

# Interpretation

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# Interpretation

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# The Origins of al-Rāzī's Political Philosophy

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## I. INTRODUCTION

We begin our inquiry into the origins of al-Rāzī's political philosophy with his *Book of the Philosophic Life* (*Kitāb al-Sirah al-Falsafīyyah*) not because it provides the fullest statement or is in any sense his earliest writing, but because it is most readily accessible. The questions raised in this treatise are central to his fuller teaching and are more clearly stated in this work than in his other writings. Here he seeks to justify the way he has led his life by showing how closely it parallels that of his acknowledged master, Socrates. For al-Rāzī, as for Socrates, the problem is to what extent the philosophically inclined individual must engage in, and be concerned with, the world of human beings as opposed to the world of ideas.

That, of course, is not the whole question. In defending his own conduct by comparison to that of Socrates, al-Rāzī must also counter the unspoken suspicion that the pursuit of philosophy threatens the faith of the community. His success at fully exculpating himself from this silent charge without ever addressing it explicitly is a clear sign of how adroitly al-Rāzī has crafted the treatise. As will become clear in what follows, he accomplishes this feat by enlarging the sphere of philosophy, by taking it beyond the way it is conventionally viewed—that is, as a quasi-ethical, quasi-metaphysical pursuit. And this, again, is part of the appeal the treatise has for us.

Whereas Socrates had to contend with the ridicule heaped upon him and his endeavors by so gifted a comic poet as Aristophanes, al-Rāzī has to answer the slanders of nameless contemporaries. For Socrates, the charges of Aristophanes awakened and then nurtured suspicions in the breasts of his fellow Athenians. Apparently never quite able to lay those suspicions to rest, he even contributed to them by the dismal account he gave of himself at his trial, at least if we are to believe Plato's and Xenophon's accounts. But both of these thinkers defended Socrates' memory in other writings:

One can easily receive the impression that Plato and Xenophon presented their Socrates in conscious contradiction to Aristophanes' presentation. It is . . . difficult to say whether the profound differences between the Aristophanean Socrates and

the Platonic-Xenophontic Socrates must not be traced to a profound change in Socrates himself: to his conversion from a youthful contempt for the political or moral things, for the human things or human beings, to a mature concern with them. The clearest and most thoughtful exposition of this possibility known to me is to be found in Muhammad b. Zakariyya al-Rāzī's *The Philosophic Way of Life*.<sup>1</sup>

Because of the impassioned manner in which al-Rāzī—defending himself—speaks of Socrates and his change from something like solitary asceticism to involvement with human beings and political matters, we turn to his exposition with enthusiasm. In this writing, al-Rāzī pleads eloquently for the pursuit of philosophy and does so without ever losing sight of how fellow Muslims disdain such activity.<sup>2</sup> The answer he gives to their charges leads us to the threshold of political philosophy and to its basic concerns. To make these observations clearer and somewhat more persuasive, I would like to analyze the basic argument of the *Book of the Philosophic Life* and examine the way it adumbrates al-Rāzī's broader political teaching.

## II. THE ARGUMENT OF THE TEXT

The *Book of the Philosophic Life* may be divided into four major parts: an introduction, a digression in which al-Rāzī sets forth the basic characteristics of the philosophic life, an attempt at self-justification, and a conclusion. By far the shortest parts of the work are the introduction and the conclusion, each amounting to less than a page of printed text (paras. 1–3, 99:3–13 and paras. 38–40, 110:16–111:7).<sup>3</sup> Even his attempt at justifying himself is quite short and amounts to little more than two pages (paras. 30–37, 108:13–110:15). So by far the most extensive and detailed part of the book is that presented explicitly as a digression, namely, the account al-Rāzī gives of the philosophic life.

### A. *The Introduction (paras. 1–3, 99:2–13)*

The work opens with al-Rāzī noting that people of speculation, discernment, and attainment have criticized him for turning away from the life of philosophers—especially the life led by his leader, master, or imam, Socrates. He is blamed for engaging with people and involving himself with the means of making a living, whereas the philosophical life as lived by Socrates consists in refraining from activities that lead to contact with others—especially the rich and powerful—and in showing little concern for his personal comfort (para. 1, 99:3–5 and see para. 34, 109:19–110:2). Central to the list of nine activities from which Socrates is said to have refrained (99:5–7) is his refusal to acquire anything, a refusal that finds a symbolic parallel in the central place his wrapping himself in a ragged garment occupies among the enumeration of activities

in which he did engage (99:7–9). This pairing takes precedence over the more apposite linking of Socrates' refusal to wear fine clothing—the third example of things he shunned—and his recourse to a ragged garment. It should also be noted that the negative list begins and ends with references to Socrates' antisocial behavior, whereas the positive list refers to such conduct only at the end. Surrounding the mention in the negative list that he “did not acquire” are examples of how he shunned acquisition—that is, by not building and not begetting. Only his lack of concern with food and drink is cited equally often. From these two lists, then, it appears that Socrates' disinterest in acquisition and in bodily comforts attracted most attention. Indeed, in contrast to the nine references to his clothing habits, various instances of his failure to acquire, and lack of appetite with respect to food and drink, there are only three indications of his disinterest in contact with other humans.

Now the enumeration of all these negative and positive activities is based on what is related of Socrates (*al-ma'thūr <'anhu> annahu*, [99:5]),<sup>4</sup> that is, on what is generally believed about him. Breaking its fine rhetorical balance is the intriguing additional claim al-Rāzī sets forth about Socrates—one so worded that it can only be understood as referring back to the earlier enumeration of what is related (see 99:5)—to the effect that he never practiced dissimulation (*taqiyyah*) either with the common people or with those in authority. Instead, “he confronted them with what was truth according to him” (*bal yajbahuhum bi-mā huwa al-ḥaqq 'indahū*) and did so “in the most explicit and clearest utterances” (*bi-ashraḥ al-alfāz wa abyanihā* [see 99:9–10]). It is, nonetheless, a claim developed nowhere in the treatise. Al-Rāzī lets Socrates' reluctance to dissimulate pass in silence either because, unlike us, he does not know that Socrates was anything but nondissimulatory—that he was ironic above all else—or because he is overly impressed by Socrates' death and thinks that had he not been so forthcoming with the people of Athens he might have survived.<sup>5</sup> A more interesting line of thought is that al-Rāzī does know about Socratic dissimulation and is thus practicing something of the same here by merely repeating the characterization without either defending Socrates for it or depicting it as an inappropriate practice.

Not content to blame al-Rāzī for his worldly pursuits, these same critics go on to insist that the life led by Socrates is evil insofar as it (a) goes against the course of nature as well as against cultivating and begetting and (b) leads to the ruination of the world as well as to the destruction of the human race. As presented here, then, the issue is whether the philosophic life Socrates is reputed to have led—a solitary, austere life that ignores his own as well as other people's needs—is good. Al-Rāzī, who claims to follow Socrates, is by no means solitary or austere. And even though the critics blame the self-imposed isolation and abstemiousness of Socrates, they fault al-Rāzī for failing to lead such a life. At the very least, the critics are not consistent.

Nothing permits us to explain the inconsistency as arising from two sets of

critics. The text presents the two critiques as coming from the same individuals. Al-Rāzī merely adds—clearly referring back to the “people of speculation, discernment, and attainment” whom he had first mentioned as having criticized and found fault with him—“then they said” (*thumma qālū*). What is more, this characterization of them as “people of speculation, discernment, and attainment” is not particularly flattering. Apart from acknowledging that they have discernment, it is purely descriptive: it tells us what they do and what they have achieved, nothing more. Even the gracious inclination to their ability to distinguish becomes an empty gesture once the full set of recriminations is presented.

At any rate, al-Rāzī says nothing about this inconsistency in what follows. He concentrates instead on defending Socrates’ solitary austerity as merely a zealous excess of youth. Since Socrates abandoned it early on, al-Rāzī sees no need to investigate whether a life so devoted to the pursuit of wisdom that it ignores all other concerns is laudable, nay, is the good life, or whether the good life is the balanced one he describes as his own at the end of the treatise. Still the issue cannot be ignored, for it points to the broader question of whether the pursuit of philosophy must be so single-minded that it takes no account of the needs of men or, differently stated, whether the proper focus of philosophy is nature and the universe or human things.

*B. The Philosophic Life, A Digression of Sorts*  
(Paras. 4–29, 99:14–108:12)

This long part or section consists of seven subsections. In the first two, al-Rāzī seeks to justify Socrates’ life by showing that the solitary and austere portrait just presented is not accurate insofar as Socrates turned away from those practices later in life (paras. 4–6, 99:14–100:14) and by arguing that austerity or abstemiousness is better than profligacy (paras. 7–8, 100:15–101:4). In the three intermediate subsections, al-Rāzī provides what he terms the complete argument about the philosophic life grounded in six principles taken from other works (paras. 9–10, 101:5–102:5), then illustrates what he means by explaining two of the principles in detail—namely, the fifth one concerning pleasure (paras. 11–14, 102:6–103:13) and the fourth one to the effect that we should not cause pain (paras. 15–22, 103:14–106:6). In the last two subsections of this “digression,” al-Rāzī notes that even though the diversity among the conditions of human beings necessitates the relative character of his discussion thus far, a general rule of upper and lower limits can still be stated (paras. 23–28, 106:7–108:3); and he provides a summary definition of the philosophic life (para. 29, 108:4–12).

1. (Paras. 4–6) It was Socrates’ “great amazement over philosophy” (*shiddat ‘ajabih bi-al-falsafah*) that occasioned his earlier solitary austerity, accord-

ing to al-Rāzī (para. 5, 100:1). Other reasons for these practices of Socrates derive from his love for philosophy, “desire to devote to it the time otherwise dedicated to passions and pleasures,” being inclined to it by nature, and “making light of and looking down on those who did not view philosophy in the way” he thought it deserved and “who preferred what was baser than it.” All of these led him to the kind of excessive attitude that frequently befalls people when they first become desirous of something; they come back to a balanced approach once they have penetrated it deeply. In sum, Socrates was infatuated with philosophy as a youth, but returned to a more conventional way of life as he came to understand philosophy better. Though al-Rāzī does not emphasize it as much as we might wish, all of these causes seem to come back to a single one—Socrates’ uncompromising pursuit of philosophy, a pursuit so intently focused that it seems almost erotic. The one passing reference he does make to “stirring and ardent matters” is sufficient reminder. After all, Socrates is known for characterizing himself as erotic about his pursuit of wisdom.<sup>6</sup>

More attention is paid to this earlier conduct of his—that is, it is more a part of common opinion and rumor—because such conduct is so unfamiliar and astonishing to most people. Indeed, observes al-Rāzī, people like to talk about the unusual. This settled, al-Rāzī now denies that his own conduct differs from that of Socrates, “even though we fall short of him greatly and acknowledge our deficiency in practicing the just life, suppressing desires, loving knowledge, and aspiring to it” (para. 6, 100:10–12). Thus, al-Rāzī’s first defense of himself is that “our difference with Socrates . . . is not about quality of life but about quantity” (100:12–13).

The wording permits al-Rāzī to compare himself, albeit unfavorably, with what is praiseworthy in Socrates’ life and to avoid being precise about whether this praiseworthy element is related to the first or second period of his life. Ostensibly, he need not blame that solitary austerity because Socrates turned away from it in order to follow a more balanced life. Thus, however blameworthy such conduct might be in itself, Socrates pursued it neither long enough nor intensely enough to deserve blame. Al-Rāzī refrains from blaming Socrates for his solitary austere practices, then, because they did not lead to dire consequences. He sees no reason to blame such withdrawal or such austerity simply.

We, however, must focus our attention on what al-Rāzī deems characteristic of the pursuit of philosophy and praiseworthy in Socrates’ life—namely, practicing justice, controlling the passions, and seeking knowledge. It is for this deficiency that he excuses himself, not for his solitary or abstemious practices. We must note, in addition, that despite having already acknowledged how Socrates distinguished himself as a soldier (para. 4, 99:17–18), al-Rāzī now cites only the virtues of justice, moderation, and wisdom; courage is passed over in silence. There is no place in his understanding of philosophy for the simply political virtue.

Though he admits to falling short of Socrates in these matters, he does not

think he therefore deserves blame: “We are not inferior if we acknowledge our failing with respect to him, for that is the truth and acknowledging the truth is more noble and virtuous” (para. 6, 100:13–14). Such honesty, surely not in al-Rāzī’s own interest, allows him to avoid determining whether Socrates’ standard is too high—too far beyond the reach of most human beings. Moreover, given the notion that Socrates’ earlier devotion to philosophy was excessive, so excessive that he himself later turned away from it, al-Rāzī would be better advised to show that he directs himself according to the standard of the later Socrates. He cannot do so, however, for he has deftly avoided making Socrates’ solitary austerity, or the pursuit of philosophy connected with it, an issue.

2. (Paras. 7–8) Another point also needs to be made, namely, al-Rāzī’s contention that his critics can blame neither of Socrates’ ways of life. Noting that what is at issue is the extent to which one practices solitary austerity, that no one would contend it is either virtuous or noble to give oneself up to passions and to prefer them, he refers to his famous book *The Spiritual Medicine* (*al-Ṭibb al-Ruhānī*) for the first time (para. 7, 100:15–17). On the basis of what is set forth there, he insists that what is virtuous and noble is “taking each need to the extent that is indispensable” or that does not entail a pain exceeding the pleasure attached to it. Consequently, Socrates’ early way of life is “truly blameworthy” insofar as it “leads to the ruination of the world and the perdition of people.” That point conceded, however, al-Rāzī immediately counters with the observation made earlier, namely, that Socrates did turn back from it in time to “beget, war against the enemy, and attend sessions of festivities” (para. 8, 100:19–101:1 and see para. 4, 99:17–18).

Explicitly and implicitly, then, the argument is based on the idea that there is nothing inherently wrong with Socrates’ early pursuit of solitary abstemiousness; it did not harm him, and he abandoned it in time to participate in activities conducive to human well-being. Differently stated, whatever the critics may claim, such conduct is not wrong per se nor against nature. It is to be judged in terms of its results—in quantitative terms, rather than in qualitative ones—and it becomes wrong only when followed to the point of threatening the well-being of the abstemious solitary or of the human race (see para. 7, 100:15–16).

Nor can his critics impugn al-Rāzī as being sated with desires just because he does not imitate Socrates’ solitary austerity. The point is eminently sensible, but al-Rāzī then seeks to summarize the argument by contending that although he falls short of Socrates’ earlier conduct (one he has now made defensible), he is still philosophical if compared to nonphilosophic people: “And we, even if we do not deserve the name of philosophy in comparison to Socrates, surely deserve its name in comparison to non-philosophic people” (para. 8, 101:3–4; see also 101:1–3). A more persuasive argument would begin by insisting that solitary austerity is always a threat to the world we live in and then praise the salubrious consequences of the life of the reformed Socrates.

That argument is not appropriate, however, for Socrates' begetting, warring, and merrymaking are not at issue for al-Rāzī's critics. Rather, it is whether doing those things prevents one from being philosophic. That al-Rāzī has engaged in activities similar to these is why they blame him, after all. But he chooses to pass over the question in silence. By phrasing his defense in quantitative terms, he fails to give an adequate account of the balanced life. What al-Rāzī needs to do here is show that, despite Socrates' later involvement in worldly activities, he continued to be as interested in philosophy as before. Or, even more to the point, al-Rāzī needs to argue that Socrates' earlier solitary austerity kept him from pursuing philosophy fully insofar as it prevented him from paying attention to the questions related to human conduct.

3. (Paras. 9–10) He takes up neither line of argument because either one would take him away from his next stated goal, namely, setting forth the argument that completes his depiction of the philosophic life. Such a claim notwithstanding, what follows is less an argument than an enumeration of six principles, all taken from other works. The reason given for setting them forth is that "we need to support . . . the goal we are intent upon in this treatise" by means of them (see para. 9, 101:7–8). Then, after mentioning the four works from which they are taken and insisting on the importance of *The Spiritual Medicine*, he lists the principles (101:13–102:5):

- a. What occurs to us after death depends on the way we live now.
- b. The reason for our being created is not to attain bodily pleasure, but to acquire knowledge and practice justice—they lead to release to the world without death or pain.
- c. Nature and passion favor pleasure now, but intellect urges putting it aside for what is better.
- d. Our Lord does not want us to cause pain, commit injustice, or be ignorant; and He punishes those who cause suffering.
- e. We should not endure a pain hoping to get a pleasure that is inferior to it.
- f. The Creator has given us the things we need to subsist and the means to them.

Three of these principles (a, d, and f) are based on premises that can be resolved only if the soundness of what has been revealed about God is granted, and the other three demand extensive discussion. Here, no defense of revelation is offered, nor does al-Rāzī do more than say that these principles have all been discussed elsewhere. Moreover, except for the two principles developed in the immediate sequel, he passes over all of the others in silence. The two he does consider are the one concerning pleasure (e), phrased almost as an imperative, and that concerning divine providence (d), with its concomitant obligation. Though the fourth principle does shed some light on the second and the fifth on the third, neither clarifies the first or the last principle.

4. (Paras. 11–14) The explanation of the fifth principle serves to confirm Socrates' wisdom in his earlier period of solitary abstinence. Al-Rāzī's argu-

ment is that if the pleasures in the life to come are neither intermittent nor limited, whereas pleasures in this life are both, it is foolish to place the former in jeopardy by pursuing the latter. He does concede, however, that all other pleasures would be permitted. Nonetheless, the philosopher will train himself to resist even these permitted pleasures, because such training makes it easier to resist.

The principle is sound and eminently reasonable, as long as the basic premise is true. Clearly, no one—normally thoughtful citizen no more than philosopher—would forego such restraint in order to pursue a pleasure likely to jeopardize greater pleasure in the next life. Still, we do not know whether the premise is sound. Nor is al-Rāzī willing to argue it here. For him, it is sufficient to posit the principle. Nonetheless, al-Rāzī does drop two hints here about the problematic character of the premise. First, he denotes the world to come as the world of the soul (para. 11, 102:10) and then brings in the ancients to vouch for at least some of what he sets forth here (para. 12, 102:15), leaving us to wonder how much they might have to say about the broader points.

5. (Paras. 15–22) Even more interesting is the fourth principle, that concerning the obligation we are under not to cause pain. Again, assuming that the premise to the effect that our Lord and Master watches over us with compassion is true, it follows that He does not want us to cause others pain. But since pain sometimes arises by a nonhuman cause, the reason must be that it is necessary and inevitable. Al-Rāzī does *not* say why it is necessary and inevitable, but it would seem to follow that it fits into a divine plan in some way unknown to us. The basic point—assuming the soundness of the original premise—is that we should cause no pain to any living creature not deserving it, unless the pain caused wards off a greater pain (para. 15, 103:14–104:4). This principle helps us understand what warrants many practices that would otherwise be deemed wrong, especially those related to hunting wild animals and to exerting or even mistreating those that have been domesticated. The first distinction, that between hunting—i.e., killing—wild animals and exerting tame ones is couched in terms of what kings do, as opposed to what ordinary people do. But it is pursued no further. Indeed, in attempting to explain how such actions might be carried out according to an intelligent and just rule—and thus be justified even though they cause a living creature pain—al-Rāzī momentarily neglects the question of hunting wild animals.

He begins by noting that certain medical practices presuppose the permissibility of inflicting a lesser pain so as to obtain a greater good: physicians sometimes cause patients to undergo painful treatment for the sake of reducing suffering or bringing about healing. Sometimes they even insist upon the patient ingesting foul substances or sacrificing a limb or organ in order to save the body (para. 16, 104:4–6). On another level, this line of reasoning permits inflicting pain on one species of being in order, thereby, to benefit a higher species. Thus al-Rāzī explains that a horse may be ridden hard—even to the

point of death—if that leads to the saving of human life, especially the life of a learned man or one valuable to the community (104:6–11). And on yet another level, the reasoning justifies inflicting pain—even death—on one member of the same species in order to preserve another member. Hence, when two men are in danger of perishing but one can be saved if the other is abandoned or allowed to die, al-Rāzī thinks it reasonable that the one most useful for the well-being of people survive (104:11–14).

The reasoning here tacitly assumes a hierarchy in nature. Insofar as we use other species of animals for our nourishment, we unreflectively abide by such a hierarchy in daily life. Nonetheless, we hesitate about, or even resist, its application to fellow human beings. Yet al-Rāzī is merely making explicit something we all seem to acknowledge implicitly, namely, that however equal human beings may be in principle, they are not all equal in fact—they are not all equally valuable to the community. Indeed, we follow such reasoning in voting, in exempting some individuals from military service, and in assigning military tasks. The only viable counters to the principle would be radical egalitarianism or insisting that, as the measure of all things, man is inviolate.<sup>7</sup> Though easier to live with, neither is a priori any sounder than al-Rāzī's.

It must also be noted that the reasoning here goes back to the original acknowledgement of necessity bringing about pain and suffering (see para. 15, 103:15–17). Yet only the second example, inflicting pain upon one species in order to benefit another, explicitly corresponds to the original formulation of the problem (i.e., 104:1–4):

[There are all] sorts of wrongs, the pleasure kings take in hunting animals, and the excess to which people go in exerting tame animals when they use them. Now all of that must be according to an intelligent and just intent, rule, method, and doctrine—one that is not exceeded nor deviated from.

The first example depends upon an extension of the necessity argument and reminds us that we willingly submit to pain when persuaded it will bring greater good. Introduction of this greater good principle underlies the second example and also the third. More attention is paid in each of the latter two, however, to necessity. Though both it and pursuit of the greater good sometimes bring us to inflict pain upon ourselves, necessity as well as attention to the dictates of intellect and justice are needed to justify inflicting pain upon inferior species of being or—in extreme cases—upon one of our own (see para. 16, 104:7 and 8).

Al-Rāzī turns from this line of reasoning to the topic he passed over earlier, hunting. In keeping with the principle guiding the discussion, he holds that we may hunt and pursue only carnivorous animals and those that are dangerous but useless. Two considerations are adduced to justify their destruction. The first is that they will exterminate or harm other animals if left to themselves and the second is that in killing them, their future life is in no way harmed. This is

because the soul is fully released only from human bodies after death (paras. 17–18, 104:15–105:4, esp. para. 18, 104:18–105:3). That is, none but the human soul lives on apart from the body after death.

Though the two considerations are originally presented as applying to both groups of animals, that is, the carnivorous as well as those that are dangerous but useless, al-Rāzī later modifies his judgment. On the grounds that carnivorous animals necessarily threaten the existence of other animals, he restricts the first consideration so as to infer an obligation to exterminate them. Because dangerous but useless animals cause harm incidentally rather than necessarily, only the second consideration fully applies to them. Thus, no more than the right of destroying them can be inferred. Even the added distinction—namely, that they may be annihilated as well as exterminated—pales in comparison to his conclusion that the former “must be exterminated so far as possible” (para. 19, 105:4–9). Perhaps as a way of softening the harshness of this imperative, al-Rāzī invokes the hope that the passage of their souls “into more suitable bodies” will thereby be facilitated.<sup>8</sup>

Finally, the same line of reasoning about the nonhuman soul not living on after death comes to sanction killing tame and herbivorous animals. But the fact that the latter are useful in addition to being harmless dictates that they be treated gently and sacrificed only as needed.<sup>9</sup> That the usefulness of animals, tame or dangerous, is judged solely from the human perspective is perfectly in keeping with al-Rāzī’s focus here on the best human life. He looks at the chain of being only insofar as it relates to human beings.

Apart from the medical treatment already discussed, causing pain to oneself is not permitted. The difference between the actions first examined—permissible pain inflicted upon oneself for the sake of health and upon other beings in order to achieve a greater good—and nonpermissible pain caused to oneself is stated in a preliminary manner here as what is regulated by the judgment of justice and intellect for the first actions and by the judgment of intellect for the second (see para. 21, 105:15–17). Later, however, the distinction is abandoned and nonmedical inflicting of pain on oneself called wrong because it goes against the larger principle: no greater good is attained by inflicting pain upon ourselves nor is any greater pain avoided (106:2–3).

Though it remains implicit, al-Rāzī’s thinking here seems to be that we come no closer to our Lord and Creator by such practices nor do we stifle any desires (see 105:17–19). There is a definite hierarchy in his enumeration of the kinds of pain different religious groups inflict upon themselves in this quest. The self-immolation and torture practiced by Hindus are simply repugnant to reason as are the acts of abuse engaged in by Manicheans. Explicitly stated as less serious are the seclusionary practices of Christians and Muslims and even the instances of self-neglect sometimes engaged in by the latter. Still, all of these are wrong insofar as they inflict pain but avoid no greater pain.

The discussion calls to mind Socrates’ earlier phase of solitary abstinence,

and he is mentioned here as having leaned somewhat to those who neglect themselves—that is, he was more like a Muslim or Christian than a Hindu or Manichean (see para. 22, 106:3–5 and para. 20, 105:13–14). Al-Rāzī does not elaborate, but we are aware that Socrates only inclined to them, that his austere or abstemious—perhaps even ascetic—practices did not lead him to inflict harm upon himself or to discipline his body in any way. Rather, they were the natural consequences of his neglecting immediate needs in order to devote himself more fully to the pursuit of philosophy. His asceticism, if it can be called that, was one of omission rather than of commission. Above all, it must be asked whether the discussion sheds new light on al-Rāzī's earlier attempt to distinguish himself quantitatively from Socrates: precisely because such practices of inflicting pain upon oneself are unjust and lead to no new knowledge, we must wonder about the extent to which Socrates actually achieved justice and knowledge in his first way of life.

6. (Paras. 23–28) The discussion of these two principles permits al-Rāzī to formulate a general rule of conduct. Taking into account the diversity occasioned by wealth and upbringing, yet not wanting to do away with these roots, he states his rule in terms of upper and lower limits with respect to the maximum amount of pleasure one may seek—the upper limit—and the minimum amount of pleasure one may seek—the lower limit. The maximum for enjoyment is phrased, drawing on the preceding discussion, in terms of seeking no pleasure that causes hurt to another being or leads to its death (see para. 25, 106:18–107:2 with paras. 23–24, 106:7–18). The lower limit is defined in terms of not limiting oneself in the pursuit of pleasures in such a way as to expose the body to danger or weaken it, while at the same time making the preservation of the body—and not seeking pleasure—one's primary goal (see para. 26, 107:3–12).

Guidelines restricting the pursuit of pleasure are set forth in the discussion of both the upper and lower limits, the two differing with respect to the way pleasure is acquired and its object. For the upper limit, the examples focus on pleasure sought by means of another or at another's expense, whereas for the lower limit they have to do with pleasure that is more personal: nourishment, clothing, and shelter. Thus, though constraining the quest for pleasure is urged in both, the discussion of permissible pleasure in the lower limit insists upon giving a minimal amount of attention to the body. It is, however, a strict minimum: the principle, first stated in terms of not being too lenient with the body or pursuing more than what is needed merely to preserve it, that is, seeking things because they are enjoyable (para. 26, 107:3–9), is then expanded to include exhortation to training in doing without (para. 26, 107:9–12 and also para. 27, 107:13–15). Later, it becomes evident that al-Rāzī is also concerned about the least one can permit oneself—anything less than that least being overly harsh and similar to the blameworthy self-inflicted pains enumerated in the preceding subsection (para. 28, 107:15–108:1).<sup>10</sup>

The standard used to explain how one understands the upper limit is the judgment of intellect or justice or—and, though mentioned here for the first time, presented as an equivalent—what displeases God. Moreover, despite initial hesitations and false allusions, al-Rāzī eventually formulates a standard based on the judgment of intellect and justice in order to determine the lower limit. First he says that infringing the second understanding of the lower limit is unjust (107:17), then that it is against philosophy (107:17–108:1)—that is, against reason or the intellect. But he says nothing about displeasing God, content perhaps to let the references to Hindus, Manicheans, and Christians carry the implication.

With respect to the lower limit, the diversity of human character and habit must be respected. Shelter suitable for a man of modest means will not be adequate for one used to elegant dwellings, nor will a man of modest means be able to accommodate himself to an elegant dwelling without the kind of struggle that will hinder him from his primary goal (para. 26, 107:3–9). The disparities caused by such differences in fortune provoke al-Rāzī to no suggestions about the need to strive for a more equitable distribution of wealth or to regulate the way it is passed on. Completely eschewing such excursions into politics and political economy, he notes merely that the less wealthy may have an easier time of abiding by the lower limit and that, all things considered, it is preferable to lean more towards that limit (para. 26, 107:9–12 and especially para. 27, 107:13–15).

7. (Para. 29) The summary statement of the philosophic life, that to which all of the preceding contributes, consists of four basic parts. It begins with al-Rāzī asserting certain qualities of the Creator. He then seeks a rule of conduct based on an analogy between the way servants seek to please their sovereigns or owners and the way we should please our Sovereign Master. Next he draws a conclusion from that analogy about the character of philosophy. And he ends with the declaration that the fuller explanation of this summary statement is to be found in *The Spiritual Medicine*.

The way al-Rāzī moves from the assertion about the qualities of the Creator to the conclusion that the goal of philosophy is to be as much like God as possible is extraordinarily subtle and inventive. It consists of a conditional syllogism along with an explanation of what the syllogism is intended to mean. The first premise of the conditional syllogism is that the Creator is a knower ignorant of nothing and so just as to commit no injustice. Then, setting forth the second premise as an explanation of the kind of knowledge and justice appropriate to the Creator, namely, knowledge and justice without qualification, al-Rāzī adds—without further argument—that compassion or mercy (*rahmah*) is also of this character (108:5). It is not clear whether compassion is added so that the reader not conceive of justice in the present context as necessarily harsh and unyielding or because one cannot speak of justice as related to the Creator without thinking also of compassion. At any rate, its introduction has certainly not been prepared by the preceding discussion. The third premise

states the relationship between us and the Creator: He is to us as a creator and a master (*mālik*), whereas we are to Him as slaves and vassals (*‘abīd mamlūkīn*). So stated, it abuts in a logical discrepancy. If God is to us as a creator and master, then we should be to Him as creatures and vassals or as creatures and slaves; but God's being our Creator does not make us His slaves. Al-Rāzī drops the logical parallelism between the creator and created in order to introduce one less obvious, namely, that between the Creator as Master and us as indebted to this Master. Politics enters into consideration given the relationship between us and the Creator, but it is a politics based on a hierarchy that can never be collapsed. The final premise, posed solely from the perspective of subjection, is that the slaves most loved by their owners (*mawālithim*) are those who adhere most closely to their ways of life and are most observant of their traditions (108:5–6).

On the basis of these premises, al-Rāzī concludes that “the slaves closest to God, may He be magnified and glorified, are those who are most learned, most just, most compassionate, and most kindly” (108:7).<sup>11</sup> The idea is that we must be to our Master as slaves are to their owners; we must follow His way of life and traditions. Perhaps, since knowledge and justice do not fully encompass God's life and traditions, al-Rāzī finds it necessary to add compassion in the second premise and kindness in the conclusion. But both are added without explanation. In each instance, the language al-Rāzī chooses permits one to think that he is merely drawing on other qualities of God so as to ward off any attempt to restrict justice. To be sure, revelation apprises us that God's justice is tempered with mercy and kindness—the justice of divine punishment, even the punishment of the day of judgment, notwithstanding. In the end, al-Rāzī's refusal here to explain why he so mingles God's justice with mercy and kindness leaves us to wonder whether it is merely an indirect suggestion to his detractors that they should so temper their sense of justice in reaching judgment about him.

It is not possible to answer such questions on the basis of the text before us. Al-Rāzī has made it impossible to pursue the inquiry by the way he has structured the syllogism. This syllogism, he further asserts, embodies what all philosophers mean when they say “philosophy is making oneself similar to God, may He be magnified and glorified, to the extent possible for a human being” (108:8–9). Even more importantly, “this is the sum of the philosophic life.” This summary description recalls Socrates' playful attempt to persuade Theodorus that those who truly deserve to be called philosophers have no need of the knowledge most men praise, that their greater or deeper knowledge leads them to flee the world in order to become as much like the deity as they can. It is, nonetheless, an incident relating to Socrates' life that is in no way alluded to here.<sup>12</sup>

Nor, replete as it is with implications, does al-Rāzī present this summary statement as his full account of what constitutes the philosophic life. That account is to be found in another work, *The Spiritual Medicine*. We must turn to

it, says al-Rāzī, because there he mentions (a) how we can rid ourselves of “bad moral habits” and (b) “the extent to which someone aspiring to be philosophic ought to concern himself with gaining a livelihood, acquisition, expenditure, and seeking ranks of rulership” (108:10–12). In other words, the definition of the philosophic life set forth here raises questions that al-Rāzī elsewhere identifies as relating to moral virtue, especially moral purification, and human affairs—economics as well as political rule.

At no point does he suggest that this fuller or more detailed understanding of philosophy is at odds with the summary statement. It seems, rather, that a complete account of what is involved in seeking knowledge, struggling to act justly, and being compassionate as well as kindly encompasses matters that fall under a discussion of moral virtue or ethics, household management or economics, and political rule. These activities must be seen in particular contexts—that relating to the improvement of the individual first of all, then to the betterment of the household, and finally to the well-being of the political community. Moreover, some hierarchy must be established among the different pursuits. In the *Book of the Philosophic Life*, however, we find no reflections of this kind. They are absent precisely because the work is so devoid of a political perspective.

As presented here, for example, compassion and kindness appear almost as afterthoughts and surely as qualities less important than knowledge and justice. Yet compassion and kindness fit in more readily with the emphasis in the treatise on what might be called the personal part of the definition of philosophy, that relating to moral virtue. Even justice, thus far defined primarily as not causing pain to others and explicitly linked with our understanding of God and what He desires for us, is thereby presented in a personal manner. To be sure, it is possible to extract the skeleton of a political argument from the discussion about a hierarchy among human beings that was introduced in the discussion of the fourth of the six principles comprising what al-Rāzī says is his “complete” statement of the philosophic life—especially insofar as the superiority of one man over another is stated in terms of his being more useful for the well-being of the people (see para. 16, 104:11–13). It is difficult to take that argument very far, however, because al-Rāzī says so little about it anywhere in this work. An attempt to extract more of a political teaching from the *Book of the Philosophic Life* is likewise frustrated by his reluctance to speak here of the Creator as the Governor of the universe<sup>13</sup> or of our relationship to Him in terms of His being like a Governor to us rather than as being like a Lord or Master to us.

### C. Self-Justification (Paras. 30–37, 108:13–110:15)

The claim that a fuller statement of these issues is to be found in *The Spiritual Medicine* must not lead us to disparage the present work. Indeed, in his

attempt to justify his right to be considered a philosopher, al-Rāzī insists that had he been capable of nothing more than composing the *Book of the Philosophic Life*, it would be enough to prevent anyone daring to deprive him of the name philosopher (para. 31, 108:18–20). This praise of the book is part of his explanation of what he has accomplished with respect to the scientific part of philosophy, science or knowledge (*‘ilm*) being one of the two parts of philosophy and practice (*‘amal*) being the other. Accordingly, al-Rāzī seeks to justify himself by elaborating on what he has done in each of these domains and challenging his detractors to show that they have accomplished as much—especially in the realm of science.

In turning to this exculpatory argument, al-Rāzī notes that the preceding explanation constitutes something of a digression:

Since we have explained what we wanted to explain with respect to this topic, we will *return* and explain what pertains to us. And we will mention those who defame us and will mention that even until this day we have not lived a life—due to success granted by God and to His assistance—such that we deserve to be excluded from being designated “philosopher.” (Para. 30, 108:13–15, my emphasis)

Now it is not clear where this digression first begins. As I order it in the division of the text followed here, it starts immediately after the introduction to the whole treatise. In this sense, the whole second part comprising the justification of Socrates' way of life, the complete statement of the philosophic life, and the final summary of it are all part of the digression (that is, paras. 4–29, 99:14–108:12). One could, however, make a plausible argument for including the two attempts to justify Socrates' early, solitary, and abstemious life (paras. 4–8, 99:14–101:4—identified here as the first two subsections of Part B) as part of the argument prior to what al-Rāzī speaks of now as having been a digression. Still, under no circumstances is it possible to interpret the complete statement of the philosophic life, the explanations of the fourth and fifth principles, and the last two accounts of what that statement and explanations mean as anything but what he refers to here as a digression.<sup>14</sup> Differently stated, the core of this treatise is external to the occasion for its writing—al-Rāzī's need to justify his life to contemporary detractors. The core of the book, the full understanding of the philosophic life, obliges us to confront his larger teaching. For that, or so it would seem, we need no forensic impetus.

Contending that philosophy consists of two things, knowledge and practice—that is, knowing what a philosopher is supposed to know and doing what a philosopher is supposed to do—al-Rāzī insists that on both counts he has done what is needed. His proof concerning knowledge consists in an enumeration of books he has written, including this one (para. 31, 108:18–109:9); a summary statement that these compositions amount to about two hundred books, treatises, and pamphlets about the physical and metaphysical branches of philosophy (109:10–11); an explanation of why he has not delved more

deeply into mathematics coupled with a summary dismissal of those who think that pursuit deserves more attention (para. 32, 109:11–14); and an assertion that if these activities do not qualify him for the title of philosopher then he can imagine no one of his age so deserving (para. 33, 109:14–16).

Al-Rāzī's enumeration of at least fifteen books and treatises here—plus a mention of several books dealing with particular subjects—follows no particular order, but it does fall into some general categories. After lauding the present book as sufficient grounds for his being considered a philosopher, he adduces the titles of four books. The first concerns logic, the second metaphysics; the third is the enigmatic *The Spiritual Medicine*; and the fourth is about physics.<sup>15</sup> There follows an enumeration of six treatises, each having to do with physical science or astronomy.<sup>16</sup> He then returns to speaking about books he has written and mentions some having to do with physical science, specifically, books about the soul and about matter (*al-hayūlā*). The enumeration of books, rather than treatises, continues. Now, however, al-Rāzī explicitly lists a series of five books having to do with medicine and speaks of them as merely an indication of what he has written on the subject.<sup>17</sup> Finally, he speaks of books he has written about the art of wisdom, something the common people call *al-Kīmiyyā*—i.e., alchemy.

Thus the list proceeds from an enumeration of books to one of treatises and back to one of books. As presented here, the subjects treated in these writings move from a defense of, or apology for, philosophy (forensic philosophy); pass to logic and metaphysics; rise to a high point with a subject combining metaphysics, physics, and medicine for the soul (*The Spiritual Medicine*); move to physics in general and, after particular aspects of physics, on to medicine; and end with alchemy. Intrigued as we might be by the reference to works on alchemy at the end of the enumeration, it is not those writings to which al-Rāzī attaches great importance in the sequel, but to his medical work that he terms the large *Summary* (see para. 37, 110:12–15).<sup>18</sup>

In defending himself with respect to practice, al-Rāzī draws the reader's attention to the two limits set forth as a summary of his explanation of the fourth and fifth principles above and claims that he has never infringed them. Yet he has frequented the mighty and certainly enjoys more wealth than Socrates, so he turns to an account of his worldly activities. It is al-Rāzī's contention that in being a companion to the ruler (*sultān*), he has merely acted as a physician and advisor for the ruler's personal well-being as well as for that of the community. (What al-Rāzī thinks of the community of citizens in relation to the ruler is aptly indicated by his choice of words at this juncture: he speaks of the citizens or subjects as the sultan's herd or flock [*ra'īyyatuh*]). Though al-Rāzī insists that he has never served as a warrior or administrator, it is not immediately obvious why he seeks to emphasize the point. After all, Socrates served as a warrior when he turned away from his ascetic ways.

At any rate, al-Rāzī turns next to an account of how he handles money. He

claims that he neither accumulates it nor spends it loosely. Moreover, thinking still of the acquisition and use of money, he insists that he does not seek quarrels, attack others, or harm them. Another count on which he seeks to excuse himself is likewise related to money—namely, his conduct with respect to clothing, mounts, and male as well as female servants—but al-Rāzī brings his denial of excess with respect to these matters under another heading. In these matters—as well as with expenditures having to do with food, drink, and festivities—al-Rāzī asserts that he refrains from excess. Thus, having insisted that nothing in his private or public life and nothing with respect to the way he treats others or disposes of his wealth is blameworthy, much less unbecoming the philosophic life, al-Rāzī closes his self-justification by noting that those who frequent or observe him know how dedicated he is to the pursuit of knowledge. Two things can be cited in evidence of the intensity of his quest for knowledge. The first is something of a character trait that has been with him since youth, namely, his inability to let a book go unread or a man unsounded even if doing so leads to major inconvenience or detriment. The second concerns the way he has weakened his sight and paralyzed his hand through the long hours spent writing his *Summary* for the last fifteen years. Both, however, point to excess that goes beyond the lower of the two limits: One is not supposed to harm oneself in the pursuit of wisdom.

*D. The Conclusion (Paras. 38–40, 110:16–111:7)*

In closing, al-Rāzī poses a double challenge to those who disparage his way of life and would deny him the title of philosopher. The defiance has to do with the two parts into which philosophy was divided in the preceding section, knowledge and practice. His final words are not contentious, however, but conciliatory. In the end, he wants only to ensure that his writings are given the attention they deserve.

As concerns practice, he asks them for a clear statement of what they think constitutes the philosophic life. If they deem his personal conduct or his definition of the philosophic life to fall short, they should explain their view so that he can accept it if it is truly superior or refute it if it is not. Even conceding, for the sake of argument, a shortcoming with respect to practice, al-Rāzī demands they also state wherein he errs with respect to knowledge. In both instances his reasoning is that he may profit from such a statement if they are correct or refute it if they are wrong. He does not think they can fault him on this count, however, and invokes doggerel to urge that they pay more attention to what he says than to what he does. In the end, it is the teaching that counts far more than the practice.

The work ends, then, on what is almost an admission that his practical life does fall short. But the only error to which he has admitted thus far—and that only by implication—is to being excessive in his pursuit of learning.

## III. AL-RĀZĪ'S POLITICAL TEACHING

Clearly, the political teaching of this work is set forth only by implication. Neither in the exposition of Socrates' life nor in the indications he gives of his own does al-Rāzī address the goal for which Socrates turned from solitary, abstemious practices to concern with human things. And, except for three inadvertent suggestions, it is difficult to discern how he would like to see the community ruled. For the most part, in fact, al-Rāzī portrays philosophy as a pursuit carried out apart from politics.

Questions of rule arise primarily with respect to personal, i.e., ethical issues. The crucial question concerns the greater or lesser usefulness one citizen or another may have for the community. Reflection upon the Creator does not lead to an awareness of divine order or diverse levels of governance within the universe, but to an image of ownership and rulership much like that a master has over slaves. There is a hierarchy, to be sure, but it is a very rigid and stratified kind of hierarchy. And this image of rule as ownership finds further expression in al-Rāzī's passing remark about the way he occasionally advises the ruler with respect to his "flock."

The considerations that prompted Socrates to turn away from inquiring into the heavens and natural phenomena, to turn from a solitary and austere pursuit of philosophy that paid little attention to human affairs, in order to concern himself with human needs and the things humans seek in daily life are not made explicit here. Nor does al-Rāzī pay attention to the content of Socrates' teaching during his solitary, abstemious period or during his period of involvement with humans. He pays no more attention to what Socrates thought and taught than to what he himself thinks and teaches. In part, this is due to the fact that this book on the philosophic life is presented as dependent upon al-Rāzī's other writings, especially on *The Spiritual Medicine*. The extent to which that work completes this one is set forth very tellingly in the final explanation of his summary of the philosophic life, a summary that points to the manner in which *The Spiritual Medicine* provides the fuller teaching about the two parts of philosophy missing here—household management or economics and politics.

Yet it must be noted that al-Rāzī has indirectly enlarged the sphere of philosophy in this treatise. He has indicated how philosophy must go beyond inquiry into individual ethics and natural phenomena in order to explore the relationship between individuals of the same species. Nature does inform that inquiry, to be sure, but the implications of the information it provides are the subject of further investigation. It is by no means clear, for example, to what extent one human being can exploit another on the basis of an acknowledged inequality between them. And even though convention provides for a form of political rule in which the ruler tends to look upon subjects as a herd rather than as autonomous individuals, al-Rāzī makes no attempt to argue that such conventional rule accords in any way with nature or with what is best for human

beings. Finally, though he has adroitly referred to the Creator and His provision for us here, thereby indicating that we must reflect upon the Creator and His providence in order to understand some of our customary practices as well as how we can live as humanly as possible, al-Rāzī has not indicated to what extent the Creator's instructions to us—His revelation by means of a lawgiver, for example—accord with what philosophy leads us to understand about human well-being and political order.

These issues—all raised, though not fully resolved in *The Book of the Philosophic Life*—are said to be treated at greater length in *The Spiritual Medicine*. This is not to say that *The Book of the Philosophic Life* is less important than *The Spiritual Medicine*. Precisely because the latter work is presented as an ethical treatise and consequently as having little to do with politics, this investigation of the philosophic life provides the necessary introduction to it and teaches us how to refocus its apparent emphasis on ethics.

From this smaller treatise we learn a lesson not addressed in the larger one, namely, that the philosophic life must go beyond solitary austerity or abstemious withdrawal—however much such conduct furthers deep reflection—to concern with fellow human beings. Everything set forth in the digression leading up to the summary definition of the philosophic life points to this conclusion: the blame of Socrates' early life as due to youthful excess; the emphasis on not causing pain to oneself or to others, even to irrational animals, except under special circumstances; and, above all, the constant reminder that, however elusive, we cannot escape the notion of the universe being orderly, even directed toward our own well-being. Al-Rāzī's two portraits of Socrates, taken together with his not so irrelevant digression, reveal the deeper strata of willing involvement in household matters as well as in the pleasures and the toils of citizenship. Even the unusual insistence on Socrates remaining faithful to his early vegetarian habits begins to make sense given this larger perspective. This, perhaps, is what lies behind the enigmatic claim cited at the beginning of this analysis, namely, that in al-Rāzī's *Book of the Philosophic Life* we find "the clearest and most thoughtful exposition of" Socrates' "conversion from a youthful contempt for the political or moral things, for the human things or human beings, to a mature concern with them."

## NOTES

I have benefitted greatly from, and thus am grateful for, both Hillel Fradkin's formal critique of this essay ("Vegetarians with Bloody Hands: Some Comments on 'The Origins of al-Rāzī's Political Philosophy,' by Charles E. Butterworth," presented at the Society for Greek Political Thought panel of the 1991 American Political Science Meetings in Washington, D.C.) and the insightful comments of Hilail Gildin.

1. Leo Strauss, *Socrates and Aristophanes* (New York: Basic Books, 1966), p. 314. This passage must be read not only in context but also with an eye to Strauss' starting point, namely, the

suggestion of a common thread between Aristophanes' attack on Socrates and the later, equally harsh, attack by Nietzsche (see pp. 3–8, esp. 6–8).

2. For a characterization of the work's passion and basic appeal, see Paul Kraus, "Raziana I," *Orientalia* 4 (1935), p. 303: "The 'Book of the Conduct of the Philosopher' is not only, as its title might make it seem, a simple exposition of Razi's ethical ideal. Its principal interest resides in the personal character it sets forth: In it, Razi presents an apology for his life. Having reached a somewhat advanced age, he sees himself attacked by adversaries who deny him the title of 'philosopher' and denigrate the high moral ideal he has set for himself. Perfectly aware of his worth, Razi replies to his adversaries. He declares that he has been faithful to his philosophic ideal and has rendered human beings great service by his scientific activity. Let us not forget that this is a physician who speaks to us, a physician impregnated with the best Greek traditions, *distant from any ascetic tendency*, whose great care is to attain the perfect equilibrium that had characterized his masters from antiquity. Rarely in Arabic literature do we have the opportunity to hear so strong a voice, one expressing itself with such an accent of personality and warmth and in the service of such a legitimate cause." (The translation is mine, as is the emphasis.)

3. Here, and in what follows, page and line references are to al-Rāzī, *Kitāb al-Sirah al-Falsafīyyah* in *Abū Bakr Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī, Rasā'il Falsafīyyah*, ed. Paul Kraus (reprint; Beirut: Dār al-Āfaq al-Jadīdah, 1973), pp. 98–111 (with an introduction by Kraus on pp. 97–98). Paragraph references are to my English translation, which is based on Kraus' edition. The division of the text is my own. For another, quite free, English translation of the text, see A. J. Arberry, *Aspects of Islamic Civilization, As Depicted in the Original Texts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1971), pp. 120–30.

4. Kraus inserts 'anhu, apparently on the basis of sense.

5. Note the way this suggestion is developed by al-Fārābī in his *Philosophy of Plato*, para. 36; in *Alfarabi's Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, trans. with an intro., Muhsin Mahdi (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1962). Though both al-Fārābī (257/870–339/950) and al-Rāzī (251/865–313/925) were in Baghdad sometime between 282/895 and 293/905, they seem to have had no contact; we know only that al-Fārābī is said to have written a treatise against al-Rāzī's metaphysical teaching.

6. See Plato *Theages* 128b; also *Apology* 23a–b.

7. For a contemporary illustration, see Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), pp. 148–49 and 149–50. See also Plato, *Theaetetus* 165e–172c.

8. See para. 19, 105:5–6 and Kraus, "Raziana I," p. 328, n. 1. Still, by denying that animal souls may pass from body to body until they finally reach the stage of humanity, al-Rāzī escapes the problem of explaining why human souls do not regress to enter the bodies of irrational animals.

9. Noting here that those who engage in philosophy (*al-mutafalsifūn*) disagree about whether the souls of such animals live on or not and that some therefore did not approve of eating meat, al-Rāzī adds that Socrates did not approve of it; see para. 20, 105:13–14 and para. 4, 99:18. This aside obliges us to wonder whether Socrates held the same opinion as they did about the souls of animals surviving. (Though the term *al-mutafalsifūn* is sometimes used in a pejorative sense to mean those who pride themselves on engaging in philosophy, it does not seem to be used in that sense here.)

10. He explicitly mentions Hindus and Manicheans in this section. then monks (*al-ruhbān*) and recluses (*al-nussāk*). When speaking earlier of pains Christians inflict upon themselves through neglect, he cited monasticism (*al-tarahhub*) and withdrawal into hermitages (*al-takhallī fī al-ṣawāmī'*) as examples of such practices. The juxtaposition of the two passages suggests that al-Rāzī wishes to exempt Islam from any of these criticisms, for nothing he said of Muslims earlier (see para. 21, 105:20–106:2) corresponds to anything mentioned here.

11. Schematically, the steps of the syllogism are as follows:

(a) Since the Creator is a knower ignorant of nothing and so just as to commit no injustice;

(b) and since His knowledge and justice are without qualification, as is His compassion;

(c) and since He is a Creator and Master to us, whereas we are slaves and vassals to Him;

(d) and since the slaves most loved by their owners adhere most clearly to their way of life and are most observant of their traditions;

(e) therefore “the slaves closest to God, may He be magnified and glorified, are those who are most learned, most just, most compassionate, and most kindly.”

12. See Plato *Theaetetus* 176a–c. Socrates, however, associates the deity with justice and practical wisdom or prudence as well as with piety or holiness, thereby suggesting that even the deity prizes the kind of knowledge needed for political life. See also Aristotle *Nicomachean Ethics* 10.8.1179a22–32. Though he speaks only of the intellectual virtue of intelligence (*nous*) in this passage, identifying it as the quality distinctive of the wise man, the discussion occurs in the context of Aristotle's attempt to determine which human virtue is best for a person to pursue so as to achieve happiness. His analysis leads to the conclusion that intelligence and wisdom allow the person possessing them to understand how best to lead an excellent human life, that such a person is most loved by the gods, and that this constitutes happiness.

13. The equivalent term in Arabic would be *mudabbir al-‘ālam* or *al-mudabbir li-al-‘ālam*; see al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Millah* (*Book of Religion*), in al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Millah wa Nuṣūṣ Ukhṛā*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1968), para. 27; an English translation of this treatise by Charles Butterworth is forthcoming in the new edition of Ralph Lerner and Muhsin Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy, A Sourcebook*.

14. That is, paras. 9–10, 101:5–102:5; paras. 11–22, 102:6–106:6; and paras. 23–29, 106:7–108:12 or, respectively, subsections 3, 4–5, and 6–7 of Part B above.

15. These books are: *On Demonstration* (*Fī al-Burhān*), *On Divine Science* (*Fī al-‘Ilm al-Ilāhī*), *On Spiritual Medicine* (*Fī al-Ṭibb al-Rūhānī*), and *On an Introduction to Physical Science* (*Fī al-Madkhal ilā al-‘Ilm al-Ṭabī‘ī*). The last, he says, is also known as *Lecture on Nature* (*Sam’al-Kīyyān*).

16. These are: *On Time, Place, Matter, Eternity, and Vacuum* (*Fī al-Zamān wa al-Makān wa al-Maddah wa al-Dahr wa al-Khilā‘*), *On the Form of the World* (*Fī Shakl al-‘Ālam*), *On the Reason for the Earth Arising in the Middle of the [Heavenly] Sphere* (*Fī Sabab Qiyyām al-Ard fī Wust al-Falak*), *On the Reason the [Heavenly] Sphere Has Circular Movement* (*Fī Sabab Taharruk al-Falak ‘alā Istidārah*), *On Composition* (*Fī al-Tarkīb*), and *On Body Having Its Own Motion and This Motion Being Known* (*Fī anna li-al-Jism Ḥarakah min Dhātih wa anna al-Ḥarakah Ma-lūmah*).

17. The books he mentions here are as follows: *The Maṣūri Book* (*al-Kitāb al-Maṣūri*), *Book to Those Whom the Physician Does not Visit* (*Kitāb ilā man lā yaḥḍaruh Ṭabīb*), and *Book about Existing Drugs* (*Kitāb fī al-Adawīyyah al-Mawjūdah*). The two books he mentions by something other than their proper titles are: *Royal Medicine* (*al-Ṭibb al-Mulūkī*), *The Summary* (*al-Jāmi‘*). There is another book on medicine attributed to al-Rāzī about which he says nothing here. This work, *Kitāb al-Madkhal ilā Ṣinā‘at al-Ṭibb, wa huwa Īsāghūjī*, has been edited and translated into Spanish, with an introduction and technical glossary, by Maria de la Concepción Vázquez de Benito under the title *Libro de la introducción al Arte de la Medicina o “Isagoge”* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 1979).

18. Of the works enumerated here, only two—*Fī al-‘Ilm al-Ilāhī* (*On Divine Science*) and *Fī al-Ṭibb al-Rūhānī* (*On Spiritual Medicine*)—are among the four listed as the sources for the six principles enumerated in subsection 3 of Part B above (see p. 243 above with para. 9, 101:9–11). They are the first two of that listing. The fourth, “our book characterized as *The Glory of the Art of Alchemy*” (*Kitābunā al-mawsūm bi-Sharaf Ṣinā‘at al-Kīmiyyā*), seems to find an indirect reference in what he says here of books that he has written about “the art of wisdom.” But of the third, *Kitābunā fī Adhl Man Ishtaghal bi-Fuḍūl al-Handasah min al-Mawsūmin bi-al-Falsafah* (“our book *On Blaming Those Characterized as Philosophers Who Occupy Themselves with What Is Superfluous in Geometry*”), nothing whatever is said. Apart from the *Book of the Spiritual Medicine*, none of these books has come down to us. However, Paul Kraus has presented fragments of *On Divine Science* culled from the critique other authors made of al-Rāzī's teaching; see *Rasā’il*, pp. 165–70 and 191–94 with 170–90 and 195–216.