

A Short Glance at the Attitude of Some Sunnī Muslim Traditionists/*Muhaddithūn* towards Philosophy and the Philosophical Sciences

Mustafa ERTURK, Assoc. Prof. Dr.*

“Bazı Muhaddislerin Felsefeye ve Felsefî İlimlere Bakışı Üzerine”

Özet: Bu makalede İbn Salâh (ö. 643/1245), Zehebî (ö. 748/1347) ve Süyûtî (ö. 911/1505) gibi Sünnî hadisçilerin felsefe hakkındaki genel kanaatlerinden; kadîm felsefeye ve filozoflara, felsefî ilimlere ve müslüman filozoflara yönelik menfî tavırlarından kısaca bahsedilmektedir. Sünnî hadisçiler felsefeye iştiğal edilmesini mekruh, hatta haram saymalarına rağmen, tarihimizde hem hadisle hem de felsefî ilimlerle meşgul olan ve bazılarında da otoriter sayılan bir kısım alimler de bulunmaktadır. Bu yazıda bunlardan sadece sekizi hakkında kısaca bilgi verilmektedir.

Atıf: Mustafa ERTÜRK, “A Short Glance at the Attitude of Some Sunnī Muslim Traditionists/*Muhaddithūn* towards Philosophy and the Philosophical Sciences”, *Hadis Tetkikleri Dergisi (HTD)*, V/1, 2007, ss. 49-62.

Anahtar kelimeler: Hadis, İslâm Felsefesi, hadis filozofu, Müslüman filozoflar, Gazâlî, İbn Salâh, Zehebî, Süyûtî.

Introduction

In his *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*, the eminent scholar and theologian al-Ghazālî (d. 505/1111) criticized philosophy and philosophers, arguing that engaging in and reading about logic, mathematics, nature, divinity, politics and ethics might cause unbelief to occur among ordinary believers. For this reason, the philosophical sciences should be forbidden in public education.¹ He also accused of unbelief some Muslim philosophers² like Abū Nasr Mu-

hammad b. Tarhān al-Farābî (d. 339/950) and Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) (d. 428/1037).³ al-Ghazālî’s attitude toward philosophy and philosophers triggered a reaction against philosophy from some Muslim scholars, especially traditionists. According to Fazlur Rahman (d. 1988), after al-Ghazālî’s total rejection of philosophy, “the tension between the traditionists-the Ahl al-Hadīth—and the philosophers remained more basic and permanent.”⁴

Muslim theologians and thinkers have made many comments for⁵ and against⁶ Greek philosophy ever since this discipline arrived in the Muslim world. The most common opinion concerning the ancient sciences and Islamic philosophy is negative.⁷ Although the unfavorable attitude toward philosophy is based largely on religious ideas, political, cultural, sociological and psychological reasons are thought as well.⁸ One consequence of negative comments on philosophy has been a disapproval of teaching, learning and spreading philosophy and related sciences.

For this reason, in the biographical works (*tabaqāt*⁹ or *asmā’ al-rijāl/names of people*) of hadith narrators and scholars, it is difficult to find any data that can help to determine whether the traditionists had any interest in ancient Greek philosophy or the philosophical sciences. These ancient sciences, according to Goldziher (d. 1921), “included the entire range of propaedeutic, physical and metaphysical sciences of the Greek encyclopedia, as well as the branches of mathematics, philosophy, natural science, medicine, astronomy,

souls of human beings will be tortured and rewarded, and that God knows everything only in its totality, not in details.

³ *al-Munqidh*, pp. 50-2.

⁴ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 122.

⁵ See Seyyed Hossain Nasr, “The Qur’an and Hadith as a Source and Inspiration of Islamic Philosophy”, in *History of Islamic Philosophy* (2 vols.), ed. Seyyed Hossain Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1996), p. 27-39.

⁶ See for example, Ibn Taymiyya, *Naqz al-mantiq*, ed. Muhammad b. Abū Hamza (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah al-Muhammad, 1952); Idem., *al-Radd ‘alā al-mantiqiyyīn* (Lahor: Idara Tarjuman al-Sunnah, 1976).

⁷ For details see Ignaz Goldziher, “The Attitude of Orthodox Islam Toward the Ancient Sciences” in M.L. Swartz (transl. and ed.), *Studies on Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 185-215. On Goldziher’s argument on logic, see Khaled El-Rouayheb, “Sunnī Muslim Scholars on the Status of Logic”, *Islamic Law and Society* (11/2), Leiden, 2004, pp. 213-32.

⁸ On reasons for being against philosophy, see Mahmut Kaya, “Felsefe”, *Diyanet İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (hereafter DIA), (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995), vol. XII, pp. 316.

⁹ In general, *tabaqāt* means “layer”, but in this case, this word refers to a “chronological succession of generation” Many lexicographers tried to establish an exact length of *tabaqāt* some of them said twenty years, whereas others chose forty years as the duration of *tabaqāt* referring to Prophet’s hadith stating that his nation consists of five *tabaqāt* and each *tabaqāt* would be forty years. See Rosenthal, Franz, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1952), p. 82.

* Istanbul University, Faculty of Theology, Istanbul, Turkey. e-mail: merturk38@hotmail.com, merturk@istanbul.edu.tr

I thank Professor Dr. David S. Powers and my colleague Dr. M. Said Ozerverli for their valuable contributions on this article.

¹ Abū Hāmid al-Ghazālî, *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl* (Beirut: Maktaba al-Sha’biyya, n.d.), pp. 46-57.

² al-Ghazālî, *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*, ed. Sulayman Dunya (Cairo: Dār al-Ma’ārif, 1987), pp. 307-9. al-Ghazālî assumed that philosophers had fallen into disbelief because they believed that the universe is eternal, that the gathering on the Day of Resurrection is not physical, that the

the theory of music and others";¹⁰ all were disapproved of by the *muhaddithūn* or *hadīth* critics.

If a *muhaddith* mentioned that he had studied or was a specialist in one of these ancient philosophical sciences, his works were subsequently frowned upon. This meant that the narrator's *hadīth* or *riwāyah* was not accepted as part of the science of *hadīth*. The general attitude of the *muhaddithūn* was that if a person studied any of the sciences of the ancients (*'ulūm al-awā'il*), then his transmissions (*riwāyāt*) could never be accepted as sound (*sahih*).¹¹ Rather he was treated as an untrustworthy person. For this reason, we find that many transmitters were discredited and called *ahl al-bid'a*. Some of them were castigated as members of a group of heretic (*al-kāfir*) because of their methods of interpretation (*ta'wil*).¹²

Although most of the Sunni *muhaddithūn* insisted that engagement with philosophy and its related sciences is unlawful, when we examine the Sunni *rijāl* or *tabaqāt* works on any general or specific history of the Islamic sciences, we find that some *hadīth* narrators were interested, indeed even specialists, in ancient Greek philosophy or the philosophical sciences. In addition to this, we find that some Muslim philosophers studied the *hadīth*, narrated it to others and wrote books about it.

General Opinions of the Traditionists on (Ancient) Philosophy and the Philosophical Sciences

We begin with Abū 'Umar Ibn al-Salāh al-Shahrazūrī's (d. 643/1245) *fatwā* on philosophy and the philosophers. Ibn al-Salāh, who was a strict defender of the *Ahl al-Sunnah* and *Ahl al-Hadīth*, wrote a book on the science of *hadīth*. He was told that some Muslim scholars (*'ulamā*) and mystics (*mutasawwifūn*) were studying, reading and teaching Ibn Sīnā's works. He was asked whether it is permissible (*jā'iz*) to read Ibn Sīnā's works and to accept him as a Muslim scholar. His answer was in the negative.

"Whoever confirmed that Ibn Sīnā was a Muslim scholar and whoever read his works betrayed Islam. Ibn Sīnā was not a true scholar (*'ālim*); rather he was a human devil who had gone astray."¹³

In his *fatwā*, Ibn al-Salāh makes a brief comment on philosophy:

Philosophy is the essence of dissolution and loss of direction, the main characteristic of depravity, a diversion from the truth to another way and the distribution of impiety. Whoever follows the method of the philosophers (*tafalsafa*) in his studies will not be able to see the beauty of the Shari'a, which has been confirmed by indisputable evidence (*burhān*). Whoever wears the garment of philosophy will be alone and suffer privation. The devil will beset him. His heart will be darkened from the prophecy of Muhammad (p.b.u.h.).

At the end of the *fatwā*, Ibn al-Salāh states:

To use logical terms in Islamic law (*ahkām*) is ugly and is not accepted, nor are the paths which will arise later. Thanks to God, Islamic law never needs logic. It has a stentorian sound. The God never allows any pure mind to comprehend logic. The duty of the administrator, may God bless him, is to protect all Muslims from the evil of inauspiciousness and to send it away from the law schools (the *madrasah*).¹⁴

Clearly, Ibn al-Salāh's attitude towards philosophy and the philosophers was intolerant and harsh. But if one examines his biography in the *rijāl* books, one finds an interesting anecdote; when Ibn al-Salāh's father sent him to Mosul to learn *hadīth*, he worked as an assistant for the instructor (*mudarris*) of the Madrasah al-Nizāmiyyah, 'Imād al-Dīn Abū Hāmid Muhammad ibn Yūnus (d. 608/1211). Muhammad b. Yūnus' brother, Abū al-Fath Mūsā (d. 639/1242), who was interested in the *hadīth* and all the sciences of philosophy, secretly gave Ibn al-Salāh logic lessons.¹⁵ But when his teacher reminded him that many people thought that those who study logic lose their faith, he immediately stopped studying this subject.¹⁶

The traditionists' attitude to philosophy and its related sciences is also reflected in an anecdote concerning the eminent *muhaddith*, Muhyi al-Dīn Yahyā b. Sharaf al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277). He decided to study the science of medicine, which was regarded as one of the philosophical sciences at that time. He says:

Once I considered studying medicine and I bought the *Kitāb al-Qānūn* (by Ibn Sīnā). But I felt a kind of darkening in my heart and later on, I understood that I could not continue to read it and I gave it back; then my heart was once again lightened.¹⁷

Another exemplary *muhaddith* scholar who spoke against philosophy and the philosophers was Shams al-Dīn Muhammad b. Muhammad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347), one of the most important scholars of *hadīth* and

¹⁰ Goldziher, *The Attitude of Orthodox Islam*, p. 185.

¹¹ For example see Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrib al-rāwī fī sharh Taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. Ahmad 'Umar Hāshim (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1993), vol. I. p. 278.

¹² Some examples in the sources of *al-jarh wa al-ta'dīl* (discreditation and commendation) of a *hadīth* narrator being accused of studying philosophy are mentioned below.

¹³ "Fatāwā Ibn al-Salāh fī al-Tafsīr wa'l-Hadīth", in *Majmu'āt Rasā'il al-muniriyyah* (n. p.; Idāra al-Tibā' at al-Munīra, 1924), p. 34.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 34–5; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a'lām al-nubalā'* (hereafter *Siyar*), ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1993), vol. 23. p. 143.

¹⁵ al-Dhahabī mentions Ibn Yūnus as a *muhaddith* (al-Dhahabī, *Tabaqāt al-muhaddithin*, ed. Hamām 'Abd al-Rahīm Sa'id (Ammān: Dār al-Furqān, 1983), 200, no. 2115). For information on him, see below, no. 6.

¹⁶ See M. Yaşar Kandemir, "İbnü's-Salâh", *DİA*, vol. 21. p. 198.

¹⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, ed. Zakariya 'Umayrāt (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'ilmiyya, 1998), (I-IV), vol. 4. p. 174.

Islamic history. In his *rijāl* book, *Siyar a`lām al-nubalā`*, al-Dhahabī classified the sciences (*`ulūm*) into three categories: necessary (*wājib*), permissible (*mubāh*) and forbidden (*harām*). According to al-Dhahabī, the sciences which are forbidden and unlawful to learn and circulate among Muslims are the ancient sciences, the idea of the philosophers on divinity, mathematics, the science of magic (*ilmi sihr*), alchemy, chemistry, the creation of illusions...and the treatises (*rasā'il*) of *Ikhwān al-Safā`*.¹⁸ If a *hadīth* scholar engages in these forbidden (*harām*) sciences, his *riwāyāt* (transmissions) should not be accepted. In his *Mizān al-i`tidāl*, which was concerned with transmitters and traditionists, al-Dhahabī makes the following observation about the Muslim philosopher Ibn Sīnā:

I do not know whether or not he related any certain knowledge (i.e. *hadīth*). If he transmitted it, it would not be lawful (*halāl*) to accept from him any transmission, because he had the philosophical thought. He was depraved. The God is not pleased with him.¹⁹

In his *Tārīkh al-Islām*, al-Dhahabī includes a lengthy biography of Ibn Sīnā: Ibn Sīnā was accepted as an exemplary figure because of his understanding and cleverness. He followed people who [based their thought on] rational premises and he was the leader of the Muslim philosophers who contested the Prophet.²⁰

al-Dhahabī adopted the same attitude towards another Muslim philosopher, Ibn Rushd (Averroes) (d. 595/1198):

Abū Muhammad b. Hawt Allah (d. 612/1214) [who was one of the trustworthy Andalusian *muhaddiths*] and Sahl b. Mālik narrated (*hadīth*) from him [Ibn Rushd]. But it is not necessary to narrate any *hadīth* from him.²¹

The Sunni scholar Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505) was author of *al-Qawl al-mashriq fī tahrīm al-ishṭighāl bi'l-mantiq*²² and *Sawn al-mantiq wa'l-kalām `an fann al-mantiq wa'l-kalām*²³, both concerned with logic. He argued

¹⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. X, 604. For al-Dhahabī's view on logic and philosophy, see *Bayān zaḡhal al-`ilm wa al-talab* (Damascus: Matba`at al-Tawfiq, 1347), pp. 24-6.

¹⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i`tidāl*, ed. `Ali Muhammad al-Bijāvi (n. p.: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 1. p. 539, no. 2014. (reported in the main text -M.E.: "I say that Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) had reported *ahādīth* on the medicine of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in his work *al-Qānūn fī al-Tibb*). However, it seems that the sentence attributed to al-Dhahabī which begins "I say that" was not actually uttered by al-Dhahabī, but rather was added by the copier (*mustansikh*). Before the phrase "I say that", al-Dhahabī insists that he does not know of any *hadīth* (*riwāyah*) reported by Ibn Sīnā. Thus, in the *Lisān al-Mizān* of Ibn Hajar al-Asqalāni, based on the *Mizān* of al-Dhahabī, the sentence which begins with "I say that" is not found. See Ibn Hajar al-Asqalāni, *Lisān al-Mizān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), vol.2. p. 357, no. 2740/579).

²⁰ See al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, ed. `Umar Abd al-Salām Tadmuri (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabī, 1989), vol. 29 (321-440 A.H.), p. 232.

²¹ Idem, *Siyar*, vol. 21. p. 310.

²² In *Rasā'il al-Suyūṭī*, ed. Sa`id Muhammed Lahhām (Beirut: `Ālam al-Kutub, 1997).

²³ Ed. `Ali Sāmi al-Nashshār (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyya, 1970).

that there is no doubt that logic is dangerous for Muslims to read and learn. In another work, he indicated that, according to the science of *hadīth*, if someone takes an interest in the ancient sciences (*`ilm al-awā'il*), like philosophy and logic, and embraces them, his transmissions become unacceptable and are regarded as a cause of criticism. al-Suyūṭī referred to some of the scholars who shared this view, like Abū Tāhir Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Silafi (d. 576/1180), al-Nawawī (d. 676/1277), Abū Abd Allah Muhibb al-Dīn Muhammad b. `Umar b. Rushayd (d. 721/1321), Ibn Abd al-Barr al-Mālikī (d. 463/1073), Sirāj al-Dīn al-Qazwīnī al-Hanafī (d. 750/1349), and Ibn Taymiyya al-Hanbalī (d. 728/1328).²⁴

Examples of Muhaddithūn Who Examined (Ancient) Philosophy

Before turning to *muhaddithūn* who were interested in the philosophical sciences, it is necessary to mention here some anecdotes relating to the use of the word "*failasūf*", i.e. "philosopher" on *hadīth* scholars.

The Arabic term *failasūf* comes from the Greek *philosophia*, which means "love of wisdom". In spite of its different meaning, etymological and epistemological usages, the term was used to refer to thinkers who discuss existence, knowledge, life and reason.²⁵ A philosopher is someone who is acquainted with Greek philosophy and its related sciences and uses its methods. This term is used for Muslims and non-Muslims. Accordingly, it would not be correct to call a scholar a philosopher of *tafsīr*, *hadīth* or *fiqh*. In some Islamic sources, however, a *muhaddith* who (strictly) studied *hadīth* and used its methods according to the Sunnī idea of God, existence and the universe was called *failasūf* (philosopher).

For example, one famous traditionist, al-Hākim al-Naysābūrī (d. 405/1014),²⁶ cited a statement attributed to Ahmad b. Hanbal (d. 241/855), a hard-line traditionist and the *imām*/leader of the Hanbalis, about the well-known traditionist and *faqīh* (jurist), Muhammad b. Idrīs al-Shāfi'ī (d. 204/820). Ibn Hanbal said: "al-Shāfi'ī was a *failasūf* in four things: lexicon, the controversy men (*ihktilāf al-nās*), the meanings of terms (*al-ma`ānī*) and law (*fiqh*)."²⁷ In his work *al-Jāmi` li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādāb al-sāmi`*, another famous traditionist and historian, al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī (d. 463/1071), lists

²⁴ *Tadrib al-rāwī fī sharh Taqrīb al-Nawawī*, ed. Ahmad `Umar Hāshim (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-Arabī, 1993), vol. 1. p. 278.

²⁵ *DĪA*, vol. 13. p. 107; http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ik/muqaddimah/Chapter6/Ch_6_30.htm

²⁶ (Narrated from al-Zubayr b. `Abd al-wāhid, al-`Abbās ibn al-Fazl b. Ursuf, Muhammad b. `Awf).

²⁷ Muhammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Mukhtasar Tārīkh Dīmashq li Ibn Asākir*, ed. Sakina al-Shibābī (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1990), 1st.ed., vol. 21, p. 384; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 10. p. 8.

approximately 25 treatises by the well-known *hadīth* scholar `Ali b. al-Madīnī (d. 234/849). He says: “`Ali b. al-Madīnī is the *failasūf* of this art (i.e. the science of the *hadīth*) and its doctor. He is the spokesman and orator of the *ahl al-hadīth*”.²⁸

Scholars familiar with the history of Islamic thought will not be able to hide their astonishment when they discover that two traditionists, one living in the 3rd /9th century, the other in the 5th /11th century, used the term *failasūf* for the two famous traditionists al-Shāfi`ī and `Ali b. al-Madīnī. In fact, it is not accurate to state that people who were opposed to philosophy and its related sciences have used the term *failasūf* to describe the most important *Ahl al-Hadīth*. As far as I know, no sources mention that al-Shāfi`ī and Ibn al-Madīnī studied philosophy and its related sciences. Thus, we cannot determine why and in what sense the term *failasūf* was attributed to these two traditionists. There are a number of possibilities. First, it may not have been objectionable to use philosophical terms to refer to *Ahl al-Hadīth*. Second, such an appellation may have been the result of a reactionary attitude against Muslim philosophers who followed Greek philosophers and who accepted their methods. In *Mir`āt al-jinān*, al-Yāfi`ī (d. 768/1366) compares al-Shāfi`ī's authority on *fiqh* methodology with that of the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle on logic.²⁹ This suggests that the use of the term *failasūf* for al-Shāfi`ī may have been the result of a reactionary factor.

In addition, Muhammad Zāhid al-Kawsarī (d. 1952), a modern Hanafī scholar, describes Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) as a *failasūf*. He says: “Ibn Hibbān is the *failasūf* of people of accepting and rejecting narrations (*ahl al-jarh wa'l-ta`dīl*).”³⁰ This shows that the use of the term *failasūf* for the traditionists may be appropriate. Be that as it may, al-Kawsarī uses this phrase about al-Bustī only in connection with *hadīth*. However, quoting al-Dhahabī, he states that Ibn Hibbān was also a scholar (*`ālim*) in medicine, astronomy and other philosophical sciences,³¹ clearly indicating that Ibn Hibbān was involved in philosophy.

Finally, a famous traditionist, `Abd al-Ra`ūf al-Munāwī (d. 1032/1623), made positive statements about philosophy and philosophers. He discussed the *hadīth* collection, *al-Jāmi` al-saghīr*, compiled by Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, who, as mentioned earlier, was opposed to philosophy. In *Fayz al-qadīr sharh*

al-Jāmi` al-saghīr, a *hadīth* is narrated: “*al-Hikmah/falsafah* is lost property of the Believer (*Mu`min*); wherever he finds it that is what he deserves.”³² al-Munāwī explains this *hadīth* by quoting a statement by Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn al-`Arabī (d. 638/1240), a well-known *sūfi*:

Oh researcher on the knowledge of Prophetic *Hadīth*! If you've heard that a philosopher or a theologian has spoken of an issue on prophetic knowledge, the phrase “he does not have a religion/he does not believe” must not detain you from narrating the words or acting upon them. The phrase “he does not have a religion” is the word of a person who has no knowledge of philosophy or theology. Not all knowledge of all philosophers is falsehood. If we know that our Shari`a does not reject this knowledge, or even if it avoids it and makes known things like sexual craving, tricks of the desires and secret evils, we must definitely accept it.³³

In light of the above, we may conclude that some traditionists used the term “*failasūf*” for the traditionists/*muhaddithūn*, whether in the context of *hadīth* or in that of Greek philosophy and its related sciences.

The eight scholars discussed below are *only exemplary scholars* and we will not give their biographies in detail; rather we will examine only the extent to which they were related to the sciences of both *hadīth* and philosophy. In some cases, the main studies of some of these scholars focused on just one topic. For example, one scholar may be interested predominantly in *hadīth*, although he was also interested in other sciences, or the reverse.

1. Abū Hāshim Khālid b. Yazīd b. Mu`āwīyah b. Abī Sufyān al-Qurashī al-Umawī (d. 85/704)³⁴

He was called *Hakīm Āl-i Marwān*,³⁵ that is, the philosopher of the family of Marwān; he is considered to be the first Muslim philosopher.³⁶ He was interested in the science of philosophy. He wanted the Alexandrian priest Marianos Romenus³⁷ to translate some works on the science of alchemy from the ancient Greek and Coptic languages into Arabic. He also arranged for Marianos' teacher, Staphonas,³⁸ to translate into Arabic some books on the

²⁸ al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Jāmi` li-akhlāq al-rāwī wa-ādab al-sāmi*, ed. Muhammad `Ajjāj al-Khatīb (Beirut: Mu`assasa al-Risālah, 1994), (I-II), 2nd ed., vol. 2. p. 467.

²⁹ See al-Yāfi`ī, Abū Muhammad Abd Allah b. As`ad, *Mir`āt al-jinān wa ibrah al-yaqzān* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmī, 1993), vol. 2. p. 18.

³⁰ Muhammad Zāhid b. al-Hasan al-Kawsarī, *Ta`nīb al-Khatīb `alā mā sāqah fī tarjama Abī Hanīfa min al-akādhīb*, (n. p.: n. pub., 1990), pp. 179-80.

³¹ al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, vol. 3. p. 90, no. 879.

³² “al-Kalimah al-hikmah dālla al-mu`min, fa haythu wajadahā fa-huwa ahaqq bihā”.

³³ See `Abd al-Ra`ūf al-Munāwī, *Fayz al-qadīr sharh al-Jāmi` al-saghīr* (Beirut: Dār al-ma`rifah, n.d.), vol. 5. p. 65.

³⁴ See his biography in Ibn Khalliqān, *Wafayāt al-a`yān wa `anbā` abnā` al-zamān*, ed. Ihsān Abbās (Beirut: Dār Sādr, 1969), vol. 2. pp. 224-6.

³⁵ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, ed. Ibrāhīm Ramadān (Beirut: Dār al-Ma`rifah, 1994), p. 300.

³⁶ al-Birūnī, Abū al-Rayān Muhammad b. Ahmad (d. 443/1061?), *al-Āsār al-baqīyyah `an al-qurūn al-haliyyah*, ed. C.E. Sachau (Leipzig 1878, 1923), p. 302. “wa kāna awwala falāsifah al-Islāmī wa hattā qīla anna `ilmahu min allazī istakhrajahu Danyāl min ghār al-kanz”.

³⁷ Ibn Khalliqān, *Wafayāt*, vol. 2. p. 224.

³⁸ *DĪA*, vol. 15. p. 293.

sciences of astronomy, chemistry and medicine.³⁹ He pioneered the introduction of the philosophical sciences into Islamic culture. He was also a specialist in medicine and alchemy.⁴⁰

In the biographies of *hadīth* narrators, Khālid b. Yazīd is classified as the second or third generation successor (*tabaqāt*) of the *muhaddith*.⁴¹ He reportedly narrated *hadīth* from his father Yazīd b. Mu`āwiyah (d. 64/684) and from Dihyah b. Khalifah al-Kalbī (d. 50/670?).⁴² The following traditionists narrated *hadīth* from him; Rajā' b. Haywah,⁴³ Ibrāhim b. Abī Hurra al-Harrānī, Khālid b. `Āmir al-Zabādī al-Ifriqī, `Abbās b. `Ubayd Allah b. al-`Abbās (known as `Ubayd Allah b. `Abbās, cited in the *Sunan* of Abū Dāwūd), `Ali b. Rayāh al-Lahmī, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, Abū al-Ahdār, Abū al-A'ḡas al-Hawlānī and Abū Warīzah al-Ansī.⁴⁴ It is reported that when he could not find a person to narrate a *hadīth*, he reported a *hadīth* to the people who were not professional on *hadīth* around him, saying, "I know that you are not *hāfiz* (a memorizer of *hadīth* by heart)"⁴⁵

Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965), who was a *hadīth* and *rijāl* critic, considered Khālid ibn Yazīd as philosopher of *Āl-i Marwān* and trustworthy.⁴⁶ Ibn Hajar al-`Asqalānī (d. 852/1448) called him *sadūq* (truthful),⁴⁷ which is a positive term for a *hadīth* narrator. Ibn Khalliḡān mentioned that Khālid was well-acquainted with the sciences of medicine and chemistry.⁴⁸ But we are

³⁹ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 434. But it is said that the report that the Umayyad prince Khālid ibn Yazīd (d. after 85/704) had Greek books on alchemy, astrology, and other sciences translated into Arabic was proven to be a fabrication made at a later date. See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arab Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad & Early Abbasid Society (2nd-4th & 8th-10th C.)*, (Florence, KY: Routledge, 1998), p. 24.

⁴⁰ Ibn Khalliḡān, *Wafayāt*, vol. 2. p. 224.

⁴¹ Abū Hātim al-Razī accepted him as second *tabaqa muhaddith* (see Ibn Abū Khātim, *Kitāb al-jarh wa al-ta'dīl*, (India: Matba'ah Majlis dā'irat al-ma'ārif al-`Uthmāniyyah, 1952), reprinted Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, vol. 3. p. 357), while Ibn Hajar considered him to be third *tabaqa muhaddith* (see *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* [Beirut: Dār ihyā al-turās al-`arabī, 1413/1993], 2nd ed., vol. 2. p. 78, no. 1985); It is reported that the word of "third *tabaqa*" has been misread, but its authentic wording states him as the second stage. See al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fi asmā al-rijāl*, ed. Bashshār `Awwād Ma'rūf (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1987), vol. 8. p. 202, footnote no. 4).

⁴² Ibn Hajar points out that al-Dhahabī said that Khālid did not meet Dihyah al-Kalbī (see *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, vol. 2. p. 78, no. 1985). But I have been unable to find any quotations of al-Dhahabī on this issue (see *Siyar*, vol. 9. p. 411).

⁴³ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 9. p. 411.

⁴⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 9. p. 411; Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 8. pp. 201-2.

⁴⁵ Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, vol. 8. p. 203.

⁴⁶ Ibn Hibbān, *Kitāb al-siqāt*, vol. 6. p. 264.

⁴⁷ Ibn Hajar, *Taqrīb al-Tahdhīb*, ed. Muhammad Awwāma (Syria-Halab: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), p. 191, no. 1690.

⁴⁸ Ibn Khalliḡān, *Wafayāt*, vol. 2. p. 224.

unable to determine from the biographical *hadīth* dictionaries whether Khālid b. Yazīd studied philosophy or other philosophical sciences. Thus, we can only assume that Khālid ibn Yazīd was probably a philosopher as well as a *muhaddith*.

2. Ahmad b. Sālih al-Tabarī al-Misrī (d. 248/862) and Ahmad b. Sālih al-Shammūnī al-Makkī (d. ?/?):

The first of these two scholars, al-Misrī, was the narrator from whom Muhammad b. Ismā'īl al-Bukhārī (d. 256/870) reported a *hadīth* in his *al-Jāmi' al-Sahīh*. But al-Nasā'ī (d. 303/915), another famous *hadīth* scholar, also mentioned al-Misrī, transmitting from Yahyā b. Ma`īn (d. 233/847): "He was the greatest of liars (*kadhhdhāb*) and he pretended to be a philosopher (*yatafal-safu*)". However, it is also reported that the person to whom Ibn Ma`īn was referring was another man named Ahmad b. Sālih. According to one report, Ahmad b. Sālih al-Shammūnī was as a fabricator of *hadīth* and a *shaykh* of Macca, not the mentioned narrator in *al-Jāmi' al-Sahīh* of al-Bukhārī.⁴⁹ As Ibn Yūnus said,⁵⁰ Yahyā Ibn Ma`īn's use of the word *tafalsafah* for Ahmad b. Sālih may not indicate that Ibn Ma`īn was familiar with the science of philosophy. In any case, we are not interested here in finding out which Ahmad b. Sālih dealt with philosophy, but rather in discovering if any transmitter of *hadīth* or any *muhaddith* concerned with philosophy was criticized by other *muhaddithūn* on the grounds that he made philosophy, means "*tafalsafah*".

3. Abū Ma`shar Ja`far b. Muhammad al-Balkhī (d. 272/886)

This scholar wrote treatises on geometry and astrology. It is reported that he studied the science of *hadīth* and provoked people against Ya`qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī (d. 252/876 ?) for studying philosophy. But at the age of forty-seven, Abū Ma`shar al-Balkhī was diverted to astrology by al-Kindī. He provided circles that allowed al-Balkhī to develop his interest in mathematics, geometry and astrology. Therefore, al-Balkhī was sympathetic towards the rational sciences (*ulūm al-aqlī*).⁵¹ Despite his activity as a *muhaddith* for almost forty years, no *hadīth* or any work on *hadīth* by Abū Ma`shar is extant. Using the word *qīla*, means 'it is reported', al-Dhahabī said that Abū Ma`shar had been a

⁴⁹ al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 6. p. 202; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 12. pp. 165, 168; Ibn Hajar, *Hady al-sārī*, p. 383. Both al-Dhahabī and Ibn Hajar think that the opinion of al-Nasā'ī on Ahmad b. Sālih is wrong, and most of the *hadīth* scholars have accepted him as trustworthy (ibid.).

⁵⁰ al-Suyūṭī, *Tadrīb al-rāwī*, vol. 2. p. 322.

⁵¹ Ibn Abū `Usaybī'a, *Uyūn al-atibbā'*, ed. Nizār Rızā (Beirut: Dār al-Maktabah al-Hayāt, n.d.), p. 286; al-Kindī, *Felsefī Risaleler*, trans. Mahmut Kaya, XIII; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 13. p. 161; Muammer Dizer, "Ebu Ma`şer el-Belhi", *DİA*, vol. 10. pp. 182-4. Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, pp. 337-8; Ibn Khalliḡān, *Wafayāt*, vol. 1. p. 358-9.

muhaddith, and he listed some his works, saying, "Many books are attributed to him, but they are nothing more than mere claims."⁵²

4. Abū al-Qāsim `Īsā b. `Ali b. `Īsā b. Dāwūd b. al-Jarrāh al-Baghdādī (d. 391/1001)

He was the son of the `Abbasid vizier Abū al-Hasan `Īsā b. `Ali (d. 334/946). He learned *hadīth* from scholars like al-Baghawī, Ibn Abī Dāwūd, Ibn Sa`īd, and Muhammad b. Nūh al-Jundīshābūrī. He recorded *hadīth* in *hadīth* dictation centers (*majlis al-implā*). Some *hadīth* scholars, including Abū al-Qāsim al-Azhārī, Abū Muhammad al-Hallāl and `Ali b. Muhammad al-Muhassin al-Tanūhī, narrated *hadīth* from him. al-Khatīb al-Baghdādī characterizes Ibn al-Jarrāh as *sabt al-simā*, i.e., trustworthy for *hadīth*, and as *sahīh al-kitāb*, i.e., his *hadīth* are sound.⁵³

A contemporary of Ibn al-Jarrāh and a student of *hadīth*, Abū al-Fath Muhammad b. Ahmad b. Abū al-Fawāris (d. 412/1022) told al-Khatīb that Ibn al-Jarrāh had been accused of studying philosophy.⁵⁴ Although al-Dhahabī and Ibn Hajar rejected this accusation,⁵⁵ al-Dhahabī, in his *Tārīkh al-Islām*, did not deny that Ibn al-Jarrāh was accused of holding philosophical ideas.⁵⁶ But he expressed the hope that Ibn al-Jarrāh would be forgiven by God because of his expertise in *hadīth*. Another contemporary of Ibn al-Jarrāh, Muhammad b. Ishāq al-Nadīm (d. 385/995?) claimed that in his time `Īsā was one of the scholars most conversant with the science of logic and ancient knowledge.⁵⁷ After quoting Ibn al-Nadīm's assessment of Ibn al-Jarrāh, al-Dhahabī says: "Studying these sciences has blackened his position and does not beautify him; but because of his dealing with the *hadīth*, I hope that the mercy of God will reach him."⁵⁸

5. Muhammad Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965)

He was a well-known traditionist, scholar of *al-jarh wa'l-ta'dīl* and the author of *al-Sahīh*. It is reported that he also studied medicine, astronomy and the philosophical sciences.⁵⁹ But none of his books on these sciences are men-

⁵² al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 13. p. 161.

⁵³ See al-Khatīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. 11. p. 179.

⁵⁴ al-Khatīb, *Tārīkh Baghdād*, vol. XI, 180; cf. al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 16. p. 550.

⁵⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-i'tidāl*, vol. 3. p. 318; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mizān*, vol. 4. p. 465.

⁵⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām* (volume between 381-400 A. H.), ed. `Umar Abd al-Salām Tamūrī (Beirut: Dār al-kitāb al-`arabī, 1993 (2nd ed.), pp. 257-8. Cf. *ibid.*, *al-Mughnī fī al-Du`afā*, vol. 2. p. 499.

⁵⁷ Ibn al-Nadīm, *al-Fihrist*, p. 186.

⁵⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 16. p. 550.

⁵⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, vol. 3. p. 90, no. 879; al-Suyūtī, *Tabaqāt al-huffāz*, ed. Ali Muhammad Umar (Cairo: Maktaba Wahba, 1973), p. 374.

tioned in any Islamic text. He studied theology (*kalām*) and philosophy, and, for this reason, he was accused of being a heretic (*zindīq*) by the followers of the anthropomorphists (*mushabbihā*);⁶⁰ also his theory on prophecy, which consists of knowledge and practice,⁶¹ was denounced for containing philosophical ideas by some sunni scholars. For example. al-Dhahabī, the important *hadīth* scholar criticized Ibn Hibbān's theory on prophecy as being philosophical.⁶²

6. Ibn Yūnus Kamāl al-Dīn Abū al-Fath Mūsa b. Yūnus b. Muhammad al-Mawsilī al-Shāfi`ī (d. 639/1242).⁶³

He carried out all kinds of sciences, reportedly mastering fourteen⁶⁴ or twenty-four.⁶⁵ He learned *fiqh* from his father and Arabic literature from Yahyā b. Sa`dūn al-Qurtubī. He also studied *tafsīr*, *hadīth* and *asmā' al-rijāl*, i.e., name of *hadīth* people, logic and philosophy. According to al-Dhahabī, Ibn al-Salāh praised him undeservedly. A student of Ibn Yūnus, Ibn Khalliqān, commended him, but also expressed the wish that God would look on him with further tolerance, as he indulged in the rational sciences.⁶⁶ Nevertheless, al-Dhahabī mentions Ibn Yūnus as a *muhaddith* in his biographical dictionary.⁶⁷

7. Ibn al-Fuwātī Abū al-Fadl Kamāl al-Dīn `Abd al-Razzāq b. Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Shaybānī al-Baghdādī al-Hanbalī (d. 723/1323)

This scholar wrote treatises on different Islamic sciences.⁶⁸ Hajji Khalifah refers to him as both a *muhaddith* and a philosopher.⁶⁹ According to al-Dhahabī and al-Suyūtī, he belonged to the twenty-first generation (*tabaqa*) of *muhaddithūn*.⁷⁰ In 660/1262, he began to study the ancient sciences of philosophy (*'ulūm al-awā'il*) from Khojah Nāsir al-Dīn al-Tūsī (d. 672/1274), a well-known Muslim philosopher.⁷¹ His piety was questioned by some traditionists because of his interest in philosophy. For example, in a short biogram in his

⁶⁰ M. Ali Sönmez, "İbn Hibbān", *DİA*, vol. 20. p. 63.

⁶¹ Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mizān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), vol. 5. pp. 128-9.

⁶² al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, vol. 3. p. 90.

⁶³ For more information about him, see Ramazan Şeşen, "İbn Yunus, Kemaleddin", *DİA*, vol. 20. pp. 452-3.

⁶⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 23. pp. 85-7.

⁶⁵ Ibn Khalliqān, *Wafayāt*, vol. 5. pp. 311-18.

⁶⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 23. pp. 85-7.

⁶⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tabaqāt al-muhaddithīn*, p. 200, no. 2115.

⁶⁸ See Cengiz Tomar, "İbnü'l-Fuwātī", *DİA*, vol. 21. pp. 47-8.

⁶⁹ Hajji Khalifah, *Kashf al-zunūn* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-`ilmiyyah, 1992), vol. 1. p. 573.

⁷⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Tadhkirat al-huffāz*, vol. 4. p. 190; al-Suyūtī, *Tabaqāt al-huffāz*, p. 515.

⁷¹ al-Dhahabī, *ibid.*, vol. IV, 190; Idem., *Mu`jam al-muhaddithīn*, ed. Muhammad al-Habīb al-Hayla (Tā'if: Maktaba al-Siddīq, 1408 A.H.), p. 144.

Tadhkirat al-huffāz, al-Dhahabī mentions that Ibn al-Fuwātī was inclined to collect and narrate *hadīth*. He learned *hadīth* from about 500 teachers. al-Dhahabī hoped that his work on *hadīth* might serve as redemption (*kaffārah*) for him.⁷²

8. Ghulām Ibn al-Munā (المني) Fakhr al-Dīn Ismā'il b. Ali b. al-Husayn al-Azjī al-Hanbalī (d. 610/1213)

He studied *hadīth* with Abū al-Fath Ibn al-Munā, Lāhiq b. 'Ali b. Kārih and others. He wrote a *hadīth* treatise (*risālah*) from Shuhdah bnt. Ahmad al-Kātibah (d. 574/1178), daughter of the famous traditionist Abū Nāsr Ahmad b. al-Faraj al-Dīnawarī. After the death of his master Abū al-Fath Ibn al-Munā, al-Hanbalī lectured on *hadīth* at the Ma'muniyyah College and he transmitted numerous traditions from his teacher and other traditionists. He was also a philosopher, a *faqīh* and a theologian. He studied logic, philosophy and the other ancient philosophical sciences. He wrote books on philosophy, including *Nawāmis al-anbiyā'*. Because of his engagement with philosophy, a Hanbalī scholar, Ibn Rajab, accused him of weakness in religion. It is reported that he criticized *hadīth* narrators for not being learned enough, for not knowing the rational sciences and for not understanding the meaning of what they narrated, apart from the literal form (*zāhir*) of the *hadīth*.⁷³ al-Dhahabī also criticized Ghulām Ibn al-Munā, classifying his narrations as unacceptable (*lā yuslah li'l-riwāyah*).⁷⁴ In his *Lisān al-Mizān*, a supplement to al-Dhahabī's *Mizān al-i'tidāl*, Ibn Hajar classifies Ghulām Ibn al-Munā as one of the weak narrators and *muhaddithūn*.⁷⁵

Conclusion:

Although it is frequently asserted that some Muslim philosophers were also qualified in *fiqh*,⁷⁶ *tafsir*, *kalam*,⁷⁷ or *tasawwuf*,⁷⁸ we rarely find any information about the activities of these scholars as *muhaddith*/traditionist because of the preoccupation with *hadīth*. Conversely, it is difficult to determine whether or not the *muhaddithūn* or *Ahl al-Hadīth* were also interested in ancient Greek philosophy or the rational (*aqlī*) sciences. As demonstrated above, some sunnī Muslim traditionists objected to philosophy and the philosophical sciences,

⁷² Ibid., IV, 190; cf. al-Dhahabī, *Mu'jam al-muhaddithīn*, p. 144; Ibn Hajar, *Lisān al-Mizān* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), vol. 4, p. 13.

⁷³ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 22, pp. 29-30; Ibn Rajab, *Dhayl Tabaqāt al-Hanābilah*, vol. 2, pp. 66-8.

⁷⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, vol. 22, p. 30.

⁷⁵ Ibn Hajar, *Lisān*, vol. 1, pp. 472-3, no. 1323.

⁷⁶ For example, Ibn Rushd Abū al-Walīd Muhammad b. Ahmad al-Qurtubī (d. 595/1198) was also a famous jurist.

⁷⁷ Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210) was also a great commentator on the Qur'an.

⁷⁸ Muhyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) was also a famous *sūfi*.

while others studied both *hadīth* and philosophy. I propose to call the latter type of scholar a *muhaddith failasūf* or *failasūf muhaddith*, that is a Muslim traditionist who was interested in and studied both *hadīth* and philosophy. The eight scholars mentioned above studied *hadīth* and philosophy in addition to other Islamic sciences. Their study of philosophy may have affected their understanding of *hadīth* and of the Prophetic *sunnah*. For example, Ibn Hibbān al-Bustī (d. 354/965) compiled the traditions and classified them in 400 sections, in his work entitled *Sahīh, al-Taqāsīm wa'l-anwā'* (Chapters and Nevus (Naw)).⁷⁹ The title probably reflects his philosophical career.⁸⁰

Abstract: In this article, I examine the attitudes and opinions of some sunnī traditionists, like Ibn al-Salāh (d. 643/1245), al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1347) and al-Suyūṭī (d. 911/1505), and the way in which they attacked ancient philosophy, the philosophical sciences and Muslim philosophers. I will study eight transmitters of *hadīth* and examine how these narrators dealt with ancient Greek philosophy or the philosophical sciences.

Citation: Mustafa ERTÜRK, "A Short Glance at the Attitude of Some Sunnī Muslim Traditionists/*Muhaddithūn* towards Philosophy and the Philosophical Sciences", *Hadis Tetkikleri Dergisi (HTD)*, V/1, 2007, pp. 49-62.

Key words: *Hadīth*, Islamic Philosophy, *hadīth* philosopher, Muslim philosophers, al-Ghazālī, Ibn al-Salāh, al-Dhahabī, al-Suyūṭī.

⁷⁹ Abū al-Hasan b. Balabān al-Fārisī (d. 739/1339) rearranged *al-Sahīh* under the title *al-Ihsān fī taqrīb Sahīh Ibn Hibbān* (ed. Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt, 18 vols., (Beirut: Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 1988).

⁸⁰ Shu'ayb al-Arna'ūt says that the philosophical career of Ibn Hibbān was reflected in his works, in particular in his *Sahīh*. See, *ibid.*, 19.