



SOME ASPECTS OF ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT
AL-BAGHDĀDĪ'S METAPHYSICS: A PARTIAL
TRANSLATION OF *KITĀB AL-MU'TABAR* WITH
INTRODUCTION

BY

MALKI AHMAD NASIR

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International Institute of
Islamic Thought and Civilization
International Islamic University Malaysia

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*Pangpentingna dina kahirupan mah
lain beunghar ku harta tapi beunghar
ku harti, sabab pangarti mah moal
laas ku jaman, moal leeh ku poe.*

The most important thing in life is
Not to be rich in material possessions
But to be rich in knowledge, because
Knowledge will not be weakened by time and
Will not be withered by the sun.

Sundanese proverb

ABSTRACT

Metaphysics, which is the science of *qua* being, was first formulated by Aristotle (d. 322 BCE) and later developed by Ibn Sina (d. 1037 CE). One of the fundamental issues dealt with in metaphysics is the existence of God and His relation to the world, that is, whether or not it is co-eternal with God. Most Muslim philosophers agree that the world was co-eternal with God, but they were divided over the question whether the world had always existed in a temporal sense or over how this question should be understood in the first place. Many of them observed that the world was created together with time, and in this sense had always existed, that is, there was no past at the time of creation. This study presents the views of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 1157 CE) on various issues in metaphysics, including one of the most controversial issues among Muslim philosophers, that is, the question of eternity or the temporality of the world, as reflected in his major work, *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah*. It shows how Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī refutes Ibn Sina's doctrines, which go back to that of Aristotle, and how Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī uses their arguments to arrive at a different conclusion, that is, that the world is not eternal, but rather had a beginning. This study consists of an analytical introduction to the relevant text, followed by a partial English translation of it. It further discusses certain aspects of metaphysics according to Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, including the problem of the existence and the nature of time. It is hoped that this study will provide the reader with a better understanding of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's metaphysics and philosophy.

خلاصة البحث

الميتافزيقا، و هي العلم الذي يبحث عن حقيقة الوجود، نشأت لأول مرة عند أرسطو (ت ٣٢٢ ق م)، ثم قام بتطويرها ابن سينا (ت ١٠٣٧ م). ومن أهم القضايا التي تناولها الميتافزيقا وجود الله تعالى وعلاقته بالعالم ، يعني هل كان العالم أزليا مع الله تعالى أم لا. وقد اتفق معظم الفلاسفة المسلمين على أن العالم أزلي مع الله تعالى، غير أنهم اختلفوا في هل أزلية العالم كانت بالمعنى الزمني ، أو كيف يجب فهم هذه القضية في المقام الأول. كثيرون فهموا أن العالم خلق مع الزمن، وبهذا المعنى كان العالم كائنا، أي لم يسبق خلقه زمن. تحاول هذه الدراسة ابراز موقف أبي البركات البغدادي (ت ١١٥٧ م) في قضايا الميتافزيقا المختلفة ، بما فيها القضية الأكثر إثارة للجدل بين الفلاسفة المسلمين ، وهي قضية أزلية العالم وحدوثه ، وفق ما يتجلى في أهم مؤلفات الكاتب و هي كتاب المعبر في الحكمة. وقد تبين من دراسة هذا الكتاب كيف أن أبا البركات البغدادي يرد على مذهب ابن سينا في المسألة، والذي تعود جذوره إلى أرسطو. كما تبين كذلك كيف أن أبا البركات البغدادي يستخدم نفس الأدلة التي استخدمها ابن سينا و أرسطو للوصول إلى نتيجة مخالفة. وتتكون الرسالة من المقدمة التحليلية لنصوص الكتاب المتعلقة بالموضوع والترجمة الانجليزية لبعضها ثمّ تعالج، بالاضافة إلى ذلك، القضايا الميتافزيقية عند أبي البركات البغدادي، بما فيها قضية الوجود وطبيعة الزمان. نتمى أن تقدم هذه الرسالة الفهم السليم إلى قراء آراء أبي البركات البغدادي الميتافزيقية والفلسفية.

APPROVAL PAGE

This thesis of Malki Ahmad Nasir has been approved by the following:

Cemil Akdogan
Supervisor

Wan Mohd Azam bin Mohd Amin
Internal Examiner

Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah
External Examiner

Nasr Eldin Ibrahim Ahmed Hussein
Chairman

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Malki Ahmad Nasir

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**SOME ASPECTS OF ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT AL-BAGHDĀDĪ'S
METAPHYSICS: A PARTIAL TRANSLATION OF *KITĀB AL-MU'TABAR*
WITH INTRODUCTION**

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To the memory of my parents H. Aip Syarifuddin and Hj. Khadijah
Who could not wait to see this doctoral work completed

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

This study aims to provide that the partial english translation of *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* which belongs to the views of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (1077-1157) on some aspects of metaphysics is intended to contribute to an adequate understanding of the thought of one of the most eminent philosophers of Islam. Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī is an example of philosopher among scientists and doctors who do not receive a place in the history of Islamic Philosophy. This may be due to the popularity of science and medicine to conquer his popularity in philosophy. On the other hand, perhaps his background as a Jew's origin who, converted to Islam, has been labeled as Jewish thinkers rather than Islamic thinkers. This is clear from various resources that he was mentioned in many sources of Jewish Philosophy and Thought as the leader of Jewish thought.

But his extraordinary contribution is not only in his thought but also what he wrote, which he inspires to the Muslim thinkers further. He builds a system of thought as known "islamization," which means commented, criticized, rejected, refined, and revised the ideas or theories, which they had found in other civilizations. Given to this phenomenon, it is understood that he becomes as one of a leader and model of Islamic philosophy. This as a prelude to a more detailed study of his thought in order to evaluate and seek whether he was the actual position of thought in the history of Islam.

1.2. SCOPE

Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (1077-1157) lived in the period when heated debates were going on between *mutakallimūn* and *falāsifah* following al-Ghazālī's attacks on al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā on the issues of the eternity of the World. Although he patterned his *magnus opus*, *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* after the *Shifā'* of Ibn Sīnā with the aim of preparing a textbook of his students, as Ibn Abī 'Usaybi'ah told that the work was dictated to his students when Abū al-Barakāt was aged and blind¹, which he did not defend Ibn Sīnā on this issue mentioned above. Rather, in his deliberations he sided with al-Ghazālī in order to prove that some ideas of Ibn Sīnā are heresy. Thus, he was one of the prominent *falāsifah* who succeeded on their offensive against *falāsifah* to destroy the tradition of Ibn Sīnā or *falāsifah*.

The purpose of this study entitled "Some Aspects of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's Metaphysics: A Partial Translation of *Kitāb Al-Mu'tabar* with Introduction" is to expose the work of al-Baghdādī on metaphysics so as to elucidate on the interaction between *kalām* and *falsafah*. The first chapter of this study comprises an introduction, scope, justification, and Islamization of foreign ideas. The second chapter comprises a review of the intellectual milieu preceding al-Baghdādī and the significance of his metaphysical ideas in refuting some ideas of Ibn Sīnā within the context of the theory of emanation. The third chapter is the English translation of some metaphysical parts of *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* from section one into four. The fourth chapter is also the English translation starting from section five into section six. While the fifth chapter comprises the section seven, eight and nine. To our knowledge, this is the first English translation of the nine sections of the metaphysical part of his *magnum opus*, which solely deal with metaphysical

¹ Ibn Abī 'Usaybi'ah, *'Uyūn al-Anba' fī Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭṭibā'* (Beirut: Dār Maktabah al-Hayah, n.d) 375.

concepts and issues. Then, the sixth chapter will be closed with the conclusion. Finally, in the apendice we present a legible copy of the Arabic text of the Metaphysical Part of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah*.

1.3. JUSTIFICATION

There has never been a full English translation of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* but some selected texts of its second volume have been translated into English by Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah under the title “*Abū al-Barakāt’s Psychology: Critical Edition of the Section on Soul (al-Nafs) from Al-Mu‘tabar fī Al-Ḥikmah with Analysis and Translation of Selected Texts*”. This work itself belongs to his Ph.D. thesis, which he defended at ISTAC-IIUM in 2007.

Zarina binti Muhammad has also translated some sections of the same book under the title “The Heavenly Phenomena: A Study of Abū’l Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar*. This work is a Master Thesis, which was accepted by ISTAC-IIUM in 2003.

Then, Şerefettin Yaltkaya has also published an incomplete Turkish translation of the *illāhiyyah* of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar*, along with an introduction, in 1932.²

To my knowledge, the third volume of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar* has never been translated into English completely, except was done partially by Shlomo Pines.³ The Arabic text of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* that I have consulted is based on two versions. The first one belongs to a printed edition of the Hyderabad edition which was prepared by Şerefettin Yaltkaya in 1358/1939 and consists of three volumes on

² see Shlomo Pines, “Abu’l Barakāt al-Baghdādī” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* edited by H.A.R. Gibb, new edition, Vol. I, A-B, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 111.

³ Pines, Shlomo, *Studies in Abu’l Barakāt al-Baghdādī Physic and Metaphysic*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1979.

logic, physics [including psychology], and metaphysics. The third volume also contains a paper written by Sulaymān al-Nadwī (pp. 230-252), dealing with Abū al-Barakāt Al-Baghdādī's biography and references made to him and to his doctrines by later Muslim writers. So, it is by far the best edition of the text and sufficient for our purposes here. Pines has shown that this text is not yet definitive. For that reason, I have also used Wan Suhaimi's edition namely *Al-Ilāhiyāt min al-Mu'tabar Lī Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī: Taḥqīq wa Dirāsah*. This work itself belongs to a his master's thesis which was accepted by Cairo University in 1998, and the manuscript itself has not been published yet. In using the Arabic text of the third volume of al-Baghdādī's *magnum opus* I utilized these two manuscripts.

It is said that *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* has been written with students in mind, because its organization and tone are both pedagogical and polemical. It is composed as a primer on how to conduct a debate with one's ideological rivals. That is why the qualified reader, after studying it, will be able to present similar arguments in actual debates or to contest an ideology. For instance, so far as the problem of the eternity of the world is concerned, Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī having confronted the theses of those who affirm it and those that deny it, does not explicitly state his own conclusions, but mentions that one who has understood his expose of the question will not fail to find the correct answer.⁵ In other words, Abū al-Barakāt's intent is neither to reject Ibn Sīnā's philosophy nor to prove its incoherence, but to improve the existing structure and correct the perceived logical and metaphysical inconsistencies of the previous texts.

For an audience Abū al-Barakāt seemingly had in mind his students as it is claimed that this book was composed in Baghdad, where he dictated the work to his

⁴ Pines, Abu'l Barakāt al-Baghdādī, 111.

⁵ Pines, 113.

disciples, i.e. Jamāl al-Dīn Faḍlān, ‘Alī ibn al-Duhān al-Munjim, ‘Alī yūsuf, the son of al-Shaykh Abdul Laṭīf al-Baghdādī who also was his disciple, and ‘Alī al-Muhadhab ibn al-Nuqās.⁶

In the course of the exposition of his work, Abū al-Barakāt took positions, for instance, his thought is part of the Aristotelian current of thought, for he used Aristotelian ideas, but projected them in a very non-Aristotelian way, on number of basic theological issues, dialectically presenting and then answering challenges to each of his claims.⁷ In most cases, Abū al-Barakāt is specifically envisioning an opponent, either the extreme “literalist” whom he identifies with Peripatetic philosophers or *mutakallimūn*. He offers his arguments and rebuttals, taking care to show at key moments the soundness and superiority of his positions which he derive from his understanding of the philosophy itself. Therefore, this is ‘The book of that which is established through personal reflection’ for which the work as whole is named.

Since in this study I focus on Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s idea (470-550/1077-1157) on the eternity of the world, which I have translated the nine sections of volume three of *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah*, which deals with metaphysical concepts and issues.

One of the aims of this study is to make this translation available to anyone who wants to know Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s thoughts on metaphysics directly. Moreover, I carried out this study in the spirit of what Ibn Hazm wrote about the academic works in the category of the fourth and the

⁶ Uṣaybi‘āh, 275.

⁷ Sirat, Collete. *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990, 131.

fifth that are to explain what is regarded as complicated and to summarize a voluminous work. As for Ibn Hazm's own statement that follows,

First, to propose something original, second, to complete what has not been completed by early scholars, third, to correct what you see is wrong, fourth, to explain what is regarded as complicated, fifth, to summarize a voluminous work, sixth, to combine information from various sources that are scattered (eg. Tabari's Tafsir), seventh, to arrange the facts and tie them together [like tying a necklace together].⁸

1.4. ISLAMIZATION OF FOREIGN IDEAS

It has been claimed by some Western scholars that the main contribution of Islamic philosophy or science is only its transmission of Greek ideas, mostly Aristotelian and neo-Platonic ones to the West. This claim implies that Islamic science and philosophy began only after the translation of Greek scientific and philosophical works into Arabic⁹, whereas in fact one must see that even before Islam, all those Greek philosophical and scientific achievement were present in the region without there having been any sizeable advancement in sciences, the role of translations from Greek should neither be over exaggerated nor underestimated, they only helped to further the already-stated phenomenon of scientific progress, therefore, these translations did not

⁸ Ibn Hazm, "Al-Akhlaq wal Siyar" in *Pursuit of Virtues: The Moral Reasoning and Psychology of Ibn Hazm*, translated by Muhammad Abu Laylah (London: Ta Ha, 1998), at ms. 21

⁹ See De Boer, T.J., *The History of Philosophy in Islam*, first published in 1903, (Richmond U.K.: Curzon Press, 1994), 28-29. Guillaume, Alfred, "Philosophy and Theology" in *The legacy of Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1948), 239. O'leary, De Lacy, *Arabic Thought and Its Place in History*, first published 1922, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1963), viii. Eugene, Myers, *Arabic Thought and The Western World* (New York: Fredrick Ungar Publishing Co, 1964), 7-8. see also, Watt, M. W., *Islamic Philosophy and Theology* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 1985), 33-64, and 69-128. Fakhry, Majid, *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, second edition, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), viii-ix. Corbin, Henry, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, translated by Willard R. Trask (Irving Texas: Spring Publication Inc, 1980), 13. Peter, F.E., *Aristotle and The Arabs, The Aristotelian Tradition in Islam* (New York: New York University Press, 1968), xxi-xxiii. Walzer, Richard, "Islamic Philosophy" in *Greek into Arab: Essays on Islamic Philosophy* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1968), 1-28. Grunebaum, Gustave E. von, *Islam and Medieval Hellenism: Social and Cultural Perspectives* (London: Variorum Reprints, 1976), 25.

play the role of initiating scientific advancement in the Islamic civilization.¹ Such a thing as shown by Prof. Alparslan Acikgenc¹ that,

sciences cannot develop by being imported. In other word, no science can arise in a society by importing scientific knowledge from another civilizational source. This is because sciences emerge from within, and the only way for this to be realized is through establishing a worldview, which will act with its knowledge-structure as the adequate environmental context for sciences.¹

Thus, the Moslem philosophers wholly were by no means only passive recipients of other civilizations, because they did not only adopt and adapt, but also commented, criticized, rejected, refined, and revised the ideas or theories they had found in other civilizations. In means that there are at least two reactions to Hellenized thought according to Alparslan Acikgenc that are firstly it is merely a religious fanaticism against all scientific activities coming from foreign sources to Islam. Secondly, the framework is used by scholars was found within the Islamic worldview as it emerged out of revelation during the time of the early Muslim community. It can be said that the Islamic worldview, which emerged out of the Qur'an, was taught to the early Muslim community by the prophet himself, and it has three fundamental elements that became the fundamental structure of the worldview of Islam, which are *tauḥīd*, the idea of the oneness of God, *nubuwwah*, the fundamental notion of religion as reflected through the chain of prophets, and *ḥashr*, the idea of a final judgment.¹ Hence, the Moslem³ philosophers introduced dissimilarities, remolded concepts, reinterpreted, infused new meanings to old terms, and replaced the new Islamic worldview-structure to the world-structure of the former worldview. And

¹ Alparslan Acikgenc, *Islamic⁰Science: Toward a Definition* (KL: ISTAC, 1996), 73.

¹ Ibid.

¹ Ibid.

¹ See Alpaslan Acikgenc, "The Relevance of Ibn Sina-Ghazali Debate: An Evaluation and A Reassessment", in *International Conference on al-Ghazali's Legacy: Its Contemporary Relevance* (24-27 October 2001), (KL: ISTAC, 2001), 3-4.

at the same time, they were making new efforts at resolving critical problems and developing new systems of their own. For it is understood in this respect that when the Greek philosophical and scientific works began to be translated into Arabic, there had already been a sophisticated and distinctly expressed Islamic Worldview with a sophisticated knowledge-structure. In a nutshell, with the worldview of Islam, they naturalized and fitted the foreign ideas into the worldview of Islam, so that these ideas became part of Islamic culture and civilization. In fact, to study Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī's conception of some metaphysics in his *magnum opus*, *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah*, which is the nine sections of volume three, is at least to show that his terms, definitions, classifications, and conceptualizations of some metaphysics in Islamic philosophy which are found in his work are part and parcel "Islamization" of foreign ideas.

CHAPTER TWO
SOME ASPECTS OF ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT AL-BAGHDĀDĪ'S
METAPHYSICS

2.1. INTRODUCTION

It is understood that metaphysics is the science of being *qua* being, i.e., of the most general and necessary characteristics that the things must have in order to count as a being or an entity. The word “metaphysics” has also been used in the sense that the investigation of entities transcending human experience, in particular, to the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, the origination of the world, the knowledge of God’s particular, and etc.

This study aims to expose about how Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s views on certain aspects of metaphysics that contains the issues in the epistemology. These subjects, in the history of Islamic philosophy, had been studied within the metaphysics, especially those earlier philosopher, and Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī has made the special attention of these where he studied them more deeply and separately. This study is also to show that a part of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s view on theory of knowledge and its relation to the metaphysics, which the connection itself between the subjects is still exist.

2.2. ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT AL-BAGHDĀDĪ'S BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

His full name is Abū al-Barakāt Hibat Allāh bin Malkā al-Baghdādī al-Baladī or *Nathanel* according to a Hebrew text, which means *Hibat Allāh, Adeodatus*, God-given. Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī, a philosopher, physician, and psychologist, was

born about 470-550 at Balad near Mosul about twenty year after *Imām* al-Ghazālī (450-505/1058-1111) was born; lived to the advanced age of eighty or ninety and died at 1077-1157.¹ He was of Jewish origin and converted late in life to Islam for reasons, which are somewhat complex, because Muslim biographers give several different versions of his conversion,² such as: it was either out of fear because of the death of the wife of sultan Maḥmūd,³ or because of a social slight which had been inflicted upon him because of his Judaism or because of his relation with various Muslim patrons and their courts.⁴ However, according to Bayhaqī, his relation to Islam was well received by Muslims in due time.⁵ He was known as *Awḥad al-Zamān*, ‘the unique in his time’ that is a sufficient indicator of his reputation. He mastered various sciences under the tutelage of al-Shaykh Abū al-Ḥasan Sa‘id bin Ḥibat Allāh bin Ḥasan before he became a famous physician.⁶

He has also served several caliphs of Baghdad and the Seljuk sultan al-Mu‘azzam, and dedicated one of his works, namely *Maqālah fī Sabab Zuhūr al-Kawākibi laylan wa Ikhtifā’ihā nahāran*⁷ to the Sultan al-Mu‘azzam Ghiyāth al-Dīn Abī Shujā‘ Muḥammad bin Malik Shāh.⁸ Of course, his main work (*magnum opus*) as mentioned before is *Kitāb al-Mu‘tabar fī al-Ḥikmah*, which can be translated as ‘The book of that which is established through personal reflection’. In this book, he

¹ See for further information, Ibn Abī Uṣaybi‘ah, ‘*Uyūn al-Anbā’ fī Ṭabaqāt al-‘Aṭṭibā’*’ (Beirut, Dar Maktabah al-Hayah), 374-376. Bayhaqī, *Zahīr al-Dīn, Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā’ al-Islām* (Damascus, 1985), 152-154. ‘Ali ibn Yusuf al-Qifī, *Kitāb ikhbār al-Ulamā’ bi Ikhbār al-Ḥukamā’* (Bayrūt, Dār al-Athār, 1985), 224-227.

² See the modern sources, such as Sarah Stroumsa, “On Jewish Intellectuals Who converted in Early Middle Ages” in *The Jews of Medieval Islam: Community, Society, and Identity* edited by Daniel Frank, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1995), Colette Sirat, *A History of Jewish Philosophy in the Middle Ages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

³ Bayhaqī, 153. see also al-Qifī, 226-227.

⁴ Uṣaybi‘ah, 375-376. Al-Qifī, 225

⁵ Bayhaqī, 153.

⁶ Uṣaybi‘ah, 374.

⁷ The work was studied and translated into German language by E. Weidemann in *Eders Jahrbuch für Photographie*, 1909, 49-54, see Shlomo Pines, “Abu’l Barakāt al-Baghdādī” in *The Encyclopedia of Islam* edited by H.A.R. Gibb, new edition, Vol. I, A-B, (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 111.

⁸ Uṣaybi‘ah, 376.

elaborates doctrines that are independent of the tradition of the Muslim philosophers, since they are the fruit of his own explorations. In addition, this work as being his personal notes accumulated in the course of a long lifetime and he refused to publish the work for fearing that unqualified readers would not understand it⁹ in spite of that he dictated his work through his students¹ 0

The work of *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* consists of three parts: Logic, Physics (including Psychology) and Metaphysics. And it modeled in great part after the *Shifā'* of Ibn Sīnā. Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī sometimes took over theses from that book, quoting them literally¹, but at the same time attacked some other theses.

More specifically, he based his views on what he regards as “immediate certainties” rather than on an assessment dependent on discursive reasoning or empirical data. The use of his own *a priori* method surrounded by the Islamic worldview clearly makes both Aristotelian approach and many Aristotelian theories unacceptable to him, and Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī is not wary of proclaiming his disagreement with the dominant philosophical tradition, which Pines says that he declares to be a corruption of the true doctrines of ancient philosophers.¹ For instance, his conception of God solely depends on his view of the soul and that is why his God is not a pure contemplating intellect but a supreme being who engages Himself in many different activities and who has knowledge of particulars. It is obvious that the knowledge of God, the cause of causes is being acquired by *a priori*

⁹ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain Sherrard, first published in 1964, (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1993), 177-178.

¹ See Uṣaybi'ah, 376. 0

¹ Pines, 111. 1

¹ Shlomo, Pines, “Abū'l Barakāt al-Baghdādī”, in *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* edited by Herre Abailard, Vol. I, (New York: The American Council of Learned Society, 1973), 26.

method and the wisdom manifested in the order of nature proves the existence of a creator.¹

3

In a nutshell, as mentioned above, the work of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī is, without a doubt, based on Ibn Sīnā's works that is especially *Al-Shifā'*, but overall, he appears to have been a quite independent thinker.¹ This view is supported⁴ by the observation of the Shī'ite scholar of the 19th century, namely Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān al-Tanakabunī, who says that the tradition of Ibn Sīnā had almost collapsed under the attacks of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.¹ But, this is not conclusion that Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (1058) played role less whom he is commonly credited with having destroyed it, as Oliver Leaman says that

Al-Ghazālī brought at least two main charges against philosophy, both of which are interesting. The first is that philosophy offends against its own principles, since it cannot establish its conclusions on the basis of its premises. Second, philosophy is irreconcilable with religion, since the former leaves no room for the latter.¹

6

The aim of this dissertation is to study the metaphysics of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī in his chief work *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar*. Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and other Muslim thinkers dealt with metaphysics after discussing physics. Metaphysics is literally, what is beyond physics and originally refers to the books of Aristotle that came after physics. However, Aristotle himself did not use the term, although at a later period there is a compilation of his works called *The Metaphysics*. He calls it first philosophy, theology, or wisdom,¹ and defines it as “a science of first principles

¹ Pines. Ibid.

3

¹ Rosenthal, Frans, *The Classical Heritage in Islam* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), 163.

¹ Pines, 113. See also the study of Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī studied by Muhammad 'Alī Abū Rayān, “Naqd Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī li Falsafat-i Ibn Sīnā”, in *Majalah Kuliyyah al-Adāb*, vol. 12, (1958):16-48. Aḥmad Ṭayyib, *Al-Jānib al-Naqdī fī falsafah Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī* (Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq, 2004).

¹ Leaman, Oliver, *A Brief Introduction Islamic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2001), 7.

¹ See, Aristotle, *The Metaphysics: Book X-XIV*, trans. by Hugh Tredennick, vol. XVII, first published 1936 (London: The Loeb Classical Library, 1990), 53. Aristotle, *The Metaphysics: Book I-IX*, trans. by Hugh Tredennick, vol. XVII, first published 1933 (London: The Loeb Classical Library, 1989), 9.

that refers to the word of wisdom (*σοφία*).”¹ Thus, the *metaphysics*⁸ can be said to attempt to present a comprehensive, coherent, and consistent picture of reality as a whole, it is synonymous with ontology. It is also the study of Being-as-such as distinct from the study of various special sciences, which study only one particular aspect of the visible universe. It is the study of the most general, persistent, and pervasive characteristics of the universe: existence, change, time, cause-effect relationships, space, substance, identity, unity, variety, sameness, and oneness. It is the study of first and last things and the study of a transcendent reality that is the cause of all existence, in other words, it is the study of the eternal First Principles or unchanging Being (or Theology). It is also the study of the non-sensible substances as opposed to the sciences that deal with sensible substances. In addition, metaphysics is the study of what is fundamental as regards knowledge, existence, and explanation.¹

If we summarize, metaphysics deals with immaterial realities, such as the nature of God, the origin of the world and God, the nature of things in the universe, the nature and destiny of the human beings, time, immortality of the soul, etc. Metaphysics is also related to these issues such as philosophy of science, essence, quiddity, theory of knowledge, the existence of God, the God’s will, etc. Classical and medieval philosophers, however, discussed ‘Metaphysics’ as the study of ultimate First things. Moreover, the subject of metaphysics also deals with existence, qualities, the distinction between particulars and universals, the nature of causation, mind, space, time, matter and form, necessary and possible, categories, substances, and attributes.

¹ Aristotle, *The Metaphysics: Book X-XIV*, 53.

¹ See, Peter A. Angles, *Dictionary of Philosophy* (New York, Harper Perennial, 1991), 169-170. See also W. L. Reese, *Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion* (Sussex, Harvester Press, 1980) 353-354.