NINE. Islamic Philosophy

The two most eminent philosophers of the Baghdad school are Al-Farabi and Ibn Sina. They espoused for the most part a single philosophy, invented by Al-Farabi, which was a blend of Aristotelianism, Neoplatonism, and Islam.

Al-Farabi was best known in his own time for being the greatest logician of Islam. His logic is in the main derived from that of Aristotle, and his supremacy probably lies mainly in his degree of mastery of Aristotle.

Al-Farabi was known for his uncouth dress and manners.

Ibn Sina (also Avicenna) expounded Al-Farabi's philosophy in voluminous writings. He was also a physician and wrote a treatise on medicine that later became in a Latin translation, the standard textbook on medicine in Europe, holding that status until the seventeenth century. Some of his writings fall into the genre of mysticism or Sufism.

Avicenna was known for his sexually indulgent lifestyle.

The most interesting and also most controversial doctrines of Al-Farabi and Avicenna involve the Aristotelian concept of intellect, and to that we now turn.

The Philosophers, Al-Gazali, and the Agent Intellect

"Physics" -- the title of a book by Aristotle and also according to Aristotle the name of a science or knowledge (Greek "episteme," Latin "scientia"), namely knowledge of nature (from Greek "phusis", nature).

"Metaphysics" -- means "first Philosophy", from the title of Aristotle's book on first philosophy, "Ta Meta Ta Physica", meaning the things that come after (in what sense?) physics. First philosophy is first because it belongs to it to treat of the broadest universal ("being") and also because it belongs to it to treat of the first principles of all knowledge.

Digression on Aristotle's theory of the intellect or mind (Greek "nous", Latin "mens" or "intellectus"):

Main text of Aristotle on this subject: De Anima III, 4-7. In
earlier parts of De Anima (On the Soul) Aristotle discusses the
nature of soul in general, to a slight extent the functions or
faculties of nutrition and reproduction, and to a much greater
extent the faculty of sensation. "Faculty" or "function" = Greek
"dunamis", literally "power".

Aristotle proclaims against Plato that soul is in itself (i. e., by
the nature of its functioning) unmoved. (According to Plato, soul is
that which moves itself.) Soul can be moved accidentally, namely by
being an attribute of something that is moved (body).

Aristotle's definition of soul: the first actuality of a living
body. The first actuality of something is what constitutes it as
what it is—in Descartes' terms, constitutes it in its formal
reality—while second actuality is a thing's characteristic
activity.

Four causes: four types of answer to the question on account of
what something is or happens: matter, form, agent, end or goal.

Matter: Greek, "hule", which originally meant "wood" -- the
material or components from which something comes to be (in a broad
sense)

Form: Greek, "eidos" -- the formula or recipe which makes a certain
thing what it is. (Same as first actuality.)

Agent: the entity which causes the motion whereby something comes
to be or comes to be in a certain state of actuality.

End: the goal or purpose for which the agent acts. The end can be
extrinsic or intrinsic to the thing.
Art (Greek "techne") : broadly, any skill which requires
instruction. Narrowly, in Aristotle, principles for accomplishing
something which constitute a system of knowledge. The artist
differs from the man or experience in that his knowledge is
abstract or well-founded, rather than being based on habit alone.

Analogy between nature and art: for Aristotle, nature and art work
the same way except that in art the agent is rational (a human
being) while in art the agent is a principle internal to the thing
itself which rules the process by which the thing becomes
completed.

Division of the sciences in Aristotle: according to Aristotle, the
sciences are distinguished by their subject, genera, or the genera of things whose attributes the sciences respectively study. Thus the genus of arithmetic is number, geometry, magnitude, physics, nature, metaphysics, being.

There are some principles, called by Aristotle "axioms" (Greek "common notions") which are common to all sciences, such as the principles of logic and of composition in general (Aristotle regards the principle, "when equals are added to equals, the results are equal" as an axiom).

Not all the four causes pertain to all sciences. All four pertain to physics, but only matter and form to mathematics (?)

A causal explanation is one in which the thing is deduced either from its causes (preferably) or its effects, with a series of causes constituting the middle terms of the complex syllogism by which the deduction occurs.

"To live": the second actuality of that which has soul -- its meaning varies according to the kind of thing.

Plant life: constituted by the activities of nutrition and reproduction alone.

Animal life: constituted by the activities of plant life plus the activities of sensation and locomotion (motion in place).

Human life: constituted by the activities of plant and animal life plus the activity of thinking.

Aristotle's Discussion of Thought

Many of the earlier thinkers thought that knowledge is similar to its object.

Aristotle: the form or essence (formula) of the object becomes present in knowing (because in knowing we attain the essence of the object)

Contrast with sensation: in sensation only the form of the sense-quality, which is a motion, becomes present, not the essence of the thing which the sense quality qualifies.

Since the formula is immaterial, the thinking faculty must likewise
be immaterial.

In sensation, the sense organ takes on the form of the sense quality and judges that quality through a mean. The mean is the formal actuality of the sense organ itself. Something similar must happen with thought except that the mean is immaterial. (I'm extrapolating here.)

Mini-faculties (my term) that accompany sensation in some animals (including man): memory and imagination.

A hierarchy of faculties in man (the higher know what is known by the lower, but not vice-versa): $\textit{note: this sense of "know" is less strict, corresponding to the Greek "gnosco", than the earlier sense corresponding to "episteme"}$

THOUGHT -- OBJECT: CONCEPT (GK: NOEMA)

MEMORY/IMAGINATION -- OBJECT: IMAGE (GK: PHANTASIA)

COMMON SENSE -- OBJECT: COMMON SENSIBLES (ROUGHLY THE PRIMARY QUALITIES OF THE EARLY MODERNS)

5 SENSES -- OBJECT: PROPER SENSIBLES (ROUGHLY THE SECONDARY QUALITIES OF THE EARLY MODERNS)

In mind, just as in nature, there must be agent, matter, and composite.

AGENT: UNMOVED MOVER

NATURE: COMPOSITE: NATURE
MATTER: PRIMARY MATTER

AGENT: AGENT OR ACTIVE INTELLECT

MIND: COMPOSITE: ACTUAL THOUGHT
MATTER: POTENTIAL INTELLECT

What did Aristotle think the agent intellect was?

Islamic Neoplatonists: the tenth intellect (intellect of the sphere of the moon).

Aquinas: a faculty of the human soul (which in consequence is naturally immortal).
_______: God.

Why someone might think the agent intellect was supposed to be God: they both have the same nature, i.e., thought thinking itself. This nature is ascribed to the unmoved mover in Metaphysics XII and to human intellect in De Anima III (because in thinking its object, thought becomes the object and also thinks itself).

What aspect of mind is immortal according to De Anima? You could interpret it to be either agent or acquired (i.e., thought as actually thinking).

Two most important Islamic Neoplatonists: Al-Farabi, Avicenna (also spelled Ibn Sina).

Al-Farabi the more creative, Avicenna the most influential (in a way, the apostle of Al-Farabi)

Avicenna in his autobiography says that he read Aristotle's Metaphysics 40 times without understanding, and then after reading Al-Farabi's interpretation understood.

TEN. The Ontology of Al-Farabi in Summary

Islamic Neoplatonists' theory of emanation:

"Necessary Being in Itself": that whose concept is sufficient reason for its existence (in Leibnizian terms)

"Necessary Being through Another": that which must of necessity exist because it is kept in being by the eternal and necessary act of another.

"Contingent Being in Itself": that which according to its own essence may or may not exist.

"Contingent Being through another": that which is kept in being by another, but not through an eternal and necessary act.

The One is a necessary being in itself. Through its eternal act of thought (which is both first and second actuality for it) it emanates all that is encompassed as necessary being.

From the thought of the One emanates the First Intelligence.

The First Intelligence has three thoughts --
From its thought of itself as contingent in itself it generates the First Sphere (which I think is the sphere of the "fixed" stars).

From its thought of itself as necessary through another it generates the Soul of the First sphere.

From its thought of the One it generates the Second Intelligence.

And so forth, down to the Tenth Intellect, which generates the Earth, the souls of all mundane creatures, and the intellects of human beings. But at this point the power of these emanations has dissipated so that earthly creatures are not immortal in their bodies.

Earthly creatures are individually generated. Primary matter is combined with two primary pairs of opposites -- hot/cold and wet/dry -- to form the elementary substances, earth, air, fire, and water. These are combined by the nutritive processes of living things to form the various kinds of tissues, organs, and whole creatures.

Seemingly, Aristotle and the Islamic Neoplatonists understood "efficient cause" differently:

Aristotle: efficient cause was merely the agent cause -- i. e., the cause of the motion whereby the thing came to be.

Islamic Neoplatonists: efficient cause was the source of the emanation whereby the thing is preserved in being.

It follows more or less from what has been said that the Islamic Neoplatonists held that, since becoming is posterior to being (from Aristotle), the agent of a thing's generation is subordinate in a series of agents to the source of the emanation of a thing's matter and form. For example, a person's father would be a subordinate agent to the tenth intellect as the efficient cause of a thing's being. The tenth intellect itself would be subordinate to the One in the same series.

Accidentally ordered series of causes: those which are ordered, but not insofar as their act of causation is concerned. Example: father, grandfather, etc.
Essentially ordered series of causes: those which are ordered in their act of causation -- The One, the First Intelligence, etc., the Tenth Intelligence, etc.

Seemingly, Aquinas (to be discussed later) thought God is the only cause of being (i.e., creator), while causes of becoming were subordinate to him as essential causes.

ELEVEN. Notes on Al-Farabi's The Political Regime

¢Al-Farabi and Avicenna (Ibn-Sina) are the two most noted of the philosophers who lived and worked under the patronage of the Abbasid Caliphate, which founded and was centered in Baghdad. The Arabian Nights, in their final compilation, also derive from the Abbasid period, although editors claim that many of the stories are from older and alien sources. Some of the stories have as a character the most famous of the Abbasid caliphs, Harun al-Rashid (in more familiar terms, Aaron the Just) after whom the famous hotel is (I assume) named.

¢My reading has led me to believe that, although Avicenna became the more famous of the two philosophers, Al-Farabi was the more creative and original, and was in fact the founder of the philosophy they essentially shared.

¢Even Al-Farabi, as we shall see, was highly dependent on Greek Aristotelian Neoplatonism. In one sense, the greatest achievement of these philosophers was to devise a philosophical vocabulary for Arabic, a language which, although it had a poetic tradition, exemplified by the Koran itself, had no previous scientific or theoretical literature.

Part I: The Principles of Beings

I. The Basic Principles
   A. Summary
      1. Six Principles
         a. The First Cause
         b. The Second Causes
         c. The Active Intellect
         d. Soul
         e. Form
         f. Matter
      2. Divisions
a. First division:
   (1) Single: the first cause
   (2) Multiple: all else
b. Second division:
   (1) Neither are bodies nor are in bodies
       (a) The First Cause
       (b) The Second Causes
       (c) The Active Intellect
   (2) In bodies but not bodies
       (a) Soul
       (b) Form
       (c) Matter

3. The Kinds of Bodies
   a. The Celestial Body
   b. The Rational Animal
   c. The Irrational Animal
   d. Plants
   e. Minerals
   f. The Four Elements

4. Initial Statements on the Six Principles
   a. The First Cause: God; the proximate cause of
      the second causes and of the Active Intellect
   b. The Second Causes: the immediate causes of
      the celestial spheres; angels; spirits: they
      correspond 1-1 to the celestial spheres
   c. The Active Intellect: its function is help
      the rational animal attain perfect happiness,
      which is union with the Active Intellect in
      such a way as to share in its self-
      sufficiency; the "Faithful Spirit;" the
      "Spirit of Holiness;" "the Kingdom."
   d. Souls
      (1) Division
          (a) The souls of celestial bodies
          (b) The souls of rational animals
          (c) The souls of irrational animals
      (2) Faculties or capacities of soul:
          (a) Reason in general: that capacity
              whereby man
              i) acquires the arts and sciences
              ii) distinguishes between good and
              iii) deliberates
              iv) perceives the useful and the
              harmful
v) perceives the pleasurable and the painful

(b) Divisions of reason:
   i) Theoretical: what does not involve action
   ii) Practical
      a) Technical: that by which man acquires arts and crafts
      b) Deliberative: that by which one decides what one ought to do

(c) Appetition: that in which arises inclination to seek or to shun, to love or to hate.

(d) Imagination: that which stores images of sensibles after the sensibles cease to be present, and combine them both during waking and during sleep and both in true and false ways; that which apprehends the useful and harmful, the pleasant and painful, but not the good and the bad.

(e) Sensation: the capacities of the five senses; apprehends pleasant and painful, but not useful and harmful or good and bad.

(f) Note: there is a departure from Aristotle here in that the nutritive and reproductive capacities are not listed.

(3) Intellection \(\text{\#this is a digression or a way of relating the principles}\)

(a) The souls of celestial bodies are more noble, perfect, and excellent than the souls of living beings in our world, because they are never in potency, but always in act, always intellecting that which they intellect, which in each case is the First Cause and the Second Cause which gave it and its corresponding celestial body being. These souls have only the intellective capacity, not the
imaginative, appetitive, or sensitive.

(b) The First intellects its own essence, and all things insofar as it is their cause.

(c) Each second cause intellects its own essence and intellects the First.

(d) The Active Intellect intellects the First, the Second causes, and its own essence; it also makes intelligible those things which are not so of themselves.

(e) Of intelligibles, some are so of their own nature, because they are intelligences intellecting themselves, but the forms of bodies are not intelligible of themselves, but must be made intelligible to be so.

(f) The Active Intellect moves both the intellect of man and the forms of bodies from potency to act; in doing so it causes man's intellect to intellect itself as well as the forms of bodies and thus to share in this respect in the nature of the celestial intellects.

(g) Analogy: sun:eye:visible=Active Intellect:human intellect:forms of bodies.

e. Matter and Form

1. Neither is self-subsistent, because form requires matter as substratum and matter exists wholly for the sake of form. Thus there cannot be unformed matter.

2. "Form" is used in different senses as it is applied to the forms of bodies, the intellected forms of bodies, and the human intellect as apprehended by itself after having been activated by the Active Intellect (this appears to be a reply to a possible objection undermining Al-Farabi's construction of his hierarchy of being).
(3) The ranks of the forms of bodies
   (a) Forms of the four elements
   (b) Forms of minerals
   (c) Forms of plants
   (d) Forms of irrational animals
   (e) Forms of rational animals

(4) Matter has no non-existence (privation?) or contrary, while form has both

(5) Although form and accident attribute both require substrata in which they exist, they differ in that the substratum of form is for the sake of the form, while that is not so for attributes.

f. Contrasts between matter and form, on the one hand, and incorporeal substances, on the other:
   (1) Incorporeal substances are not subordinate to anything as matter, instrument, or servant.
   (2) Incorporeal substances lack nothing to their perfection which could be achieved by acting or being acted on

   (3) Incorporeal substances have no contraries or privations

  g. Contrast between the First and other incorporeal substances: the First requires intellection of nothing but itself for its existence and fulfillment, but the second causes and the active intellect require intellection both of themselves and of the first for existence and fulfillment. Since their very essence is to intellect, they are thus multiple, while the First is wholly unitary.

h. Contrast between intelligences and souls
   (1) Souls require a substratum in which to exist, while intelligences do not.
   (2) Souls require instruments and material for creation, while intellects emanate merely by existing.
   (3) Souls require the intellection of things beneath them for fulfillment, while intelligences do not.

i. Contrast between perfected human soul and
other pure intellects:

(1) Its perfection requires the intellection of things beneath it

(2) It is not an agent qua what it is, as are other pure intellects

II. The First (Note: the discussion of "the First" uses the terms "existence" and "essence" in technical philosophical senses which are far from clear. Since I lack the capacity to check the translator's employment of these terms, we shall have to accept on faith that she is correctly reflecting Al-Farabi's usage. Roughly "essence" is what something is while "existence" is that it is. As far as I know Al-Farabi originated the idea, continued at least through Leibniz, that in God, and only in God, essence and existence are one. I suppose this means that the fact of God's existence follows from what he is.)

A. The First is an existence than which there cannot be a more perfect.

B. The First is wholly unlike anything else

1. Argument:

   a. There is nothing prior to it, from which it could share in an attribute by participation

   b. Furthermore, there is nothing equal in rank with it which it could have lacked

   c. For reasons (a) and (b), it cannot derive any of its existence from anything higher than or equal with it, and thus it cannot resemble anything higher than or equal with it

   d. Since it is wholly perfect, it cannot have received any of its existence from anything lower than itself, and thus cannot resemble any such thing

C. The existence which the First has cannot belong to more than one (i.e., the First is unique)

1. First argument:

   a. Either there would or would not be some difference between them

   b. Suppose the former

   c. Then each of the two existences is in some way constituted by that attribute by which it differs from the other

   d. But then neither would be the First, since they would each be constituted, and, thus in some way posterior, to the other

   e. Suppose the other alternative, that they do
not differ at all

f. Then they are not two existences. (Here he is
appealing to the principle of the identity of
indiscernibles, made famous many centuries
later by Leibniz -- that for every attribute
P and entities x and y, x possesses P if and
only if y possesses P; if and only if x is
identical with y -- in symbols, (P)\forall(Px, Py)
, (x = y)\). According to Hilbert and
Ackermann, The Principles of Mathematics,
this is an axiom of second-order predicate
calculus.)

2. Second argument
   a. If there were another of the same rank as the
      First, then the First would lack something --
      i.e., the existence possessed by that other,
      which can be possessed by that which is
      completely perfect. But then it would not be
      completely perfect in the sense of lacking no
      possible perfection.

D. The First has no contrary
   1. First argument: the contrary of anything is in the
      same rank as that thing, but there is nothing else
      in the same rank as the First
   2. Second argument: a contrary can be fully realized,
      or perfect, only in that respect in which its
      contrary is wholly absent. But a contrary can only
      resist the power of its contrary only through the
      power of things external to it. I think that by
      things external to the thing in question he means
      the substratum or subject here, since Aristotle
      usually says that only attributes, not substances,
      have contraries. But if the First preserved
      itself through an external power, it would be in
      some respect externally caused, and thus not be
      the first.

E. The First is indefinable by a definition having parts -
   - not divisible into things by which it is made a
   substance Note: Aristotle resolves the problem of the
   unity of the defined in Metaphysics VII, VIII, and IX,
   by asserting that in a definition by genus and
difference or differentia, the genus is named from the
thing's matter and the difference from its form!
   1. Argument: if it were definable in this way, its
      matter and form would constitute its essence and
      thus be its causes, and it would not be first.
F. The First is also indivisible in any other way
   1. Argument: all ways of divisibility are consequent on divisibility into matter and form. \(\text{\&Note: this seems authentically Aristotelian, but at the moment I cannot give a good ARistotelain argument for it}\)

G. The existence by which the First exists is inseparable from that by which it is differentiated from other things. \(\text{\&It appears that "the existence by which it exists in itself" means numerical individual existence, while "the existence by which it is differentiated from other things" means the complex of general attributes or essence. Thus this may be Al-Farabi's statement of the very well-known doctrine, held by Avicenna, Maimonides, Anselm, Aquinas, and Leibniz, that in God there is no distinction between existence and essence.}\)
   1. Argument -- from the general lack of divisibility in the First

H. The First is by its substance intellect, intellected, and in the act of intellecting; but in such a way that these are all inseparable from each other
   1. Argument: that which prevents intellection is matter, so that in something without matter, intellection is as intrinsic as existence. \(\text{\&He seems to be assuming without argument the Aristotelian position that whatever intellects anything simultaneously intellects itself. Here Al-Farabi's notion of the First seems very similar to Aristotile's notion of the unmoved mover in Metaphysics XII and to Proclus' notion of Intelligence}\)

I. The First is wise
   1. Argument: the First intellects the most perfect by the most perfect act of intellection, and we say that what is wise is knowing, and what is the wisest knows the most perfect things and knows them by the most prefect knowledge

J. The First is by its substance adornment, splendor, and beauty.
   1. Argument: these attributes belong to the most perfect existence, since it is the most prefect, and since it is whatever it is wholly through itself

K. The First is by its substance joy, delight, and happiness
1. Argument: this belongs to that which knows the most beautiful by the most perfect knowledge

L. There is no proportion between Its joy and our joy (or at least a "very small"(?) proportion

1. Argument: there is no ratio between the infinite and the finite

M. The First is the first lover and first beloved

1. Argument: from the preceding, since to delight in the beautiful is love \(\text{\textsuperscript{Note: I have taken a liberty with the translation here}}\)

N. All things caused by the First emanate from its existence with necessity

1. Argument: if the First made other things intentionally, they would constitute final causes for it, and thus in a sense be prior to it \(\text{\textsuperscript{Note: this doctrine of Al-Farabi was considered extremely impious by more conservative elements in Islam. Although, as we shall see, the theologies of Maimonides and Aquinas seem very derivative as wholes from that of Al-Farabi (through Avicenna), neither Maimonides nor Aquinas, due to the necessity of conforming to religious authorities and the deeply entrenched view of God as a volitional agent, could follow Al-Farabi on this point. Aquinas said that God acted volitionally and for an end, but that the end was his own essence, thus escaping Al-Farabi's dilemma on this point.\)}}

O. The existence of those things that emanate from the First is not posterior in time to the First, but only in perfection and causal order.

1. Argument: follows from the fact that these things emanate with necessity

P. Although the names by which the First is called (words predicated of the First) signify the perfections and excellences of things of our world, when they are applied to the First they signify only the perfections proper to the First \(\text{\textsuperscript{Note: he seems to saying what would be expressed in Aristotelain terminology by saying that words predicated of the First and of those things subsequent to the First are predicated homonymously or equivocally.\)}}

1. Argument: otherwise, the First would be like other things in some way, whereas it has already been argued that he is not
Q. The diversity of names of perfections predicated of the First does not signify that in the First there are diverse perfections
   1. Argument: as was argued earlier, there is no divisibility (plurality) in the First

R. Names of perfections which, when applied to things in our world, signify attributes which are distinct from the existence of those things in which they exist, do not, in the case of their predication of the First, signify things which are distinct from the existence of the First.
   1. Argument: as was argued earlier, there is no divisibility or plurality in the First

S. Names predicated of the First which imply a relation to subsequent things must be understood, when applied to the first, as complex: predicking first some non-relative perfection and subsequently predicking a relation to subsequent realities which follows of necessity from the First's existence.
   1. Argument: no relations to anything else can be intrinsic to the First's existence; otherwise he would be posterior to something else in some way

T. Names predicated of the First are divided into those which are shared by all beings and those which are shared by only some of them

U. All names predicated of both the First and other things are primarily predicated of the First, because whatever they denote in subsequent beings are things those beings have derived from the First
   $\textit{Obscure!}$ All names predicated of things only insofar as they resemble the first are predicated of the first most properly and of secondary things only with a denotation of posterity. $\textit{I'm not sure exactly what}$

W. The fact that for words predicated both of the First and other things our predicking them of other things is prior in time to our predicking them of the First, does not contradict our assertion earlier that they are predicated primarily of the First, for temporal order and order of intrinsic nature are distinct.

X. Names predicated of the First are further divided into those that denote unspecified perfection, such as "being" and "one," and those that denote a specific kind of perfection, such as "knowing" and "wise."

Y. Names which denote unspecified perfection are
attributed to things according to degree, with the degree being proportional to proximity to the First (the name being predicated in the highest degree of the First)

Z. Names which denote specific perfections such as "knowledge," which exist in the First in the highest way in which it can exist, also are attributed to things according to degree, with the degree being proportional to proximity to the First

AA. Names which denote specific perfections and in addition denote some sort of imperfection cannot be predicated of the First. (Note: this is Anselm's view, but not that of Pseudo-Dionysius)

III. The Second Causes

A. (Obscure) The second causes each have two existences -- that by which they emanate from a higher existence and that by which they are constituted in their own essence

≥A. The Second Causes, as with the First, emanate other beings solely by the existence through which they are constituted in their own essences

C. All the Second Causes acquire existence from the First

D. Each Second Cause intellects both itself and the First

E. Each second cause is constituted in essence by its intellection of itself, but is constituted in perfection or happiness only by intellection of the First. (Note: this is not quite explicit in the text -- I have interpreted the text here in the light of Proclus)

F. For each Second Cause, the ratio of the happiness it derives from its intellection of itself to the happiness it derives from intellecting the First is the same as the ratio of its own excellence to the excellency of the First. Thus, as with the predication of names, the primary happiness of a Second Cause is the happiness which results from its intellection of the First

G. (Obscure) The perfection of each Second Cause is the degree to which it resembles the First, while its defect is the degree to which it is different or removed from the First

H. The Second Causes have no perfections which are posterior in time to their existences

I. From the existence of each Second Cause there emanates necessarily the existence of one of the physical heavens (celestial spheres)

IV. The Celestial Spheres (Note: there is no formal division in
A. The substance of each heaven is composed of soul and substrate (matter).
B. The soul of each heaven is perpetually intellecting its own essence, the Second Cause from which the heaven emanated, and the First.
C. The heavens are imperfect in their essence because they require a substrate for their essence to be constituted -- they are the first order of imperfect beings.
D. The heavens are also imperfect for another reason -- they are not productive solely from their essence, but require additional attributes for productivity -- attributes which belong to the categories of attributes: quantity, etc. -- i.e., a certain shape and size.
E. Every attribute of a heaven is the most excellent attribute in its range or category -- e.g., their places are the most excellent of places.
F. The heavens have most of their perfections from the beginning, but must perpetually strive for a slight additional perfection by their perfectly circular and unending motions.
G. The substrate of a heaven is permanently joined to its soul.
H. From the previous point it follows that a heaven can have no contrary.

V. The Active Intellect
A. Obscure! All forms given by the heavens to lower entities are examined by the Active Intellect.
B. As a result, the Active Intellect desires to liberate these forms, and to raise them to the highest proximity to itself which is possible.
C. Thus it makes potentially intelligible forms to be actually intelligible and potentially intelligent beings (humans) to be actually intelligent -- that is, actively intellecting.

VI. Possible beings (beings composed of matter and form)
A. The first (highest) heaven emanates primary matter, from which all material beings ultimately are formed.
B. Opposite forms come to be in matter from the influence of the motions of the heavenly bodies, which in their circular motions come successively to occupy opposite positions with respect to earthly things.
C. Possible beings, those which both can be and can not-be, are intermediate between those which necessarily
are (the First, the Second Causes, and the heavens) and those which cannot be §Here I'm interpolating in the text! §This ultimately comes from a logical square of opposition for modal propositions which occurs in Aristotle's On Interpretation:

D. The existence of possible beings follows from the fact that the First pours out its being as far as is logically possible (this was later §in Leibniz! called the "principle of plenitude")

E. A possible being is indeterminate with respect to two opposite states in two ways:
   1. With respect to either of two contraries, (prime matter (?) or
   2. With respect to being and non-being (composite sensible substances(?))

F. Opposite beings can exist in three ways:
   1. At different times
   2. At the same time in different respects
   3. As different beings

G. Possible beings have two existences:
   1. As undetermined (with respect to their matter)
   2. As determined (with respect to their form)

H. The possible being is of two kinds:
   1. That which can exist as a given thing or not as that thing (prime matter)
   2. That which can exist as a certain thing or can not exist (composite of matter and form)

I. There is a hierarchy among possible beings:
   1. (Lowest:) prime matter
   2. The elements -- come to exist through contrarieties in prime matter §Aristotle: hot-cold, wet, dry!
   3. Etc. (these were listed under topic I, but Al-Farabi does not list them all here)

J. Lower kinds of possible beings are matter exist for the sake of higher kinds

K. Prime matter cannot exist unformed

L. The highest kind of possible beings, the form of forms, does not exist for the sake of anything else (this is the human intellect)

M. Intermediaries may exist both for their own sakes and for the sakes of others

N. By the right of its matter, a possible thing exists as its opposite; by the right of its form as itself. Therefore it undergoes perpetual alteration between
opposites.

O. Each possible being, since it lacks the capacity of itself either to change or to perdure, must have a mover and a preserver.

P. Both of these functions are performed, ultimately, by the heaven.

Q. The heaven performs the moving function in several ways:
   1. It acts to move a possible being from one form to another without an intermediary or instrument
   2. It gives matter a capacity by which the matter itself moves toward the form
   3. It gives to A the capacity to move B to form C
   4. It gives to A the capacity to give to B the capacity to move C to a form
   5. Etc.

R. The heaven also performs the preserving function in several ways:
   1. It provides the possibile thing, along with its form, a certain capacity
   2. It provides another body to preserve the thing inside it
   3. It provides servant bodies to protect it
   4. It provides reproductive capacities

S. Possible things also possess destructive capacities, and thus there is co-operation and strife in this realm

T. There are three ways of existing for another:
   1. As matter
   2. As instrument
   3. As servant

U. The rational human does not exist for another in any of these three ways, and thus not at all.

V. When a possible being has a state which arises from it automatically if not hindered, that state is its ultimate perfection--example: sight is the perfection of the eye.

W. All Second Causes and heavenly bodies are perpetually in their ultimate perfections -- in the case of the Second Causes there is no distinction between their essences and their ultimate perfections, while in the case of the heavenly bodies, their ultimate perfections are their motions, which are perpetual.

X. Possible beings are intermittently in their ultimate perfections, and are sometimes impeded by others, sometimes aided by others, in attaining such.