

Khojazāda on al-Ghazālī's Criticism of the Philosophers' Proof of the Existence of God

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Introduction

Khojazāda (d. 893/1488) did not choose to write his *Tabāfut al-Falāsifa* of his own accord. He was commissioned to do so by the Ottoman sultan Mehmed II (r. 848/1444-850/1446 and 855/1451-886/1481),¹ and when commissioned

by the sultan, scholars normally obliged. Neither the theme, “the floundering of the philosophers”, nor al-Ghazālī's four-centuries-old text, are starting points that the author himself would have elected for a book project. He was much more interested in refining the philosophico-theological system of later Ash‘arism set out in highly developed expositions in al-İṣfahānī's (d. 749/1348) *Maṭāli‘ al-Anzār*, a commentary on al-Bayḍāwī's (d. 716/1316) *Ṭawāli‘ al-Anwār*, al-Jurjānī's (d. 816/1413) commentary on al-Ījī's (d. 756/1355) *Mawāqif*, and al-Taftāzānī's (d. 793/1390) *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid*, on the first two of which he wrote incomplete glosses. Anachronistic though it may be, the choice was perfectly consonant with what many patrons of scholarship were after: stimulating debates involving diametrically-opposed opponents, much like duels. Al-Ghazālī's book was chosen, not because the contents were of outstanding philosophical interest for ninth/fifteenth-century thinkers – as we will see, the contrary appears to be the case – but because this work written by this highly respected figure had an almost legendary status. It originated from the dawn of neo-Ash‘arism, at a time when philosophers were still philosophers and kalām theologians still theologians. For once, a later Ash‘arī philosopher-theologian had to abandon his hair-splitting niceties, so utterly boring and

¹ As this paper appears in a volume dedicated to Khojazāda, please refer to other chapters of the volume for background information on the author and the text. These details have been omitted here.

pedantic for the non-specialist patron, only to be pushed into a more monochrome arena.

During the four centuries or so that separated the two *Tabāfut*, the tradition of philosophical theology underwent immense developments, evident, for instance, in the terminology and the complexity of the arguments. Khojzāda makes this amply clear in the Sixth Discussion in his work, "On Showing [the Philosophers'] Inability to Prove the Existence of the Maker for the World", in which he is harshly critical of al-Ghazālī, describing the arguments set out in the corresponding Fourth Discussion of his *Tabāfut* as "insubstantial" (*ḥashf*) and "of no consequence" (*laysa bi-shay*).² While exposing flaws in al-Ghazālī's arguments, Khojzāda nonetheless endorses fully his predecessor's objectives and tactics. He seeks to show that the philosophers make contradictory assertions, and proceeds to do so along the same lines followed by al-Ghazālī, offering philosophically-sounder alternatives to his arguments.

The translation of the Sixth Discussion below includes explanatory material enclosed in square brackets and some marginal comments where necessary, to resolve any ambiguities in the doctrines and arguments discussed. The broad outlines of the discussion are as follows:

1. Al-Ghazālī's preliminary accusation that the philosophers' stance is patently incoherent and incomprehensible;
2. Khojzāda dismisses this accusation;
3. The philosophers' argument from contingency for the existence of the First Principle;
4. Al-Ghazālī's objection to the philosophers' appeal to the argument from correspondence against the infinite regress of causes: I. the argument from the beginningless series of temporal events;
5. Khojzāda rejects this objection;

² al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad, *Tabāfut al-Falāsifa* [*Algazel Tabafot al-Falāsifa*] (ed. Maurice Bouyges), Imprimerie Catholique, Beirut 1927, 133-142. Translated by Michael E. Marmura, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers: Tabāfut al-Falāsifa*, Brigham Young University Press, Provo, Utah 1997, 79-84. On this discussion in al-Ghazālī's *Tabāfut*, see Davidson, Herbert A., *Proofs for Eternity, Creation, and the Existence of God in Medieval Islamic and Jewish Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1987, 366-375.

6. Al-Ghazâlî's objection to the philosophers' appeal to the argument from correspondence against the infinite regress of causes: II. the argument from the infinite number of human souls;
7. Khojazâda rejects this objection;
8. Khojazâda advances his own objection to the philosophers' appeal to the argument from correspondence against the infinite regress of causes: the argument from the knowledge that higher beings have of temporal events;
9. A defence of al-Ghazâlî's second objection, from the infinite number of human souls;
10. Khojazâda rejects this defence;
11. An outline of a second argument cited by the philosophers against the infinite regress of causes: the argument from the contingency of a causal series;
12. Khojazâda rejects this argument;
13. Al-Ghazâlî's response to the philosophers' second argument against the infinite regress of causes;
14. Khojazâda dismisses al-Ghazâlî's response.

Al-Ghazâlî's attack against the argument from contingency for the existence of the First Principle targets the premise that the infinite regress of causes is inconceivable. He does this by undermining two proofs that the philosophers cite in support of this premise, namely the argument from correspondence (nos. 4 and 6) and the argument from the contingency of a causal series (no. 13). Khojazâda (no. 4) describes al-Ghazâlî's method of argumentation against the first of these proofs as a case of "annulment" (*naqd*). A disputant "annuls" an opponent's argument by contending that the argument is unsound, and then supporting this contention with some evidence (*sbâhid*, though Khojazâda does not employ this term here).³

The "argument from correspondence" (*burbân al-tatbîq*) goes as follows. Consider a series of units that begins at one point and is infinite in one direction. We can then consider a different series by subtracting a certain number of units (say, one unit) from the finite end of the first series. If we then compare the two series by "juxtaposing" them against each other such that each

³ For a recent overview of this method, see al-Maydânî, 'Abd al-Raḥmân Ḥabannaka, *Ḍawābiḥ al-Ma'rifa wa-Uṣûl al-Istidlâl wa-l-Munâzara*, Dâr al-Qalam, Damascus 1993, 437 ff.

unit in the latter series corresponds to its counterpart in the former series, we will find that the former contains an extra unit that does not correspond to any units in the latter. The former series, therefore, is longer than the latter by virtue of the additional unit it contains. However, it is inconceivable for an infinite series to become longer than another infinite series by the addition of a finite number of units, for difference in length is conceivable only between series consisting of finite quantities of units. Therefore, an infinite series is inconceivable.⁴

The philosophers are not entitled to appeal to this argument in their proof of the existence of the First Principle, according to Khojazāda's presentation of al-Ghazālī's discussion, because it is annulled (*manqūḍ*) on account of two pieces of evidence, which exhibit the applicability (*jarayān*) of the same argument to two other doctrines, which, by contrast, the philosophers do accept. These are, first, the doctrine of temporal events that have no beginning (*ḥawādith lā auwal la-bā*), another case of infinite regress (no. 4), and second, the notion of the infinite number of human souls (no. 6). The argument from correspondence, thus, is annulled only for the philosophers, *vis-à-vis* these doctrines of theirs, and not absolutely, since, Khojazāda explains, it is not annulled for kalām theologians, who reject the doctrines of temporal events that have no beginning and of an infinite number of human souls.

Khojazāda (no. 5), however, dismisses al-Ghazālī's first attempt to annul the argument from correspondence for the philosophers on account of the doctrine of temporal events that have no beginning. For, unlike an infinite series of coexisting causes, the units that comprise a beginningless series of temporal events are not coexistent. Hence, it will not be possible to speak of correspondence between two such series either in the external world, since most units no longer exist, or in the mind, since it cannot perceive an infinite number of things simultaneously.

⁴ On arguments from correspondence, see: Al-Taftāzānī, Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn ʿUmar ibn ʿAbd Allāh, *Sbarḥ al-Maqāṣid* (ed. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ʿUmayra), ʿĀlam al-Kutub, Beirut 1998, II, 120 ff.; al-Jurjānī, Abū l-Ḥasan al-Sayyid al-Sharīf ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAlī, *Sbarḥ al-Mawāqif* (ed. Muḥammad Badr al-Dīn al-Naʿsānī), Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿāda, Cairo 1907, IV, 167 ff.; Fazlur Rahman, *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā*, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 1975, 65 ff. For references to further discussions of this argument in medieval sources, see: Davidson, H. A., *Proofs for Eternity*, 120-121.

The second piece of evidence used to annul the philosophers' argument from correspondence, then, seems more promising (no. 6). If this argument does not apply to the case of temporal events that have no beginning because they are not coexistent, then it should apply to the case of the infinite number of human souls, which, according to Ibn Sînâ, are coexistent.⁵ Khojazâda rejects this second objection on the grounds that since human souls do not form a series consisting of units ordered successively in a discernible order, whether in position or nature, it is inconceivable to apply the argument from correspondence in this case (no. 7).⁶ A little later (no. 10), he dismisses a possible defence of al-Ghazâlî's argument (no. 9), which attempts to argue that human souls are indeed ordered in a series, either chronologically or with respect to their nature.

Notwithstanding his criticism of al-Ghazâlî's arguments, Khojazâda does not dismiss the tactic of annulling the argument from correspondence for the philosophers. Advancing alternative evidence to affirm this annulment (no. 8), he confirms that,

[...] our objective is not [to show] that the argument for the inconceivability of infinite regress can never be established, but rather to compel [the philosophers] to concede that it cannot be established [soundly and coherently] *vis-à-vis* their principles. It will then follow that the existence of the First Principle cannot be established [soundly and coherently] within their system. We are able to accomplish this objective [...].

Though Khojazâda, in his discussion of the philosophers' proof for the existence of God, dismisses all the objections put forth by al-Ghazâlî, he nonetheless takes his predecessor's agenda fully on board. The overall objective is still the same: to force the philosophers to concede that they are not entitled to appeal, in their proof from contingency, to the premise that the infinite regress of causes is inconceivable, and ultimately to illustrate that they cannot sustain their doctrines because they are contradictory. Furthermore, the main

⁵ On this problem, see: Marmura, Michael E., "Avicenna and the Problem of the Infinite Number of Souls", *Mediaeval Studies* 22 (1960), 232-239.

⁶ These conditions for the inconceivability of an infinite number of objects – namely, that they be coexistent and ordered either in their position or nature – were set forth earlier by al-Fârâbî and Ibn Sînâ (see, for instance, Davidson, H. A., *Proofs for Eternity*, 128-129; 368-369).

elements of the discussion are the same. Khojazāda criticises the same two arguments for this premise attacked by al-Ghazālī. For the first, the argument from correspondence, he rejects the two objections that al-Ghazālī presents to annul the argument for the philosophers, and proposes an alternative objection to annul the same argument in the same way: by showing that it applies to a doctrine involving the affirmation of an infinite number of ordered coexisting objects, which, in contrast to the infinite regress of causes, the philosophers do accept.

Compared to the main philosophical and theological summae of the period, Khojazāda's treatment of the proof from contingency appears piecemeal. In line with the elements and parameters of al-Ghazālī's treatment, he confines himself to discussing arguments against infinite regress; he discusses only two such arguments (al-Taftāzānī discusses seven⁷); and he does so dialectically, and thus non-comprehensively. Ibn Rushd was well justified in following al-Ghazālī's discussion closely in *Tabāfut al-Tabāfut*: he sought to respond to his criticism of the philosophical tradition, which exerted much influence in the Maghreb during the sixth/twelfth century. Khojazāda, of course, was commissioned by the sultan to write his *Tabāfut*, but otherwise lacked a comparably strong and genuine motive to do so. Though the dichotomy *mutakallim-faylasūf* was still current in the philosophical and theological literature of the period, it was of a primarily theoretical significance, and the real tension between the two sides a thing of a bygone era. This might explain why the Sixth Discussion of Khojazāda's *Tabāfut* – and the same is not necessarily true of the book as a whole – appears to be essentially a critical update of the corresponding discussion in al-Ghazālī's work.

Note on the Translation: The translation below is based on the holograph copy (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Library, Şehid Ali Paşa, 1583, fols. 45^a-48^a; referred to as M). Corrections to the lithograph edition (ed. 'Abduh Muṣṭafā Qushaysha al-Ash'arī al-Shāfi'ī, al-Maṭba'at al-İlāmiyya, Cairo 1303 AH, 47-51; referred to as L), as well as page and folio numbers, are noted in the margins.⁸

⁷ al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-Maqāsid*, II, 114-131.

⁸ For a description of the manuscript and lithograph copies, see: "Hocazāde'nin Eserleri", 382-383, in the present volume.

Translation

The Sixth Discussion:

On Showing [the Philosophers'] Inability to Prove the Existence of the Maker for the World, Which Comprises the Heavens and What is Therein and the Elements and What Consists Thereof

[1. Al-Ghazālī's Accusation that the Philosophers' Stance is Incomprehensible]

The Imām al-Ghazālī, may God's mercy be upon him, says⁹ that those who assert that the world is originated in time have an apprehensible doctrine concerning the existence of the Maker, as it follows necessarily from [the premise] that every originated thing requires an originator, and that [the series of originated things and originators] cannot regress *ad infinitum*, as this would be inconceivable, but must terminate in a pre-eternal being. Those, on the other hand, who maintain that the world is pre-eternal and does not require a maker, their doctrine too is comprehensible, even though its falsity is then shown by means of proof. As to the philosophers, they assert that the world is pre-eternal then, despite this, have affirmed for it a maker. This juxtaposition is contradictory, and its falsity in need of no exposition.

[2. Khojazāda's Response]

[To this,] I say:

If by this he intends that a thing's being pre-eternal contradicts both its causedness and its being an effect of a cause, then this cannot be conceded, considering that he previously allowed this. If, however, he intends that "maker" means "one who existentiates things after they did not exist", then, supposing that we accept this [notion], this would not affect [the philosophers]. For they do not affirm for the world a maker in this sense, for a contradiction to follow, but instead affirm a cause for [the world's] existence on account of its contingency. If they choose to name that Cause the "Maker", then they will not

⁹ Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Tabāfut*, 133-134; Marmura, M. E. (trans.), *Incoherence*, 79.

intend one who creates [the world] in time, but one who existentiates [it]. [The philosophers'] doctrine, therefore, involves no contradiction.

Moreover, there is no need¹⁰ for him to mention this [supposed] contradiction in his explanation of the objective of this chapter. For the objective is to expose their inability to set out a proof for the existence of the Principle of this world; and this does not presuppose the contradiction that he mentioned.¹¹

[3. An Outline of the Philosophers' Proof of the Existence of God]

In affirming the Principle of this world, [the philosophers] assert that the mind knows immediately that every existent must be either contingent or necessary.¹² For if it depends for its existence on another being, it will be contingent. Otherwise, it will be necessary of existence.

There is no doubt that something exists. If, then, [that which exists] is a necessary existent, the thing we are after will be affirmed. For contingent beings will depend on it [for their existence]; otherwise, circularity or infinite regress [would be inevitable]. If, however, it is contingent, then it must have a cause. If that cause, [in turn,] has a further cause, then the same reasoning will apply to it. [The series of] causes will then either be circular, or be infinitely regressing, or terminate in a being that has no cause. As the first two [divisions] are false, the third must be true.

That [necessary] being cannot be a body. The reason for this is that bodies are composite, while a being that has no cause cannot be composite.¹³

¹⁰ M 45^b.

¹¹ M: + *ma'a annabū lā ḥāja ilā mā dbakarabū min al-tanāquḍ fi bayān gbaraḍ ḥādhā l-faṣl fa-inna l-gbaraḍ minhu bayān 'ajzibim 'an iqāmat al-dalīl 'alā wujūd mabda' al-'ālam wa-ḥādhā lā yatawaqqaf 'alā mā dbakarabū min al-tanāquḍ.*

¹² This argument is not taken from al-Ghazālī's *Tabāfut*, but reflects the version advanced by Ibn Sīnā (e.g. *al-Najāt* [ed. Mājid Fakhri], Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīda, Beirut 1982, 271-272). On this proof, see, for instance: Marmura, M. E., "Avicenna's Proof from Contingency for God's Existence in the *Metaphysics* of the *Shifā'*", *Mediaeval Studies* 42 (1980), 337-352; Davidson, H. A., *Proofs for Eternity*, 281 ff.; Mayer, Toby, "Ibn Sīnā's 'Burhān al-Ṣiddiqīn'", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12 (2001), 18-39.

¹³ L: + *li-anna kull murakkab muḥtāj ilā 'illa.*

Nor can it be part of [a body]; for each of the two components of the body¹⁴ requires the other.¹⁵ Nor can it be a soul or an intellect; for the necessary being is one and true (*wāḥid ḥaqq*) in all respects, whereas they are not so. It follows that there must be a being that is extraneous to the totality of the world and acts as its cause, which is what we are after.¹⁶

[4. Al-Ghazālī's Principal Objection to the Philosophers'
Appeal to the Argument from Correspondence]

The Imām al-Ghazālī, may God's mercy be upon him, objected to [this proof] on two counts.¹⁷ First, why could that Principle not be one of the heavenly spheres? As to their contention that bodies are composite whereas the necessary being is not so, we will discuss this further below, God willing.¹⁸

Second, why could there not be for each cause a further cause *ad infinitum*? The inconceivability of infinite regress cannot be squared with [the philosophers'] own principles.¹⁹ For there is no disagreement that the inconceivability of this is not known immediately. Furthermore, of the arguments put forth to demonstrate this inconceivability, the most relied-on is the "argument from correspondence" (*burhān al-taṭbīq*), which is annulled (*manqūḍ*) by [the philosophers' acceptance of the doctrine of] successive temporal events that have no beginning (*ḥawādith muta'āqiba lā auwal la-bā*), which, they admit, is conceivable and actually occurred. Kalām theologians, by contrast, reject [the doctrine of] successive temporal events that have no beginning, and consider it inconceivable. Hence, [the argument from correspondence] will not be annulled by their principles.

¹⁴ L 48.

¹⁵ This seems to be a reference to form and matter.

¹⁶ M: + *la-bā*.

¹⁷ Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Tabāfut*, 135 ff.; Marmura, M. E. (trans.), *Incoherence*, 80 ff.

¹⁸ The first objection that al-Ghazālī actually puts forth in Discussion 4 is different.

¹⁹ Reading *lā tastatibb 'alā aṣṣlikum* (M), rather than *lā tastabīn 'alā aṣṣlibim* (L).

[5. Khojazāda's Response]

The response given to [al-Ghazālī's claim that the philosophers cannot appeal to the argument from correspondence] is this:²⁰

Since successive temporal events that have no beginning are not coexistent, it will not be possible to conceive of correspondence between individual [temporal events], neither in the extra-mental world since they do not coexist there, nor in the mind given the inconceivability of the existence of what is infinite, with [its individual units] fully set out, in the mind. The existence of [such an infinite series, conceived of] abstractly, in the mind is insufficient to [apply the method of] correspondence: we know [this fact] inwardly within ourselves. Therefore, the argument [from correspondence] does not apply in this [case],²¹ and the [aforementioned attempt at] annulment comes to naught (*fa-lā jarayān li l-dalīl fī-bā fa-lā naqḍ*).

The same is not true of the infinite number of coexisting bodies ordered successively in place. For due to their coexistence and positional arrangement, [the argument from] correspondence applies in this [case], and the demonstration [concerning the inconceivability of an infinite number of coexisting bodies] can be set out soundly. That is why they pronounced this to be inconceivable.²²

[6. Al-Ghazālī's Argument from the Infinite Number of Human Souls]

If you then say:

“Even if we admit that [our attempt to establish that the argument from correspondence] is annulled by [the philosophers' acceptance of] successive temporal events [that have no beginning] has been obviated, the argument [from correspondence] can nevertheless be annulled [for the philosophers] by [their doctrine of] human souls. For despite being, according to them, infinite in number, [human souls] are coexistent, since, as they claim, they endure eternally after the corruption of the body”.

²⁰ This response is mentioned briefly by al-Ghazālī (*Tabāfut*, 136; Marmura, M. E. [trans.], *Incoherence*, 81).

²¹ M 46^a.

²² Reading *bi-buṭlānibī* (L), rather than *bi-burbānibī* (M).

[7. Khojazâda's Response]

[To this,] I say:²³

[This argument from] human souls, too, fails to annul [the argument from correspondence for the philosophers]. For since there is no order whatsoever, with respect to either position (*wadʿ*) or nature (*ṭabʿ*), among [human souls], the aforementioned demonstration [from correspondence] will not apply to them. For it will not follow from the correspondence between the first [soul] from the first of two sets [of souls] and the first [soul] from the second set [of souls], that the second [soul from the first set] will correspond to the second [soul from the second set], the third [from the first set] will correspond to the third [from the second set], and so forth until the correspondence is set out fully, unless, perhaps, if the mind considers each individual [soul] from the first set and treats it as corresponding to an individual [soul] from the second set. The mind, however, is incapable of perceiving infinite things, individually, whether concurrently or within a finite period of time, for the [method of] correspondence to become possible, and for [al-Ghazālī's] *reductio ad absurdum* to work. Rather, [the method of] correspondence becomes inapplicable as soon as it ceases to take its cue from both the imagination and reason.

[8. The Argument from the Knowledge that Higher Beings
Have of Temporal Events]

It may be said:

Although successive temporal events do not coexist extra-mentally, they do, according to [the philosophers], coexist in the “shadow” (*zillī*) mode of existence, since they coexist in the knowledge of the higher beings. This suffices us in establishing the annulment [of the argument from correspondence] *vis-à-vis* their principles. Let it not be argued, “Perhaps [the philosophers] affirm these items of knowledge in a sense other than that of mental existence; or perhaps they do not maintain that those items of knowledge are ordered, given that they are not subject to time”. For we would

²³ This response is mentioned briefly by al-Ghazālī (*Tabāfut*, 137; Marmura, M. E. [trans.], *Incoherence*, 81).

say that our objective is not [to show] that the argument for the inconceivability of infinite regress can never be established, but rather to compel [the philosophers] to concede that it cannot be established [soundly and coherently] *vis-à-vis* their principles. It will then follow that the existence of the First Principle cannot be established [soundly and coherently] within their system. We are able to accomplish this objective; for since they assert that the intellects and souls possess knowledge [of things] by virtue of the presence in them of the forms of things – indeed, for Abū ‘Alī [ibn Sīnā], even the knowledge of the First Principle is thus – successive temporal events, which occur in the extra-mental existence, will coexist in their knowledge in a shadow mode of existence. As to the lack of order among those items of knowledge given that they are not subject to time, this is an insignificant point [for two reasons].

The first reason is that the order among those temporal events is not merely the order of their chronological occurrence. Rather, there is, according to [the philosophers], a natural order among them,²⁴ since some [temporal events] depend [for their existence] on others, as they affirm in their basic principles. Let it not be said, “The natural order among temporal events is only present in their concrete mode of existence, to the exclusion of the shadow mode [of existence]”. For, we would say: The higher principles, according to [the philosophers], know things on account of their knowledge of the causes [of things]. Hence, since every temporal event is part of the cause of another temporal event,²⁵ knowledge of every temporal event is part of the cause of the knowledge of another temporal event. It follows that²⁶ order will be present in the shadow mode of existence too.

The second reason is that those items of knowledge are not subject to time only with respect to the three [temporal] attributions, namely pastness, presentness and futurity, in the sense that the knowledge that [higher beings have] of temporal events is not [knowledge] of the occurrence of some of them in the present²⁷ and of others in the future. For there is no past, present or future for [higher beings]. Rather, they know [temporal events] as occurring at the time of their occurrence; and this is sufficient for [their knowledge of temporal events to have a] chronological order.

²⁴ M 46^b.

²⁵ L 49.

²⁶ L: + *al-ṭabī‘ī*.

²⁷ L: + *wa-ba‘ḍabā fī l-māḍī*.

Therefore, the argument from correspondence will be applicable to this [case], as dictated by [the philosophers'] basic principles. [The argument from correspondence] will, hence, be annulled by [its applicability to this case].

[9. A Defence of the Argument from
the Infinite Number of Human Souls]

As to human souls, some have claimed that they are ordered among themselves, with respect to both position and nature.²⁸ Hence, they, too, will be subject to the argument from correspondence, which will consequently be annulled by this. The positional [order among human souls] follows from the order of the moments of time in which they come into being, while the natural [order among human souls] follows from [the fact that the existence of] a child's soul [presupposes the existence] of his body, which [in turn] presupposes the soul of the parent, which generates the matter of the child's body.

[10. Khojazâda's Response]

[The notion that the argument from correspondence] can be applied [to the problem of the infinite number of human souls], on account of [their] positional order, can be ruled out because not all individual [souls] are ordered [in this way]. For a group of [souls] may come into being simultaneously at a given point in time, and another group, which may be smaller or larger, at a different point in time, whereas [a series of] individual [souls] may come into being at successive moments. Hence, it is not possible to conceive of all [souls] as being ordered in succession simply on account of the successive order of the points in time [in which they come into being]. Some [souls] may indeed be ordered in chronological succession, such as the souls of Zayd and his forefathers *ad infinitum*. However, with respect to their being related to the moments of their coming into being they do not coexist, since it is inconceivable for those moments to coexist, and without them they cannot be ordered [chronologically].

[The notion that the argument from correspondence can be applied to the problem of the infinite number of human souls], on account of [their] natural

²⁸ Cf. al-Ghazâlî, *Tabâfut*, 137-138; Marmura, M. E. (trans.), *Incoherence*, 81-82.

order, [is ruled out] because the soul of the parent acts as a cause for specific motions that [in turn] are preparatory causes for the actualisation of the matter of the child's body], which plays a role in the coming into being of the child's soul. There will, thus, be a sequentially-ordered series consisting of the parent's soul, those motions, the [child's] body and the child's soul. Yet, as some of the units that comprise this series then cease to exist, namely the specific motions and the [child's] body, there can be no correspondence among the units [of such series], because of the inconceivability of correspondence between existents and non-existents, or between non-existents among each other. As to the remaining, [existent] units,²⁹ there will be no order among them. For they are connected only through the intermediation of those preparatory things;³⁰ hence, if [the latter] cease to exist, there will be no connection or dependence left [between the remaining units], and each will exist separately and independently of others. Therefore, none will correspond to another, because of the lack of order among them,³¹ unless the mind considers each individually and treats it as corresponding to another. However, you already know that the mind is incapable of that.

[11. The Philosophers' Argument against the Infinite Regress of Causes
from the Contingency of a Causal Series]

If it is then said:

“The philosophers have, in addition to the demonstration from correspondence, a different demonstration, which proves conclusively the inconceivability of the infinite regress of causes, with which the proof of the existence of the First Principle for beings will become complete. This [goes as follows]. If every contingent being depends [for its existence] on another contingent being *ad infinitum*, then, if you consider this whole [causal] series, without including therein anything extraneous to it or excluding anything belonging to it, there will be no doubt that [the series] will itself be contingent, because it will depend on its components, which are other than it. Therefore, because it is contingent, [the series] must have a cause. That cause, then, cannot be [the series] itself, since the thing cannot act as its own cause; for otherwise it

²⁹ M 47^a.

³⁰ Reading *al-mu'iddāt* (M), rather than *al-ma'dūmāt* (L).

³¹ M: + *li-'adam al-tarattub baynabā*.

would precede itself, which is patently absurd. Nor can it be a component [of the series itself], because what causes the existence of the whole will be the cause of existence for each of its components; however, this would entail that that component be a cause for itself, which is absurd, as³² we have just explained. It follows that [the cause] must be extraneous to [the series].

“That extraneous cause, then, will undoubtedly cause the existence of one component in that series. For had each of its components been caused by something other than [the extraneous cause], then the whole, too, would have been caused by something other than [that extraneous cause], since there is nothing in the whole other than its parts.³³ The extraneous cause, in this case, would not be a cause for the whole. Yet we have posited the contrary to this.

“Now, if the extraneous cause causes the existence of each component in the series, then it must act, for one individual [component] among them, either as a complete or an incomplete cause.³⁴ It is inconceivable that the individual [component] caused by that extraneous cause be either the final [effect] or an intermediate effect. Otherwise, if we suppose the completeness [of the extraneous cause], the same effect would be produced by two complete causes;³⁵ or if we suppose the incompleteness [of the extraneous cause], a complete cause would be complemented [by an auxiliary thing], as we have already posited that each individual component of the components of which

³² Reading *ka-mā* (M), rather than *li-mā* (L).

³³ In other words, for the extraneous cause to cause the existence of the whole series, it must directly produce one of its components. If none of the components are produced by this extraneous cause, then it cannot act as the cause of the whole; for the whole has no reality other than its parts.

³⁴ On the complete cause (*‘illa mustaqillā*), see, for instance, al-Tahānawī, Muḥammad A‘lā ibn ‘Alī, *Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn* (ed. ‘Alī Daḥrūj *et al.*), Maktabat Lubnān, Beirut 1996, II, 1209.

³⁵ Since each unit in this series is caused by another cause in the series, then if the extraneous cause is supposed to cause an intermediate effect (“intermediate” in the sense of both being caused by another unit in the series and acting as a cause for another unit) or a final effect in the series (“final” in the sense that it is caused by another unit in the series, but does not cause a further unit), the effect will be caused, at once, by both another unit in the series and the extraneous cause. The same effect, however, cannot be the product of two complete causes.

the series is comprised acts as a complete cause for another [component].³⁶ It follows that [the individual component caused by that extraneous cause] must be the final³⁷ individual component of³⁸ the series, at which the series will terminate.”

[12. Khojazāda's Response]

[To this,] we say:

We can select the option that the cause of the series is one of its components. If, by his contention,³⁹ “What causes the existence of the whole will be the cause of existence for each of its components”, [the philosopher] intends that that which causes the existence of the whole must itself cause [directly] the existence of each of its individual components, then this cannot be conceded. If, however, he intends that that which causes the existence of the whole is the cause, either itself or [indirectly] through the components of [the whole], of each of its individual components, then this will be granted. Yet this does not [force us to concede] a consequence that we would not want to concede. For it will then be conceivable that that which precedes the effect that occurs at the end of the infinite [series] is the cause of the series.⁴⁰ Though [this cause], due to its contingency, will [in turn] require⁴¹ a further cause, [the latter] cause will nonetheless be a component [of the series], specifically that [component] which precedes the second effect, and so forth *ad infinitum*.

As to what is said [by, or on behalf of, the philosophers]:

“What is intended by ‘cause’ in the [above] exposition of the proof is the complete agent (*al-fā'il al-mustaqill*), in the sense that absolutely every component in the series is caused either [directly] by it or [indirectly] by an

³⁶ In this case, the extraneous cause would act as an auxiliary for the complete cause, which is a unit within the series. A complete cause, however, would not be complete if it required an auxiliary.

³⁷ Reading *akbār^{am}* (M), rather than *ākbar* (L). This final individual unit of the series seems to be the first cause in the series, which must be uncaused, as the possibility that it be the final effect has just been excluded.

³⁸ L 50.

³⁹ L; + *li-anna*.

⁴⁰ Reading *li l-silsila* (M), rather than *li l-tasalsul* (L).

⁴¹ M 47^b.

effect thereof. By contrast, ‘that which precedes the final effect *ad infinitum*’ is obviously not a complete agent in this sense.”

The response to this is [as follows]:

What is known to us is that every contingent being that is composed of multiple contingent beings must have been produced by a complete agent. However, “completeness”, in the sense that absolutely every component of that composite thing is caused either [directly] by [that complete cause] or [indirectly] by an effect thereof, is only necessarily true of what is composed of a finite number of individual [components] that produce one another. As to what is composed of an infinite number of individual [components] that produce one another, as we have posited in the case of the series we are presently discussing, we do not concede that it will, by necessity, have a complete agent in this sense. Why would it not be sufficient for [what is composed of an infinite number of units] to have a complete agent in the sense that what is composite does not require an extraneous agent?⁴² Indeed, what we have already mentioned implies this sense of “completeness” here.

If you say:

“Whichever component of the series is posited as the cause [of the series], the cause [of that component] will have precedence over it to be the cause [of the series], since the effect of [the former] component is to produce all that its antecedents, while the effect of its cause is to produce both it and all its antecedents. Therefore, if the cause of the series is a component thereof, the balance will be tipped in favour of the less likely possibility without a factor that makes it preponderant (*lazima tarajjuh al-marjuh bi-lā murajjih*).”

[To this,] we say:

The initial and essential producer of the series is that which precedes the final effect, since it will produce the final effect and the series will terminate. As to its cause, it produces it by virtue of its essence, and through it produces the series.⁴³ Therefore, it will be individually identified as the cause of the series.⁴⁴

⁴² This seems to suggest that the complete cause is not extraneous to the series, but a part thereof.

⁴³ What Khojazāda is saying here is not entirely clear. If the expression “initial” (*auwal*) is not understood in an absolute sense, this will not be an admission that the series must be

[13. Al-Ghazālī's Response to the Second Argument
against the Infinite Regress of Causes]

The Imām al-Ghazālī, may God's mercy be upon him, says in his dismissal of the second proof for the inconceivability of the infinite regress of causes:⁴⁵

"The expressions 'the contingent' and 'the necessary' are ambiguous expressions, unless by 'necessary' is intended 'that whose existence has no cause', and by 'contingent' 'that whose existence has a cause'. If this is what is intended, then let us turn again to these expressions. We will say: Each one of [the components] is contingent in the sense that it has a cause additional to itself, while the whole is not contingent [but necessary] in the sense that it does not have a cause additional to itself, extraneous to it.⁴⁶ If, however, by the expression 'contingent' is intended other than what we intended, this would be incomprehensible.

"If it is then said, 'This leads to [the consequence] that the necessary existent would have its subsistence through contingent things, which is inconceivable', we say: If by 'necessary' you intend what we have mentioned, then this is the very thing we are after. We do not concede that it is contingent. This is similar to one's saying, 'It is inconceivable for the pre-eternal to have its subsistence in temporal events', when time, according to them, is pre-eternal and the individual rotations [of the celestial spheres] are temporal: [so, individual rotations] have beginnings, whereas [their] totality has no beginning.⁴⁷ Hence, that which has no beginning has been rendered subsistent⁴⁸ by things that have beginnings, and 'having beginning' becomes true of

caused by an uncaused cause. The text indeed suggests that that unit within the series, which by virtue of its essence produces all that issues from it, is itself caused by a further cause that produces it, and through it the rest of the series, by virtue of its essence. The series of causes will thus continue *ad infinitum*.

⁴⁴ M: + *bādbāʿ* L: + *min ghayr maḥdūr bādbāʿ*.

⁴⁵ Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Tabāfut*, 138-140. Much use has been made here of Marmura's translation (*Incoherence*, 82-83).

⁴⁶ Marmura (*Incoherence*, 236, n. 4) explains this as follows: "The whole series of infinite causes would be necessary (not possible in this sense), but each individual component of the series would remain possible, requiring an individual cause."

⁴⁷ Reading *lā awwala lab* (M), rather than *al-awwal* (L).

⁴⁸ M 48^a.

individual units, but not true of the whole. Similarly, it is said about each individual unit that it has a cause, but it will not be said about the totality that it has a cause. Not all that is true of the individual units is necessarily true of the totality. For it would be true of each individual unit that it is one, that it is a part, and that it is a component, but none of this would be true of the totality. Every place on earth that we specify will be lit by the sun during the day and becomes dark during the night, and each [of these two events] comes into temporal existence after not being; in other words, it has a beginning. However, the totality, according to [the philosophers], has no beginning. Therefore, it has become evident that whoever allows the conceivability of temporal events that have no beginning – namely the forms of the elements and all things that undergo change – will be unable to deny that causes could be infinite. From this it follows that [the philosophers], for this difficulty, have no way to accomplish [their goal of] affirming the First Principle. The distinction [they make between the two cases] hence reduces to sheer arbitrariness.”

[14. Khojazâda’s Response]

This is [al-Ghazâlî’s discussion] verbatim. [To this,] I say:

This is all insubstantial!⁴⁹ For what is intended by “the contingent” is what has a cause other than itself,⁵⁰ and by ‘the necessary’ what does not have a cause, whether or not it be extraneous to it.⁵¹ Hence, the whole will be contingent because of its need for a cause, namely its components; and it is inconceivable for the necessary being to have its subsistence through what is contingent in this sense. Making an analogy between this case and that of the subsistence of the pre-eternal in temporal things may be apt. However, [his] ascription of [the view] that the analogue is conceivable to the philosophers is most appalling!

His saying, “Since the individual rotations [of the celestial spheres] are temporal and have beginnings, whereas [their] totality, according to [the philosophers], has no beginning, that which has no beginning has been rendered subsistent by things that have beginnings”, is of no consequence. For

⁴⁹ Reading *ḥashf*(M), rather than *ḥashw* (L).

⁵⁰ L 51.

⁵¹ Reading *kāna kbārija ‘anbu aw lā* (M), rather than *kānat dākbila aw kbārija* (L).

no one claims that the totality of the rotations is subsistent.⁵² How could any sensible person allow himself to assert that the totality, a component of which occurred today, is pre-eternal and has no beginning! For since the realisation of the whole requires the realisation of all of its components, the whole, prior to the realisation of some of its parts, will not be realised to start with. [This point would be even more compelling] in the case of a pre-eternal [series].

Indeed, what does actually appear in [the philosophers'] discussions is that the species of motion is pre-eternal, and that individual [instances of motion] are temporal, in the sense that each rotation is preceded by another rotation⁵³ *ad infinitum*, and that their species is sustained by the infinite succession of individual [instantiations]. How different this is from [the view that] the totality is pre-eternal, though some of its components are temporal! Although that which is true of each component is not necessarily true of the whole, this does not entail that what is true of each individual [unit] is not true of the whole. For some characteristics are shared by both the whole and the part. Pre-eternity is [a characteristic] that when affirmed as true of the whole must be affirmed as true of each part [thereof]. Temporality is [a characteristic] that when affirmed as true of the part must be affirmed as true of the whole. This is known immediately and cannot be disputed.

⁵² Reading *qā'im^{am}* (M), rather than *qadīm^{am}* (L).

⁵³ M: + *dawra*.

Abstract

This paper offers an introduction to, and a translation of, the Sixth Discussion in Khojazâda's *Tabâfut al-Falâsifa*, entitled "On Showing the Philosophers' Inability to Prove the Existence of the Maker for the World". It shows that although Khojazâda dismisses all the objections put forth by al-Ghazâlî against the argument from contingency for the existence of the First Principle, particularly against the premise that the infinite regress of causes is inconceivable, he nonetheless takes his predecessor's broader objectives and dialectical agenda fully on board. This gives the impression that the discussion is essentially a critical update of the corresponding Fourth Discussion in al-Ghazâlî's *Tabâfut*. Whether or not the same is true of Khojazâda's book as a whole is still to be seen.

Özet

Gazâlî'nin Felsefecilerin Allah'ın Varlığı Konusundaki Delillerine Eleştirisi Üzerine Hocazâde'nin Görüşleri

Bu çalışma, Hocazâde'nin *Tebâfütü'l-Felâsife*'sindeki "Felsefecilerin Âlemin Bir Yaratıcısı Olduğunu İspattaki Yetersizlikleri" isimli Altıncı Bölüm'e bir giriş ve çeviri sunacaktır. Gazâlî'nin Mebde-i Evvel'in varlığına yönelik imkân delilinin, özellikle de sonsuz illetlerin imkânsız olduğuna dair ilkenin karşısına koyduğu tüm itirazları reddetmesine rağmen Hocazâde, Gazâlî'nin genel itirazlarına katılır ve diyalektik tarzına uyar. Bu bize Hocazâde'deki tartışmanın, Gazâlî'nin *Tebâfüt*'ündeki ilgili Dördüncü Bölüm'ün eleştirel bir yeniden yazımı olduğu izlenimini vermektedir. Bütünüyle Hocazâde'nin kitabı hakkında aynı şeyin geçerli olup olmadığı ise ileride görülecektir.