

IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO
QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION

BY

ZEHRA GÖKBULUT

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

2022

IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO
QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION

BY

ZEHRA GÖKBULUT

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the
Degree of Master of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies

AbdulHamid AbuSulayman Kulliyyah of
Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences
International Islamic University Malaysia

DECEMBER 2022

ABSTRACT

Ibn Sīnā was not only a great philosopher and physician, but also a Qur'anic commentator who interpreted verses and *sūras*. Ibn Sīnā had written in nearly every field. It was unthinkable for a Muslim philosopher to be uninterested in the Qur'an and its interpretation. This study explains Ibn Sīnā's approach to the Qur'anic verses and *sūras* and shows the characteristics and limitations of his method. The study is based on six independent exegetical treatises 1) The verse of Light/*Nūr* in *Sūrah al-Nūr*, 2) The verse of Smoke/*Dukhān* in *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah*, 3) *Sūrah al-A'ālā*, 4) *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, 5) *Sūrah al-Falaq*, and 6) *Sūrah al-Nās* and relies on historical analysis as well as content and comparative analysis, leading to several research findings. According to the findings of this study, Ibn Sīnā chose Qur'anic verses and *sūras* to represent his philosophical thought and perspective in order to reconcile religion and philosophy. In interpreting the verses and *sūras*, Ibn Sīnā mainly used hypothetical opinion exegesis (*tafsīr bi al-ra'yī*), which includes several types of *tafsīr* such as the 'linguistic *tafsīr*', the 'symbolic and metaphorical *tafsīr*' and the 'ishārī *tafsīr*'. This study also shows that the commentary of Ibn Sīnā contains esoteric (*bāṭinī*) interpretations and sometimes contradicts other prominent books of *tafsīr*. Another finding of the study is that contrary to the general assumption that the clear centralised, and systematised form of scientific *tafsīr* understanding in the Islamic world was first seen in al-Ghazzālī, Ibn Sīnā gives the first examples of scientific *tafsīr*. Ibn Sīnā interprets by reconciling the Qur'anic verses with scientific accuracy according to the general scientific acceptance of his time.

ملخص البحث

لم يكن ابن سينا من أعظم الفلاسفة أو الأطباء فحسب، بل كان مفسراً أيضاً للقرآن العظيم متقناً لأدوات التفسير، وعارفاً بسور القرآن وآياته ومعانيه. ابن سينا الذي لم يترك مجالاً ولا علماً إلا وألّف فيه، لا يتصور أن يكون غير مهتم بالقرآن وتفسيره. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى شرح مقاربة ابن سينا في تفسير الآيات وسور القرآن وتوضح كذلك خصائص ومحدودية منهجه، وتستند هذه الدراسة إلى ستة سور تفسيرية مستقلة: (1) آية النور في سورة النور، (2) آية الدخان في سورة الفصلت، (3) سورة الاعلى، (4) الاخلاص، (5) الفلق، و(6) الناس. وتعتمد على التحليل التاريخي بالإضافة إلى تحليل المحتوى والتحليل المقارن، مما يؤدي إلى العديد من النتائج البحثية. وخلاصة القول في هذه الدراسة هي أن ابن سينا اختار الآيات والسور التي تمثل فكره وآرائه الفلسفية بهدف التوفيق بين الدين والفلسفة. ومن حيث منهجه التفسيري فقد استخدم أساساً التفسير بالرأي والذي يتضمن عدة أنواع من التفسير، مثل التفسير اللغوي والتفسير الرمزي والمجازي، والتفسير الإشاري الصوفي. كما تبين هذه الدراسة أن شرح ابن سينا يحتوي على تفسيرات باطنية تتناقض مع كتب التفسير البارزة الأخرى. ومما تكشفه هذه الدراسة أيضاً أنه وخلافاً للافتراض العام بأن الشكل الواضح والمركزي والمنهجي للتفسير العلمي في العالم الإسلامي قد شوهد لأول مرة عند الغزالي، فالظاهر أن ابن سينا هو من أعطى النموذج الأول للتفسير العلمي. فقد حاول التوفيق بين آيات القرآن والعلم وفق الحقائق العلمية المقبولة في عصره.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies.

.....
Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies.

.....
Raudlotul Firdaus binti Fatah
Yasin
Internal Examiner

.....
Abdoul Karim Toure
External Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the Department of Qur'an and Sunnah Studies and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Qur'an and Sunnah.

.....
Nashwan Abdo Khaled
Head, Department of Qur'an
and Sunnah

This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Human Sciences and is accepted as a fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Qur'an and Sunnah .

.....
Shukran Abd. Rahman Dean,
Abdulhamid AbuSulayman
Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed
Knowledge and Human
Sciences

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis 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.

Zehra Gökbulut

Signature.....

Date.....

XXXXXXXXXX

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF FAIR
USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO QUR'ANIC
INTERPRETATION**

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis is jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2022 Zehra Gökbulut and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understood the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialisation policy.

Affirmed by Student Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF FAIR
USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO QUR'ANIC
INTERPRETATION**

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis is jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2022 Zehra Gökbulut and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understood the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialisation policy.

Affirmed by Student Name

.....

Signature

.....

Date

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY MALAYSIA

**DECLARATION OF COPYRIGHT AND AFFIRMATION OF FAIR
USE OF UNPUBLISHED RESEARCH**

**IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO QUR'ANIC
INTERPRETATION**

I declare that the copyright holder of this thesis is jointly owned by the student and IIUM.

Copyright © 2022 Zehra Gökbulut and International Islamic University Malaysia. All rights reserved.

No part of this unpublished research may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without prior written permission of the copyright holder except as provided below

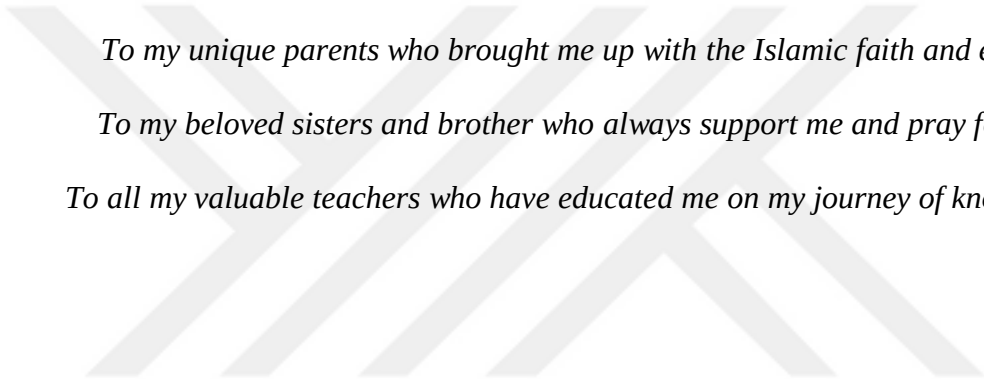
1. Any material contained in or derived from this unpublished research may only be used by others in their writing with due acknowledgement.
2. IIUM or its library will have the right to make and transmit copies (print or electronic) for institutional and academic purposes.
3. The IIUM library will have the right to make, store in a retrieval system and supply copies of this unpublished research if requested by other universities and research libraries.

By signing this form, I acknowledged that I have read and understood the IIUM Intellectual Property Right and Commercialisation policy.

Affirmed by Student Name

.....
Signature

.....
Date



To my unique parents who brought me up with the Islamic faith and ethics
To my beloved sisters and brother who always support me and pray for me
To all my valuable teachers who have educated me on my journey of knowledge

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Indeed, all praise is due to Allah the Almighty, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful. May His peace and blessings be upon our Noble Prophet Muḥammad, peace be upon him, his family and his followers till the Day of Judgement. Due to His Mercies and Blessings on me ease the herculean task of completing this thesis.

My expression of thanks goes to my supervisor, Dr. Khairil Husaini Bin Jamil who guided my research with wisdom and dedication. I am very grateful to Dr. Hikmatullah Babu who gave his invaluable suggestions and helped with my thesis format. I would also like to thank my precious sister ‘Afaf Husaini, who has always encouraged and supported me and my beloved friend Tamannoa Vohidova, who took the time to review my work. I would like to express my appreciation to my valued mentor Nevin Meriç, who always encourages me and believes in me.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my beloved sister Derya Başoğlu, who has supported me from the beginning, made countless sacrifices and has always strived to create an environment for me to conduct my research, for which I am deeply indebted to her. My graduate studies were made possible thanks to a scholarship from the Ministry of Education, Türkiye.

Once again, I glorify Allah for His endless mercy on me, one of which is enabling me to successfully round off the efforts of writing this thesis. Alhamdulillah.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	i
Abstract in Arabic.....	ii
Approval Page	iii
Declaration	iv
Copyright Page	vi
Dedication	vii
Acknowledgments	ix
List of Tables and Figures.....	xii
Transliteration Table.....	xiii
 CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	5
1.3 Research Questions	6
1.4 Research Objectives	6
1.5 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.6 Literature Review	7
1.7 Scope of the Study.....	14
1.8 Research Methodology	15
1.9 Table of the Study Plan.....	16
 CHAPTER TWO: THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF IBN SĪNĀ AND HIS PARTICIPATION IN TAFSĪR.....	17
2.1 Introduction.....	18
2.2 The Political, Intellectual and Cultural Situation of the Islamic World During Ibn Sīnā's Period.....	19
2.3 Ibn Sīnā's Life	24
2.4 Ibn Sīnā's Religious and Scientific Background.....	30
2.5 Ibn Sīnā's Notable Philosophical Thought	37
2.5.1 Metaphysics and Ontology.....	39
2.5.2 Knowledge Theory and Logic/Epistemology.....	41
2.5.3 Philosophy of Religion.....	45
2.5.4 Ethics.....	47
2.6 Conclusion	49
 CHAPTER THREE: ANALYSIS OF HIS TREATISES ON VERSES AND SŪRAS	52
3.1 Introduction.....	52
3.2 The Historical Background of Philosophical Tafsīr.....	53
3.3 Intellectual Background of Ibn Sīnā's Qur'anic Exegesis.....	61
3.4 The Basic Structure of Ibn Sīnā's Tafsīr Works	66
3.4.1 The Structure of Individual Verses.....	67
3.4.1.1 The Verse of Light in Sūrah al-Nūr	67
3.4.1.2 The Verse of Dukhān in Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah	72
3.4.2 The Structure of Individual Sūras.....	75
3.4.2.1 Sūrah al-A'lā.....	75

3.4.2.2 Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ	83
3.4.2.3 Sūrah al-Falaq	91
3.4.2.4 Sūrah al-Nās	96
3.5 Conclusion	99
CHAPTER FOUR: IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION	103
4.1 Introduction	103
4.2 Ibn Sīnā's Ontological Perspectives on Qur'anic Exegesis	103
4.3 Ibn Sīnā's Scientific Perspectives on Qur'anic Exegesis	104
4.4 Ibn Sīnā's Epistemological Perspectives on the Qur'anic Exegesis	106
4.5 Ibn Sīnā's Ethical Perspectives on Qur'anic Exegesis	109
4.6 Ibn Sīnā's Psychological Perspectives on the Qur'anic Exegesis	113
4.7 General Features of Ibn Sīnā's Interpretation	116
4.8 The Influence of Ibn Sīnā on Scholars in the Interpretation of the Qur'an	119
4.9 Conclusion	123
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION	128
BIBLIOGRAPHY	132

LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

Table 1.1.The Study Plan.....	13
Table 2.3.A Comparison of Ibn Sīnā's Interpretations of Q:24.35	71
Table 3.4.A Table of Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Approach to Qur'anic Interpretation	127
Figure 1.1.The Map of Transoxiana Region	18
Figure 2.1.The Map of Rayy	24



TRANSLITERATION TABLE

The Table of the system of transliteration of Arabic words and names used by the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)

ء	`	خ	kh	ش	Sh	غ	Gh	ن	N
ب	B	د	D	ص	ṣ	ف	F	ه	H
ت	T	ذ	dh	ض	ḍ	ق	Q	و	W
ث	Th	ر	R	ط	ṭ	ك	K	ي	Y
ج	J	ز	Z	ظ	ẓ	ل	L		
ح	ḥ	س	S	ع	‘	م	M		

Short Vowels		Long Vowels	
اَ	A	اَ	ā
اِ	I	اِيّ	ī
اُ	U	اُوّ	ū

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Ibn Sīnā (d.428/1037) is a significant figure in the history of Islamic philosophy. He introduced the foundations of philosophy in terms of genre, content and scope. He is also known in the West as the Prince of Physicians for his famous medical text, *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* (The Canon of Medicine). He completed his education in Islamic sciences and philosophical studies were in his early years. Ibn Sīnā, who studied medicine, metaphysics, physics, logic, mathematics and astronomy, among other subjects, also interpreted certain Qur'anic verses and *sūras*. Therefore, modern scholars such as Elmalili Hamdi Yazir (d.1361/1942), Ahmed Hamdi Akseki (d.1370/1951), Muḥammad Ḥussain Dhahābī (d.1397/1977) and 'Ādil Nuwayhī¹ have recognised him as an exegete (*mufassir*). According to them, it is enough to interpret a few Qur'anic verses and *sūras* to be recognised as a *mufassir*. The last Ottoman scholar, Omar Nasuhi Bilmen (d.1391/1971), who ranked exegetes of the Qur'an into nine ranks, placed Ibn Sīnā in the fifth rank of exegetes. Omar Nasuhi Bilmen states that:

Ibn Sīnā has devoted to both Islamic studies and Greek philosophy. His reputation is well-known in human civilisation. His works were taught during the medieval period in the west. He has proved his influential scholarly works not only in medicine, mathematics and philosophy but also in Islamic studies. He wrote the *tafsīr* for some *sūras* and propound sage remarks.²

'Ādil Nuwayhī, a modern scholar, also recognised Ibn Sīnā as an exegete. These recognitions indicate that Ibn Sīnā can indeed be considered a Qur'an interpreter in the

¹ There is no information about 'Ādil Nuwayhī and his death neither in Turkish and Arabic sources nor on the internet. He informed in his book titled '*Mu'jam al-Mufasssīrīn*' that he moved to Bairut before 1973 and took refuge in a highland village around aeiirut because of civil war in Lebanon and remained here until 1988. 'Ādil Nuwayhī, *Mu'jam al-Mufasssīrīn min Ṣadr al-Islām ḥatta 'Aṣr al-Ḥāḍir*, vol. 1 (Bairut: Muassasah Nuwayhī Al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1342),13.

² 'Omar Nasuhi Bilmen, *Buyuk Tefsir Tarihi: Tabakatu'l Mufessirin*. Translated by Zehra Gökbulut.vol.2 (Istanbul: Bilmen Yayınevi, 1973),408-409.

field of Qur'anic *tafsīr*. Moreover, Ibn Sīnā's treatises on specific verses and *sūras* of the Qur'an were compiled into one book. He also quoted some verses of the Qur'an in his other famous works such as *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt* (The Book of Directives and Remarks and Admonitions), *Kitāb al-Najāt* (The Book of Deliverance), *Danishnāma-i 'Alā'ī* (The Book of Science Dedicated to 'Alā' al-Dawla), *Kitāb al-Shifā'* (The Book of the Remedy), *'Uyūn al-Ḥikmah* (Fountains of Wisdom) and others.

When evaluating the classification of *tafsīr* works in the context of the tendencies of the interpreter and the particular characteristics of the works, it should be acknowledged that Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of Qur'anic verses and *sūras* also falls into the category of philosophical *tafsīr*.

The philosophical *tafsīr* can be described that is as the interpretation and explanation of the Qur'an with a conceptual framework based on philosophical, theological, historical and theoretical considerations.³ It should be noted that there is no comprehensive discussion of philosophical *tafsīr* conducted by *tafsīr* historians. The classifications of *tafsīr* and *mufasssīr* were previously available based on historical continuity. Contemporary *tafsīr* historians identify exegesis books according to the sect of *Mufasssīr*, the temperament and the significant characteristic of his book. Modern *tafsīr* historians such as Omar Nasuhi Bilmen, 'Ādil Nuwayhid have accepted the commentaries and analyses of classical Muslim philosophers on the verses and *surās* of the Qur'an as a philosophical *tafsīr*. The commentaries of Muslim philosophers such as al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'⁴ are divided into two sections according to their purpose and scope.

The first section is to interpret and explain religious texts and legal facts through philosophical views. The main objective is to harmonise religion and philosophy. The second one is to explain religious texts and legal facts with philosophical views, theories

³ Ahmet Faruk Guney, "İbn Sina'dan Elmalili'ya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi" (Ph.D., Marmara Üniversitesi, 2008), 21.

⁴ The name of an organized group who lived at the end of the Abbasid time and had religious, philosophical and political targets and they have hidden their activities. Look for further information: Mājid Fakhrī, "Mawsū'ah al-Falsafah al-'Arabiyyah," in *Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā'* (Bairut: Maktabah Mu'mīn Quraish, 1988), 47-69.

and concepts and show that philosophy overpowers religion and controls its texts.⁵ This method is more dangerous than the first method because it challenges the authority of religion and religious texts. It can lead to religious texts being secondary sources as compared to philosophy. If philosophical *tafsīr* can preserve the syntax and semantics of the Qur'an, we can consider it as a *tafsīr*. Otherwise, it is classified as esoteric (*bāṭinī*) exegesis.⁶

Most Muslim philosophers did not interpret the entire Qur'an with the exception of Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (710\1311), who was the greatest exponent of the enlightenment and wrote an entire thirty-six volume work on Qur'anic exegesis entitled '*Faṭḥ al-Mannān fī Tafsīr al-Qur'an*'. In addition, some philosophers wrote about some of the verses and *sūras* of interest for their philosophical expositions.⁷ Historically, Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb ibn al-Kindī was recognised as the first Muslim philosopher to interpret the Qur'an because he interpreted verse number six from *Sūrah al-Rahmān*. He interpreted this verse philosophically in his book titled '*Risālah al-Kindī al-Falsafīyyah*'.⁸

Another Muslim philosopher who interpreted Qur'anic verses philosophically was Abū Naṣr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Fārābī. According to al-Fārābī, religion is a symbolic expression of philosophical facts and if religion is understood with rational science, it can be kept away from all kinds of degenerations. al-Fārābī explained the verses from his philosophical perspective.⁹

Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (The Brethren of Purity) was a secret society of Muslim philosophers founded in Baṣrah, Iraq in the 8th or 10th century. They wrote epistles called '*Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa Khullān al-Wafā'*' (The Epistles of the Pure Brethren

⁵ Guney, "İbn Sina'dan Elmalili'ya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi.", 21.

⁶ Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Dhahābī, "Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn" vol. 2 (al-Qāhirah: Maktabah al-Wahābiyyah, n.d.), 309.

⁷ Ahmet Faruk Guney, İbn Sina'dan Elmalili'ya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi (Phd Thesis, Marmara University, 2008), 25.

⁸ Abū Yūsuf Ya'qūb al-Kindī, *Risālah al-Kindī al-Falsafīyyah*, Muḥammad 'Abd al-Hādī Abū Zaida (Miṣr: Matba'ah al-Itimād, 1950), 244-46.

⁹ Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Dhahābī, "Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn" vol. 2 (al-Qāhirah: Maktabah al-Wahābiyya, n.d.), 294.

and the Sincere Friends).¹⁰ This group approached the Qur'anic verses and interpreted it of Qur'an philosophically. They believed that if someone has the wisdom to understand philosophy, it means he can understand the *mutashābih* of the Qur'an. They considered themselves in that class, and they highlighted anthropomorphic verses and interpreted them.¹¹

Ibn Sīnā was a Muslim philosopher who tends to write philosophical *tafsīr* more frequently than other philosophers before him. He was considered as the most important *Mashshā'ī* (peripatetic)¹² philosopher and influenced numerous Muslim philosophers after him. Fakhr al-Din Rāzī was one of them. He cited Ibn Sīnā's interpretation in his famous *tafsīr Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. According to him, some of Ibn Sīnā's interpretations of the Qur'an are appropriate but others are to be criticised.¹³ Ibn Sīnā had interpreted some verses and *sūras* of the Qur'an. The *Sūrah* and verses that he has interpreted are *Sūrah al-Nūr* verse 35, *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah* verse 11, the entire *Sūrah al-A'ālā*, *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *Sūrah al-Falaq* and *Sūrah al-Nās*.¹⁴ He also penned a work entitled, *al-Risālah al-Nawrūziyah* on *al-Ḥurūf al-Muqatta'ah*. Ibn Sīnā argued that the Qur'an uses imagery and symbolic language to reach out to people from all levels in all walks of life from all over the world. According to him, the Qur'an also contains some symbols and signs for people who tend to do philosophical research.¹⁵

In general, Muslim philosophers of Qur'anic interpretations, particularly Ibn Sīnā were focused on mental inference and intellectual endeavour. They did not follow the

¹⁰ For further information refer to, 'Omar Furūgh, *Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā':Dars, 'Arḍ, Taḥlīl*, Dirāsāt Qaṣīrah Fī Al-Adab Wa al-Tārīkh wa-al-Falsafah 15 (Bairut: Manshūrāt al-Maktabah al-Maymanah, 1953); Abū al-Hasan 'Alī Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh al-Ḥukamā' al-Islām* (Damascus: Matba'ah al-Taraqqī, 1946),86; Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *'Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa Khullān al-Wafā'*, vol. 1 (Muassasah Handāwī, 2018).

¹¹ Ahmat Faruk Guney, *"İbn Sina'dan Elmalili'ya İhlas Suresi Felsefi Tefsir Gelenegi,"* (Ph.D. thesis, Marmara University 2008), 26.

¹² Aristo gave lectures in a philosophy school called Lykein (high school) that he established while penning his books before MS.335-323. He taught his lessons in the wide cloister of the school by walking to make his students do physical and intellectual exercises at the same time. Therefore, his philosophy is called peripateticism, which means 'walking and touring' in the Greek language. While peripateticism shows to education method of Aristoteles in the beginning, then used as a name for the system of the philosophers raised in the Hellenistic period and followed the doctrine of Aristo. For further information see: Mājid Fakhrī, "Mawsū'ah al-Falsafah al-'Arabiyyah," in *Al-Mashshā'iyyah al-Qadīmah* (Bairut: Maktabah Mu'min Quraish, 1988), 1276-1282.

¹³ Mesut Okumus *Kur'ân'ın Felsefi Okunusu: İbn Sina Ornegi*, (Ankara: Arastırma Yayınları, 2003), 204.

¹⁴ Look Hassan 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Sūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā* (Bairut: al-Muassasah al-Ghāmiyya li al-Dirāsah wa al-Tawzī', 1983).

¹⁵ Mesut Okumus, *Kur'ân'ın Felsefi Okunusu:İbn Sina Ornegi* (Ankara: Arastırma Yay., 2003),225.

previous authority of *tafsīr* and their methodology of interpretation on *Qur'ān* was manifested in two ways. The first way is the Qur'anic verses and *sūras* do not contradict with philosophical concepts chosen by Muslim philosophers. Thus, the verses are explained with philosophical thoughts collaterally. This is less problematic. The second way is in which the interpretation makes philosophical thoughts and ideas dominant over religion. Most traditional scholars criticise the use of this method.¹⁶

As mentioned above, Ibn Sīnā wrote the first examples of philosophical exegesis as independent *tafsīr* treatises. To better understand the nature of philosophical exegesis and Ibn Sīnā's method and its impact on later philosophical commentary studies, these independent treatises by Ibn Sīnā should be studied. This research aims to determine and explain Ibn Sīnā's approach to the interpretation of the Qur'an, i.e., his treatises on the individual verses and *sūras*. This research also reveals the primary forms of his methodology on the verses and *sūras* of the Qur'an.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This study intends to examine Ibn Sīnā's approach to certain Qur'anic verses and *sūras* and his methodology of interpreting the Qur'an, as there is no specific research devoted exclusively to the study of Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* treatises. As mentioned earlier, Ibn Sīnā was the first philosopher to write specific treatises on particular Qur'anic verses and *sūras*. Although al-Kindī and al-Fārābī had also expounded some verses, they did not write specific treatises on *tafsīr*. Therefore, Ibn Sīnā's works on verses and *sūras* are very important to understanding the nature of philosophical exegesis and his approach to the Qur'an. Researchers who have studied Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* have pointed out the need for further research on Ibn Sīnā's philosophical *tafsīr*. For example, Daniel De Smet and Meryem Sebtī stated in their article that:

Further investigations are needed before we will be able to fully measure the influence of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical reading of the Qur'an on later *tafsīr*. Much further research is also necessary before we may answer the question raised at the beginning of this article: to what extent Ibn Sīnā's

¹⁶ Mesut Okumus "Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sina'nın Kur'an Sure ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları", *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 50 (2014):171.

metaphysics were influenced by his reading and understanding of the Qur'an?¹⁷

Another researcher, Jules Janssens, expresses the need for further study of Ibn Sīnā's masterpieces with these worlds:

The Avicennian fragments of Qur'anic exegesis discussed here are rich in content. I have traced here. I might only hope that I have shown that they are philosophically interesting and thus worthy of further investigation, regardless of the question of authenticity- though this too deserves close analysis.¹⁸

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is expected to answer the following questions:

1. How can the historical background of Ibn Sīnā provide information about his philosophical background?
2. What are the verses that Ibn Sīnā had interpreted and how did he carry the task of interpretation?
3. What are the main features and limitations of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical methodology of *tafsīr*?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The major objectives of this study can be summarised as follows:

1. To explore the historical background of Ibn Sīnā provide information about his philosophical background.
2. To determine to what extent his philosophical background affects his approach to Qur'anic interpretation.
3. To explore the main features and limitations of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical methodology of *tafsīr*.

¹⁷ Daniel De Smet and Meryem Sebtı, "Avicenna's Philosophical Approach to the Qur'an in the Light of His Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 2009): 143.

¹⁸ Jules Janssens, "Avicenna and The Qur'ān a Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries," *MIDEO* 25–26 (2004):192.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Ibn Sīnā is undoubtedly the Muslim philosopher who presented the first examples of philosophical exegesis in the history of *tafsīr*. The most crucial factor in the selection of topic was the evaluation of studies in this field from the perspective of philosophy in general, considering each *sūrah* was interpreted by Ibn Sīnā separately. In other words, there is no question speaking of a comprehensive study in which completion of the *tafsīr* treatises of Ibn Sīnā identified in the field is treated from the perspective of *tafsīr*. With this study, the first independent examples of the philosophical *tafsīr* tradition that can be mentioned will be examined and the exegesis method and limitations of such *tafsīr* studies will be pointed out. The study aims to be a neat and comprehensive investigation by bringing together all the exegetical treatises of Ibn Sīnā. Furthermore, this study will contribute modestly to this under-researched field and inspire researchers investigating the contributions of Muslim philosophers before and after Ibn Sīnā to the science of *tafsīr*.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Undoubtedly, Ibn Sīnā is the most famous scholar in the world of science. He has written a lot of *rasā'il* and books on philosophy, logic, medicine, mathematics, physics and astronomy. His contributions are undeniable, and a considerable amount of his research is used as the primary reference in both the Muslim world and the West. A comprehensive, non-discriminatory study of Ibn Sīnā's work has been conducted. It was found that nearly five hundred studies on his entire field can be found in university library databases and websites. It is found that most studies on Ibn Sīnā focus on philosophy and medicine.

Upon research, it is found that the first book on this subject was written by Ḥassan 'Āṣī with the title *al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*.¹⁹

¹⁹ Ḥassan 'Āṣī, *al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*. (Bairut: al-Muassasah al-Ghāmiyya li al-Dirāsah wa al-Tawzī', 1983).

This study deals with his *tafsīr* treatises and his thought of Sufism. The author stated that Ibn Sīnā's philosophy was rich in Qur'anic interpretation and Sufism. However, his interpretations have not been published and verified its manuscripts respectably until now. Therefore, this book is aimed at filling this gap. In this book, the Qur'anic commentary, its nature and types were discussed in order to evaluate Ibn Sīnā's interpretation and to determine his position among the other *tafsīr* books. Then, Ibn Sīnā's *Ṣūfī* views with other well-known *Ṣūfī*'s movements were proposed. A structural unity that unifies the symbolic impact of Ibn Sīnā was mentioned. The summary in which the views of Western scholars (such as Henry Corbin and Dimitri Gutas) were presented through rationality that combines the interpretation of Ibn Sīnā with his mysticism in the context of his general philosophy, regarding what can be called the mysticism of Ibn Sīnā. Ḥassan 'Āṣī was hardly concerned with the verification of his *tafsīr* texts. He did not mention his approach and methodology of Qur'anic interpretation. This study will examine his methodology and approach to Qur'anic interpretation based on his independent *tafsīr* treatises. It will analyse deeply these texts that the author verified only taḥqīq.

Another study is the article titled Ibn Sīnā's Interpretation of the Qur'an.²⁰ written by Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaq. This article is based on Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of the Qur'an chapter titled '*Fī Sūrah al-A'lā*'. Muḥammad 'Abd al-Ḥaq reflected that Ibn Sīnā is known only as a translator of Greek philosophy and a philosopher who continues the legacy of Aristotle in the West but this claim means that his Muslim identity and unique thought are ignored. The author claims that Ibn Sīnā's mystical thought was hidden in earlier speculative and discursive writings. Besides his mystical poems, the theory of prophecy, the doctrine of angels, his belief in the immortality of the soul, especially his interpretations of the Qur'an showed his firm belief in the beliefs of Islam as well as the Islamic originality of his thought. On the other hand, Imām al-Ghazzālī accused him of being the most representative transmitter of Aristotelianism and called him an infidel (*kāfir*) in three doctrinal arguments. In the face of three contradictory and confusing charges against Ibn Sīnā, this article is aimed at removing all these implications and misunderstandings thanks to the exegesis of the *Sūrah al-A'lā*, which

²⁰ M. Abdul Haq, "Ibn Sīnā's Interpretation of the Qur'an", The Islamic Quarterly, 32(1) (1988):46-56.

is the most significant work of Ibn Sīnā's mature period. The thesis aims to analyze with a holistic view along with Ibn Sīnā's whole *tafsīr risālas* unlike this article.

As previously stated, the first and only work on Ibn Sīnā's approach to *tafsīr* and his methodology was published by Mesut Okumus in the Turkish language under the title of *Kur'anın Felsefî Okunusu (İbn Sīnā Ornegi) / Philosophical Reading of the Qur'an (Example of Ibn Sīnā)*.²¹ Ibn Sīnā's life, his scientific personality and some features of his philosophical system are treated in general terms in this book. Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the Qur'an and his commentaries on various verses are the results of his worldview, which is composed of certain accumulation and resources. For this reason, the author has included Ibn Sīnā's life, scientific studies and travels in the first chapter in order to come to an accurate conclusion in the next chapter. Then, the book refers to the following topics: Ibn Sīnā's concept of philosophy, religion and the Qur'an. Since Ibn Sīnā's understanding of the Qur'an was shaped in the context of the philosophy-religion relationship, the author has analysed his understanding of the Qur'an in order to understand his Qur'anic interpretation. Ibn Sīnā's methodology of interpretation in the context of the philosophical *tafsīr* and the philosopher's approach to the Qur'anic verses is presented with philosophical thoughts, including the order of existence and the impact of the method of interpretation on the tradition of the *tafsīr*. The difference between this thesis and Mesut Okumus' book is the handling of Ibn Sīnā's independent *Tafsīr* treatises in detail and classification based on philosophical issues. In addition, only *tafsīr* risalahs were focused on.

The same author wrote an article under the title '*Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sina'nın Kur'an Sure ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları/Ibn Sīnā's Approaches to the Qur'anic verses and sūras in connection with Philosophical Tafsīr Methodology*'²² He discussed the possibility of philosophical *tafsīr* and Ibn Sīnā's identification with exegete mentioning his understanding to the fact of philosophy and religion, Ibn Sīnā's opinions about philosophy-religion and mind-transfer his understanding of the Qur'an. The article explained the general features of Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* methodology and gave some

²¹ Mesut Okumus *Kur'an'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sina Ornegi.*, (Ankara: Araştırma Yayınları, 2003).

²² Mesut Okumus "Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sina'nın Kur'an Sure ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları", *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 50 (2014): 157-194.

examples from his *tafsīr* method. Finally, it emphasised the influence of Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* and highlighted some criticism directed at Ibn Sīnā's work. The author has concluded that Ibn Sīnā used Qur'anic verses and *hadiths* as a reference in most books. It means there is no contradiction between philosophy and religion based on Ibn Sīnā's works. He also mentioned that Ibn Sīnā asserted that Qur'an and its language are symbolic. Thus, symbolic verses and *sūras* are not understood through literal meaning. Last but not least, he mentioned that Ibn Sīnā was grounded based on philosophy and evidenced the trueness of his philosophical system through Qur'anic verses. The article is a kind of summary of his book. As mentioned above, the thesis aims to analysis deeply every each independent treatise of Ibn Sīnā about Qur'anic verses and *surās*.

Jules Janssens addressed in his work titled *Avicenna and The Qur'an: A Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries*.²³ about Ibn Sīnā and Qur'anic commentaries further than other studies. The author discussed that Ibn Sīnā finished the study of Qur'an and a large amount of literature at ten and he mastered all philosophical sciences such as logic, mathematics, physics and metaphysics at eighteen. According to the author, when he wrote 'Physics' in the earliest volume of the book titled '*al-Shifā'*', he was well over eighteen years old.²⁴ The author later stated that Ibn Sīnā made a connection between Qur'anic education in his early life and his rapid learning of science and philosophy and suggested that there was a directly proportional relationship between them. He also highlighted that Ibn Sīnā did not mention the theory of emanation/procession (*faḍl/ṣudūr*)²⁵ in his *tafsīr* work and described the exegesis of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* based on *Kalām*. The reason for this may be that Ibn Sīnā wrote his *tafsīr* in his early period since it is quite obvious that Ibn Sīnā had not yet found his mature philosophical system. He assessed that the other three *sūras* (*Sūrah al-Falaq*, *Sūrah al-Nās* and *Sūrah al-A'lā*) are very philosophical in content. However, despite his philosophical tendency, Ibn Sīnā

²³ Jules Janssens, "Avicenna and The Qur'an a Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries," MIDEO 25-26 (2004): 177-92.

²⁴ Because it is known that he wrote 'Physic' during his staying in Hamadān, which is between year 1015 and 1024. Therefore, the author claimed that Ibn Sīnā was at least thirty-six years old at that time.

²⁵ According to Abrahamic religions, Allah created the universe with His absolute will and power later and from out of nothing. The philosophers like Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā claim that this explanation for creation has contradictions. Thus, they propounded the theory of emanation/procession to explain the creation of the universe far from contradictions and more understandable inspiring from Plotin. For further information, see: Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā'*, Al-Ilahiyyāt (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 1960), 355-70.

did not change the content in his *tafsīr* treatises. He respected the original words of the Qur'an. The author wondered how Ibn Sīnā treated the revelation and especially the Islamic revelation in its actual wording, i.e., the Qur'an, and surveyed Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of Qur'anic texts to get the answer. As the author mentioned in the article, Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* risālas deserve further investigation and close analysis. The thesis also is written for aiming same goals.

*İbn Sina`dan Elmalili`ya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi/The Philosophical Exegesis Tradition from Ibn Sīnā to Elmalili.*²⁶ titled work, found across in the literature search related to interpreting Ibn Sīnā is a dissertation that deals with the tradition of writing *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* that originated from him. The aim of this research is to analyse the *tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* both within the *tafsīr* content and the explanations, describing excavated manuscripts and resolve debated issues written in the *Tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*. In addition to that, this dissertation showed how a chapter of the Qur'an has become a reference point for philosophical, theoretical, historical and concepts within the history of *tafsīr* and reveals its reasons. In the context of all the above purposes, this study discussed the philosophical and theoretical interpretations of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* by the *mufasssirs* interpreted it. Finally, the main philosophical issues were discussed in the interpretation of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*. This work focuses mainly on the philosophical *tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* and the *mufasssirs*, including Ibn Sīnā as well. This study concerns only a part of the subject under investigation.

Bakkār Maḥmūd al-Ḥāj Jāsīm had written a book called *Al- Athar al-Falsafī fī al-Tafsīr*.²⁷ The book was written to show the relationship of the *tafsīr* to philosophy and its influence on the commentators regarding the importance of philosophical exegesis in Dhahābī's book '*al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*'. The author did not put a time limit in his book because philosophy always had an influence on the *tafsīr* books. The philosophical influence in the book is limited to the *mashshā'i* philosophy. In the three chapters, the author benefited from some *tafsīr* books that mainly deal with philosophical topics and works of the main *mashshā'i* philosophers (al-Kindī, al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, and Ibn Rushd). The author determined the philosophical topics mentioned in

²⁶ Ahmat Faruk Guney, İbn Sina'dan Elmalılıya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi (Phd Thesis, Marmara University), 2008.

²⁷ Bakkār Maḥmūd al-Ḥāj Jāsīm, *Al-Athar al-Falsafīyyu fī al-Tafsīr*, (Damascus: Daralnwader, 2008).

the *Tafsīr* books, such as theology, the names of Allah, His attributes, the universe, and man. The philosophical discourses of the commentators are discussed in the context of these main topics and interpretations of verses are also given to show the connection between philosophical thoughts and verses (*ayās*) , examining the sources of the philosophical discourses and the closeness of the opinions of the *mufasssirs*. Special attention is mentioned to the similarities and differences between the ideas of the philosophers and exegetes, criticising the views that contradict the Qur'an and the majority of scholars. The author focuses on the philosophical topics related to Qur'anic interpretation in the books of *mashshā'i* philosophers. The aim of the study is restricted only to focus on Ibn Sīnā's *Tafsīr* treatises and determine his methodology on them.

Daniel De Smet and Maryam Sebtī published an article named *Avicenna's Philosophical Approach to the Qur'an in the Light of His Tafsīr Sūrah al-Ikhlās*.²⁸ This article's aim is to reveal Ibn Sīnā's Qur'anic interpretation and his approach has not been studied thoroughly until now. According to them, modern researchers have perused Ibn Sīnā as an Arabic Aristotelian whose thought reflects a Neo-Platonic reading of Aristotle. Even if it is accepted that Ibn Sīnā was an Arabic Aristotelian, they ignored Islamic elements used by him in his works and his religion and cultural environment. The authors examined the relationship between Ibn Sīnā's metaphysical thought and *Qur'ān* based on his *tafsīr Sūrah al-Ikhlās*. The authors precipitated that Ibn Sīnā's Qur'anic commentaries have clearly indicated that the references to the Qur'an arising from his philosophical works are not just external and secondary 'foreign' elements in his thought. In addition, they point out the study about to what extent Ibn Sīnā's metaphysics was influenced by his reading and understanding of the Qur'an and what is the measure of the influence of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical approach on the Qur'an and *tafsīr*. Although the purpose of the article is similar to the thesis, the authors discuss only *Sūrah al-Ikhlās* and seek the answers to their questions through it. The thesis aims to address whole his independent *tafsīr risālas*.

²⁸ Daniel De Smet and Meryem Sebti, "Avicenna's Philosophical Approach to the Qur'an in the Light of His Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ikhlās," *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 2009): 134–48.

The last two studies focused on the matter of evil in Ibn Sīnā's interpretations on the Qur'an. The article by Maria De Cillis: *Avicenna on Matter, The Disobedience of Matter and Evil: Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur'anic Perspective*.²⁹ examines Ibn Sīnā's opinion on the matter of evil, with the author exploring how Ibn Sīnā, as a philosopher, uses Qur'anic hermeneutics to show his stance on these concepts, which are enshrined in the Qur'an. In the author's opinion, Ibn Sīnā commented on *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah* (41;11-12) and *Sūrah al-Falaq* (113) in a way that allows him to prove that some questions are substantially influenced by Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought. It claims that these questions are the concept of disobedience of matter and the ontological nature of evil, which are part of the Islamic discussion and are found in the sources of Islamic revelation (Qur'an and *Sunnah*) and are completely parallel to orthodox principles. In this study, it is claimed that Ibn Sīnā used the Qur'anic commentary based on his metaphysical perceptions and that he essentially succeeded. The article approaches Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr risālas* in the context of two important concepts of metaphysics. The thesis deals with the entire philosophical ideas that Ibn Sīnā mentioned in his treatises.

The last article³⁰ related to the topic analysed *Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of Sūrat al-Falaq* and the methodology of interpretation. The author argued that there is consistency between the philosopher's understanding of evil and the interpretation of *Sūrah al-Falaq*. The article is to discuss the evil problem in his books. The author discussed the philosophical exegesis of the Qur'an wherein the classical period and mentioned that there are three major characteristics in the light of Ibn Sīnā's work. First, philosophical exegesis is evaluated to the extent of symbolic interpretation (*ta'wīl*) rather than technical/linguistic *tafsīr*. Second, Qur'anic verses are chosen related to philosophical issues. Third, the Qur'an is interpreted from the metaphysical and moral issues point of view, which is principally away from ideological bias. Although the article is parallel to the thesis about the terms of the main idea and aims. The extent to

²⁹ Maria De Cillis, "Avicenna on Matter, The Disobedience of Matter and Evil: Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur'anic Perspective," *Transcendent Philosophy: An International Journal of Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism* 12 (2011): 147–68.

³⁰ Sayeh Meisami, "Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Interpretation of Surat al-Falaq," *Al-Bayān Journal of Qur'ān and Hadith Studies* 15 (2017): 1–19.

of it evaluated the evil problem of *Sūrah al-Falaq* looks more narrow- scope compared to the thesis.

Keeping in mind, the articles, theses and books mentioned above, there is only one aspect of the study in terms of scope and subject matter. There is no study that considers Ibn Sīnā's particular verses and *sūras* interpretations all together from a *tafsīr* perspective. Moreover, although there are some articles on the subject, so far they have not been in the form intended in this study. Most of the articles deal with only one *sūrah* and most of them focus on philosophical issues in their interpretations. No one has dealt with these independent *sūras* and verses from a *tafsīr* perspective. There is one study that includes all the Ibn Sīnā verses and *sūras* treatises on *tafsīr* and discusses them from the *tafsīr* perspective.³¹ However, this study is written in Turkish language. There are no comprehensive English or Arabic studies in the academic literature that include all of Ibn Sīnā's treatises on Qur'anic exegesis on this topic. Taking all this into account, it is clear that the mentioned study will fill an important gap in the field.

1.7 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The life and philosophical thoughts of Ibn Sīnā are examined through his biography and books. (Ibn Abī 'Usaib'ah, *'Uyun al- Anbā' fī Ṭabaqāt Al-Aṭibbā'*, Ja'far al-Yasīn, *Faylasof 'Ālam: Dirasah Tahlīliyye li-Ḥayati Ibn Sīnā Fikruhu al-Falsafī*, L.E. Goodman, 'Avicenna', Soheil Muhsin Afnan, 'Avicenna: His Life and Works'. Dimitri Gutas, 'Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to the Reading of the Philosophical Works of Avicenna'). Other studies on Ibn Sīnā are consulted as needed (Peter Heath, *Allegory and Philosophy in Avicenna*. Peter Adamson, *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*) will also be of use. Throughout this study, his philosophical approach to the Qur'an will be discussed only based on particular verses and *sūrahs*' *risālahs* verified (*tahqīq*) by Ḥassan 'Āṣī in his book entitled *al-Tafsīr al-Qur'anī wa al-Lughah al-Sūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*.

³¹ Mesut Okumus *Kur'ân'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sīnā Orneği.*, (Ankara: Arastırma Yayınları, 2003).

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative method of analysis. It relies primarily on library research. It also includes historical and analytical methods. The historical method will reflect Ibn Sīnā's life adventures and the events and centuries he lived through in his ideas and works. It will attempt to determine the dynamic relationship between the philosopher's life story and his philosophy. Using the analytical method, it will explore the question of why Ibn Sīnā preferred these verses and sūrahs to the *tafsīr* treatises and what method he followed in interpreting the Qur'an. Throughout the study, textual analysis is used for data analysis. Suitable texts are identified in Ibn Sīnā's biography and *tafsīr rasā'il*. Therefore, the study will be conducted using these texts. If there are no primary sources, the researcher can rely on secondary sources such as translations, analyses, transcriptions and reviews by related scholars. By applying the above methods, the study will elaborate on Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of the Qur'an and his contribution to philosophical Qur'anic exegesis.

1.9 TABLE OF THE STUDY PLAN

Table 1.1.The Study Plan

RESEARH QUESTIONS	RESEARCH OBJECTIVES	RESEARCH METHOD	DATA COLLECTION	DATA ANALYSIS	CHAPTER OUTLINE
1. How can the historical background of Ibn Sīnā provide information about his philosophical background?	1. To explore the historical background of Ibn Sīnā that provides information about his philosophical background	Historical	Library Research	Textual Analysis	The Intellectual Life of Ibn Sīnā and His Participation in <i>tafsīr</i>
2. What are the verses that Ibn Sīnā had interpreted and how did he carry the task of interpretation?	2. To determine to what extent his historical background affects his approach to Qur'anic interpretation.	Analytical	Library Research	Textual Analysis	Analysis of His Treatises on Verses and <i>Sūrās</i>
3. What are the main features and limitations of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical methodology of <i>tafsīr</i> ?	3. To explore the main features and limitations of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical methodology of <i>tafsīr</i>	Analytical	Library Research	Textual Analysis	Ibn Sīnā's Philosophical Approach to Qur'anic Interpretation

CHAPTER TWO

THE INTELLECTUAL LIFE OF IBN SĪNĀ AND HIS PARTICIPATION IN *TAFSĪR*

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Each scientist reflects the characteristics of the environment and the century in which he lives. Undoubtedly, Ibn Sīnā cannot be considered independent of his environment and the time in which he grew up. In the century in which Ibn Sīnā lived, the institution of the caliphate was weakened, and, as a result, various state structures emerged in Islamic countries. The struggle among these structures, fed by local elements, has led to political instability in Muslim societies. Despite the administrative and political adversities, they experienced, the X- XI centuries were a time when Islamic science and philosophy made rapid progress. A large trade network functioned from China to Andalusia and urban life continued to develop. Also, in these centuries, the *Sunnī Kalām* was greatly developed and the Islamic jurisprudence, in short, in all its aspects and it can be said that the Islamic heritage continues to mature and enrich with increasing momentum.¹

The Sāmānīd state, which dominated the region during the centuries in which Ibn Sīnā lived made the ‘Transoxiana region’ the heart of the scientific and cultural basin. During the Sāmānīd period, Islamic thought gained an important place in Transoxiana, especially in Samarqand and Bukhārā. The progress of the cities of Transoxiana in terms of culture and civilisation in this period was realised thanks to the great value that the Sāmānīds rulers gave to science and scholars. They took special care of the scholars, had special structures built for them and set up a throne in their hearts. The names of these scholars who grew up under the patronage of the Sāmānīds became well known in many parts of the Islamic world. They have become commonly known as ‘Transoxiana ‘Ulamā’ or ‘Transoxiana School’.²

¹ Abdulvahid Yakub Sipahioğlu, “X.-XI. Asırlarda Musluman Toplamlar: Siyasi İstikrarsızlık Karsısında Kulturel Butunluk,” *Turkish Academic Research Review* 2, no. 3 (December 2017): 41.

² Osman Aydınli, “İmām Mātūrīdī’nin Yetistigi İlmī Ortam Ve Semerkant’ta İlim Merkezleri,” *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 55, no. 3 (September 15, 2019): 575.

The Sāmānīds often pursued a free, protective and reassuring policy towards all kinds of religions, sects and schools of thought. Their observances also have laid the foundation for the emergence of a vibrant and rich cultural heritage in the region. However, this structure also led to the development of many other thoughts and ideas in the region that were contrary to Islām. In this environment in which he grew up, Ibn Sīnā had the opportunity to become acquainted with various scientific discussions and sectarian views at an early age.³

Moreover, the Sāmānīds took care that they benefited from the scholars and their views. They appointed them to many state offices such as the state administration and the divans. Thanks to the importance that the Sasanids attached to the sciences and the scholars, Ibn Sīnā's scientific genius was noticed and he became a palace physician. This mission opened the doors of the palace library to him. In later times, he had the opportunity to easily pursue his scientific activities under the auspices of the state with the office of vizier.⁴

Paper manufacturing in Samarqand and the development of this industry, economic, geographical, etc. together with these factors, contributed to the rapid growth of scientific studies here and throughout the Transoxiana region. Now, every part of society had easy access to writing materials on paper so more people had the opportunity to benefit from books. Ibn Sīnā took advantage of these opportunities and became interested in philosophy. He had the opportunity to study the works translated from Greek philosophy into Arabic.⁵

Ibn Sīnā who read Aristotle, Plato and many Greek philosophers became a system-philosopher builder of Islamic philosophy with the Islamic education he received and the perspective he gained, synthesising ideas he encountered with Islamic thought.

³ Hilmi Demir, "İmam Maturidi'nin Gnostik Akımlarla Mucadelesi" (Mâtûridî'nin Düşünce Dünyası, Ankara: T.C. Kültür Ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2011), 425-26.

⁴ Richard N. Frye, "The Sāmānids," in *The Cambridge History of Iran* (Cambridge University Press, 1975), 43.

⁵ Aydınli, "İmām Mâtûrîdî'nin Yetistigi İlmi Ortam Ve Semerkant'ta İlim Merkezleri.", 579.

Considering all these conditions, this study will talk about many factors for the development of a genius like Ibn Sīnā. The purpose of this section is to examine important factors in Ibn Sīnā's education and important philosophical views that he brought to Islamic philosophy and to try to determine their impact on Qur'anic exegesis.

2.2 THE POLITICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL SITUATION OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD DURING IBN SĪNĀ'S PERIOD

Ibn Sīnā lived between the end of the 10th century and the first half of the 11th century. During these centuries, the Muslim world was in a period of political instability. In the 9th century, semi-independent governors or governorates that morphed into dynasties were replaced by independent political actors that came from the remotest corners of the caliphate's geography and over time, from the beginning of the 10th century to the end of the 11th century, the Muslim world was in a state of political instability prior to the fall of the Abbasid Empire before the Ottoman Empire .⁶

A very large cultural network was established, and the political and social fabric was remixed, especially with the process of Islamisation that gained momentum in the Abbasid period. This process was no longer the privilege of the Islamic Arab conquerors. Now, local actors and citizens in the region have begun to name the order of the caliphate and give colour to the institutions with a new found identity.⁷

This political fragmentation, just before the Buwayhids invaded Baghdād in 945, created an environment of turmoil in which large and small dynasties fought each other. The statutes that governed their regions as semi-independent governors or independent dynasties, some of which remained partially loyal to the caliphate and others as a direct local element, fractured the political rule of the Abbasid.⁸ The fact that internal elements of the institution of the caliphate did not cease to seek power at any cost made the caliph vulnerable to these structures. The Buwayhids attempted to invade Baghdād, which was in chaos, made the Caliph's situation extremely bad. Thus, it began a new era in

⁶ Abdulvahid Yakub Sipahioğlu, "X.-XI. Asırlarda Müslüman Topluluklar: Siyasi İstikrarsızlık Karşısında Kültürel Bütünlük", *Turkish Academic Research Review* 2, no.3 (December 2017),40.

⁷ Hayrettin Yücesoy, "Caliph and Caliphate up to 923/1517", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, THREE, Brill, Leiden, 2016,21.

⁸ Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *"The Venture of Islam"*, vol.2 (USA: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), 12.

Baghdād, as the center of the Abbasid caliphate. The Shiite Buwayhids favoured the continuation of the Sunnī Abbasid caliphate for political reasons. Because they intended to use the continuation of the caliphate to their advantage, both in their own domains and outside them. Moreover, if they kept the caliphate under their own control, they would be respected by both Sunnis and other Muslim states within the state.⁹

Although the Sultāns broke the political leadership of the Islamic societies, the unity of the Muslims and the doctrine of the single caliph were shaken by the Andalusian and Fātimid caliphs. On the other hand, the Andalusians who defied Byzantium became the noble protectors of Islam. The great world of Hārūn Rashed and Ma'mūn had crumbled, political instability had spread across Islamic societies and violence had gradually increased.¹⁰ Despite this political, military and economic instability, the 'Transoxiana region' where Ibn Sīnā grew up, developed into a center of science, culture and civilisation. This was because of factors such as the presence of institutions like madrasas, libraries and ribats in the region, their scientific and cultural activities and the protection of scholars by the rulers and the wealthy. The development and progress of Islamic science made this region one of the leading centres of science and culture in the Islamic world. Thus, many prominent scientists, philosophers, writers and thinkers were produced in this region.¹¹

⁹ Mafizullah Kabir, "The Relation of the Buwayhid Amirs with the 'Abbasid Caliphs," *JPHS* II, no. 3 (1954): 232-33.

¹⁰ Janina Safran, "The Command of the Faithful in al-Andalus: A Study of in the Articulation of Caliphal Legitimacy", *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 30, no:2 (May 1998),184.

¹¹Recep Onal, "Socio-Geo-Political Context İn The Formation of Mātūrīdī Thought: Analyses On The Transoxania (Samarqand And Bukhara)/ Mātūrīdī Dusuncenin Tesekkulunde Sosyo-Jeo-Politik Baglam: Māverāunnehir (Semerkand Ve Buhara) Uzerine Analizler," 2018, 52.

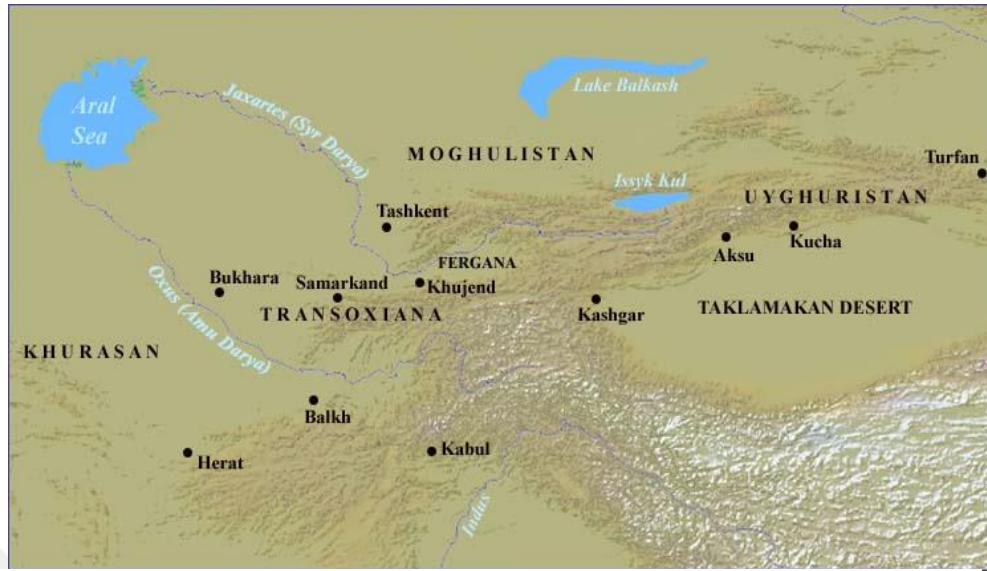


Figure 1.1. The Map of Transoxiana Region

However, if the questions of government or administration and focus on the situation of society are left aside, a surprising picture emerges. These centuries were also a time when the brightest names in the history of Islamic science and philosophy lived. It was known that there had been an enormous trade network from China to Andalusia. Moreover, in these centuries, the cities of Islam had developed.¹² During these centuries, *Sunnī-Kalām* also improved to a great extent and Islamic jurisprudence has matured. In short, it can be spoken of as a process in which Islamic heritage continues to mature and enrich itself in every way and with increasing dynamism.

This period is considered as the golden age of the Islamic era in all respects. Valuable scholars were trained in all fields. The cultural and civilisational progress of cities in Transoxiana, especially Samarqand and Bukhārā during this period was because of the great value that the Sāmānid rulers attached to science and scholars. They took special care of the scholars, built special buildings for them and established a throne in their hearts.¹³

¹² Hugh Kennedy, "The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphates -The Islamic Near East from The Sixth to Eleventh Century-", (Edinburgh: Pearson-Longman. 2004), s.198.

¹³ Osman Aydınli, "İmâm Mâtûrîdî'nin Yetistigi İlmi Ortam Ve Semerkant'ta İlim Merkezleri" *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 55, no.3 (September 15, 2019): 576.

The Sāmānīd Sultāns made their palaces a centre of science and culture and sheltered many scholars and poets in their palaces. As the greatest guardians of Sunnism in the region, they composed the Arabic Creed Tractate (*al-Sawād al-A'zām*) to protect people from many perverted thoughts and *bid'ah* (religious innovation) such as Rafidism of the Shiite and later had it translated into Persian. The Sāmānīd rulers also supported poets who wrote Arabic and Persian poetry and those who produced literary works. Therefore, there were always many scholars and poets in the Sāmānīd palace who were given the highest attention and respect. It is an appreciable value that when they attached to sciences, scholars and poets, this region remained a centre of science and culture for a long time.

One reason the Transoxiana region stands out for its scientific, intellectual and economic vitality is the fact that the region was founded on very fertile soil and in a place where the historical Silk Road and the Indian Spice Route, originated from the regions under the Indian, Iranian and Turkish rule, converged. This location of trade in the region are very well developed on an international level. The trade routes lead to centres in Irān and 'Irāq, to China in the east, to India in the south, to the Eurasian steppes and to the Volga in the northwest. Because of this important role in the trade routes, the Sāmānīd rulers built *ribāts* along the borders to protect these roads and ensure the safety of the caravans. Although the ribats were built as border outposts for mounted troops to protect the land from enemy attacks, they gained a new identity with the establishment of the Islamic religion in the region. These *ribāts*, once built for military purposes, are now also used for educational and commercial activities.¹⁴ The socio-economic structure of the region is based on trade has increased the prosperity of the people in the region. This wealth resulted from the trading activities, has led the children to have the opportunity to receive better education, which contribute to the brilliant scientific achievements.

One of the most important reasons for the emergence of the scientific movement in Transoxiana, especially in Samarqand, is that the first paper production in the Islamic world was started in Samarqand by the Chinese prisoners captured in the *Talas* War of 133/751 and this industry was highly developed in the city. Writing materials such as

¹⁴ Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Ja'far Al-Narshakī, *Tārikh al-Bukhārā* (Qahira: Dār al- Ma'ārif, 1994), 59-60.

leather and Egyptian papyrus which were previously used for writing were both scarce and very expensive. Thus, engaging in science and writing books became possible only for a few people among the elite from the society. Eventually, the paper that was first produced in Samarqand spread to other Islamic cities where it was manufactured in Baghdād. However, for a long time, the quality of the paper produced in other regions could not match the quality of the paper produced in Samarqand.¹⁵

Paper production in Samarqand and the development of this industry, as well as economic and geographical factors, contributed to the rapid growth of scientific studies here and throughout the Transoxiana region. Every section of society now had easy access to paper writing materials, so more people had the opportunity to benefit from books. For example, Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī b. Aḥmad al-Bākhilī al-Nīshābūrī al-Tājir (d. III / IX.) was one of them. The hadith scholars Abū Sulaimān Dāwūd b. Abī Dāwūd (d. 281/894) from Marw and ‘Abdullāh b. Muḥammad b. Naṣr al-Warrāq (first half of the 10th century) came to Samarqand, earned their living by trading in the paper markets and continued their scholarly activities in this way, staying in Samarqand.¹⁶

One factor that made this period a golden age was that the region became one of the most important cultural centres in the world, where people of different races, religions, sects, ways of thinking and cultural structures came together and Eastern and Western civilisations met and influenced each other since the region was on important trade routes. It is the interaction of different religions, sects and philosophies with each other. In the 10th century, the population of Transoxania and Khurāsān was composed of people from different religions, mainly Muslims but also Mazdaism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Judaism and Christianity. This diversity brought vitality to the social life of the region and gave the impression of a melting pot of religious traditions.¹⁷ The region has always preserved this multicultural and pluralistic characteristic. Among the contributing factors are the fertile soils, which the region gained great wealth through

¹⁵ ‘Abd al-Aḥad Hannawī, “The Role of the Arabs in the Introduction of Paper into Europe,” *Middle East Librarians Association*, no. 85 (2012), 19-21.

¹⁶ Osman Aydın, *Fethinden Sāmānīler’in Yıkılışına Kadar (93-389/711-999) Semerkant Tarihi* (İstanbul: İSAM Yay., 2011), 402.

¹⁷ Richard Foltz, *Religions of The Silk Road Premodern Patterns of Globalization* (London: Palgrave macmillan, 2010), 19.

trade and agriculture and the prosperity, thus the standard of living of the people reached a peak level.

For centuries, the region as the centre of trade routes, allowed the spread and meeting of religions, philosophies, artistic models, ancient manuscripts and traveling missionary monks from the east to the west, from the south to the north, accompanied by trade goods and caravans to influence. In this regard, the region played a very important role in the formation of rich and vibrant thought and the scientific environment with different beliefs and philosophies brought by caravans from outside.¹⁸

Another reason for Transoxiana's multicultural and pluralistic structure is that there is no state religion controlling religious life and no government providing political balance in the region. Because of this characteristic, the region has a lively position in terms of political, social, cultural and religious activities which is not a unity in the sense of ethnic and religious unity but on the contrary, includes people with different religions and cultures.¹⁹

In fact, Brahmanism and Buddhism came from India and China since the third and fourth centuries; Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism and Nestorianism from Iran; Judaism from the Caucasus Strait; members of various religions such as Islam from Iran and the Caucasus Strait, saw the region as a safe haven and migrated there, settled and were able to form their own communities.²⁰ Transoxiana, in particular, which was located on the Cultural Road, formed the centre of these religious activities. This is because these roads were used by travelling priests and merchants. Priests of different religions also travelled to this geographical region and tried to spread their religion.²¹

On the other hand, the tolerance of the Sāmānīd state that ruled Transoxiana towards various faith groups and the granting of certain privileges made the region

¹⁸ Mustafa Demirci, "Turk İslām Medeniyetinin İkinci Dalgası: Orta Asya'da Gelisen Bilim ve Dusuncenin Dinamikleri" (International Symposium on The Contribution of Turkish World to Islam, Isparta: SDUİF Kitapevi Yay, n.d.),80.

¹⁹ Vasily Vladimirovich Bartdhold, *Orta Asya Turk Tarihi Dersleri* (Ankara: Çağlar Yay, n.d.), 55-56.

²⁰ Ibid, 56.

²¹ Unver-Harun Gunay-Gungor, *Baslangıçtan Gunumuze Turklerin Dini Tarihi* (İstanbul: Ragbet Yay., 2007), 168.

attractive to many political, religious and philosophical sects that were suppressed elsewhere. Missionaries of different religions and leaders of religious communities had an easy time spreading and developing in the region, using these privileges to their advantage. In particular, Samarqand and Bukhārā became the region of various religions such as Manichaeism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, Christian Nestorianism and Judaism before the arrival of Islām. Therefore, the religious thought that developed in this region was more flexible, philosophical, open to debate and had a higher claim to universality than the religious thought that developed in Syria, Egypt and the Hijāz, the inner regions of the Islamic world. Science and thought that developed within these differences created a tradition that could tolerate other religions and philosophies. In this respect, the region formed one of the most colourful regions in terms of religion and philosophy in the ancient world. Members of different religions and philosophers have achieved a synthesis here and discuss.²²

With the beginning of Islamisation of the region, almost all Islamic groups such as the Mu‘tazila, the Ahl-i Ḥadith, the Shī‘a, the Ismā‘īliyya, the Khārijite, the Zaidiyyah, the Murji‘ah and the Karramiyya settled down and made Transoxiana and Khurāsān an important center where they could easily pursue their activities. They have made Bukhārā, Samarqand and Baikan a centre of attraction by taking advantage of the safety of the roads (along the Silk Road) and tried to attract followers by building madrasas there. Therefore, Transoxiana and Khurāsān also became a region where religious disputes and debates between Islamic sects were freely conducted.²³

Although there are various sects in the region, the dominant sect is generally the Ahl-i Sunnah and, in particular, the Ḥanafī-Māturīdī sect. Undoubtedly, this situation has led to the rise of spiritual and philosophical sciences, to which the Hanafī-Māturīdī school attaches great importance. As a result, cities such as Bukhārā and Samarqand in the region were favoured in rational sciences such as *Kalām* and philosophy. Indeed, in the early Ottoman period, scholars who had grown up in Anatolia usually turned to these cities for further education in their fields, especially in the rational sciences such as

²² Mustafa Demirci, “Türk-İslam Medeniyetinin İkinci Dalgası: Orta Asya’da Gelisen Bilim ve Düşüncenin Dinamikleri (X-XIII.YY)” (International Symposium on the Contribution of The Turkish World to Islam, Isparta, 2007), 82.

²³ Zekeriyya Kitapçı, *Orta Asya’da İslamiyet ve Türkler* (İstanbul: Yedi Kubbe Yay., 2004), 193.

kalām and philosophy. This shows that a rational and philosophical tradition, i.e. in the field of religious sciences and thought, was at the forefront of reason and vision.²⁴

One of the most important reasons is that the statesmen who belonged to the Sāmānids of that time made it their business to fight the *bid'ah* movements by spreading the *Sunnī* faith. In the councils of scholars that the leaders established in their palaces for this purpose, debates were held on various topics. In this way, the scholars who were under protecting of the state took part in discussions and debates in all fields of science. Due to the encouraging academic environment, discussions and debates were held mainly in *kalām* and *fiqh*. These debates also played an important role in the development of ideas and the systematisation of sects by becoming more specific.

Mystical life also received its share of vibrancy and richness of the period. Sufism, whose subject, purpose, method and terminology were explained with learnt works, leaving behind a period of affliction that culminated with the *mihnah* and Hallaj (execution in 309/921) and became a system of life that penetrated to the remotest corners of the masses. While Sufism was taught and preached in places like darwish huts, *khangāh* and *ribāt*, another striking feature of this period was that the rulers paid some compliments to Sufism which was accepted by the mass of the people. For example, it can be cited that Maḥmūd of Ghaznī visited Abū al-Ḥassan al-Kharaqānī in his *khangāh* in Rayy and the visit of Saljuq ruler Tughril Beg to Baba Taher Oryan Hamadānī. During this period, the mystics were bought up with a variety of qualities and experiences.²⁵

²⁴ İsmail Ciftcioglu, "Orta Asya -Anadolu İlim ve Kültür Koprusu: XI-XVI. Yüzyıllar," *BILIG* 44 (2008), 162.

²⁵ Dilaver Guler, 'Sufi' Ibn Sīnā (o.428/1037) ve 'Makāmatu'l-Ārifin"i," *Tasavvuf: İlmî ve Akademik Araştırma Dergisi* 2, no. 6 (2001), 119.

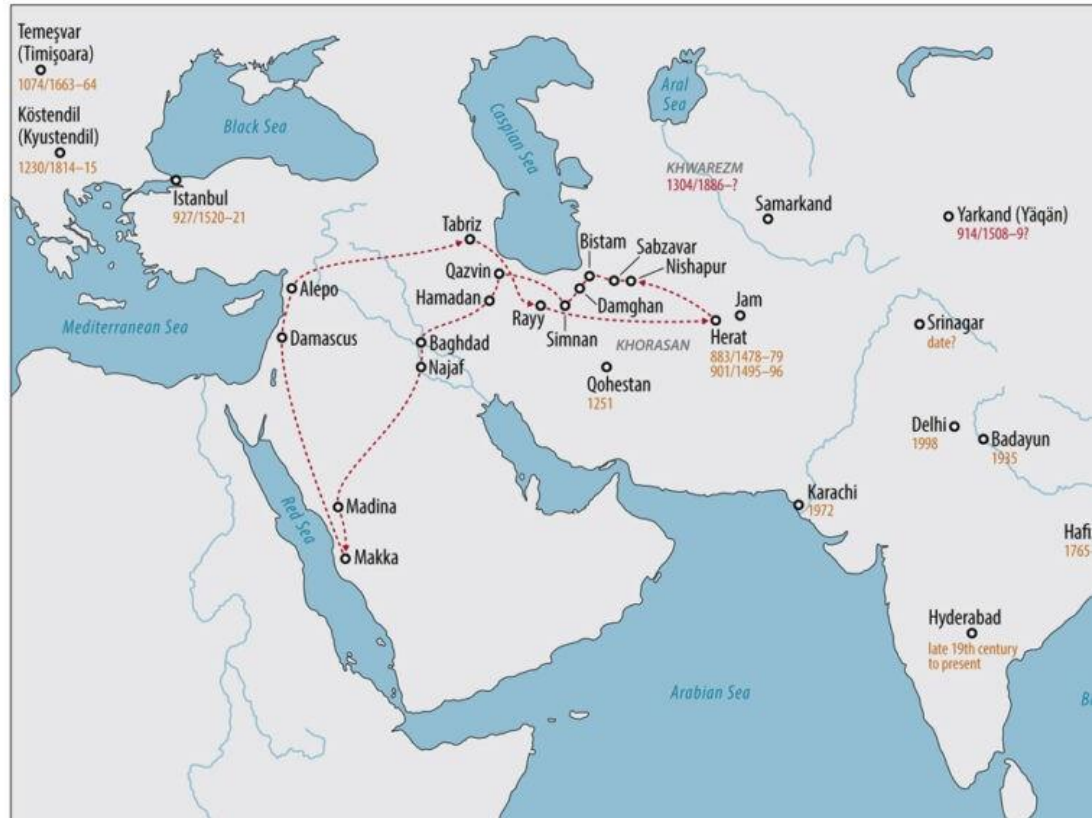


Figure 2.1. The Map of Rayy

2.3 IBN SĪNĀ'S LIFE

His real name is Abū 'Alī Al-Ḥussain bin 'Abdullah b. 'Alī b. Sīnā is known in the East as 'Al-Shaykh al-Raīs' (the eminent master) and 'Hujjat al-Haq' (the proof of God) and in the West as 'Avicenna' in the sense of 'the prince of physicians'.²⁶ Historical information about Ibn Sīnā has been preserved to this day through the life story (autobiography) of his student Abū 'Ubaid al-Juzjānī and his (biography), which Juzjānī provided with additional information about his teacher from Ibn al-Qiftī and Ibn Abī 'Usaybi'a.²⁷ Although there are various discussions about the date of birth, Šafar 370/August 980 is generally accepted. He was born in the village of Afshānah near Bukhārā. His father was from Balkh. He was the governor of Kharmaythan, a region

²⁶ Seyyed Ḥossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardī-Ibn 'Arabī* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1992), 20; John McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna* (Newyork: Oxford University Press, 2010), 17.

²⁷ Ibn Abī 'Usaybi'a, *Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Anbā' fī Ṭabaqāt al-A'ṭibbā'*, vol. 1 (Dār al-Ma'ārif, n.d.), 84-97; Ibn Al-Qiftī, *Tārikh al-Ḥukamā'* (Berlin: Leipzig, 1908), 313-39.

under the Sāmānid government, the dominant power at the time. Ibn Sīnā who moved with his family to Bukhārā, the capital of the Sāmānids and also a centre of attraction for intense scientific and intellectual activity, received a good education there. In fact, his home became a center where philosophy, geometry and Indian mathematics were debated as his father was in regular contact with the Ismā‘īlī dā‘īs (inviter). Since Avicenna participated in these discussions at a young age, he became familiar with philosophical questions.²⁸

Ibn Sīnā, who was noted for his intelligence and good memory at a young age, first memorised the Qur’ān and then received education in language, literature, theology and fiqh. In addition, his father sent him to work under a greengrocer, which enabled him to learn Indian mathematics and algebra.²⁹ His biography mentions that he took fiqh lessons from the famous Ḥanafī jurist of the time, Ismā‘īl al-Zāhid³⁰, and that when Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Nāṭilī came to Bukhārā, his father asked him to take him in and gave his son lessons, Ibn Sīnā read part of Porphyry’s Isagoge and five or six chapters of Euclid’s Elements with him from the beginning. He notes that he completed the remaining parts himself. Then, he began Ptolemy’s Almagest with his teacher and after the geometry part, he completed this book himself. Due to his brilliant mind and scientific curiosity, Ibn Sīnā, esteemed by his teacher and advised by his father to keep his son busy with nothing but science.³¹

After his teacher left Bukhārā, Ibn Sīnā, who was devoted to philosophical questions, turned to the science of medicine, having learned this science at a good level. Since Ibn Sīnā considered the science of medicine as a simple science, he rose in this science for a short time and became a medical authority which was recognised by his

²⁸ William E. Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 1974), 18-20.

²⁹ A man called al-Mahmūd al-Masāh (the Surveyor or Mathematician). Bayhaqī, *Tarikh-i Ḥukemā al-Islām*, 53.

³⁰ Abū Muḥammad Ismā‘īl Ibn-al-Ḥussain ibn-‘Alī al-Zāhid al-Bukhārī, a noted Ḥanafī jurist of Bukhārā, died in 8 Sha‘bān 402/5 March 1012: al-Ḥaṭīb al-Baḡhdādī, *Tārikh al-Baḡhdād*, Bairut 1968, VI, 310; Gutas “Madhab” 327–330.

³¹ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 21; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*, 18.

environment at sixteen.³² According to sources, it is known that he received the science of medicine from two teachers. One of them was Abū Sahl ‘Īsā b. Yaḥyā and the other was Abū Maṣṣūr Ḥassan b. al-Qumrī.³³

Besides medical science, he developed his knowledge of fiqh to the point where he could participate in a debate. After making progress in all of these sciences, he looked at the books of logic and philosophy, could not understand Aristotle’s *Mā ba‘da al-Tābi‘a* after reading it forty times, and then bought a book at the insistence of a bookseller. This book was a work by Abū Nasr al-Fārābī entitled *Al- Ibāne ‘an Gharāḍi Aristotala fī mā ba‘da al-Tābi‘a* (On the Aims of Metaphysics). This is how Aristotle’s metaphysics became clear to him.³⁴

If the life of Ibn Sīnā in five stages is evaluated,³⁵ the first phase would be the part from birth to 16 years of age. This period is generally the time of scientific education. Ibn Sīnā expressed that after this period, he did not learn any new science but only increased his scientific maturity. The second process begins with Ibn Sīnā’s invitation to the palace because of the serious illness of Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr, the Sāmānid Sulṭān. This is a period of 8 years between h. 387-395/ m. 997-1005. Ibn Sīnā who was only 17 years old, has shown relative success in the Sulṭān’s recovery through his joint studies with the palace physicians. Therefore, he gained the position of palace physician. This situation gives him the opportunity to enter the palace library which is rich in books. With special permission from the Sulṭān , he sees and reads books, especially in the field of medicine that he had never heard of. Later, these books were destroyed by fire.³⁶ After the death of Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr, it is assumed that he continued his service during the reigns of Maṣṣūr b. Nūḥ and Ismā‘īl b. Nūḥ al-Muntāsir and also wrote his books at the same time. In fact, his neighbour, Abū al-Ḥussain al-‘Aruḍi asked him to write a

³² Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 25-27; Soheil M. Afnan, *Avicenna His Life and Works* (Museum Street London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958), 59; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*, 19.

³³ Gutas Dimitri, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition Introduction to Reading Avicenna’s Philosophical Works*, Second (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014), 16; Lenn E. Goodman, *Avicenna* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 14.

³⁴ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation* 33-35; Peter Adamson, *Interpreting Avicenna Critical Essays* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 17-18.

³⁵ Nihat Keklik, “İbn Sina (980/1037) Hayatı ve Eserleri,” *Edebiyat Fakultesi Matbaası* 22–23 (1981), 2.

³⁶ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 35-37; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*, 19; Keklik, “İbn Sina (980/1037) Hayatı ve Eserleri,” 3.

comprehensive work and he wrote a work entitled *al-Ḥikmat al-‘Aruḍiyya* (Philosophy for ‘Aruḍ) covering all sciences except mathematics. He wrote *al-Ḥāsil wa al-Maḥsūl* (The Available and the Valid) and a treatise *al-Birr wa al-Ithm* (Piety and Sin).³⁷

In 1002, Ibn Sīnā’s father died and this situation affected his service in the palace. Probably the collapse of the Sāmānid state had a great impact on him. In fact, the Sāmānid state was completely erased from the stage of history in 1005 and Ibn Sīnā had to leave Bukhārā. This period of his life can be considered the years of specialisation in medicine. Ibn Sīnā spent the third phase of his life travelling to different regions. His first stop after Bukhārā was Gurgānj, a city in Khwarazm. Abū Ḥussain al-Suhaylī, a vizier here who was interested in philosophical sciences, introduced Ibn Sīnā to the local ‘Āmir ‘Alī ibn Ma`mūn. Being a philosopher, virtuous and popular, he paid Ibn Sīnā’s salary during his stay in Gurgānj. At that time, scholars such as al-Birūnī, Abū Sahl al-Masīḥī, Ibn al-Ḥammar and Ibn al-‘Iraqī were in the ‘Āmir’s palace. However, after a short time, Maḥmūd of Ghaznī sent a letter to the Amir asking him to send the scholars of his palace before him. In this case, al-Birūnī, al-Ḥammar and al-‘Iraqī accepted the offer and went to the palace but Ibn Sīnā and al-Masīḥī refused and left Gurgānj. After visiting Nasā, Bāward, Tūs, Samanqan and Jājarm, he went to Jurjān to meet with Ziyārid Qābūs b. Vushmgīr (d. 997). After Ziyārid was imprisoned in a castle and killed there, he moved to Dihistān between Khwārazm and Jurjān.³⁸

While Ibn Sīnā was suffering from a serious illness in Dihistān in the year of 402/1012, he returned to Jurjān. where he met his disciple, Abū ‘Ubaid al-Juzjānī, who stayed with him until the end of his life and wrote his biography. As he writes in his poem³⁹, he travelled back and forth between cities for seven years because his value was unknown and he was not protected.

Finally, Abū Muḥammad al-Shirāzī, the lover of science in Jūzjān, bought him a house and offered him some facilities. Ibn Sīnā had the opportunity to write his works

³⁷ Dimitri, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition Introduction to Reading Avicenna’s Philosophical Works*, 19; Afnan, *Avicenna His Life and Works*, 19.

³⁸ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 41-43; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*, 20.

³⁹ When I became great, no country could hold me; When my price went up, I lacked a buyer. (Gohlman, *Ibid*, 43.)

and train students with this environment. In fact, he had a student dictate his work entitled *al-Mukhtaṣar al-Awsaṭ al-Manṭiq* (Middle Summary on Logic). He also composed *al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ād* (The Origin and Return) and *al-Arshad al-Kulliyah* (Complete Astronomical Observation) for Abū Muḥammad al-Shirazī. He also compiled many of his works such as the beginning of *al-Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* (Canon of Medicine) and *Mukhtaṣar al-Majasty* (The Summary of the Almagest) here.⁴⁰

The years 1012 and 1024 constitute the fourth phase of his life. Ibn Sīnā travelled to Rayy in 1012 and met with the wife of the governor of Buwayhid (Sayyida) and his son Majd al-Dawla to treat the latter's colic illness. This situation enabled him to establish close relations with the Buwāyhid state. During his stay in Rayy, he wrote his work entitled 'Ma'ād'. He left Rayy out of necessity to travel to Qazwīn and Hamedan. Ibn Sīnā, who cured the illness of the Buwāyhid ruler Shams al-Dawla whom he met on one occasion, won the ruler's friendship. Ibn Sīnā, who took part in the expedition of Shams al-Dawla (r. 997-1021) to Qirmisīn, returned to Hamadān with the ruler after the war ended in defeat. After this incident, he was offered the post of vizier and accepted the offer. However, as a result the rebellion of the army, Ibn Sīnā's house was besieged, he was imprisoned, his books were looted and his property was confiscated. Shams al-Dawla released him to appease the army which demanded his execution. However, due to his recurring illness, Ibn Sīnā returned to the palace and began treating him.⁴¹

Thereupon, his place as vizier was returned to him and he was better restored than before. In the meantime, Ibn Sīnā did not neglect the education of his students. During the day, he was busy with the affairs of the state and at night, he read parts of his works such as *Qānūn fī al-Ṭibb* and *al-Shifā'* to his students. Although not all of his students are known, Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Ma'sūmī, Abū Maṣṣūr Ibn Zayla ve Bahmanyār b. Marzubān el-Azarbayjānī were among them.⁴² Later, Ibn Sīnā had to participate in the expedition of Shams al-Dawla (r. 997/1021) to Tarim. When the 'Āmīr fell ill again

⁴⁰ Adamson, *Interpreting Avicenna Critical Essays*, 12; Afnan, *Avicenna His Life and Works*, 68; Goodman, *Avicenna*, 25.

⁴¹ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 49-51; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*, 22; Afnan, *Avicenna His Life and Works*, 66-67.

⁴² Abū al-Hassan 'Alī ibn Zayd al-Bayhaqī, *Tārikh al-Hukamā al-Islām* (Damascus: Matbaa al-Taraqqi, 1946), 62.

near Tarim, the soldiers wanted to take him to Hamadān but he died on the way and was replaced by his son Samā al-Dawla (412/1021). Although the new ‘Āmir asked Ibn Sīnā to continue his station as vizier, he refused. He did not leave Hamadān and stayed in the house of a person named Abū Ghālīb al-‘Aṭṭār out of sight for a while. Ibn Sīnā completed - at the request of his pupil Juzjānī - the chapter titled *al-Ilāhiyyāt* in his book of *al-Shifā`* except for *al-Ḥayawān* and *al-Nabāt* during his stay in this house. In addition, he wrote the chapter on logic in *al-Shifā`*.

Shams al-Dawla`s second son Tāj al-Mulk claimed that Ibn Sīnā had secretly corresponded with the ruler of Kākūyid ‘Alā al-Dawla (d. 1041/42) but the latter denied this accusation. However, since his enemies were against him, Tāj al-Mulk had him imprisoned in the castle of Fardagān (414/1023). Ibn Sīnā who remained in the castle for four months, wrote here *al-Hidāyah* (The Guidance), *Ḥayy bin Yaqzān* (Alive, the Son of Awake), *al-Qulunc* (The Colic) and the section on logic in the book of *al-Shifā`* (The Healing). Ibn Sīnā, who was released due to the expedition to Hamadān organised by ‘Alā al-Dawla`s an, stayed for a while in the house of the former governor of Hamadān, (Abū Ṭaleb al-‘Ulvī). After these events, Tāj al-Mulk made some promises and tried to persuade him to stay but Ibn Sīnā did not rely on them and secretly left Hamadān with his brother, the student Juzjānī and two of his servants and reached Isfahan after an arduous journey. This event, which probably took place in the year (4415/1024), was the beginning of the fifth phase of his life. Ibn Sīnā, who was welcomed by his friends and relatives from ‘Alā al-Dawla, stayed in the house of ‘Abd Allāh ibn Bībī. Ibn Sīnā, who joined the gathering of ‘Alā al-Dawla after some time was respected here. The scientific meetings organised by ‘Alā al-Dawla made it possible to spread the reputation of Ibn Sīnā in Iṣfahān.

During this period, the philosopher of ‘*al-Shifā`*’, who also continued his scientific studies, tried to complete some of his unfinished works; he further developed some of his works on mathematics, astronomy and music and composed new works including the book he called *Danishnāma-i al-‘Alā`i*, in reference to the name of ‘Alā al-Dawla and ‘*al-Najāt*’. He participated with ‘Alā al-Dawla in some expeditions to Ṣabūr Khwāst and Hamadān. He also made astronomical observations on behalf of the ruler to correct

the inaccuracies in the calendars, and although he did not obtain complete results, he clarified various issues.⁴³

The years of Iṣfahān were relatively quiet and Ibn Sīnā lost his peace with the entry of Sulṭān Mas‘ūd, the ruler of Ghaznawid, into Iṣfahān. His house and books were looted and he fell ill with great shock. Although Ibn Sīnā was ill with colic and tried to cure himself and recovered, he fell ill again on the way traveling with ‘Alā al-Dawla and died in Hamadān. Today, he has a tomb in Hamadān, which is within the borders of Iran.⁴⁴

2.4 IBN SĪNĀ’S RELIGIOUS AND SCIENTIFIC BACKGROUND

Shortly after Ibn Sīnā’s birth, his family moved to Bukhārā, the scientific and cultural centre of the time, where he was able to receive a good education. His father's close relations with the geniuses of the Ismā‘īlīs transformed his home into a scientific environment where philosophy, geometry and Indian mathematics were discussed. In addition to easy access to teachers and libraries, Ibn Sīnā studied many sciences perfectly until he was eighteen years old. His father’s prominent position in the Sāmānid state, his own will and his superior intelligence are among the contributing factors in his educational development.⁴⁵

As Ibn Sīnā states in his autobiography, he memorised the Qur’an and Islamic sciences at a young age. He took lessons in procedure and fiqh from the famous Ḥanaḫī jurist at the time, Ismā‘īl al-Zahidī, although his father was among the Ismā‘īlī propagandists, he did not adopt their views. Ibn Sīnā says in his following autobiography:

My father was one of those who responded to the propagandist of the Egyptians and was reckoned among the Ismā‘īliyya. From them, he, as well as my brother, heard the account of the soul and the intellect in the special manner in which they speak about it and know it. Sometimes they used to discuss this among themselves while I was listening to them and

⁴³ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 59-69; Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh-i Ḥukemā al- Islām*, 63-65.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 86-89; Al-Bayhaqī, *Tārīkh al-Ḥukemā al-Islām*, 68-70; McGinnis, *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*; Afnan, *Avicenna His Life and Works*, 25-26.

⁴⁵ Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardī- Ibn ‘Arabī*, 20.

understand what they were saying but my soul would not accept it, and so they began appealing to me to do it [to accept the Ismā‘īlī doctrines]. And there was also talk of philosophy, geometry and Indian calculation.⁴⁶

This information has been expressed in various works as judgment that Ibn Sīnā considered the book of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’ because of some distortions in later periods and that the views were also influenced by them. The source of this information is undoubtedly Zāhir al-Dīn al-Bayhaqī, a Muslim scholar. In his biography, Bayhaqī ignored what Ibn Sīnā said on this subject and noted the following:

His father made it a habit to recite and ponder over the treatises of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, and Ibn Sīnā sometimes pondered over this work.⁴⁷

Al-Bayhaqī has not specified this detail at this point by any source. Nowhere does Ibn Sīnā express his thought about al-Rasāil at any point in his life. Moreover, there is no other source from which al-Bayhāqī can learn this detail. This expression seems to be an arbitrary excerpt from the relevant section in Ibn Sīnā’s autobiography. Regardless of the intent of this typo, it influenced those who followed it and became the factor that influenced Ibn Sīnā’s thinking. In fact, Mājīd Fakhrī refers to al-Bayhaqī in his work and says that the author made it a habit to read the letters of the Ikhwān-ı al-Ṣafā’ (The Brothers of Purity). Another false conclusion about Ibn Sīnā is that he belongs to the Ithnā’ ‘Ashariyyah Shī‘as.⁴⁸ The fact that he was in the service of the Buwayhid and Kākūyi orders, which are Ithnā’ ‘Ashara Shī‘as of Ibn Sīnā, led to the misunderstanding that he should be mentioned in this group. However, especially during the reign of the Buwayhids, they followed a policy of balance and treated the Sunnis with respect in order to gain the support of the Abbasid caliph. Moreover, Ibn Sīnā’s first entry into the service of a Shi‘ite ruler occurred a period after his fortieth year. The fact that he began working in the palace of 404/1014 Majd al-Dawla in Rayy invalidates this claim. However, the claim in question was later revised by Henry Corbin and erroneously skewered in the literature.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 18-21.

⁴⁷ Al-Bayhaqī, *Tārikh al-Ḥukamā’ al-Islām*, 52-53.

⁴⁸ A major branch of the Shi‘ite sect that adopts the twelve imam system from its numerous subdivision. For further information see: ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq* (Mi: Maktabah Ibn Sīnā, n.d.), 56.

⁴⁹ Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy* (London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1962), 170.

These assertions have no relevance to the correct understanding of Ibn Sīnā's life, scientific personality and works. This is because Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, his scientific studies and the subjects in which he is interested are far above those in which confessional differences might play a role. However, this distorted information is an obstacle to understanding his philosophy. Therefore, they must be corrected.⁵⁰

As Ibn Sīnā clearly stated in his autobiography, he learned fiqh from Ismā'īl al-Zāhidī. At the age of fifteen, Ibn Sīnā reports that he made it a habit to participate in the discussions of the fuqahā. From this, it can be concluded that the faqih group in which Ibn Sīnā debated was highly qualified in terms of sect, direction, ideology and method. More importantly, after the collapse of the Sāmānids, Ibn Sīnā took shelter in the palace of 'Alī b. Mamūn, where he was assigned the task of a judge. He wore a dress worn by prominent jurists called Taylasān and received service from the palace. The fiqh he applied during his service must have belonged to the favoured sect in the palace of Ma'mūn. It is also hard to imagine that it is outside the sect where Ibn Sīnā received his education and became famous as a highly qualified judge.⁵¹

Both direct and indirect evidence of Ibn Sīnā's sect shows he belongs to the Sunnī Ḥanafī sect. The direct evidence is one of the leading Ḥanafī scholars of Ismā'īl al-Zāhid in Bukhārā, who is Ibn Sīnā's fiqh teacher. Khatīb al-Baghdādī noted the following information about Ismā'īl al-Zahid: His full name is Muḥammad Ismā'īl b. Ḥussain b. 'Alī al-Ḥassan b. Hārūn al-Faqīh al-'Ahid al-Bukhārī. He visited Baghdād twice while traveling to Macca for pilgrimage and he transmitted hadiths from many scholars during these visits.⁵²

Another problem is that although he does not mention Ibn Sīnā as his teacher, Abū Bakr Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Barqī whom he mentions as his neighbour, was a member of the famous Barqī family which dominated the scholarly activities and environment of Hanafite fiqh in Bukhārā in the 4th century. This person was well known

⁵⁰ Gutas Dimitri, "Avicenna's 'Madhab' With an Appendix on The Question of His Date of Birth," *Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino* 5/6 (1988 1987), 325.

⁵¹ Dimitri, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*, 326; Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 40-41.

⁵² Khātib al-Baghdādī, *Tarīkh-i Bagdād*, vol. VII (Bairut: Dār al-Garb al-Islāmī, 2001), 312-313.

in the fields of literature, mysticism and theology. Ibn Sīnā says the following about this person in his autobiography:

In my neighbourhood there was also a person named Abū Bakr al-Barqī who was born in Khwarazm. He was a man of dignity and was the only name in fiqh, asceticism and *tafsīr*. He was also interested in philosophical sciences. He asked me to interpret books on philosophy and I wrote about twenty volumes of *al-Ḥāṣil wa al-Maḥṣūl* for him. In addition, I also wrote a work on ethics entitled *al-Birr wa al-Ithm*.⁵³

In light of all this information, it can be said that Ibn Sīnā's relationship with Abū Bakr al-Barqī was to be more than neighbourly. It is possible that he received training in literature, though not in fiqh. Finally, it should be noted that Ibn Sīnā was the Ḥanafī of the scholars with whom he had legal disputes at the age of fifteen. Abū Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Qamarī; The Barqī family and Ismā'īl al-Zāhid are neighbours of Ibn Sīnā. These individuals who maintained personal and social relations with each other were also among the scholars of the Sāmānid dynasty and earned merit for the effective Ḥanafī policies of that dynasty.⁵⁴

Certainly, these names are not the only ones that characterise Ibn Sīnā's learned personality. He took lessons in logic, mathematics (Indian arithmetic), philosophy and astronomy from Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Nāṭilī, one of the famous philosophers of his time. In fact, Ibn Sīnā was one step ahead of his teacher and his teacher was not enough for him. After al-Nāṭilī left Gurgānj, he began to learn natural sciences and metaphysics on his own. Due to his superior intelligence, he could expand his knowledge of mathematics, logic and physics in one and a half years. However, he could not fully understand Aristotle's metaphysics, he became competent in its contents accredited to al-Fārābī's work called *al-Ibāne* that he bought with the advice of a bookseller.⁵⁵

After Ibn Sīnā had absorbed all these sciences, he began his education in medicine, which he considered from the easy sciences. His teachers were o Abū Sahl 'Asā b. Yaḥyā al-Masīḥī and Abū Mansūr Ḥassan b. Nūḥ al-Qumrī who was considered physician of the Sāmānids palace in Bukhārā. After theoretical training, Ibn Sīnā,

⁵³ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 38-41.

⁵⁴ Dimitri, "Avicenna's 'Madhab' With an Appendix on The Question of His Date of Birth.", 329-30.

⁵⁵ Ibn Al-Qifti, *Tarikh-i al-Hukemā*, 315.

expanded his knowledge on a practical level of the treatment of patients at the age of only sixteen and was invited to the palace for treating the Sāmānid Sultān ‘Āmir Nūḥ b. Maṣṣūr. He was appointed as the palace physician because of his treatment successes and his good reputation in the region after a while. According to the testimony of his pupil al-Juzjānī, Ibn Sīnā did not learn any new science after the age of eighteen, but he increased his scientific maturity.⁵⁶

Juzjānī, who was in service for twenty-five years, expresses his scientific competence with the following sentences:

I did not once see him, when he came across a new book, examine it from beginning to end. Rather he would go directly to its difficult passages and intricate problems and look at what its author had to say about them. Thus would he seek to ascertain the level of his knowledge and the degree of his understanding.⁵⁷

Ibn Sīnā did not hesitate to write the work and train students despite the burden of his palace doctor and various political duties. Abū Maṣṣūr said that Ibn Sīnā was a good physician and philosopher but he was not a competent linguist and Ibn Sīnā al-Azharī, who could not be proud of this, studied grammar for three years and secured the *Tahdhīb al-Lughah*. After Ibn Sīnā attained superior competence in grammar, he wrote poems in three different styles and asked them to be sent to Abū Maṣṣūr, saying that they had found them in the desert. When Abū Maṣṣūr could not solve some passages, Ibn Sīnā told him the sources of the passages he could not solve and Abū Maṣṣūr realised that he wrote the letters and apologised to him. It cannot be brought in and remains as a draft. This anecdote is just one of the passages that show his ambition for scholarship and his perseverance.⁵⁸

Western and Eastern scholars have held very different views of Ibn Sīnā's religious life. Undoubtedly, there are reasons for the formation of these different opinions such as the closeness of Ibn Sīnā to his own legitimacy and sect or the annoyance with his ideas.⁵⁹

⁵⁶ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sīnā A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 34-37.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 68-69

⁵⁸ Ibid, 69-73

⁵⁹ Mesut Okumus *Kur'ân'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sina Orneği* (Ankara: Arastırma Yay., 2003), 46.

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, one of the contemporary Iranian scholars, stated that he did not distinguish in Ibn Sīnā as an Ahl al-Sunnah or Shī'ah, referring to the difficulty in determining his stance and position on *Sharī'ah*. This interpretation, as mentioned earlier, is an attempt to place Ibn Sīnā close to *Imāmiyya Shī'a*, if not Shī'ism. He also says of Ibn Sīnā in his *Three Muslim Sages*: Ibn Sīnā was a sincere Muslim and not only drew inspiration from the Qur'an in his poems and interpretations but he also strove to remain faithful to the Islamic point of view in almost all areas and in fact interpreted many of his teachings through the spirit and teachings of Islam. He had a deeply religious character which is also evident in his philosophical works.⁶⁰

Western writers who believed that Islam and philosophy cannot come together have tried to show that Ibn Sīnā's non-religious practices are foregrounded and that he distanced himself from religion. For example, Bernard Russell said the following about Ibn Sīnā's religious life.

Ibn Sīnā who was accepted as a medical adviser in Europe from the 12th century until 19th century did not have the character of a saint. He was fond of wine and women. He had also doubts about Sunnism.⁶¹

Marshall Hodgson, another Western scholar, explains Ibn Sīnā's relationship to *sharī'ah* as follows:

...He expounded elaborately the social usefulness of the various *Shārī's* rules for the masses and even for the elite with the understanding, in the latter case, that the 'philosopher' as sage could dispense with details for overriding reasons. Thus, he defended the usefulness of salat worship as a discipline of the attention even for the 'philosopher' but he allowed himself wine on the ground that he found it helpful and knew how to avoid the excess-the danger of which among the masses had been the ground for the Prophetic ban of it.⁶²

⁶⁰ See: Ibn Sīnā, "*Risalah fī Sirr Al-Qadar*," in *Majmū' Rasa'il al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs bin Sīnā al-Bukhārī* (*Matba'ah Jāmi'iyyah Dā'irah al-Ma'arif al-Uthmāniyyah*, 1354); Ibn Sīnā, "*Risālah Al-Birr al-Ithm*," in *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyya 'inda Ibn Sīnā*, *Shams al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Āmir* (Bairut: *Dār al-Kitāb al-'Alamī*, 1988); Ibn Sīnā, "*Risālah fī Al-Hudūd*," in *Tis'a Rasā'il fī al-Hikmah wa al-Ṭabī'iyyah* (*Qāhirah: Dār al-'Arab*, n.d.).

⁶¹ Bernard Russel, *A History of Western Philosophy*, (Newyork: 1945), 424.

⁶² Marshall G.S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam*, (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974), v.2, 180-81. Marshall Hodgson, as a Western academician, used the expression 'the Prophetic ban' wrongly. Alcohol was banned by Allah not the Prophet with verse 90 of Sūrah al-Māidah (the note of author)

Semsettin Gunaltay, one of the Turkish researchers, states that the famous *Qaṣīda al-Rūḥiyyah* of the author is not only the verses of a philosopher who was guided by philosophy but rather a work that expresses the views of a pious scholar who tries to reconcile philosophy and traditions, wisdom and Sūfism.⁶³

Based on his own works, it can be said that Ibn Sīnā is a devout Muslim, that he places prophethood above philosophy and that he does not shortchange prayer and worship. The view that Ibn Sīnā drank is in fact a misunderstanding resulting from the translation of ‘wine’ that he drank in his autobiography as ‘wine’ in order not to fall asleep during his busy nights. In Arabic, however, words like ‘*khamr*’, ‘*rahiq*’ and ‘*handeris*’ are used for the word ‘wine’.⁶⁴

Upon close analysis of the works of the philosopher, it can clearly be seen Ibn Sīnā’s devotion to religious values. It should be known that the most beautiful movement is the prayer, the most perfect and virtuous of the acts of worship (sequences) is fasting, the most beneficial of the good deeds is charity, the most decent is the endurance and patience of the mysteries and life, the most perverse of the efforts and the falsest of the efforts is hypocrisy. Ibn Sīnā who suggested that the drink should not be used for pleasure and entertainment but for healing and curing, in his work *Risālah fī al-’Ahd* against Allah, promised not to use alcohol except for cure and healing.⁶⁵

İbn Sina mentioned in his life story that he dedicated himself to learning and reading and returned to reading logic and all the parts of philosophy. During this time, he also expressed he did not sleep completely through a single night nor devote himself to anything else by day. During his intensive study, when the problems used to baffle him and he could not solve the middle term of the syllogism, he used to visit the mosque

⁶³ Mesut Okumus *Kur’ân’ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sina Ornegi.*, (Ankara: Arastırma Yayınları, 2003), 47.

⁶⁴ Ibid,47.

⁶⁵ Ibn Sīnā, "Risālah al-’Ahd", (in Majmu’ah al-Rasā’il), Egypt 1328, 207; Some treatises in Majmū’ah al-Rasā’il are also included in Tis’a Rasā’il. However, in the Cairo edition of Tis’a Rasā’il, the treatises *Risālah fī al-’Ahd* and *Risālah fī al-Akhlāq* were mixed. Therefore, this statement of Ibn Sīnā is included in *Risālah fī al- Akhlāq*, *Risale fī al-’Ahd*, among the treatises in Tis’a Rasā’il. For comparison see. Ibn Sīnā, Tis’a al- Rasā’il, Dār al-’Arab, Cairo, t.y.,155; See also on the covenant of the philosopher. Ibn Abī ‘Usaybia, ‘Uyūn al-Anbā., 445-446.

frequently and worship and pray humbly to Allah until He opened the mystery of it to him, and made the difficult seem easy.⁶⁶

Similarly, Ibn Sīnā wrote treatises on the beneficial and positive effects of prayer, dhikr, worship, praying and visiting the shrines of saints and similar practices.⁶⁷ He also reacted sensitively to the accusation of irreligion made against him by some exoteric theologians and jurists and wrote in his defense a Persian quatrain in which he emphasised his loyalty to Islam:

It is not easy and trifling to call me a heretic
No belief in religion is firmer than my own
I am the unique person in the world and If I am a heretic
Then there is not a single Muslim anywhere in the world.⁶⁸

Thus, if considering Ibn Sīnā's religious personality based on his own works, Ibn Sīnā received a Ḥanafī-Sunnī upbringing. Although his family had an Ismaelite tendency, he did not adopt it; he reacted to the non-Islamic speeches addressed to him and the claims that he drank alcohol were misinterpreted. The statement that he formed an opinion and that alcohol is not allowed for pleasure and entertainment except for cure and healing in his treatises that he wrote special treatises on prophecy, the hereafter and worship all show that he adheres to religious values.

2.5 IBN SĪNĀ'S NOTABLE PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Ibn Sīnā is the greatest thinker of the al-Fārābī school in the tradition of Islamic philosophy. The most important feature of this tradition is the idea that religion is an indispensable divine institution for society and this idea is, in a sense, the essence of the philosophy of the two philosophers. It is these two philosophers who developed the philosophy founded by al-Kindī and institutionalised it in the thinking society. More precisely, it was al-Kindī who made the transition from theology to philosophy, it was al-Fārābī who systematised it with terminology and problems and it was Ibn Sīnā who collected and evaluated this accumulation which returned to his own time as a rich

⁶⁶ Gohlman, *The Life of Ibn Sina A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*, 26-29.

⁶⁷ Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardi- Ibn 'Arabi*, 41.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 41.

corpus. In fact, since the success of logic for al-Fārābī, *'Mu'allim al-Thānī'*, he bore the title of *'al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs'* for Ibn Sīnā because he brought philosophy and other sciences to a systematic and didactic consistency. Hence Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā primarily comes to mind when the word 'philosophy' is mentioned in the Islamic world after the century.⁶⁹

However, Ibn Sīnā did not adhere to the system of Plāto and Aristotle as much as al-Fārābī and became one of the system-building philosophers of Islamic philosophy. There are three elements that distinguish Ibn Sīnā's philosophy from the others. The first is that Ibn Sīnā skillfully combined the philosophical systems before him in a dynamic and theoretically convincing manner. The second is Ibn Sīnā, who, when dealing with topics such as the nature of prophethood and the afterlife (*ma'ād*), incorporated all the intellectual interests of Islamic society into his philosophical system and treated these topics with the concepts of that system. In this way, Ibn Sīnā presented a convincing and full-fledged philosophy both in terms of the interests of Islam in the eleventh century and as a system. Thus, it can be said that Ibn Sīnā expanded the field of philosophy to include religious facts compared to his predecessors and that he achieved this goal with undiminished philosophical effort and intensity. The third factor which is no less important than the others is the method and style Ibn Sīnā used in his works. He did not use volatile language like al-Fārābī, nor dry and vulgar language like in the Greek translations.⁷⁰

On the contrary, he tried different styles of writing to make his works more appealing. It can be said that the expressions used by Ibn Sīnā are in complete harmony with the needs of intellectual discourse in society. He presented his teachings programmatically but mostly through examples, developing an argumentative or aporetic philosophy or using the method of philosophical inquiry.⁷¹

In addition to the scientific terms and style used by Ibn Sīnā which are easily accessible to intellectuals in all fields of Islamic civilisation, he harmonised philosophy

⁶⁹ Ali Durusoy, "İbni Sina," in *DİA* (İstanbul: TDV Yay., 1999), 322.

⁷⁰ Dimitri Gutas, "The Heritage of Avicenna: The Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy 1000-ca 1350," vol. XXVIII, 1 (Avicenna and His Heritage, Leuven-Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1999), 84.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 84-85.

with this spiritual nature, especially in relation to intellectuals accustomed to the Jadal method used in the science of *Fiqh and Kalām*. Ibn Sīnā made philosophy the mainline of Islamic culture both in terms of its content and its language and functioning. This is the golden age of Islamic philosophy which describes the period when philosophical discussions were held with great enthusiasm and also explains the success of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy.⁷²

It is possible to summarise Ibn Sīnā's remarkable philosophical thoughts under the following headings.

2.5.1 Metaphysics and Ontology

Ibn Sīnā designated the concept of metaphysics, the first philosophy (*al-Falsafah al-'Ulā*), knowledge of God (*al-'Ilm al-Ilāhī*), divinity, transcendental wisdom (*al-Ḥikmah al-Muta'āliyah*), wisdom and the science of the ultimate goal. (*'Ilm al-Ghāya*) refers to the science of the otherworldly nature (*'Ilm mā ba'da al-Ṭabī'ah*, *'Ilm mā qabla al-Ṭabī'ah*) and for the metaphysician, (*al-Failasuf al-Awwal*). The subject of metaphysics is generally existence and the principles of existence. It studies abstract entities, existence and the order of existence such as God, the intellect and the human soul (*nafs*). Metaphysics provides principles to the sciences that are interested in particular areas of existence, thus, preventing them from substituting themselves for metaphysics.⁷³

It is undisputed that Ibn Sīnā fed mainly on al-Kindī and al-Fārābī in shaping his philosophy. In metaphysics, however, Ibn Sīnā pursued an independent line. According to him, there is a distinction between the object and the purpose of metaphysics, and accordingly, the object of metaphysics is the existence and more specifically, the existence of God is the object of inquiry and not a postulate in this science. Ibn Sīnā's main thesis here is that the object of science must be given as a postulate before the nature and properties of that object are investigated. However, it is not possible to assume the existence of God as a postulate in this science (i.e. in metaphysics). On the contrary, his existence can be an object that is investigated in this science.

⁷² Ibid, 87-88.

⁷³ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā*, Al-Ilāhiyyāt (Qum; Iran: Ayatullah Mar'ashī Najafī, 1960).

Ibn Sīnā, like al-Fārābī, expressed that the existence that the intellect of man can attain is the most general and clear concept so that existence cannot be defined. The information that is put forward here as proof or description is only a process to warn the mind of information and not to prove, report or show something unknown. In this case, knowledge of being and metaphysics, in general, is not logical proof or indirect one, but known directly through reason (clear wisdom).⁷⁴ Metaphysical concepts are not only a form like the concepts of logic but they are concepts which have content and actual reality.⁷⁵ When a being is abstractly apprehended in the mind, one can always doubt whether it exists outside the mind. Being and essence are separate things. Therefore, being has the quality of *a 'rāḍ* added to essence and quiddity. This distinction brought with it the concept of possibility. The thing whose existence and absence coincide with reason is a possible being. This distinction applies only to possible things. In the case of mental and spiritual beings, this distinction is not in question.

In this case, the quiddity of God means also his existence. For this reason, the mind can never envision his absence. The question is asked about God 'what is he?' should be answered as 'he exists' because his existence and quiddity are the same. Possibility beings that are different in their existence and quiddity exit to the area of existence but their existence is due to Necessity Being, their feature of possibility being has never been annihilated. Accordingly, the metaphysical nature of Ibn Sīnā is based on the separation of existence and quiddity. According to this distinction which arises from the investigation of the conception of something in the mind, a being is divided into two as possible and necessary (*Wājib*) and this distinction is one that is not apparent but an actual one. However, the de facto real possible being is possible in terms of itself, existent in terms of its real cause, the necessary being.⁷⁶

According to Ibn Sīnā, the clearest proof of the existence of immaterial beings is the knowledge of one's own self and existence. For if a man investigates what his own self is he will understand that it is an intangible entity grasped by the mind, not the body he sees and touches with the senses. This knowledge of the self is the first and important door directly to metaphysics. With the analysis of the concept of being formed in the

⁷⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt* (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allah Mar'ashī Najafī, 1960), 110.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 104-105.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 22-30.

mind and the knowledge of one's self, the man arrives at the 'first principle' (*al-Mabda'* *al-Awwal*) and the 'first cause' (*al-'Illah al-Ūlā*) in which all being is explained from itself. This 'first principle' has two main features. One is Necessary Existence (*Wājib al-Wujūd*) for its existence and essence are one and the same; and the other is that it is both justified, valid and reasonable for it has indeed been known since eternity. Likewise, *Allah*, who is *Wājib al-Wujūd* has no *fasl*, essence, equivalent or the like. Therefore, His existence cannot be defined and no evidence can be provided for His existence. is obvious. Therefore, He is the *Burhan* of everything. Ibn Sīnā accepts the attributes of God.⁷⁷

According to him, these attributes do not fully explain the existence of God since there is no multiplicity in Himself. Ibn Sīnā explained that the relationship between God and the realm is timeless. The becoming of God does not take place in time but in terms of being, God is the unity and the only principle of being. Being is a natural process and not the goal of God. It is only the necessary consequence of His knowledge of Himself. His knowledge of His own existence requires only one being. This first created being is the spirit (active mind) which is one like Himself. Ibn Sīnā explains the creation with the understanding of the emanation (*ṣudūr*) of al-Fārābī. Unlike Ibn Sīnā said nothing about the number of heavenly spirits and souls. According to him, the principle of being is how, where and in whom perfection is attained. The realm has come into being in the most perfect way through his knowledge and grace which is as competent as himself. No other explanations for a more perfect world and becoming are conceivable than this.⁷⁸

2.5.2 Knowledge Theory and Logic (Epistemology)

The method Ibn Sīnā used at the beginning of his thought was logic and the mental apparatus known involves the understanding and study of the human rational soul. So, logic and the theory of the soul as the basis of epistemology are the two that drive Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. He wrote more and more frequently on these two subjects than on anything else. However, in his writings on the soul (*nafs*), he examines the process of

⁷⁷ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 108- 110.

⁷⁸ Durusoy, "İbni Sina.", 326.

cognition in terms of form (*sūra*) and content /matter (*mādda*) in logic. He expressed that a person whose most fundamental quality is knowing, being willing and can have access to all kinds of information. Ibn Sīnā expressed this in terms of ‘*perception*’ (*idrāk*) and explains that knowledge begins with the abstraction of the mind.⁷⁹

According to Ibn Sīnā, knowledge consists of the mind taking the image of the object by abstraction and transforming it into knowledge. There are two kinds of knowledge in the mind. When the object of knowledge is a concrete being, it arises in the mind through stages of abstraction and one gains knowledge about that thing. Knowledge about physical being is attained this way. If the object of knowledge is something spiritual and metaphysical, then the work of abstraction is unnecessary. Knowledge about this thing is acquired directly. Therefore, logic does not deal with this area because logic provides information about the objective world which can be obtained only through emotions and abstraction..⁸⁰

In a cognitive process, the physical, chemical and biological properties of the object are first perceived with the help of the sensory organs. In the second stage, copies of these particular perceptions are stored in the imagination or design (*musawwirah*). Ibn Sīnā saw this information as being at the level of imaginative understanding. According to him, when certain figures are capable of imagination and design, the mind passes through a three-stage path. In the second stage, when the imaginary creates new images by combining or separating them, certain judgments are formed without thinking about these individual images. This kind of information is partly intuitive and has no scientific or philosophical value. It has its origin in instinct and certain experiments in the past. This kind of information is the highest level of information available to non-human beings. When a human being has this information, he is on the same level as other living beings but this information is not completely useless. It is stored in the memory and can be used in daily life. Ibn Sīnā calls this kind of information as ‘*ma‘nā*’.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al-Nafs (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allah Mar’ashī Najafī, 1960), 52-53.

⁸⁰ Ibid,197

⁸¹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al- Nafs,1960, 36-37.

Ibn Sīnā believed the senses cannot make mistake in this process of acquiring knowledge which is based on observation and experiment and that the fault lies with the mind which misinterprets the data of observation and experiment. In this context, according to Ibn Sīnā, thinking is not knowing but inquiring about knowledge. However, the thinking process does not always lead people to information. In order for thinking to lead to correct results, it is necessary to know its principles and to use the information possibilities appropriately.⁸²

According to Ibn Sīnā, knowledge is not gained by thinking alone. The more important and shorter way in this regard is intuition. In this respect, it can be said that he gives more importance to intuition than to thinking. This is because when the subject is studied thoroughly, it is found that the propositions with informational value are based on the intuition of those who have developed skills in this field. According to Ibn Sīnā, thinking and intuition are at the bottom of gaining knowledge. Thinking is intuition that takes place in a temporal process and intuition is the acquisition of knowledge in an almost timeless way. However, while intuition sometimes takes place against one's will, thinking is always a voluntary activity.⁸³

With this understanding which has persisted since Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā opens the door to intuitionism (*ishrāq*) by connecting the source of rational knowledge with the active mind which is an irrational force. It should be remembered, however, that this is not mystical intuition but rational intuition. Although Ibn Sīnā is bound to the tradition of *Mashshā'i*, it is clearly different from that of his predecessors such as al-Kindī and al-Fārābī. According to him, man's ability to know is intelligence in its strength, reason in the form of the ability to attain the principles of thought with this ability, intelligence in the form of the act of attaining knowledge of the objective world through observation and experimentation on the basis of these principles and that the mind passes through these stages and reaches the stage of perfection through the activity of the active mind called the underdeveloped mind. However, the unmediated knowledge that prophets with superior abilities acquire is perceived by their sacred mind but is actually a function of the theoretical mind power.⁸⁴

⁸² Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 95.

⁸³ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 95-96; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā'*, Al-Nafs 1960, 219.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 219-220.

Although philosophers and logicians before him made various studies of Aristotle's *Organon*, it was Ibn Sīnā who examined all parts of the work in a single text. The philosopher's work on logic caused the translation of the *Organon* and the studies after him - with the exception of Ibn Rushd - to be forgotten and consequently, his texts were taken as the basis for the logic studies after Ibn Sīnā.⁸⁵

According to Ibn Sīnā, logic is a discipline that teaches the laws and rules of coherent thought; in short, it is the science of thought. Thinking is a concept or an attempt to make a judgment, and this is done by identification or proof. Logic is a science that studies and teaches the rules of identification and proof; it is also a tool and an introduction to other sciences. With the exception of the Prophets, no one who wants to do scientific research depends on logic. Ibn Sīnā also begins his studies of logic with the subject of language. Ibn Sīnā emphasises the necessity of not confusing language and thought and says that the object of language is words and the object of logic is concepts. The presence of the intensity and the painting of a word determines the nature of what it indicates; this process is the identification. Thus, the meaning of the word that shows the reality of the object in the mind becomes the concept (*taṣawwur*) and the expression of the meaning in language becomes the definition (*ḥadd*). The meaning in the mind is the nature of what is being defined. Hence the requirements of nature are transferred to the mind. Thus, to define something means to show what it is in order to comprehend it. This can only be done if the constituent elements of what are defined are present in the mind as a whole. Therefore, Ibn Sīnā introduced quiddity (*māhiyyah*) by definition into logic. The definition of a thing is done by its intensity and scope. In other words, by the concept and nature of that thing.⁸⁶

Ibn Sīnā also made a classification of sciences to continue the tradition. Ibn Sīnā includes logic, natural sciences, theological sciences, ethics and politics among the practical sciences. Ibn Sīnā who also deals with the sciences in terms of their purposes, says that the purpose of theoretical knowledge is truth and the purpose of practical one is goodness.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Nicholas Rescher, *Taṣawwur Al-Mantiq al-'Arabī* (Qahirah: Dār al- Maârif, 1985), 175-178.

⁸⁶ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 1-15.

⁸⁷ Ibid, 145.

It is noteworthy that Ibn Sīnā does not include religious sciences such as Kalām and fiqh in his classification of sciences. That Ibn Sīnā attaches importance not only to the form of knowledge but also to its content (e.g., classifying definitions, propositions, and comparisons according to the value of truth, classifying sciences according to their subjects) shows that his logic, like the logic of Aristotle and al-Fārābī, is a logic of content. Since the study of the form, content and subject matter of knowledge in separate places would not completely indicate knowledge and science, Ibn Sīnā's logic treated epistemology, philosophy of science and logic together.⁸⁸

2.5.3 Philosophy of Religion

Ibn Sīnā's views on the philosophy of religion focus on the necessity of religion, the nature and possibility of revelation and the structure of the language of revelation. According to him who defends the necessity of living together and the division of labour that accompanies it, there must be rules for everyone who can sincerely adopt and follow in order for social relations and the division of labour to function properly. If this task of legislation is left to individuals and societies, each individual and society will decide according to their own interests and this will not provide justice and peace in society. That is why a person in society has been chosen as a prophet with divine grace. It gave him the necessary information to organise his personal and social life because divine obedience requires the welfare of the individual and society, the realisation of public order and the existence of prophethood.⁸⁹

According to Ibn Sīnā, the soul having the power to acquire knowledge shows the possibility of revelation. Moreover, the Prophet's soul is confirmed from the creation and his intellect is on the level of the holy spirit at the highest level of intuition. The knowledge abilities of this person from creation are far above the abilities of an ordinary person. With no education or training, the basic knowledge of existence, law and morality are imparted to him through revelation. This knowledge first enters his theoretical mind, then imagination and common sense. Thus, the abstract and universal

⁸⁸ Durusoy, "İbni Sina.", 324.

⁸⁹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 441-443.

knowledge become concrete; finally, these rational concepts are transformed into sounds that are heard and remembered and into images that are seen and perceived.⁹⁰

The human soul that undertakes such a task can realise the particular events it has imagined as miracles to prove that it is commissioned by God. This is because it has the power to influence the ego. In fact, this situation is not against the laws of nature. According to Ibn Sīnā, obedient servants who are the saints of Allah can have some effects on the object. The miracles shown by the prophets are aimed at enabling them to prove their prophecy in the eyes of society and to accept the teaching they brought.⁹¹

On the other hand, according to Ibn Sīnā, although the Qur'an explains the principles of faith, worship, law and morality in clear language, much of the information about Allah and the hereafter is expressed with symbols, parables and examples. This is necessary so that people can grasp the sublime truths. This is because the general public is not capable of fully understanding the nature of this information nor is their everyday language sufficient to explain it. Only those who have a high level of understanding can grasp the true reality behind this religious language through interpretation. If such rational language is not used, ordinary people can not accept metaphysical realities because they cannot comprehend them. For example, if it is explained in completely abstract concepts (the way of the afterlife), they have difficulty accepting the existence of God. In this case, the purpose expected from religion would not be fulfilled.

If there is a religion, there should be worship. While worship keeps the religious doctrine and the idea of God alive in the mind of the believer, it keeps him from evil deeds and leads him to good deeds. On the other hand, it ensures the continuity of the religious doctrine. Moreover, since worship requires some mental and physical preparations, it strengthens people's will and determination and puts them in a certain order. The essence of worship is to sincerely believe in Allah and live with this consciousness (ma'rifatullah- dhikrullah) at all times. This is because the more deeply

⁹⁰ Ibid,160-61.

⁹¹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al-Nafs, 177-178; Al-Ishārāt, 167-169.

the consciousness of God is rooted in man, the more perfectly the values offered by religion are lived.⁹²

According to Ibn Sīnā, no one can claim that religious knowledge is impossible and unnecessary in the name of reason. In fact, the problem of good and evil cannot be solved without the light of revelation because, in the face of the problems of good and evil, man cannot remain on the level of reason alone, can not think objectively and cannot act objectively. In situations related to these values, emotions also come into action, forcing people to make subjective judgments and actions. The presence of religion is necessary and can not be replaced by anything else when it comes to warning people about their passions, protecting them from getting caught up in them and acting rationally.⁹³

2.5.4 Ethics

Reason (*'aql*) alone is not sufficient to determine and establish the content of moral concepts such as the concepts of metaphysics; the content of these concepts cannot be determined by experience and logic alone. Ibn Sīnā deals with the basic concepts of moral philosophy which measures human behaviour and expresses value judgments with a purposive perspective and therefore considers moral philosophy as related to and complementary to metaphysics. It adopts the moral principles from metaphysics and therefore ethics comes after metaphysics.⁹⁴

The concepts that Ibn Sīnā emphasises in his moral philosophy are the concepts of good and evil. Ibn Sīnā acknowledged the existence of evil and that it is clearly known. Even though it is tiny compared to good, its existence is necessary. This is because the possibility of possible beings other than just the good *Wājib al-Wujūd* is also the reason why they are imperfect beings. Since imperfection is a kind of evil, one cannot imagine a world without evil. The place where evil is actually seen is in the realm of being and decay and this is because matter, in which formation and decay take

⁹² Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al-Nafs, 155-157; *Al-Shifā`*, al-lāhiyyāt, 443-446.

⁹³ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 142-143.

⁹⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al-Nafs, 37-38.

place, is very susceptible to taking on a wide variety of forms and opposing qualities are open to each other. Since matter cannot fully assume the form it must take, sometimes that individual of the species cannot attain the competence of its own nature and thus evil arises in the ontological structure. Such evil acts are, for example, an unhealthy mother giving birth to an unhealthy child the drowning of a human being in the water or the burning of a fire. However, the purpose of such natural events is not to harm people.⁹⁵

Moreover, such evils are not so frequent as to affect all or most of the members of a species nor are they permanent; hence, these few evils have no significant effect on the general scheme of prosperity. It would be a greater evil if the Creator transformed existence into nothingness so that these evils would not exist. Consequently, the essence of the universe consists of good and evil. Everything happens according to the divine plan of destiny. The effect of the supralunar realm is random, it is destiny to see this effect in the realm under the lunar world.⁹⁶

According to Ibn Sīnā, evil is not absolute but relativistic and must be considered as a kind of absence; the reason for this absence is the property of matter in all kinds of forms. However, Ibn Sīnā does not consider the evils (disease, disability, etc.) to which man is exposed as part of the material world as evil. Since some of these evils can be remedied by treatment even if they are not eliminated, this evil is confined to this world and limited only to the body. However, true evil is not that which has to do with the body but with the self that lives on after it leaves the body. The evil that falls under the subject of moral philosophy is the evil that has to do with the soul, the true existence of man. However, it should not be concluded from this that the body is excluded and extinguished for the self can realise its competence by using the body.⁹⁷

Ibn Sīnā, like all Muslim thinkers, believed that the goal of morality is happiness and that this can be realised to the highest degree after death but in order to achieve happiness, the theoretical mind must first become competent and grasp and know many aspects, especially the first being/Allah as much as possible. As this information

⁹⁵ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 140-43.

⁹⁶ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā*, al-Ṭab'īyāh: al-Samā al-Ṭabī'ī, 40; *Al-Ishārāt*, 140-43.

⁹⁷ Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah Al-Aḍḥawiyya fī Amr al-Ma'ad li al-Shaykh*, 145.

increases, the desire will increase to realise the first existence (love). This intense desire for the first existence is the competence of the intellectual mind and, at the same time, the highest happiness of man. While virtue is to some extent, related to the body, happiness is unique to the soul for it is only the soul that is immortal. It is a phenomenon that begins as soon as he leaves the body when he encounters (*thawab- 'iqāb*) or (*sa 'adah-shaqāwah*) which is the reward for what he has earned with the body.⁹⁸

Although Ibn Sīnā does not consider it impossible that the soul will be united with some kind of body after death⁹⁹, he claims that only the soul will feel and experience otherworldly happiness or unhappiness. Reasoning can only prove the happiness or unhappiness of the soul and people can only accept what religion says about the body. According to Ibn Sīnā, many questions related to the afterlife are unclear to people.¹⁰⁰

Ibn Sīnā is of the opinion that with death, there is nothing more connected with the body and material pleasures in the consciousness of the soul because even the smallest crumb will lower the level of its happiness after death. The goal of the soul should be to become a mere thought (being) even with the body. Although this situation is not really possible with the body, it can occur immediately after the body. However, it should not be concluded from this that the body prevents the virtue and happiness of the soul. Even though the body is a tool for the soul to attain eternal happiness, this tool must be healthy but physical health alone is not enough for happiness.¹⁰¹

2.6 CONCLUSION

The life of Ibn Sīnā was treated in five stages. The first stage was the part from his birth to the age of sixteen. This period was generally the time of scientific education. The second stage began with Ibn Sīnā's invitation to the palace after the Sāmānīd ruler Nūh bin Manṣūr felt seriously ill.

⁹⁸ Ibid,148.

⁹⁹ According to Muslim Kalamist.

¹⁰⁰ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā`*, Al-Ilahiyyāt (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 1960),423.

¹⁰¹ Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah Al-Aḍḥawiyya fī Amr al-Ma'ād Li al-Shaykh* (Qāhirah: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, 1949), 148-151.

In the third phase of his life, Ibn Sīnā traveled to various regions. The years 1012 and 1024 Gregoriana constitute the fourth phase of his life. He went to Rai and treated the melancholic illness of Majd al-Dawla, the son of the Buwayhī governor. In this way, he became close to the Buwayhids and became their vizier. This period was marked by ups and downs and political turmoil. Although he went through a turbulent process, he did not neglect composing and training students.

After these unpleasant events, Ibn Sīnā secretly left Hamadān with his brother and student Juzjānī and his two servants and reached Iṣfahān after an arduous journey. This event, which probably took place in the year (4415/1024), comprised the beginning of the fifth phase of his life. During this period, he was respected and honoured by the Kākūyi ruler, ‘Alā’ al-Dawla and participated with him in some expeditions. He also made astronomical observations on behalf of the ruler to correct the errors in the calendars. Ibn Sīnā, whose days in Iṣfahān were relatively quiet, could not get rid of the disease he had caught and died in Hamadān.

After the XI century, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā came to mind when the word ‘falāsifah’ was mentioned in the Islamic world. However, Ibn Sīnā was not as dependent on the systems of Plato and Aristotle as al-Fārābī. Moreover, Ibn Sīnā had a unique position than al-Fārābī because he was a historian of philosophy, a physician and a historian of science; an artist-philosopher.¹⁰²

Ibn Sīnā was undoubtedly a systematic philosopher who wrote in all areas of philosophy. This study highlights the major philosophical thoughts that are thought to influence Ibn Sīnā’s approach to the verses of the Qur’an.

In all his great, middle and small works which he wrote according to the classification of sciences, Ibn Sīnā crowned the philosophy in which he began with pure reason with prophethood. In almost all his philosophical works, he tried to explain the necessity and naturalness of religion for the happiness of the individual and society in a fluent style without resorting to complex proofs.

¹⁰² Durusoy, “İbni Sina.”, 322.

In all his philosophical works, Ibn Sīnā tried to distinguish between judgments of fact (true-false) and judgments of value (good-bad), showing that the first one includes the realm of philosophy and science and the latter to the realm of religion and that finally, metaphysics assumed the role of a bridge between religion and philosophy.

Ibn Sīnā treated the problem of knowledge together with the topics of logic (*manṭiq*) and psychology (*nafs*). However, in his writings on *nafs*, he generally examined the process of knowledge and logic, knowledge in terms of form (*sūra*) and content (*mādda*). He explained the process of knowledge with the theory of the psychological mind and saw rational intuition as the source of knowledge (*ishrāq*). Ibn Sīnā explained that the process of coming into being and passing away in the universe requires two elements: one changing and the other unchanging. The part that bore the change of these two elements that made up the body was the matter (*mādda*) and the part that changed and determined the type was form (*sūra*). Although Ibn Sīnā mentioned matter as the principle of forms or essences in various places, he declared that the only principle of individual existence is God. Accordingly, God is the first cause (*'illah*) that conferred existence, and the matter is the second-degree cause that externally supplies the qualities of multiplicity. The sum of objects from the four elements to the celestial bodies is called the realm. According to Ibn Sīnā, the world is finite; there is no emptiness in the world. The space in which the movement takes place does not mean emptiness. Space is a mental realm in which the enclosing object comes into contact with the enclosing object and in the external world, there is no space. Although Ibn Sīnā gave psychology a place in natural philosophy, he argued that the soul is an independent and real existence (substance) and its immortality.

CHAPTER THREE

ANALYSIS OF HIS TREATISES ON VERSES AND SŪRAS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Ibn Sīnā wrote quite comprehensive works in disciplines such as logic, nature and metaphysics more comprehensive than other Muslim philosophers. Ibn Sīnā was the most important system philosopher of the peripatetic (*mashshā'i*) school, placing the tradition of classical philosophy at the forefront in terms of style, content and scope focusing not only on the philosophical and natural sciences but also on religious topics such as prayer, fate, Prophethood and the afterlife, writing treatises. This situation led to him gaining more recognition in the Islamic world. Almost all of Ibn Sīnā's works are preserved today in many copies.¹

Al-Kindī who was considered the founder of Islamic philosophy stated that the Qur'an uses figurative language and is therefore open to different interpretations. He believed that the Qur'an allows for the basic ideas of philosophy which leads to a new interpretation of the Qur'an, a philosophical exegesis. One of the greatest philosophers of humankind, Ibn Sīnā (d. 427/1037), developed this type of interpretation, which was not observed for almost two centuries as a model and used it in his interpretations of the Qur'an. The tradition of philosophical interpretation of the Qur'an which began with al-Kindī and Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', was further developed by Ibn Sīnā. Therefore, he must be considered the scholar who brought the genre of philosophical exegesis to fruition.²

Ibn Sīnā is not known to have interpreted the Qur'an from beginning to end. Six *tafsīr* treatises believed to belong to Ibn Sīnā were collected by Ḥassan 'Aṣī in his work, '*al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*.' The work is a verified (*taḥqiq*) publication of Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* treatises.³ The texts of the relevant

¹ Omer Mahir Alper, "İbn Sina (Eserleri)," in *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*, 20 (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yay., 1999), 338; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardi- Ibn 'Arabi* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1992), 24.

² Jules Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 781.

³ Ḥassan 'Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā* (Bairut: al-Muassasah al-Jāmi'iyyah al-Dirāsāh wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzi', 1986), 84-125.

treatises are taken from this work throughout this study. Ibn Sīnā's Qur'anic writings fall into two categories: commentaries on individual verses and commentaries on individual *sūras*. Independent treatises on verses are respectively: The verse of Light (Q.24 / 35), the verse of *Dukhān* (Q:41.11), the *sūras* are: *Sūrah al-A'la*, *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *Sūrah al-Falaq*, *Sūrah al-Nās*. Ibn Sīnā also has a treatise on the Qur'an called *al-Risālah al-Nawrūziyya*. This treatise is about the interpretation of the letters of abbreviation (*muqatta'ah*) at the beginning of the *sūras*, which was not included in the dissertation because it was considered more appropriate to include in the Qur'anic sciences.

This chapter will outline the structure, contents and scope of Ibn Sīnā's treatises on Qur'anic verses and *sūras*. This will allow us to better situate his Qur'anic hermeneutics and method.

3.2 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF PHILOSOPHICAL TAFSĪR

Parallel to the scientific issues that Muslim scholars dealt with in the period called '*muta'akhhir*' in Islamic civilisation, commentary studies also diversified in linguistic, confessional, juridical, philosophical and mystical aspects. These scholarly discussions have led to the emergence of multidimensional interpretive methods that preserve the integrity of the understanding of the Qur'an.⁴ One of these methods is undoubtedly the type of philosophical commentary in which verses are interpreted according to the rules of philosophy and logic. Although the production of such philosophical interpretations was very limited in the classical period, it significantly influenced later Qur'anic commentaries, especially in the form practiced by philosophers and Sufis.⁵

There is no clear definition for the philosophical interpretations of the Qur'anic verses by commentators and scholars. The authors of the classical *tafsīr* books classified the commentaries according to the layers of commentators and their historical

⁴ Resad İlyasov, "Ebû Said Muhammed Hâdimî'nin Kur'an'ı Yorumlama Yöntemi" (Phd, İstanbul, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007),10.

⁵ Jules Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qur'anic Studies*, Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 780.

continuity. Contemporary historians of exegesis have mostly classified the *tafsīr* according to the basic tendencies of the commentators, taking into account their particularities.⁶ The possibilities and legitimacy of these works which they call philosophical commentaries and to what extent they can contribute to the interpretation of the Qur'an are among the issues that need to be discussed.⁷

Some contemporary historians of exegesis define philosophical commentaries as the interpretations and analyses of the sūras and verses of the Qur'an performed by Muslim philosophers. Others consider philosophical interpretation as works in which verses are interpreted using the rules of philosophy and logic. In these commentaries, the philosophers take two different approaches to reconciling religion and philosophy. The first is a selective approach and has tried to prove that religion and philosophy are compatible by interpreting traditions and religious truths from a philosophical point of view. The other is to explain religious truths and verses with philosophical theories, which risk becoming alienated from the idiosyncratic method of interpreting the Qur'an, leading to philosophical theories dominating the verses of the Qur'an. For all these reasons, most classical *tafsīr* scholars did not accept such *tafsīr* activities that contradicted the Qur'anic *tafsīr* method. Some scholars preferred to use these commentaries by removing the parts that contradict the religious tradition.⁸

There is nothing more natural in the work of a scholar than to reflect on the knowledge, understanding and views of his time and seek answers to the theological, philosophical, cultural and legal problems of the day. In this regard, the reason for the emergence and development of the science of *tafsīr* is the effort to interpret the Qur'an in a way that appeals to the addressees of the time.⁹ Philosophical commentaries are also a product of the efforts of Muslim philosophers to interpret the Qur'an in accordance with their own system of thought. The first example of a philosophical interpretation is found in the works of al-Kindī, who is considered the founder of Islamic philosophy. Despite the technical devices used in other types of exegesis including the

⁶ Ahmet Faruk Guneş, "İbn Sina'dan Elmalılı'ya İhlâs Sûresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi" (Phd, 2008), 20.

⁷ Mesut Okumus *Kur'an'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sina Ornegi* (Ankara: Arastırma Yay., 2003), 36.

⁸ Muḥammad Ḥussain Al-Dhahābī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. II (Qāhirah: Maktabah Wahba, n.d.), 309.

⁹ Guneş, "İbn Sina'dan Elmalılı'ya İhlâs Sûresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi.", 23.

Mu'tazila, al-Kindī presented an outspoken philosophical interpretation of Qur'anic verses for the first time in history. Al-Kindī interpreted the verse 'The stars and the trees, both prostrate (before Allah)'.¹⁰ In his treatise '*Al-Ibāne 'an Sujūd al-Jirm al-Aqsā wa Ṭa'atihī lillahi 'Azza ve Jalla*', Al-Kindī explains that what the Prophet brought from Allah does not contradict the mind, that they are all present in the general functioning of the mind and that no one can deny them unless he is unwise. He explained that the expression 'they prostrate before Allah' in the verse means 'obedience to Allah'. According to this interpretation, all planets obey God towards the divine will.

Although Abū Naṣr Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ṭarkhān b. Ūzlugh al-Fārābī (d. 339/ 950) did not deal with *tafsīr*, he interpreted some verses in his works. According to al-Fārābī, true religion is a symbolic expression of precise philosophical (scientific) truth and if religion is understood only in the light of rational sciences, it can be protected from all kinds of conspiracies and distortions. In his work called *Fuṣūs al-Ḥikam*, he interprets some truths and verses of the *Qur'ān*. One of them is '*Zāhir*' (exoteric) and '*Bāṭin*' (esoteric), one of the attributes of Allah mentioned in the third verse of *Sūrah al-Ḥadid*. The explanation is:

His existence is the most perfect among other beings. Nothing remains hidden among the embroidery assets. He is apparent in his nature. He is abdominal due to the severity of its occurrence. Every exoteric (*ẓāhir*) appears with Him. It reveals all the hidden things, just like the sun. It also hides those that are not hidden. He is abdominal due to the severity of its occurrence. Its appearance rises above the realisations and becomes hidden. He is *Zāhir* in terms of his attribution to his works. It is wajib in terms of being and it is believed.¹¹

Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', a community that emerged in Baṣra for religious, scientific, philosophical and political purposes also interpreted the verses of the Qur'an and reached some conclusions that contradicted general acceptance. This group, which frequently refers to the verses of the Qur'an in its treatises titled *Rasā'il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' wa Khullān al-Wafā'*, has fifty-two treatises, fourteen of which concern mathematics

¹⁰ Sūrah al-Raḥmān, 55/6.

¹¹ Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Al-Majmū' min Muallafah Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī* (İstanbul: Suleymaniye Kutuphanesi, 1325),70.

and logic, seventeen the sciences and psychology, ten metaphysics and eleven the science of the stars and magic.¹²

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā's view of Islam is almost like a synthesis of *Ismā'īlī* thought and Sufism. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' made all matters related to religion dependent on the fundamental distinction between the exoteric and the esoteric, just like the *Ismā'īlīs* and Sufis. This distinction also applies to the Qur'an they assume that the words and apparent meanings of the divine address are intended for ordinary people ('*awwām*'); they claimed that only connoisseurs of wisdom and truth (*khawwās*) can understand the essential and true meanings.¹³ Some interpretations of this group that interpret the Qur'anic verses in their sense are:

According to the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', who interpreted the torments of hell and the hereafter entirely symbolically with a Gnostic understanding, the verse '*They are exposed to the fire every morning and every evening; and when the last hour comes, a command will be given: Let the Pharaonites come to an even harder torment,*'¹⁴ declares the souls of unbelievers and devils doomed to suffer from their ignorance and presumption until the Day of Judgment. Likewise, the expression of the seven gates of hell which is used in the verse ¹⁵ is explained by the fact that the objects under the moon are divided into seven types. Four of these seven kinds of objects are fire, air, water and earth. The other three are mines, plants and animals called *mawâlid al-thalâtha*, whose structural forms are prone to decay. Again, these 'seven gates' signify the contact between the seven moving planets of what happens in the realm of *kawn* and *fasad* Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' interpreted parables, which are themselves symbolic expressions, in accordance with certain philosophical theories in their systems of thought. 'Above it (hell) is nineteen guardians' verse 'nineteen' symbolises seven planets and twelve horoscopes. Because the effects of these planets on the earthly events occur with their course in twelve signs and the sum of the planets and twelve signs corresponds exactly to the number nineteen.¹⁶

¹³ Mustafa Ozturk, "İhvân-i Safâ'nin Felsefî Düşünce Sisteminde Kur'an ve Yorum," *OMUİF Dergisi*, no. 14–15 (2003): 298.

¹⁴ Sūrah al-Ghāfir, 40/46.

¹⁵ Sūrah al-Hijr 15/44.

¹⁶ Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasâ'il Ikhwân al-Safâ' wa Khullân al-Wafâ'*, vol. 3 (Muassasah Handawî, 2018), 64.

The Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' interpreted parables which are themselves symbolic expressions, in accordance with certain philosophical theories in their system of thought. For example, *Sūrah Al-Nūr* (Q:24/35) was adapted to the theory of emanation in Neoplatonism¹⁷, which they based on the theme and the invention of being as follows:

Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. As His light, the entire spirit is like a lamp. This soul shines with the light of the spirit, just as a lamp shines with a lamp illuminated by the light of Allah. In this lamp, there is a lamp in a crystal lamp glass: the crystal is the first image (the first substance) that is illuminated and transparent by the radiance of the soul that permeates it (the first substance) so that the universal mind focuses on the universal soul.

This glass is almost like a pearl: this is an abstract image that crystallises in its own diversity. It is not relative and does not belong to the East or to the West but is ignited by the oil that comes from the olive tree: the soul gives movement to all beings just as the oil gives power to a lamp. It belongs neither to the East nor to the West. On the contrary, it was created by the command of Allah but it is not ink (composite). Its oil almost gives light even if the fire does not touch it. Although it cannot reach it, the soul almost becomes a spirit by its grace and greatness. The spirit strengthens the soul with goodness.¹⁸

Otherwise, it would be 'light above light'. The light of the spirit is higher than the light of the soul (*nafs*). Allah guides whomever He wills to His light. Allah gives examples like this to people. Therefore, fire is the highest form and the greatest example associated with light. That is why Iblis said, '*You created me from fire and him from clay.*'¹⁹ He was cursed when he said for fire by nature moves upward; mud, on the other

¹⁷ It is known that this center, which was called the Alexandria school and the philosophy of Alexandria in history, was fed from the Alexandria Library. The philosophy of Alexandria is identified with Plotin (d. 270), the pioneer and most important philosopher of Neoplatonism, and is the product of his work known as the *Enneades* (the Nine) and his followers. For further information see: J. Richard Netton, "Neoplatonism in Islamic Philosophy," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London-New York: Routledge, 1998), 5984-5988.

¹⁸ Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Al-Risālah al-Jāmi'ah Dhāt al-Fawā'id al-Nāfi'ah*, vol. 2 (Bairut: Dār al-Andalus, n.d.), 484.

¹⁹ *Sūrah al-Ṣād*, 38/76.

hand, by its nature, moves downward.²⁰ As it can be seen, the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' tried to support their views by using the verses as evidence for their philosophical thoughts. It can be said that the methods in the *tafsīr* have similarities with the approach of the Ismā'īlī group.²¹

Undoubtedly, Ibn Sīnā was the first philosopher to write independent *tafsīr* treatises in the philosophical *tafsīr* tradition. With these *tafsīr* treatises, Ibn Sīnā became a pioneer of the philosophical commentary tradition and influenced the philosophers and commentators after him. These *tafsīr* letters which are the major subject of our study and Ibn Sīnā's approach to the Qur'an will be explained in detail later on.

Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī (d. 505/1111) is known among Muslims as the 'Proof of Islam' and undoubtedly one of the greatest thinkers of all time in the Islamic world interprets Qur'anic verses or parts of them according to philosophical overview as creatively developed by Ibn Sīnā. The first significant example of this is found in his book *Ṭhyā al-'Ulūm*. The passage is entitled 'The Armies of the Heart' and begins directly with a quotation at the end of the verse. 'And no one knows the armies of your Lord except Him.'²² After noting that there are many armies known only to God, al-Ghazzālī stated that of the armies to which humans have access, there are two in particular that can be distinguished: one that is seen with the external eye and one that is perceived with the internal eye. Expression of the perceptual faculties in Al-Ghazzālī seems to be like Ibn Sīnā's theory. Al-Ghazzālī recalled the perceptive faculty (along with specifying the five external senses and the five internal senses) as well as the arousal faculty (desire and anger) and the motive faculty. It should be remembered that the word 'heart' in this context is synonymous with 'soul' for it is used in its subtler sense as a lordly, divine subtlety that is the reality of man.²³ Al-Ghazzālī described the Qur'anic sayings in an unexpected, namely psychologising way which was also found in Ibn Sīnā's philosophical exegesis that deserves special attention.²⁴

²⁰ Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Al-Risālah al-Jāmi'ah Dhāt al-Fawā'id al-Nāfi'ah*, vol. 2, (Bairut: Dār al-Andalus, n.d.), 484-85; Ozturk, "İhvân-i Safâ'nin Felsefî Dusunce Sisteminde Kur'an ve Yorum.", 305-6.

²¹ Ozturk, "İhvân-i Safâ'nin Felsefî Dusunce Sisteminde Kur'an ve Yorum.", 306.

²² Sūrah al-Muddaththir, 73/31.

²³ Abū Ḥāmid Al-Ghazzālī, *Ṭhyā' al-'Ulūm al-Dīn* (Bayrut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005), 879.

²⁴ Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries.", 785-86.

Finally, al-Ghazzālī, in his work *Mishkāt al-Anwār*, interpreted the basic expressions in verse thirty-five of *Sūrah Al-Nūr* as symbolic as a niche, a lamp, a glass (crystal), olive oil and a tree. According to al-Ghazzālī, the five senses of man are like a niche. This is because a niche has a narrow space and looks outward. It can not go beyond what is seen (*mā-warā*). It is there through *ma 'qūlāt* to give light but not through itself. The imagination is like a glass/mirror that takes in the images of things that come from the environment (*mudrekāt*), captures the spiritual light and illuminates the living beings it surrounds. The mind is like a *miṣbah* (lamp) that enhances perceptions and divine faculties. *Mufakkirah* is like an olive tree blessed with a genealogy that produces endless fruits (results). The sacred power is like an olive oil lamp for this sacred power with its purity and clarity gives light almost without contemplation.²⁵

In summary, one can find examples of philosophical exegesis in al-Ghazzālī's writings on various occasions. This does not mean that the philosophers and Ibn Sīnā, in particular, always influenced him in his understanding of the Qur'an. However, al-Ghazzālī did not reject any of their interpretations outright. In fact, he found some of them useful and did not hesitate to include them in his work.²⁶

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) is one of the most important scholars in the history of Islamic thought with his answers to the intellectual problems of the Muslims of his time through his questions, his philosophical criticism and his works. While pondering theological problems and interpreting the Qur'an, he could not ignore the philosophical intellectual tradition of Muslim society. Viewing the *Kalām* as a universal science, Al-Rāzī emphasised interpretation based on reason instead of narratives in his famous exegesis work '*al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*'. He distinguished between *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* and framed the commentary with quotations and linguistic explanations.²⁷

In his *tafsīr* book, Al-Rāzī sometimes comprised the rules of the intellect of the teachings of the *Sunnī* '*Ash 'arī Kalāmī* system, the views of the philosophers, the words of the *Sūfīs* based on explorations and information about fields such as medicine,

²⁵ Abū Hāmid Al-Ghazzālī, *Mishkāt Al-Anwār (The Niche of Lights)* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Press, 1998), 25-32.

²⁶ Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries," 787.

²⁷ Mustafa Ozturk, "Tefsirde Fahreddin Er-Râzî," in *İslâm Düşüncesinin Donusum Çağında Fahreddin Er-Râzî*, Omer Turker-Osman Demir (İstanbul: İSAM Yay., 2013), 289-90.

astronomy and cosmology. Al-Rāzī's quoted Ibn Sīnā in the thirty-fifth verse of *Sūrah al-Nūr*. The author criticised the philosophers who misunderstood the literal meaning with no proof. In particular, he considered the philosophers' evaluation of Allah's depiction of the 'heavens beneath which rivers flow' in the Qur'an as a representation of happiness and grace as an interpretation that leads to religious distortion.²⁸

Another name that gives an example of philosophical exegesis is Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn 'Arabī (d. 638/1240) as known, *Al-Shaikh Al-Akbar* (The Greatest Master). His comprehensive system is esoteric (*baṭīnī*) and thus has little or nothing in common with the philosophy which is actually based on reason. However, Ibn 'Arabī seems to have been occasionally influenced by philosophical exegesis at least by its approach. Ibn Arābī referred almost directly to Q. 55: 19-20 but while the Qur'an text mentions the existence of a barrier between 'two seas', Ibn Arābī shifts the word *barzakh* from a physical to an intellectual level. After emphasising that the *barzakh* is not perceptible to the senses, he continues, since the *barzakh* is a separating entity between the known and the unknown, the nonexistent and the existent, the negated and the affirmed, the intelligible and the unintelligible, it means 'barrier' (*barzakh*). Ibn Arābī explains a Qur'anic term, *barzakh*, in terms of the modalities of human acquaintance with reality, through sensation, intellect or imagination, even though the Qur'anic verse does not point directly in that direction.²⁹

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191) is a philosopher who lived in Irān and had some philosophical interpretations of the Qur'an. Even though Suhrawardī's basic ideas differed from Ibn Sīnā, he was not indifferent to the philosophy of the latter and adopted many of his ideas, including components of his philosophical interpretations. One of these philosophical explanations is as follows: In the 56th verse of *Sūrah al-Dukhān*, it says: 'And they will not taste death except the 'first death'. Suhrawardī interpreted the first death as the death of the body based on the narration of the Qur'an. However, as for the second death which is not explicitly mentioned in the Qur'an, Suhrawardī associated the 'second death' with the fate of those who have failed and

²⁸ Ibid, 287,293.

²⁹ Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries.",789.

identified this fate not with the fire of hell but with suffering because of the deprivation of the power of knowledge.³⁰

Muḥammad Ibn Ibrahim Ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawamī al-Shirāzī (b. 1571–d. 1640), sometimes called Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shirāzī and commonly known as Mullā Ṣadrā, is one of the outstanding figures in Islamic philosophy of the post-advantage period. He was born in Shirāz and received his education there and in Iṣfahān. Ṣadrā's writings in the various sciences, his work on the Qur'an and its interpretation occupy an important place because the Qur'an plays a central role in his thought. Although almost all of Ṣadrā's important philosophical writings contain quotations from the Qur'an, Ṣadrā wrote several commentaries on individual chapters and verses of the Qur'an from the beginning of his career until several years before his death.³¹

Thus, the tradition of philosophical *tafsīr* began with al-Kindī and was coined by Ibn Sīnā who wrote the first independent exegetical treatises. It can be said that the philosophers and commentators after Ibn Sīnā continued the tradition of philosophical *tafsīr* by being influenced by the works of Ibn Sīnā's philosophical interpretation of the Qur'an.

3.3 INTELLECTUAL BACKGROUND OF IBN SĪNĀ'S QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Ibn Sīnā's views on philosophy, religion and the relationship he established between the two, as well as on revelation, prophecy and the Qur'an should be studied carefully for an empirical yet rational understanding of his *tafsīr* works. The philosopher's approach to these concepts sheds light on his method and approach to interpreting verses and sūras. In Ibn Sīnā's works, he mentions the concept of philosophy as synonymous with the words 'wisdom' and 'science'. Ibn Sīnā '*Uyūn al-Ḥikmah*' defines 'wisdom' as follows:

³⁰ Ibid. 790.

³¹ Sajjad H. Rizvi, *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzī: His Life And Works And The Sources For Safavid Philosophy* (United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007), 5-8.

It is the desire to perfect the human soul by envisioning the concepts related to the facts and confirming the theoretical and practical realities as much as the human capacity allows.³²

Philosophy is an art of thinking and investigation, of searching for the truth of things (*naẓar*). Due to this art, man finds existence (*wujūd*) and God (*Wājib*) in himself. In this way, he honours his soul, matures it and prepares for eternal bliss in the hereafter. Ibn Sīnā, who divides wisdom into theoretical and practical wisdom (*naẓarī and ‘amālī ḥikmah*), explained the purpose of theoretical wisdom (*naẓarī ḥikmah*) as obtaining accurate and precise information about existence. Practical wisdom aims to ensure the perfection of the soul, not only through knowledge but also through action. Thus, in the first case, the goal is to develop a conviction and realistic. In the second case, the goal is to develop an action and good (*khair*).³³

According to Ibn Sīnā, philosophy also includes the goals of religion and morality. The author, who supports this idea with the 269th verse of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*³⁴ interprets: ‘A person who perfects his soul with theoretical and practical wisdom and fulfils the requirements of practical wisdom is now given a great good’³⁵

Ibn Sīnā describes religion under its purpose. Religion has political, metaphysical and moral functions. Because of these functions of religion, its target audience is humanity. The prophets also aim to address almost all people and convey religious messages. This situation influences the language used by the prophets. The word of religion, which aims to lead people to theoretical and practical wisdom, tries to explain some truths that people cannot grasp by dealing with symbols and examples.³⁶ *The Sharī‘ah*, which provides people with theoretical knowledge such as the existence of the Creator, His attributes, unity, wisdom, justice and the exclusion of deficient attributes, later transitions into the practical and moral dimension of human behaviour. That which purifies the human soul from evil is worshipping God and acting in

³² ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Badawī, *Ibn Sīnā ‘Uyūn al-Ḥikmah* (Bairut: Dār al-Qalam, 1980), 16.

³³ Ibn Sīnā, “Fī Aqsām al-‘Ulūm al-‘Aqliyyah,” in *Tis’a Rasāil fī al-Ḥikmah ve al-Ṭabī‘yyah* (Qāhirah: Dār al-‘Arab, 1989), 104-05; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifā’*, vol. 1, *Al-Mantīq* (Qāhirah, 1957), 14.

³⁴ Allah grants wisdom to whoever He wills. And whoever is granted wisdom is certainly blessed with a great privilege. But none will be mindful of this except people of reason. (Q.2:269)

³⁵ Ibn Sīnā, “Fī Aqsām al-‘Ulūm al-‘Aqliyyah,” 105.

³⁶ Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah Al-Aḍḥawiyya fī Amr al-Ma‘ād li al-Shaykh* (Qāhirah: Dar al-Fikr al-‘Arabi, 1949), 44-50.

accordance with the Prophet's *sharī'ah*,. Ethics and worship are like a castle and shield that protect man.³⁷

According to Ibn Sīnā who claimed that worship performed with the body and all deeds by which one does favours for others leads man to the truth and purity superstition so that the soul can attain happiness when it leaves the body, the basically *sharī'ah* sets two types of limits: incentive and deterrent. Using incentives and inspirational expressions in the language of religion do not always lead to the desired result. In order to prevent people from falling into mischief, some limits should be set and there should be threats to intimidate them. Finally, it is also beneficial to prevent people from falling into mischief so as not to disturb the order in the world. People must be bound by one of the two basic bindings. One is the *sharī'ah* and the other is the bond of reason. If these two ties are broken, there can be no more order on earth.³⁸

Ibn Sīnā, like the previous philosophers and theologians, tried to reconcile religion and philosophy. According to him, there are similarities between religion and philosophy to start points, themes and goals. The major theme and the goal of both is the knowledge of the first cause of existence and to secure man's happiness through this knowledge. The aim of the prophets is to inform people about Allah and the hereafter. Issues related to God, theology and mead are among the most important topics of philosophy and philosophers. Divine wisdom, which is one of the most important subjects of philosophy, also deals with the existence of God, His essence, His attributes, His relations with the universe, the meaning of human life, the structure of the human mind and the meaning of human happiness, etc. It aims to get accurate information about the following.³⁹

Another goal of the prophets is to realise human perfection by establishing the rules for just administration in this world and later opening the way to happiness and salvation in the hereafter. Ibn Sīnā too aims to create an ideal society in this world so that man can attain the perfection and happiness for which he was created. So all these

³⁷ Ibid, 120.

³⁸ Ibn Sīnā , "Risālah fī Sirr al-Qadar," in *Majmū` Rasā'il al-Shaykh al-Ra'īs Ibn Sīnā al-Bukhārī* (Matba 'ah Jami'iyyah Dāirah al-Ma'ārif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1354),3.

³⁹ Ahmet Arslan, "İbn Sinā ve Spinoza'da Felsefe-Din İlişkileri," in *İslam Felsefesi Uzerine* (Ankara: Vadi Yay., 1999), 107-108.

similarities and goals between philosophy and religion are the elements that make both disciplines compatible.⁴⁰

Although Ibn Sīnā accepts that philosophy and religion are the same in terms of the issues they address, the problems they seek to solve and the goals they seek to achieve. There are some differences between the two fields, both in terms of the target audience and the language they use toward that audience and in terms of the approach and method they choose to solve the problems. As a result, there are some considerable variations between a philosopher and a prophet. While there is a similarity between both Ibn Sīnā and the prophet in terms of how they get information and the type of knowledge they possess, there are some differences in how they convey the truth. The habit of the *sharī'ah* holders is to tell people what they have been told as a method and to avoid going into depth and explaining details. According to the philosophers, the explanations in some parts of the religious laws should be exoteric and in others symbolic (esoteric). Therefore, wise people think about these mysteries and allegorical interpretations and develop a higher level of knowledge about God.

Ibn Sīnā's philosophical understanding influenced his insight of religion and the Qur'an and formed the basis for his philosophy of religion. Ibn Sīnā sought to incorporate the Hellenistic heritage that reached him and the Prophetic sources of knowledge and he frequently attempted to explain philosophical issues in Islamic terms. Although the mind can understand some metaphysical realities to a certain extent, these realities cannot be expressed or shared with a large section of society because of the problem of language. Therefore, Ibn Sīnā strives to explain the religious equivalence of philosophical concepts by using spiritual and religious concepts side by side in his metaphysical writings. Occasionally, he substantiates the conclusions of his thought by referring to a particular part or word of a verse or hadith. Thus, Ibn Sīnā added a divine dimension to epistemology by equating the sphere of the mind and souls of the philosophical tradition with the angelic realm (*malakūt*) of the Qur'an. In a sense, he sought to reconcile the spirit of philosophy with the revelation of the Qur'an.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ibid, 108.

⁴¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *İslam Kozmoloji Ogretilerine Giriş* (İstanbul: İnsan Yay., 1985); Mesut Okumus "Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sīnā'nın Kur'an Sure Ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları," *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 50,1 (n.d.): 170.

In clarifying the relationship between religion and philosophy, Ibn Sīnā goes a step further and mentioned that the principles of practical wisdom are taken from the divine *sharī'ah* and their definitions are explained in the most perfect way by philosophy. He explained that man, thanks to his theoretical abilities, applies these laws to problems by drawing conclusions and resorting to practical principles. Ibn Sīnā explains the relationship between religion and philosophy in his letter called *Aqsām al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyyah*:

I have shown you a fragment of wisdom. Therefore, it became clear that wisdom contains nothing contrary to the Sharia. Those who call people to wisdom or who want wisdom and later diverge from the way of the *Sharī'ah* have deviated from their own accord because of their own weakness and faults not because the art of wisdom requires it so for wisdom is far from those heretics.⁴²

According to Ibn Sīnā, the Qur'an is not only a work of revelation but also a miraculous book. Among the miracles and amazing features of the Qur'an are its qualities, the beauty of its verses, the information, the spiritual themes - its explanations about Allah, the angels, the divine books and the prophets - it is the invisible (*ghaybī*) news about the past and the future in its content. Ibn Sīnā who accepts these features in the divine address as miraculous features tries to explain the phenomenon of miracle with a rational justification by interpreting it as some important and special powers that the prophets possessed.⁴³

Ibn Sīnā accepted religion as a universal phenomenon and its audience as all humanity without distinction. For this reason, the address of Qur'an is also universal. Accordingly, the language and the form of address were chosen. However, this does not mean that the language of the religion and all the topics contained in the Qur'an can be understood equally by all people. In the address of the Qur'an, the language used can be understood by everyone but sometimes only the elite can understand. The divine address, which also takes into account the needs of the general audience, has kept many topics short. The Qur'an has used language that is occasionally *tanzīhī* and sometimes

⁴² Ibn Sīnā, "Fī Aqsām al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyyah.", 118.

⁴³ Ibn Sīnā, "Risālah fī al-Fī'l wa al-Fā'il wa Aqsāmuhu," in *Majmū' Rasā'il Al-Shaykh Al-Ra'is* (Jāmi' iyyah Dāirah al-Ma'ārif Al-Uthmāniyyah, 1354), 4-5.

representative and prefers *ramzī* and symbolic language, especially when expressing some issues that are difficult to explain to the public.⁴⁴

Ibn Sīnā argued that the Qur'an is generally a symbolic truth, though not the whole, but literal truths must be preserved for the common people. This does not mean that the Qur'an is not the word of God. Of course, in a sense, the Qur'an is the literal word of God. The *sharī'ah* is also partly symbolic and partly doctrinal, although it must be followed by all. Ibn Sīnā accepts the existence of symbolic expressions in the Qur'an and *Sunnah*. According to him, the Qur'an sometimes uses a language and tone that is *tanzīhī*, sometimes symbolic, and sometimes real and metaphorical. Ibn Sīnā explains that many verses in the Qur'an have metaphorical features because they are parables and one of the tasks of the elite is to decipher this metaphorical language. Ibn Sīnā also selected some verses and *sūras* and tried to decipher their metaphorical language.⁴⁵

In the later titles, some verses and commentaries of *sūras* attributed to him were analysed.

3.4 THE BASIC STRUCTURE OF IBN SĪNĀ'S TAFSĪR WORKS

Ibn Sīnā wrote six independent treatises of exegesis that are still known today. These works were studied by Ḥassan 'Aṣī and collected in the book of *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Sūfiyyah Fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*. Most of the studies on Ibn Sīnā's *tafsīr* treatises have been based on the work of Ḥassan 'Aṣī. In this study, his *tahqīq* was also taken as the basis. There is no in-depth scholarly study on the attribution of treatises to Ibn Sīnā. There are various claims about the imputation of *Sūrah al-Nūr* and *Sūrah al-A'ālā*.⁴⁶ The study is conducted based on the *tafsīr* treatises of Ḥassan 'Aṣī, who is considered the most reliable among the *muhaqqiqīn*.

⁴⁴ Ibn Sīnā, *Risālah al-Aḍḥawiyyah fī Amr al-Ma'ād li al-Shaykh*, 46-47.

⁴⁵ Okumus "Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sīnā'nın Kur'an Sure Ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları.", 162.

⁴⁶ Jules Janssens, "Avicenna and the Qur'ān: A Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries," *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales* 25-26 (2004): 177-92; Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries.", 781.

3.4.1 The Structure of Individual Verses

There are independent epistles by Ibn Sīnā in two verses. These are the 35th verse of the *Sūrah al-Nūr* known as the verse *Nūr* (the Light) and the 11th verse of the *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah* known as the verse *Dukhān* (the Smoke)

3.4.1.1. The Verse of Light in *Sūrah al-Nūr*

Ibn Sīnā interpreted the same verse in his works *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt* and *Risālah al-Ithbāt fī al-Nubuwwah*. However, while the interpretations in two different works overlap, the interpretation in this treatise differs from the others. For this reason, doubts have arisen about the treatise's affiliation with Ibn Sīnā. Jules Janssens, one of the scholars on this subject reported:

Let us first concentrate on Avicenna's explanation or rather, The Light verse's explanations. That there are at least two 'explanations' is evident from the fact that the one issued by 'Āṣī seems to have nothing in common with the one presented in *On the Proof of Prophecies* and *The Ishārāt*. It must be stressed that the commentary edited by 'Āṣī is preserved only in a relatively late manuscript in Istanbul University in 1458.⁴⁷

Mesut Okumus in his book *The Philosophical Reading of the Qur'an: The Example of Ibn Sīnā* considered the affiliation of this text with Ibn Sīnā doubtful since there are references to innocent imams in the tractate and the symbols in the verse differ from the interpretations in his other two works.⁴⁸ Despite all these doubts, this section analyses the epistle and presents a table comparing the meanings of the symbolic expressions in the verses with other texts.

﴿اللَّهُ نُورُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ﴾

‘Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth’ (Q.24:35)

⁴⁷ Jules Janssens, “Avicenna and the Qur'ân: A Survey of His Qur'anic Commentaries,” *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales* 25–26 (2004): 181.

⁴⁸ Okumus *Kur'an'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sina Ornegi*, 231.

In interpreting this verse, Ibn Sīnā described the source of existence as the light of Allah Himself, mentioning the distinction between the possible and the obligatory in his philosophical system and explaining that the possible is surrounded by Allah, including his sculpture. In explaining the verse, the author, who rejects the creation of existence by separation from the essence of Allah, made remarks emphasising the theory of emanation. The source of guidance is the light of His existence. The light of Allah is also the One who shows them what they need for the benefit of people in the world and in the heavens.⁴⁹

Ibn Sīnā made a second interpretation of the verse. According to him, the heavens and the earth represent the existence, unity, power and knowledge of Allah. God's illumination of the heavens means the glorification of the throne, the pulpit, the pen, the *lawḥ al-maḥfūz*, the *sidrah al-muntehā*, the *jannah al-ma'wā*, the *bayt al-ma'mūr*, the high stations of heaven, the *Karrabiyyūn*, the *Rūḥaniyyūn*, those who walk around the throne and occupy ranks, the glorification of those who glorify themselves with Gabriel, Michael, Isrāfēl, Azrael the blessing of those who sanctify, the bowing of those who bow down, the prostration of those who prostrate and the recitation of those who recite the Qur'an.

He ruled the earth by sending prophets, apostles and guards around the *Qa'abah*, *Bayt al-Maqdis*, i.e. *Masjīd al-Aqsā*, which is His own mosque, and the lives of prophets Abraham, Ismael, Isaac and others passing there. The earth with waters, trees and cities is adorned with food and fruits for the benefit of the creatures living on it as well as the worship of the worshippers, the repentance of the repentant, the longing of the truth-lovers and the tears of the rebels.

Ibn Sīnā considers the existence of the innocent *imāms* in the text and their guidance as one ornament of the earth does not make him a Shiite thinker. As mentioned in the second chapter, Ibn Sīnā had no sympathy for the *Ismā'ilī* groups. The presence of this expression in the text casts doubt on the text's affiliation with Ibn Sīnā. Moreover, Jules Jansens claimed that this treatise which is considered a text from a rather late

⁴⁹ 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 86-88.

period is not related to Ibn Sīnā 's thoughts of the last period of theology and the other two texts because of its wording and the way the verses are treated.⁵⁰

{ مَثَلُ نُورِهِ كَمِشْكَاةٍ فِيهَا مِصْبَاحٌ الْمِصْبَاحُ فِي زُجَاجَةٍ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ }

‘...His Light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a glass, the glass is like a glittering star...’ (Q.24:35)

As a result of his approach to the Qur’an, Ibn Sīnā, who accepted the verse as symbolic and metaphorical, moved on to ta’wil. In his interpretation, *Mishkāṭ* is the blessed person of the Prophet who is honourable, exalted, chosen and the leader of the Prophets. The meaning of *zujājah* (glass) is his pure heart, free from all doubts. *Miṣbāḥ* is the light of knowledge and faith, which he fills with brilliance. In the *miṣbāḥ*, the light of the olive oil is free from all dirt and filth and the light of the oil lamp reflected in the glass, becomes light upon light. When these lights are gathered in the niche, they turn into the brightest thing that can shine.

{ الزُّجَاجَةُ كَأَنَّهَا كَوْكَبٌ دُرِّيٌّ }

‘...The glass is like a glittering star...’ (Q.24:35)

The glass (*zujājah*) in the verse is like a shining pearl star with its brightness and light. The brightness and intensity of the light of the glass surpass itself. The fact that a star is like a pearl means that it resembles the sun in terms of its brightness and that the sun is the brightest light among the stars. The author interprets the verses in a symbolic way. The meaning of ‘*kawkab*’ here means that it is one of the greatest of the star *al-Qadr al-Awwal* or the star of *Zuhra* (Venus) or one of the five remaining imaginary planets. The term ‘*Durriyyun*’ is also said to mean that there is much light and brightness.⁵¹

{ يُوقَدُ مِنْ شَجَرَةٍ مُبَارَكَةٍ زَيْتُونَةٍ }

‘...It is kindled from a blessed olive tree...’ (Q.24:35)

⁵⁰ Janssens, “Avicenna and the Qur’ân: A Survey of His Qur’anic Commentaries.”, 182-83.

⁵¹ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī also gives the same meaning. For comporasion, see: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātiḥ Al-Ghayb*, vol. 23, 32 vols. (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 238.

What is illuminated in the verse is either *miṣbāḥ* or glass. The ‘blessed olive tree’ is the body of the Messenger of Allah (saw). The word ‘olive tree’ is more than a ‘blessed tree’ and means that it is free from turbidity and is pure.

﴿لَا شَرْقِيَّةَ وَلَا غَرْبِيَّةَ﴾

‘...neither of the East nor the West...’ (Q.24:35)

It is neither from the east nor from the west. It is from the east as well as from the west. This power is an allusion to the light of the religion that the prophet brought and to the splendour of his people. The voice of Islam has reached both the east and the west of the world and spread to all villages, cities and countries.

﴿يَكَادُ زَيْتُهَا يُضِيءُ وَلَوْ لَمْ تَمْسَسْهُ نَارٌ﴾

‘...Its oil would almost shine, even if no fire has touched it...’ (Q.24:35)

In other words, the religion of the Prophet is so bright and clear that it needs no proof, that anyone who has a conscience witnesses the fact that the religion is true without the need for miracles or proofs.

﴿نُورٌ عَلَى نُورٍ يَهْدِي اللَّهُ لِنُورِهِ مَن يَشَاءُ﴾

‘Light upon light’, Allah guides to His light whomever’(Q.24:35)

According to Ibn Sīnā, Allah guides all people. The one who shows the way of guidance is Muḥammad (saw) Those who leave this path and do not go are those who take away the light of their eyes and extinguish the light of their foresight. That Allah guides whom He wills would mean that He brings happiness to whom He wills and shows to the Prophet. For those who do not want their happiness, He deprives them of His mercy by making them unhappy. When Ibn Sīnā dealt with the theological problem of Allah guiding whom He wills, he expressed this guidance as to the concept of happiness.⁵²

⁵² According to Ibn Sīnā, for people to be happy in the world because of divine laws and justice, the prophets first tell people about Allah and His Sunnah, the virtues that must be earned, and the disgraces

﴿وَيَضْرِبُ اللَّهُ الْأَمْثَالَ لِلنَّاسِ﴾

‘...He pleases and gives the examples to mankind...’ (Q.24:35)

Ibn Sīnā emphasises that these parables are given for the benefit of mankind.

﴿وَاللَّهُ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ۝٣٥﴾

‘...Allah has knowledge of everything.’ (Q.24:35)

The knowledge of Allah encompasses the nature of things from eternity to eternity. Nothing in the heavens and the earth, not even a small or large speck, is outside His knowledge.

It has already been mentioned that Ibn Sīnā had other works besides this separate treatise on the verse of *Nūr* in which he interpreted the same verse. The first of these works is *Fī Ithbāt al-Nubuwwah*. Here, the author treats the verse in detail. Another is *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbihāt*, which was written in a later period. By means of a comparative table of the symbolic meaning of the verse of *Nūr* interpreted by Ibn Sīnā in three different works, the difference between this treatise and other treatises will be shown here.⁵³

Table 2.3.A Comparison of Ibn Sīnā’s Interpretations of Q:24.35

that must be avoided. To the extent that people follow these teachings, they receive a share of happiness in this life, and this also paves the way for happiness in the Hereafter. Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Shifāʾ, Al-Ilāhiyyāt*, 441-42.

⁵³ Martin Whittingham, *Al-Ghazali and the Qurʾān One Book, Many Meanings* (New York: Routledge, 2007), 103-104.

Qur'anic Verse	Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt	Fī Ithbāt al-Nubuwwāh	Risālah Ayah al-Nūr	Tafsīr
Niche	'Aql al-Hayūlānī (material intellect) and al-Nātiqa	Al-'Aql al-Hayūlānī and al-Nafs	-----	
Lamp	'aql bi al-fi'l (actual intellect)	Al-'Aql al-Mustafāḍ bi al-Fi'l (acquired actualised intellect)	Muḥammad (peace upon him)	
In a glass	'Aql bi al-Malakah (intellect in habitus)	that which mediates between the two faculties of Niche and Lamp	The pure heart of Muḥammad (saw)	
Olive Tree	Fikrah (reflection)	al-Quwwah al-Fikriyyah	The body of Muḥammad (saw)	
Oil	Ḥads (intuition)	al-Quwwah al-Fikriyyah	-----	
Neither From East nor West	-----	cogitative power is neither purely rational nor purely animal	The Light of Islam and the brightness of Ummah	
Fire	Al-'Aql al-Fa'āl (active intellect)	al-'Aql al-Kullī (universal intellect)	The Religion of Islam	
Light Upon Light	Al-'Aql al-Mustafāḍ (acquired intellect)	-----	-----	

3.4.1.2 The Verse of *Dukhān* in *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah*

As a Muslim thinker who did not ignore the Aristotelian and Neoplatonic philosophical heritage, Ibn Sīnā tried to isolate apparent contradictions between the themes derived from Greek metaphysics, the relationship between matter and forms and the function of matter in the theory of emanation, with some metaphysical perspectives on this theme in the Qur'an. He felt the need to interpret theological truths by bringing them together. For example, he tries to reconcile the philosophical phenomenon of 'disobedience of substance' (*'iṣyān al-mādda*) with the Qur'anic view of God to whom everything is absolutely subject. In interpreting this verse, Ibn Sīnā ignored the explanations of earlier commentators and, under the influence of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic thought, relied on a concept such as the disobedience of matter and tried to make it a Qur'anic concept.⁵⁴

﴿ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ ۚ﴾

⁵⁴ Maria De Cillis, "Avicenna on Matter, The Disobedience of Matter and Evil: Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur'anic Perspective," *Transcendent Philosophy: An International Journal of Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism*, 12 (December 2011):1-2.

‘Moreover, He comprehended in His design the sky, it had been (as) smoke...’
(Q.41:11)⁵⁵

Ibn Sīnā explained the word smoke in the verse as the substance of darkness. According to him, the matter is the source of darkness because it is the source of nonexistence and darkness has no other meaning than nonexistence.⁵⁶

﴿فَقَالَ لَهَا وَلِلْأَرْضِ اأْتِنِيَا طَوْعًا أَوْ كَرْهًا ۝﴾

‘and said to it and to the earth: “come both of you willingly or unwillingly”(Q.41:11)

Ibn Sīnā explained this part of the verse in terms of form (*ṣūra*), matter (*mādda*) and essence (*jawhar*). According to him, the matter of the universe is different from the matter of the elements due to the nature of what is explained here. Therefore, the universe accepts a form (*taw‘an*) because the original matter (*hayūla*) tends to assume a form (*mushtaqa ilā al-ṣūrā*). Heaven (*samā*) has no other forms nor does this substance take different forms at different times. If the form it first found prevents it from assuming other forms, then the matter of the universe willfully assumes its own form. The substance of the elements is common to them. The adoption of any form of a material object is possible only when the previous disappears. As long as the old form of matter persists, it can only forcibly and involuntarily assume a new form.⁵⁷

Ibn Sīnā supports this explanation with the following example. When water is heated, the heating that takes place in it is a forced state of the water. This is because the matter of the elements does not obey when it is commanded to assume a different form. That they take the new form and prepare for it is because they do not want to obey

⁵⁵ “Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur‘ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 91-93.

⁵⁶ Rāzī explains that the sky consists of dark parts, and darkness means the absence of Nūr. He explains that people who sit in the dark and those who sit in the light see the weather differently, so darkness cannot be an adjective referring to air, but on the contrary is used in the opposite's sense of Nūr. See Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb*, vol. 27 (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981),105.

⁵⁷ Ibn Sīnā tried to interpret the verse in accordance with the astronomical and geological understanding of his time. Ibn Sīnā basically divides the universe into two parts, namely the lunar eclipse and the moonlight. He believes that the lunar realm is composed of a substance called the 'ether' of the superlunar universe, and that the lunar realm is composed of four elements called 'elements' comprising air, water, earth and fire. See: Okumus “Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sīnā'nın Kur'an Sure Ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları”,183.

the divine command. The previous form is an obstacle to the new form that will come into being.

Moreover, in the verse, the word ‘heaven’ preceded the word ‘earth’ and the expression ‘willing’ came before ‘unwilling’. This situation shows that the expression ‘heaven’ is related to ‘willing’ and the word ‘unwilling’ refers to the element of the place. Here, the author has made statements with reference to the rules of Arabic rhetoric.

﴿قَالَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ۝١١﴾

‘They both said: We come willingly’ (Q.41:11)

The verse contradicts Ibn Sīnā’s earlier statements. Knowing this, Ibn Sīnā raised and answered this objection as well. As long as the matter of water is potentially ready for absorption, it is ready to be heated by force from outside and converted into the air by evaporation. The heating event is its forcing and in this case, it is in a state of unwillingness and avoidance. As long as there is water, it is ready to be heated from outside by forcing and converting it into the air by evaporation. Heating is its compulsion and in this case, it is a state of wanting and avoiding water but when it is heated and the form of water is changed to air, henceforth there is no hindrance to this new form in the matter-ore for it was created with the capacity to assume all forms in its being. In this case, the assumption of the new form after its creation is voluntary and not accidental. It is therefore the state of unwillingness in the article of the elements for the preparatory stage made for the realisation of the event. After the event has occurred, the acceptance is now voluntary.⁵⁸

﴿فَقَضَاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ فِي يَوْمَيْنِ ۝١٢﴾

‘...Then he completed and finished from their creation seven heavens in two days...’ (Q.41:12)

⁵⁸ Ibn Sīnā attempts to reconcile the apparent contradictions between these explanations and the themes derived from Greek metaphysics and apply them to Islamic religious issues. For example, he attempts to reconcile the philosophical phenomenon of ‘disobedience of matter’ (*‘iṣyān al-mādda*) with the Qur’ānic image of God to whom everything is absolutely subject. See De Cillis, “Avicenna on Matter, The Disobedience of Matter and Evil: Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur’anic Perspective.”, 2.

Ibn Sīnā interpreted this verse in a kind of scientific exegesis based on his own cosmological assumptions. According to him, seven planets (*kawakib sab‘a*) indicate carrier spheres (*al-kurrah al-hāmilah*). The expression 'two days' stands for their two parts comprising matter and form.⁵⁹

﴿وَأَوْحَىٰ فِي كُلِّ سَّمَاءٍ أَمْرَهَا ۚ﴾

‘...and He made each heaven its affairs...’ (Q.41:12)

According to Ibn Sīnā, this verse has a meaning as a sign of the *mufāriq* intellect, which is activated by encouragement and love.

﴿وَزَيَّنَّا السَّمَاءَ الدُّنْيَا بِمَصَابِيحَ وَحِفْظًا ۚ ذَٰلِكَ تَقْدِيرُ الْعَزِيزِ الْعَلِيمِ ۝﴾

‘And We adorned heavens that nearest with lamps stairs and as protection. That is the determination of the Exalted in Might, The Knowing.’ (Q.41:12)

Allah knows best the truth of things. The praise of the rich belongs to Allah, the Rabb. May the mercy and peace of Allah our Lord be upon Muḥammad (saw), his family members and his companions.

3.4.2 The Structure of Individual Sūras

There are a total of four independent *tafsīr* treatises attributed to Ibn Sīnā. They are *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, *Sūrah al-Ikhlās*, *Sūrah al-Falāq* and *Sūrah al-Nās*.

3.4.2.1. *Sūrah al-A‘lā*

Ibn Sīnā interpreted *Sūrah al-A‘lā* under three main headings.

[A] First Topic: About the Proof of God's Existence

﴿سَبِّحْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ الْأَعْلَىٰ ۝ ١ الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسُوَّىٰ ٢ وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ ٣ وَالَّذِي أَخْرَجَ الْمَرْعَىٰ ٤ فَجَعَلَهُ غُثَاءً أَحْوَىٰ ٥﴾

⁵⁹ The fact that there are many surahs and verses in the Qur`an that speak of natural phenomena is convenient for Ibn Sīnā to provide explanations in accordance with his philosophical system. While Ibn Sīnā tried to explain such verses with natural sciences in a way he gives the first examples of scientific exegesis. See Okumus *Kur`ân'ın Felsefî Okunusu:İbn Sina Ornegi*,84.

‘[Prophet], glorify the name of your Lord the Highest, who created [all things] in due proportion; who determined their destinies and guided them; who brought out the green pasture then made it dark debris.’ (Q.87:1-5)

Ibn Sīnā explained that these verses prove the existence of Allah through two types of inferences. The first is the verse 'Who created [everything] in the right proportion, which describes the creation of living beings. The word ‘proportion’ in this verse means creation.⁶⁰ The body of every living being is estimated according to a certain ratio. The body structures of living beings consist of cold-warm, wet and dry parts. In order for the temperament to be formed, each of these parts must be adjusted to a certain degree. If you decrease or increase any of these parts, the temperament changes. This is also called levelling (*taswiyyah*).⁶¹

In the verse ‘*who determined their goals and guided them,*’ there is a connection with the soul of the living being. Allah, the Exalted, has given each organ a certain power and has distributed that power in such a way that it benefits that particular organ. For example, He has given the power of seeing to the eye, the power of hearing to the ear and the power of digestion to the stomach.

The second inference is the creation of plants as in the verse who brought forth the green meadow and then made it dark refuse. (Q.87:1-5) Ibn Sīnā explained that mentioning the creation of living beings before that of plants is more appropriate because living beings are superior to plants in terms of creation and because the wonders of living beings are greater than those of plants.

In this context, Ibn Sīnā referred to the theory of providence to reject the idea of accidental creation in the context of causality. He rejected the notion of some Greek philosophers that the existing world came into existence by chance and explained that the world was brought into existence by the generosity and grace of God. He further explained this view by means of the following hypothetical question and answer: Why

⁶⁰ Āṣṭī, *Al-Taḥsīn al-Qurʾānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 94-103.

⁶¹ Ibn Sīnā, “Risālah Al-Ḥadd,” in *Tisʿa Rasāʾil* (Qāhirah: Dār al-ʿArab, 1989), 90-91.

should the reproduction of living beings and plants be realised by nature itself and not by a cause? The nuṭfah is like nature. The effects of nature, stars and destiny on nuṭfah are similar to each other. Since the effect of these similar objects on the nuṭfah is similar, it is impossible for one object to appear in different situations.⁶²

For example, if a candle capable of illuminating an area of five centimetres is lit and placed in any location, it is expected to illuminate the entire area at the same rate. If there are no obstructions, it is not reasonable to light one of the different directions by five inches and the other by half an inch. In this way, it was proven that the factors affecting nature should have similar effects on the nuṭfah. Ibn Sīnā said that some parts of the nuṭfah form bones, some nerves and some veins and joints. On the contrary, he tries to prove that the creation cannot be random by saying that it shows the influence of an agent with power and will.

Consequently, Ibn Sīnā compared the nutfah to nature and attempted to explain that everything in creation was imbued with an appreciation rather than a necessity, responding to the claim that the creation of the world occurred as a work of nature.

[B] Second Topic: About the Narration of Prophecy

Ibn Sīnā explained the subject of prophecy based on the nature of Muḥammad (saw). According to him, there is in this issue through three perspectives. The first is about the essence and attribution of the Prophet (saw). The second concerns inviting immature people. The third concerns people's dispute about the perfection of the Prophet Muḥammad (saw).⁶³

The first subject explains the nature of the *Nabī*, its soul substance and its scientific and moral character. In pure science, the theoretical and the practical strength,

⁶² Another theme that constitutes the ontological dimension of grace in Avicenna is causality. However, this idea of causality does not lead Avicenna to a strict determinism. Ibn Sīnā explains that the things that happen in the world happen by providence as a result of a divine cause, basing the idea that natural beings act according to a purpose, the cause that gives form, i.e., the permission of Allah. Look for further information: Catarina Belo, *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007), 108-120.

⁶³ Look for further information: Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najah fī al-Ḥikmah wa Al-Mantiqiyyah Al-Tab'iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyah*, Muḥy al-Dīn Ṣabrī al-Kurdī (Miṣr: Matba'ah al-Sa'adah, 1938), 303-308.

the two fundamental powers of the human mind, have been demonstrated. With these powers, the Prophet disposes of the objects in the universe in the most correct and appropriate manner, both in his own body and through Allah the Almighty. The verse:

﴿سَنُفَرِّقُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى ۖ﴾

‘[Prophet], We will teach you [the Qur’an] and you will not forget.’ (Q.87:6)

point this truth. Allah, the Exalted, strengthens the souls of the prophets, honours them with divine ingenuity and true knowledge and makes them mature into a 'holy soul'. So, when the Nabī learns something, he will never forget it.⁶⁴ With the verse,

﴿إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ﴾

‘...unless God wills it’ (Q.87:7)

Ibn Sīnā expressed that man is not able to have absolute power over the nature of his soul substance and says that this power is interrupted from time to time for reasons such as forgetfulness and inattention.

﴿إِنَّهُ يَعْلَمُ الْجَهْرَ وَمَا يَخْفَى ۖ﴾

‘...He knows both what is open and what is hidden’. (Q.87:7)

The verse is the promise of Allah Almighty that His Messenger will enable him to know the soul substance, the information accurately and comprehensively, always effectively and with a maturity strong enough to remain unaffected. Ibn Sīnā emphasised here that Allah knows all things known, nothing that He could not have created the Prophet’s soul to be free from forgetfulness and absent-mindedness if He did not know.

﴿وَنُيَسِّرُكَ لِلْيُسْرَى ۖ﴾

‘We shall show you the easy way.’ (Q.87:8)

⁶⁴ “Allah has strengthened the Prophet's soul and through divine ingenuity and knowledge of the truth, He has matured it into a "holy soul". In this way, the Prophet rises to the highest possible level of competence in this world without the need for human learning. In the words of Ibn Sīnā: "The highest of the human species is the one who has perfected the intuition of theoretical power so that, thanks to his intuition, he does not need a teacher." See Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Mabda' wa al-Ma'ād* (Ṣaṭṭanah ‘Umān: Wuzārah al-Dhaqāfah wa li al-Dhiqāh, 1998), 115-116.

It is said that the spirit of the Prophet was strengthened with practical powers for, according to Ibn Sīnā, people are partners in beauty and ugliness (good and evil), sin and chastity. However, there are some among them whose natures are more susceptible and prone to one of these states. Here, the susceptibility (*suhūlah*) consists of the quality called creation. The souls of those who are happy, pure and pious are said to be chaste and pure by nature. The unfortunate ones are just the opposite. The term 'relief' in the verse indicates this situation. It also shows the perfection of the *Nabī* first in its theory and second in its practical strength.⁶⁵

The second major theme of prophethood is the task of remedying people on the right path. Those whose theoretical and practical skills are sufficient not only to mature but also to make others mature are also called *Nabī*. Undoubtedly, the rank of prophethood is the most perfect rank. This is because Absolute *Kamāl* means to be complete.

Those who have reached the point where perfection surpasses everything in its theoretical and practical strength should pass on some maturity (*ifāḍah*) to those who are inadequate. This is a call for people to turn to God. Therefore, Allah Almighty has said in this verse

﴿فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۙ﴾

‘So remind if reminding will help.’ (Q.87:9)

The expression 'so remind,' (Q.87:9) was used to invite people to the truth. It is a divine order for the Prophet. In the second part of the verse, it is explained that this call will not benefit everyone because while some of the *nafs al-nāṭiqah* accept training and purification, some do not. Those who accept purification also differ from each other in strength and weakness, speed and slowness, abundance and scarcity. For this reason, Almighty Allah has set a record as ‘...if reminding help’ (Q.87:9)

⁶⁵ Ibn Sīnā attempted to prove the practical wisdom of the Prophet in this interpretation. The second essential quality of the Prophet concerns his imagination. The Prophet predicts what will happen with his imagination and can perceive the unseen. In fact, many people can receive information about the future in their dreams. The difference between the prophet and other people, however, is that he can take this information not only while asleep but also while awake. This means that the soul of the Prophet becomes competent in terms of its ability to act. See Ibid, 116-117, 120.

According to Ibn Sīnā who explained that the verse can be understood as beginning with a general phrase and then elaborating, the purpose here is to explain how people accept the invitation. This is precisely the purpose of the prophecy. When people hear the invitation, they are divided into two parts. Some respond to this invitation and benefit from it. This group is meant by the verse,

﴿سَيَذَكَّرُ مَنْ يَخْشَى ۝١٠﴾

‘Those who stand in awe of God will heed the reminder.’ (Q.87:10).

The principle of this acceptance is also fear and trembling. Those who hear the prophet's call and then think that this world is transitory and temporary anyway are afraid that they will perish, even if they are not concerned with improving their afterlife. The second part is those who want to turn to the hereafter, the call of the prophets in this world and those who see and hear their calls but do not benefit from them. The verse:

﴿وَيَتَجَنَّبُهَا الْأَشَقَى ۝١١ الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ۝١٢﴾

‘but it will be ignored by the most wicked, who will enter the Great Fire,’ (Q.87:11-12)

also refers to this group. Those who turn away from seeking the afterlife and throw themselves into the love of this world and turn to the tastes and pleasures of this world will not only feel the fire but also the fire of sadness that comes from leaving their loved ones.

﴿الَّذِي يَصْلَى النَّارَ الْكُبْرَى ۝١٢ ثُمَّ لَا يَمُوتُ فِيهَا وَلَا يَحْيَى ۝١٣﴾

‘who will enter the Great Fire, where they will neither die nor live.’ (Q.87:12-13)

The feeling of the spiritual fire added to the fire will increase the agony of the torment. In the tenth verse, the characteristics of the group that fears Allah and accepts the advice are mentioned in the fifteenth verse, and then three levels of perfection of those who benefit from the invitation of the prophets are mentioned in the following verses.

1. The purification of the soul from superstitious and bad customs consists in throwing away only unnecessary things. Surely, the removal of dirt from a dirty surface precedes the drawing of clean and mature forms.

﴿فَقَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَنْ تَزَكَّى ١٤ وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى ١٥﴾

‘Prosperous are those who purify themselves, remember the name of their Lord’ (Q.87:14-15)

2. Having purified the soul from unnecessary things, it is undoubtedly necessary to mature its *naẓarī* power through holy education and divine knowledge. The verse: *وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى* ‘... remember the name of their Lord...’ (Q.87:15) is the verse of *ma‘rifatullah* and remembering Allah is the head of all sciences. (‘*ulūm*)
3. Finally, the maturation of practical power with the help of right actions and good deeds (*āthār*). This is the third stage. The verse: *فَصَلَّى* ‘...and pray’ (Q.87:15) also points to this. For the beginning of good deeds is obedience to Allah and service to Him. The prophecy ends with the fifteenth verse.

[C] Third Topic: About Eschatology

﴿بَلْ تُؤْثِرُونَ الْحَيَاةَ الدُّنْيَا ١٦ وَالْآخِرَةُ خَيْرٌ وَأَبْقَى ١٧﴾

‘Yet you [people] prefer the life of this world, even though the is better and more lasting.’ (Q.87:16-17)

Ibn Sīnā believed that this verse is complete and sufficient to prove the phenomenon of the afterlife. He explained that the verse is important proof as follows: Since people have enjoyed physical pleasures in this world, they have no understanding of the happiness of the hereafter. This situation leads them to desire the continuation of this world’s taste and turn away from the taste of the hereafter. This is what the verse points to.

By giving the seventeenth verse two different meanings, Ibn Sīnā tried to prove with examples that the hereafter is better than this world. The first is that the taste of the hereafter is better than the taste of this world which Ibn Sīnā explained as follows: the

physical taste is common to humans, animals, maggots and even dirtbags. However, the spiritual taste is better. If goodness and happiness were corporeal, the more they are, the greater would be the happiness and perfection of the objects in which they are found. However, it is known that this is not the case.

Supposedly that an intelligent man, who has no other thoughts than eating, drinking and sex, spends his whole life on these, then he belongs to a low class like animals. However, a person who keeps away from these things is very close to perfection and spirituality. Therefore, spiritual pleasure is better than physical pleasure. For this reason, people avoid sexual intercourse in public. However, if this taste came from the class of perfection, it would undoubtedly be better to perform it openly than in secret. Likewise, people do not boast about eating a lot for it is not an adjective that makes a person perfect. Besides, the spiritual substance is more honourable than the physical substance. The joy and love of *ma'rifatullah* are more honourable than eating, drinking and sexual pleasure.⁶⁶

The second interpretation is that the hereafter is better and more permanent. This is clear in two respects. Death is inevitable and all physical pleasures cease with death. The tastes are formed during eating, drinking and sex where these actions take place. After the work is accomplished, its effects are not certain and these tastes can sometimes turn into pain. The pleasure created by divine ingenuity, holy sciences and moral virtues is uninterrupted and continuous; it is safe from decay and transition and highly desirable.

The meaning of the verse:

﴿إِنَّ هَذَا لَفِي الصُّحُفِ الْأُولَىٰ ۝١٨ صُحُفِ إِبْرَاهِيمَ وَمُوسَىٰ ۝١٩﴾

‘All this is in the earlier scriptures, the scriptures of Abraham and Moses.’ (Q.87:18-19)

It is the purpose of all the books that Allah Almighty sent down to the prophets and is nothing but the explanation of these three points (God existence, Prophecy and Eschatology). First, to know God, second, to know prophethood and third, to know the

⁶⁶ This comment of Ibn Sīnā on this verse has a mystical spirit. For the mystical influences on Ibn Sīnā's thought, See: 'Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 86-88.

hereafter. When one contemplates the secrets of the *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, according to the author, one understands that it contains a warning that occupations other than these three subjects are ultimately futile. Human happiness is possible only when one knows these three themes.

3.4.2.2 *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*

One of the most important works of Ibn Sīnā, a system philosopher, in which he expounds his philosophical concepts and thoughts, is the commentary on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*. Ibn Sīnā is first scholar who made the philosophical interpretation of the *sūrah*. This is because, as Imām al-Ghazzālī said: ‘*Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* is the only *sūrah* in which the essence of Allah is mentioned. After this independent and philosophical treatise of Ibn Sīnā on the chapter of *Ikhlāṣ*, the tradition of writing an independent commentary on the chapter of *Ikhlāṣ* began and the first examples of philosophical commentary with writing a philosophical commentary on this *sūrah*.’⁶⁷

By interpreting *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, Ibn Sīnā established the distinction between *wājib* and *mumkīn*, which is the basis of his metaphysical understanding. By explaining the absolute identity of Allah, He proved His views that the body is separate from the essence and that existence includes a *Wājib al-Wujūd* within the framework of *sūrah*.⁶⁸

Ahmat Hamdi Aksaki, a later Ottoman scholar, used the following statements about Ibn Sīnā’s commentary on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*:

Like the other works of Ibn Sīnā who was an outstanding logician and reconstructed Aristotelian logic, in this work, every sentence was measured with a logic scale and each sentence needs a separate comment.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ See: ‘Abd Allah ‘Abd al-Raḥman al-Khaṭīb, *Tafsīr Sūrah Al-Ikhlāṣ li-Shayk al-Ra’is Abī ‘Ali al-Ḥassan Bin ‘Abdullah Bin Sīnā* (Kuwayt: Majallah al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Dirāsāt al-Islamiyyah, 2002), 8-14.

⁶⁸ Janssens, “Avicenna and the Qur’ān: A Survey of His Qur’ānic Commentaries.”, 187.

⁶⁹ Ahmet Faruk Guney, “Bir Felsefî Tefsir Ornegi Olarak Ahmet Hamdi Akseki’nin İbn Sina’nın İhlas Sûresi Tefsiriyle İlgili Telif Ettigi Tercume ve Serh,” *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları Dergisi*, no. 20 (2011), 293.

It is disputed whether the *sūrah* is *Maccī* or *Madanī*. There are also different narrations about the cause of the descent. The conclusion that emerges from all these narrations is that the *sūrah* was revealed to Prophet Muḥammad (saw) as an answer to the questions of various groups - the polytheists, the Jews and the Christians - about Allah. There are many rumors about the virtuousness of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*. The most authentic of these traditions is the following hadith in the unity (*Tawḥīd*) chapter of Bukhārī: 'I swear by Allah, in whose hand is my existence, that this *sūrah* is equivalent to a third of the Qur'an'⁷⁰ There are different opinions among scholars about the fact that *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* corresponds to one-third of the Qur'an. Some have said that it corresponds to a third of the Qur'ān in terms of reward, others in terms of meaning.⁷¹

Imām al-Ghazzālī explained that the information in the Qur'an is divided into three principles: Knowledge of Allah (*ma'rifatullah*), Knowledge of hereafter, and Knowledge of the right path (*sirāt al-mustaqīm*), and he said that *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* corresponds to one-third of the Qur'an because it contains the subject of *Ma'rifatullah and Tawḥīd*.⁷² According to Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, the aim of *Sharī'ah* and worship is to know the nature of Allah, His attributes and actions. This *sūrah*, on the other hand, talks about the essence of Allah. Therefore, this means that it corresponds to one-third of the *Qur'ān*.⁷³

Since *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* is a *sūrah* that describes the basic creed of Islam, the *Tawḥīd*, as well as Allah's attributes, the scholars who came after him, especially Ibn Sīnā, attached importance and wrote independent interpretations of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*.⁷⁴ However, in contrast to the classical *tafsīr*, Ibn Sīnā used for the first time terms such as body, essence, identity and *wājib* possibility. In this way, he has not only brought a philosophical approach to the *tafsīr* but also influenced the methodology of the scholars who came after him, especially in the exegesis of this *sūrah*.

⁷⁰ Bukhari, "Faḍā'il Al-Qur'an," in *Ṣaḥīḥ Al-Bukhārī*, Dār al-Ibn Kathīr (Bairut, 2002), 1281.

⁷¹ Guney, "İbn Sina'dan Elmaliliya İhlās Sûresi Felsefî Tefsîr Gelenegi.", 36.

⁷² Al-Ghazzālī, *Jawāhir Al-Qur'ān*, 77.

⁷³ Al-Rāzī, *Mafātih Al-Ghayb*, 32, 176.

⁷⁴ For independent interpretation studies on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* see Ahmet Faruk Guney, "İbn Sīnā'dan Elmaliliya İhlās Sûresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi" (Phd, 2008), 42-353.

In fact, in research, there are mainly commentaries written by Ibn Sīnā on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* as well as those who wrote a philosophically independent commentary on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* such as Ibn Sīnā, and those who quoted Ibn Sīnā or touched on philosophical themes in their full commentary.⁷⁵

It should also be noted that the geography in which Ibn Sīnā's philosophical interpretation is followed and the commentaries on *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* are written from a philosophical point of view is the Ottoman's largely political, cultural and scientific geography. The most important reason for this is that the Ottoman understanding of science is based on the line of Ibn Sīnā- Al-Ghazzālī-Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī and the first Ottoman *mudarris*, Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350) and Mullā al-Fānārī (d. 834/1431) who belonged to this line with the addition of the viewpoint, the predominance of a theological viewpoint in the Ottoman *madrāsas*.⁷⁶

Ibn Sīnā used basic metaphysical concepts in interpreting *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*. Although Ibn Sīnā used these philosophical concepts, his goal is a theological one. He wanted to strengthen the belief in *Tawhīd* by making a philosophical analysis of each word of the *sūrah*.⁷⁷

Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* can be summarised as follows:

﴿قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ﴾

‘Say, He / Huwa is God the One’ (Q.112:1)

God is the ‘Absolute He’ (*al-Huwa al-Muṭlaq*).⁷⁸ His identity is not dependent on anyone else. The existence of a person whose identity depends on another cannot be independent of another.⁷⁹ He is the one whose identity is in the person, whether or not

⁷⁵ Guney, “İbn Sina’dan Elmalili’ya İhlās Sūresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi”, 42-45.

⁷⁶ İhsan Fazlıoğlu, “Osmanlı Coğrafyasında İlmi Hayatın Tesekkulu ve Davud El-Kayserî” (Uluslararası Davud el-Kayserî Sempozyumu, Ankara, 1998), 25-42.

⁷⁷ Daniel De Smet and Meryem Sebtî, “Avicenna’s Philosophical Approach to the Qur’ān in the Light of His Tafsīr Sūrat al-Ikhlās,” *Journal of Qur’ānic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009), 135.

⁷⁸ ‘Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Şūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 104-13.

⁷⁹ Ibn Sīnā is based on the word 'existence'. Ibn Sīnā discusses existence in three areas or divides it into three classes: 1- Absolute existence 2- Being in the mind 3- Existence in the external world The truth of a thing exists either in the external world, or in the mind, or in the reality that includes all of them. See Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najāh fī al-Hikmah wa al-Mantiqiyyah al-Tab'iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyah*. 236.

someone else considers it. The existence of every possible being comes from someone else. This is its identity. In this case, the identity of the being is from someone else, and the person whose identity is from the person is *Wājib al-Wujūd*.⁸⁰

The identity of the enablers is not their nature. For this reason, the believers do not become him because of their essence. *Mabda' al-Awwal*, on the other hand, is the One because of His essence. Everything other than him (*māsiwā*) *huwa huwa*, it is not him. On the contrary, his identity is from someone else. Necessary Existence (*Wājib al-Wujūd*) is He is He/Huwa Huwa because of Himself, the only being He, no other. This identity and characteristic and the explanation of the meaning without a name are only possible with its necessities (*lawāzim*).

According to Ibn Sīnā, who stated that some of the necessities (*lawāzim*) are *salbī* and some of them are relative, the need for relative tools is more than the need for *salbī* tools when making a definition. The most perfect of definitions is the one that brings together the requisites of both necessities (*lawāzim*). This means that this identity is divine for God is not the one who is attributed to another, but the one who is attributed to him.

Absolute deity, together with all beings, is relative (to be related to others and his inability to be related to another is also *salbī* because of his greatness and majesty for divine identity when no other expression other than 'He is He' can be used. This identity of him is only explained by his necessities (*lawāzim*). Some of my supplies are *salbī* and some are *idāfi*. That's why, according to Ibn Sīnā, the name of Allah Almighty must be used together with these two essentials (*lawāzim*).⁸¹

The wording of Allah after the word '*Huwa*' in the verse is also aimed at some subtleties. Allah Almighty implies that identity can only be recognised by its *lawāzim*, that it comprises divinity and that it has no constituent elements (*muqawwimāt*). Otherwise, switching from *muqawwimāt* to *lawāzim* would have caused a deficiency in the word.

⁸⁰ 'Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 106.

⁸¹ *Ibid*, 108.

Another subtlety is the mention of the word '*Aḥad*'. This wording is the last frontier of unity. There is a simile in this expression that unity is at its last limit and that there is no strength.

After all these explanations, Ibn Sīnā summarised the interpretation of the verse 'Say, He / Huwa is God the One' (Q.112:1) as follows: because people cannot fully grasp Him with their limited minds and their eternal light is not even able to strengthen the bright mind. Since there is no name in the definition of the saint's identity that encompasses the divinity that lies at the ultimate limit of unity and perfection of simplicity, his *muqawwimat* has been abandoned and only the mention of the *lawāzim* has been specified. Another quibble here is that although the *Mabda' al-Awwal* has many *lawāzim*, they are on different levels and according to Ibn Sīnā who tries to explain this situation with the theory of emanation, nothing other than *al-Ḥaqq*, *al-Wāḥid* and *al-Basīṭ* can come into existence. This can only happen if He establishes a downward order in the form of vertical (*tūl*) and horizontal (*'arḍ*).⁸²

Ibn Sīnā explained that the definition of God's existence can only be achieved with his *lawāzim*, noting that a very narrow *lawāzim* is required for the definition to be explanatory. According to Ibn Sīnā who gives an example that man is known for his ability to wonder rather than laugh, this description will not be accurate if one of his remote principles is mentioned in the definition of nature because He is *Wājib al-Wujūd* since with His existence He was the beginning of everything except Himself. The necessity of existence and the beginning of everything or the sum of *salbī* and *idāfī* *lawāzim* consists in divinity.

Ibn Sīnā focused on the word '*Huwa*' used in the verse to explain the necessity of concepts such as nature and identity (the legitimacy of the concepts he created in his system). According to him, '*Huwa*' is a concept that points to the rightness and legitimacy of identity. That is why the word '*Huwa*' is also called. How great is his glory, how great is his kingdom, the ultimate source of needs, the station where desires are fulfilled. No matter how well the narrators described it and how perfectly the

⁸² In interpreting the verse, Ibn Sīnā refers to the understanding theory of emanation. Look for further information: Avicenna and Michael E. Marmura, *The Metaphysics of The Healing*, Bilingual (Brigham Young Univ Pr, 2005), 299-307.

presenters portrayed it, *Jalāl* and majesty, happiness and splendour cannot reach the least of it. The amount that can be explained is found only in the Bible, in its Holy revelation and in its pure, holy, sublime and high symbols.

According to Ibn Sīnā who noted that the concept of '*Aḥad*' is an exaggeration for unity, *Wāḥid* is a word that has doubts in terms of meaning. The characterisation of the one who does not accept a division in any way as unity (*wāḥidiyyah*) is in some ways better than the one who accepts division. The genus that is divisible in terms of force is also more deserving of this title than the genus that is actually divisible since the unity of the former is more holistic and the latter is not *waḥdah jāmi'ah*, the unity of the former is more convenient. With these explanations, Ibn Sīnā proved that there are strengths and weaknesses in unity.⁸³

Attribute of Allah '*al-Aḥad*' indicates that it is '*al-Wāḥid*' in every respect. There is never any spiritual, mental or emotional plurality.⁸⁴ The wording of '*Aḥad*' and explanation of Allah includes that it is free in terms of genus, substance, form, accidents, parts, shapes, colors and other relative aspects. It includes the similarity and equivalence of everything that is similar to it in accordance with the grace, holiness, unity and truth of Allah Almighty.

One of the Ibn Sīnā's method often used in interpreting verses is the question-answer method, and in interpreting this verse, he answered a hypothetical question. His question is: 'Assuming that all these meanings are hidden under the word in question (*al-Aḥad*), where is the proof of this?'⁸⁵

The identity of any whole formed only by the combination of its parts depends on the existence of those parts. In this case, it does not become it through itself, but through another. *Mabda' al-Awwal* is the one who is 'He is He' (*Huwa Huwa*) as the verse says. Allah Almighty has no parts. After detailed explanations, Ibn Sīnā showed

⁸³ 'Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 109.

⁸⁴ Ibn Sīnā states that he means multitude of *muqawwimah* such as spiritual multitudes and chapters, mental multiplicity of matter and form, and potentially and actual emotional multiplicity, in bodily multiplicity.

⁸⁵ 'Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 110.

his modesty by explaining that his own understanding can only interpret the verse so far and that it is Allah who knows the secrets of His word completely.

﴿اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُۙ﴾

‘God the eternal’(Q.112:2)

According to Ibn Sīnā, the word ‘*al-Ṣamad*’ (eternal) in the verse is interpreted in two ways: First, (*lā jawfa lahu*) absence of space and second, it is ‘*al-Sayyid*’. In the first commentary, it has a *salbī* meaning. This situation shows that Allah Almighty has no nature. In Himself, there is no other nature and no other dignity than that of existence. The one who has no dignity other than existence is the one who never accepts non-existence. Something that exists with the dignity of ‘*Huwa Huwa*’ cannot accept non-existence. So ‘*al-Ḥaqq*’, ‘*al-Ṣamad*’, ‘*al-Wājib al-Wujūd*’ in the absolute sense in all its aspects is.

According to the second interpretation, the meaning of ‘*al-Ṣamad*’ is relative, which means that he is the master of everything (*kull*), i.e. the beginning of everything (*Mabda’ al-kull*). It is possible that both are meant in the verse. In other words, the divinity consists of the sum of this gift and necessity.

﴿لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْۙ﴾

‘He begot no one was more He begotten’ (Q.112:3)

After declaring that everything (*kull*) is based on Himself, that it needs Him, that He gives His existence to all beings, that He is a ‘*Fayyāḍ*’ who gives existence (*wujūd*) to all kinds of essence (*māhiyyah*), He also declared that nothing is similar/equivalent to Him. This is because the identity of creating a whole in the minds and giving them existence requires divinity so that a similar/equivalent existence can exist which can be His offspring from His own existence. Almighty Allah declares that his likeness is not descended from himself because, if a likeness is descended from himself, its common essence is shared between him and someone else. Any being that has a shared nature between itself and another is only made clear with the matter and whatever is related to

the matter. Therefore, Anything that is material and has to do with matter is born from someone else.⁸⁶

It is assumed that He did not give birth because He was not born. Ibn Sīnā raised a possible question: What sign in this *sūrah* indicates that he did not give birth? That He did not give birth follows from the fact that there is no other quiddity (*māhiyyah*) and honour for Him, with the statement ‘He is He’ (*Huwa Huwa*) at the beginning of the *sūrah* and that his identity (*huwiyyah*) is His own.

Ibn Sīnā explained that the fact that the statements about the world in the Qur’an are limited to children and wives is based on the following secret: Birth means separation from something that is similar to Him. If it is not similar to Him, it cannot be said to be his offspring. This is because separation implies that it is affected (*infi‘āl*). To be affected means to reproduce its species’ nature. As mentioned earlier, this is due to the matter. The nature of any material thing is not identical to its quiddity. The nature of *Wājib al-Wujūd* is the same as his identity. Therefore, He neither gave birth to another Himself nor was He given birth to by another.

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ﴾

‘No one is comparable to Him’ (Q.112:4)

Nothing can equal Him in the strength of existence. There are two ways to be equal in the strength of being. The first is equality in quiddity (*māhiyyah*) and the second is equality in the nature of quiddity (*māhiyyah*). That nothing is equivalent means that it is equivalent only in the necessity of its existence. The verse ‘He did not give birth’ refutes that there is an equivalent in the nature of quiddity (*māhiyyah*) to Allah Almighty. The existence of anything that has commonality between itself and another is material and means that it was born from someone else, while *al-Haqq* was not born from someone else.

⁸⁶ Ibid, 111-112.

After Ibn Sīnā interpreted all the verses, he divided the *sūrah* into two parts. He explained that these sections complete the definition of Allah’s word in the full sense. In the first section from the beginning of the *sūrah* to the word

﴿اللَّهُ الصَّمَدُ ۚ﴾

‘God, the Eternal’ (Q.112:2)

explains the unity of His essence and truth, namely that He is never a composite being (*murakkab*). The second part of the verse,

﴿لَمْ يَلِدْ وَلَمْ يُولَدْ ۚ﴾

‘He begat no one more than Him’ (Q.112:3), which ends with the verse

﴿وَلَمْ يَكُنْ لَهُ كُفُوًا أَحَدٌ ۚ﴾

‘No one is comparable to Him’ (Q.112:4)

is neither child-bearing nor born of another being. He declares He has no equal in terms of genus and species, in the sense that there is no equal (equivalent) existence to Him.⁸⁷

Philosophers interpret this by referring to the hadith of the Prophet, ‘Surely, *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* is equivalent to one-third of the Qur’an’.⁸⁸ The goal of all sciences is to know the essence of Allah (*ma‘rifah dhātillah*), to learn that attributes and actions originate from him (*ṣudūr*) and even by implication, refer to everything related to researching the essence of Allah.

3.4.2.3. *Sūrah al-Falaq*

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ الْفَلَقِ ۝﴾

‘Say (Prophet), I seek refuge with the Lord of daybreak’ (Q.113:1)

⁸⁷ ‘Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’anī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sina*, 112.

⁸⁸ Bukhārī, “Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān,” in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Dār al-Ibn Kathīr (Bairut, 2002), 1281.

What the verse generally explains in the commentaries as ‘the Lord of the morning’ Ibn Sīnā interpreted as *Mabda’ al-Awwal*, *Wājib al-Wujūd*, who slit the darkness of absence with the light of existence. According to the author, the splitting of the darkness of nonexistence with this light of existence was meant with the first intention, and it is the essence of his absolute best in his identity.⁸⁹

Ibn Sīnā began his *tafsīr* with the metaphor of light/darkness. He identified this metaphor with existence/non-existence and he explained the verse as follows: It is *Wājib al-Wujūd*, the first beginning donation (*jūd*), who bestows the splitting of the darkness of non-existence with the light of existence. He accepted *Wājib al-Wujūd* as ‘Absolute Goodness’ (*khair mahd*). This donation of existence is one of the primary requirements of absolute unity. After that, the successive causes, which encounter the necessary evils and whose influence is accidental, continue. According to Ibn Sīnā, the first creation is the absolute best because of its creator.⁹⁰

Evil, on the other hand, arises from causes that collide with each other as the first light spreads due to the blurring of the underlying entities. The first entity that has emerged from the First Beginning is *qadā’* in which there is no essential evil. However, in the spread of the ‘first light’, the blurring of the ‘*māhiyyah*’ (*ma‘nan*) that has remained beneath it is an exception. For this reason, Allah, the Exalted, immediately said:

﴿مِنْ شَرِّ مَا خَلَقَۙ﴾

‘against harm in what He has created’ (Q.113:2)

and placed evil in the sphere of creation and discretion (of fate) for evil arises only from objects that have dimensions.

That is, on the level of *qadā’*, there is basically no evil but it arises on the level of *qadar*. Since matter occurs only in the realm of *qadar*, Allah, the Exalted, has said that

⁸⁹ ‘Aṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 114-120.

⁹⁰ This explanation of Ibn Sīnā refers to the theory of providence. For further information, see Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, *Al-Ilāhiyyāt* III (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allah Marashī Najafī, 1960), 131-33.

evil ‘consists of the evil of what He has created’, and has attributed evil to those whom He has created.⁹¹

In the mention of ‘explosion’ before evil which is one of the necessities of creatures, the light of the ‘body’ spreads over the nature of the possible (*mumkīn*) and there is evidence that by the first intention ‘no’ is meant and by the second intention evil. To sum up, *Wājib al-Wujūd* made appearance possible by giving division to the suppression of absence with the spread of the light of existence. Also, human evil did not exist first in divine chance but appeared second in fate. Therefore, it was commanded to take refuge in the one who is *Rabb al-Falaq*, before the necessity of creatures.

As in the interpretation of other surās, Ibn Sīnā continued the question-answer method in explaining this verse and discussed why Allah is called the *Rabb al-Falaq* and not *Ilāh*. There is a subtle mystery behind the use of this word. The Lord is the Lord of *Marbūb*. There is a convergence and a practice between them. The thought of the existence of one presupposes the thought of the existence of the other. Such a *Marbūb* (trained being) cannot be independent of the Lord in all his states. In fact, a child brought up under the discipline of his parents can never remain independent of his parents during that education. Possibly, they cannot be detached from the grace and benevolence of *Mabda’ al-Awwāl* at any time of their existence and under any circumstances.

Although the word ‘*Al-Ilāh*’ has the meaning of needy, the marbub has no claim to worship compared to God for the need of the marbub in this context is not God but the Lord. In other words, a ‘*Falaq*’ who is a *Marbūb* needs a ‘*Fāliq*’, an agent effective in itself, the Lord, and does not seem to need the word ‘God’ in the *sūrah*’s context.

Ibn Sīnā said that one of the hidden meanings of this verse is also in the wording. The word ‘*isti’ādah*’, ‘*awdh* ve ‘*iyādh*’ means to seek refuge in someone else. The

⁹¹This understanding, which deals with the justice of God and is expressed by the term Theodicy, which is formed by the combination of the words "god" and "justice", has a direct relationship with Avicenna's theory of emancipation and providence. See Ibn Sina (Avicenna), *Avicenna's Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition* (Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, 1981), 229.

reason some good things do not happen in the act itself is not because of the one who created good but because of the inadequacy of the one who will accept it. In conclusion, the lack of perfection is not because of the stinginess of *Mabda' al-Awwāl* but due to the lack of effort of the refugee.⁹²

﴿وَمِنْ شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ﴾

‘the harm in the night when darkness gathers’ (Q.113:3)

Ibn Sīnā treated this verse in the context of the relationship between the soul and the body in his own philosophical system. In this verse, the one who takes his refuge in the Lord is the little soul of a human individual which is the evil that appears on the plane of destiny and is the essential part of things. The forces that work in the body damage the substance of the human soul. For this reason, these forces of the body are both tools for the body and heavy burdens that it has to carry. There are two types of forces, the vegetative and the animal ones.⁹³

The animal powers are dark, enveloping and blurred. In contrast, the substance of the nafs mentioned in the verse which seeks refuge was created clean, pure and free from matter and its associated opacities. It is inclined to accept all forms and truths. Then, all these beauties and lights do not disappear in it but when the animal forces such as vanity, delusion, lust and anger, which belong to the animal forces are formed in it, the said beauties disappear. Just as the things that come from outside are constantly renewed, darkness is also constantly renewed.

According to Ibn Sīnā, ‘*Ghāsiq al-Waqāb*’ means that the essence of the soul is covered with darkness. It is covered with those forms that are closest to the essence of the soul (*nafs al-nātiq*).⁹⁴, it suddenly comes under their influence and adopts them.

⁹² Ibn Sīnā quoted a hadith to support his view. The hadith reads as follows: "In the days in which you live there are pleasant breaths and beautiful breezes blowing from the mercy of your Lord, be watchful and devote yourself to them" Al-Tabarānī, *el-Mu'jam al-Kabīr*, Maktabah al-'Ulūm wa al-Ḥukm), XIX (Muṣūl, 1983), 233.

⁹³ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najah fi al-Ḥikmah wa al-Manṭiqiyyah al-Ṭabī'iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyah*, Muḥy al-Dīn Ṣabrī al-Kurdī (Miṣr: Matba'ah al-Sa'ādah, 1938), 158.

⁹⁴ According to Ibn Sīnā, besides the vegetable and animal powers, there are also found in man powers called '*al-nafs al-nātiqa*', '*al-nafs al-insāniyya*'. According to him, the nātiq nafs is the one who comprehends the corpus, it has a power that extracts partial meanings from it and makes criticisms and judgments. This soul, which is the first perfection of man, is neither a body nor firmly attached to a

Allah Almighty mentioned this verse after the verse 'against harm to what He has created' (Q.113:2). There is a general-particular relationship between the evils arising from the covering of the '*Ghāsiq*' and the evil of its creations.

Ghāsiq's peculiarity, according to the philosopher, is that he shrouds the soul in darkness so it is particularly important to mention this. It should be understood that the delegation of *ghāsiq* is one of the greatest defilements of the soul. It should be avoided and the soul should be strengthened to eliminate this confusion.

﴿وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ﴾

‘the harm in witches when they blow on knots’ (Q.113:4)

According to Ibn Sīnā's interpretation, this verse explains that it refers to the vegetative forces responsible for the development and management of the body and that the body is a bond formed by the connections ('*uqdah*) between different elements that compete for dissolution and decay. In fact, the body comes alive through the tension created by the violent action of these elements on each other and it is the natural forces that act upon them. Undoubtedly, blowing (breathing) causes the substance of a thing to increase in all directions, namely in width, depth and length. These vegetative forces also act on the growth of the nourished and developing body in terms of the above-mentioned width, depth and length.

For example, if a blacksmith wants to cut a piece of iron to lengthen it, he must reduce its width or thickness, decrease its density or add an extra piece from the outside. As for the effects of plant power, blowing is most similar to the object. This is because blowing is the reason every object swells to some degree in every respect. Ibn Sīnā, who used the expression,

﴿النَّفْثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ﴾

‘... Witches when they blow on knots...’ (Q.113:4)

body. It is not something that can be perceived by the senses, any more than it is a physical force embedded in matter. It is an essence free from matter. It depends on matter in its acts. Ibid,182.

As a vegetable force, emphasises that the relation between the human soul and the vegetable force is undoubtedly mediated by the animal force, and because of the animal force is mentioned before.

To sum up, the evil which these two forces have brought to the human *nafs* is to strengthen the bodily concern interest and prevent it from besieging the worldly realms of earth and heavens. Therefore, humans cannot be processed with endless embroidery.

(وَمِنْ شَرِّ حَاسِدٍ إِذَا حَسَدَ)

‘the harm in the envier when he envies’ (Q.113:5)

This verse also refers to the conflict between the body and all its powers and the soul. Undoubtedly, the verse refers first to the evil arising from eating and then to all other evils. The *sūrah* began with the evils demanded by the animal forces, then the evils emanating from the vegetative forces, and then the evil emanating from the body, which has both of these forces. There is another conflict between the body and the soul. This conflict is the envy that arose between Ādam (mankind) and Iblīs (the devil), an incurable disease.⁹⁵

Through the interpretation of this *sūrah*, Ibn Sīnā came to the conclusion that the way evil enters the divine chance is not meant with a chance but with the human soul, the source of evil is the physical relations with the physical and animal forces.⁹⁶

3.4.2.4 *Sūrah al-Nās*

(قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ)

‘Say, ‘I seek refuge with the Lord of people’ (Q.114:1)

⁹⁵ Where Ibn Sīnā makes statements about temperament, he establishes a connection between the science of medicine and morality. In this context, Ibn Sīnā’s definition of morality has a medical aspect. According to this definition, moral action can only take place when it is temperate, that is, when it is on the middle path, that is, in a temperate temperament, to the extent that the discipline of medicine does not err. Abd al-Amīr Shams al-Dīn, “Risālah Al-Birr al-Ithm,” in *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyya ‘inda Ibn Sīnā* (Bairut: Dar al-Kitāb al-‘Ālamī, 1988), 353.

⁹⁶ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najah fi al-Hikmah wa al-Mantiqiyyah al-Ṭabi’iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyah*, Muḥy al-Dīn Ṣabrī al-Kurdī (Miṣr: Matba’ah al-Sa’ādah, 1938), 189-190.

According to Ibn Sīnā who interprets the word ‘*Rabb*’ in the sense of ‘the one who trains’, ‘training’ means the regulation of temperament and the levelling of the same. Undoubtedly, man does not come into being until the body is fully prepared for the full preparation (*isti’dād*) takes place with very fine training and a very sensitive mixture (temperament) that the mind is incapable of comprehending. Ibn Sīnā quoted the 28th verse of *Sūrah al-Ḥijr* as proof of the formation of the temperament.⁹⁷

The first blessing of Allah Almighty on a particular person is to train him by leveling his physical mixture temperament and after this training, He gives the person *nafs al-nāṭiqā* and places the body under the control and dominion of the soul.⁹⁸ In this way, he devours the organs of the body, the powers of sensation, imagination and *wahmī* therein, all the powers connected with thought and memory, hearing, sight, smell, taste, touch, lust and anger, the powers that activate the muscles, the nutritive power and its sub-branches, attachment, traction, digestion, excretion, growth and reproductive power; Altogether, he has placed under the control (*maqḥūr*) of the sublime, perfect and spiritual soul all the vegetative and animal powers whose functions differ from one another, whose relations to one another are opposed, and whose sources differ from one another.⁹⁹

Allah Almighty has firstly ordered the physical temperament and secondly, He has placed it under the control of the *nafs*. With this attribute, He is the absolute ruler. He is the one who entrusts the management of the body to the soul and places it under its responsibility. Undoubtedly, the owner can make someone else the owner, just as he owns his property. After this stage, the soul desires to be close to the places from which it has separated in terms of its substance, to be with them constantly, to be happy by observing them and to establish familiarity.

⁹⁷ ‘Āṣī, *Al-Taḥsīn al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 86-88., 123-25.

⁹⁸ Ibn Sīnā calls the parts of the soul five. The fifth of them is *nāṭiq nafs*. Man, processes sciences and arts with his *nāṭiq nafs*. With it he separates the bad from the good in his actions. Ibn Sīnā, “*Risālah al-Birr al-Ithm*.”, 361.

⁹⁹ Ibn Sīnā, in the last part of *al-Isharat*, explains the status of the ‘faithful friends of Allah’ (*Awliyā` Allah* and *Abrār*) who, because of their very pure temperament and morals, are ready to part with material interests (*tajarrud*) and accept divine emanation (*faḍl*). He showed that temperament is a determining factor for some states and qualities of the soul. Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 202-203.

This constant passion (enthusiasm) is inherent in human nature and creation. To have a flow of holy glory, he always brings this passion of seeking and asking for *mabda'*. When the nafs has reached the level of intelligence *bi al-malaka*, this can be done either with the mind or with movement or by taking the help of the esoteric forces, mixing their forms and substances and activating them to make them ready to accept emanation. All these are expressions that show that the *Mabda'* are worshipped.

Therefore, this *mabda'* has different names depending on the time and situation. The first name at the emergence of the temperament is 'Lord'; the second name is '*al-Malak*' depending on the nature of the soul; the third name is '*al-Ilāh*' depending on the desire of the soul. The stages of relations between *mabda'* and *nafs* end here and in this *mabda'*, the ruler of the sublunary realm is '*Wāhib al-Ṣuwar*'.¹⁰⁰

When Allah Almighty explained in Sūrah al-Falaq how to take refuge in *Mabda'* *al-Awwal*, the source of the explosion, i.e., the first source of existence (*mabda'*), he explained how evil is included in Divine providence (*al-'ināyah al-ilāhī*). He clarified these gradations by explaining how one can take refuge in the Giver of Forms (*Wāhib al-Ṣuwar*), who is also the near *mabda'* in Sūrah al-Nās.

﴿مِنْ شَرِّ الْوَسْوَاسِ الْخَنَّاسِ﴾

'Against the harm of the slinking whisperer' (Q.114:4)

The 'whisperer' in the verse means the power that gives deception. This is the 'power of imagination' (*al-quwwah al-mutakhayyila*), for it uses the animal soul (*nafs*) and then works against it for the soul directs it towards the *mufāriq mabda'*. Since the imagination is preoccupied with matter and its kinship, it creeps up on the human soul to act against it and tries to make the human soul do the opposite. Hence, it becomes '*Khannās*'.

¹⁰⁰ Since the Active Intellect is considered to be the principle of all kinds of physical, chemical, biological and physiological formations and deteriorations in the sublunary realm, it is called '*Wāhib al-Ṣuwar*' (it gives a certain shape and form to every creature in the world). Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna-Suhrawardi- Ibn 'Arabī*, 30.

﴿الَّذِي يُوسِّسُ فِي صُدُورِ النَّاسِ ٥﴾

‘Who whispers into the hearts of people’ (Q.114:5)

The meaning of this verse is that *khannās* the conceit (*al-mutakhayyilah*). This gives delusions to the 'chests' because it is the first mount (*maṭiyyah*) of the soul. It is certain that the first connection of the human soul is the heart and the forces spread through it to other organs so that the effect of delusion begins first in the chest.

﴿مِنَ الْجِنَّةِ وَالنَّاسِ ٦﴾

‘Whether they be jinn or people’ (Q.114:6)

Jinn means hidden and nās means familiarity (*isti'nās*). As for the secret things, they are the external and internal senses. At the end of the commentary, Ibn Sīnā concluded his *tafsīr* by saying that he knows best the truth of Allah's wisdom and the secrets of the verses.

3.5 CONCLUSION

One summarised this section which analysed Ibn Sīnā's individual exegetical treatises as follows.

Some scholars have said that one of the best examples of the hidden (*kāmin*) parable in the Qur'an is the 35th verse of *sūrah al-Nūr*. Here, Ibn Sīnā interpreted this verse, which was considered the best example of the secret parable, in accordance with his own philosophical system. In the history of Islamic thought, there was a great variety of interpretations of the verse *Nūr*. There were many commentaries on this verse written by famous philosophers and sages such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazzālī and Mullā Ṣadrā and each of them, as this verse allows, reflects one of many levels of interpretation. Both Islamic mystics and philosophers were interested in the verse and it was interpreted in various ways. The Sūfīs in particular made a connection between *Nūr al-Muḥammadī* and this verse. In this independent exegesis treatise, Ibn Sīnā developed an approach similar to that of the Sūfīs. As mentioned earlier, Ibn Sīnā

interpreted this verse in different ways in his *Kitāb al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt and Risālah al-Ithbāt fī al-Nubuwwah*.

The ‘*mishkāṭ*’ in this verse is honourable, exalted, superior, chosen and the leader of the prophets, Muḥammad (saw). What was meant by ‘*miṣbāḥ*’ was the knowledge and the faith that he filled with his faid that was the light. ‘The tree’(*shajarah*) also referred to the body and the body of the Prophet because his body is a blessed tree with the highest degree of abundance and fertility.

The expression that this blessed olive tree is neither from the East nor from the West is an allusion to the light of religion brought by the Prophet and to the splendour of his people. The verse ‘...Its oil would almost shine, even if no fire touched it..’(Q.24:35) means that the religion of the Prophet is so bright that it does not need any proof.

In verses 11-12 of *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah*, Ibn Sīnā’s theme of the rebellion of matter widely discussed in the Aristotelian and Neo-Political traditions, was explained by verses. According to Ibn Sīnā, the ‘foreign’ (inherited from Greek thought) metaphysical idea of the disobedience of matter was recognised as being implicitly asserted in the divine revelation and ready to be grasped by means of a philosophical interpretation. This was also evident when Ibn Sīnā referred to the verse: ‘He assigned to each heaven its duty and command’ (Q.41:12); with it, the scholar reiterates the idea that divine *qadā`* decrees the role of the heavens and of the celestial spheres whose movements influence matter’s receptivity and disposition on earth as claimed by the Peripatetic philosophers.

They mentioned *Tawḥīd*, prophecy and belief in the hereafter in the most general sense as the principles of faith in Islam. The same approach is found in Ibn Sīnā’s commentary on *Sūrah al-A‘lā*. Ibn Sīnā stated that this *sūrah* is about *Tawḥīd*, prophecy and the hereafter and explains that it deals with the three most fundamental beliefs of Islam.

In the commentary on *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, Ibn Sīnā tried not to damage the belief in tawḥīd by emphasising that the only creator is Allah, and by stating that creation is a

divine act, he rejected the creative role of natural processes in nature such as naturalism and evolution which are peculiar to modern times.

In interpreting *Sūrah al-A‘lā*, Ibn Sīnā elaborates on the essence of the Prophet and his qualities and points out the perfection he achieved in terms of the theoretical and practical intellect, specifying his superior qualities in terms of science and moral quality, and because of this perfection, he emphasised that the Prophet influenced both his own body and other objects in the universe.

In interpreting *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, Ibn Sīnā stated that the main purpose of all sciences is to know the nature and attributes of Allah Almighty. In this sense, *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* is equivalent to one-third of the Qur’an, for it represents everything related to the study of the essence of Allah Almighty, including *ta‘rīd* and allusions.¹⁰¹

Allah Almighty is the source of the explosion in the *Sūrah al-Falaq* that is, he explained how to seek shelter in the First Source of Existence (*Mabda’*) and how evil is included in the divine providence.

In interpreting *Sūrah al-Falaq*, he stated that the animal forces in man are dark, enveloping and blurred and that matter is the source of oppression, evil and absence, in contrast to *naḥs al-nātiq*, which has a commanding existence, and points out that the source of evil and evil is matter and power of the material. The substance of the natural soul, however, is pure, free from matter and its attendant opacities. It is inclined to accept all forms and truths. All this beauty and light are not lost to it but only when the animal powers such as conceit, delusion, lust and anger which belong to the animal power are formed in it. In Q:113.4 of the verse, there is a reference to the vegetative forces.

In the *sūrah*, when the evil entered the divine by chance, it is shown that it is not meant personally but accidentally and that the source of the evil after the human soul is the physical relations with animal and vegetable forces. Since all this is a burden for the

¹⁰¹ ‘Āṣī, *al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 112-113.

human soul and exhausts it, the *sūrah* mentioned that it is necessary to turn away from them.

In *Sūrah al-Nās*, Ibn Sīnā who mentioned the stages of the human soul in progress clarified these stages by explaining how to take refuge in *Wahib al-Ṣuwar* who is a close *mabda'*. In this way, by bestowing the soul on that person, he placed the body under the control and dominion of the *nafs*.

According to Ibn Sīnā who interpreted the whispering as imagination (*nafs al-mutakhayyilah*), this force avails itself of the animal soul and acts contrary to it, causing tension. The first point of connection of the human soul is the heart, and therefore, the first effect of whispering is manifested in the chest. *Jinn* and man, in Ibn Sīnā's interpretation, are the external and internal senses.

CHAPTER FOUR

IBN SĪNĀ'S PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH TO QUR'ANIC INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

As a result of the analysis of the two verses and four *sūrās*, it was understood that Ibn Sīnā brought together the most original ideas of his own philosophical system through these verses he chose and supported them with the reference of the verses. The purpose of this section will examine this picture more closely and to reveal under which heading in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy the verses are discussed. For this reason, this chapter will be dealt with in terms of metaphysics, ontology, epistemology, ethics and science, which are the main subjects of Islamic philosophy in general and Ibn Sīnā in particular

4.2 IBN SĪNĀ'S ONTOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

As is well known in his philosophical system, Ibn Sīnā subjected existence to a threefold classification as *wājib*, the possible and the probable inspired by al-Fārābī. According to Ibn Sīnā, *Wājib al-Wujūd* is a being whose existence is obligatory and whose absence creates a spiritual contradiction. More specifically, the *wājib* being is a real being and the reason for the existence of possible beings. Possible values are those that are equal, like two empty pans on a scale of existence or non-existence. Someone preferring their presence or absence is necessary for them to exist or not. Moreover, the assumption of existence and non-existence of possible beings does not lead to a mental contradiction.

Necessary existence expressed in philosophical language as *Wājib al-wujūd*, forms the basis of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy and the starting point in terms of clarity. This is because, for Ibn Sīnā, necessary existence is the source and principle of all existence. According to him, when existence, that is meant as *Wājib* is spoken of its essence is understood. When its essence is considered, its existence can never be considered as its absence. For him, any being whose existence comes from another is worthy of non-

existence or being thought non-existence. Moreover, existence for him comes from someone else. Also, in this case, there is no existence for itself before the existence.¹

To prove the existence of God, Ibn Sīnā started from the clarity and uniqueness of the word 'existence' without proving it from the physical world with a philosophical approach and proves the existence of God with the idea of existence itself which is called 'existence' proof (ontological proof). Ibn Sīnā is the first founder of ontological proof. It is believed that Ibn Sīnā was not able to develop it further.²

Indeed, in the first verse of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ*, Ibn Sīnā explained the existence of Allah with ontological evidence. According to this, God is the absolute He/Huwa. His identity is not dependent on anyone else. The existence of a person whose identity is dependent on another cannot be independent of another. He is a person whose identity is Himself regardless of whether another person is observed or not. The existence of any possible human being is dependent on someone else. *Mabda` al-Awwal* is one by virtue of his being. Anything other than him (*māsiwā*) Huwa Huwa, not him. Rather, his identity is of someone else. *Wājib al-Wujūd* is 'Huwa Huwa' by virtue of Him who is the only one who has no other.³

4.3 IBN SĪNĀ'S SCIENTIFIC PERSPECTIVES ON QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

Both Islamic scholars of the classical period and contemporary commentators on the Qur'an consider that the Qur'an is based on both natural sciences and religious sciences. By expressing that, it also contains information about religion, i.e. scientific data where they sought a compromise between the two. Although it is believed that the clear, centralised and systematised form of scientific *tafsīr* understanding in the Islamic world was first seen in al-Ghazzālī, those who attribute the beginning of this understanding to the translation movements in the Islamic world took place much earlier than al-Ghazzālī and even some predecessors. Scholars agree with the understanding and views in this direction. There are also those who oppose it.⁴

¹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt*, 447.

² Okumus *Kur'ân'ın Felsefî Okunusu:İbn Sina Ornegi*,137.

³ 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qu'rānī wa al-Lughah al-Şūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā* ,106.

⁴ For further information,see Al-Dhahābī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 349-362.

If the early Muslim philosophers were considered, it would be appreciable finding to say that the scientific-philosophical orientation to the Qur'an began to form and develop within the relationship between philosophy and science. Ibn Sīnā saw no difference between the human and divine sources from which he profited and tried to explain and interpret the verses of the Qur'an with the data of astronomy and earth sciences of his time with the results of the branches of science. In this context, he tried to reconcile many verses and concepts in the divine address with the results of the natural and rhetorical wisdom of his time and interpret them accordingly.

Ibn Sīnā gives examples of the scientific *tafsīr* by reconciling the verses of the Qur'an with the accuracy of science and interpreting them according to the generally accepted scientific understanding.

﴿ثُمَّ أَوْتَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ ۚ﴾

‘Then He turned to the sky, which was smoke...’ (Q.41:11).

He tried to interpret the above verse in accordance with the astronomical and geological understanding of his time.

In Ibn Sīnā's opinion, the universe is basically divided into two, the supralunar world and the lunar world. The supralunar world according to him, consists of a substance called 'ether' and four elements, also called the elements of the sublunar realm namely air, water, earth and fire. Ibn Sīnā explains that the 'smoke' mentioned in the verse is the substance of the sky. He explains that it is a dark substance and that matter is the source of darkness because it is the source of absence. Ibn Sīnā, accepting the existence of a deep-rooted difference between the matter of heaven and the matter of earth, comments that the matter of heaven and the matter of the four elements differ because of this verse. He explains that the matter of heaven takes its own form 'voluntarily' and that the elements take new forms by force.⁵

Ibn Sīnā states that all living things on earth are made of matter and form and explains that if they are to take on another form of matter, they do not do so voluntarily

⁵Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 91.

but 'forced/involuntarily', with power coming from outside and says that this happens as a result of submission to divine order. Ibn Sīnā explains the issue in a similar way as the principle of inertia. According to him, this interpretation does not contradict the statement of the verse:

(قَالْنَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ ۝۱۱)

‘...we came willingly...’ (Q.41:11)

expressed in the heavens and the earth because the unwillingness of the matter of the four elements to assume a form is related to the fact that it can potentially assume many different forms, otherwise this new form, which it assumes after having assumed a certain form, would now be willing for it.

As it can be seen, although this verse, known in classical commentaries as the *Dukhān* verse was treated in the context of creation and Allah’s power in general, Ibn Sīnā explained the verse according to the assumptions of his time in physical science.

4.4.IBN SĪNĀ’S EPISTEMOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE QUR’ANIC EXEGESIS

In Ibn Sīnā, epistemology is closely related to logic and psychology (*nafs*). However, it generally studies the cognitive process of *nafs* and knowledge in logic in terms of form (shape) and content (matter). Ibn Sīnā said that a person whose most basic quality is knowing, being willing and doing can attain all kinds of knowledge. He explained that knowledge begins with the abstraction of the mind and expressed this with the term cognition.⁶

According to Ibn Sīnā, man, who is the subject of knowledge activity, is an entity that both generates sensory information and implements mental information. In determining the man's position in the hierarchy of existence, Ibn Sīnā considers knowledge to be his most important activity, not systematic. For this reason, the existence, definition and capabilities of the human soul which are in Ibn Sīnā’s

⁶ Ali Durusoy, “İbni Sina,” in *DiA* (İstanbul: TDV Yay., 1999), 323.

understanding of knowledge, are at one end of the activity of knowing that should be discussed.⁷

In defining the soul, Ibn Sīnā preferred the concept of competence to that of power and form. Competence, on the other hand, is the action of the soul itself. The definition of the soul as 'first competence' is based on the fact that the primary competence, which is the principle of actions, precedes the 'second competence', which is the actions themselves. His ego drives an innate love of activity.⁸ This activity, based on love, is an open existence. This existence consists in accepting the manifestation of the Absolute Good. Everything accepts the manifestation according to its own power and is made to resemble the Absolute Good in the aims of its actions. Allah has expressed the drive or direction with the verse:

﴿إِلَهُ النَّاسِ﴾

'the Lord of men' (Q.114:3)

for to be a God is to lead the creatures to Himself.⁹ Ibn Sīnā first makes a classification of the faculties of the soul. What constitutes this classification is the layer of organic unity in which the faculties are found. Accordingly, the faculties of the nafs form the types of the nafs based on the organic layers of existence in which they are found. According to this classification, the nafs is divided into three parts: vegetative, animal and human.¹⁰

The vegetative soul defined as the first competence of the natural body with organs related to nutrition, growth and reproduction, has three basic abilities. The first of these is the ability to eat (*al-quwwah al-ghāziyah*) which transforms the ingested food into a form suitable for each organ of the body. The second ability of the vegetative soul is the power of growth and development (*al-quwwah al-nāmiyyah*). This faculty sends the food that the nourishing faculty has made suitable for the temperament of each organ to the appropriate organs. At the end of this distribution, each organ develops in terms of width, height and depth with an object suitable for its own structure. The ability

⁷ Hidayet Peker, "İbn Sina'nın Bilgi Anlayışı" (Phd, Bursa, Uludag Üniversitesi, 1999),12.

⁸ 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Şūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*,251.

⁹ Ibid, 124.

¹⁰ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najah fī al-Ḥikmah wa al-Manṭiqiyyah al-Ṭabī'iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyāt*,158.

that ensures the balanced development of the body and completes the body of every living being is the ability to grow.¹¹

Ibn Sīnā interpreted *al-Falaq* of the 4th verse in line with his remarks on the nutritional and growth powers of the herbal soul. According to him, the 'knot' (‘*aqd*’) in the verse refers to the vegetative self’s ability to nourish and grow. This is because the body is formed by the combination of different elements. The forces that connect the elements that make up the body are the forces of nourishment and growth. Similarly, 'stroke' refers to the growing power of the vegetative soul as it enables something to develop in various aspects such as width, height and depth.¹²

According to Ibn Sīnā, the realm that stands above the realm of vegetable being in the organic scale of being is the realm of animal being. The animal soul has two main powers namely the faculty of movement (*al-quwwah al-muḥarrikah*) and the faculty of perception (*al-quwwah al-mudrikah*). Perceptive faculties (*al-quwā al-mudrikah al-ḥissiyyah*) belong to the animal power of the soul which occupies an important place in Ibn Sīnā’s philosophy and the explanations of these faculties are usually contained in his writings on the nafs.¹³

Ibn Sīnā divided his sensory comprehension abilities into two: external comprehension abilities (*al-quwā al-mudrikah al-ẓāhirah*) and inner comprehension abilities (*al-quwā al-mudrikah al-bāṭinah/dākhilah*).¹⁴ In the 6th verse of *Sūrah al-Nās*, it says: 'whether they are jinn or men' The term ‘human’ refers to the external cognitive faculties (*al-quwā al-mudrikah al-ẓāhirah*) and the ‘jinn’ refers to the hidden, i.e., the internal cognitive faculties (*al-quwā al-mudrikah al-bāṭinah*).¹⁵

Ibn Sīnā’s views on the necessity of prophethood and the possibility of prophetic knowledge are one of the topics that most clearly reflect the character of his philosophy. Although the subject of prophecy has both a philosophical and religious content, it was

¹¹ Ibid, 158-159.

¹² ‘Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 119.

¹³ Peker, “İbn Sina’nın Bilgi Anlayışı.”, 28-29.

¹⁴ Badawī, *Ibn Sīnā 'Uyūn Al-Ḥikmah*, 30.

¹⁵ ‘Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 125.

placed on a socio-political and epistemological basis in his philosophy as intense debates about the denial and proof of prophecy in the Islamic world continued until the philosopher's lifetime.¹⁶

The epistemological dimension of prophethood consists of the spiritual degree of the prophet and the quality of the knowledge he has attained. According to Ibn Sīnā, there are three basic qualities in prophets:

1. a very high degree of intuition (hads)
2. knowledge of the ghayba with his imagination
3. the ability to perform miracles, i.e. to change nature.

Ibn Sīnā explained the verse:

﴿سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَى ۚ﴾

‘We shall teach you [the Qur’an] and you will not forget unless God wishes;’ (Q.87:6)

In the interpretation of *Sūrah al-A‘lā* as Allah strengthening the Prophet’s soul and perfecting it into a holy soul so much so that this perfection makes him a person who knows the true sciences and divine knowledge and never forgets it afterwards. However, Ibn Sīnā has used the phrase ‘except by the will of Allah’ in the verse in question as to the nature of the human soul substance which he considers as proof that (here the Prophet’s soul) cannot have absolute power. Accordingly, forgetfulness and mistakes can sometimes be observed in prophets.¹⁷

4.5 IBN SĪNĀ’S ETHICAL PERSPECTIVES ON QUR’ANIC EXEGESIS

Ibn Sīnā’s classification of the sciences, logic, nature and rhetoric are mentioned within the theoretical sciences while ethics and politics also belong to the practical sciences. The sciences are also classified in terms of their goals. According to him, the goal of theoretical knowledge is truth and the goal of practical knowledge is goodness.¹⁸

¹⁶ Peker, “İbn Sina’nın Bilgi Anlayışı.”, 103.

¹⁷ ‘Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Şūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 98.

¹⁸ İbn Sīnā, “Risālah Al-Birr al-Ithm.”, 2.

This science which Ibn Sīnā has divided in various ways is wisdom. Wisdom is the science that conveys the knowledge of the remote causes of beings and it is the science that conveys the immediate causes of the existence of things.

The part of the wisdom that relates to morality is the practical part: practical wisdom is also examined in three parts. These three parts are the first part deals with how to be happy in this world and in the hereafter, how to act and act morally and what to do to achieve happiness between spouses and children in household management. It consists of the part that examines the duties of people and finally the part that examines the classes of politics and can be related to prophethood. This last part of practical wisdom is related to the existence of prophethood and people's need for religious knowledge.¹⁹

In Ibn Sīnā's opinion, human actions, which are the subject of morality, arise under the influence of the emotional force of the soul. This practical force (*quwwah al-'amaliyyah*) is the force that drives people to behave in the way they prefer. When this practical spirit is not effective on the body, bad habits develop in people and when the practical force is effective, good habits develop. This situation makes the *nafs* the source of morality.

In Ibn Sīnā's work, the soul (*nafs*), together with the body, contributes to the origin of moral actions. It is a source that causes morality and creates morality. The theory of temperament which deals with the differences of the soul as a natural consequence of this close relationship between the soul and morality is indirectly one of the sources of morality.

Although the soul (*nafs*) is the source of morality in Ibn Sīnā along with the body, the mystical theories developed by Ibn Sīnā on the theory of the soul also make the theory of the soul a subject of Sūfī ethics. According to the philosopher, the happiness of the soul comes with the maturation of the essence of its substance. This purification

¹⁹ Ibn Sīnā, "Taqsīm al-'Ulūm al-'Aqliyyah," in *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyyah 'inda Ibn Sīnā*, Shams al-Dīn 'Abd al-'Āmir (Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Ālamī, 1988), 263-264.

is possible through the purification of the soul through the knowledge of Allah and through the deeds done for Allah.²⁰

When Ibn Sīnā treated the subject of temperament in a text, it is transferred to temperament from the explanations that refer to the science of medicine. According to him, medicine and moral science have a common basis in the forces of the human soul in relation to being alive. Medicine studied the human body and organs and specialised in the study of the body while the science of ethics specialised in the study of the natural soul and its practical powers.

Accordingly, morality depends on the temperament of the body. When a person's temperament is under the influence of phlegm, his temperament is calm, dignified and meek. If it is under the influence of bile, anger will dominate his temperament; if it is dominated by black bile [sadness, melancholy], he will have a bad temperament and he will be subject to morality (not all of which can be enumerated here).

Ibn Sīnā interpreted some verses in this context. The term 'Lord' in the verse:

﴿قُلْ أَعُوذُ بِرَبِّ النَّاسِ ۝﴾

‘Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of people’ (Q.114:1)

means the regulation of the human body. The regulation of the body is the temperament. He first creates the human body with a suitable arrangement and then gives the soul that fits the temperament of that body.²¹ Similarly, 'creation' in the verse:

﴿الَّذِي خَلَقَ فَسَوَّى ۝﴾

‘who created [all things] in due proportion’ (Q.87:2)

is the appreciation of the body of a living being to a certain degree. The body consists of a mixture of properties such as dryness, wetness, cold and heat. The fact that

²⁰ Ibn Sīnā, “Risālah fī Kalām ‘alā Nafs al-Nāṭiqah,” in *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyyah ‘inda Ibn Sīnā*, Shams al-Dīn ‘Abd al-‘Āmir (Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Ālamī, 1988), 326.

²¹ ‘Āsī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 123.

this mixture is to a certain degree creates the temperament is the arrangement (levelling). The 'guiding' in the verse:

(وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ ۖۛ)

‘who determined their destinations and guided them’(Q.87:3)

is the creation of spiritual power for each organ by a certain mixture. For example, the sight for the eye, the hearing for the ear and the creation of digestive powers for the stomach.²²

According to Ibn Sīnā, ‘temperament’ accepts change. Morality also accepts change with the change of temperament. This asceticism is also mentioned in moral books. A person’s temperament changes easily with the embellishment of his morality. When a person’s temperament approaches moderation, that person will have very virtuous, scientific and practical abilities.²³

The source of morality in Ibn Sīnā and perhaps the most important is prophecy. In other words, Allah informs people of moral principles through his prophet. According to Ibn Sīnā, the source of morality is the reason, comparison of evidence (*burhān*) and prophecy. The Prophet gives examples of what people understand and imagine of happiness and misery. The true *Shāriah* handed down by the Prophet has explained the state of happiness and misery on the basis of the body. Some of them are understood through the mind and the *burhanî* comparison, and the Prophethood has also confirmed this.²⁴

God’s best ordering of men through prophethood, that is, the impartation of moral principles, is also a result of necessity, and this obligation is closely related to the concept of providence. In general, providence means that God knows in a way that makes the most beautiful order and the most perfect order possible.

²² Ibid,96-97.

²³ Ibn Sīnā, “Risālah fī Kalām ‘alā Nafs al-Nāṭiqah.”,330.

²⁴ Seyma Sahinoglu, “İbn Sīnā’da Ahlāk Sorunu” (Master, İstanbul, Marmara Universitesi, 2009),49.

The concept of providence is the theme of '*ilm al-Ilāhī*' by Ibn Sīnā. This concept is treated as a subject of Allah's attributes and knowledge in close connection. In this case, the concept of providence has the same meaning as the fact that Allah surrounds all existence with His knowledge. Prophethood is one of the sources of morality in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. According to it, Allah communicates knowledge about the details in this world through the Prophet. That this information was "given" to the Prophet by Allah is related to the subject of Allah's attributes and knowledge. It results from Allah's providence. Just as Allah surrounds beings with His divine knowledge without intending it and just as it results from His providence that He gives the best order for existence, it is also a result of the necessity that Allah gives the best order, i.e. moral principles through prophethood. This makes Allah's attribute of providence the source of morality.²⁵

Indeed, in the *tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-A'ālā*, Ibn Sīnā emphasises that prophecy is the source of morality by the providence of Allah.

(فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ ۙ ٩)

‘So remember, if remembering help’(Q.87:9)

expresses that the prophets, who were perfect in theory and practice, had the task of perfecting the morals of people and bringing them happiness in this world and the hereafter and that in this respect, they differed from philosophers and *awliyā'*.²⁶

4.6 IBN SĪNĀ'S PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE QUR'ANIC EXEGESIS

According to Ibn Sīnā *nafs* is a polysemous word. Since living beings comprising plants and animals enter into the meaning of soul, humans and heavenly angels are also included in some places.²⁷ According to Ibn Sīnā's theory of life and soul, soul literally means 'a set of forces associated with a material body.' The material body matures and

²⁵ Ibid,50.

²⁶ 'Āsī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Šūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 99.

²⁷ Ibn Sīnā, "Risālah fī al-Ḥudūd," in *Tis'a Rasā'il fī al-Ḥikmah wa al-Ṭabī'iyyāt* (Qāhiraḥ: Dār al-'Arab, n.d.),81.

becomes active with the soul. According to Ibn Sīnā, the soul is ‘the first perfection of the natural body.’ The works of this perfection are achieved through the performance of vital functions such as nourishment and growth.²⁸

Ibn Sīnā accepts the soul as the first principle of living beings and as a species. Ibn Sīnā divides the *nafs* into three, namely the vegetable *nafs*, the animal *nafs* and the human *nafs*, and states that each of them has its own distinct powers and properties.

Vegetative soul (*nafs*): it is the first perfection of a natural body with organic life. The vegetative soul has three powers:

- a. Nourishing power (*al-quwwah ṭa‘miyyah*)
- b. Growth power (*al-quwwah al-nāmiyah*)
- c. Reproductive power (*al-quwwah al-muwallidah*)

The first two of these powers provide survival and perfection of the individual and the last provides a continuation of the species.

Animal soul (*nafs*): forms a higher stage of the vegetative soul. All the powers of nourishment, growth and reproduction that the vegetative soul has are also found in the animal soul. However, in the animal soul, in addition to the vegetative soul, there is also the power of movement and mind. In this case, there are two additional forces that determine the animal soul and distinguish it from the vegetable soul:

- a. The power of movement (*al-quwwah al-muḥarrika*),
- b. The power of understanding (*al-quwwah al-mudrikah*).

Ibn Sīnā also divided the 'power of understanding', the second faculty of the animal soul, into two: a. External senses (*al-ḥawāss al-ẓāhirah*) and b. Internal senses (*al-ḥawāss al-bāṭinah*). According to the philosopher, the external senses of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch are the five sense organs. Some animals have all the external senses while others do not. The internal senses are: a. common sense (*al-ḥissu*

²⁸ Okumus *Kur’ān’ın Felsefî Okunusu:İbn Sina Ornegi*,164.

al-mushtarak), b. imagination (*al-quwwah al-muṣawwirah*), c. deception (*al-quwwah al-wahmiyyah*), d. memory (*al-quwwah al-dhākira*) and e. imagination. (*al-quwwah al-mukhayyilah*)

The 'common sense' is where the five external senses come together. The power of design hides images from common sense; the 'power of intuition' helps to grasp things that the organs cannot perceive and to understand meanings. The 'power of remembering' preserves some meanings acquired by instinct and finally, the 'power of imagination' activates some forms and concepts stored in memory. In humans, imagination has a different meaning, slightly different from that of animals: In animals, imagination is activated by the power of intuition; in humans, it is activated by the power of thought. Thus, the force that separates the human soul from the animal soul is the force of reasoning.²⁹

The human soul (*nafs*): Ibn Sīnā arrived at the human soul by expanding the cognitive abilities of the animal soul. According to him, the human soul contains all the properties of the plant and animal souls. In addition, however, it also has human powers and a natural soul. This is the most important feature that distinguishes it from other living beings. In fact, Ibn Sīnā has rendered some surahs and verses metaphorically and allegorically. In them, he comments philosophically that man commits evil acts that are vegetable, claiming that they derive from animal forces.³⁰ While interpreting

﴿وَمِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ﴾

‘the harm in the night when darkness gathers,’ (Q.113:3)

He explained that the animal forces in man are dark, enveloping and blurred, that matter is the source of oppression, evil and absence, in contrast to the *Nafs al-Nātiqa*, which has a commanding existence and attributes the source of evil and bad to matter and material forces. The nature of the pure soul, on the other hand, is clean, pure and free from matter and its associated opacities. It is inclined to accept all forms and truths.

²⁹ For further information see: Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Najāh fī Al-Ḥikmah wa al-Manṭiqiyyah Al-Ṭab'iyyah wa Al-Ilāhiyyah*, 158-59.

³⁰ 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Ṣūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*, 118-19, 123-24.

All this beauty and light are not lost to it but only when the animal forces such as vanity, delusion, lust and anger, which belong to the animal force, are formed in it.³¹

Ibn Sīnā made a unique contribution to the history of philosophy with his theory proving the existence of the above-mentioned five inner senses. At the same time, he skillfully used the theory of nafs for his interpretation. He treated the *Falaq-Nās surās* with a completely different psychological approach than classical commentaries. It has also been said that the psychological approach advocated by Ibn Sīnā is also accepted as fundamental in contemporary psychology, and in this context, Ibn Sīnā's psychology is fundamentally empirical.

4.7 GENERAL FEATURES OF IBN SĪNĀ'S INTERPRETATION

Throughout history, the Qur'an has been interpreted in various ways literary, philological, grammatical, legal, philosophical, theological, mystical, social, and positive. Islamic societies sought to resolve the social, moral and cultural issues they faced with the guidance and example of this text.

The Muslim philosophers did not hold back and tried to explain the Qur'an from their own perspectives. Among the Muslim philosophers, Ibn Sīnā was the first to write an independent work on the verses and surahs of the Qur'an. In interpreting the Qur'anic verses, Ibn Sīnā, like other commentators, reflected the general characteristics of the time in which he lived, the social and political problems and the general scientific assumptions of his century.

There were certain scholars and movements that shaped and nurtured Ibn Sīnā's understanding of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*. These include *al-Farābī*, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', Aristotle and Neoplatonism in particular, classical Greek philosophy and Islamic philosophy in general. In this context, Ibn Sīnā's method of Qur'anic interpretation is a part of the philosophical system of thought.

³¹ Ibid,118-19.

In interpreting the Qur'an, it can be said that Ibn Sīnā exhibited the quality of an astute *tafsīr* who referred to his own opinion rather than the method of narration in which the views of previous commentary authorities are reproduced.

One of Ibn Sīnā's interpretive methods is to attempt to reconcile religion and philosophical thought. Since Ibn Sīnā considered the language of religion as a partially symbolic and symbolic realm and philosophy as a branch of science based on evidence, he saw philosophy as a key to unravelling the language of religion as he understood it and tried to give interesting examples.

Another method of interpretation used by Ibn Sīnā is that he derived some conclusions directly from the Qur'an and tries to support the conclusions he drew based on his reasoning and experience in the intellectual and philosophical fields with religious texts. He explained philosophical issues based on the verses and hadiths and tried to reconcile his interpretations with the Qur'an based on his philosophical background. S.Hossein Nasr, one of the contemporary thinkers, expressed this as follows:

In his commentaries on the Qur'an, Ibn Sīnā continued al-Fārābī's efforts to reconcile religion and philosophy or faith and reason. These efforts were continued by many sages in the following centuries.³²

Interpreting the ways of Muslim thinkers and philosophers to reconcile religion and philosophy, especially the verses of the Qur'an is manifested in two different ways: The first way is to select those religious truths which are compatible with philosophical views and comments on them. The second way is the way of *ta'wīl*, in which the texts which seem to be inconsistent with the parents of the system of philosophical sciences are interpreted as metaphorical and symbolical, implying that they are not in the proper sense. The second is the way of *ta'wīl*: the texts which seem to be inconsistent with the data of the system of philosophical sciences are interpreted metaphorically and symbolically, by saying that they are not so in the proper sense.

³² Nasr, *İslam Kozmoloji Ogretilerine Giris*, 360.

For this reason, this method of understanding the philosophical *tafsīr* used by Ibn Sīnā and other Muslim philosophers was criticised by classical scholars.³³ Ibn Sīnā believed that the prophets used some representations, pseudonyms and signs to reduce their level of understanding of the subjects that could not be perceived by the general public and explained the religious texts in a way that did not contradict his philosophical theses and supported the correctness of his own ideas.

Ibn Sīnā tried to explain religious concepts and expressions by ignoring the linguistic rules and general objectives of religion in his explanations of various Qur'anic suras and verses. There are also some examples of excessive interpretation. One of the notable features of Ibn Sīnā's method of interpretation was first, the *tafsīr* works focus on specific suras, concepts and verses rather than the entire Qur'an. *Mufasssīr* Ibn Sīnā interpreted the suras and verses that were more consistent with his own philosophical views in his understanding of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl*.

Scholars explained the reason why Ibn Sīnā focuses on certain surahs and verses of the Qur'an to prove the correctness of his own philosophical system, to show that his view and understanding are correct. In short, it is to support his philosophical understanding and ideas with the verses of the Qur'an. Ibn Sīnā prefers the verses and *surās* in which he can explain an opinion that he accepts in his philosophical system and is guided by the signs of the words. Such an approach leads to the fact that the interpretation remains on an allegorical level.³⁴

Omar Nasuhi Bilmen, a later Ottoman scholar, gave the following assessment of the philosopher's method in the field of *tafsīr*:

Ibn Sīnā is unique in science and philosophy. Some of his views, expressed under the influence of philosophical thought or as an interpreter of the ideas of ancient philosophers, are not in accordance with the truths of Islam and are therefore the subject of some criticism and objection.³⁵

³³ 'Aṣī, 25; Al-Dhahābī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, 400.

³⁴ 'Aṣī, 30.

³⁵ Omar Nasuhi Bilmen, *Buyuk Tefsir Tarihi Tabakatu'l-Mufessirin*, vol. I, II vols. (İstanbul: Semerkand, 2004), 506.

In summary, Ibn Sīnā's method of interpretation takes a rational and philosophical approach that is closer to the method of prudence commentaries. Starting from the data for understanding cosmology based on the Ptolemaic astronomy of the philosopher's era, he sought a reconciliation basis between them and the verses and concepts of the Qur'an on astronomy and metaphysical entities, and he made his own interpretation and ta'wīl of these concepts.

4.8 THE INFLUENCE OF IBN SĪNĀ ON SCHOLARS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THE QUR'AN

Al-Ghazzālī, who studied the views of the philosophers among the schools of thought of his time, was an attentive reader of Ibn Sīnā and despite his critical attitude towards the philosophers of the peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) school and his special efforts to refute the views of the philosophers, he could not free himself from the influence of the philosophy and views of the Muslim philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā on various subjects. This effect can also be observed in the context of understanding and interpreting the Qur'an. Al-Ghazzālī created an eclectic synthesis by trying to give a form to the elements from the thoughts of the philosophers that were consistent with the understanding of the *Ahl Al-Sunnah* and *Ash 'ārī*.³⁶

Despite his severe criticism of the philosophers of the Peripatetic school, Al-Ghazzālī accepted the works of Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī as the most competent works for explaining classical Aristotelian philosophy, and in a sense, he gives his right.³⁷

Some examples of Ghazzālī being influenced by Ibn Sīnā's views and philosophy makes the issue more vivid e.g. Ibn Sīnā saw all beings that are not *Wājib al-Wujūd*, i.e. the mass whose existence and essence are the same, in the category of possible beings and considers them all as beings that can perish and disappear in relation to Necessary Existence (*Wājib al-Wujūd*). He understood the statement of Abraham who emphasised his turning to Allah by saying, "I dislike those who perish" when he saw the stars in his

³⁶ Mesut Okumus "Gazzālī'nin Kur'an Yorumlarına İbn Sīnā'nın Etkisi," *İslāmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13, no. 3-4 (2000): 341-42.

³⁷ Ibid, 341.

debate about his people and interprets the *ufûl* as a possibility. Al-Ghazzālī also gave the *ufûl* the same meaning.³⁸

While expressing *marātib al-wujūd*, Ibn Sīnā began the sorting with *Wājib al-Wujūd*, the first and most honourable being, and ends in spirit/matter, arranging them in descending order; then, starting from the most delicate matter, he presented an arrangement that ends in 'aql al-mustefāḍ, elevating them from the simple to the composite and from the lower to the more honourable.³⁹

Al-Ghazzālī also conveyed this understanding in his works and accepts it as it is. Allah has created the blessings and the creatures in order. Allah is such a forerunner that there is no one before Him. The *mubda'at* and the *mumkīnah* have completely emerged from Him. Then, this order descends from the most venerable to the less venerable, to the meanest (vulgar) objects. Then, starting from the finest matter, it ascends to the more venerable things and finally ends with man. Thanks to the purification of his soul, the man returns to the form in which he says:

﴿أَرْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً ۝٢٨﴾

‘Return to your Lord and be pleased with yourself and Him’ (Q.89:28).

As it can be seen, al-Ghazzālī seems to have been strongly influenced by the thoughts of the philosophers in general and Ibn Sīnā in particular. It goes without saying that this effect continues in the context of the understanding and interpretation of the Qur'an.⁴⁰

Another important scholar who was influenced by Ibn Sīnā's philosophical views is Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. Because of his eclectic outlook, Rāzī's works are both influenced by Ibn Sīnā's philosophy and these influences are reflected in his commentaries. He benefited from Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037) in the philosophical and

³⁸ Ibid,343.

³⁹ Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt* (Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allāh Mar'ashī Najafī, 1960), III,241-242.

⁴⁰ Al-Ghazzālī, *Mishkāt al-Anwār (The Niche of Lights)*,277.

spiritual evaluations in the interpretation of many verses and in his explanations of the natural sciences.⁴¹

It is evident that Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, in his explanations of *Asmā' Al-Ḥusnā*, adopted Ibn Sīnā's idea that possible beings tend toward nonexistence. In explaining Allah's attribute of perseverance, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī mentioned the following principle: Two things are common in an object but if one of them is more than the other in that object, what is more, is perseverance and the other is called contempt. This excess does not change, either materially or spiritually or in other things. When describing the majesty of Allah, one cannot speak of physical greatness here. God is greater than everything that exists. Undoubtedly, He is eternal and imperishable. Apart from Him, there can be nothing like Him. He is the highest in knowledge, power, sovereignty and dominion. Everything except Allah is unworthy compared to Him. Even though the knowledge of creatures is infinite, it is finite compared to Allah's knowledge. The same is true of His power, His dignity, His pre-eternity and His eternity. Everything else is null and void compared to His perfection and majesty.⁴²

As it can be seen, Al-Rāzī also referred to the approaches of Ibn Sīnā in his interpretation of the 35th verse of *Sūrah al-Nūr*. The commentator reproduces the views and interpretations of the scholars of the first period regarding this verse, giving space in particular to the approaches of al-Ghazzālī. By reproducing the evaluations and views of the mystics, he conveys as another approach Ibn Sīnā's opinion that the analogy mentioned in the verse and especially the five examples symbolise the levels of understanding of the human soul, lists them one after another and summarises the interpretations of the philosophers but the accuracy of the interpretations he gives is not correct. It does not make positive or negative opinions or evaluations.⁴³

Şadr al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. Yaḥyā Qawamī Shirāzī (c. 1571-1636) is probably the most important Islamic philosopher after Ibn Sīnā. As known Mullā Şadrā, he later received the title Şadr al-Muta'allihīn (Master of the Theosophists) for his

⁴¹ Ozturk, "Tefsirde Fahreddin Er-Rāzī", 323.

⁴² Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *al-Lawāmi' al-Bayyināh fī Sharḥ Asmā' Allāh wa al-Ṣifāh*, Al-Seyyed Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī (Mişr: al-Matba'ah al-Sharafīyyah, 1323) 189-190, Janssens, "Philosophical Commentaries.", 788.

⁴³ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb*, vol. 23 (Bairut: Dār al-Fikr, 1981), 224-39.

approach to philosophy which combined an interest in theology with insights from mystical intuition.⁴⁴

Şadrā is a dedicated scholar and a philosopher who wrote interpretations of the Qur'an as independent treatises. Moreover, there is a mutual reinforcement and amplification between his philosophy and the reading of the Qur'an because his approach to the Qur'an is philosophical and his philosophy is based on the Qur'an. In this respect, Mullā Şadrā has taken the philosophical tafsir tradition established by his predecessor Ibn Sīnā a step further.⁴⁵

The only philosopher that Şadrā explicitly mentioned in his commentary on Sūrah al-Fātiḥa is Ibn Sīnā. It can be said that Şadrā, who quoted from *Al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt*, was influenced by Ibn Sīnā's *ishraqī* philosophy in his interpretations of the Qur'an.⁴⁶

One of the commentators who criticised his views is the late Elmalili M. Hamdi Yazır (d. 1942). In his *tafsīr*, he supported Ibn Sīnā's views and evaluations in the field of natural sciences, his ideas on religious issues and his exegesis of the verses of the Qur'an, the philosopher's *tafsīr* and interpretations and expressed that the philosopher's commentaries do no harm. Yazır explained that there are three aspects to interpreting the verse:

﴿وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ﴾

‘the harm in witches when they blow on knots’ (Q.113:4)

that the first of the two aspects is the general meaning and that the meaning is 'from the evil of magical women, souls or communities who make *ruqyah* and incantation by tying knots on threads and blowing on them; Second, he explained that it is interpreted as 'from the *evil* of deceitful women or from the *evil* of *evil* women who tempt men, attacking them by presenting their beauty and seducing them'.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The School of Isfahan," in *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, M. M. Sharif, vol. I (Wiesbaden, 1966).

⁴⁵ Rustom, "Qur'anic Exegesis in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullā Şadrā's Tafsīr Sūrat al-Fātiḥa.", 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 117-118.

⁴⁷ Elmalili Hamdi Yazır, *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*, vol. 10, 10 vols. (Istanbul: Azim Dagıtım, 2011), 184.

After giving the two meanings about the souls blowing up knots, he mentioned it as a third comment of Ibn Sīnā and some Sūfīs. It means

﴿وَمِنْ شَرِّ النَّفَّاثَاتِ فِي الْعُقَدِ﴾

‘the harm in witches when they blow on knots’ (Q.113:4)

This is the fact that the verse refers both to animals, plants and all developing bodies, the organic forces called nutritive power, organic (*uḍvī*) or actually among the elemental bodies. The first principle of the excitation of desire, the tendency of the tasks of nourishment and reproduction in the human body as the organs and the condition is that this soul and other animal and emotional forces are complementary to it, means the general of everything as a sign of the desired force, which is on the level of the disease of the previous meanings. Even in this respect, it would be more obvious to say 'the power of pleasure' and he found this interpretation more appropriate.⁴⁸

4.9 CONCLUSION

Looking more closely at Ibn Sīnā's approach to the verses, the first thing that stood out was the complete interpretation of certain verses and sūras. This statement reinforced the idea that Ibn Sīnā actually had a purpose in selecting these verses. He choosed the verses to prove the correctness of his own system. In a sense, he expressed the important philosophical questions that are the cornerstones of his own philosophical system with references from the verses. For this reason, the titles in this section are ontology and epistemology, the main topics of philosophy. By subtitles such as the nature, morality and psychology perspective, an attempt had been made to determine the influence of Ibn Sīnā's view on his Qur'anic interpretation.

Ibn Sīnā's interpretations of the *tafsīr* were carefully analysed and the following conclusions were drawn:

Verses 11 and 12 of *Sūrah al-Fuṣṣilah* were interpreted in a way that is called scientific exegesis in accordance with the astronomical and geological understanding of

⁴⁸ Ibid,185.

his time. He tried to solve the rebellion of matter discussed in Neoplatonism in the interpretation of this verse from a Qur'anic perspective.

Interpreting the verse al-Nūr reflected Ibn Sīnā's view of the Qur'an. According to him, the language of the Qur'an was metaphorical and symbolic. A number of metaphors have been used to explain to the public. 'The light' in the verse means the light of Muḥammad (saw) (Nūr al-Muḥammadī) as 'the lamp' represented Prophet Muḥammad (saw), 'the glass' meant his pure heart, 'the olive tree' is his blessed body, the expression 'neither from East and West', the brightness of the religion of Islām and the Muslim ummah and 'the fire' also infer Islam.

The commentary of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* had become the proof of the existence of Allah with the science of logic. Expressing that the greatest goal of all sciences in interpreting *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* was to learn the nature of Allah, His attributes and the way His actions emanate from Him, Ibn Sīnā said that this *sūrah* also referred to everything related to the study of the nature of Allah whether through *ta'riḍ* or allusions.

Ibn Sīnā addressed the problem of evil in *Sūrah al-Falaq*. Ibn Sīnā addressed one of the main topics of philosophy and tried to identify the concepts of the Qur'an with philosophical concepts. According to Ibn Sīnā's interpretation of al-Falaq, evil arises at the level of 'particular realisation' (*qadar*), while evil at the level of predestination (*qadā*) is only a latent potentiality. Ibn Sīnā explained that the evils that resulted from the darkness of the soul also fell under the category of metaphysical evil.

Ibn Sīnā clarified these gradations by explaining in *Sūrah al-Nās* how it was to seek refuge with *Wahib al-Ṣuwar*, who is also in the nearby *al-Mabda`*. According to Ibn Sīnā, *al-waswas* in the verse was the force of *mutakhayyilah*. This force moves man against the human soul. For this reason, man insidiously approaches his *naḥs* and becomes *khannās*. Since the first mount (*maṭiyyah*) of the soul is the chest, the forces spread through it to other organs. For this reason, the effect of deception begins first in the chest. *al-Jinn* is the batini and *al-Nās* are the external senses.

In the context of the subject of the thesis, scholars who were influenced by Ibn Sina in the field of tafsir were traced. These scholars were discussed chronologically. Despite his severe criticism of the philosophers of the peripatetic tradition, al-Ghazzālī seemed to have been a very meticulous and attentive reader of Ibn Sīnā. When his works were closely examined, it was understood that he had different ideas than his predecessor's ideas. This indicated that al-Ghazzālī could not escape from the influence of philosophy and the views of Islamic philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā on various issues. Al-Ghazzālī referred mainly to his explanations of the understanding of God, the stages of existence and some Qur'anic concepts of Ibn Sīnā.⁴⁹

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was also a high representative of the Kalām tradition but he was a good reader, critic and commentator of Islamic philosophy in the eyes of Ibn Sīnā. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was a good student of Ibn Sīnā, a true admirer of him and a qualified critic. Although he declared that he was against Ibn Sīnā's ideas with their details, principles, results and requirements, all of Rāzī's works showed the dependence of his new theological system, themes and conceptual world on Ibn Sīnā and revealed the results of the efforts of his philosophy to articulate. The originality of Rāzī's investigations, criticisms and interpretations were the features that supplement the shortcomings of Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, strengthens his proofs, saved him from becoming history by removing them from the eleventh century and reintroduced them to philosophical thought with his criticisms in his own time.⁵⁰

Undoubtedly, Elmalili Hamdi Yazir, a later Islamic scholar, was influenced by Ibn Sīnā's philosophical views. Elmalili referred to Ibn Sīnā's works in various parts of his *tafsīr* and also added his commentaries on some Qur'anic verses. In his commentaries, the author sometimes criticised the philosopher's views and sometimes stated that he agreed with him. Elmalili frequently referred to Sīnā's views, especially in interpreting the chapters of *Sūrah al-Iklāş*, *al-Falaq* and *al-Nās*.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Okumus "Gazzālī'nin Kur'an Yorumlarına İbn Sīnā'nın Etkisi.", 341.

⁵⁰ Altas, "Fahreedin Er-Rāzī'nin İbn Sina Yorumu ve Eleştirisi.", 355, 361.

⁵¹ Hatice Toksoz, "Elmalili Hamdi Yazır'ın İhlas Sūresi Tefsirinde Tanrı Tasavvuru İle İlgili Felsefî Kavramlar Ve İbn Sina'daki Temelleri," *Suleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi*, no. 28 (2012), 42.

If the interpretations of *Sūrah al-Ikhlāṣ* by Ibn Sīnā and Elmalili M. Hamdi Yazir were compared, it was found that Elmalili's thoughts on the concept of God in the commentary of the aforementioned *sūrah* had similar features to the views of Ibn Sīnā, the pioneer of philosophical exegesis. The commentator made some references to the works of Ibn Sīnā and he used metaphysical concepts in his philosophy.⁵²



⁵² Ibid,42,58.

Table 3.4.A Table of Ibn Sinā's Philosophical Approach to Qur'anic Interpretation

Ontological	Epistemological	Psychological	Ethical	Scientific
أَرْجِعْ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ رَاضِيَةً مَّرْضِيَّةً 'Return to your Lord and be pleased with yourself and Him' (Q.89:27)	سَنُقَرِّئُكَ فَلَا تَنْسَىٰ * إِلَّا مَا شَاءَ اللَّهُ 'We shall teach you [the Qur'an] and you will not forget unless God wishes;' (Q.87:6-7)	وَمِن شَرِّ غَاسِقٍ إِذَا وَقَبَ the harm in the night when darkness gathers,' (Q.113:3)	فَذَكِّرْ إِن نَّفَعَتِ الذِّكْرَىٰ So remember, if remembering helps' (Q.87:9)	ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ وَهِيَ دُخَانٌ 'Then He turned to the sky, which was smoke...' (Q.41:11)
قُلْ هُوَ اللَّهُ أَحَدٌ 'Say, He / Huwa is God the One' (Q.112:1)	إِلَهُ النَّاسِ 'the Lord of men' (Q.114:3).	وَمِن شَرِّ الْوَقْعَةِ فِي الْعُقَدِ 'the harm in witches when they blow on knots' (Q.113:4).	وَالَّذِي قَدَّرَ فَهَدَىٰ 'who determined their destinations and guided them' (Q.87:3)	قَالَتَا أَتَيْنَا طَائِعِينَ : '...we came willingly...' (Q.41:11)
			يَرْبِّ النَّاسِ 'Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of people' (Q.114:1)	

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

It is not possible to consider *tafsīr* works independently of the spiritual world of the exegetes who wrote them and the time in which they lived. In interpreting Qur'anic verses, each *tafsīr* interpreter reflects some extent the prevailing scholarly assumptions of the time in which he lived, the intellectual and religious discussions of the time and his own knowledge and sources. These situations mentioned also apply to Ibn Sīnā to a great extent.

The sources from which Ibn Sīnā drew his understanding of *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* were undoubtedly al-Fārābī, Aristotle, Neoplatonism in general, Greek philosophy, Islamic philosophy and personal opinions that fed his thinking. The method of interpretation that Ibn Sīnā used in interpreting the Qur'an is a part that completes his philosophical thought. This situation showed that it was natural for him to use the methods and means of the *tafsīr* of wisdom and not the method of the *tafsīr* of narration in interpreting the Qur'an.

One of the remarkable features of Ibn Sīnā in evaluating the verses is that he tried to reconcile religion and philosophical views. Because of the religious education he received and his interest and immersion in philosophy, he believed that there could be no conflict between these two disciplines. He attempted to theoretically reconcile these seemingly obvious contradictions. Ibn Sīnā considered the language of religion as a partially symbolic and emblematic realm and saw philosophy as the key that resolves this language. In the *tafsīr* treatises he wrote, he tried to combine the symbolic expression of religion with his philosophical views.

Another feature of the *ta'wīl* method was that it attempted to use religion to support the conclusions drawn directly from the Qur'an, as well as the conclusions drawn on the basis of intellectual and philosophical thought, reflection and experience. Ibn Sīnā created his works in two ways. While explaining his philosophical thoughts based on the *Qur'ān* and the verses, he tried to reconcile his interpretations with the Qur'an based on his intellectual philosophical accumulation.

In fact, Seyyed Hossein Nasr wrote the following about Ibn Sīnā's method of *tafsīr*:

Moreover, he wrote several religious works which include not only treatises on religious subjects, such as the meaning of fate and free will, but also commentaries upon several chapters of the *Qur'an*. This latter category is particularly important because it was primarily in these commentaries that Ibn Sīnā sought to harmonize reason and revelation along lines already begun by al-Kindī, al-Fārābī and the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', continued after him by Suhrawardī, and finally brought to its fruition by Mir Damad and Mullā Ṣadrā.¹

In this context, based on the data of the understanding of cosmology which was based on the Ptolemaic astronomy of the era of the philosophers, he sought a compromise between them and the verses and concepts of the *Qur'an* on astronomy and metaphysical beings and made *tafsīr* and interpretations on such concepts as heaven, angels, 'arsh and desk.

When interpreting the *Qur'an*, there are some rules that interpreters must follow. These are explained in detail in the *tafsīr* books. In Ibn Sīnā's interpretations, there were both interpretations in which he adopted the traditional method and features and approaches that were completely independent of it. Generally, in interpreting the *Qur'an*, Muslim philosophers preferred to the method of applying the way of *ta'wil* based on the data and intellectual efforts derived from the study of the beings, adhering to their own philosophical system rather than adopting the style of earlier commentary authorities.

Muslim philosophers attempted to reconcile religion and philosophy through two different methods. First, religious texts that do not contradict philosophical results were selected and explained in parallel with philosophical ideas. In this way, religion and philosophy were reconciled. This method seems to be acceptable in the general nature of the *tafsīr*.

In the second method, religious texts and *sharī'ah* truths were adapted to philosophical views and theories. The explanations were formulated in such a way that

¹ Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardi- Ibn 'Arabi*, 24.

philosophy dominates religion. This method was used by Muslim philosophers al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā. However, compared to al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā was clearer and more specific.² In this method, the texts that do not agree with the philosophical system were accepted as metaphorical and symbolic and *ta'wīl* was used. Therefore, this attitude was criticised by classical scholars.

To make statements about the concepts and expressions of religion by ignoring the rules of linguistics and the general purposes of religion falls into the realm of forced interpretation. It turned out that Ibn Sīnā interpreted the religious texts in parallel with his own philosophical thoughts. The philosopher's understanding of religion, Qur'an, *tafsīr* and *ta'wīl* determined the method of interpretation of the texts and he presented practical examples of this understanding based on the verses and sūrās that he has selected.³

One of the features of the philosopher's method in interpreting the Qur'an was that he selected certain verses and surās and tried to win these texts for the validity of his own philosophical system. According to Ḥassan 'Āṣī, these interpretations of Ibn Sīnā were sectarian, *ishārī* and philosophical. According to him, Ibn Sīnā selected the verses that fit his thoughts, relied on them and compared the indications of the words with his own views. Although this method was valid and useful for the philosopher, it was considered symbolic and allegorical in terms of the methods and procedures of exegesis. This situation caused the philosopher's interpretations of the Qur'an to remain on a subjective and ideological level.⁴

Omar Nasuhi Bilmen criticised the *tafsīr* method of Ibn Sīnā as follows:

In short, Ibn Sīnā is unique in terms of science and philosophy. However, under the influence of philosophy or because of some his opinions and studies, which he did not express as an interpreter of the opinions of the ancient philosophers, needed criticism and correction from the point of view of the law of Islam, this aspect attracted some objections and criticisms against him.⁵

² Muḥammad Ḥussain al-Dhahābī, *Al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn*, vol. II (Qahirah: Maktabah Wahba, n.d.), 400.

³ 'Āṣī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur'ānī wa al-Lughah al-Şūfiyyah fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā* (Bayrut: al-Muassasah al-Jāmi'iyyah al-Dirāsāh wa al-Nashr wa al-Tawzī', 1986), 7.

⁴ Ibid, 30.

⁵ Okumus *Kur'an'ın Felsefî Okunusu:İbn Sina Ornegi*, 107.

If his *tafsīr* method was evaluated in terms of *tafsīr*, it included 'linguistic explanations', 'symbolic and metaphorical *tafsīr*', 'ishārī *tafsīr*', 'esoteric *tafsīr*' and the kind of *tafsīr* that is now called 'scientific *tafsīr*'. It could also be said that the characteristics that make up many of the types of *ta`wīl* were interwoven and that there were elements that could be placed in the category of forced and exaggerated interpretation that transcend the boundaries drawn by tradition for *ta`wīl* from time to time.⁶

In summary, the most striking features of Ibn Sīnā's understanding of *tafsīr* and *ta`wīl* were the understanding of religion and the Qur'an was practiced within a theoretical framework and practices were put forward, that acumen and rational approaches dominated over narrative, that correct and incorrect interpretations were interwoven, philosophical and it could be enumerated that it had a structure that also had scientific features that some ambiguous verses and terms were interpreted in accordance with the philosophical system of thought of the philosopher, that there were occasional limitations and exaggerated interpretations and that it contained particular and subjective evaluations peculiar to the commentator.

⁶ Ibid,107.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adamson, Peter. *Interpreting Avicenna: Critical Essays*. Newyork: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Afnan, Soheil M. *Avicenna His Life and Works*. Museum Street London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1958.
- Al-Baghdādī, ‘Abd al-Qāhir. *Al-Farq Bayn al-Firaq*. Mişr: Maktabah Ibn Sīnā, n.d.
- Al-Baghdādī, Khatīb. *Tārikh Al- Baghdād*. Vol. VII. Bairut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islamī, 2001.
- Al-Bukhārī. “Faḍāil Al-Qur’an.” In *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Dār al-Ibn Kathīr. Bairut, 2002
- Al-Dhahābī, Muḥammad Ḥussain. *Al-Tafsīr Wa al-Mufasssīrūn*. Vol. II. Qāhirah: Maktabah Wahba, n.d.
- Al-Fārābī, Abū Naşr. *Al-Majmū‘ Min Muallafah Abū Naşr al-Fārābī*. İstanbul: Suleymaniye Kutuphanesi, 1325.
- Al-Ghazzālī, Abū Ḥāmid. *Mishkāt Al-Anwār (The Niche of Lights)*. Provo,Utah: Brigham Young Press, 1998.
- . Abū Ḥāmid. *Ihyā Al- ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*. Bairut: Dār Ibn Ḥazm, 2005.
- . *Jawāhir Al-Qur’an*. Bairut: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Ulum, 1986.
- Al-Kindī, Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb. *Rasāil al-Kindī al-Falsafīyyah* Muḥammad ‘Abd al-Hādī Abū Zaida. Mişr: Dār al-Fikri al-‘Azlī, 1950.
- Al-Narshakhi, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Ja'far. *Tārikh al-Bukhārā*. Qāhirah: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1994.
- Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Mafātīḥ Al-Ghayb*. Vol. 32. 23 vols. Bairut: Dar al-Fikr, 1981.
- . *Al-Lawāmi‘ al-Bayyinah fī Sharḥ Asmā‘ Allāh wa al-Şifāh*. Al-Seyyed Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Ḥalabī. Mişr: Al-Matba‘ah al-Sharafīyyah, 1323.
- Alper, Omar Mahir. “İbn Sina (Eserleri).” In *TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi*. 20. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Yay., 1999.
- Altas, Esref. “Fahreedin Er-Râzî’nin İbn Sina Yorumu ve Eleştirisi.” Phd, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2009.
- Arslan, Ahmat. “İbn Sīnā ve Spinoza’da Felsefe-Din İlişkileri.” In *İslam Felsefesi Uzerine*. Ankara: Vadi Yay., 1999.
- ‘Āşī, Ḥassan. *Al-Tafsīr al-Qur’anī Wa al-Lughah al-Sūfiyyah Fī Falsafah Ibn Sīnā*. Bairut: al-Muassasah al-Ghāmiyyah lī al-Dirasāh wa al-Tawzi, 1986.
- Aydinli, Osman. “İmām Mātūrīdī’nin Yetistigi İlmî Ortam Ve Semerkant’ta İlim Merkezleri.” *Diyanet İlmî Dergi* 55, no. 3 (September 15, 2019): 565–99.
- . *Fethinden Sāmāniler’in Yıkılışına Kadar (93-389/711-999) Semerkant Tarihi*. İstanbul: İSAM Yay., 2011.
- Bartdhold, Vasily Vladimirovich. *Orta Asya Turk Tarihi Dersleri*. Ankara: Çağlar Yay., 2004.
- Bayhaqī, Abū al-Ḥassan ‘Alī. *Tārikh Al-Ḥukamā’ al-Islām*. Damascus: Maṭba‘ah al-Taraqī, 1946.
- Belo, Catarina. *Chance and Determinism in Avicenna and Averroes*. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007.
- Bilmen, Omar Nasuhi. *Buyuk Tefsir Tarihi Tabakatu’l-Mufessirin*. Vol. I. II vols. İstanbul: Semerkand, 2004.
- Ciftcioglu, Ismail. “Orta Asya -Anadolu İlim ve Kultur Koprusu: XI-XVI. Yuzyıllar.” *BILIG* 44 (2008).
- Corbin, Henry. *History of Islamic Philosophy*. London: The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 1962.

- Daniel De Smet, and Meryem Sebtî. "Avicenna's Philosophical Approach to the Qur'an in the Light of His Tafsîr Sûrat al-Ikhlâs." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no. 2 (2009).
- De Cillis, Dr Maria. "Avicenna on Matter, The Disobedience of Matter and Evil:Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur'anic Perspective." *Transcendent Philosophy: An International Journal of Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism* 12 (2011): 147–68.
- De Smet, Daniel, and Meryem Sebtî. "Avicenna's Philosophical Approach to the Qur'an in the Light of His Tafsîr Sûrat al-Ikhlâs." *Journal of Qur'anic Studies* 11, no. 2 (October 1, 2009): 134–48. <https://doi.org/10.3366/jqs.2009.0010>.
- Demir, Hilmi. "İmam Mâtûrîdî'nin Gnostik Akımlarla Mucadelesi." Ankara: T.C. Kültür Ve Turizm Bakanlığı, 2011.
- Demirci, Mustafa. "Türk İslâm Medeniyetinin İkinci Dalgası: Orta Asya'da Gelisen Bilim ve Dusuncenin Dinamikleri." Isparta: SDUİF Kitapevi Yay, n.d.
- . "Türk-İslam Medeniyetinin İkinci Dalgası: Orta Asya'da Gelisen Bilim ve Dusuncenin Dinamikleri (X-XIII.YY)." Isparta, 2007.
- Gutas, Dimitri. *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. Second. Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2014.
- . "Avicenna's 'Maḏhab' With An Appendix On The Question Of His Date Of Birth." *Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino* 5/6 (1988 1987).
- . "The Heritage of Avicenna: The Golden Age of Arabic Philosophy 1000-ca 1350," Vol. XXVIII. 1. Leuven-Belgium: Leuven University Press, 1999.
- Durusoy, Ali. "İbni Sina." In *DİA*. Vol. 20. İstanbul: TDV Yay., 1999.
- Fazlıoğlu, İhsan. "Osmanlı Coğrafyasında İlmi Hayatın Tesekkulu ve Davud El-Kayseri." Ankara, 1998.
- Foltz, Richard. *Religions of The Silk Road Premodern Patterns of Globalization*. Palgrave macmillan, n.d.
- Frye, Richard N. "The Sāmānids." In *The Cambridge History of Iran*. Cambridge University Press, 1975.
- Furūgh, 'Omar. *Ikhwān Al-Ṣafā': Dars, 'Arḍ,Taḥlîl*. Dirāsāt Qaṣīrah fî al-Adāb wa al-Tārikh wa al-Falsafah 15. Bairut: Manshūrāt al- Maktabah al-Maymanah, 1953.
- Gohlman, William E. *The Life of Ibn Sina A Critical Edition and Annotated Translation*. Albany, Newyork: State University of New York Press, 1974.
- Goodman, Lenn E. *Avicenna*. London and New York: Routledge, 1992.
- Guler, Dilaver. "'Sufî' Ibn Sina (o.428/1037) ve 'Makâmatu'l-Ârifin'i." *Tasavvuf: İlmi ve Akademik Arastırma Dergisi* 2, no. 6 (2001).
- Gunay-Gungor, Unver-Harun. *Baslangıçtan Gunumuze Turklerin Dini Tarihi*. İstanbul: Ragbet Yay., 2007.
- Guney, Ahmet Faruk. "Bir Felsefî Tefsir Ornegi Olarak Ahmet Hamdi Akseki'nin İbn Sina'nın İhlas Sûresi Tefsiriyle İlgili Telif Ettigi Tercume ve Serh." *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Arastirmaları Dergisi*, no. 20 (2011).
- . "İbn Sina'dan Elmalılı'ya İhlas Suresi Felsefî Tefsir Gelenegi." PhD Thesis, Marmara Universitesi, 2008.
- H. Rizvi, Sajjad. *Mullā Ṣadrā Shirāzi: His Life And Works And The Sources For Safavid Philosophy*. United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Hannawî, 'Abd al-Aḥad. "The Role of the Arabs in the Introduction of Paper into Europe." *Middle East Librarians Association*, no. 85 (2012).
- Ibn Abî 'Uṣaybi'a. *Kitāb 'Uyūn al-Anbā Fî Ṭabaqāt al-Aṭibbā'*. Vol. 1. Dār al-Ma'arif, n.d.
- Ibn Al-Qiftî. *Tārikh al-Ḥukamā'*. Berlin: Leipzig, 1908.

- Ibn Sīnā. “Al-Ilāhiyyāt.” In *Al-Shifā`*. Qum; Iran: Ayatollah Mar’ashi Najafī, 1960.
- . *Al-Mabda’ wa al-Ma’ād*. Şaltanah ‘Umān: Wuzārah al-Dhaqāfah wa li al-Dhiqāh, 1998.
- . “Al-Manṭıq.” In *Al-Shifā*, Vol. 1. Qahira, 1957.
- . “Al-Nafs.” In *Al-Shifā`*. Qum; Irān: Ayāt Allāh Mar’ashī al-Najafī, 1960.
- . *Al-Najah fī al-Ḥikmah wa al-Manṭiqiyyah al-Tab’iyyah wa al-Ilāhiyyah*. Muḥy al-Dīn Şabri al-Kurdī. Mişr: Maṭba‘ah al-Sa‘adah, 1938.
- . “Fī Aqsām al-’Ulūm al-’Aqliyya.” In *Tis’a Rasail Fī al-Ḥikmah ve al-Tabi’yyat*. Qahira: Dār al-’Arab, 1989.
- . *Kitāb Al-Ishārāt Wa al-Tanbīhāt*. Qum; Irān: Ayatollah Mar’ashī al-Najafī, 1960.
- . *Risālah Al-Aḍḥawīyyah fī Amr al-Ma’ād Li al-Shaykh*. Qahirah: Dār al-Fikr al-’Arabī, 1949.
- . “Risālah al-Birr al-Ithm.” In *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyya ‘inda Ibn Sina*, Shams al-Dīn Abd al-Amir. Beirut: Dar al-Kitab al-’Alemī, 1988.
- . “Risālah al-Ḥadd.” In *Tis’a Rasail fī al-Ḥikmah wa al-Tabi’iyyah*. Qāhirah: Dār al-’Arab, 1989.
- . “Risālah fī al-Fi‘l wa al-Infi‘āl wa Aqsāmuhu.” In *Majmū‘ Rasail Al-Shaykh Al-Ra’īs*, 2–11. Jāmi’iyyah Dāirah al-Ma’arif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1354.
- . “Risālah fī al-Ḥudūd.” In *Tis’a Rasail fī al-Ḥikmah Wa al-Tabi’iyyah*. Qāhirah: Dār al-’Arab, n.d.
- . “Risālah fī Kalām ‘alā Nafs al-Nāṭıqa.” In *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyyah ‘inda Ibn Sīnā*, Shams al-Dīn ‘Abd al-’Āmir. Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-’Alamī, 1988.
- . “Risālah fī Sırr Al-Qadar.” In *Majmu’ Rasail al-Shaikh al-Rais Bin Sina al-Bukhārī*. Matba’ah Jāmi’iyyah Dāirah al-Ma’arif al-Uthmāniyyah, 1354.
- . “Taqsīm al-’Ulūm al-’Aqliyyah.” In *Al-Madhab al-Tarbawīyyah ‘inda Ibn Sīnā*, Shams al-Dīn Abd al-Amir. Bairut: Dār al-Kitāb al-’Alamī, 1988.
- . *Uyūn al-Ḥikmah*. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī. Bairut: Dār al-Qalam, 1980.
- Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna),. *Avicenna’s Psychology: An English Translation of Kitāb al-Najāt, Book II, Chapter VI with Historico-Philosophical Notes and Textual Improvements on the Cairo Edition*. Westport, Conn: Hyperion Press, 1981.
- Ikhwan al-Şafā’. *Rasā’il Ikhwan al-Şafā’ wa Khullān al-Wafā’*. Vol. 3. Mu’assasah Handouwī, 2018.
- . *Al-Risālah al-Jāmi’ah Dhāt al-Fawāid al-Nāfi’ah*. Vol. 2. 2 vols. Bairut: Dār al-Andalus, n.d.
- İlyasov, Resad. “Ebû Said Muhammed Hādımī’nin Kur’an’ı Yorumlama Yontemi.” Phd, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2007.
- Janssens, Jules. “Avicenna and the Qur’ān: A Survey of His Qur’anic Commentaries.” *Mélanges de l’Institut Dominicain d’Études Orientales* 25–26 (2004): 177–92.
- . “Philosophical Commentaries.” In *The Oxford Handbook of Qur’anic Studies*, Mustafa Shah and Muhammad Abdel Haleem. New York: Oxford University Press, 2020.
- Kabir, Mafizullah. “The Relation of the Buwayhid Amirs with the ‘Abbasid Caliphs.” *JPHS* II, no. 3 (1954): 228–43.
- Keklik, Nihat. “İbn Sina (980/1037) Hayatı ve Eserleri.” *Edebiyat Fakultesi Matbaası* 22–23 (1981).
- Khaṭīb, ‘Abd Allāh ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-. *Tafsīr Sūrah Al-Ikhlāş Li-Saykh al-Ra’īs Abī ‘Alī al-Ḥassan Bin ‘Abd Allāh Bin Sīnā*. Kuwait: Majallah al-Sharī‘ah wa al-Dīrāsah al-Islāmiyyah, 2002.
- Kitapçı, Zekerıyya. *Orta Asya’da İslamiyet ve Türkler*. 2004: Yedi Kubbe Yay., 2004.

- McGinnis, John. *Great Medieval Thinkers Avicenna*. Newyork: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Meisami, Sayeh. "İbn Sînâ's Philosophical Interpretation of Surât al-Falaq." *Al-Bayân Journal of Qur'ân and Hadith Studies* 15 (2017): 1–19.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *İslam Kozmoloji Ogretilerine Giriş*. İstanbul: İnsan Yay., 1985.
- . "The School of Isfahan." In *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, M. M. Sharif. Vol. I. Wiesbaden, 1966.
- . *Three Muslim Sages Avicenna- Suhrawardi- Ibn 'Arabi*. Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1992.
- Nettion, J. Richard. "Neoplatonism in Islamic Philosophy." In *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Vol. VI. London-New York: Routledge, 1998.
- Okumus, Mesut. "Felsefî Tefsir Bağlamında İbn Sînâ'nın Kur'an Sure ve Ayetlerine Yaklaşımları." *Diyanet İlmi Dergi* 50, no. 1 (n.d.): 157–94.
- . "Gazzâlî'nin Kur'an Yorumlarına İbn Sînâ'nın Etkisi." *İslâmî Araştırmalar Dergisi* 13, no. 3–4 (2000): 341–52.
- . *Kur'an'ın Felsefî Okunusu: İbn Sînâ Ornegi*. Ankara: Araştırma Yay., 2003.
- Onal, Recep. "Socio-Geo-Political Context İn The Formation Of Mâtürîdî Thought: Analyses On The Transoxania (Samarqand And Bukhara)/ Mâtürîdî Dusuncenin Tesekkulunde Sosyo-Jeo-Politik Bağlam: Mâverâunnehir (Semerkand Ve Buhara) Uzerine Analizler," 2018.
- Ozturk, Mustafa. "İhvân-ı Safâ'nin Felsefî Dusunce Sisteminde Kur'an ve Yorum." *OMUİF Dergisi*, no. 14–15 (2003): 283–309.
- . "Tefsirde Fahreddin er-Râzî." In *İslâm Dusuncesinin Donusum Çağında Fahreddin Er-Râzî*, Omer Turker-Osman Demir., 279–346. İstanbul: İSAM Yay., 2013.
- Peker, Hidayet. "İbn Sina'nın Bilgi Anlayışı." Phd, Uludag Üniversitesi, 1999.
- Rescher, Nicholas. *Taṭawwur Al-Mantiq al-'Arabī*. Qahirah: Dâr al-Ma'ârif, 1985.
- Rustom, Mohammed. "Qur'anic Exegesis in Later Islamic Philosophy: Mullâ Sadrâ's Tafsîr Sûrat al-Fâtiha." Phd, University of Toronto, 2009.
- Sahinoglu, Seyma. "İbn Sînâ'da Ahlâk Sorunu." Master, Marmara Üniversitesi, 2009.
- Sipahioglu, Abdulvahid Yakub. "X.-XI. Asırlarda Musluman Toplumlar: Siyasi İstikrarsızlık Karsısında Kulturel Butunluk." *Turkish Academic Research Review* 2, no. 3 (December 2017): 39-54.
- Toksoz, Hatice. "Elmalılı Hamdi Yazır'ın İhlas Sûresi Tefsirinde Tanrı Tasavvuru İle İlgili Felsefî Kavramlar Ve İbn Sina'daki Temelleri." *Suleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakultesi Dergisi*, no. 28 (2012).
- Whittingham, Martin. *Al-Ghazali and the Qur'an One Book, Many Meanings*. New York: Routledge, 2007.
- Yazır, Elmalılı Hamdi. *Hak Dini Kur'an Dili*. Vol. 10. 10 vols. İstanbul: Azim Dağıtım, 2011.
- Ziyâdah, Mu'in. "Mawsû'ah al- Falsafah al-'Arabiyyah." In *Ikhwân Al-Şafâ'*, 2:47–69. Bairut: Maktabah Mu`min Quraish, 1988.
- . "Mawsû'ah al- Falsafah al-'Arabiyyah." In *Al-Mashshaiyyah al-Qadîmah*. Vol. 3. Bairut: Maktabah Mu`min Quraish, 1988.