

IBN SĪNĀ—AL-BĪRŪNĪ CORRESPONDENCE—VIII

Translated by Rafik Berjak and Muzaḥfar Iqbal

This provisional translation of the correspondence between Ibn Sīnā and al-Bīrūnī (*al-Asʿilah waʿl-ajwibah*) contains the complete text of the response of Abū Saʿīd al-Maʿšūmī to the objections of al-Bīrūnī regarding the set of eight questions posed by him to Ibn Sīnā. Al-Bīrūnī had not been satisfied with Ibn Sīnā's initial response and had replied in short, categorical statements showing his dissatisfaction. In this eighth and final installment, Ibn Sīnā's student and friend, al-Maʿšūmī, responds to these objections in turn in terse language, indicating his exasperation with al-Bīrūnī.

Keywords: Ibn Sīnā–al-Bīrūnī correspondence; Peripatetic natural philosophy; history of physics; criticism of Aristotelian physics; Islamic scientific tradition; natural elements; schools of thought in Islamic scientific tradition.

ON THE OTHER EIGHT QUESTIONS

On the First Question:

Your objection to the question of reflection of light is based on your lack of its observance in the flask. [Ibn Sīnā], however, had trusted that you would observe it in the flask, which is why he mentioned that a stronger reflection is to be found in [the case of] water and the flask together, as reflection occurs by them both and not within them. Furthermore, you see how the focused ray burns by the smooth surface of the water and the solidity of the glass. Had the flask been [filled]

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