Summary of the particular points of heresy and unbelief of which Al-Ghazali accuses the “philosophers” (Aristotelian-Neoplatonists, primarily Al-Farabi and Avicenna) in *Tahafut Al-Falasifa (The Incoherence of the Philosophers)*

General note 1: “Unbelief” seems to be a more serious charge than “heresy.” After each point listed below I shall indicate whether Al-Ghazali considers that point to be one merely of heresy on the part of the philosophers, or one of unbelief.

General note 2: With respect to all these points, Al-Ghazali levels a two-fold attack—first, from the standpoint of religion, that either that a certain proposition of the philosophers or the philosophers’ general system bearing on this proposition constitute either heresy or unbelief with respect to (Sunni) Islam, and second, from the standpoint of logic, that either the philosophers’ proofs are incorrect or that their system is incoherent. Thus his refutations are refutations only in a qualified sense—they are not disproofs of the propositions of the philosophers (some of which Al-Ghazali agrees with, such as the existence of God), but only assertions of unsoundness, invalidity, or incoherence in the philosophers’ system.

General note 3: According to the translator, Michael E. Marmura, while in other works Al-Ghazali adopts a thoroughly occasionalist point of view, in this work he employs occasionalist theories only in so far as to provide counter-examples (possibly true theories, given the premises of an argument) illustrating the invalidity of the philosophers’ arguments, and mixes them with counter-examples that are actually inconsistent with occasionalism.

General note 4: A reminder of the primary theses of Islamic occasionalism: God is the only causal agent, space and time are composed of atoms, and in each time-atom God directly recreates, freely and in accordance with his will, every atom of substance and all its accidents. An aspect of this is that human choice and its effects are both created directly by God. The order of the universe is determined, not by absolute necessity, or by the causal powers of creatures, but by the eternal decree of God.

1. The philosophers’ doctrine of the pre-eternity of the universe. Unbelief.
2. The philosophers’ doctrine of the post-eternity of the universe. Heresy.
3. The philosopher’s doctrine of the emanation of the universe from God. Heresy.
5. The philosophers’ proof that there cannot be two Gods. Heresy.
6. The philosophers’ doctrine denying divine attributes (this concerns whether there is any distinction between God and his attributes, which, as we have read, Al-Farabi, for example, denies). Heresy.
7. The philosophers’ statement that the essence of the First is not divisible into genus and species. Heresy.
8. The philosophers’ statement that the First is a simple existent without quiddity. Heresy.
9. The philosophers’ proof that God is not a body. Heresy.
10. The tendency of the philosophers’ doctrines towards materialism and atheism. Heresy.
11. The philosophers’ inability to maintain that the First knows others. Heresy.
12. The philosophers’ inability to maintain that the First knows himself. Heresy.
13. The philosophers’ statement that the first does not know particulars. Unbelief.
14. The philosophers’ doctrine that the heaven is an animal that moves through volition. Heresy.
15. The philosophers’ mention of the purpose for which the heaven moves. Heresy.
16. The philosophers’ doctrine that the souls of the heavens know all particulars. Heresy.
17. The philosophers’ doctrine that the disruption of the habitual course of nature is impossible. Heresy.
18. The philosophers’ statement that the human soul is a self-subsistent substance that is neither body nor accident. Heresy.
19. The philosophers’ assertion that annihilation is impossible for the human soul. Heresy.
20. The philosophers’ denial of bodily resurrection. Unbelief.