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بِوَسِيلَتِنَا نُنَاقِشُ الْإِسْلَامَ وَنُنَاقِشُ الْإِسْلَامَ بِوَسِيلَتِنَا

ABŪ AL-BARAKĀT'S PSYCHOLOGY:
CRITICAL EDITION OF THE SECTION ON SOUL
(*AL-NAFS*) FROM *AL-MUṬABAR FĪ AL-ḤIKMAH*
WITH ANALYSIS AND TRANSLATION OF
SELECTED TEXTS

BY

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ABSTRACT

The problem of soul is among the most important issues discussed in Islamic philosophy. Many important works on soul have been written by Muslim philosophers and most of them did contribute something in the development of the philosophical psychology in Islam. Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi's *Book on Soul (Kitab al-Nafs)* is one of those important literatures which reflect the later development of the psychological discussion in Islamic philosophy. His reputation as a critic of the Peripatetic philosophy in Islam has placed his works and philosophy in a spot which attracts the supporters as well as the opponents to read and study them. This study entitled *Abu al-Barakat's Psychology: Critical Edition of the Section on Soul (al-Nafs) from al-Mu'tabar fi al-Hikmah with Analysis and Translation of Selected Texts*, as it is motivated by the above motivation, is also an attempt to place and make available one of his important and certainly among the most valuable works on soul in Islamic philosophy. It comprises of three major parts namely the analysis, the translation of the selected texts of the Book and the critical edition of its Arabic text. The analysis part focuses on the selected problems concerning the very nature of human soul such as its definition and existence, its immateriality and substantiality, its soul-body relationship, and its faculties and unity. This is followed by the translation part which comprises a complete translation of the selected five chapters on the nature of soul and its perception. The most important part is the critical edition of a complete Arabic text of *Kitab al-Nafs* which would be the first critical edition ever. It is undeniable that there are many unexpected and important views raised by Abu al-Barakat in this work which, in some instances, may give a critical impact on the Peripatetic reputation especially of Ibn Sina.

ملخص البحث

تعتبر قضية النفس من أهم القضايا التي اهتمت بها الفلسفة الإسلامية. لقد ترك لنا الفلاسفة المسلمون مؤلفات عديدة ومهمة حول قضية النفس وكان معظمهم قد شارك بشيٍ ذي قيمة كبيرة في تطور علم النفس الفلسفي في الإسلام. ويعدّ كتاب النفس من المعتبر في الحكمة تأليف أبي البركات البغدادي من أهم المؤلفات التي لها مكانة ودور في تطور الفكر النفسي الفلسفي عند فلاسفة الإسلام خاصة في طوره المتأخر. لقد كان لسمعة أبي البركات البغدادي بوصفه واحد من النقاد للفلسفة المشائية في الإسلام تأثير واضح في إعلاء كتبه وفلسفته إلى موضع الإعجاب لدى كل من المؤيدين والمناقضين حتى قرؤوها ودرسوها. فلهذه المكانة المذكورة جاءت هذه الدراسة تحت عنوان "فلسفة أبي البركات البغدادي في النفس: تحقيق ودراسة كتاب النفس من المعتبر في الحكمة مع ترجمة النصوص المختارة منه"، وهي محاولة لتقديم فلسفة أبي البركات وكتابه من جديد حتى يتناولها الدارسون المعاصرون. فالبحث ينقسم إلى ثلاثة أقسام رئيسة وهي قسم الدراسة وقسم الترجمة وقسم التحقيق. يتناول قسم الدراسة أهم القضايا المتعلقة بطبيعة وحقيقة النفس الإنسانية وتشمل تعريف النفس ووجودها وروحانيتها وعلاقتها بالبدن وقواها ووحدتها. بينما قدم قسم الترجمة الإنجليزية الكاملة لخمس فصول مختارة من نصوص الكتاب وهي تتناول القضايا المتعلقة بطبيعة النفس الإنسانية والمعرفة. أما قسم التحقيق، والذي يعتبر أهم أقسام الدراسة، فقدم التحقيق العلمي لنصوص كتاب النفس من المعتبر في الحكمة بكامله وهو حسب علمنا أول تحقيق علمي للكتاب. لقد كان من الأمر المعترف به أن في فلسفة أبي البركات، وبالأخص من خلال مؤلفه هذا، أفكار ومناقشات عديدة وقيمة قد تصل في بعض الأحيان إلى نقد حاسم من شأنه أن يسيء إلى سمعة المشائيين في الإسلام وخاصة ابن سينا.

APPROVAL PAGE

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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.

Wan Suhaimi Wan Abdullah

Signature:

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**ABU AL-BARAKAT'S PSYCHOLOGY: CRITICAL EDITION OF THE
SECTION ON SOUL (*AL-NAFS*) FROM *AL-MU^cTABAR FI AL-HIKMAH*
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.....

To my parent, wife and daughter,
to my respective professors and guiders,
I dedicate this work.

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A GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Psychology as science is one of the most important sciences that human had and have to deal with since it concerns with the very nature of human being. Every individual human being will have to face and think at least of his psychological problem and phenomena whatsoever. Various psychological problems faced by the modern society nowadays have made the discussion and research on psychology becoming more and more important and critical.

As observed in the history of psychology, there are tremendous development and innovation; some related to the approach and method of studying psychology and others related to the psychological issues or problems themselves. Many psychological schools arose and had tried to propose their approaches and theories on human soul. The rational and philosophical approach in studying psychology has focused more towards understanding the reality and the very nature of human soul. It tries to understand human psychical activities and therefore explaining the relationship between soul and all these activities. It also concerns with the influential elements that might have an effect on soul and therefore could manipulate it to decide its activities. Thus the ultimate purpose of this kind of study is to understand the problem of soul and trying, based on the said understanding, to 'educate' the soul to become purer. As a result, it would be able to lead human behaviour towards the better.

On the other hand, the empirical scientific approach has limited the discussion on psychological appearances and behaviours which are empirically accessible and could be proven by empirical evidences and facts. Therefore, due to this limitation, the question on the reality of soul is to some extent irrelevant anymore or at least it will be

understood and explained based on the modern empirical scientific experiments and findings. As a result, the term 'soul' is becoming unpopular. It is considered 'religious' and non-scientific, and consequently excluded from any scientific project. The focus is now directed to several new scientific terminologies such as mind and the problem of cognition and behaviour. This approach in studying human psychology, even though it has developed thus far and has successfully brought the psychological problems closer to our awareness, but sometimes it creates many unpredicted issues. It is inaccurate sometimes to interpret human nature based on his behaviours or appearances alone, especially when this interpretation and understanding is influenced by personal background, environment, ideology, school and perception of the psychologist and psychoanalyst.

This study is not aiming neither in comparing between these two major approaches nor in judging the better and preferable approach when discussing psychological problem and reality. Each approach has its own scope and did contribute something to human understanding about their soul or mind, and certainly their life. But since our texts here deal with the philosophical problems of soul, this study will focus mainly on the major psychological issues concerning the reality of human soul. It covers aspects such as definition and existence of human soul, as well as its nature, that is, the problem of immateriality and substantiality of soul, its faculty and the soul-body relationship.

These are the selected topics focused in this study. Indeed, the text of *Kitāb al-Nafs*, of which the first critical edition is presented in this study, discusses many psychological issues other than the above selected topics. It includes, as observable in other earlier works on soul as earlier as Aristotle's *De anima* and Ibn Sīnā's 'Book on Soul' of his *al-Shifā'*, *al-Najāt* and others, the discussion on senses and knowledge, on

moral issues include the human characters, the issue of good and bad, and the concept of happiness. It touches the problem of destiny of soul afterlife or eschatology as well. All these issues are very complicated problems; various schools and explanations have been established through out human intellectual and scientific history, including in Islamic intellectual tradition. The area concerning knowledge or its theory for instance has developed to become a separate and independent issue. The similar development is true for other issues like ethic and morality. Each of these subjects could stand by its own and had indeed developed their ways.

This explains why this study had focused only on those selected issues. Moreover, the purpose of the analysis part of this study is not to establish a complete study on the subject. It is merely a part of a bigger project and it serves as a kind of an introductory survey on the issues which hopefully, together with the translation part, would guide the reader of the text to understand it better.

The most important part of this study would be the text edition. To produce a critical edition of a text is extremely paramount important because it would provide us an authentic text for any further study. Therefore the very focus of this research is to establish a critical edition of *Kitāb al-Nafs* from *al-Mu'tabar fī al-Ḥikmah* by Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī. However, as part of an attempt to make the text readable and helping the reader in understanding it clearer, that introductory survey and the translation of the selected text was provided.

Thus, this study was divided into three major parts; the analytical part which covers several issues related to the very nature of human soul, followed by the translation of the selected texts. This translation part would be as a sample of Abu al-Barakāt's text in English. A complete translation of the text, which is indeed important and useful especially for those who are not well versed in Arabic, would be

our future project, *inshā-Allāh*. The last part of this study is actually the major purpose and would be a major contribution of this study. It provides a clear and easy-to-read Arabic text of *Kitāb al-Nafs* from *al-Mu^ʿtabar*. This is hopefully would motivate and guide many serious and further studies on Abū al-Barakāt's philosophy in general and his psychology in particular, especially when the only edition of the text, that is the Hyderabad edition, has gone out of print since decades ago.

This is concerning the content and focus of the study. As for the earlier studies on Abū al-Barakāt's psychology, there are many notable published and unpublished works since the last sixty years especially by Shlomo Pines in his *La Conception de la conscience de soi chez Avicenne et chez Abū'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī* (1954)¹, Yaḥyā Huwaydī in his study 'Naqd Abī al-Barakat al-Baghdādī li Naẓariyyat Ibn Sīnā fī al-Nafs wa al-^ʿAql' in his *Muḥāḍarāt fī al-Falsafah al-Islāmiyyah* (1965)², Roger Arnaldez in his 1987. 'La doctrine de l'âme dans la philosophie d'Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī', in *Studia Islamica*³, and Īzīs Ayyūb Rizq Allāh in her unpublished Master's thesis at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Cairo University entitled *Mushkilat al-Nas al-Insāniyyah fī Falsafah Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (Ibn Malkā) wa Maṣādiruhā al-Yūnāniyyah* (1987). Apart from this specific studies, the problem of soul in Abū al-Barakāt's philosophy was discussed by most scholars who studied his work for instance Muḥammad ^ʿAlī Abū Rayyūn in 'Naqd Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī lī Falsafat Ibn Sīnā' (1958), in *Majallat Kulliyyah al-Ādāb*⁴, Aḥmad Muḥammad Al-Ṭayyib in his PhD. thesis in al-Azhar entitled: *Mawqif Abī al-Barakāt*

¹ This study is republished in 1979 in *Studies in Abu'l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī Physics and Metaphysics* (The Collected Works of Shlomo Pines – vol. 1), Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, the Hebrew University and Leiden: E.J. Brill.

² Published by Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Misriyyah, al-Qāhirah, 1965, p. 191-259.

³ In vol. 66 (LXVI), p. 105-112.

⁴ Published by Maṭba^ʿah Jāmi^ʿat al-'Iskandariyyah, Iskandariyyah, vol. 12, p. 17-48.

al-Baghdādī min al-Falsafat al-Mashā'iyah.⁵ Except for the study by Īzīs Ayyūb Rizq Allāh, which is not accessible for the researcher, all these studies have contributed very useful and helpful information for this research particularly in understanding Abū al-Barakāt's idea and to some extent in re-structuring the discussion of the analytical part. Apart from that, this study does provide a further elaboration of certain issues which are not properly expanded on before and it proposes a more systematic structure in presenting Abū al-Barakāt's psychology, particularly on human nature.

However, in relation to the translation of the text, there is no complete English translation of any part of *al-Mu^ctabar* known to date. The late Professor Shlomo Pines did provide a French translation of certain texts of *al-Mu^ctabar* quoted in his studies. Thus, as far as the translation part of this study is concerned, although it is not a translation of the whole Book on Soul, it would at least serve as part of the bigger project of this study. In addition, it would be a preliminary attempt for a complete translation of the book or even of the whole *al-Mu^ctabar* in the future. Thus, apart from presenting the translation of the selected texts of the Book on Soul, the very purpose of this attempt is to experience translating the Arabic philosophical texts into English. It would be also like an exercise for the researcher in translating the texts and this experience would be useful, *inshā-Allāh*, for the future project.

And finally as for the editing part of this research, it is the first critical edition of the text. The book was published before by the Dā'irat al-Ma^cārif al-Uthmāniyyah, Hyderabad as a rectified edition (*tab^cah muṣaḥḥahah*) where the editor compared the texts of several manuscripts and established the best reading without necessarily stating the variances between manuscripts. The arrangement of the text and the

⁵ The thesis was finally published in 2004 under the title: *Al-Jānib al-Naqdī fī al-Falsafat Abī al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī*. 1st. edition. Al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Shurūq.

punctuation marks were not done properly and therefore it does not really help the reader in reading and understanding the text. Moreover, although it is acknowledged that the present edition does profit a lot from the Hyderabad edition, but indeed, some corrections on the edition have been done. Many aspects have been rearranged in this edition and it would help the reader to read and to understand the text easier and better.

The method used in this research varies from part to another. Each part uses an appropriate method. Apart from the method used in the translation and the editing parts, which is presented in detail in its place, the method used in the analysis part is basically a content analysis. The text was closely reexamined and reconsidered, taking into account all related backgrounds of the ideas discussed in the text and tried to restate the idea in a comprehensive presentation possible. At the end of each presentation of each issue, the concluding remarks are given. It tries to compare Abu al-Barakat's idea with the similar statements by the earlier thinkers, particularly Ibn Sina and al-Ghazali, which might have inspired him. At the same time, the restatement of the same idea of Abu al-Barakat by the later thinkers specially al-Suhrawardi, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi and Mulla Sadra, whether as a positive restatement or as a refutation of his ideas, are also recorded. This is ultimately trying to place Abu al-Barakat and his contribution in the history of Islamic intellectual tradition in general and in Islamic psychological discussions in particular.

Finally, it is hoped that this study would contribute to the development of Islamic intellectual tradition and to the study of Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi's philosophy in particular. As for the international contribution, this study may go along with other attempts made before in several places in the world, from Hyderabad to Europe, the Middle East and now in Malaysia, and certainly by the establishment on

this texts, it will take up again the study of Abu al-Barakat and his work *al-Mu^ctabar fi al-Hikmah* again.

PART I

ABU AL-BARAKAT AL-BAGHDADI'S PSYCHOLOGY

PREFACE

As previously stressed, the major aim and contribution of this study would be the establishment of a critical edition of the section on the soul (*Kitab al-Nafs*) from *al-Mu^htabar fi al-Hikmah* by Abu al-Barakat al-Baghdadi. However, it is undeniable that a brief survey on the text would spot and highlight certain interesting issues and discussions related to Abu al-Barakat's elaborations on psychology and hopefully this might lead to a better understanding of the text and perhaps enable to elaborate more in a separate further study.

Thus, this part will try to present some preliminary analysis on some major notions concerning the very nature of human soul according to Abu al-Barakat. It is a preliminary analysis or survey since the very purpose of this attempt is to present the selected issues as understood from the text and tracing the sources as well as the influence of his idea and presentation in the history of Islamic philosophy. It is not a thorough analysis for indeed there are many aspects of the discussion that needs to be closely re-examined. Apparently a careful comparative study between this text and the other available works of a similar topic would provide us an appropriate understanding and appreciation of Abu al-Barakat's contribution in Islamic philosophical tradition in general and psychology in particular.

This survey touches only on some selected issues of the text; starting from the definition of soul and its existence, followed by a discussion on the nature of soul particularly its immateriality and substantiality. In addition it included the explanation on the nature of soul-body relationship, the faculty of soul and its unity. As any reader would observe, the text contains a vast scope concerning soul and its activities. It

covers the very reality and nature of soul as well as its various activities. This latter aspect would include the perceptive, the natural and the ethical activities which are basically the issues related to epistemology, human biological development as well as ethic. On the other hand, it also talks about the destiny of soul; its happiness and the afterlife. All these issues are among the great problems discussed by the philosophers and it needs a proper and separate study in order to deal justly with the problems. And as part of a bigger project, this analysis part would certainly unable to present a thorough survey of all these problems. Therefore, it selects the above selected issues which cover major discussions concerning the very nature and reality of human soul.

As mentioned above, this part is an attempt to present the selected issues and tracing the sources and the influences of his idea and presentation in the history of Islamic philosophy. Thus, although it is understood that the notion of the philosophical thought in Islam is not limited only to the Hellenistic-based tradition, but it includes the theological thought (*Kalam*) and Sufism as well, however due to the time constrain, this study has limited its focus only on several major thinkers who represent different schools of thought which have connection with Abu al-Barakat's ideas in a way or another. Those representatives are Ibn Sina, Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, al-Suhrawardi and Mulla Sadra. But this does not mean that other thinkers like al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ikhwan al-Safa, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Bajjah and Ibn Rushd had been completely ignored. Some observations concerning their ideas have been occasionally mentioned and this is to show that there could be a kind of an indirect connection between Abu al-Barakat and those great thinkers.

CHAPTER 1

THE DEFINITION OF SOUL

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The discussion on soul has developed from philosophy to science and this has given a significant impact on the nature of discussion itself.⁶ As far as definition of soul and its existence is concerned, the significance of this development is obvious. The term ‘soul’ is understood in different ways and therefore its existence has been explained differently.⁷

As in the development of the discussion in Islamic philosophy, this issue is extremely important since it is related to its very fundamental problem. In addition to the facts on soul they found in Islamic teaching⁸, Muslim philosophers would consider any available related discussions arrived from the earlier civilization. This explains why the problem of soul in general, and the definition and existence of soul in

⁶ For a comprehensive survey on the development of psychology from ‘Philosophical psychology’ to ‘Scientific psychology’ see for instance Daniel N. Robinson (1986), *An Intellectual History of Psychology*, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

⁷ The word ‘psyche’ is understood as ‘equivalent to mentality, or as a substitute for mind or soul’ and the problem of soul is now considered as merely a philosophical or religious matter and it is therefore something ‘outside the field of positive science’, see James Drever (1969), *A Dictionary of Psychology*, reprinted edition, revised by Harvey Wallerstein, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, s.v. ‘Psyche’ and ‘Soul theory’. Psychology in modern understanding is not anymore a philosophical search for the very reality of human soul, instead it becomes ‘the science of behaviour and cognitive processes’ and therefore is practical and its approach is more towards the experimental methods. See on modern psychology, its nature and scope for instance, Philip G. Zimbardo (1979), *Psychology and Life*, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Company, p. 32-45; James W. Kalat (1996), *Introduction to Psychology*, Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, p. 2-19 and Robert A. Baron (1996), *Essential of Psychology*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, p. 1-30.

⁸ See on Islamic concepts of soul or human psyche Zafar Afaq Ansari (ed.) (1992), *Qur’anic Concept of Human Psyche*, Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, especially the ‘Introduction’ by Zafar Afaq Ansari, p.1-11, chapter on ‘Qur’anic Concepts of Humans Psyche’ by Absar Ahmad, p. 15-37 and chapter on ‘Psyche in Islamic Gnostic and Philosophical Tradition’ by Naumana Amjad, p. 39-56 and Akbar Husain (2006), *Islamic Psychology: Emergence of a new field*. New Delhi: Global Vision Publication House. Also I.R. Netton’s article on ‘Nafs’ in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (New Edition), Leiden and New York: E.J. Brill, v. VII: p. 880-884.