the city of Farghānah, the other from Tāhart, one is tall and well-built, the other short and unattractively diminutive, one is lean and meager, the other sturdy and tough, one is hirsute and covered in thick hair, the other smooth and with

49.1

أزعر وهذا أعيان من باقل وهذا أبلغ من سبحان وائل وهذا أجود من السحاب إذا سح
بودق بعد برق وهذا أبجل من كلب على عرق إذا ظفر بعرق وبينهما من الخلاف
والاختلاف ما يجب الناظر إليهما والفاحص عن أمرهما.

٢٠٤٩

وعلى ذكر الخلاف والاختلاف ما الخلاف والاختلاف وما الإلف والائتلاف؟
نعم ثم لا تراهما إلا متمازجين في الأخذ والإعطاء والصدق والوفاء والعقد والولاء
والنقص والنماء بغير نحلة عامة ولا مقالة ضامة ولا حال جامعة ولا طبيعة
مضارعة. ثم هذا التصافي ليس يختص ذكراً وذكراً دون ذكر وأنثى ودون أنثى وأنثى.
وإذا تنفس الاعتبار أدى إلى طرق مختلفة منها أن التصافي قد يمتد وقد ينقطع
ففيما يمتد ما يبلغ آخر الدهر وفيما ينقطع ما لا يثبت إلا شهراً أو أقل من شهر ومن
أجب ما ينبع منه العداوة والشحناء والحسد والبغضاء حتى كأن ذلك التصافي كان
عين التنافي وحتى يفضي إلى عظام الأمور وإلى غرائب الشرور وإلى ما يفني التالد
والطارف ويأتي على البقية المرجوة وربما سرت العداوة في الأولاد كأنها بعض الإرث
وربما زادت على ما كانت بين الآباء وهذا باب عسر وللتجيب فيه مجال وموقع والعلل
فيه محبوة وقل ما تصيب في زمانك هذا ذهنًا يولع بالبحث عن غامضه ويلهج
بالمسألة عن مشكله وليتهم إذ زهدوا في هذه الحكم لم يقذفوا الخائضين فيها والمنقذين
عنها بالتهم.

الجواب

٣٠٤٩

قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله سبب الصداقات بين الناس ينقسم أولاً إلى قسمين
عاليين وهما أسباب الذاتي والعرضي ثم ينقسم كل واحد منهما إلى أقسام وبحسب
أقسام المودات تنقسم أيضاً أسباب العداوات وإذا عرف أحد المتقابلين عرف
مقابله الآخر لأن أقسامه كأقسامه. أما السبب الذاتي من أسباب المودة فهو

١ الأصل: مقابلة.

very little hair, one is more tongue-tied than Bāqil, the other more eloquent than Saḥbān Wā'il,⁵² one is more generous than a rain cloud after a lightning storm, the other more avaricious than a dog nursing a fleshless bone it toiled to secure, so that the divergence and discordance between the two provoke the spectator and inquirer to wonder?

Speaking of divergence and discordance, what are they, and what are amity and concord? Indeed, you notice these individuals continually involved in relations of give and take, honesty and fidelity, agreement and loyalty, contraction and growth, while sharing no common faith, joint opinion, uniting condition, or comparable nature. Such reciprocal affection does not obtain exclusively between males, but between males and females, and also between females. If we expand our remit, we can see a number of different permutations. The relationship may extend over time, or may be curtailed, with some lasting forever, while others endure for no longer than a month, maybe even less than a month. Perhaps most remarkable is when it creates enmity and rancor, envy and hatred, as if this very reciprocal affection were reciprocal antipathy, and heinous and uncommon atrocities are generated, including the destruction of wealth, be it ancestral or recently acquired, and the premature end of lives. Sometimes the enmity spreads to the children, as if it formed part of their inheritance—sometimes it grows even fiercer than it was among the parents. This is a difficult subject that gives free rein to wonder, and the causes are obscure. In this day and age, one seldom meets a mind keen to inquire into its mysteries and fervent about investigating its ambiguities. Yet what a relief it would be if those with no interest in such nuggets of wisdom left off incriminating with their calumnies those of us who try to unearth them!

49.2

Miskawayh's response

The causes of the friendships that arise between people divide into two high-level categories, namely, essential causes and accidental causes. Each of these subdivides into further categories, and the categories that pertain to amicable relations also apply to the causes of hostile relations. By understanding one of the two opposite terms one can understand the other, as the categories of the one mirror the categories of the other. The essential cause of relations of affection is powerful and stable and, if it extends over time, does not change and endures so long as the individuals do. It is an affinity between two

49.3

القويّ الثابت الذي مدّ لا يستحيل ويبقى ببقاء الشخصين وهو نسبة بين الجوهريين إِمّا من المزاج الخاصّ العناصر وإمّا من النفس والطبيعة فأَمّا المزاج فقد يوجد بين الإنسانين وبين البهيّمين فإنّ تشاكل الأمرجة يؤلّف ويجذب أحد المتشاكلين بها إلى الآخر من غير قصد ولا روية ولا اختيار كما تجد ذلك في كثير من أنواع البهائم والطيور والحشرات وكذلك تجد بين الأمرجة المتباعدة عداوات ومنافرات من غير قصد ولا روية ولا اختيار وإذا تصفّحت ذلك وجدته أكثر من أن يحصى.

٤٠٤٩ وإن ارتقيت من الأمرجة إلى البسائط من الأمور وجدت هذا مستمرّاً أيضاً فيها أعني المشاكلة والمحبة والمنافرة والعداوة فإنّ بين الماء والنار من المنافرة والمعاداة وهرب كلّ واحد منهما من صاحبه ليبعد عنه ثمّ ميل كلّ واحد منهما إلى جنسه وطلبه لشكله ليتصل به أمر لا خفاء به على أحد. فإنّ انضاف إلى ذلك مزاج مناسب بتأليف موافق ظهر السبب وقوي كما يوجد حجر المغناطيس والحديد وبين حجري الخلل أعني محب الخلل وباغض الخلل وفي الحيوان من هذا المعنى شيء كثير بين لا يحتاج إلى تعديده وإطالة الجواب بذكره. وإذا كان اتفاق الجسمين يوجب المودة بالجهر وبالمزاج الخاصّ فكم بالحريّ أن يوجبها اتفاق النفسين إذا كان بينهما مناسبة ومشاكلة.

٥٠٤٩ وأمّا الأسباب العرضية فهي كثيرة وبعضها أقوى من بعض. فأحد أسباب المودة العرضية العادة والإلف والثاني الأمر النافع أو المظنون به النفع والثالث اللذة والرابع الأمل والخامس الصناعات والأغراض والسادس المذاهب والآراء والسابع العصبية. ثمّ طول مكث أحد هذه الأسباب وقصره علة طول المودات وقصرها ومثال النافع مودات الأتباع أو الخدم وأربابهم وأصحاب الشركة والتجارات وطلاب الأرباح والمكاسب ومثال اللذيذ مودة الرجل والمرأة على أنّ هناك أيضاً مودة النافع ومودة الأمل فهو لذلك قويّ وثيق ومودة المتعاشقين والمتعاشرين على المأكول

١ الأصل: من أسباب المودة فهو القويّ الثابت الذي مدّ: زيادة من الهامش؛ ط: أما السبب الذاتي من أسباب التصافي فهو السبب الذي.

substances stemming either from the specific constitutive elements of their mixture or from the soul and nature. An affinity that stems from the elemental mixture might be found between two human beings or between two beasts. For a likeness in mixture unites and attracts like beings to each other without the operation of any intention, reflection, or choice, a phenomenon one encounters among many types of beasts, birds, and insects. Similarly, one encounters relations of hostility and antipathy between mixtures that lie far apart from one another without the operation of any intention, reflection, or choice. If you reflect on this, you will find that there are more cases than can be counted.

If we go up a level, from mixtures to simple elements, we encounter the same phenomenon—I mean likeness and love, and antipathy and hostility. We are all familiar with the antipathy and animosity between water and fire, and with the way each element flees the other and strives to keep its distance from it, and also with the way each inclines to its own kind, seeking out its like to join itself to. If a harmoniously related mixture with a congruent composition is added, the cause becomes manifest and grows stronger, as it does in the case of magnets and iron and between the two vinegar stones—I mean the one attracted to, and the one repelled by, vinegar. The instances of this principle are so obvious among animals that they do not require detailed enumeration, making our response longer. If the agreement between two bodies by virtue of their substance and specific mixture necessitates affection, it is all the more fitting that agreement between two souls should also necessitate it, if there is affinity and likeness between them.

49.4

There are many accidental causes of affection, and some are stronger than others. One such cause is habit and familiarity. The second is benefit, or the supposition of benefit. The third is pleasure, the fourth hope, the fifth crafts and practical ends, the sixth doctrinal affiliations and opinions, and the seventh partisanship. The length of time one of these relations lasts is determined by how long the cause abides. Examples of relations of affection based on benefit are the relations between subordinates or servants and their masters, between business partners and merchants, and between those pursuing profit and those pursuing financial gain. Examples that are based on pleasure are the relations between men and women—though this also involves the affection based on benefit and the affection based on hope, hence its strength and tenacity—and the relations between lovers, between those who eat or drink or

49.5

والمشروب والمركوب وما أشبه ذلك وأما مثال الرجاء والأمل فكثير ولعل مودة الوالدين للولد فيها شيء من هذا الضرب لأنه متى زال الأمل وقوي اليأس انتفيا من الولد وزالت المودة وحدث البغض فأما مودة الولد فالنفع لا غير ثم يصير مع ذلك أيضاً إلفاً. ولست أقول إن الأسباب كلها في مودة الوالدين ما ذكرته فإن هناك أسباباً أخرى طبيعية ولكن فيها شيء كثير من هذا المعنى. ومثال الصناعات والأغراض كثير ظاهر لا يحتاج إلى ذكره مع ظهوره ومثال النحل والعصبيات كذلك أيضاً في البيان والظهور.

٦٠٤٩

وهذه الأقسام محصورة تحت قوى النفس البهيمية والغضبية والناطقة فما كان منها عن نسبة ومشكلة بين النفس النامية والبهيمية كان منه أسباب المودة للذيد أو النافع وما كان منها بسبب مشكلة بين النفس الغضبية كان منه أسباب المودة للعبة كالاجتماع للصيد والحرب وسائر العصبيات التي تكون فيها قوة الغضب وما كان منها عن نسبة ومشكلة في النفس الناطقة كان منه المودة التي للدين والآراء وهذه تترك وتنفرد فكلما تركت وكثرت الأسباب قويت المودة وكلما تفرقت ضعفت المودة ويكون زمان المكث بحسب ذلك أيضاً. وأقوى الأسباب المفردة العرضية ما كان عن النفس الناطقة ويتلوه ما كان عن النفس الغضبية. وأنت تستقري ذلك وتبينه لئلا يطول الجواب فيخرج عن الشرط الأول من تحريم الإيجاز وجميعها يزول بزوال أسبابها وليس منها شيء ثابت لا يزول إلا الجوهري الذاتي إما نفساً وإما طبيعة.

مسألة

١٠٠٠

ما العلم وما حده وحقيقته؟ فقد رأيت أصحابه يتناهبون الكلام فيه حتى قال قوم هو معرفة الشيء على ما هو به وقال آخرون هو اعتقاد الشيء على ما هو به وقال

travel in each other's company, and the like. Examples of relations of affection based on expectation and hope abound, and perhaps the affection of parents toward their children contains an element of that. For when hope disappears and despair takes hold, parents withdraw from children, affection disappears, and hatred develops. The affection experienced by children is based on benefit, and additionally comes to be based in familiarity. I am certainly not saying that the causes I mentioned as being at work in the affection of parents are exhaustive, for there are other, natural, causes in operation; but there is a large share of this element involved. There are many obvious examples of relations based on crafts and practical purposes—so evident as not to require separate treatment. Examples of relations based on religious creeds and partisan loyalties are equally plain and evident.

These categories range themselves under the beastly, irascible, and rational powers of the soul. Those that derive from an affinity and likeness between the growing and beastly souls yield the causes of affection for pleasure or benefit. Those that result from a likeness in the irascible soul yield the causes of affection for victory, such as hunting parties, military expeditions, and the other partisan activities in which the irascible power is in operation. The ones that derive from an affinity and likeness in the rational soul yield affection for religion and doctrinal views. These may be found in compound or in isolation. The relation of affection is stronger when they enter into compounds and the causes multiply. The relation of affection is weaker when they appear in isolation, and the length of its duration also depends on this. The isolated accidental causes that derive from the rational soul are the strongest, followed by those that derive from the irascible soul. You can study and clarify the particulars on your own, so that my response does not violate the condition of synoptic presentation. When their causes disappear, so do these relations—none of them endures indefinitely apart from those based on what is substantial and essential, whether in the soul or in nature.

49.6

On the definition and nature of knowledge

What is knowledge? What is its definition, and what is its nature? I have seen its proponents seizing upon different views of the topic. One group said: It consists in being cognizant of something the way it is. Others said: It consists

50.1

قائلون هو إثبات الشيء على ما هو به. فقيل لصاحب القول الأول لو كان حد العلم معرفة الشيء على ما هو به لكان حد المعرفة علم الشيء على ما هو به والحاجة إلى تحديد المعرفة كالحاجة إلى حد العلم وهذا جواب فيه سهو وإيهام.

٢٠٥٠ وقيل لصاحب القول الثاني إن كان حد العلم اعتقاد الشيء على ما هو به فبين أن كون الشيء على ما هو به سبق الاعتقاد ثم اعتقد أو الاعتقاد سبق كون الشيء على ما هو به فإن ما هو به هو المبحوث عنه ومن أجله وضع العيار ولزم الاعتبار. فقال الجيب مواصلاً لكلامه الأول هو اعتقاد الشيء على ما هو به مع سكون النفس وثلب الصدر. فقيل له إن الاعتقاد افتعال من العقد يقال عقد واعتقد والكلام عقد والتاء عرض لغرض ليس من سوس الكلمة فإذا هو فعل مضاف إلى العاقد الذي له عقد والمعتقد الذي له اعتقاد والمسألة لم تقع عن فعل وإنما وقعت عن العلم الذي له قوام بنفسه وانفصال من العالم. ألا ترى أن له اتصالاً به؟ فهب أنك تحدّه باعتقاد الإنسان الشيء ما دام متصلاً به فما حقيقته من قبل ولما يتصل به؟ وهذا جواب المعتزلة ولهم التشقيق والتمطيط والدعوى والإعراب والعصبية والتشيع. وقيل لصاحب هذا الجواب لو كان العلم اعتقاد الشيء على ما هو به لكان الله معتقداً للشيء على ما هو به لأنه عالم. فقال إن الله تعالى ذكره لا علم له لأنه عالم بذاته كما هو قادر بذاته حي بذاته. فقيل له إنك لم تمنع في هذه الحاشية فلا تتوار عن السهم إن كان حد العلم اعتقاد الشيء على ما هو به

in believing something to be the way it is. Yet others said: It consists in affirming something to be way it is. Exponents of the first view were then challenged: If knowledge is defined as being cognizant of something the way it is, cognizance would have to be defined as knowing something the way it is, and cognizance stands as much in need of definition as knowledge does. This answer is careless and misleading.

Exponents of the second view were challenged: If knowledge is defined as believing something to be the way it is, it is clear that either a thing's being the way it is existed prior to belief and only afterward became an object of belief, or the belief existed prior to the thing's being the way it is. For the way it is is what one is seeking to determine and for the sake of which standards are posited and reflection is required. The authors of the second opinion responded to this objection, adding to their original definition: Knowledge consists in believing something to be the way it is, combined with a repose of the soul and mental satisfaction. It was then objected: The word "belief" (*i'tiqād*) is a morphological derivative from the term "to make a bond, to fix, to contract" (*'aqd*). We say someone "made a bond," that a person "believed," and that the speech in question is a "binding contract." The consonant *t* in *i'taqada* is a contingent element reflecting a particular purpose and is not one of the root consonants of the word. Thus, the word indicates an act that is related to the binder who has a binding contract, and to the believer who has a belief. Yet the question was not about an act but rather about knowledge, which subsists in itself and is unconnected to the knowing subject. Can you not see that it is connected to him? Suppose you define it in terms of a person's believing a given thing so long as it is connected to him. What then was its reality prior to that point, when it had not yet been connected to him? This is the response of the Mu'tazilites, who are in the habit of making grandiloquent pronouncements, rolling their tongues at length over their words, submitting postulates and making distinct utterances, zealously and passionately defending their side. Those who offered this objection were told in turn: If knowledge consisted in believing something to be the way it is, then since God is knowing, God would believe things to be the way they are. To this they answered: God has no knowledge, for He is knowing through His essence, just as He is powerful through His essence and living through His essence. The objection was then made: The original objection did not concern this side issue, so don't dodge the arrow. If knowledge is defined as believing something to be the way it is,

50.2

فحد العلم أنه معتقد الشيء على ما هو به وسيؤنف النظر هل له علم أم ليس له علم فراغ هكذا وهكذا.

٣٥٠ وقيل لصاحب القول الثالث إثبات الشيء عبارة مقصورة على إضافة فعل إلى الفاعل والفعل هو الإثبات والفاعل هو المثبت وباب العلم والجهل والفتنة والعقل والنهي والدرك ليس من الأفعال المحضة وإن كانت مضارعة لها كمضارعة طال ومات ونشأ وشاخ واستعرّ وباخ. وهذا البحث متوجه إلى صاحب القول الرابع أعني في قوله حد العلم إدراك الشيء على ما هو به. وينبغي أن تعلم أن الغرض في حد الشيء هو تحصيل ذاته معرفة من كل شائبة خالصة من كل مقذية بلفظ مقصور عليها وعبارة مصوغة لها وما دامت عين الشيء ثابتة في النفس ماثلة بين يدي العقل فلا بد للمنطق من أن يلحق منها الحقيقة أو يدرك أخصّ الخاصّة.

المجواب

٤٥٠ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما الأجوبة المحكية والاعتراضات عليها فأنما معرض عن جميعها إذ كان هؤلاء القوم الذين حكي عنهم ما حكي لا يعرفون صناعة التحديد وهي صناعة صعبة تحتاج إلى علم واسع بالمنطق ودربة مع ذلك كثيرة. وغاية ما عند هؤلاء القوم في التحديد إبدال اسم مكان اسم بل ربما كان اسم الشيء أوضح من الحد الذي يضعونه له. وهذه سبيلهم في جميع ما يتكلفونه إلا ما كان مأخوذاً من المتقدمين ومنقولاً عنهم نقلاً صحيحاً كحد الجسم والعرض وما أشبههما. فأما ما تكلفوه من الحدود فهو بالهذيان أشبه. وأقول إن الحد مأخوذ من جنس الشيء المحدود القريب منه وفصوله الذاتية المقومة له المميّزة إياه عن غيره. فكل ما لم يوجد له جنس ولا فصول مقومة فإنما يرسم. والرسم يكون من الخواص اللازمة التي أشبه بالفصول الذاتية فلذلك ما نحد العلم بأنه إدراك صور الموجودات بما هي موجودات. ولما كانت الصور على ضربين منها في هيولى ومادة ومنها مجردة خالية من المواد صار إدراك

then the knowing subject must be defined as one who believes something to be the way it is. The question of whether this subject has knowledge or not can then be eschewed, and is moot on both views.

Exponents of the third view received this objection: “Affirmation” is an expression that signifies nothing more than the relation of an act to an agent. Affirmation is the act, and the affirmer is the agent. Yet notions like knowledge, ignorance, astuteness, intelligence, understanding, and discernment do not belong to the class of pure acts, even though they resemble them in the same way that verbs like “to be long,” “to die,” “to come into being,” “to grow old,” “to flare up,” or “to abate” resemble them. The same consideration is directed against exponents of the fourth view,⁵³ I mean with regard to their claim that knowledge consists in discerning something to be the way it is. You must know that when defining something, the aim is to attain its essence stripped of accretions and free from extraneous elements, using terms exclusively assigned to it and expressions specially crafted to fit it. As long as the being of the thing is securely fixed in the soul and stands erect before reason, logic must necessarily arrive at its true nature or discern its most exclusive characteristics.

50.3

Miskawayh’s response

I repudiate every one of these responses and their objections; for the people whose views were reported are unacquainted with the craft of definition, a difficult craft requiring wide knowledge of logic as well as extensive experience. These people think that definition is simply the substitution of one word for another, yet sometimes the word to be defined is clearer than the definition they posit for it. This is invariably how they proceed, except when they draw on the early thinkers and accurately transmit their views, as in the definition of bodies, accidents, and the like. The definitions they have proposed, however, are closer to drivel. Definitions, I say, are based on the proximate genus of the definiendum and the essential differences that constitute it and distinguish it from other things. When a genus and constitutive difference are not found for a given thing, it is only described. Description is based on concomitant properties that bear the greatest resemblance to essential differences. That is why we do not define “knowledge” as the perception of the forms of existents qua existents. Since forms are of two kinds—those that subsist in matter and material substance, and those that are abstracted and free from matter—the perception

50.4

النفس أيضاً على ضربين أحدهما بالحواس وهو إدراكها لما كان في مادة والآخر بغير الحواس بل العين الباطنة الروحية التي تقدم الكلام فيها في بعض المسائل المتقدمة. فاسم العلم خاص بإدراك الصور التي في غير مادة واسم المعرفة خاص بإدراك الصور ذوات المواد ثم يستعمل هذا مكان هذا للتشاع في اللغة.

ووجدتك قد اعترضت على أجوبة من لم ترض جوابه باعتراضات يجوز أن تظن أنها لازمة لجوابنا هذا فلذلك احتجت إلى الكلام عليها فأقول إن من شأن الحد أن ينعكس على المحدود وذاك أن الاسم والحد جميعاً دالان على شيء واحد لا فرق بينهما إلا في أن الاسم يدل دلالة بجملة والحد يدل دلالة مفصلة. مثال ذلك أن تقول في حد الجسم إنه الطويل العريض العميق أو تقول هو ذو الأبعاد الثلاثة ثم تعكس ذلك إن الطويل العريض العميق هو الجسم أو ذو الأبعاد الثلاثة هو الجسم. وكذلك تقول في سائر الحدود الصحيحة ولهذا تقول في العلم إنه إدراك صور الموجودات وتقول أيضاً إدراك صور الموجودات هو العلم فلا يكون بينهما فرق إلا أن العلم يدل دلالة إجمال وحده يدل دلالة تفصيل على ما قدمنا ذكره وبيانه.

وإذا بان أن العلم إدراك وتصور فقد بان أنهما انفعال لأن الصور إنما تكون موجودة إما مجردة عقلية وإما مادية حسية وإذا أدركتها النفس فإما تقلها إلى ذاتها نقلاً لتطبع تلك الصور فيها وإذا انطبعت فيها تصورت بها وهذا مستمر في المحسوس والمعقول. وإذا بان هذا فقد بان أنه من باب المضاف لأن الإدراك أثر يقع بالمنفعل من الفاعل وكذلك التصور. والأشياء التي من باب المضاف لا سبيل إلى وجودها منفردة ولا إلى تحصيل ذواتها معرفة من كل شائبة كما طالبت خصمك به لأنها لا عين لها ثابتة في النفس ماثلة بين يدي العقل إلا من حيث هي مضافة للمعلوم إذن يتقدم العلم تقدماً ذاتياً وكذلك المحسوس يتقدم الحس^٢ بالذات. والفرق بين التقدم

١ الأصل: إذا. ٢ الأصل وط: الحاس.

of the soul is also of two kinds. One is produced through the senses—this is its perception of that which subsists in matter. The other is not produced through the senses, but rather through the spiritual inner eye discussed in some of the earlier questions. Knowledge, as designated through the term *‘ilm*, specifically refers to the perception of the forms that do not subsist in matter. Another concept of knowledge, that designated through the term *ma‘rifah*, refers to the perception of the forms that are possessed of matter. But as a result of loose linguistic usage, the two terms are employed interchangeably.

I notice that you formulated objections against responses you judged to be inadequate that you might think also apply to this response, so I felt the need to address them. I therefore say the following. It is in the nature of a definition that it can change places with the term being defined; for the term defined and the definition signify one and the same thing, the only difference between them being that the term signifies in a general manner, whereas the definition signifies in a particularized manner. For instance, “body” might be defined by saying “it is that which is long, wide, and deep” or “it is that which has three dimensions,” and this could then be reversed by saying “that which is long, wide, and deep is a body” or “that which has three dimensions is a body.” This applies to all other sound definitions. That is why one can say “knowledge is the perception of the forms of existents,” and one can also say “the perception of the forms of existents is knowledge,” the only difference between the two being that “knowledge” signifies in a general manner, whereas its definition signifies in a particularized manner, as was earlier stated clearly.

So now it is clear that knowledge consists in perception and in the acquisition of forms. It is clear that these involve being passively affected, for forms are either abstracted and intellectual or material and sensory. When the soul perceives them, it transfers them into itself, so that these forms are imprinted in it, and when this occurs, it acquires their form. This holds true for both sensible and intelligible things. Now that this is clear, it will further be clear that it falls in the class of relational things, for perception is an effect produced in that which is passively affected by that which acts, and so is the acquisition of forms. Things of a relational kind cannot exist in isolation, nor can one “attain their essence stripped of every accretion” as you demanded from your opponent. For they have no being that is “securely fixed within the soul and stands erect before reason” except insofar as they are relational. Thus, the object of knowledge is essentially prior to the knowledge, just as the object of sense

50.5

50.6

الذاتي والتقدم العرضي والزمني بين في غير هذا الموضع وإن كانا معاً بالزمان ثم تتزع
النفس صورها وتستبثها في ذاتها^١

v.٥٠ فأما ما أزمته في خصمك^٢ في الله تعالى عن صفات المخلوقين فقد عرفت مما تقدم
من المسائل أنا لا نقول فيه تقدس ذكره إنه عالم بالحقيقة التي نقولها في العالم منا
ولا نطلق شيئاً من صفاته بالمعاني التي نطلقها في غيره بوجه من الوجوه وإنما
نتبع الشريعة ونتمثل ما تأمر به ونسَميه بأحب^٣ الأسماء ونصفه بأعظم الصفات
التي نتعارفها نحن معاشر البشر لأنه لا سبيل لنا إلى غير ما نعرفه فيما بيننا ولا طريق
لنا إلا ما يستحقه عز وجل ذاته لأننا لا نعلم بالحقيقة منه شيئاً إلا الإتيّة المحض
حسب. ثم جميع ما يُشار إليه بعقل أو حس فهو مخلوق له. وإذا كان الأمر كذلك
ووجدنا الشريعة قد رخصت في أسام وصفات ممدوحة عظيمة بين البشر اتمنا للشرع
فأطلقناها من غير أن نرجع بها إلى الحقائق المعروفة من اللغة والمعاني المحصلة بها.
وهذا موضع قد أومأت إليه فيما سلف وأعلمتك وجه الصعوبة فيه والله الموفق
والمعين ولا قوة إلا به.

مسألة

١٠٥١ لم إذا أبصر الإنسان صورة حسنة أو سمع نعمة رخيمة قال والله ما رأيت هذا قط
ولا سمعت مثل هذا قط وقد علم أنه سمع أطيب من ذلك وأبصر أحسن من ذلك؟

١ يباض في الأصل. ٢ الأصل وط: خاصتك. ٣ الأصل وط: بأحد. ٤ ط: لأن. ٥ الأصل: فأطلقناه.

perception is essentially prior to the sense perception. The difference between essential priority and accidental and temporal priority has been clarified elsewhere. If the two are temporally simultaneous, and then the soul extracts their forms and establishes them securely within itself . . .⁵⁴

As for the entailment you forced on your opponent regarding God—may He be exalted far above the attributes of created beings—you will know from earlier questions that we do not qualify God as “knowing” in the literal sense that attaches to the qualification “knowing” among us humans, and in no respect do we apply any of His attributes with the meanings they have when applied to other beings. Rather, we follow the religious Law and acquiesce in its commands, and we predicate of Him the most beloved epithets and describe Him using the greatest attributes that we as human beings are familiar with. For we have no means of accessing anything beyond what we know among ourselves, and no way of knowing what He merits in Himself. The sole thing we know about Him in reality is the pure fact that He is. Furthermore, everything that can be indicated through reason or through the senses has been created by Him. This being the case, if we find the religious Law sanctioning the use of names and attributes deemed praiseworthy and exalted among human beings, we accede to the command of the Law and apply them without referring them to the literal meanings known through language and the definitions acquired through it. This is a topic that I briefly touched on earlier, and I apprised you of the type of difficulty it involves. God is the one who grants success and assistance, and strength comes through Him alone. 50.7

On why people make apparently false statements when expressing admiration

Why is it that when a person sees a pretty picture or hears a melodious tune, he says, “By God, I’ve never seen or heard anything like that before,” even though he has in fact heard better, and seen prettier, things? 51.1

المجواب

٢٠٥١ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما بحسب الفقه أو مقتضى اللغة فهو غير حاث ولا مخطف لأن شيئاً لا يماثل شيئاً بالإطلاق ولا يقال في شيء هذا مثل هذا إلا بتقييد فيكون مثله في جوهره أو كميته أو كفيته أو غير ذلك من سائر المقولات وقد يماثله في اثنتين^١ منها وأكثر فأما في جميعها فحال. فهذا وجه صحة قول الإنسان والله ما رأيت مثله. فأما من جهة أخرى وهي جهة طبيعية فإنك تعلم أن الحس سيال بسيلان محسوسه^٢ فإذا استثبت صورة ثم زالت عنه وحضرت أخرى شغلته وثبتت بدل الأخرى فلا يحضر الحس إلا ما قد أثر فيه دون ما قد زال وإنما حصلت الأولى في الذكر وفي قوة أخرى وربما لم يجتمعا أو لم يحضر الذكر فيكون قول الإنسان على قدر^٣ الأمر الحاضر وحضور الذكر أو غيبته.

مسألة

١٠٥٢ ما سبب استحسان الصورة الحسنة؟ وما هذا الولوع الظاهر والنظر والعشق الواقع من القلب والصبابة المتميزة للنفس والفكر الطارد للنوم والخيال المائل للإنسان؟ أهذه كلها من آثار الطبيعة أم هي من عوارض النفس أم هي من دواعي العقل أم من سهام الروح أم هي خالية من العلل جارية على الهذر؟ وهل يجوز أن يوجد مثل هذه الأمور الغالبة والأحوال المؤثرة على وجه العبث وطريق البطل؟

١ الأصل: اثنتين. ٢ الأصل: محسوسة. ٣ ط: حسب.

Miskawayh's response

From the perspective of jurisprudence or linguistic necessity, this is neither perjury nor error. For no single thing resembles another absolutely, and we only say that "*this is like that*" in a qualified manner. It might be like it in terms of its substance, quantity, or quality, or one of the other categories. Or again, it might resemble it in two or more of these respects; but resemblance in all respects is impossible. This is why it is correct for a person to say, "By God, I've never see anything like it." From another perspective—and this is a natural perspective—you know that the senses are in a state of flux that derives from the flux of their objects. When the senses fix on a form and it then passes away and another appears, the new form occupies the senses, fixing itself in the place of the first. So what is present to the senses is only what has produced an effect on them, not what has passed away. The first form has been realized in the memory, and in another power; but the two may often not occur together, or the memory may not present itself, so what the person says will be based on the present moment and the presence or absence of memory. 51.2

On why people take pleasure in contemplating beautiful forms

Why does one take pleasure in beautiful forms? What is the evident rapture, the lingering look, the passion that seizes the heart, the ardor that entralls the soul, the thoughts that drive out sleep, the images that swim before a person's eyes? Do all these things belong to the effects of nature, to the happenings of the soul, to the incitements of reason, or to the apportionments of the spirit? Or are they rather bereft of causes, and matters of mere senseless talk? Can phenomena that possess such dominance and conditions that exercise such an effect possibly exist by way of idle sport? 52.1

المجواب

٢٠٥٢ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما سبب الاستحسان لصورة الإنسان فكمال في الأعضاء وتناسب بين الأجزاء مقبول عند النفس. وهذا الجواب بحسب غرضك من المسألة التي هي متوجهة نحو الصورة الإنسانية المعشوقة دون غيرها. وأقول إن الطبيعة مقتضية أفعال النفس وآثارها فهي تعطي الهيولى والأشياء الهيولانية صوراً بحسب قبولها وعلى قدر استعدادها وتحكي في ذلك فعل النفس فيها أعني في الطبيعة ولكنها هي بسيطة فتقبل من النفس صوراً شريفة تامة فإذا أرادت أن تنقش الهيولى بتلك الصور أعجزت الأمور الهيولانية عن قبولها تامة وافية لقلّة استعدادها وعدمها القوة المسككة الضابطة ما تُعطاه من الصور التامة. وهذا العجز في الهيولى ربما كان كثيراً وربما كان يسيراً وبحسب قوتها على قبول الصور يكون حسن موقع ما يحصل فيها من النفس فإذا المادة الموافقة للصورة تقبل النقش تامةً صحيحاً مشاكلاً لما قبلتها الطبيعة من النفس والمادة التي ليست بموافقة تكون على الضد.

٣٠٥٢ والمثال في ذلك أن الطبيعة إنما تعمل من المادة عند تجميل الناس في الرحم الفطس في الأنف والزرقة في العينين والصهوبة في الشعر وبحسب قبول الهيولى الموضوعه لها لا لأنها تقصد الصور الناقصة بل تقصد أبدأً الأفضل ولكن المادة الرطبة تأتي إلا قبول ما يلائمها. وذلك أن الدعج في العين والشم في الأنف صور تحتاج إلى اعتدال المادة بين الرطوبة السيالة واليوسة الصلبة ولا يمكن إظهارها في المادة الرطبة كما لا يمكن صياغة خاتم من شع ذائب. وربما كانت المادة حاضرة من طريق الكمية دون الكيفية فلا تتم الحلقة على أفضل الهيئات. وكذلك الحال في شعر الرأس وأهدب العين والحاجب فإنها لا تنتقش على ما ينبغي إذا كانت ناقصة المادة أو غير معتدلة في الكيفيات فتعمل الطبيعة منها ما يمكن ويتأتى فقيء الصورة غير مقبولة عند النفس لأنها لا تطابق ما عندها من الكمال. فأما وأنت تتأمل ذلك من طين الختم

١ ط: أنها. ٢ ط: والشم.

Miskawayh's response

The reason one takes pleasure in the form of human beings is due to a perfection in the bodily members and a harmonious relation between the parts of the body that are received with satisfaction in the soul. My response addresses what interests you in asking this question, oriented toward the human form that arouses passion, to the exclusion of other forms. So I say as follows. Nature imitates the acts and effects of the soul, imparting forms to matter and material objects according to their receptivity and the degree of their susceptibility. In doing so, it mimics the action of the soul on it—that is, on nature; yet the soul, for its part, is simple.⁵⁵ So nature receives complete noble forms from the soul, but when it seeks to engrave those forms on matter, material objects fail to receive them completely and fully on account of their poor susceptibility, and because they lack the power to grasp and secure the complete forms imparted to them. This failure on the part of matter can be sometimes great and sometimes small, and how well it responds to what the soul introduces into it will depend on its power to receive the forms. Thus, matter that agrees with a form receives the engraving completely and correctly and in a way that resembles what nature has received from the soul. Matter that does not agree with it behaves in the opposite manner.

An example is the way nature produces flat noses, blue eyes, and reddish hair from matter when human beings are being shaped in the womb, in accordance with the receptivity of the matter at its disposal. This is not because it aims at deficient forms, for it always aims at what is most excellent. But moist matter will only consent to receive what is congruent with it. For black eyes and high-ridged noses are forms that require matter to have a proper balance between pliant moistness and firm dryness, and cannot be manifested by moist matter, just as a seal cannot be produced from molten wax. Sometimes the matter throws up impediments from the direction of quantity rather than quality, so that the physical constitution is not configured in the best manner. This is the case with the hair of the head and with eyelashes and eyebrows, for if there is a deficient amount of matter or the qualities are imbalanced, these are not engraved as they ought to be. Nature thus produces from it what is possible and achievable, and the ensuing form is not welcomed in the soul, for it does not correspond to the perfection the soul contains. Let's continue to use a clay seal as a basis for reflection: If the quantity of clay falls short of

فإنه إذا كان ناقص الكمية غير مقدار الخاتم أو يابساً أو رطباً أو خشناً نقصت صورة الخاتم ولم يقبل النقش على التمام والكمال.

٤٥٢ فأما المثال في المادة الموافقة فهو بالصد من هذا المثال فلذلك تقبل ما تعطيه الطبيعة على التمام وتنقش نقشاً صحيحاً مناسباً مشاكلاً لما في النفس فإذا رأتها النفس سرتها لأنها موافقة لما عندها مطابقة لما أعطتها الطبيعة. فكأن الصناعة تقني الطبيعة فإذا صنع الصانع تمثالاً في مادة موافقة فقبلت منه الصورة الطبيعية تامة صحيحة فرح الصانع وسر وأعجب واقتصر لصدق أثره وخروج ما في قوته إلى الفعل موافقاً لما في نفسه ولما عند الطبيعة فكذلك حال الطبيعة مع النفس لأن نسبة الصناعة إلى الطبيعة في اقتنائها إياها كنسبة الطبيعة إلى النفس في اقتنائها إياها. ثم إن من شأن النفس إذا رأت صورة حسنة متناسبة الأعضاء في الهيئات والمقادير والألوان وسائر الأحوال مقبولة عندها موافقة لما أعطتها الطبيعة اشتاقت إلى الاتحاد بها فنزعته من المادة واستتبته في ذاتها وصارت إياها كما تفعل في المعقولات. وهذا الفعل لها بالذات له تحرك وإليه تشتاق وبه تكمل إلا أنها تشرف بالمعقولات ولا تشرف بالمحسوسات. فإذا فعلت النفس ذلك واشتاقت إلى الطبيعيات والأجسام الطبيعة رامت الطبيعة في الأجساد من الاتحاد ما رامته النفس في الصور المجردة فلا يكون لها سبيل إليه لأن الجسد لا يتصل بالجسد على سبيل الاتحاد بل على طريق المماسّة فحصل حينئذ على الشوق إلى المماسّة التي هي اتحاد جسمائني بحسب استطاعتها. وهذا من النفس غلط كبير وخطأ عظيم لأنها تنتكس من الحال الأشرف إلى الحال الأدون وتتصور بصورة طبيعية منها أخذت وبها اقتديت وتقوتها الصور الشريفة العقلية التي ترقى بها إلى الرتبة العليا والسعادة العظمى.

٥٥٢ وهذا الذي ذكرته هو الأمر الذاتي الكلي الجاري على وتيرة طبيعية تحصرها الصناعة وتضبطها القوانين. فأما الاستحسان العرضي والجزئي أعني ما يستحسنه شخص

the amount needed for the stamp, or if it is dry, moist, or rough, the form of the stamp becomes deficient and it does not receive the engraving completely and perfectly.

The case of agreeable matter is the opposite, for it receives completely what nature imparts to it, and is engraved in a way that is sound and harmonious and that resembles what is in the soul. So the soul rejoices when it sees it, because it agrees with what the soul contains and corresponds with what it imparted to nature. Crafts imitate nature; so when a craftsman fashions a statue out of agreeable matter, and the latter receives the natural form completely and accurately, the craftsman is overjoyed and feels a sense of pride and self-satisfaction on account of the veracity of his work, and of his having actualized his potentiality in a way that agrees with what is in his soul and with what nature contains. Something similar applies to the relationship between nature and the soul, for in imitating nature, crafts stand in the same relation to nature as nature stands to the soul in imitating it. Moreover, it is characteristic of the soul that when it sees a beautiful form whose members are harmoniously related in terms of shape, measurement, color, and other features—a form that it receives with satisfaction and that agrees with what it imparted to nature—it longs to be united with it. It thus extracts it from matter, fixes it securely within itself, and becomes identified with it, as it does in the case of intelligible things. This is an act that belongs to it through its essence, and that it is driven toward, longs for, and is perfected by; yet it is ennobled through intelligible things, not through sensible things. When the soul does that and conceives a longing for natural things and natural bodies, nature seeks to bring about a union between bodies like the one the soul seeks in relation to abstract forms. Yet it has no means of achieving this, because bodies cannot join themselves to other bodies by way of union, only by way of external contact; hence, it experiences a longing for the external contact which represents the type of bodily union that lies within its power to achieve. This is a gross delusion and grave error on the part of the soul, for it demotes itself from a nobler state to a baser one, assuming a natural form for which it itself served as the source and original model, and thus failing to attain the intelligible noble forms that cause it to be elevated to the highest rank and the greatest happiness.

52.4

I have mentioned that which is universal and essential, and which proceeds in a natural manner encompassed by craft and precisely determined by rules. The particular and accidental pleasure one might take—I mean, when a certain

52.5

ما بحسب مزاج ما فهو أيضاً لأجل نسبة ما ولكته يصير شخصياً والأمور الشخصية لا نهاية لها فلذلك لا تنحصر تحت صناعة ولا لها قانون. والذي ينبغي أن يُعلم منها أن كل مزاج متباعد من الاعتدال تكون له مناسبات نحو أمور خاصة به وبخالفه المزاج الذي هو منه في الطرف الآخر من الاعتدال حتى يستقيم هذا ما يستحسن هذا وبالضد وكذلك ما تقيده العادات والاستشعارات وهو موجود في استلذاذ المأكول والمشروب فإن الأمزجة البعيدة من الاعتدال تناسب طوعاً غريبة وتستلذ منها طرائف وعجائب والاستقراء يفيدك كل عجيبة وطريقة من هذا النحو في الروائح والسماع وجميع الحواس.

مسألة

١٠٥٣ لم صار الحصيف المتمكن والليب المبرز يُشاور فيأتي بالفلق والداهية حتى يدع الشعر مشقوقاً والغيث مرهوقاً فإذا انفرد بشأنه وانتصر لنفسه وتعقب غاية منفعه عاد كسراب بقية لا يُجلى ولا يُمرّ حتى يُفتضح عند من كان يثني الخنصر عليه بنكره ودهائه ويشير إلى صواب رأيه؟ ما الذي أصابه ونزل به وما الذي بدله وتحيف عليه؟ وما هذا الأمر الذي وسمه بما وسمه وأذاه إلى ما أذاه؟

الجواب

٢٠٥٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله سبب ذلك شيان أحدهما محبة الإنسان ذاته وتخوفه على نفسه من خطأ يُنسب إليه أو غلط يقع منه فتعرض له الدهشة والحيرة

١ الأصل: سبب.

On why people are more adept at counseling others than at managing their own affairs

individual takes pleasure in something on the basis of a certain humoral mixture—is also due to a certain affinity, but it has the status of something individual, and individual things are infinite in number, and so cannot be encompassed by any craft or ordered by any rules. What one needs to know is that every humoral mixture far from the balanced state has relations of affinity with things specific to it, while it conflicts with the humoral mixture that lies at the other extreme of the balanced state, so that what one person finds pleasant the other finds repugnant, and vice versa. The same applies to things determined by customs and different modes of perception. One sees this in the different kinds of food and drink that people take pleasure in. For humoral mixtures that lie far from the balanced state have an affinity for strange flavors and take delight in uncommon and extraordinary things. A broader survey of the phenomena will reveal to you all manner of extraordinary and uncommon things relating to smells, sounds, and the other senses.

On why people are more adept at counseling others than at managing their own affairs

Why is that when men of discrimination, ability, and intelligence are approached for counsel, they come out with wondrous subtleties, splitting hairs in half and outrunning the very clouds in the sky, yet when they turn to their own affairs and are called to be their own supporters and ponder the pursuit of their own advantages, they become like a mirage on a plain and express bland views, incurring shame from those who mentioned them as bywords for cunning and subtlety, and advertised the soundness of their judgment? What befalls and afflicts them? What alters them and causes their diminution? What distinguishes them with such a characteristic and brings them to such a result? 53.1

Miskawayh's response

The reason is twofold. One is the love human beings have for themselves and their fear of having error imputed to them or of committing mistakes, which induces a sense of bewilderment and confusion. The other is their susceptibility to blind desire. Blind desire is the enemy of reason, and error is always the adjunct of blind desire. When blind desire strikes, reason departs, 53.2

والآخر ميله إلى الهوى والهوى عدو العقل والخطأ أبداً مع الهوى فإذا حضر الهوى غاب العقل وحيث يغيب العقل يغيب الخير كله فالإنسان أبداً أسير في يد الهوى والهوى يريه القبيح^١ جميلاً والخطأ صواباً. وإحساس الرجل المميز الفاضل بذلك من نفسه لا يأمن أن يكون رأيه لنفسه من قبيل ما يريه الهوى دون العقل فيضطرب فكره ولا يصح رأيه لنفسه. فأما إذا رأى لغيره فهو سليم من الخالين جميعاً فلذلك يرى عقله دون هواه وليس يغلطه المحبة وتخوف الخطأ^٢ فلذلك يأتي بالرأي الصحيح السليم كالقبح لغيره. وربما كان له هوى في غيره أيضاً فيعرض له من الخطأ مثل ما عرض له في نفسه وهذا يدل على صحة ما ذكرناه من السبب في خطأه^٣ على نفسه وسداده في أمر غيره. وإذا احترز العاقل لنفسه أيضاً وتجنب الهوى صح رأيه لنفسه وقل خطأه إلا بمقدار ما جُبل عليه المرء من^٤ محبة نفسه واشتباة الهوى في بعض المواضع اللطيفة بالرأي الصحيح فإنه حينئذ يغلط غلطاً يُعذر فيه ويسلم من تبعته.

مسألة

لم يشمئز الإنسان من جرح قد فغرفه حتى إنه لينفر من النظر إليه والذنوب منه وينفي^{١٠٥٤} خيال ذلك عن نفسه ويتعلل بغيره وكلما اشتد نفوره منه اشتد ولوعه به؟ ما هذا أيضاً فإنه باب آخر في طي التجب مما تقدم؟ وفي المسألة أن المعالج يباشر ذلك بعينه نظراً وبيده علاجاً ولبسانه حديثاً أترى ذلك من المعالج إنما هو لضرأوته وعادته وطول مباشرته وملاحظته أم لمكسبه وحاجته وعياله ونفقته؟ فإن كان للضرأوة والعادة

١ ط: ما يقبح. ٢ ط: جميعاً. ٣ الأصل: خطائه. ٤ الأصل: المؤمن؛ ط: المرء من.

and when reason departs, no good remains. Human beings are ever captive to blind desire, and blind desire makes them see wrong as right and error as sound judgment. Men of excellence and distinction are aware of this about themselves, and do not feel secure against the possibility that their judgment regarding their own affairs might be the result of how blind desire, rather than reason, makes them see things; so their thinking falters and their judgment regarding their own affairs becomes impaired. When offering their judgment on other people's affairs, by contrast, they are free from both conditions, so they judge things based on reason rather than blind desire, and are not led astray by self-love or fear of error. Hence, the judgment they deliver on other people's affairs is sound and as straight as an arrow. Sometimes they are subject to blind desire with regard to others' affairs, and then are affected by the same error that affects them in their own case. This demonstrates the soundness of our account concerning why they get matters right in other people's affairs and fall into error in their own. The judgments of rational people regarding their own affairs can be sound, and their errors can be minimized, if they place themselves on guard and steer clear of blind desire, except that people have been naturally formed to love themselves and in subtler contexts to confuse blind desire for sound judgment. In such cases, the mistakes they commit are excusable and they can be spared from their consequences.

On why the sight of open wounds provokes horror and fascination

Why is it that people recoil in horror from an open wound, shrinking from looking at it and from drawing near it, repulsing all images of it from their mind, and trying to distract themselves from it with other things, yet the more violently they shrink from it, the more violent their fascination with it becomes? And what about the following? For this is another subcategory within the earlier category of wonder. To continue the question: The person who treats the wound comes into contact with it through his eyes as he looks at it, through his hands as he treats it, and through his tongue as he speaks of it. Do you think the reason he can do so is the fact that this is customary and habitual for him, having had long experience with looking at, and coming into contact with, wounds? Or is it because he needs to earn a living, meet

54.1

فما خبره في ابتداء هذه الضراوة والعادة؟ وإن كان لحرفته فكيف عاند طباعه معاندة
وجاهد نفسه مجاهدة؟ وهل يستوي للإنسان أن يعتاد ما ليس في طبعه ولا في
عادته ثم يستمر ذلك عليه ويكون كمن ولد فيه وعمر به؟

الجواب

٢٠٥٤ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله قد تبين في المباحث الفلسفية أن النفس بالحقيقة
واحدة وإنما تكثرت بالأشخاص وإذا كان ذلك كذلك فالإنسان إذا رأى غيره أمراً
خارجاً عن الطبيعة من جرح أو تفاوت في الخلق أو من نقص في الصورة عرض له
من ذلك ما يعرض له في ذاته وكأنه ينظر إلى نفسه وجسمه لأن النفس هناك هي
بعينها النفس ههنا فبقي ما يعرض هذا العارض. فأما ولوعه به وحضوره^١ في ذكره^٢
أبداً فإنما ذلك لأجل أن النفس إذا قبلت صورة نزعته من مادتها واستثبتتها في
ذاتها وقيدت عليها قوة الذكر. وليس تجري النفس مجرى المرأة التي إذا قابلها الشيء
قبلت صورته ما دام ذلك الشيء قابلتها فإذا زال زالت صورته عنها ولا كما ظر العين
في قبول الصور أيضاً وذلك أن هذه أجسام طبيعية تقبل صورة الأجرام قبولاً عرضياً
فأما النفوس فإنها تقبل الصور بنوع أشرف وأعلى ثم تستثبت تلك الصورة وإن زال
حاملها عن محاذة العين.

٣٠٥٤ وقد مر في هذه المسائل طرف من هذا المعنى وبيناً^٣ هناك كيف تقبل النفس
بقوتها المتخيلة صورة الشيء سريعاً وكيف تبقى بعد ذلك هذه الصورة في قوتها الذكرية
حتى تراها مناماً ويقظة فإنما متى شئنا أحضرنا صور آبائنا وأجدادنا ومدننا حتى كأننا
نراهم وإن كانوا غائبين أو منقرضين^٤. فأما لم ذلك وكيف استقصاء الكلام فيه
فوجود في مظانته. وأما المعالج لما سألت عنه المعتاد به بالضراوة فإنما كان ذلك لأجل

١ الأصل: حضور. ٢ الأصل: ذكر. ٣ ط: وبين. ٤ ط: منفرطين.

his needs, look after his dependents, and defray expenses? If it is because of custom and habit, how did matters stand with him at the beginning of this custom and habit? If it is because of his profession, how did he manage to resist his natural inclinations and discipline himself in such a way? Is it possible for someone to grow habituated to something that is neither in his nature nor his habit, and, with perseverance, to become like a person born in that condition who has experienced it his whole life?

Miskawayh's response

Philosophical inquiries have established that the soul is one in reality, and that multiplicity is only introduced into it through the multiplicity of individuals. This being so, when a person sees another suffering from something unnatural, such as a wound, an imperfection in his physical build, or a deficiency in his form, he responds as he would in his own case, as though he were looking at his own soul and body. For the soul in the one case is the same as the soul in the other, so such a response is only proper. His fascination with it and its perpetual presence in his memory are due to the fact that when the soul receives a form, it extracts it from its matter and fixes it securely within itself, binding it through the power of memory. The soul does not resemble a mirror, which, confronted by an object, receives its form as long as that object stands before it, and loses the form when the object disappears; nor does it receive forms the way the eye does. For these bodies are natural, and they receive the form of physical objects accidentally. Souls, by contrast, receive forms in a nobler and loftier modality, and they retain those forms securely fixed even when their bearers are no longer in front of the eyes.

54.2

There has already been some discussion of this point in these questions, and at that juncture we provided an account of how the soul rapidly receives the form of an object through the power of imagination and how this form endures afterward in the power of memory, so that it sees it when asleep and when awake. For we can summon at will the forms of our fathers and grandfathers and the cities we have lived in as though they were standing right before us, even if they are absent or no longer exist. An explanation of the reason for this and a more detailed account of the topic can be found in the appropriate sources. The person who treats the wound you asked about, who has grown habituated to it through custom, can do so due to the recurrence of the form

54.3

تكرّر الصورة وأنّ ذلك الفعل صار كالخلق له. وقد بيّنا فيما تقدّم أنّ الصور إذا تكرّرت على النفس حصل منها شيء ثابت كالجوهريّ لها وقلنا إنّها لولا هذه الحال لما أدبنا الأحداث ولا عودنا الصبيان في أوائل نشوئهم العادات الجميلة فإنّ الأفعال إذا اتّصلت ودامت ألفتها النفس سواء كانت حسنة أو قبيحة فإذا استمرّ الإنسان عليها صارت ملكة له وقية فعرس زوالها.

مسألة

١٠٥ ما العلة في حبّ العاجلة؟ ألا ترى الله تعالى يقول ﴿كَلَّا بَلْ تُحِبُّونَ الْعَاجِلَةَ﴾
والشاعر يقول [كامل]

وَالنَّفْسُ مُوَلَّعَةٌ بِحُبِّ الْعَاجِلِ

ومن أجل هذا المعنى ثارت الفتن واستحالت الأحوال وحارت العقول واحتيج إلى الأنبياء والسياسة والمقامع والمواعظ فإذا كان حبّ العاجلة طباعاً ومبدوراً في الطينة ومصوغاً في الصيغة فكيف يُستطاع نفيه ومزالته؟ وكيف يرد التكليف بخلاف ما في الطبيعة؟ أليست الشريعة مقوية للطبيعة؟ أليس الدين قوام السياسة؟ أليس التألّه قضية العقل؟ أليس المعاد نظير المعاش؟ فكيف الكلام في هذا الشق؟ وكيف يطرّد العتب على من أحبّ ما حُبب إليه وقصرت همته عليه كما حُلق ذكرًا أو أنثى أو طويلًا أو قصيرًا أو ضريبًا أو بصيرًا أو جلفًا أو شهماً؟ فإن سقط اللوم في إحدى الحاسيتين سقط في التي تليها وإن لزم في إحدهما لزم في أخراهما. وهذا نظر ينسلّ إلى الجبر والاختيار وهما فتان يحتاجان إلى تحديد نظر وتحديد اعتبار والحال المقسّمة للبال مانعة من قضاء الوطر وبلوغ الغاية في النظر.

١ ط: أول.

On why people love the present world; on whether the religious Law can conflict with nature

and because the act has become like a fixed trait for him. As we clarified earlier, when the soul is recurrently exposed to particular forms, these forms produce something stable in it that is akin to an inherent characteristic. And we noted that if this were not so, we would not be able to educate the young or to inculcate fine habits into children during the early stages of their development. For the soul acquires a familiarity with acts that are performed consecutively and without cease, regardless of whether they are good or bad. When a person continues to perform them, they become a stable state and an acquired possession, and it becomes hard to eliminate them.

On why people love the present world; on whether the religious Law can conflict with nature

What causes love for the present world? We know that God says, «No indeed; but you love the hasty world».⁵⁶ And the poet says,

55.1

The soul is rapt in the love of the present world.⁵⁷

This has fomented strife, fermented change, plunged reason into confusion, and created the need for prophets and political governance and for restraints and admonitions. If love for the present world is given with our natural disposition, ingrained in the material of our being, and beaten into our mold, how is it possible to banish and remove it? How can divinely imposed obligations conflict with the demands of nature? Doesn't the religious Law reinforce nature? Doesn't religion serve as a foundation for political governance? Doesn't reason rule in favor of religious devotion? Isn't the next world comparable to this one? What view should one take before this abyss? How can one cogently reproach someone who loves what was rendered lovable to him and what was made the exclusive object of his ardor in the same way that he was created male or female, tall or short, blind or sighted, boorish or gallant? If blame is disarmed for one of these sets, it will be disarmed for both, and if it clings to one, it will cling to both. This is an inquiry that leads to questions about compulsion and free choice, two subjects requiring well-defined inquiry and renewed consideration, for the facts leave the mind divided and prevent one from satisfying one's desires and attaining one's ends in inquiry.

المجواب

٢٠٥٥ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله العاجلة إنّما يوماً بها إلى الحواسّ وتوابها من اللذات في المآكل والمشرب والاستفراغات والاستراحات والتي تختصّ بهذه الأشياء من الحواسّ هي النفس البهيمية. ثمّ ينبغي أن تعلم أنّ هذه النفس هي معنا من أولّ النشوء ومع الولادة فقد ألفناها الفأقياً مع الزمان المتصل الطويل فلذلك كانت قوتها أظهر وغلبتها أشدّ وصار الحكم لها. وإنّما نظرنا النفس المميّزة بقوة العقل من بعد فيظهر أثرها قليلاً قليلاً إلى أن يقوى في وقت التكهل والاجتماع وبلوغ الأشدّ فنحن نحتاج لذلك إلى مقاومة تلك النفس والاستعداد لها وكسر حدّتها وإيهان قوتها بكلفة شديدة وصبر طويل بحسب قوتها واستيلائها علينا وإفنا إياها ونحتاج أيضاً إلى تقوية النفس الناطقة بامتثال أمرها وتأميرها وتنفيذ عزائمها فلأجل هذا صعب علينا قبول أمر هذه وسهل قبول أمر تلك.

٣٠٥٥ فأما قولك كيف يرد التكليف بخلاف ما في الطبيعة فإنّنا نقول إنّ في طبيعة النفس البهيمية الانقياد للنفس الناطقة والوقوف عند أمرها. ولولا أنّ ذلك في جبلتها وسوسها وهو قبول التأديب وأن تصدر أفعالها الخاصّة بها بحسب ما يأمرها به العقل لكان لعمرى تكليفاً بخلاف ما في الطبع ولكنّ أحدًا لا يروم إبطال هذه القوّة رأساً بل يطالبها بأن تقبل ترتيب الأفعال على ما يرسمه العقل وهي مطبوعة على قبول هذا الأدب كما قلنا. وليس يجري هذا مجرى ما ضرب به المثل من الطول والقصر وغيرهما لأنّ هذا شيء لا صنع فيه للأدب وإنّما هو أثر يقبله^٢ الهيولى من المعطي بحسب موضوعه ولا يمكن خلافه بوجه ولا سبب. وتفسير ذلك أنّ الرطوبة التي في المادّة تقبل من الحرارة امتداداً وانجذاباً إلى العلو الذي هو حركة الحرارة فيحدث الطول بحسب المادّة ويقدر الرطوبة المنفصلة والحرارة الفاعلة ولا يمكن أن يكون إلا على ما يظهر بالفعل. فقد بان الفرق بين هذين النوعين اللذين رمت الجمع بينهما وظهر

١ الأصل وط: شميرها. ٢ ط: إن. ٣ الأصل وط: يقبل.

Miskawayh's response

The “present world” refers to the senses and to the pleasures of eating, drinking, voiding, and resting that form their adjuncts. It is the beastly soul to which these sensible things specifically pertain. You should understand that this soul is with us from the beginning of our development and from when we are born, so we acquire a powerful attachment to it through the long, continuous passage of time. That is why its power is so manifest, why it dominates so strongly, and why it exercises such a controlling force. It is only at a later stage that we look to the soul that discriminates through the power of reason. Its effects make themselves progressively manifest, and it gains in strength when one reaches middle age and attains one's full vigor and physical maturity. In order for that to happen, we need to mobilize ourselves in resistance to that other soul, denting its force and attenuating its power through intense effort and sustained perseverance, depending on the power it has, the mastery it enjoys over us, and the attachment we feel toward it. We also need to strengthen the rational soul by acceding to its rule, by giving it authority over us, and by implementing its resolutions. This is why we find it difficult to accept the rule of the latter and easy to accept the rule of the former soul. 55.2

Our response to your question “How can divinely imposed obligations conflict with the demands of nature?” is as follows. It is in the nature of the beastly soul to submit to the rational soul, and to be restrained by the latter's commands. Were this not in its innate disposition and its natural grain—that is, being receptive to instruction and issuing its specific acts in accordance with what reason commands—this would, I swear, be an imposition of obligations that conflict with nature. Yet nobody desires to eradicate this power completely. Rather, we demand that it agree to order its acts on the basis of what reason prescribes; and, as we have said, it is naturally disposed to accept this kind of instruction. The cases mentioned by way of analogy—tallness and shortness, and so on—do not conform to the same principle, for instruction plays no role in these things, and what is involved is rather an effect that matter receives from its giver depending on its substrate, and it is not possible to oppose this in any way or through any cause. To elaborate, the moisture contained by matter is extended and drawn upward through heat, this being the direction in which heat moves. The tallness thus produced depends on the matter, the amount of moisture acted upon, and the heat acting upon it, and 55.3

السبب في حبّ العاجلة وحسن ما أدّب الله تعالى به الناس بالدين والآداب وخرج
الجواب عن المسألة في إيجاز وإيضاح.

مسألة

١٠٥٦ ترى ما السبب في قتل الإنسان نفسه عند إخفاق يتوالى عليه وفقر يُججج إليه
وحال تتمتع على حوله وطوقه وباب ينسدّ دون مطلبه ومأربه وعشق يضيق ذرعاً به
ويبعل في معالجته؟ وما الذي يرجو بما يأتي؟ وإلى أيّ شيء ينحو فيما يقصد وينوي؟
وما الذي ينتصب أمامه ويستهلك حصافته ويذهله عن روح مألوفة ونفس معشوقة
وحياة عزيزة؟ وما الذي يخلص إلى وهمه من العدم حتى يسببه من قبضة الوجدان
ويسلمه إلى صرف الحدّثان؟

الجواب

٢٠٥٦ قال أبو عليّ مسكويه رحمه الله الإنسان مركّب من ثلاث قوى نفسانية وهو كالواقف
بينها تجذبه هذه مرة وهذه مرة. وبحسب قوة إحداها على الأخرى يميل بفعله فربّما
غلبت عليه القوة الغضبية فإذا انصبغ بها ومال بفعله إليها ظهرت قوته كلّها كأنّها
غضب وخفيت القوى الأخرى حتى كأنّها لم توجد له وكذلك إذا هاجت به القوة
الشهوية خفيت آثار القوى الأخرى. وأحصف ما يكون الإنسان وأحسنه حالاً
إذا غلبت عليه القوّة الناطقة فإنّ هذه القوّة هي المميّزة العاقلة التي ترتب القوى
الأخرى حتّى تظهر أفعالها بحسب ما تحدّه وترسمه. والإنسان حينئذ نازل بالمنزلة
الكريمة بحيث هيأه الله تعالى وكما أراد. فإذا كان الأمر كذلك فغير منكر أن يهيج
بالإنسان بعض تلك القوى منه عند التواء أمر عليه أو انسداد باب دون مطلب له

the way it is in fact manifested cannot be otherwise. The distinction between the two types of things you proposed to fuse is now clear, and the reason for the love of the present world and the value of the discipline God provides to people through religion and different forms of instruction is revealed, in a succinct and clear answer to the question.

On why people take their own lives

I wonder: What causes a person to take his own life when failures crowd him, when poverty besieges him, when circumstances defy his power and capacity, when his demands and desires meet with closed doors, when passionate love oppresses him and shows itself recalcitrant to cure? What does he hope to achieve through this course of action? What is his aim in pursuing what he proposes? What looms before him and consumes his good judgment, rendering him oblivious to a spirit he knows intimately, a soul he loves passionately, and a life he holds dear? What is it about nonexistence that filters into his imagination and snatches him from the grip of experience and delivers him to the cruel shifts of fate? 56.1

Miskawayh's response

Human beings are a composite of three powers of the soul, and stand in the midst of these powers, as it were, pulled now by one, now by another. The direction in which their acts incline depends on the relative strength of a given power. Thus, sometimes it is the irascible power that dominates them, and if they are imbued by it and their acts incline toward it, their powers appear as though they were exhausted by anger, with the other powers receding from view, as if they did not possess them. Similarly, if the appetitive power rages, the effects of the other powers recede from view. Human beings are at their optimal and most judicious state when they are dominated by the rational power, for it is this that exercises rational discrimination and disposes all the other powers so that their acts emerge in accordance with its dictates and prescriptions. Human beings then occupy the eminent rank that God has prepared and willed for them. If this is so, we should not think it strange that some of those powers should be stirred up when human beings encounter some difficulty or when a door closes in the face of something they desire, so that an 56.2

فيظهر منه فعل لا توجهه روية ولا يقتضيه تمييز لحناء أثر القوة الناطقة واستيلاء القوة الأخرى.

٣٠٥ أنت تجد ذلك عياناً عند الأحوال المختلفة بك فإنك تجد نفسك في أوقات على أحوال مؤثرة لها قاصدة إليها غير مصغية إلى نصيح ولا قابلة أمر شديد حتى إذا أفقت من تلك المسكرة التي غلبت عليك في تلك الحال عجت من الأفعال التي ظهرت منك وأنكرت نفسك فيها وكأنّ غيرك كان الذي آثرها وقصد إليها فلا تزال كذلك حتى تهيج بك تلك القوة الأولى مرة أخرى فلا يمنعك ما جرّته من نفسك ووعظتها به أن تقع في مثله. وسبب ذلك التركيب من القوى المختلفة النفسانية. وليس يمكن الإنسان أن يخلص بقوة واحدة ويصدر أفعال الباقية بحسب التي هي أفضل وأشرف إلا بعد معالجة شديدة وتقوم كثير وإدمان طويل فإنّ العادة إذا استمرت والعزيمة إذا أنفذت في زمان متصل طويل حصل منها خلق فكان الحكم له وصار هو الغالب ولذلك نأمر الأحداث بالسيرة الجميلة ونؤاخذهم بالآداب التي تسنها الشرائع وتأمّر بها الحكمة.

٤٠٥ واستقصاء هذا الكلام وذكره لا تقتضيه المسألة ولا يفي به المكان فإن شكّ فيما قلنا شكّ وظنّ أنّ الإنسان المركّب من القوى الثلاثة يجب أن يكون لازماً لأمر واحد مترتب من تلك القوى كما نجد الحال في سائر المعجونات والمركبات من الأخلاق الطبيعية^١ فليعلم أنّ مثاله ليس بصحيح لأنّ قوى الإنسان النفسانية^٢ لها من ذاتها حركات تزيد^٣ وتقص وأحوال أيضاً من خارج تهيجها^٤ وليست كذلك قوى الطبيعيات فلنتم النظر في ذلك تجده مبنياً كما أوامناً إليه وذكرناه.

١ ط: الطبيعة. ٢ ط: نفسانية. ٣ الأصل: وتريد. ٤ ط: أيضاً تهيجها.

act issues from them that is neither entailed by reflection nor mandated by discrimination, as a result of the fact that the effect of the rational power recedes from view and the other powers gain the upper hand.

You can witness this firsthand in the different states that visit you. For at various times you find your soul experiencing certain states, which it chooses and pursues, refusing counsel and right-minded command. Later, when you emerge from the fit that had come over you in that state, you are amazed at the acts that issued from you. You rebuke yourself for them, as if it were someone else who had chosen and pursued them. Things continue this way until the moment arrives when once again that first power stirs up in you, and you are not prevented from succumbing to the same thing by your previous experience of yourself and the admonitions you gave yourself. This is because we are composed of different powers of the soul. It is only after strenuous treatment, extensive reform, and long practice that human beings can isolate a single power and perform the acts of all the others on the basis of the one that is most excellent and noble. For persistence in a habit and implementation of a resolve over a long, uninterrupted period of time produces a trait of character, and this exercises the controlling force and becomes dominant. That is why we command the young to comport themselves well, and why we hold them to the principles of conduct instituted by revealed laws and commanded by wisdom.

56.3

Your question does not require, and the present space does not permit, a more in-depth exposition of this point and an account of its causes. Should someone doubt what we have said and suppose that human beings, composites of these three powers that they are, ought to abide in a single state composed from those powers, as is the case with all other entities that form blends and composites of natural dispositions, they should realize that their analogy is unsound. For the powers of the soul in human beings have their own essential movements that increase and decrease, and also external conditions that stir them up. The same does not apply to the powers of natural entities. Ponder the matter, and you will find that things stand as our synopsis has indicated and outlined.

56.4

مسألة

١٠٥٧ سألت بعض مشايخنا بمدينة السلام عن رجل اجتاز بطرف الجسر وقد اكتشفه الجلاوزة يسوقونه إلى السجن فأبصر موسى وميضة في طرف دكان مزين فاخطفها كالبرق وأمرها على حلقومه فإذا هو يبحر في دمانه قد فارق الروح وودع الحياة . فقلت من قتل هذا الإنسان؟ فإذا قلنا قتل نفسه فالقاتل هو المقتول أم القاتل غير المقتول؟ فإن كان أحدهما غير الآخر فكيف تواملا مع هذا الانفصال؟ وإن كان هذا ذاك فكيف تفاعلا مع هذا الاتصال؟ وإنما شيعت المسألة الأولى بهذا السؤال لأنه ناه نحوها وقاف أثرها .

الجواب

٢٠٥٧ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله كأن هذه المسألة مبنية على أن الإنسان شيء واحد لا كثرة فيه والشبهة فيها من هذا الوجه تقوى فإذا بان أن للإنسان قوى كثيرة وهو مركب منها وأنه يميل في وقت ما نحو قوة وفي وقت آخر نحو غيرها وأن أفعاله أيضاً بحسب ميله^١ إلى إحدى^٢ القوى وغلبتها عليه كما يتناه في المسألة التي قبل هذه زال هذا الشك .

٣٠٥٧ فأما قوله كيف تواملا مع هذا الانفصال فأقول إن السبب في ذلك أن الباري تعالى لما علم أن هذا المركب من نفس وجسد يحتاج إلى أشياء تقيمه من غذاء وغيره وأنه لا قوام لحياته إلا بمادة وكان لا يصل إلى تلك المادة إلا بحركة وسعي وكانت العائقات والممانعات عنها كثيرة أعطاه قوة يصل بها إلى حاجاته ويدفع بها أضرارها عن نفسه ليم له البقاء . ومن شأن هذه القوة أن تهيج وتثور في أوقات باكثر مما ينبغي وفي أوقات تقصر عما ينبغي . وهاتان الحالتان لهما رذيلتان أما الأولى فيتبعها التهور وأما

١ الأصل: مثله . ٢ الأصل: أحد .

On a philosophical puzzle relating to the act of suicide

I asked one of our teachers in Baghdad about a man who had been walking along the bridge when suddenly a number of armed officers surrounded him and set about hauling him to prison. Seeing a razor blade gleaming in a fancy shop, he seized it in the twinkling of an eye and slit his throat with it; he was soon lying in a pool of his own blood, having breathed his last and left the land of the living. I ask: Who killed this man? If we reply that he killed himself, then is the one who did the killing the same as the one who was killed, or is the one who did the killing different from the one who was killed? If the one is different from the other, then how did they come to be conjoined in view of this disjunction? If the two are the same, how did they come to be disjoined in view of this conjunction? I have appended this question to the previous topic because it tends in the same direction and treads in its footsteps. 57.1

Miskawayh's response

This question seems to be premised on the notion that human beings are a single thing that involves no multiplicity, and from this perspective the aporia gains in force. Yet this misgiving disappears once it is clear that human beings possess and are composed of many powers, that they incline sometimes toward one power and sometimes toward another, and that their acts also depend on the power toward which they incline and by which they are dominated, as we showed in the previous question. 57.2

I respond to his question "How did they come to be conjoined in view of this disjunction?" as follows. The reason for this is that the Creator knew that this being composed of a soul and a body requires things for its sustenance, such as food and the like, that its life can only be sustained through matter that it can only attain through movement and striving, and that there are many things that hinder and prevent access to it. He consequently gave it a power to use to attain its needs and repulse whatever opposes its needs, so that it might survive. It is in the nature of this power to be stirred up and roused more than it ought on certain occasions, and less than it ought on others. These two conditions involve defects: Rashness is the concomitant of the first, cowardice of the second. Through their power of discrimination and reason, human beings are capable of using this power in the right manner and of training it so that it 57.3

الثانية فيتبعها الجبن . وللإنسان بقوة التمييز والعقل أن يستعمل هذه القوة على ما ينبغي ویروضها حتى تثور وتهيج في الوقت ، وبالقدر الذي ينبغي وعلى الشيء الذي ينبغي . فإذا حصل في هذه الرتبة فهو شجاع ومدوح وكما أراد الله تعالى منه على خلقه له .

٤٠٥٧ وقد بقي في المسألة موضع شك وهو أن يقول قائل إن كان قاتل نفسه إنما ظهر منه هذا الفعل بحسب القوة الغضبية فهو شجاع والشجاع محمود ونحن نعلم أن هذا الفاعل بنفسه هذا الفعل مذموم فكيف حاله وأين موضع الشجاعة المدوح؟ فقول لعمرى إن هذا الفعل من أثر القوة الغضبية ولكنه بحسب رذيلتها وتقديرها عما ينبغي لا بحسب الزيادة ولا بحسب الاعتدال الذي سمّناه شجاعة وذلك أن المرء الذي يخاف أمراً يقع فيه من فقر أو شدة ولا يرحب ذرعاً به ولا يستقبله بعزيمة قوية ومنته تامة جبان ضعيف فيحمله هذا الجبن على أن يقول أستريح من تحمل هذه المشقة التي ترد علي وهذا هو النكول والضعف المسمي جبناً . وقد ذكرنا أن قوة الغضب ربما كُتت ونقصت عما ينبغي فتكون رذيلة ومنقصة ولا تسمى شجاعة ولا يكون صاحبها محموداً ولا مدوحاً .

مسألة

١٠٥٨ كيف صار يخلص في وقت معتاد النفاق ويتيقن من اشتغال بالريب ويستيقظ من هو راقد ويتنصع من هو غاش؟ وكيف صار أيضاً ينافق من نشأ على الإخلاص ويريب من ألف النزاهة؟ وعلى هذا كيف يخون من استمر على الأمانة ستين عاماً ويتخرج من عتق في الخيانة ستين عاماً؟ ما هذه العوارض المختلفة والعادات المستطرفة؟ وكذلك نجد الكذاب يصدق أحياناً لغير أرب محتلب

١ ط: على ما ينبغي . ٢ الأصل: من .

is only roused and stirred up at the right time, in the right measure, and for the right objects. When they achieve this rank, they are courageous and praiseworthy, and they are as God willed them to be in creating them.

The question still harbors a possible point of doubt, for someone might ask: If the person who kills himself performs that action in accordance with the irascible power, then he is courageous, and the courageous person is laudable. Yet we know that the person who does this to himself is blameworthy. So how do things stand with regard to him, and where is praiseworthy courage to be located? To this I respond: Be assured, this act is indeed among the effects of the irascible power, but it is an expression of its defective state and of how it falls short of what is right, not an expression of how it goes beyond it or of the balanced state we have termed "courage." For the person who feels fear about something that happens to him, such as poverty or some adversity, and who does not face up to it and greet it with firm resolve and full strength of mind, is a coward and a weakling. This cowardice leads him to say, "I shall relieve myself from the burden of enduring this hardship that has come upon me." This is the cringing attitude and weakness that is termed "cowardice." We have mentioned that the irascible power may sometimes be slack and fall short of what is right. It then involves a defect and a failing; this is not called "courage," nor is the person commended or praised.

57.4

On moral change and acting out of character

How does it come about that at a certain moment in time the hardened hypocrite turns sincere, the person steeped in doubt conceives certainty, the one slumbering awakens, and the one given to perfidy becomes well-intentioned? How does it likewise come about that the person who has always been sincere turns hypocritical and the one who has made a habit of integrity provides grounds for suspicion? Along the same lines, how is it that the person who has kept faith for sixty years commits betrayal, and the one who has been a veteran of betrayal for sixty years abstains from it? What is the meaning of these disparate happenings and singular phenomena? We similarly find that the liar sometimes tells the truth though it serves no objective and the truth teller lies for no definite reason, and it doesn't generally turn out to be the case that the

58.1

والصادق يكذب لغير معنى محدد ثم لا يتفق أن يصدق ذلك في نافع أو يكذب هذا في دافع.

الجواب

٢٠٥٨ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله هذه المسألة أيضاً قريبة من المسألتين المتقدمتين والجواب عنها قريب من الجواب عنهما وذلك أن النفاق والنصح وسائر ما ذكره في هذه المسألة هو من آثار النفس الناطقة. ومن البين أن هذه النفس لها أيضاً مرض وصحة فصحتها اعتدالها في قواها الباقية ومرضها خروجها عن الاعتدال. وهي إن خرجت عن اعتدالها في وقت فغير منكر لها أن تعود إليه في وقت آخر وكما أن الصدق والنصيحة وصحة الروية وتسيط الأعمال بحسب الأحوال هو صحتها واعتدالها فأضداد هذه مرضها وخروجها عن الاعتدال ولكن ليس يُسلم أنها تصدق ثم تكذب لغير سبب ولا لدفع مضرة بل تظنّ أبداً أن فعلها صواب لأمرتاه فربما كان ذلك الظن غلطاً وخطأً فأما أن تفعل ذلك لغير أرب وغير قصد إلى ما تراه خطأً فحال.

مسألة

١٠٥٩ ما معنى قول بعض العلماء إن الله عم الخلق بالضعف ولم يعيهم بالاصطناع؟ وما مبسوط هذا المعنى وكيف وجه تحصيله؟ وهل ترك الله تعالى شيئاً فيه صلاح الخلق فلم يجده به ابتداء من غير طلب؟ كيف يكون هذا وقد بدأ بالنعيم قبل الاستحقاق وخلق الخلق من غير حاجة إلى الخلق؟ فإن قيل أبل بالحاجة ثم منع من غير بخل قيل فلن ينبغي أن يحمد إحسانه فيما ظهر لحيرة تقع فيما يظنّ ولعل في غيب ما منع

١ الأصل: نسلم.

former tells the truth for the sake of attaining a benefit and the latter tells a lie for the sake of repelling harm.

Miskawayh's response

This question is closely related to the previous two, and the response it invites is closely related to the response given to those questions. For hypocrisy, good will, and the other things he mentioned in his question are effects of the rational soul. It is evident that this soul also has its state of illness and its state of health. When it is in a balanced state with respect to its other powers, it is healthy, and when it departs from this balanced state, it is ill. If it departs from a balanced state at one time, it is not impossible that it should return to it at another. Just as truthfulness, good will, sound reflection, and the proper disposition of actions according to the circumstances represent its health and balanced state, their contraries represent its illness and departure from a balanced state. Yet we certainly do not concede that it tells the truth at one time and lies at another for no reason, or for the sake of repelling some harm. On the contrary, it always supposes that its action is right on account of something it sees in it. This supposition may be misguided and mistaken. Yet it is inconceivable that the soul should perform that action without being motivated by some desire and without aiming at what it mistakenly sees in it. 58.2

On the meaning of a certain saying concerning God's beneficence

What did the scholar mean when he said, "God extended His benefits to all people, but He did not extend the surplus of His beneficence to all?" How could one expound the meaning of this statement? By what means could one determine its truth? Is there something that promotes the welfare of people that God omitted and did not liberally dispense ab initio without express solicitation? How could this be, when He initiated the bestowal of benefits before there was merit and desert, and when He created people without a need for their existence? Supposing one said, "Without being avaricious, He afflicted people with need and then withheld what they needed." One ought to object: 59.1

ما قد يقع ولكنه مجهول وهو بتدبيره مليء وعلى موجب الحكمة ماض بغير مدافعة ولا اعتراض.

المجواب

٢٠٥٩ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما قول من قال إن الله تعالى عم بالضع خلقه ولم يعمهم بالاصطناع فكلام قد ذهب به مذهب البلاغة ومعناه صحيح لولا التكلف الذي تجشمه صاحبه. وهذا المعنى في قول المسيح عليه السلام أظهر وذلك أنه روي لنا ونقل من لفته إلى لغتنا أنه قال لا تهتموا ولا تقولوا ما نأكل وما نشرب وما نلبس فإن قدر الحاجة قد عم به جميع الخلق وإنما يلتمسون الفضول فيها واعلموا أن ليس كل من دعا إلى الله يرى وجه الله بل من أكمل رضوانه بالعمل الصالح فهذا قول المسيح عليه السلام على ما نقل وروي.

٣٠٥٩ فأما تفسير هذا الكلام وهو تبين الكلام الأول الذي سألت عن معناه فإن الضع البين الظاهر لجميع الخلق هو إعطاؤهم الحياة ثم إزاحة العلة فيما هو ضروري في بقائها وذلك أن بقاءها بالحرارة الغريزية وبقاء الحرارة الغريزية بالترويح يخرج من معدنها الذي هي متعلقة به الدخان الذي يحدث عن الحرارة والرطوبة الدهنية وتبديل الهواء اليابس بذلك الدخان بهواء آخر رطب سليم موافق لمادة تلك الحرارة وذلك بمنفاخ دائم العمل في شبيه كبير الخذاين وهو الرئة وآلة النفس في جميع ماله قلب ومعدن لهذه الحرارة وما يجري مجراها في الحيوانات الأخرى التي لا قلب لها ولا حاجة بها إلى الترويح عن الحرارة الملتهبة في المادة الرطبة الدهنية ثم إزاحة العلة في نفس الهواء الذي هو مادة تلك الحرارة ثم في الرطوبة التي لولاها لفني مقدار ما في الجسم منها مع اغتذاء الحرارة بها أعني الماء.

One should not thus deny His munificence with regard to manifest matters because uncertainty adheres to matters of speculation; it is possible that the hidden realm of things He has withheld includes things that may happen but that are unknown, and permeated by His providential disposition they might unfold in accordance with His wisdom in a manner that cannot be denied or gainsaid.

Miskawayh's response

The statement "God extended His benefits to all people, but He did not extend the surplus of His beneficence to all" is a remark made in the rhetorical style, and its meaning is correct if one disregards the labored feel imparted to it by its author. A statement uttered by Christ makes this point plainer. For it is reported, in a translation from his language to ours, that he said, "Do not worry and do not ask, What shall we eat, what shall we drink, and what shall we wear? For God has granted these things to all people in the measure of their need, but they desire surplus. And know that not everyone who prays to God will see the face of God, but only those who have fully attained His satisfaction through righteousness."⁵⁸ These are Christ's words as translated and reported. 59.2

Let us interpret these remarks—that is, let us clarify the first remarks whose meaning you inquired about: The clear and manifest benefits given to all people consist of the gift of life and the removal of the impediments that block access to the things necessary for its preservation. For its preservation depends on innate heat, and the preservation of innate heat depends on aeration—which expels the smoke generated by the heat and the greasy moisture from the locus the heat adheres to—and on the replacement of the dry air in that smoke with air that is moist, salubrious, and agreeable to the matter of that heat. This is achieved through an instrument for blowing air that resembles blacksmiths' bellows, namely, the lung and the respiratory organ in all beings that have a heart and a locus for this heat, and what is akin to the lung in other animals that have no heart and no need to aerate the heat blazing in the greasy moist matter. Furthermore, the removal of impediments applies to the very air that constitutes the matter of that heat, and then to the moisture, without which, given the heat's consumption of it, the quantity of it found in the body would be depleted—I am referring to water. 59.3

٤٠٩ وهذه هي الأشياء الضرورية في الحياة التي لو فقد منها واحد طرفة عين لبطلت الحياة. وقد أريحت العلة فيها إزاحة بينة كثيرة ظاهرة وعمّ بها جميع الحيوان. فأما الأشياء التي تتبع هذه مما هي ضرورية في طول بقاء الحيّ وفي حسن حاله من العروق الضوارب وغير الضوارب وآلات الغذاء والقوى الجاذبة والمغيّرة والمحيلة والممسكة والدافعة والرئيسة من هذه القوى والخدمة لها وقيام الرئيسة أبداً بسياسة الخوادم واستخدامها وقيام الخوادم منها بالطاعة والخدمة الدائمة فأمر قد تبين في صناعة الطب وظهر ظهوراً لا يُحتاج معه إلى استئناف قول. ويبقى بعد ذلك تخيّر الحيّ لقوت دون قوت مما ليس بضروريّ في بقائه فقد أعطي بحسب حاجته أيضاً قوة يطبق بها التخيّر والتوصّل إلى قدر حاجته وهذا كله معموم به جميع الخلق غير ممنوع من شيء منه.

٥٠٩ فأما الاصطناع فهو القرب من البارئ جلّ اسمه وليس يتمّ هذا إلا بسعي ورغبة وتوجّه. وقد دلّ أيضاً تقدّس اسمه إلى ذلك ويبقى أن يتحرك العبد إلى هذه الحال فإنه لا يمنع أيضاً من الاصطناع بل الباب مفتوح والحجاب مرفوع وإنما المرء يحب نفسه ويمتنع من التوجّه والرغبة وقصد المنهاج والسبيل الذي دلّ عليه ورغب فيه بأن يتشاغل بفضول عيشه الذي هو مستغن عنه بما هو حيّ وبالميل إلى لذات الحسّ التي تعوقه عن مطلبه وغايته ومنتهى سعادته وهذا بحسب الموضع كاف فيما سألت عنه والله الموفق.

مسألة

١٠٦٠ ما سرّ النفس الشريفة في إثارة النظافة ومحبة الطهارة وتتبع الوضوء؟ وعلى هذا فما وجه الخير في قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم البذاذة من الإيمان؟ وقال بعض النساك القشف من الشرف والترّف من السرف وسمعت صوفياً يقول سرّ الصوفي إذا صفا

These are the elements necessary for life, the lack of which, even for the blink of an eye, would lead to the destruction of life. The removal of impediments with respect to them is clear, abundant, and manifest, and extends to all animals. The subordinate elements necessary for the longevity and well-being of living creatures—such as the existence of arteries and other blood vessels, of organs for obtaining nourishment, of powers for attracting, transforming, changing, retaining, and repelling, and of powers with a presiding role and others subservient to them (the presiding powers always govern and put the subservient ones to service, while the subservient ones constantly offer their obedience and service)—has all been expounded clearly in the craft of medicine and is so evident that there is no need to broach the topic again. Finally, there is the choice that living beings have between one type of aliment and another, which goes beyond what is necessary for their preservation. For they have also been granted, in accordance with their need, a power that enables them to make choices and to secure what they need. The entirety of this has been extended to all people, and none of it has been withheld from them. 59.4

The “surplus of beneficence” consists in proximity to the Creator, and this can only be achieved through striving, desire, and application. God has also pointed the way to this, and it is left to human beings to direct themselves toward it. For the surplus of beneficence is not held back from them; indeed, the door lies open, and the barrier has been lifted. But people set up barriers for themselves, and hold back from application and desire and from pursuing the method and pathway pointed out to them and recommended to their desire. This they do by preoccupying themselves with the superfluities of their subsistence, which they have no need for as living beings, and by inclining toward the pleasures of the senses, which hinder them from attaining their object, their end, and their ultimate happiness. For the present context, this suffices as a response to the question you have posed. God alone grants success. 59.5

On why noble-minded people love cleanliness

What is the secret behind the fact that noble-minded people prefer cleanliness, love ritual purity, and pursue neatness? But if that is so, what good is there in the Prophet’s statement, “Shabbiness is a part of faith”? A certain ascetic said, “Frugality is a part of nobility, and opulence a part of prodigality.” 60.1

لم يحتمل الجفا ومطلق هذا يقتضي قيدا ولكن قال هذا وسكت. وسمعت فيلسوفا يقول إذا صفا السر انتفى الشر وهذا وإن كان قولاً رشيقاً فإن السبب فيه متوارٍ والدليل عنه متراخ.

المجواب

٢٠٦٠ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله ينبغي أن نتكلم أولاً في سبب النظافة والندس حتى يتبين معنى كل واحد منهما ثم ننظر في نفور الإنسان عن الندس وميله إلى الطهارة فأقول إن العناصر الأربعة إذا لم تمتزج ضروب الامتزاجات المتغيرة لم ينفر الإنسان منها ولم يسمها دنساً وإنما يقع النفور من بعض المزاجات. وإذا نظرنا في المزاجات وجدنا هذه الأربعة إذا اختلطت ضرباً من الاختلاط على مناسبة ما كانت معتدلة وحصل المزاج الإنساني وهذا المزاج له عرض ما فكل ما لم يخرج عنه فهو إنسان بالصورة والمزاج وإن انحرف عن هذا المزاج وخرج عنه لم يكن إنساناً. ولا بد أن يكون انحرافه وخروجه إلى واحد من هذه الأربعة أكثر فإن كان مائلاً إلى جهة الحرارة وباقي العناصر مقاربة للمزاج الإنساني أو باقية مجالها نُظِرَ في مقدار خروجه إلى جهة الحرارة فإن كان كثيراً جداً كان سماً للإنسان قاتلاً له وإن كان دون هذا كان ضاراً له بحسب خروجه عن اعتداله في الحرارة وهذا لا يسمى دنساً. وكذلك إن خرج في جهة اليوسة والبرد فإن هذه إن أفرطت وحصلت مضادة للمزاج المعتدل حتى تبطله كانت سُموماً وإن لم تبطل ذلك المزاج فهي تضره وتغيره عن صورته وسواء كان هذا الخارج عن الاعتدال الإنساني نباتاً أو حيواناً فإنه يعرض فيه ما ذكرناه.

٢٠٦٠ فهذه حال مفردات العناصر إذا أفرطت مع اعتدال الباقيات فأما إذا خرج اثنان منها عن الاعتدال فإن خروجهما أيضاً يكون على ضروب وأنحاء إلا أن الرطوبة خاصة إذا أفرطت في الزيادة والحرارة إذا أفرطت في الزيادة عرض من هذا

١ ط: يتبين. ٢ الأصل: كان.

I heard a Sufi say, "When the heart of a Sufi grows pure, it stands against coarseness inured." Taken as it stands, this remark requires some qualification, but the Sufi stayed silent after pronouncing it. I heard a philosopher say, "When the heart is purified, evil is nullified." While this makes for an elegant turn of phrase, the reason for it is elusive, and its proof straggles behind.

Miskawayh's response

First, we must discuss the cause of cleanliness and filthiness so as to clarify the meaning of each notion, and then examine the repulsion human beings feel toward filth and the attraction they feel toward purity. I therefore say the following. If the four elements do not enter into heterogeneous mixtures, human beings do not feel repelled by them and do not term them "filth." The sense of repulsion is aroused only by certain kinds of mixtures. We find upon examining the mixtures that when these four elements enter a specific kind of blend based on a certain harmonious relation, they achieve a balanced state and produce the human mixture. This mixture has a certain compass, and that which does not depart from it is a human being in form and mixture, whereas if it deviates from this mixture and departs from it, it is not a human being. Its departure and deviation must be oriented more toward one of the four elements than to the others. If it inclines in the direction of heat and the remaining elements stand close to the human mixture or remain in the same state, the extent of its departure in the direction of heat is examined. If the departure is very great, the mixture constitutes a lethal poison for human beings. If it falls below that level, the mixture's noxiousness for human beings depends on the degree of its departure from a balanced state as regards heat. This is not called filth. The same applies when it departs in the direction of dryness and coldness. For if these run to excess and oppose the balanced mixture to the point that they destroy it, they constitute poisons. If they do not destroy that mixture, they harm it and displace it from its form. No matter whether the thing that departs from the human mixture is a plant or an animal, it is affected by what we have mentioned.

60.2

This is how matters stand when single elements run to excess while the others remain balanced. The departure of two of them from the balanced state also admits of different varieties and occurs in different ways. Yet when

60.3

المزاج حال تسمى عفونة وهي عجز الحرارة عن تحليل الرطوبة فيحصل مخالفاً للمزاج المعتدل من هذا الوجه فيتكرهه الإنسان وأباه سواء أكان ذلك في حيوان أو جماد. وهذا النفور والتكره على ضروب بحسب خروج المزاج المقابل له عن الاعتدال وسأضرب لذلك مثلاً وهو أن مزاج الإنسان لما كان مقارباً لمزاج الفرس وكانت بينهما مناسبة حصل بينهما قبول من تلك الجهة فإذا تباعد هذا المزاج حتى يكون منه الغبار والدود والجعل والذباب نفر منه الإنسان وتكرهه وذلك أن هذه الأنواع من الحيوانات مكوّنة من عفونات كما وصفناه من زيادة الرطوبة وتقصان الحرارة فبعدت من مزاج الإنسان.

وكذلك حال فضول البدن وذلك أن الطبيعة إذا استولت على الغذاء فتناولت منه القدر الملائم وميّزته وحصلته في أوعيته وشبهته أولاً أولاً بالبدن ونفت ما ليس بملائم وميّزته أيضاً وحصلته في أوعية أخرى وهي آلات النفض فإن ذلك المميز الذي قد خرج عنه جميع ما فيه من الملاءمة يحصل على غاية البعد من المشابهة وتعرض له غلبة الرطوبة وتقصان الحرارة فيعفن فينفر عنه الإنسان ويكرهه ويحب الراحة منه. وهذا سبيل ما يرشح من البدن من سائر الفضول فإن جميعه ما نفاه الطبع وميّزه فهو لذلك غير ملائم وما لم يكن ملائماً كان متكرهاً ويسمى هذا النوع دنساً إلا أنه ما دام مستبطناً وغير بارز من البدن فهو محتمل بالضرورة فإذا برز عفناه حينئذ وتكرهناه وتقرّزنا منه وهذه الأشياء هي التي تسمى دنساً وقدراً بالطبع. وههنا أشياء أخر ينفر منها الإنسان بالعادة ويألفها أيضاً بالعادة وليس مما نحن فيه من هذه المسألة في شيء.

فأما قول النبي عليه السلام البذاذة من الإيمان فهو بعيد من هذا النمط الذي كما في ذكره فإن من كان باذ الهيئة يكره الدنس ويجب النظافة وليس يخالفك في شيء مما تؤثره من معنى الطهارة فإن خالفك فليس من حيث بذاذة الهيئة لكن كما يخالفك غيره ممن ليس باذ الهيئة. وكذلك حال التقشف الذي حكيت فيه كلاماً

moisture in particular increases to excess, or when heat increases to excess, this mixture produces a state that is called “putridity”; this when heat is unable to dissipate the moisture, so that it conflicts with the balanced mixture from this respect. As a result, human beings find it repugnant and feel a sense of aversion toward it, be it encountered in an animal or an inanimate object. This sense of repulsion and repugnance comes in different varieties, depending on the way in which the corresponding mixture departs from the balanced state. I will give you an example. Since the mixture of human beings is close to the mixture of horses and there is an affinity between them, they feel positively disposed toward each other on this account. Yet human beings feel repelled by this mixture and find it repugnant if it grows distant and results in dirt, worms, dung beetles, and flies. For these kinds of animals are made of putridities resulting from the increase of moisture and the decrease of heat, as we have described, and are distant from the mixture of human beings.

The same applies to the superfluities of the body. Once nature has seized upon nourishment, extracted what is suitable, sifted it out, gathered it in its receptacles, and gradually assimilated it into the body; and once it has rejected whatever is unsuitable, sifting it out in the same manner, and gathering it in other receptacles—namely, the organs of excretion—the part sifted out and stripped of all suitable elements comes to be at the farthest remove from similarity, and is affected by a dominance of moisture and a decrease of heat that causes it to become putrid. As a result, human beings find it repulsive and repugnant, and wish to be relieved of it. This is true for all superfluities filtered out of the body. It is unsuitable because it has all been rejected and sifted out by nature—and whatever is unsuitable arouses repugnance. This is called “filth,” yet so long as it remains within the body and has not extruded from it, it is tolerated by necessity. Once it extrudes, we feel disgusted by it and find it repugnant and loathsome. These are what are called “filth” and “squalor” by nature. There are other things that human beings find repulsive through habit and also become comfortable with through habit, but they have nothing to do with the topic we are considering in this question.

The Prophet’s statement, “Shabbiness is a part of faith,” has nothing at all to do with the type of thing we were just discussing. A person with a shabby appearance hates filth and loves cleanliness, and does not disagree with you concerning any of the aspects of purity you value. If he does disagree with you, it has nothing to do with his shabby appearance, but is rather in the way

60.4

60.5

ما عن بعض الصوفية فإن تلك المعاني هي موضوعات آخر ليست مما كما فيه والكلام فيها يتصل بمعاني العفة والقناعة والاقتصاد وهي فضائل قد استقصى الكلام فيها في مواضع آخر. فأما قول القائل سرّ الصوفي إذا صفا لم يحتمل الجفا وقول الآخر إذا صفا السرّ اتقى السرّ فهو إيماء إلى مراتب النفس من المعارف ومنازل اليقين ولعمري إن من حصل له مرتبة في القرب من بارئه جلّ اسمه وتعالى علواً كبيراً فقد اتقى منه الشيء ولم يحتمل الجفاء وشرح هذا الكلام وبسطه طويل وقد لاح مما ذكرناه ما فيه كفاية وبلاغ.

مسألة

١٠٦١

الغناء أفضل أم الضرب والمعنى أفضل وأشرف أم الضارب؟

الجواب

٢٠٦١

قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما الموسيقى فإنه علم وقد يقترن به عمل وعامله يسمى موسيقاراً فأما علمه فهو أحد التعاليم الأربعة التي لا بد لمن يتفلسف أن يأخذ بحظّ منه وأما عمله فليس من التعاليم ولكنه تأدية نغم وإيقاعات متناسبة من شأنها أن تحرك النفس في آلة موافقة وتلك الآلة إما أن تكون من البدن أو خارجة عن البدن فإن كانت من البدن فهي أعضاء طبيعية أُعدت لتكمل بها أمور آخر فاستعملت في غيرها وإن كانت خارجة من الطبيعة فهي آلات صناعية أُعدت لتكمل بها تأدية النغم والإيقاع. ومن شأن الآلات الطبيعية إذا هي استعملت في غير ما أُعدت له أن تضطرب وتخرج عن أشكالها فتبدل وتتغير. فإن كان غرض المتكلف ذلك فيها الوصول إلى خسائس الأمور ونقائصها كان قبيحاً مستهجنًا

١ الأصل: القائل إذا.

someone without a shabby appearance might disagree with you. The same applies to the state of austerity that was the subject of the remarks by the Sufi you reported. These notions represent different topics from those we were considering, and their discussion is connected to the notions of temperance, contentment, and moderation, virtues examined in depth elsewhere. The statement, “When the heart of a Sufi grows pure, it stands against coarseness inured,” and the statement, “When the heart is purified, evil is nullified” refer to the different grades of certainty and the different ranks the soul may attain with respect to knowledge. Upon my life, when someone has attained a certain rank with respect to proximity to His Creator, evil has been nullified in him and he has been inured against coarseness. An analytical account and exposition of these topics would run to great length—our discussion has brought out what is sufficient and adequate to the purpose.

On the merits of singing versus playing musical instruments

What is better, singing or playing musical instruments? And who is better and nobler, the one who sings or the one who plays a musical instrument?

61.1

Miskawayh’s response

Music is a form of knowledge that may be conjoined to practice, and its practitioner is called a “musician.” As knowledge, it is one of the four mathematical sciences that the student of philosophy must receive a degree of instruction in. As practice, it does not number among these sciences, but consists in the production of well-proportioned notes and rhythmic patterns calculated to move the soul using an appropriate instrument. That instrument may either be part of the body or extraneous to the body. If it is part of the body, it consists in natural organs that were designed as a means for carrying out different tasks and are ordinarily put to other uses. If it is extraneous to nature, it consists in artificial instruments that were designed as a means for carrying out the production of notes and rhythmic patterns. When natural instruments are put to uses other than those for which they were designed, it is in their nature to suffer disturbance and be displaced from their shapes, undergoing mutation and change. It is wrong and deserves censure if the person who puts them

61.2

وإن كان غرضه منها إظهار أثر العلم للحسّ لستبين النسب المؤلفة في النفس وإظهار الحكمة في ذلك كان جميلاً مستحسنًا وإن كان لا بدّ فيه من الخروج عن العادة والإلف عند قوم.

٣٠٦١ لكن غرض أهل زماننا من العمل هو إثارة الشهوات القبيحة وإعانة النفس البهيمية على النفس المميّزة حتى تتناول لذاتها من غير ترتيب العقل وترخيصه فيها وإذا كان قصده لذلك بآلات طبيعية فهو لا محالة يضمّ إليه كلاماً ملائماً له يؤلف منه تلك النغم في ذلك الإيقاع فإن كان أيضاً منظوماً نظماً شعرياً غزلياً قد استعمل فيه خدع الشعر وتمويهاته تركب تحريكه للنفس وكثرت وجوهه واشتدتّ الدواعي وقويت على ما ينقض العفة ويثير الشبق والنشره لأنّ الشعر وحده يفعل هذه الأفعال وهذه أسباب شرور العالم وسبب الشرّ شرّ فلذلك يعافه العقل وتحظره الشريعة وتمنع منه السياسة.

٤٠٦١ فإذا كانت الآلة خارجة من البدن فأحسنها ما قلّ استعمال الأعضاء فيه وبقيت هيئة الإنسان ونصبته صحيحة غير مضطربة وكان مع ذلك أكثر طاعة في إبراز علم التأليف وأقدر على تمييز النغم وأفصح على حقائق النغم المتشابهة لا إلى المتناسبة التي حصلها علم الموسيقى. ولسنا نعرف أكل في هذه الأسباب من الآلة المسماة عوداً لأنّ أوتارها الأربعة مركبة على الطبائع الأربع ولدساتينها المشدودة نسب موافقة لما يُراد من تمييز النغم فيها وليس يمكن أن توجد نغمة في العالم إلا وهي محكية منها وموودة بها. أمّا ما يحكى عن الأرغن الروميّ فلم نسمعه إلا خبراً ولم نره إلا مصوراً وقد عمل فيه الكندي وغيره كلاماً ما لم يخرج به إلى الفعل من القوة ولو عملت الآلة لاحتاجت من مهارة مستعملها ما يتعذر وجوده ويعد. وكما أنّ العود لما خرج إلى الفعل احتجّ إلى ماهر يضربه ولم يكن ليغني فيه العلم دون

to that use seeks to obtain vile and defective things. If he seeks in doing so to make the effects of knowledge manifest to the senses, so that they clearly discern the proportional relations composed in the soul, and to make manifest the wisdom involved, this is admirable and deserves approval, even if it involves a departure from what is customary and familiar in the view of some people.

But the objective people have in practicing music today is to arouse vicious appetites and to help the beastly soul prevail over the rational, discriminating soul, so that it may partake of its pleasures without being ordered and licensed by reason. If one pursues that by means of natural instruments, one inevitably incorporates appropriate words, which are used to combine the specific notes with the specific rhythmic pattern. If, in addition, these words are cast in erotic verse deploying the deceitful and distorting artifices of poetry, their power to move the soul becomes composite and multifaceted, and one's impulses gain force and grow strong enough to do away with temperance and arouse lust and covetousness; because poetry alone has these effects. These are causes of evil in the world, and any cause of evil is itself evil. This is why it is abhorred by reason, forbidden by the religious Law, and prevented by political power.

61.3

If the instrument is extraneous to the body, the best kind is that which makes the least use of bodily members and allows the human shape and stature to remain in its proper form without suffering disturbance; it is simultaneously more amenable to displaying the science of composition, more capable of distinguishing notes, and more successful at articulating the true nature of those notes that are similar, but not related by harmony as determined by the science of music.⁵⁹ We know of no better instrument for this than the one designated as the "lute," for its four strings are mounted in correspondence with the four natural elements, and its fastened frets have proportional relations that are suited to the task of distinguishing notes.⁶⁰ There is no note in the world that it cannot be used to reproduce and play. We have only heard reports about the Greek organ, and have only seen pictures of it.⁶¹ What al-Kindi and others have said about it has not helped it emerge from potentiality to actuality. Even if the instrument were to be constructed, it would require a degree of skill on the part of its operator that would be impossible, or very difficult, to find. When the lute first emerged into actuality, it required a skillful person to play it, and knowledge alone was not enough to play it without practice and skill. The same would hold true were this instrument to emerge into actuality.

61.4

العمل والحذق فيه فكذلك هذه الآلة لو خرجت إلى الفعل فلذلك توقفنا عن الحكم لها بالشرف وقطعناه للعود.

مسألة

١٠٦٢ ما علة افتتان بعض الناس في العلوم على سهولة من نفسه وانقياد من هواه واستجابة من طبعه وآخر لا يستقل بفن مع كد القلب ودوام السهر ومواصلة المجالس وطول المدارس؟ ولعل الأول كان من المحاويج والثاني من المياسير. وقال بعض الناس هذه مواهب وقال آخرون هي أقسام وقال قائلون هي طبائع مختلفة وعروق نزاعة ونفوس أباءة وقال آخرون إنما هي تأثيرات علوية ومقابلات سفلية واقتانات فلكية^٢. وقال آخر الله أعلم بخلقه وبفعله ليس لنا إلا النظر والاعتبار فإن أفضيا بنا إلى البيان فعممة لا يقوم بشكرها إنس ولا جان وإن أديا إلى اللبس فتسليم لا عار فيه على الإنسان.

الجواب

٢٠٦٢ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله إن النفس وإن كانت في ذاتها كريمة شريفة فإن أفعالها إنما تصدر بحسب آلتها فكما أن التجار إذا فقد الفأس واستعمل المثقب أو المنشار مكانه لم يصدر فعله الذي يتم بالفأس كاملاً ولم تحصل له صور المنجور تاماً ولم يكن ذلك لتقصير منه بل لفقده الآلة فكذلك حال النفس إذا ثارت إلى معرفة ونهضت نحو علم ثم لم تجد آله فإنها حينئذ بمنزلة التجار الذي ضربناه مثلاً. وذلك أن بعض العلوم يحتاج فيه إلى تحيّل قويّ والتخيّل إنما يكون باعتدال ما في مزاج^٣ بطن الدماغ المقدم. وبعض العلوم يحتاج فيه إلى فكر صحيح والفكر الصحيح إنما يتم باعتدال ما في

١ الأصل وط: افتتان. ٢ الأصل: ملكية. ٣ الأصل: "مزاج" زيادة من الهامش.

That is why we refrain from declaring it superior, but categorically affirm that the lute is superior.

On why some people master different subjects more easily than others

Why do some people master different forms of knowledge with facility, with the submissive cooperation of their desires and the ready acquiescence of their nature, while others cannot get to grips with a given subject, even though they wear out their minds, pass sleepless nights, frequent intellectual gatherings, and spend a long time studying with others? The first person may live in penury, whereas the second may enjoy ample means. Some have said it is a matter of different gifts, others that it is a matter of different lots in life, others still that it is a matter of different natures, dispositions that make one incline to some things, souls that make one decline others. According to others, it is a matter of supernal influences, sublunar receptions, and celestial conjunctions, whereas someone else said: God knows best what He has created and what He has done, and all we can do is undertake inquiry and take instruction. If they lead us to clarity, that is a blessing that neither human beings nor jinn can give sufficient thanks for. If they conduce to obscurity, that is a situation that human beings can accept without shame. 62.1

Miskawayh's response

Even though the soul is noble and lofty in its essence, the acts that issue from it depend on the instruments at its disposal. Thus, if a carpenter's axe is missing and he uses the borer or saw instead, his act—which requires an axe to be accomplished—cannot issue in a perfect way, and he cannot fully realize the forms of the material he is hewing—not because of any remissness on his part, but because he lacks the necessary instrument. So it is with the soul when it is galvanized to seek some understanding and roused to pursue some knowledge and fails to find the instruments it requires. When this happens, it is in the same position as the carpenter in our example. For some forms of knowledge require a powerful imagination, and the imagination depends on a certain balance in the mixture of the anterior ventricle of the brain. Other forms of knowledge require sound thought, and sound thought is achieved 62.2

مراج بطن الدماغ الأوسط . وبعض العلوم يُحتاج فيه إلى حفظ صحيح جيد والحفظ الجيد يحصل باعتدال ما في بطن الدماغ المؤخر . وبعض هذه المراجات يحتاج في اعتداله الخاص فيه إلى رطوبة ما وبعضه يحتاج فيه إلى يوسة ما وكذلك الحال في الكيفيتين الأخيرين .

ولما كانت هذه البطون متجاوزة أدى بعضها إلى بعض كيفيتها فإن رطوبة أحدها ترطب الآخر بالمجاورة وإن كان غير محتاج إلى الرطوبة في اعتداله الخاص به فذلك قل من يجمع له الفضائل الثلاث من صدق التخيل وصحة الفكر وجودة الحفظ . وإذا غلب أحد هذه كانت سهولة العلم الموافق لذلك المزاج على الإنسان بحسب ما ركب فيه وأعطى القدرة عليه ومن فقد الاعتدال فيها كلها فقد الانتفاع بالعلوم أجمعها . وربما حصلت الفضائل في التركيب من صحة المزاج ثم أهمل صاحبها نفسه بمنزلة النجار الذي يجد الآلة ثم لا يستعملها كسلاً وميلاً إلى الراحة والهونا وشغلاً باللعب والعبث فهذا هو المذموم المضيع حظه الذي خسر نفسه قال الله تعالى فيه ﴿ قُلْ إِنَّ الْخَاسِرِينَ الَّذِينَ خَسِرُوا أَنْفُسَهُمْ ﴾ . فأما من استعمل آله بحسب طاقته وحصل فضيلتها بنحو استطاعته فهو معذور . وليس يكون ذلك بيسار ولا فقر بل بحصول الآلة ومواتاة المزاج ويقدر عناية الإنسان بعد ذلك .

فمن قال من الناس إنها مواهب أو أقسام أو طبائع أو تأثيرات علوية أو غير ذلك فهو صادق وليس يكذب أحد في شيء مما حكيت له لأن كل واحد منهم يرمى إلى جهة صحيحة وسبب ظاهر وإن كانت جميع الجهات والأسباب مرتقية إلى سبب واحد لا سبب له وإلى علة أولى هي علة الباقيات وإلى مبدع للجميع خالق لكل تعالى ذكره وتقدس اسمه ونحن نستمدّه التوفيق ونسأله العصمة ونستوزعه الشكر ونفوض إليه أمورنا وهو حسبنا ومولانا وعليه توكلنا ونعم المولى ونعم النصير .

through a certain balance in the mixture of the medial ventricle of the brain. Yet other forms of knowledge require an excellent and sound memory, and excellent memory arises through a certain balance in the posterior ventricle of the brain. Some of these mixtures require a certain degree of moisture for their specific balance, while others require a certain degree of dryness, and the same applies to the remaining two qualities.

As these ventricles are contiguous, each communicates its quality to the other. Thus, the moisture of one provides moisture to the other on account of their contiguity, even if the latter does not require moisture for its specific balance. That is why it is rare to find a person who combines the three excellences together—namely, an accurate imagination, sound thought, and an excellent memory. If one of these dominates, the ease with which a person takes to the form of knowledge corresponding to that mixture will depend on what he was endowed with and what capacity he was given. A person who lacks balance in all of them will lack the ability to benefit from any and all forms of knowledge. Sometimes the excellences may be realized in a sound mixture, but their bearer neglects his soul, the way a carpenter might have the instrument he needs but fail to use it out of laziness and a preference for comfort and ease, and because he is distracted by amusements and idle activities. This is the kind of person who deserves blame for squandering his lot—he loses his soul. God said about him: «Surely the losers are they who lose themselves».⁶² The person who uses the instrument available to him to the extent of his ability and who realizes its excellence according to his capacity, by contrast, is exempt from blame. That does not depend on ample means or poverty, but rather on the presence of the relevant instrument and a propitious mixture and, beyond that, on a person's level of application.

62.3

Therefore, those who say that this is a matter of different gifts, lots, natures, supernal influences, or the like speak truthfully, and none of their views you have quoted are false. Each points to a sound aspect and a manifest ground, even though all of the aspects and grounds are to be traced back to a single ungrounded Ground, a first Cause that is the cause of every other, an Originator of all, and a Creator of everything. We ask Him to supply us with His grace, beseech Him to place us beyond reproach, ask Him to make us thankful, and commit our affairs to Him. He is our sufficiency and our master, and in Him our trust reposes—an excellent master is He and an excellent ally!

62.4

مسألة

١٠٦٣ ما الفراسة وماذا يراد بها وهل هي صحيحة أم هي تصح في بعض الأوقات دون بعض أول شخص دون شخص؟

الجواب

٢٠٦٣ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله الفراسة صناعة تتصيد الأخلاق والأفعال التي بحسب الأخلاق من الأمزجة والهيئات الطبيعية والحركات التي تتبعها وهي صناعة صحيحة قوية الأصول وثيقة المقدمات ويحتاج صاحبها ومتعاطيها أن يتدرب في ثلاثة أصول لها حتى يحكمها ثم يحكم بها فإنه حينئذ لا يخطئ ولا يغلط . والأصول الثلاثة هي هذه أما أحدها فالطبائع الأربع أنفسها والثاني الأمزجة وما يتبعها ويقتضيها والثالث الهيئات والأشكال والحركات التابعة الأخلاق ونحن نشرحها على مذهبنا في الإيجاز والإيماء إلى النكت والدلالة بعد ذلك على مظانها .

٣٠٦٣ فأمّا قولك فما الذي يراد بها فإن المراد من هذه الصناعة مقدمة المعرفة بأخلاق الناس ليلايسهم على بصيرة . والفراسة قد تكون في الخيل والكلاب وسائر الحيوانات التي ينتفع بها الناس وقد تكون في الجمادات أيضاً كفراسة السيوف والسحاب وغيرهما إلا أن العناية التامة إنما وقعت بفراسة الإنسان خاصة لكثرة الانتفاع به مما سنذكره بمشيئة الله .

٤٠٦٣ وأمّا قولك هل تصحّ أبداً أم في وقت دون وقت ولشخص دون شخص فإني أقول إنها تصحّ أبداً في كل وقت ولكل أحد ولكن على الشريطة التي ذكرناها من إحكام الأصول التي وعدنا بذكرها مجلّة والدلالة على مواضعها مفصّلة . وإمّا قلنا إنها تصحّ أبداً ودائماً لأن مقدماتها ودلائلها ثابتة غير متقلبة وليست كأشكال الفلك التي تتبدّل وتتغيّر

On the nature of physiognomy

What is physiognomy, and what does one seek to obtain through it? Is it sound, or is it sound at some times and not others, or for one individual and not another? 63.1

Miskawayh's response

Physiognomy is a craft that seeks to unearth people's character traits and the acts that flow from character traits by means of the elemental mixtures, natural appearances, and attendant movements. It is a sound craft grounded in strong principles and firm premises, and its possessor and practitioner must school himself in three principles in order to master it and rule on its basis; if he does so, he will not err, nor will he be deceived. The three principles are: the four natures; the elemental mixtures and the things that attend and entail them; and the appearances, outward forms, and movements that attend character traits. We will explain these points following our usual approach of keeping the exposition short and merely alluding to the subtler points, and beyond that indicating the sources where they can be found properly discussed. 63.2

You ask, "What does one seek to obtain through it?" What one seeks to obtain through this craft is an advance cognizance of people's character traits so that one may enter into relations with them with the benefit of such insight. Physiognomy may be practiced on horses, dogs, and all other animals that human beings derive benefit from. It may also be practiced on inanimate things, as in the physiognomic study of swords, clouds, and other objects. But it is the physiognomic study of human beings in particular that has attracted the most thoroughgoing attention, on account of the multiple benefits it brings, as we will explain, God willing. 63.3

To your question "Is it always sound, or only at one time and not another, and for one individual and not another?" I respond that it is sound always, at all times, and for all people, but with the proviso mentioned—namely, that one has mastered the principles of which we promised to give a general overview, referring to its proper sources for a detailed exposition. The reason we have said it is always and perpetually sound is that its components and indicants remain stable and do not undergo alteration. They are not like the external forms in 63.4

بل شكل الإنسان وهيئته ومزاجه والحركات اللازمة له عن هذه الأشياء ثابتة باقية ما دام حياً فالمستدل بها أيضاً يتصفها فيجدها بحال واحدة .

٥٠٦٣

ونعود إلى ذكر الأصول الثلاثة فنقول أما الاستدلال بالطبائع أنفسها فهو أن الحرارة التي تكون في قلب الإنسان وهي سبب الحياة من شأنها إن زادت على الاعتدال إلى أن تزيد في النفس لحاجة القلب إلى الترويح بالريّة وأن توسع التجويف الذي تكون فيه بالحركة الزائدة وأن يكون لها دخان فاضل على القدر المعتدل بحسب زيادتها وبقدر الرطوبة الدهنية التي تجاورها. فيعرض من هذه الأحوال التي ذكرتها أن يكون الإنسان الذي حرارة قلبه بهذه الصفة عظيم النفس واسع الصدر جهير الصوت كثير الشعر في نواحي الصدر والأكتاف إذا لم يمنع منه مانع كما يعرض لمن يكون جلده مستحسفاً ومسام جلده مسدودة أو ضيقة. فمن وجد هذه الصفات فحكم بأن الموجب لها حرارة غالبية فهو صادق إلا أنه لا ينبغي أن يتسرع إلى حكم آخر حتى ينظر في الأصلين الباقيين ليشق كل الثقة وذلك أن الحرارة يتبعها الغضب والشجاعة وسرعة الحركة ولكن على شروط وهي أن للدماغ مشاركة في أفعال الإنسان وتعديل حرارة القلب إذا كان بارداً رطباً فينبغي أن يُنظر فيه فإن كان صاحب هذا المزاج صغير الرأس بالإضافة إلى صدره فاحكم عليه بما قلناه فإن أضاف المستدل إلى هذه الدلالة الداليتين الأخيرين من الأصلين الباقيين لا أشك في صحة حكمه وصدق قياسه.

٦٠٦٣

وأما الاستدلال بالأصل الثاني وهو المزاج فقد علمنا أن لكل مزاج خلقاً ملائماً وشكلاً موافقاً وذلك الخلق يتبعه خلق النفس^٣ فإن الطبيعة تعمل أبداً من كل مزاج خلقاً خاصاً فلذلك لا تعمل من نطفة الحمار إلا حماراً ومن النواة إلا النخلة ومن البرة إلا برّاً. وكذلك أيضاً أبداً تعمل من المزاج المخصوص بالأسد خلقة الأسد

١ الأصل: وهو. ٢ الأصل: إذا. ٣ ط: للنفس.

the celestial sphere that suffer mutation and change. Rather, the external form, appearances, and elemental mixture of human beings and the movements they necessarily perform as a result of these aspects remain stable and endure as long as they live. Thus, the person who uses these indicants as the basis for his judgment also finds them in a uniform state when he examines them.

We return to our enumeration of the three principles to say: The use of the natures themselves as indicants takes the following form. When the heat that is located in the human heart—which is the cause of life—exceeds a balanced state, it naturally leads to an increase in respiration on account of the heart’s need for aeration through the lung, to an expansion of the cavity in which it is located through increased movement, and to its accumulating a quantity of smoke that surpasses the right balance and that is proportionate to its increase and to the amount of greasy moisture contiguous to it. The effect of the conditions I have enumerated is that the person whose heart-based heat has these characteristics possesses a heavy way of breathing, a broad chest, a sonorous voice, and thick hair around the chest and shoulders—unless a preventative factor arises, as happens in the case of the person whose skin is affected by dry mange or the pores of whose skin are blocked or narrow. Whoever encounters these characteristics and judges that they are entailed by a predominance of heat judges correctly, but he must not hasten to pronounce any other diagnosis before he has inquired into the other two principles, that he may rest in full confidence. For heat is attended by anger, courage, and speed of movement, but this is contingent on certain conditions. Thus, the brain has a role to play in the acts of human beings, and it modifies the heat of the heart, given that it is cold and moist; therefore it must be examined. If the person who possesses this mixture has a small head relative to his chest, then one may pronounce the diagnosis we have outlined. If the investigator adds to this the other indicants furnished by the remaining two principles, there can be no doubt as to the soundness of his diagnosis and the accuracy of his reasoning.

63.5

As for the use of mixture, the second principle, as an indicant, we know that every mixture has a physical structure suited to it and an external form congruent with it, and this physical structure has a particular character trait of the soul as its concomitant. For nature always produces a specific physical structure from every mixture. That is why only a donkey is produced by nature from the sperm of a donkey, a date tree from a date pit, and wheat from a wheat grain. Similarly, the physical constitution of a lion is always and only

63.6

ومن مزاج الأرنب خلقة الأرنب. وإن ذلك الخلق يتبعه خلق خاصّ أبداً بموجب الطبيعة وذلك أن الأسد لما كان مزاج قلبه حاراً تبعه الجرأة ولأنه مستعد لأن يلهب قلبه صار يسرع إليه الغضب ولأن مزاجه موافق لخلقه أعدت له الطبيعة آلة الفرس والنهس وأزاحت عنته في الأعضاء التي يستعملها بحسب هذا المزاج وأعطته الأيد والبطش. ولما كان مزاج الأرنب مقابلاً لهذا المزاج صار خواراً جباناً ضعيفاً قليل المنة فأعدت الطبيعة آلة الهرب فهو لذلك خفيف جيد العدو لا يصدر عنه شيء من أفعال الشجاعة والإقدام فكل أسد شجاع مقدم وكل أرنب جبان فرار حتى لو تحدّث إنسان أن أرنباً أقدم على سبع وولى السبع عنه لكان موضع ضحك. فإذا وجد صاحب الفراسة في مخيل الإنسان وخلقته مشابهة لأحد هذين الحيوانين فحكم له بقريب من ذلك المزاج والخلق الصادر عنه فهو غير بعيد من الحق لا سيما إن أضاف إليه الأصلين الباقيين.

وهذان المثالان اللذان ذكرناهما يستمرّ القياس عليهما على كل مزاج خاصّ بحيوان أعني أنه يتبع كل مزاج خلق كالروغان للشعب والحداع والخبث للذئب^٢ والحتل وكالملق للستور والأنس وكالسرق للعقعق والدفن. وإنما صار الإنسان وحده لا يظهر منه الخلق الطبيعي ظهوراً تاماً كظهوره من هذه الحيوانات لأنه مميّز ذو روية فهو يستر على نفسه مذموم الأخلاق بتعاطي ضده وتكلف فعل المحمود وإظهار ما ليس في طبعه ولا في جبلته فيحتاج حينئذ إلى أن يستدلّ على خلقه الطبيعي بأحد شيئين إما بطول الصبغة وتفقد الأحوال وإما بالاستدلال الذي نحن في ذكره والاستعانة بصناعة الفراسة على ما يسهره^٣ من أخلاقه الطبيعية. فإن كان مزاجه وخلقته مناسباً لخلق الأرنب حكم بخلقته وإن كان مناسباً للأسد حكم عليه بخلقته مع سائر دلائله الأخر.

١ الأصل: الذي. ٢ ط: للأرنب. ٣ ط: يسهره.

produced from the mixture peculiar to lions, and the physical constitution of a hare from the mixture specific to hares. We know that that physical structure is always attended by a specific character trait by natural necessity. The mixture of a lion's heart is hot, so it is attended by boldness, and its heart is disposed to blaze, so it is quick to feel anger. Since its mixture agrees with its physical structure, nature equipped it with an apparatus for breaking the neck of its prey and ripping it with its teeth, removed its impediment as regards the bodily parts it employs in conformity with this mixture, and supplied it with its strength and physical force. The mixture of hares is opposed to this mixture, so hares are languid, cowardly, and weak, and have little vigor, and thus nature equipped them with the apparatus of flight. Hence, they are light and good at running, and no acts of courage or daring issue from them. Every lion is courageous and daring, while every hare is cowardly and skittish, so that people would laugh if someone were to recount how a hare daringly advanced on a predator and the predator took to flight. So, if the physiognomist finds that a person's features and physical structure bear a resemblance to one of these two animals and judges that he possesses a closely related mixture and its ensuing character, he will not be far from the truth, particularly if he includes the other two principles in his consideration.

The reasoning that applies to the two examples we have mentioned can be extended to every mixture specific to a given animal. That is to say, every mixture is attended by a particular character trait, such as slyness and deceitfulness in foxes, malice and duplicity in wolves, fawning and geniality in cats, and thieving and burying in magpies. It is only in human beings that natural character does not manifest itself fully as it does among these animals, because human beings can discriminate and reflect, and can conceal their blameworthy character traits by assuming their contraries, by simulating praiseworthy actions, and by manifesting that which is not in their nature or in their inborn constitution. In that case, one will need to uncover their natural character using one of two things as the basis of one's judgment: either long acquaintance and inspection of their affairs, or the basis we are presently considering, enlisting the craft of physiognomy against the natural character traits they conceal. If a person's mixture and physical structure have an affinity to the makeup of a hare, we judge that he possesses a hare's character, and if they have an affinity to a lion, we judge that he possesses a lion's character, along with all its other indicants.

63.7

٨٠٦٣ فأما الاستدلال بالأصل الآخر وهو الهيئات والأشكال والحركات فهو أن لكل حال من حالات النفس من غضب ورضا وسرور وحزن وغير ذلك هيئات وحركات وأشكالاً تتبع تلك الحال أبداً وظهورها يكون في العين والوجه أكثر وأصحاب الفراسة يعتمدون العين خاصة ويرغمون أنها باب القلب فيتصيدون من شكلها ولونها وحركتها أحوال أخر لها كثيرة يضيق موضعنا عن ذكرها أكثر الأخلاق والشيم وتحسن إصابتهم ويصدق حكمهم لا سيما إن أضافوا إليه الأصلين الباقيين. وذلك أن عين السرور مثلاً وعين الحزن ظاهرتا الهيئة والحركة فإذا وجد الإنسان وهو بالخلقة والطبيعة على أحدهاتين الحالتين من هيئة عينه وحركتها حكم عليه بذلك الطبع وكذلك من ظهر في وجهه في حال سكونه^٢ قطوب وغضون في الجبهة وعبوس حكم عليه بهذا الطبع وأنه سيئ الخلق.

٩٠٦٣ فهذه هي الأصول الثلاثة التي اعتمدها أصحاب الفراسة وهي قوّة طبيعية كما تراها وقد عمل فيها أفليمون كتاباً ويقال إنه أول من سبق إلى هذا العلم ممن انتهى إلينا أثره وعرفنا خبره ثم تبعه جماعة صنفوا فيه كتباً وهي مشهورة فمن أحب الاتساع في هذا العلم فليأخذه من مظانه. وههنا نوع آخر من الاستدلال وإن لم يكن طبيعياً فهو قريب منه وهو العادات فإن المثل قد سبق بأن العادة طبيعة ثانية وقد علمنا أن من نشأ بمدينة وفي أمة وطالت صحبته لطائفة تشبه بهم وأخذ طريقتهم ممن يصحب الجند وأصحاب الملاهي أو سائر طبقات الناس حتى يظن بمن صحب البهائم طويلاً أنه يحدث فيه شيء من أخلاقها وأنت تتبين ذلك في الجمالين والرعاة الذين يسكنون البرّ وتقلّ مخالطتهم للناس وفي القوم الذين يعاملون النساء والصبيان كيف ينحطون إلى أخلاقهم ويتشبهون بهم.

١ الأصل: وأشكال. ٢ الأصل وط: سكونته.

The use of appearances, external forms, and movements—the final principle—as an indicant amounts to the following. Every state of the soul, such as anger, satisfaction, joy, and sadness, among others, involves appearances, movements, and external forms that always attend that state, and that manifest themselves most strongly in the eyes and the face. Physiognomists place special reliance on the eyes, asserting that they are the gateway to the heart. They use their external form, color, and many other aspects—too many to enumerate in the present context—to unearth the majority of a person’s character traits and dispositions; and they successfully form accurate assessments, particularly if they include the other two principles in their consideration. For the way the eyes of a joyful person and the eyes of a sad person appear and move, for example, is manifest. If, thus, we encounter a person whose eyes appear and move in a way that corresponds to one of these two states by physical constitution and by nature, we judge that he possesses this natural disposition. Similarly, if a person’s eyebrows knit, his forehead becomes wrinkled, and a frown appears on his face when he is at rest, we judge that he possesses this natural disposition, and that he has a bad character. 63.8

These, then, are the three principles on which physiognomists rely, and they are strong and natural, as you can see. Polemon has written a book on the subject, and they say that he was the first of the authors whose works have come down to us and about whom we have information to arrive at this knowledge. He was then followed by others who composed books on the topic that enjoy wide repute. So a larger share of this knowledge may be acquired from its proper sources. There is also another type of indicant that can be used as a basis for judgment, which may not be natural but is closely linked to it, namely, habit. For we have already mentioned the saying, “Habit is a second nature.” We know that a person who has grown up in a particular city and a particular nation and has spent a long time in the company of a particular faction becomes like them and adopts their ways, as happens with people who spend time in the company of soldiers, amusement seekers, or any other class of people. It is even supposed that a person who spends a long time in the company of beasts acquires something of their character traits—something you can observe clearly among camel drivers and shepherds, who live in the open country and rarely mingle with people, and how those who deal with women and children sink to the level of their character traits and grow to be like them. 63.9

- ١٠.٦٣ فهذه جملة من القول في الفراسة وينبغي أن تحذر الحكم بدليل واحد وتتوخى جميع الدلائل من الأصول الثلاثة لتكون بمنزلة شهود عدول لا يتداخلك الشك في صدقهم فيكون حكمك صادقاً وفرادتك صحيحة وذلك بحسب دربتك بالصناعة بعد معرفتك بالأصول. وما أكثر الانتفاع بهذا العلم وأحضره فأني أرى في الجولان الذي يتفق لي في الأرض وكثرة الأسفار أن أرى ضرورياً من الناس وأخالط أخفاف الأمم وأشاهد عجائب الأخلاق فأستعمل الفراسة فيعظم نفعها وتتجمل فائدتها.
- ١١.٦٣ والفراسة ربما تخطئ في الفيلسوف التام الحكمة ووجه ذلك أنه ربما كان ذا مزاج فاسد وخلق بالطبع مشاكل له فيصلحه ويهذبه بطول المعاناة وتعاهد نفسه بدوام السيرة الحميدة ولزوم السجيا الرضية كما يحكى عن أفليمون وهو أول من سبق إلى هذا العلم فإنه حُمِلَ إلى أبقرطيس^٢ وهو متكرر فدخل إليه وهو لا يعرفه فلما تأمله حكم عليه زان فهم أصحابه بالوثوب عليه فنهاهم أبقرطيس^٣ وقال قد صدق الرجل بحسب صناعته ولكنني بالقهر أضع نفسي من إظهار سجيته.

مسألة

- ١٠.٦٤ ما سرّ قولهم الإنسان حريص على ما مُنِع؟ ولم صار هذا هكذا؟ وكيف يسرع الملل مما بذل وتضاعف الولوع بطلب ما يحل به؟ هلا كان الحرص في مقابلة ما وُجد والزهد في مقابلة ما مُنِع؟ ولهذا ما صار الرخيص في مقابلة ما وُجد مرغوباً عنه والغالي مرغوباً فيه ولهذا إذا ركب الأمير لا يُحرص على رؤيته كما يُحرص على رؤية الخليفة إذا برز.

١ الأصل: ووحده وذلك. ٢ الأصل: أبقرطيس. ٣ الأصل: أبقرطيس. ٤ الأصل: الملك.

This provides a general overview of physiognomy. It is imperative that you guard against forming a judgment on the basis of a single indicant, and that you strive after all the indicants provided by the three principles. In this way, you will be like those trustworthy witnesses whose veracity raises no doubts in your mind, your judgment will be accurate, and your physiognomic insight sound, depending on the experience you have acquired in the craft once you have familiarized yourself with its principles. How much profit there is in this knowledge, and how promptly it is delivered! Throughout my many peregrinations across the world, I see many varieties of people, mingle with nations of different kinds, and witness extraordinary traits of character. When I make use of physiognomy, it brings great profit and immediate benefit. 63.10

However, physiognomy may err when confronted with the philosopher who has achieved the fullness of wisdom. The reason for this is that he may have had a corrupt mixture and a natural character of a piece with it, yet he may have reformed and refined it through prolonged exertion, and he may have given himself a pledge to preserve upright conduct and cleave to agreeable traits, as is reported about Polemon, who was the first person to arrive at this knowledge. For he was brought to Hippocrates while the latter's identity was masked, so he met him in person without knowing who he was. He contemplated him and pronounced the judgment: "Adulterer." Hippocrates's students leapt to their feet to attack him. But Hippocrates forbade them, saying, "The man has spoken the truth on the basis of his craft, but I forcibly restrain my soul from manifesting its natural disposition."⁶³ 63.11

On why people covet things denied to them

What is the secret behind the saying "Men covet what they have been denied?" Why are things that way? How is it that people are quick to lose interest in what they have been given, while their passion redoubles to seek what has been withheld? Should we not rather feel covetous toward what is available and indifferent toward what has been denied? Is this why we feel no desire for cheap things, but feel desire for expensive ones? And is this why we do not feel as keen to see the emir when he rides forth as we are to see the caliph when he appears in public? 64.1

المجواب

٢٠٦٤ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله إن النفس غنية بذاتها مكتفية بنفسها غير محتاجة إلى شيء خارج عنها. وإنما عرض لها الحاجة والفقير إلى ما هو خارج منها لمقارنتها الهيولى وذلك أن^١ أمر الهيولى بالضد من أمر النفس في الفقر والحاجة والإنسان لما كان مركباً منهما^٢ عرض له التشوق^٣ إلى تحصيل المعارف والقنيات. أما المعارف والعلوم فهو يحصلها في شبيه بالخزانة له يرجع إليه متى شاء ويستخرج منه ما أراد أعني القوة الذاكرة التي تستودع الأمور التي تستفاد من خارج أعني من العلماء والكتب أو التي تستثار بالفكر والروية من داخل. وأما القنيات والمحسوسات فإنه يروم منها ما يروم من تلك التي تقدم ذكرها فلذلك يغلط فيها ويخطئ في الاستكثار منها إلى أن يتنبه بالحكمة على ما ينبغي أن يقتني من العلوم والمحسوسات فيقصد نحو القصد من الأمرين جميعاً ويقف عنده.

٣٠٦٤ وإنما حرص على ما منع لأنه إنما يطلب ما ليس عنده ولا هو موجود له في خزائنه فيتحرك لاقتنائه وتحصيله بحسب ميله إلى أحد الأمرين أعني المعقول أو المحسوس فإذا حصله سكن من هذه الجهة وعلم أنه قد آذخره ومتى رجع إليه وجدته إن كان مما يبقى بالذات وتشوق إلى جهة أخرى ولا يزال كذلك إلى أن يعلم أن الجزئيات لا نهاية لها وما لا نهاية له فلا طمع في تحصيله ولا فائدة في النزاع إليه ولا وجه لطلبه سواء كان في المعلوم أو في المحسوس. وإنما ينبغي أن يقصد من المعلومات إلى الأنواع والذوات الدائمة السرمدية الموجودة أبداً بحالة واحدة ويكون ذلك برد الأشخاص التي هي بلا نهاية إلى الوحدة التي يمكن أن تتأحد بها النفس ومن المحسوسات المقننة إلى ضرورات البدن ومقيماته دون الاستكثار منها فإن استيعاب جميعها غير ممكن لأنها أمور لا نهاية لها.

١ الأصل: "أن" زيادة من الهامش. ٢ الأصل وط: منها. ٣ ط: التشوف. ٤ ط: وتشوف.

Miskawayh's response

The soul is self-sufficient and self-content, with no need for anything external. Its need and want for things external arise on account of its conjunction with matter; for with regard to wanting and needing, matter is the opposite of soul. Human beings are composed from both, so they long to gather many kinds of learning and material possessions. They collect learning and knowledge in a thing that resembles a storeroom, which they can consult whenever they wish and from which they can extract whatever they will. I am referring to the power of memory, where we deposit the things derived from external sources—that is, from scholars and books—or generated through internal thought and reflection. Human beings entertain the same desire for material possessions and sensible objects that they do for the things already mentioned. That is why they are led astray by them and mistakenly multiply them to excess, until philosophy brings them to an awareness of the kinds of knowledge and sensible objects they ought to acquire, and then they make it their aim to pursue both things in moderation, without exceeding that limit. 64.2

The reason they covet what has been denied is that they seek the things they do not have and are unavailable in their storeroom, and they take steps to acquire and attain them depending on the inclination they have toward either the intelligible or the sensible. Upon attaining them, they feel pacified, knowing that they have stored them away and will find them waiting for them whenever they go back to them (if they are the type of things whose essence it is to endure). Then they turn their longing in another direction. This continues until they realize that particulars are infinite in number, that one cannot hope to attain what is infinite in number, and that there is nothing to be gained from yearning for it and no point in seeking it, whether it regards matters of knowledge or sensible objects. Among objects of knowledge, one rather ought to pursue those species and entities that are permanent, everlasting, and always in a single state; this is accomplished by referring the infinite number of individuals to the unity with which the soul can unite itself. Among sensible objects that can be acquired, one ought to pursue those that are necessary for the body and that serve to sustain it, without multiplying them to excess; for it is impossible to encompass them in their entirety given that they are infinite in number. 64.3

٤٠٦٤ فإذن كل ما فضل عن الحاجة وقدر الكفاية فهو مادة الأحران والهموم والأمراض وضروب المكاره. والغلط في هذا الباب كثير وسبب ذلك طمع الإنسان في الغنى من معدن الفقر لأن الفقر هو الحاجة والغنى هو الاستقلال أعني ألا يحتاج بثته ولذلك قيل إن الله تعالى غني لأنه غير محتاج بثته. فأما من كثرت قنياته فإنه ستكثر حاجاته بحسب كثرة قنياته وعلى قدر منازعته إلى الاستكثار تكثر وجوه فقره وقد تبين ذلك في شرائع الأنبياء وأخلاق الحكماء. فأما الشيء الرخيص والموجود كثيراً فإتما رغب عنه لأنه معلوم أنه إذا التمس وجد وأما الغالي فإتما يقدر عليه في الأحيان ويصيبه الواحد بعد الواحد فكل إنسان يتمنى أن يكون ذلك الواحد ليحصل له ما لم يحصل لغيره وذلك من الإنسان على السبيل الذي شرحناه من أمره.

مسألة

١٠٦٥ ما سبب نظر الإنسان في العواقب؟ وما مثاره منها وما آثاره فيها وما الذي يحلى به إذا استقصى وما الذي يتخوفه إذا جنح إلى الهويني؟ أو ما مراد الأولين في قولهم المحتفل ملقى والمسترسل موقى؟

الجواب

٢٠٦٥ قال أبو علي مسكويه رحمه الله أما نظر الإنسان في العواقب فيكون لأمرين أحدهما لتطلعه إلى الأمور الكائنة وشوقه إلى الوقوف على الأمر الكائن قبل حدوثه لما تقدم فيه من الكلام في المسألة الأولى والآخر لأخذ الأهبة له إن كان مما ينفع فيه ذلك ولهذا المعنى اشتاق الإنسان إلى الفأل والزجر إذا عدم جميع وجوه الاستدلال من أشكال الفلك وحركات النجوم وربما عدل إلى المتكهن وصدق بكثير من الظنون الباطلة.

١ الأصل: أن لا.

Thus, everything that outstrips need and the measure of sufficiency gives rise to sorrows, anxieties, illnesses, and all kinds of woes. People often go astray on this head, because of the human aspiration to do away with the basis of privation—for privation means need, and self-sufficiency means independence, that is, having no needs whatsoever. That is why one says that God is self-sufficient, because He has no needs whatsoever. But when people have numerous possessions, the number of their needs grows with the number of their possessions, and the forms of their privation increase in proportion to the impulse to acquire more. The laws of the prophets and the ethical teachings of the philosophers have made that plain. The reason we feel no desire for things that are cheap and widely available is that we know we will find them whenever we try to obtain them. Expensive things, by contrast, are only available at certain times and are obtained now by one person and now by another; everyone wishes to be that person in order to attain what others have failed to, in line with what we have explained about human beings. 64.4

On why people inquire into what will happen in the future

Why do human beings inquire into future outcomes? Why are they affected by them, and what influence do they wield over them? What good do they garner if they take this to great lengths, and what evil do they fear if they incline to indifference? What did the ancients mean when they said, “He who watches himself is met with adversity; he who abandons himself is preserved from it”?⁶⁴ 65.1

Miskawayh’s response

There are two reasons why human beings inquire into future outcomes: first, the eagerness they feel about things that are to be, and their longing to know what is to be before it has occurred, for reasons that were discussed in the first question; second, in order to prepare for them if they are the sort of thing for which preparation avails. This is why human beings long for omens and augurs when they lack other forms of proof such as the configurations of the celestial sphere and the movements of the stars, and why they sometimes have recourse to diviners and put credence in many false speculations. 65.2

٣٠٦٥

وأما قول المتقدمين المحتفل ملقٍ والمسترسل موقى فهو على ظاهره كالمناقض للحكم الأول وذلك أن الإشارة في هذا المثل هو إلى أن المحتفل إنما يتوقى ما لا بد أن يصيبه فهو يجتهد أن يخرج من حكم القضاء أعني موجبات الأقدار بتوسط حركات الفلك فيصير اجتهاده في الخروج منه سبباً لحصوله فيه ووقوعه عليه وإلى هذا المعنى أشار الشاعر بقوله [كامل]

وَإِذَا حَدِرَتْ مِنَ الْأُمُورِ مُقَدَّرًا وَهَرَبَتْ مِنْهُ فَتَحَوَّهُ تَوَجَّهٌ

فأما المسترسل إلى ذلك الراضي به فإنه موقى مما هو غير مقضي ولا هو بمصيب له وإن لم يتوقه كما قال الشاعر فيمن كان بغير هذه الصفة [كامل]

حَدِرًا^٢ أُمُورًا لَا تَكُونُ وَحَائِفٌ مَا لَيْسَ مُنْجِيهِ مِنَ الْأَقْدَارِ

ويتصل بهذا الباب شرح ما يجب أن يتوقى وما يجب ألا يتوقى أعني بذلك ما يعني فيه الفكر والروية وما لا يعني فيه. وإذا مر ما يقتضيه من الكلام استقصيته إن شاء الله.

١ الأصل: من ما. ٢ ط: حذر.

Taken at face value, the statement of the ancients, “He who watches himself is met with adversity; he who abandons himself is preserved from it,” seems to conflict with the first proposition. For this saying refers to how someone who watches himself tries to protect himself against things that must unavoidably befall him. He tries to escape from what is predetermined—I mean, from the necessary entailments of the destinies mediated by the movements of the celestial sphere—and his attempt becomes the cause of its happening to him. The poet was referring to this when he said:

If you guard yourself against fate and try to flee,
you will only run toward it.⁶⁵

By contrast, the person who gives himself to it and is content with it is preserved from what is not predetermined and, even if he does not try to preserve himself from it, it does not befall him, as the poet said about those who have the opposite quality:

Guarding against things that will not be,
and fearing things that cannot deliver them from fate.⁶⁶

To this topic pertains an explanation of the things from which one should try to preserve oneself and the things one should not—by which I mean, things in which thought and reflection avail, and ones in which they do not. If a topic arises that demands it, I will examine it closely, God willing.

Notes

- 1 This echoes Aristotle's references to a friend as another or second self in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (e.g., 1166a31–32, 1169b6–7, 1170b6–7).
- 2 Miskawayh must here be referring respectively to the verses by the second/eighth-century poet Bashshār ibn Burd that read, "If you reproach your friends in all things, you will find none who do not provoke your reproach / So live alone or be joined to your brother in amity, for at one time he does wrong and at another abstains from it / If you do not accept your drink despite its impurities you will go thirsty, for who is ever so lucky to drink from crystal-pure springs?" (al-İşfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 3:137); and to the verse by the pre-Islamic poet al-Nābighah that reads, "You would have no brothers left who do not need to have their defects corrected—what man is pure beyond reproach?" (*al-Aghānī*, 11:6).
- 3 This is partly a reference to Aristotle's discussion in *Categories* 1a1–16, though the specific five-fold scheme Miskawayh outlines was developed by later commentators. See, e.g., Simplicius, *On Aristotle Categories 1–4*, 22, 20–23, 5. Several commentators in the Arabic tradition deploy this scheme; see for example al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, 71, §19, and al-Ḥasan ibn Suwār's commentary in Aristotle, *Maṅṭiq Arisṭū*, 1:80–82.
- 4 Q Ibrāhīm 14:51.
- 5 The verbs discussed are 'aṭā, ya'tū ("to receive") and 'a'tā ("to give"), both derived from the root 'ṭ-w; they are compared with qāma ("to rise") and 'aqāma ("to make someone rise"). In Arabic grammar, the verbal paradigm referred to is *fā'ala*, in the context of *nāwala* ("to hand over") and *ḥāwala* ("to strive").
- 6 The verse is by the first/seventh-century poet Miskīn al-Dārimī (d. 89/708).
- 7 The poet is Abū Miḥjan al-Thaqafī (d. ca. 16/637).
- 8 Miskawayh may have in mind the kind of ideas discussed by al-Fārābī in *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā al-kabīr*, 188–94.
- 9 The association of the soul with numbers is a standard Neoplatonic idea. See Adamson, *Al-Kindī*, 178–79.
- 10 Q Baqarah 2:255.
- 11 Q Muddaththir 74:56.
- 12 Elsewhere, Miskawayh attributes this description to Plato: *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, 12.
- 13 This point evokes Miskawayh's broader understanding of the ethical life as a transcendence of nature to the metaphysical realm through an actualization of the "divine" (*ilāhī*) element of one's being, reason. The best kind of life represents an assimilation

- to the angelic order and an imitation of God (*al-iqtidā' bi-l-bārī*). See, indicatively, the remarks in *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 87–90.
- 14 This view goes back to Aristotle, and was adopted in different forms by a number of Miskawayh's predecessors, including the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' and al-Fārābī. See Nader El-Bizri's helpful overview in "Time, concepts of."
- 15 This definition again has Aristotelian roots. Miskawayh's specific formulation echoes the one given by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī in *Rasā'il falsafiyya*, 198. Yet al-Rāzī's phrase was *al-saḥḥ al-mushtaraka bayna al-ḥāwī wa-l-maḥwī*: "the surface common to . . ." Miskawayh's expression seems to invert the relevant relationship.
- 16 Q Baqarah 2:62.
- 17 The reference is to Bryson, the obscure neo-Pythagorean philosopher who authored the influential treatise *Management of the Estate*. The passage Miskawayh has in mind can be found in Swain, *Economy, Family, and Society*, 18 (§113).
- 18 See Aristotle's remarks in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book IV.9.
- 19 The source for this saying is unclear.
- 20 The manuscript continues in the margin: "I say, how could it not be remarkable that he claims this falsely when he is lying and lying is necessarily evil?"
- 21 As Miskawayh's response in §13.3 indicates, this question segues into a second one relating to old men who act like juveniles. This continuation does not appear in the text of the question itself in the manuscript.
- 22 The term *khalā'ah* ("wantonness") is derived from *khalā'a* ("to throw off the bridle"). The verb *ḥajara* means "to hinder" or "prohibit."
- 23 This is a celebrated Platonic idea set out in the *Phaedo* and other dialogues.
- 24 In framing his question, al-Tawḥīdī used the verb *ta'allama*—translated here as "to acquire knowledge," but which strictly means "to learn"—in connection with both knowledge and ignorance. This term has the same morphological pattern as *taṣawwara*, which is the term that focuses Miskawayh's philosophical view of knowledge.
- 25 This view is expressed in *Metaphysics* 982b–983a, but the remarks here also echo passages from Greco-Arabic gnomologia. See, e.g., Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature*, 161 (§2).
- 26 This is one of a handful of places where Miskawayh slightly alters the wording (and inevitably the meaning) of al-Tawḥīdī's question in quoting it.
- 27 Q Anbiyā' 21:22.
- 28 This may be a reference to a common philosophical conception of the hierarchical relationship between the different powers of the soul, with the rational power seen as the ruling or kingly (*malakiyyah*) power to which all others must be subordinated. See, e.g.,

- Tahdhīb al-akhlāq*, 16 (cf. the reference to the archetypal virtue of this power, knowledge or wisdom, as “kingly” on p. 17). Compare the remarks about the soul’s governance of the body in *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, 49.
- 29 This saying appears in Greco-Arabic collections of wisdom literature; see, e.g., Gutas, *Greek Wisdom Literature*, 173–74 (§35).
- 30 Q Ṭā Hā 20:84.
- 31 The poet is al-Mutanabbī (d. 354/965). See *Dīwān al-Mutanabbī*, 371, using variant wording (*min shiyam al-nufūsi*).
- 32 The reference is to the short treatise *Risālah fī māhiyyat al-‘adl*, edited by M. S. Khan under the title *An Unpublished Treatise of Miskawaih on Justice*. The Arabic terms discussed in the next sentences are *jawr* (“inequity”) and the verb *jāra*, *yajūru* (“to be inequitable”); and *‘adl* (“justice”) and the verbal noun *i’tidāl* (“moderation”).
- 33 This is likely a reference to Galen’s synopsis of Plato’s *Republic*, which we know to have been translated into Arabic.
- 34 See the discussion of commercial exchange in Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book V.5.
- 35 The two words derive from the same trilateral root, *w-f-q*.
- 36 The term for luck, *bakht*, is a Persian loanword.
- 37 As in many such passages in the book, the discussion hinges on Arabic morphology, which we have tried to convey in English without cluttering the argument with too much transliteration. We offer the following, less free, rendering, for those who are interested in the specific morphologies under discussion: “*Tamkīn* is the verbal noun of the verb *makkana*. The principal parts of the verb are thus *makkana tamkīnan*; compare *karrama takrīman* and *kallama taklīman*. *Imkān* is the verbal noun of the verb *‘amkana*. The principal parts of the verb are thus *‘amkana imkānan*; compare *‘akrama ikrāman*. The term *mumkīn* adopts the morphological pattern *muf‘il*; compare *mukrim*. The noun from which the verb theoretically derives is not used in the Arabic lexicon, nor does it come from it. For the thing has no verb connected with it other than the transitive verb expressed with the prefix *‘a-*. So if you say that a certain thing is possible, it is as though you were saying that this thing which exists *in potentia*—for which there is no ordinary noun in use, but which exists virtually, and its virtual meaning is ‘that which is possible’—has given itself to you, and has put you in the position to make it actual through your voluntary choice. *Imkān* is the verbal noun from *‘amkana*. *Tamkīn* is an action performed on someone by something else, whereby it puts him in the position to make that thing actual through voluntary choice. It is the verbal noun of *makkana*, and the geminate verb form appears at this kind of lexical juncture to signify iteration and intensity of action, the way one says *ḍaraba* and *ḍarraba*, *shadda* and *shaddada*. The term *tamkīn*

- can also carry another sense, namely, as a verbal noun of the form *tafʿīl* deriving from the term *makān*, the way we say ‘I established (*makkantu*) the stone in its position’ when we give it the amount of space it requires so that it sticks firmly to the spot. In the same sense we speak of a horseman as being ‘firmly fixed’ (*tamakkun*) in the saddle, and of a person as being ‘firmly established’ (*tamakkun*) in his seat. Talk of a person ‘establishing himself’ (*tamakkun*) with an emir falls in the same class by way of comparative and figurative use. As you can see, there is a vast difference between this meaning and the first.”
- 38 Q Maryam 19:62.
- 39 Q Ḥaṣhr 59:7. The discussion involves permutations of the root *d-w-l*.
- 40 The reference is to a proverb that has different interpretations, in one referring to a man who found a wife comparable to him in intelligence, in another to two tribes that were evenly matched in force. See al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*, 2:359–60 (#4340).
- 41 At this point, Miskawayh notes that “the original form of the verb is **iwtafaqa*.”
- 42 Fully: “This is *tawfiq*, which derives from the term *wafq*, with the morphological pattern *tafʿīl*.”
- 43 The Arabic terms are *maḥdūd*, *ḥadd*, and *ḥaddād*, respectively.
- 44 The Arabic terms are *wilāyah* and *mawlā*.
- 45 Miskawayh must be referring to Question 14, where al-Tawḥīdī used the term *laʿīm* in framing his question. Miskawayh reframed it using the term *bakhīl*, without, however, spelling out the distinction between the two.
- 46 *Masīk* (“stingy”) comes from the verb *masaka*, “to clutch, to grasp”; cf. *amsaka*, “to withhold, to retain.” *Manūʿ* (“ungiving”) comes from the verb *manaʿa*, “to refuse, to deny, to withhold.”
- 47 *Jaʿd* (“tightfisted”) can also have the literal meaning “contracted” or “short.” *Kazz* (“skin-flint”) can also mean “dry,” “stiff,” “rigid,” “contracted.”
- 48 The Arabic terms are *ʿadah*, *ʿāda yaʿūdu*, and *iʿtādā yaʿtādu*, respectively.
- 49 For the broader metaphysical picture that underlies this point, see *al-Fawz al-aṣghar*, 55 ff., where Miskawayh discusses the twofold movement of the soul: upward toward the intellect and downward toward matter.
- 50 The notion of “muddled dreams” has Qurʾanic overtones: see Q Yūsuf 12:44.
- 51 The Arabic terms are *abṣara*, *istabṣara*, *baṣar*, and *baṣīrah*.
- 52 See al-Maydānī, *Majmaʿ al-amthāl*, 1:249 (#1336) and 2:43 (#2595).
- 53 No fourth view seems to have been mentioned. Combined with the elliptical character of these passages, this suggests this may be another instance of editorial intervention on the part of Miskawayh.
- 54 There seems to be a lacuna in the text here.

- 55 See Wakelnig, *A Philosophy Reader*, 137, for a similar statement attributed to the “Greek sage.”
- 56 Q Qiyāmah 75:20.
- 57 The verse is by the Umayyad poet Jarīr (d. ca. 110/728–29): see *Dīwān Jarīr*, 1: 737.
- 58 Miskawayh appears to be splicing a number of loosely quoted passages from the New Testament, including Matthew 6:25 and 7:21.
- 59 The text seems to be corrupt here and it is difficult to discern alternative readings.
- 60 Miskawayh here echoes ideas articulated by al-Kindī, for example in *Risālat al-Kindī fī l-luḥūn wa-l-naghām*. For further discussion, see Adamson, *Al-Kindī*, 173–80.
- 61 *Urghan* (Greek *organon*) could refer to either a wind-blown or stringed instrument, though Miskawayh must have the latter in mind. This organ was reported to be capable of inducing extreme rapture, as al-Iṣbahānī reports in *al-Aghānī*, 10:146.
- 62 Q Zumar 39:15.
- 63 This oft-cited incident—which was transposed from an anecdote featuring the physiognomist Zopyrus and Socrates—is reported in different versions. See Hoyland, “The Islamic Background to Polemon’s Treatise,” in *Seeing the Face*, ed. Swain, 237–38, and Ghersetti, “The Semiotic Paradigm: Physiognomy and Medicine in Islamic Culture,” section II, in the same volume.
- 64 In *Al-Baṣā’ir wa-l-dhakhā’ir*, al-Tawḥīdī attributes this saying (in slightly altered wording) to a certain al-Kindī [?] as reported by the ‘Alid supporter Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ashtar: *Al-Baṣā’ir wa-l-dhakhā’ir*, 7:16 (#16).
- 65 The line is by the third/ninth-century poet Ibn al-Rūmī but does not seem to be included in the extant recension of his diwan.
- 66 In one report, the verse is by the poet Abān al-Lāḥiqī, a court poet of the Barmakids. See al-Suyūṭī, *al-Muzhir*, 1:180.

Glossary

- Abū Ayyūb al-Anṣārī* (d. ca. 52/672) companion of the Prophet and participant in many of the military operations of the early Islamic period.
- Abū Bakr* (r. 11–13/632–34) the first caliph and Muḥammad's father-in-law.
- Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī* (d. ca. 313/925 or 323/935) prominent philosopher, physician, and alchemist. His best-known philosophical works include *Spiritual Medicine* (*Kitāb al-ṭibb al-rūḥānī*) and *The Philosophical Life* (*Kitāb al-Sīrah al-falsafiyah*).
- Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus* (d. 328/940) Nestorian Christian who translated and commented on Aristotle's works and played an important role in the translation of Peripatetic philosophy from Syriac into Arabic.
- Abū l-Faṭḥ ibn al-'Amīd* (d. 366/976) son of Abū l-Faḍl ibn al-'Amīd and one-time vizier of the Buyid emir Rukn al-Dawlah.
- Abū Ḥanīfah* (d. 150/767) theologian and jurist who founded an eponymous school of law.
- Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī* (d. 321/933) theologian who was one of the foundational figures of the school of Baṣran Mu'tazilites, best known for his theory of modes or *aḥwāl*.
- Abū l-'Ibar* (d. 252/866) a poet and relative of the Abbasid caliphs who was known for composing humorous and frivolous verse.
- Abū 'Īsā l-Warrāq* independent Shi'i thinker and religious skeptic of the third/ninth century, said to have been Ibn al-Rāwandī's teacher, author of well-informed reports and refutations of non-Muslim religions, including Christianity.
- Abū Sa'īd al-Ḥaṣīrī* Sufi theologian and heresiographer with skeptic tendencies, also referred to in other sources as al-Ḥuṣrī, al-Ḥaḍrī, or even al-Ḥaḍramī.
- Abū Tammām* (d. 231/845 or 232/846) poet and anthologist who achieved fame during the rule of the caliph al-Mu'taṣim.
- Abū 'Uthmān al-Jāḥiẓ* (d. 255/868–69) eminent Mu'tazilite theologian and belletrist from Baṣra whose works inspired many generations of prose writers, including al-Tawḥīdī.
- Abū 'Uthmān al-Nahdī* (d. ca. 95/714) first-century transmitter of prophetic traditions.

- Abū Yūsuf al-Kindī* (d. after 256/870) philosopher and scholar who played a paramount role in the reception, translation, and dissemination of Greek philosophical thought and authored multiple works across a broad range of philosophical sciences.
- Abū Zayd al-Balkhī* (d. 322/934) prolific author of philosophical, scientific, and religious works in the Kindian tradition, possibly a teacher of the philosopher Abū Bakr al-Rāzī.
- ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib* (d. 41/661) the Prophet’s son-in-law and fourth caliph, and the first Imam of the Shi‘ah.
- Allāt* the name of a pre-Islamic goddess, given to many goddesses worshipped in the ancient Near East.
- ‘Alwah* name given to the beloved in many poems by al-Buḥturī.
- ‘Āmir ibn al-Ḍarīb* sage of the pre-Islamic era.
- Aristotle* (d. 322) Greek philosopher who authored an influential series of works on logic, ethics, metaphysics, and scientific and other subjects. Many of these works, including the *Organon* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* to which Miskawayh refers in this book, were translated into Arabic during the Abbasid era. Reflecting his stature, many writers refer to him simply as “the Philosopher.”
- Baghdād* capital city of the Abbasid caliphate, founded along the Tigris river in 762 by the second Abbasid caliph, al-Manṣūr. In Tawḥīdī and Miskawayh’s day, the capital of the Buyid principality of Iraq, with Rayy (now a suburb of present-day Tehran) being the capital of the principality of the Jibal and Shiraz the capital of Fars.
- Bāqil* a figure proverbial for a lack of eloquence, often mentioned in the same breath as Saḥbān Wā’il.
- Bashshār ibn Burd* (d. ca. 167/783) renowned poet of Persian origin of the late Umayyad and early Abbasid period.
- Bryson* (fl. before the second century CE) obscure neo-Pythagorean philosopher who authored the treatise *Management of the Estate*, which was highly influential for Arabic approaches to economics.
- al-Buḥturī* (d. 284/897) prominent court poet of the Abbasid era.
- Da’d* woman’s name, given to the beloved in some Arabic poems.
- al-Faḍl ibn Yaḥyā* (d. 193/808) member of the powerful Barmakid family and eldest son of Yaḥyā ibn Khālīd al-Barmakī. He served as vizier to Hārūn al-Rashīd.

- Farghānah* valley in present-day eastern Uzbekistan and parts of Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, surrounded on three sides by the Tianshan Mountains and traversed by the Syr Darya river, which flows out of the western end of the valley to the Aral Sea. In the third/tenth century, it represented a remote eastern outpost of the Muslim world.
- Fartanā* woman's name, given to the beloved in some Arabic poems.
- Galen* (d. ca. AD 216) medical writer and physician from Pergamon whose translated works played a critical role for the development of the medical tradition in the Islamic world. Though more limited in extent, his ethical writings (notably the *Peri Ethon*) were also highly influential.
- Hārūn al-Rashīd* (d. 193/809) fifth 'Abbasid caliph, whose rule was enmeshed with the Barmakid family and whose court formed a lodestone of poets, scholars, and entertainers.
- Hind* woman's name, given to the beloved in many Arabic poems.
- Ibn al-Khalīl* unidentified individual.
- Ibn Mujāhid* (d. 324/936) religious scholar best known for his role in establishing the seven canonical variants or readings of the Qur'an.
- Ibn al-Rāwandī* prominent heterodox figure of the third/ninth century, notorious for his polemics against religious (including Muslim) belief, and his attacks on prophecy, the credibility of miracles, and the compatibility of religious claims with reason.
- Ibn Sālīm al-Baṣrī*, *Abd Allāh Muḥammad* (d. 297/909) Sufi thinker who was a disciple and companion of Sahl al-Tustarī.
- Imru' al-Qays* (fl. sixth century) renowned pre-Islamic poet who was the author of one of the most famous of the pre-Islamic poems known as the *Suspended Odes* (*al-Mu'allaqāt*).
- Ishāq al-Mawṣilī* (d. 235/850) musician, poet, and composer associated with the court of several Abbasid caliphs.
- Jābir ibn Ḥayyān* (d. ca. 193/812) linchpin figure in the early development of alchemy in the Islamic world and putative (though disputed) author of a vast corpus of alchemical writings.
- Ja'far ibn Yahyā* (d. 190/805) member of the powerful Barmakid family and youngest son of Yaḥyā ibn Khālīd al-Barmakī, vizier to Hārūn al-Rashīd.
- Khālīd ibn Yazīd* (d. ca. 85/704) Umayyad prince who, according to a disputed tradition, commissioned translations that first introduced alchemy into Arabic culture.

- al-Khalīl* (d. ca. 175/791) celebrated Baṣran grammarian and lexicographer who laid the foundations for Arabic phonetics and prosody.
- Kharījites* hardline Islamic sect that arose in the first Islamic century in connection with a dispute about the caliphate and that remained a source of political and theological unrest during the Umayyad period.
- Khurasan* region comprising present-day northeastern Iran, Afghanistan, and parts of Central Asia.
- Luqmān ibn ʿĀd* a figure from pre-Islamic times, proverbial for his wisdom.
- Mālik ibn Anas* (d. 179/796) Medinan jurist who founded an eponymous school of law.
- al-Maʿmūn* (d. 218/833) seventh Abbasid caliph, whose rule was punctuated by theological upheavals but also by a flowering of intellectual activity, including the large-scale translation of Greek philosophical and scientific texts.
- Maʿrūf al-Karkhī* (d. 200/815–16) prominent early ascetic and mystic of the Baghdad school.
- al-Muraqqish al-aṣghar* (fl. sixth century CE) poet from the predominantly Christian town of Hīrah in southwestern Iraq.
- al-Mutanabbī* (d. 354/965) renowned poet and panegyrist who flourished under the patronage of the ruler of Syria, Sayf al-Dawlah.
- Muʿtazīlites* theological school that emerged in the second/eighth century, distinguished by its rationalistic methods and austere emphasis on theological tenets relating to divine unity and justice.
- al-Nābighah* (fl. sixth century CE) celebrated poet of the pre-Islamic era famous for his panegyrics of the rulers of the predominantly Christian town of Hīrah in southwestern Iraq.
- The Philosopher* See Aristotle.
- Plato* (d. 347) Greek thinker who played a seminal role in the development of ancient philosophy and whose ethical and metaphysical views, especially in their Neoplatonic reworkings, were highly influential in the Islamic world.
- Polemon of Laodicea* (d. ca. AD 144) politician and intellectual who authored an influential treatise on physiognomy, the science of discerning character from external appearance. The work was translated into Arabic in Abbasid times.

al-Rūdakī (d. ca. 329/940–41) prominent Persian poet who flourished in the first half of the fourth/tenth century.

Sahbān Wāʿil a figure of proverbial eloquence, often mentioned in the same breath as Bāqil.

Salmā woman's name, given to the beloved in many Arabic poems.

al-Shāfiʿī (d. 204/820) jurist and legal theoretician who founded an eponymous school of law.

Tāhart city in northwest Algeria founded by the Rustamid dynasty in the late second/eighth century.

al-Ṭarmī an obscure poet about whom little is known.

Thābit ibn Qurrah (d. 288/901) eminent mathematician and scientist known both for his original scientific work and his translations of Greek texts.

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About the Editor–Translators

Bilal Orfali is Associate Professor of Arabic Studies at the American University of Beirut. He co-edits *al-Abhath Journal* and Brill's series *Texts and Studies on the Qur'an*, and he is the author and editor of more than twenty books on Arabic Studies. His recent publications include *The Anthologist's Art*, *The Book of Noble Character*, *The Comfort of the Mystics*, *In the Shadow of Arabic*, and *Sufism, Black and White*.

Maurice A. Pomerantz is Associate Professor of Literature at New York University Abu Dhabi. He is the author of *Licit Magic: The Life and Letters of al-Ṣāhib b. 'Abbād*.

Sophia Vasalou is Senior Lecturer and Birmingham Fellow in Philosophical Theology at the University of Birmingham. Her books include *Moral Agents and their Deserts: The Character of Mu'tazilite Ethics*, *Wonder: A Grammar*, and *Ibn Taymiyya's Theological Ethics*.

James E. Montgomery is Sir Thomas Adams's Professor of Arabic, Fellow of Trinity Hall at the University of Cambridge, and an Executive Editor of the Library of Arabic Literature. His latest publications are *Loss Sings*, a collaboration with the celebrated Scottish artist Alison Watt, and *Dīwān 'Antarah ibn Shaddād: A Literary-Historical Study*. He is preparing a translation of poems by al-Mutanabbī for Archipelago Books.