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CONCEPT OF METAPHYSICAL REALITIES IN ISLAMIC AND NON-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract
Metaphysics has stood as the primary framework of philosophical inquiry since antiquity, serving as the definitive arena for investigating the nature of existence, causality, ultimate reality, and the divine. This comparative analytical study explores the structural, methodological, and ontological formulations of metaphysical thought across two distinct intellectual paradigms: Islamic philosophy (and theology) and non-Islamic Western philosophical traditions. Drawing directly upon foundational primary textual references, classical source works, and historical commentaries, this paper systematically evaluates the contributions of classical and modern thinkers. The inquiry begins with an examination of early Islamic thinkers, including Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Rushd, Al-Razi, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, alongside modern reformist scholars such as Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Abul Kalam Azad, and Maulana Wahiduddin Khan. Simultaneously, it contrasts these perspectives with the evolutionary trajectory of non-Islamic metaphysics, traversing Classical Greek philosophy (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Philo, Plotinus), Medieval and Early Modern European thought (St. Augustine, Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, René Descartes, Baruch Spinoza, John Locke, George Berkeley, David Hume, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Immanuel Kant, G.W.F. Hegel), and 19th-to-20th-century secular materialist or positivist critiques (Karl Marx, Auguste Comte, Bertrand Russell). By meticulously examining their respective treatments of necessary versus contingent existence, prime movers, divine attributes, spiritual transmigration, and empirical rejection, this article illuminates how Islamic metaphysics maintains a harmonized synthesis of rationalism, intuition, and divine revelation, whereas non-Islamic traditions incrementally bifurcated into transcendental idealism or absolute empirical materialism.

Keywords: Metaphysics, Ontology, Necessary Existence, Islamic Philosophy, Western Philosophy, Epistemology, Cosmology, APA 7th Edition.

1. INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The pursuit of understanding ultimate reality—that which transcends the immediately observable physical phenomenon—constitutes the foundational core of speculative philosophy. Termed Falsafa-i-Ula (First Philosophy) or Ma-ba'd al-Tabi'at (Metaphysics) in the Islamic tradition, and metaphysics within the Western canon, this discipline

confronts fundamental questions regarding the nature of Being (Wujud), the existence and attributes of the Supreme Intellect or Divine Creator, the mechanics of cosmic origin, and the ontological status of the human soul.

Within the history of ideas, metaphysical discourse has not developed in isolation. Rather, it represents a dynamic intellectual continuum marked by translation, synthesis, critique, and divergence. A critical historiographical observation made by the medieval Muslim historian Al-Shahrastani provides essential context for evaluating early Islamic philosophical developments. Shahrastani records a comprehensive directory of early Muslim scholars and translators—including Abu Bishr Matta, Yaqub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi, Hunayn ibn Ishaq, Yahya al-Nahwi, Abu al-Faraj the commentator, Abu Sulayman al-Sijistani, Abu Sulayman Muhammad ibn Ma'shar al-Maqdisi, Abu Bakr Thabit ibn Qurra al-Harrani, Abu Tammam Yusuf ibn Muhammad al-Naysaburi, Abu Zayd Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Balkhi, Abu Muharib al-Hasan ibn Sahl al-Qummi, Ahmad ibn al-Tayyib al-Sarakhsi, Talha ibn Muhammad al-Nasafi, Abu Hamid al-Isfizari, Isa ibn Ali the Vizier, Ibn Miskawayh, Yahya ibn Adi al-Saymari, Abu al-Hasan al-Amiri, and Abu Nasr Al-Farabi [1].

In synthesizing the overarching methodological orientation of these scholars, Al-Shahrastani highlights their foundational leadership and philosophical alignment:

"And indeed, the leader and figurehead of this group is Abu Ali al-Husayn ibn Abd Allah ibn Sina. All of them followed the path of Aristotle in everything he held and stood unique in, except for a few isolated words wherein they perhaps adopted the opinion of Plato and the earlier predecessors." [1]

Al-Shahrastani's commentary underscores a vital methodological reality: while early Islamic philosophers heavily integrated Aristotelian logic and Neoplatonic cosmological structures, they did so within an overarching monotheistic imperative. Their non-Islamic predecessors and successors, operating outside the framework of prophetic revelation, derived metaphysical models based either on purely deductive rationalism, radical skepticism, or physical empiricism. This study offers a comprehensive comparative investigation of these two divergent intellectual trajectories.

2. METAPHYSICAL FORMULATIONS IN ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL THOUGHT

Islamic metaphysical thought is characteristically unified by a shared affirmation of Tawhid (the absolute oneness of God) and the necessary existence of a First Cause. However, Islamic thinkers differed significantly regarding the precise analytical mechanisms used to establish divine reality, the relationship between divine essence and attributes, and the temporal versus eternal nature of the cosmos.

2.1 Yaqub ibn Ishaq Al-Kindi (801–873 CE)

As the pioneer of formal philosophy in the Islamic world, Al-Kindi established the structural taxonomy of philosophical inquiry that guided subsequent generations. In defining the scope of human knowledge, Al-Kindi categorized philosophy into distinct physical and supra-physical domains:

Al-Kindi included physics and metaphysics within the higher branches of philosophy, which he generally termed 'First Philosophy' (Falsafa al-Ula). He defined the former (physics) as the study of sensible, material, and moving things, and the second (metaphysics) as the study of immovable and immaterial entities [2].

Through this structural classification, Al-Kindi established that metaphysics is strictly concerned with static, non-material, and spiritual realities. For Al-Kindi, the physical realm of change and movement necessarily points toward an uncaused, immaterial Originator who operates beyond the constraints of physical time and spatial extension.

2.2 Abu Nasr Al-Farabi (872–950 CE)

Al-Farabi advanced Islamic metaphysics by formulating the famous ontological distinction between Contingent Being (Mumkin al-Wujud) and Necessary Being (Wajib al-Wujud). He structured his proof for the existence of God around this dichotomy:

According to Al-Farabi's view, every existing entity is either necessary or contingent; there is no third category between the two. Since every contingent thing inherently requires a cause for its existence, and an infinite regress of causes is impossible, it is logically imperative to believe in the existence of a Being that exists by virtue of its own essence without any external cause, and is adorned with all supreme attributes. Adorned with eternal reality, it is self-sufficient for all things without undergoing any change or transformation. In terms of its attributes, it is absolute intellect, pure goodness, and complete thought, harboring inclination toward goodness and beauty [3].

Al-Farabi's metaphysical system utilizes the contingent nature of the physical universe as an unassailable logical proof for the Necessary Being (Wajib al-Wujud), establishing God as the transcendent, immutable source of all actualized reality.

2.3 Ibn Sina (Avicenna, 980–1037 CE)

Widely recognized as one of the towering intellectual figures of Islamic scholasticism, Ibn Sina refined Peripatetic metaphysics into a sophisticated ontological system. He classified all existents into three rigorous metaphysical categories:

(Ibn Sina) categorized existing entities into three types: First, that which is purely contingent (Mumkin بذاته), encompassing all objects that come into being and perish. The second category includes entities that are contingent in their own essence, but possess necessity due to an external cause. In other words, every existent that possesses the capacity for decay and permanence (such as celestial spheres) and the intellects which are contingent in their essence and cannot exist without the First Cause—all these fall into the second category. The third category is restricted to that supreme Being which is Necessary in its own Essence (Wajib al-Wujud bi-Dhatihi), which we refer to as Allah. Ibn Sina accepted the absolute unity of existence, oneness, and spirit only within this Supreme Being, whereas in the other categories, unity and existence are accidental attributes that supervene upon the essence of things [4].

Regarding divine omniscience and the mechanics of divine knowledge, Ibn Sina's metaphysical stance maintained a nuanced distinction:

Like other philosophers, Ibn Sina advocates God Almighty's universal knowledge encompassing general existents rather than particularized entities, nor over events that occur accidentally; he attributes knowledge of particulars to the souls of the celestial spheres, and through the mediation of these celestial souls, God Almighty's knowledge relates to terrestrial existents [5].

Thus, Ibn Sina's metaphysics operates through a tripartite taxonomy of existence, moving from pure contingency to external necessity, and ultimately anchoring all reality in the uncaused, self-subsistent Wajib al-Wujud.

2.4 Abu Hamid Al-Ghazali (1058–1111 CE)

In stark contrast to the abstract rationalism of the Falasifa, Al-Ghazali mounted a devastating critique of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic metaphysics, while reaffirming core Islamic theology. The renowned scholar Shibli Nomani notes Al-Ghazali's pragmatic approach to proving divine reality:

"The Imam did not establish any novel argument regarding the effects of God. In his view, this issue is extremely clear and straightforward. The argument traditionally utilized by the theologians (Mutakallimun)—that the universe is temporal/created (Hadith), and a created entity cannot originate spontaneously, hence requiring an originator who is God—Imam Ghazali considers entirely sufficient." [6]

Regarding divine anthropomorphism and the interpretation of sacred texts, Nomani further elucidates Al-Ghazali's theological resolution:

"The Imam resolved this dilemma by demonstrating that although such words exist in the Quran and Hadith, they are not grouped together but scattered in isolated places. Since the Lawgiver (Shari') had deeply impressed the principle of absolute transcendence (Tanzih) upon hearts through constant repetition, words carrying physical resemblance (Tashbih) could not give rise to ideas of literal physical anthropomorphic resemblance." [7]

For Al-Ghazali, metaphysical truth does not depend on complex Aristotelian emanations. Rather, it relies on the straightforward logical requirement of a Creator for a temporal universe, combined with absolute divine transcendence (Tanzih).

2.5 Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126–1198 CE)

Revered as the supreme commentator on Aristotle, Ibn Rushd sought to purge Islamic philosophy of Neoplatonic accretions and restore original Aristotelian metaphysics. The historian De Boer highlights Ibn Rushd's assertion of the eternal nature of the cosmos:

Ibn Rushd explicitly declares the world to be an eternal act of creation. The world, as a totality, is eternal, necessary, and unified, leaving no room for absolute non-existence, potency, or arbitrary change. Matter and form can only be separated in thought. Forms do not wander in dark matter like ghosts, but are present within it like a kernel. The effect of material forms is like the powers of nature that manifest unto eternity. They are never separated from matter, yet they must be termed divine. Creation and destruction do not occur in the world out of nothingness, for temporal generation named transition from potency to act, and return from act to potency. In this process, every entity perpetually generates a form identical to itself [8].

Concerning the metaphysical status of the Divine, Ibn Rushd aligns closely with Aristotelian motor theology:

"The Prime Mover or God, along with the essence of the intellects of the celestial spheres, represents to Ibn Rushd an idea in which he finds the unity of existence. The sole affirmative definition of the Unique Essence is: 'An idea that is its own subject.' This very idea is simultaneously unity and existence. In other words, existence and unity are not accidents attached to essence, but like all universals, their existence resides purely within intellect." [9]

Ibn Rushd thus conceives God primarily as the Prime Mover (Al-Muharrik al-Awwal), maintaining that matter is eternal in potentiality and continuously actualized through divine activity.

2.6 Abu Bakr Al-Razi (864–925 CE)

A bold and non-conformist thinker, Abu Bakr Al-Razi formulated an atypical metaphysical system characterized by five eternal principles, diverging significantly from mainstream Islamic orthodoxy:

According to Al-Razi, in the beginning, there existed nothing except five eternal principles: the Creator, the Soul, Matter, Space, and Time. Among these principles, a strange desire arose within the Soul to attach itself to another principle—namely, Matter—and from this conjunction to generate forms capable of experiencing physical pleasures. However, Matter resisted this union. At this juncture, the Creator intervened to fashion this material and physical world so that the Soul might enjoy its durable forms. Simultaneously, He created humanity, endowed man with reason from the fountainhead of His divinity, and decreed that the soul within man would one day awaken from its worldly slumber. It would be reminded that its true abode lies in a higher, supreme world. To return to this higher realm, the soul would undergo a series of transmigrations (Tanasukh), becoming purified and refined through the influence of philosophy until it ascends back to that supreme world. When all human souls complete this process and return to their primal state, this physical world will dissolve, and matter—which the Creator had forcibly bound to body and form—will revert to its pure, formless, original state [10].

Al-Razi's metaphysical model presents physical existence as a temporary, corrective stage designed for spiritual purification, culminating in the ultimate liberation of the soul and the dissolution of physical form.

2.7 Ibn Taymiyyah (1263–1328 CE)

Ibn Taymiyyah mounted a powerful theological defense of early Islamic orthodoxy (Salafism), criticizing both the Falasifa and the Mu'tazila for reducing God to an abstract, static concept. Hanif Nadvi summarizes Ibn Taymiyyah's rejection of negative theology (Ta'til):

According to Ibn Taymiyyah, divine attributes—such as God being All-Hearing (Sami'), All-Seeing (Basir), All-Powerful (Qadir), and All-Wise (Hakim)—are realities in which affirmation (Ithbat) and actualization constitute the foundational truth, whereas negation or divestment (Ta'til) is fundamentally false. The scholar's argument in this regard is clear, lucid, and eminently accessible. He asserts that the collective consciousness and experience of all Prophets bear witness that they consistently presented the attributes of God Almighty in affirmative terms, emphasizing their positivity, and treating actualization and attribution as the very root and soul of faith... God's conception is fully realized through the affirmation of attributes, not through negation, abstraction, or divestment [11].

Ibn Taymiyyah insists upon a dynamic, active God possessing real affirmative attributes as revealed in scripture, rejecting the static, stripped-down deity of abstract metaphysical rationalism.

2.8 Shah Waliullah Dehlawi (1703–1762 CE)

Shah Waliullah Dehlawi, one of the most prominent revivalist scholars of modern South Asia, presented a highly structured, integrative metaphysical framework in his monumental work Hujjat Allah al-Baligha. He divided God's creative relationship with the cosmos into three distinct operational modalities:

"Know that God Almighty possesses three sequential attributes with respect to the origination of the world:

First: Al-Ibda' (Invention), which is the origination of a thing not from a pre-existing thing, such that the entity emerges from the hidden realm of non-existence without material substance...

Second: Al-Khalq (Creation), which is the creation of a thing from an existing substance, just as Adam was created from dust and the Jinn from a smokeless flame of fire... Reason and revelation both demonstrate that God Almighty created the world in diverse species and genera, assigning distinct inherent properties (Khawass) to each...

Third: Tadbir (Governance/Management of the Realm of Generation), the essence of which is directing the events occurring in the generated world to conform with the order approved by His wisdom, leading to the beneficial outcome demanded by His grace..." [12]

Shah Waliullah's metaphysics provides a comprehensive continuum: starting from absolute creation out of nothing (Ibda'), moving to empirical shaping of matter (Khalq), and culminating in continuous divine providence and cosmic ordering (Tadbir).

2.9 Modern Islamic Revaluations: Iqbal, Azad, and Wahiduddin Khan

In the modern era, Islamic scholars re-evaluated metaphysical claims in light of emerging empirical sciences and Western philosophical developments.

Allama Muhammad Iqbal (1877–1938):

Iqbal critiqued classical Newtonian physics for reducing universe to a dead material mechanism operating in absolute space. In The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam, Iqbal observes:

Indeed, the scientific stance that the natural world is nothing more than a physical entity is tied to Newton's theory that space is an absolute void in which all objects reside. Although science advanced rapidly through this approach, when percepts and concepts became split into two isolated, contradictory worlds of mind and matter, science was eventually forced by the resulting difficulties to turn its attention to problems it had initially dismissed as

unnecessary... Criticism of the foundations of mathematics has proved that the pure materialist assumption—that matter is a self-subsistent entity located in absolute space—is completely untenable [13].

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (1888–1958):

Azad addressed the perceived conflict between empirical science and religious metaphysics in Ghubar-e-Khatir:

Science deals with the domain of sensible realities; religion provides news of that which lies beyond sensible perception. The two represent a multiplicity of spheres, not a contradiction. Whatever lies beyond sensible perception, we mistakenly assume to be in opposition to sensible perception, and right here begins all the exhaustion of our flawed, crooked vision [14].

Maulana Wahiduddin Khan (1925–2021):

Wahiduddin Khan utilized modern thermodynamic laws—specifically the Second Law of Thermodynamics (Entropy)—to construct a contemporary metaphysical argument against the eternity of matter:

This law, known as the Law of Entropy, proves that the universe could not have existed from eternity. The Law of Entropy demonstrates that heat continuously transfers from a hotter body to a colder body, but this cycle cannot reverse itself spontaneously... Because chemical and physical processes are actively occurring and the vibrancy of life persists, it is conclusively proven that this universe has not existed from eternity; otherwise, due to the mandatory law of heat dissipation, its usable energy would have expired long ago, and not even a faint trace of life would remain [15].

3. METAPHYSICAL TRAJECTORIES IN NON-ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS

Non-Islamic metaphysics presents a vastly different evolutionary arch. Beginning with Greek speculative cosmology, it transitioned through medieval scholasticism and early modern dualism, ultimately bifurcating into radical empirical skepticism, absolute idealism, or anti-metaphysical logical positivism.

3.1 Classical Greek and Hellenistic Metaphysics

Socrates (470–399 BCE)

Socratic metaphysics prioritized the transcendent nature of the human soul (Psyche) over material bodies. Socrates viewed the soul as the immortal governing principle of human existence:

The soul, in its totality, holds all non-soul entities under its protection and traverses the entire cosmos in various forms. If it is complete and properly feathered, it ascends to the upper celestial realm and adorns the entire universe; whereas an incomplete soul, shedding its wings and descending downward in its flight, eventually comes to rest on solid earth, acquiring a terrestrial body that appears to move on its own, but is in reality moved by an external force. This composite of soul and body is termed a living, mortal entity [16].

Plato (428–348 BCE)

As the founder of Objective Idealism, Plato located ultimate metaphysical reality not in the physical world, but in the transcendent domain of immutable "Forms" or "Ideas":

Plato was the founder of Objective Idealism... To explain Being, Plato formulated the theory of immaterial Forms or Ideas. He designated these forms as 'Ideas' (A'yan) and equated them with true existence. Essentially, he sought to uncover the material reality of things based on shadows. According to him, the sensible world—a product of forms and matter—occupies an intermediate status. Forms are eternal and reside beyond the heavens; they are neither born nor destroyed, and do not depend on time and space. Perceptible objects are temporal, relative, and dependent on time and space [17].

Aristotle (384–322 BCE)

Aristotle grounded Plato's transcendent forms into material objects through hylomorphism (matter and form), positing God as the Unmoved Prime Mover:

Aristotle views all nature as transformations from 'matter' to 'form' and back from 'form' to 'matter'. However, he perceived matter merely as a passive principle and linked all activity to form. In his view, the absolute source of activity is God—the unmoved eternal mover. Nevertheless, regarding 'Forms', Aristotle's objective idealist stance is in many respects far more reaching, general, and objective than Plato's idealism. He approached very close to materialism [18].

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE–50 CE) and Plotinus (204–270 CE)

Philo fused Platonism with Jewish scripture, treating the physical body as an evil hindrance:

In Philo's philosophy, the foundation rests on distinguishing spiritual life from worldly affairs. Philo viewed the material world and physical body with contempt. Like Plato, the body for him was an 'evil and dead thing'—inherently bad and conspiring against the soul... In his view, ultimate human destiny and absolute bliss resided solely in the 'knowledge of the true and living God' [19].

In Philo's view, man is fundamentally passive, and God alone sows the seeds of higher capacities within the soul. Hence, we humans are instruments of God [20].

Plotinus formulated Neoplatonic emanationism, asserting that God is an unknowable, overflowing source:
According to Plotinus, God is the cause of everything in the universe, but God has reached such a degree of perfection that we cannot say anything about Him with certainty. We can only state what He is not, but cannot state what He is... Plotinus states that God is like a fountain flowing from eternity to eternity. The world needs God, but God is independent of the world [21].

3.2 Early Modern and Enlightenment Metaphysics

Saint Augustine (354–430 CE)

St. Augustine synthesized Christian theology with Neoplatonic metaphysics, asserting creatio ex nihilo (creation out of nothing):
God is eternal. He brought the world into existence out of non-existence (ex nihilo). Prior to creating anything, God predetermined its destiny. Therefore, God knows in advance what His creation will do in the world. According to him, God is the absolute perfection of the concept of goodness within man. He is the Creator of all, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and pure blessing and goodness [22].

Francis Bacon (1561–1626) and Thomas Hobbes (1588–1679)

Francis Bacon revived classical materialist traditions, discarding scholastic metaphysics:
First, he revived the materialist tradition and re-evaluated past philosophies from this perspective. Furthermore, he praised early Greek materialism and highlighted the errors of idealism. Second, he formulated his own materialist concept of nature based on the theory that matter is a combination of particles [23].
Thomas Hobbes rejected immaterial metaphysical concepts entirely, grounding truth in empirical science:
Hobbes prioritized 'science' over less reliable beliefs... It is only science (knowledge of consequences) that provides reliable knowledge of the future and overcomes defects of human opinion [24].

René Descartes (1596–1650)

Descartes introduced radical substance dualism, dividing reality into mind (res cogitans) and matter (res extensa):
Descartes believed in dualism. According to him, substance or reality possesses two types: thinking-being (res cogitans) and extended-being (res extensa), by which Descartes meant mind/soul and matter respectively... "I think, therefore I am" (Cogito, ergo sum). That is, my existence consists of a thinking and reflecting entity, named mind, self, intellect, or soul [25].

Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677) and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716)

Spinoza proposed monistic pantheism, holding that Mind and Matter are merely two infinite attributes of a single substance, which he called "God or Nature" (Deus sive Natura) [26].
Leibniz, conversely, proposed a pluralistic metaphysics of windowless spiritual entities called "Monads":
Leibniz built his philosophy on the concept of substance... he believed in an infinite number of substances which he termed 'Monads'. These monads are spiritual units. Every monad is completely distinct from every other... They are windowless. No two monads can hold a causal relationship with one another. They cannot receive influence from outside [29].

British Empiricism: John Locke (1632–1704), George Berkeley (1685–1753), and David Hume (1711–1776)

John Locke restricted human knowledge strictly to ideas derived from sensory experience, asserting that underlying material substance remains fundamentally unknowable [27].
George Berkeley escalated empiricism to Subjective Idealism (esse est percipi — to be is to be perceived), denying the existence of material substance altogether:
Berkeley eliminated the distinction between primary and secondary qualities... If it is established that we only know our mental ideas, then it is meaningless to claim that color, taste, and sound are mental states, while extension and motion are reflections of external physical objects [27].
David Hume pushed empiricism to radical skepticism, declaring war on metaphysical theology:
Hume believed in matter alone and saw no means to knowledge except sense perception... Consequently, Hume declared war on religion and dedicated the largest portion of his philosophy to combating religion, proving that religion is nothing but superstition and subjective illusion with no reality in external existence [28].

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) and G.W.F. Hegel (1770–1831)

Immanuel Kant revolutionized metaphysics by demonstrating that human reason cannot access "things-in-themselves" (noumena), but only appearances (phenomena):
"As we all know, it was Kant who first raised the question: 'Is metaphysics possible?' He answered this question in the negative; and his argument applies with equal force to the realities in which religion is especially interested. The manifold of sense, according to him, must fulfill certain formal conditions in order to constitute knowledge..." [30]
G.W.F. Hegel countered Kantian limits by constructing an evolutionary metaphysics of Absolute Idealism, where God is synonymous with developing cosmic consciousness:

Hegel's God is part of his theory of evolution. According to him, the world is progressing; therefore, God is also evolving. Along with the evolution of the world, His consciousness is evolving... Hegel states that God is the name of creative intellect expressing itself in the world [31].

3.3 19th and 20th Century Anti-Metaphysical Critiques

Karl Marx (1818–1883)

Karl Marx inverted Hegelian metaphysics, formulating Dialectical Materialism:

All mythology overcomes, dominates, and shapes the forces of nature in and through the imagination; it disappears therefore with the arrival of real mastery over them [32].

"My dialectic method is not only different from the Hegelian, but is its direct opposite. To Hegel, the life-process of the human brain... is the demiurgos of the real world... With me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought." [33]

Auguste Comte (1798–1857)

Comte founded Positivism, asserting that human thought evolves through three historical stages, rendering metaphysics obsolete:

Positivist philosophy asserts that human thought can only perceive sensible phenomena in the world we inhabit, and perceive clear physical relations between those phenomena [34].

Auguste Comte divided human intellectual history into three stages: The first is the Theological Stage, where cosmic events are explained via divine powers; the second is the Metaphysical Stage, where abstract external forces replace personal gods; the third is the Positive Stage, where events are explained purely through empirical observation and natural laws... giving rise to Logical Positivism [35].

Bertrand Russell (1872–1970)

Bertrand Russell rejected both God and immortality as unscientific artifacts of human fear:

God and immortality, the two cardinal doctrines of religion, find no support in science... They are beyond the bounds not only of actual but of possible knowledge, and therefore no duty rests upon anyone to consider them [36].

Metaphysicians have advanced countless arguments to prove that the soul must be immortal... I believe that if we did not fear death, the concept of eternal life would never have been invented [37].

4. CONCLUSION

This comparative analysis demonstrates a fundamental divergence between Islamic and Western metaphysical traditions. Islamic metaphysical thought—whether articulated through the Hellenistic-influenced logic of Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, the traditionalist orthodoxy of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah, or the modern re-evaluations of Iqbal and Wahiduddin Khan—maintains an unyielding commitment to Tawhid (Divine Unity). It views physical nature not as an autonomous, self-sufficient mechanism, but as a contingent sign (Ayah) pointing directly to the Necessary Being (Wajib al-Wujud).

Conversely, non-Islamic Western metaphysics presents a trajectory marked by ideological fracture. Beginning with the transcendent Forms of Plato and the Prime Mover of Aristotle, Western thought incrementally separated reason from divine revelation. This trajectory led from Cartesian dualism and Berkeleyan idealism to Humean skepticism, Kantian agnostic limits, and ultimately the absolute rejection of metaphysics by Marx, Comte, and Russell. Where Western metaphysics frequently collapsed into either anti-metaphysical empiricism or mechanical materialism, Islamic metaphysics preserved a holistic framework—synthesizing empirical observation, rational inquiry, and spiritual revelation into a coherent vision of ultimate reality.

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