Late Islamic Philosophy and Ibn Sina's Solution for the Problem of Induction

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ABSTRACT

In this paper I examine some contemporary challenges to Ibn Sina's account of inductive arguments. According to that account there is a distinction between mere inductions on the one hand and what they call 'experiential arguments' on the other hand. The latter is based on some observations and an additional deductive argument. The major premise in this deduction is the allegedly self-evident principle that 'something accidental is not persistent or nearly persistent'. The main criticism is that this principle is neither self-evident nor derived from self-evident truths. I argue that this criticism is based on some wrong conception of 'accidental'. In order to grasp the right meaning of 'accidental' I have to clarify the Ibn Sina's general theory of physical causation. After that, I will proceed by giving a more plausible account of the principle regarding the accidentals. Finally, I will show how the traditional account survives these recent challenges.