

Volume 2. Number 2. June 2001

Transcendent Philosophy

An International Journal for Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism

Muhsin Araki

The place of Mysticism ('Irfīn) within the hierarchy of Islamic Sciences

Seyed Ṭāfāvī, SOAS, University of London

The Practice of Mysticism ('irfīn-i 'amalī) in Islam

Dr. Karīm Mujtahidī, University of Tehran, Iran

Mullī Ṭadrī in the Narrative of Henry Corbin

Hamid Hadji Haidar

Majoritarianism and Constitutionalism

Reza Akbarian, Tarbiat Modarres University, Iran

The Fundamental Principles of Ibn Sīnā's Ontology

Muḥammad Taqī Miṣbīḥī Yazdī

Two Critical Issues in Sadrian Philosophy: Substantive Motion and its Relation to the Problem of Time, and the Principality of Existence

Book Reviews

Flusser, V.

The Shape of Things: A Philosophy of Design

Flusser, V.

Towards a Philosophy of Photography (Oliver Leaman)

Yahya Christian Bonaud,

L'Imam Khomeyni, un gnostique méconnu du XXe siècle: Métaphysique et théologie dans les oeuvres philosophiques et spirituelles de l'Imam Khomeyni (Sajjad Rizvi)

Hunsberger, A., Nasir Khusraw

The Ruby of Badakshan. A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher (Oliver Leaman)

Michael Cook

Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought (Sajjad Rizvi)

Des Chene, D.

Spirits and Clocks: Machine and Organism in Descartes (Amy Mullin)

Christian Jambet

Se rendre immortel suivi du Traité de la résurrection de Mullī Ṭadrī Shīrīzī (Sajjad Rizvi)

Arnaldez, R.  
Averroes, a Rationalist in Islam, trans. R. Sleight (Oliver Leaman)

Goldziher  
Ernest Renan als Orientalist, trans. P. Zalan (Oliver Leaman)

Sachiko Murata  
Chinese gleams of Sufi light: Wang Tai-yu's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm, with a new translation of Jīmī's Lawj'ī by William Chittick (Sajjad Rizvi)

Williams, J.  
Denying Divinity: Apophasis in the Patristic Christian and Soto Zen Buddhist Traditions (Oliver Leaman)

Wall, P.  
Wittgenstein in Ireland (Oliver Leaman)

Books Published in Iran

Books Received

The place of Mysticism ('Irfīn) within the hierarchy of Islamic Sciences

Muhsin Araki, Islamic Centre of England, UK

Abstract

This brief paper presents and locates the study and discourse of mysticism ('irfīn) within the wider context of the disciplines and sciences studied and practised in Islam. After a brief introduction to the sciences in Islam and the definition of a science, the author focuses on the relationship between mysticism and philosophy and their different examinations of the notion and reality of existence.

To ascertain and define the correct location for the study of mysticism, we need to explain three contextual issues. First, what is meant by the term 'Islamic sciences'? Second, what are the features that are similar and what distinguishes mysticism from other Islamic sciences and disciplines? Third, how has mysticism developed with respect to these other sciences and how do they affect each other?

I: A general definition of Islamic sciences.

Islamic sciences ('ulm islmiyya) is a concept used in two senses. (1) The first sense is broadly understood. Islamic sciences, taken in their broad sense, encompass a constellation of disciplines, which have evolved in the context of Islamic civilisation, both ones which primarily developed from Islamic sources and principles, and those which already existed in other societies and civilizations ('ulm al-awī'il) but which were integrated into, and flourished within Islamic civilisation. Islamic sciences in this broad sense embrace disciplines held in common among Islamic scholars in scientific and academic institutions in the Islamic world throughout the history of Islam. Consequently, both original Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence, theology, principles of jurisprudence, exegesis of the Qur'an and the life

(سّرا) of the Prophet and Imams and other sciences derived from other civilisations such as astronomy, medicine, mathematics, all of which fit in this broad category.

The second sense is narrower. This narrow definition embraces those disciplines, which originate directly from Islamic principles and sources, namely, the Qur'ān, the tradition (sunna) of the Prophet and Imams and the creed, which is derived from Qur'ān. This category of sciences is an innovation of Muslims and is, in fact, an illustration and interpretation of the tradition of the Prophet. The narrow category of Islamic sciences itself is divided into two groups. The first comprises those developed for the sole purpose of interpretation and elaboration of the meaning and purposes of the Qur'ān and the tradition of the Prophet. The second comprises those, which are considered an introduction to the former group, such as logic, Arabic literature and grammar, the history of Islam, sciences related to the understanding of Qur'ān, the science of recitation of Qur'ān and the science of verification of narrators of sayings of the Prophet and Imam ('ilm al-rijāl).

Islamic sciences are also divided into two categories on the basis of their methodology. They are either based on pure reasoning or derive their authority from religious sources. The first category, which is based on intellectual investigation, comprises the intellectual sciences ('ulm 'aqliyya). The second comprises the sciences based upon scriptural authority and exegesis ('ulm naqliyya). In the sciences derived from scripture, the authority of scriptural sources is the main basis for arguments. However, the degree of rational reasoning in these sciences varies. Disciplines such as transcendental philosophy (falsafa ilāhiyya), theoretical mysticism, logic and rational theology (kalīm 'aqlī) employ only rational premises in their arguments. They clearly fall into the former category, while practical mysticism, scripturally-oriented theology, principles of jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) and the exegesis of the Qur'ān are considered as scripturally-orientated sciences.

## II: Similarities and differences between mysticism and other branches of Islamic sciences

Islamic sciences differ in their subject matter, purpose or methodology, or any of two or three of these factors. For example, theology is different from jurisprudence in terms of subject matter and purpose. The subject matter of theology is one's religious attitude towards human beings and the world, whereas the subject matter of jurisprudence is human agency vis-à-vis God, other humans and the world. The purpose of theology is to attain peace of mind and certainty in an uncertain world, while jurisprudence deals with the conformity of our deeds in relation to the commands of God. On the other hand, unlike jurisprudence, rational theology follows a rational methodology and relies mainly only on 'reason' ('aql), while scripturally-orientated theology shares the methodology of jurisprudence employing a combined methodology of scripturally-orientated argument and pure 'reason'.

Islamic philosophy (metaphysics) and theology are also different in terms of subject matter and purpose. The subject matter of metaphysics is pure existence (al-wujūd bimj huwa wujūd), while the subject matter of theology is the existence of God (awareness of whose existence is essential). However, these two disciplines share the same methodology in achieving their objectives, which is pure reason. Our main aim here is to indicate the similarities and differences between Islamic mysticism and other disciplines within the Islamic sciences.

Categorisation of Islamic sciences into introductory and core disciplines, places mysticism into the core and fundamental category. It also comes under the category of rational sciences, although practical mysticism comes under the category of scriptural sciences. The inclusion of theoretical mysticism into the intellectual sciences indicates that this type of mysticism reinforces findings of intuition by rational

reasoning, although the primary and main source intuition and knowledge is attained through the purity of heart. The results of such spiritual journeys are often confirmed by inductive reasoning. As a result of such a diversified methodology, we classify this type of knowledge as part of rational sciences.

One of the main principles of this discipline, upon which all scholars of 'irfān agree, is that one has to follow a mentor in all phases of a spiritual journey. The honest and experienced leader who is chosen as guide on this journey must also be a friend of God (walī Allāh). (2) The greatest teacher and mentor on this spiritual journey to God is the Prophet of Islam, Muḥammad (ﷺ). He and his descendants are the greatest masters and mentors whom one has to follow in the spiritual quest for truth and the meaning of life. They are pioneers of knowledge and teachers of love, without whom one can go astray, as this endeavour can turn out to be a very risky adventure without the guidance of the friends of God.

This interpretation is based on a Shi'ī way of thinking that places reason at the forefront of its importance. A reference to authority in the Shi'ī way of thinking is not convincing on its own. In the final analysis the authority rests on reason. On the other hand some schools of thought, mainly from Sunni branches of Islam attribute absolute authority to the practice of the Prophet and deny the role of reason.

The necessity of having a mentor on the spiritual path has been reiterated by great masters in this field. Rūmī (d. 1274), the great Sufi master and founder of the Mevlevi order of dervishes, in his exciting treatise *Mathnavī-yi Ma'navī* reminds us of this requirement when he says:

Follow the master (pīr) as without him  
This journey is hazardous indeed  
Therefore the way that you have not seen before  
You should not go alone, do not disobey the mentor. (3)

ʿīfī (d. 1389), another famous authority in this field follows the same line when he says:

Do not walk into the quarter of love without a solid reason,  
I have made hundreds of attempts but in vain.  
Beware of this hazardous path without the guidance of Kheẓr,  
It is darkness and the danger of going astray is present.

According to this important principle of 'irfān, it is necessary to follow a friend or deputy of God. Following the holy Prophet and those who are closest to him as the friend of God is of utmost importance. Secondly, those who are most familiar with the practice and teachings of the Prophet and Imams are also appointed to lead people.

### III: The difference between the problems of philosophy and 'irfān

The idea of following the Prophet and other Saints implies that practical 'irfān is a science based on scriptural authority. One can only follow them through an understanding of their practice and of the Holy Qur'ān. However, theoretical mysticism, philosophy and theology share common features as intellectual inquiries on the nature of existence. On the other hand, practical 'irfān resembles ethics and jurisprudence as all three deal with human agency. Other Islamic sciences do not have any common ground with 'irfān so they are excluded of this study.

The characteristic features of any discipline consist of four elements. First, methodology ascertains the modes of inquiry and method of verification. Second, subject matter (mawḥḍ') defines the science because a 'science studies the essential properties of its subject matter'. (4) Third, the aporiai and issues (masi'il, qaḥiḍi) involved characterise the discipline. Fourth, the purpose and telos (ghiyā) of a science defines the aims of the inquiry. (5)

Theoretical 'irfīn employs a different methodology from that of philosophy and theology. Besides an inductive intellectual methodology, it relies mainly on intuition (ishrīq) and direct experience (dhawq). It prefers knowledge that is inspired by an understanding through the heart, rather than by logical reasoning. Because through intuition, a unity of subject of knowledge, knowledge itself and the holder of knowledge occurs (ittiḥīd al-'aql wa l-'iqil wa l-ma'qūl). On the contrary, the results of rational inquiry are only some reflections or cognitive images of the subject matter of knowledge and the very reality of the subject matter of knowledge itself is absent to the holder of knowledge.

Theoretical mysticism and theology are similar as both establish their results prior to any reasoning and then try to reinforce it through reasoning. However, they differ as the foundation of a priori knowledge in theology has religious authority and in theoretical 'irfīn, knowledge is acquired through intuition.

With respect to subject matter, philosophy is different from theoretical 'irfīn. The subject matter of philosophy is pure existence or existence qua existence. The subject matter of theoretical 'irfīn, on the other hand, is God or a mode of existence whose absence is logically impossible to imagine, that is, the Necessary Existent (wājib al-wujūd). Philosophy deals with existence in its pure form and attributes, regardless of the type of existence. Mysticism, however, focuses only on God and its existence, as other forms of existence, as other forms of existence do not, in fact, exist, they are only a shadow of the existence, namely of God. (6) He is Existence and everything else is a reflection of His Existence. According to 'irfīn, existence is equivalent to necessity of existence. That is to say that true existence is the one that is absolutely necessary to exist, that is God. The rest have an illusory existence.

The subject matter of theology includes issues related to the origin of creation, resurrection, Prophethood, leadership and related subjects. The very existence of God and His attributes constitute the subject matter of mysticism. However, mysticism is not concerned with proving the existence of God, which is beyond its sphere. No discipline is required to prove the existence of its subject matter. The existence of God is taken for granted in mysticism and it is the function of onto-theology or theology to prove the existence of God. The mere fact that God exists is a philosophical question, as necessity is among the attributes of existence.

General conceptions are not the same in mysticism and philosophy. In philosophy, existence is divided into categories such as diversity and unity, causality, essence and attributes, eternity and incipience, and necessary (inherent) or possible existence. However, in mysticism with its assumption of monorealism (waḥdat al-wujūd), these categories of existence do not make any sense. The different forms and colours of existence are illusory because there is unity in existence. Only one reality exists.

In philosophy, one considers general notions. Through a deductive abstraction process, the mind proceeds to conceptualise some general notions, which do not have reference in concrete existence. The first phase of such process takes place by forging a general concept, which is applicable to tangible and real subjects. For instance, the concept of a 'cat' is deduced from the many or one real cats, but this general concept is not equivalent to our image of any individual cat. It is a general concept, which embraces the common features of cats and ignores their peculiarities. This conceptualisation may even

go further and imply a secondary concept, such a 'animal'. There is an even more sophisticated conceptualisation when we deduce logical categories such as 'generality', 'necessity', 'causality' and so on. These are either logical or philosophical secondary concepts (ma'qġlit thġniyya manŖiqiyya aw falsafiyya).

Ĥadr al-Dġn Muġammad Shġrġzġ (d. 1641) known as Mullġ Ĥadri, a philosopher of the Safavid renaissance in Iran, ended the controversy between philosophy and Irfan when he introduced his transcendental philosophy combing elements from the two camps. (7) The originality of his contribution lies in his existentialist theory (not to be confused with modern European existentialism) (8) according to which the boundaries of existence that make up the identity of things are considered secondary to existence itself. In his theory of the pyramid of existence (hġram-i hastġ), all beings share existence as such but their differences stem from the degree or intensity of their existence. God's existence in this pyramid has no limit and boundary. Therefore, his identity is identical to His existence. According to this understanding, the differences between philosophy and 'ġrfġn are reconciled. There is diversity (degrees of existence) within the unity (all beings share existence). (9) This is the doctrine of tashkġk al-wujġd, or gradation and modulation of existence. (10)

#### IV: The constancy of existence

Is existence static or dynamic? If it is dynamic, how it can be constant and continue? If existence is constant, what is the impact of the mind? Classical Islamic philosophers believed that if a created being and the cause for its existence existed, that being should continue to exist regardless of the passage of time. In fact, they thought that, despite the passage of time, being maintains its identity (huwiyya). Mysticism does not agree with this way of thinking. Within 'ġrfġn, there is no such continuity and existence is renewed constantly. They assume new identities as time goes by. It is our imagination that tries to ignore this fundamental transformation. Existence is, therefore, a process of becoming.

This disagreement between philosophical and mystical approaches was resolved by Mullġ Ĥadri through his theory of the transitory nature of substance (ġaraka jawhariyya). He argues that although fluid existence undergoes constant change, there is one factor that goes through this stretched existence across time. It is existence itself, which is present at all of these moments of change. Again the dynamic and static aspects of existence are reconciled.

#### Notes:

1-On the hierarchy of knowledge, see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Science and civilization in Islam*, 2nd edn., Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society 1987, pp. 59-64, and Osman Bakar, *The classification of the sciences in Islamic Philosophy*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society 2000.

2-On this critical theme, see 'Allġma ġabiŖabi'ġ, *Risġlat al-wilġya*, Tehran: Intishġrġt-i ġikmat 1374 shamsġ, and 'asanzġda 'mulġ, "Vilġyat-i takvġnġ," in *Majm'ġ'a-yi maġilġt*, Qum: Daftar-i tablġghġt-i Islġmġ 1375 shamsġ, pp. 31-82.

3-Rġmġ, *Mathnavġ-yi ma'navġ*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London: Gibb Memorial Trust 1925-40, vol. II, verse 2943.

4-Cf. *Kġtibġ Qazwġnġ*, *al-Risġla al-Shamsiyya in Biblioteca Indica Appendix I*, ed. A. Sprenger, Calcutta: Bengal Military Orphan Press 1854, p. 3.

5-This four-fold schema has important precursors in Neoplatonic and late antique pedagogy and curricular formation. See I. Hadot, "Les introductions aux commentaires exégétiques," in *Les règles de l'interprétation*, ed. M. Tardieu, Paris: Presses Universitaires de France 1987, pp. 99-122.

6-Djw£d al-Qay¥arç, *Shar' al-i muqaddima-yi Qay¥arç bar Fu¥£¥ al-'ikam*, ed. S.J. shtiyjnç, Qum: Daftar-i tablçghjt-i isljmç 1991, p. 100.

7-In some of his texts, he privileges mysticism over philosophy. For example, in his hierarchy of sciences in *Iksçr al-'jrifçn in Rasj'il*, Tehran lithograph 1885, pp. 279-86, he places the sciences of 'states' (a'wil) at the culmination of human noetic inquiry. Another philosopher who regards mysticism as the culmination of inquiry is Qu\$b al-Dçn Shçrjzç (d. 1311), who completes his encyclopaedia *Durrat al-Taj li-ghurrat al-Dubij* with a *khjtima* on mysticism – see MS *Majlis-i Shçrj 4720 fols. 596-620*; cf. J. Walbridge, "A Sufi scientist of the thirteenth century: The mystical ideas and practices of Qu\$b al-Dçn Shçrjzç," in *The heritage of Sufism volume II: The legacy of medieval Persian Sufism*, ed. L. Lewisohn, rpt., Oxford: Oneworld 1999, pp. 326-40.

8-Cf. the pioneering discussion of Henry Corbin in his introduction to *Mullj 'adri Shçrjzç, Kitjb al-Mashj'ir* (*Le Livre des Pénétrations métaphysiques*, rpt., Tehran: ahçrç 1982, pp. 62-75).

9-See Fazlur Rahman, *The philosophy of Mullj 'adri*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1975, pp. 27-41.

10-See Sajjad H Rizvi, *Modulation of being (tashkçk al-wuj£d) in the philosophy of Mullj 'adri Shçrjzç*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University 2000.

## The Practice of Mysticism ('irfjn-i 'amalç) in Islam

Seyed Safavi, SOAS, University of London

### Abstract

This survey article introduces the theoretical aspects of the practice of mysticism in Islam. It examines the nature of mysticism, the mystic and his states, the goal of the mystic and the ethics of spiritual wayfaring. The author addresses major themes that are central concerns of mystical authors and describes their meaning. He describes and analyses mystical states drawing on the major practical and homiletic manuals of the Sufi tradition. The paper is both descriptive and prescriptive.

In his Name who taught the soul to think  
Who enlightened the heart by the soul's insight. (1)

In this article, we attempt to provide a brief introduction to the theory of mystical practice as expounded in classical Islamic mystical texts. A range of issues is considered from the very nature of mysticism to specific states and stages of the path of the mystic. The mystic's path begins with self-reflection and a contemplation of creation that leads him to the One, his origin, and once the mystic embarks on his journey to the One to his origin he completes his circle of being. His origin is the One and his return is the One. First, he must start with creation.

## I: Purpose and design of creation

One of the most positive and decisive Islamic teachings is that the creation has a definitive purpose. Islam contends that the act of creation has not been aimless and in vain. It is for a purpose, as God says in the Holy Qur'an:

Did you think that We had created you in vain and that you would never be recalled to Us? (2)

One of the most important, positive and exalted objectives of God's prophets, indeed the ultimate purpose of creation, is for man to realise and perfect his being as a true servant of God, gaining intuitive knowledge and bearing witness to the Lord. As He said:

I was a hidden treasure but wished that they would know Me, therefore, I created mankind.

and in the holy verse:

I only created mankind and the jinn so that they might worship Me. (4)

Indeed the divine phrase, "...that they would know Me" establishes the divine  $\text{!ad}\ddot{c}h$ . The truth, the inner reality and the ultimate in Islamic mysticism with respect to the infinite depth of meaning of the above Qur'anic verses amounts to divine service to, and intuitive witnessing of, God.

## II: Forgetting oneself

Usually when man enters this world, he becomes negligent of himself as a result of such tendencies as neglecting the Lord, seeking the world, pursuing power and status, and satisfying his carnal desires. As God has said

...those who forgot Allah so He caused them to forget themselves. (5)

Men forget the three essential questions of "Where have I come from?" "Where do I go?" and "Why am I?". These are questions that establish the cause, the philosophy and the ultimate objective of the creation and set forth man's basic essence and his authentic self.

## III: Awakening

During a man's lifetime often circumstances and certain conditions put an end to his negligence and awaken him to observe the blessings of God and make him realize his own sinfulness and how far he has strayed away from the exalted purpose of his own creation. Under such conditions, one understands one's own shortcomings and spiritual and mental states and stages like those of Ibrihcm ibn Adham (d. 778), Bishr al- $\text{°}jfc$  (d. d. 841), Fuayl ibn 'Iyix, developing his character. As a result, he becomes aware of his real self, of what he is and of what he can be.

## IV: What is man and what is he capable of being?

Man has two facets or aspects namely, matter and mind, body and soul, earthly and celestial, and the bestial and angelic. The Qur'anic verse



We created man from dry clay, from black moulded loam (6)

points to the material aspect of man. The verse

...and breathed of My spirit into him

is indicative of man's moral or divine aspects. Man's creation is the loftiest and most exalted model of creation as we read:

Verily, We created man in the best form. (7)

In him both worlds have met now a devil, next a human set. (8)

Man, this trustee of God, (9) this perfectionist and seeker of truth, this divinely trained (10) educated being, (11) and possessor of wonders is capable of being more ferocious and savage than any rabid animal and can sink deep in sins, in self love, in false pleasures and happiness. But man is capable of ascension to the highest levels of heaven and can fulfil the function of being God's caliph on earth.

And about face from the Hades of the lewd.

All but prepares him to meet the highest good. (12)

And reach such status that, in the words of °azrat 'Alç ibn Abç ±jlib ('A),

If veils are removed from the face of the unknown, the secret, nothing new will be revealed to him. (13)

Love, lover and beloved, reason and the reasonable shall be the same to him.

No distinction left among the parts

The knower and the known united

And merged in all the charts. (14)

Naught but His knowledge

Can contain the mystic's heart

Naught but the Absolute Being

Can his intuition acknowledge. (15)

And, if the 'seventy thousand veils of darkness and of light' (16) that bar the peripatetic mystic from the presence of the Lord be removed by rigorous religious practices and by purging the self, or soul, man becomes a theomorphic being and finds peace and tranquillity through his nearness to God. He acquires the contented soul (al-nafs al-muṣma'inna), which converts him into an entirely divine being. The prophetic tradition sets forth this status of light in the following terms:

And when My faithful servant approaches Me through prayers and good deeds, I shall bestow upon him of My affection. Hence forth, I shall be his ears by which He hears; I shall be his eyes to see with and he shall use My tongue and hands by which to say and to hold. (17)

And if divine love sets fire to the heart of this gem of the world of creation, this most noble creature (man), he shall attain to such an exalted stage as the following divine edict purports:

He who seeks Me finds Me  
He who finds Me know Me  
He who knows Me befriend Me  
He who befriends Me loves Me  
He who loves Me shall be loves by Me  
And I shall destroy him who loves Me  
And he whom I destroy is entitled to revenge or 'blood money' from Me  
And I shall stand 'blood money' and at the disposal of him whom I have destroyed. (18)

However, attaining to such a superb position and to pure life and eternal serenity is possible only when:

Dust and dirt are you entire  
Cast them away now  
Go dust off your heart  
Make room worth of the Beloved  
Make your exit to let Him in  
His face shall be manifest to you  
When you no more are  
In your heart no light shall shine  
Unless the snare are first remove  
Your prayers shall avail you naught  
Unless you give your-self up in full  
When your essence is purged at last  
Of things ugly and obscene  
Your prayers shall surely shine  
Well bright and all serene. (19)

V: Mysticism ('irfjn) as an agent for uniting man with God

Of all the Islamic tenets and teachings, the one that is exclusively devoted to the basic issue of the manner and quality of man's spiritual conduct, his fight against carnal desires, is attainment of union with the Lord. Man thus ceases to exist independently but continues his existence in Him. This is mysticism or Sufism.

Mystic knowledge, as a thorough cultural system that pertains to man's spiritual life, has its theoretical base in an unimpeachable belief in the fact that the most perfect way to receive the essence and the truth of existence is through intuitive knowledge and perception, the unification of reason with the reasoned and the reasonable, love with lover and the beloved. From the practical point of view, it is based on the performance of lawful ascetic practices, purification of the ego or soul, vigilance, reckoning of the self, the saying of prayers and passing beyond the surface and the superfluities of worldly affair and in the utmost attachment to the truths of all matters relating to body and soul.

'Irfjn (mysticism) is both theoretical and practical. The theoretical undertakes the elaboration and interpretation of God, the world and the man from a mystical viewpoint. It provides mystical answers to the three essential questions of life, namely the whence, wherefore and whither.

Practical mysticism is also called wayfaring or peripatetic journeying and sets forth the realisations and duties of man with himself, with the world and with God. (20) It denotes what a *sīlik* or walker, wayfarer, or peripatetic Sufi or mystic's initial conduct and its terminal points must be in order to become a Perfect Man (*insān-i kīmīl*) and successor of God on earth and reach the highest position that is possible for man to attain. That exalted human status is the dissolution (*fani*) of his being in God and his subsistence (*baqī*) by His will to eternal life. It describes a Sufi's duties of conduct, his means, his states and the experience he goes through on his way to join with the Lord. Ways to purge the self, to combat the ego and purify the soul are also included among these practices. Thus *'irfān* is described as an intuitive knowledge of God that leads man to His Presence and to the ultimate which is to witness and be in Presence with God (*liqā' Allāh*).

VI: The Law, the Way and the Truth (*sharċ'at*, *ṣarċqat*, *ʾaqċqat*)

In the clash of ideas among Islamic scholars and thinkers, some are exponents of pure *fiqh* or Islamic religious jurisprudence. They support the view that religion means the face value of what its laws and tenets signify. However, the *'urafī*' (plural for *'irif*, meaning mystics) believe that religious laws and decrees have implications and meanings other than what meets the eye. (21) They hold that behind and beyond the surface and explicit meanings of religious edicts, there exist certain truths that are the real aims and objectives of religion. Therefore, the mystics have their own conclusions regarding the real import and significance of religious beliefs and precepts such as monotheism, prophethood, resurrection, daily prayers, the pilgrimage, fasting, and so on. The real mystics, to be sure, adhere to a holistic conception of life that comprises the law, the way and the truth (*sharċ'at*, *ṣarċqat*, *ʾaqċqat*). (22) They maintain that attainment of truth is not possible except through religion. It has been said:

Sharċ'at is the rind, Truth the kernel.  
Between the two lies the Way.

Break up the shell,  
Hold up the peel  
Cast off the rind  
Take up the sweet nut Word,  
With their rhetoric and syntax  
All have but a letter at the core  
No way to waste one's life  
The dear life to circle and spin  
Green peels reveal the juicy nut  
Crack the skin and get at the dehiscent pod  
Unripe is the nut not covered in skin  
Face-sheet in for often yield  
Glorious data of faith in charming din. (24)

The Sufi regards the *sharċ'at* (face, appearance) and *ṣarċqat* (the hidden, the concealed) as the guiding light and the way but his objective is his destination which is above these two and above all else. This he calls God and the Truth, *al-ʾaqq* and *ʾaqċqat*, in which the realisation of all things and objects rest. The mystic regards the attainment to such knowledge as the ultimate point in all creation. He sees all things and objects (in the universe) as seeking Him and desiring His knowledge, the *ṣarċqat* and the *sharċ'at* are both preludes to such achievement. (25)

The 'urafi' believe that the heart, the core and the essence (biṣin) or the inner being of sharċ'at is the way which they term ṣarċqat. This way or road ends in truth, which is monotheism and it occurs after the mystic has ceased to exist as an independent entity. Thus the 'irif (mystic, Sufi) believes in three things: the sharċ'at, the ṣarċqat and the 'aqċqat. (26)

Know that sharċ'at is the word of the prophets, ṣarċqat is the deed or action of the prophets and 'aqċqat is the vision or perception or insight of the prophets. (27) The ṣilik or walker must first learn what he must of the sharċ'at. Then he must perform of the actions of the ṣarċqat as much as he should so that the lights of truth are revealed to him commensurate with his efforts.

O Dervish! He who accepts what his prophet has said is of the sharċ'at and he who performs what his prophet has performed is of the ṣarċqat and he who sees what his prophet has seen is of 'aqċq (truth). (28)

Sharċ'at is like a candle, it kindles the way, Without acquiring a light, the path cannot be traversed. As you enter the way your wayfaring is ṣarċqat. And, when you reach the destination, that is the 'aqċq (truth). (29)

VII: Who is a mystic ('irif)?

An 'irif is a person who arrives at a knowledge of truth (as it is) through intuition and spiritual illumination and inspiration. He is submerged and deeply involved and engaged in divine affairs and matters. He is committed and dedicated to the commands and decrees of religion (sharċ'at) and has merged sharċ'at and 'aqċqat. A real mystic is one who has passed from the stage of certainty ('ilm al-yaqċn) and conviction of knowledge to the stage and level of conviction by perception and insight ('ayn al-yaqċn) and beyond to the certainty of truth ('aqċq al-yaqċn). (30) He has passed from the stage of mental awakening and repentance. He has gained understanding to the stage of grace and awareness experienced in His Presence. He has undergone obliteration and found revival in the Lord. A true mystic is also one who performs prayers, purges his ego, and experiences religiously allowed rigorous ascetic exercises not from fear of hell, nor for love of paradise and not as extraordinary wondrous acts. Rather, he has God in mind in all this and nothing and no one else, as the Holy Qur'jn says:

My prayers and my devotions, my life and my death, are all for Allah. (31)

The term 'irif has been defined variously. It has been given different meanings from differing angles, view and attitudes. Some have differentiated between 'irif and Sufi but we have ignored such distinctions in this study. However, the following definitions are commonplace in the literature.

1) Avicenna (d. 1037) says that an 'irif is one

Who has turned away his conscience, or heart and mind from all things except God and has opened up his inner being to the sacred and holy world so that the light of truth (God) may shine and become reflected in it. (32)

2) Junayd (d. 910) says:

Taṣawwuf (mysticism) is picking and screening...and anyone who is cut off or separated from all that is not of God, is a Sufi. (33)

3) Junayd also says:

A Sufi is one whose heart, like that of Abraham, is safe from love of this world; who performs God's commands as Abraham and submits himself to His Will as Abraham and Ishmael; whose grief is such as David's, whose 'poverty' is like that of Christ, whose patience is that of Job; whose enthusiasm be like that of Moses and whose sincerity be as that of Muḥammad. (34)

Sufis often trace their spiritual and initiatic lineage back to the Prophet through his family, especially the first eight Shi'i Imams.

VIII: The goal of mysticism as distinct from practical reason and philosophy

The aims of an 'irif or mystic are severance and separation from everything and all things that are not of God, purification, abstraction of the soul, dissolution in God (maḥw) and revival by Him (baqi'). Mystic conduct is active whereas ethical conduct is static. In 'irfīn the various steps and stages and the beginning and ending of each 'journey' receives particular attention with respect to one's deeds and conduct.

Ethical acts embellish one's soul without order or discipline, whereas in 'irfīn ethical factors assume a dialectic form.

The spiritual elements in ethics are limited to some meanings and practices of movement and conduct. Discussions are often held with respect to states and intuitional revelations that are the ṣīlik's exclusively and of which others are unaware.

The objective of the philosopher is to turn the worldly man into an intellectual being, but the mystic wants to reach the core of truth, which is God and to witness His presence. The philosopher finds perfection in understanding. The 'irif finds it in reaching (to the ultimate truth).

A philosopher's tools are reason, logic, argument and proof. An 'irif's tools are his heart, diligence, purification, inner effort and movement. (35)

Arguments of reason may all be jewels and gems. Yet, pleas of the heart are surely something else. (36)

The mystic seeks God and prays and praises the Lord for no reason except that He is worthy of praise. (37)

IX: What is wayfaring (sulḥk)?

'Irfīn is ever concerned with man's conscience, the core of his being and heart. Sulḥk, which means walking, has a particular meaning in mystical terminology. Physical walking with the legs is not what is intended. Sulḥk means entrance of the mind and the heart into the world within, into the world unknown, the invisible world.

Sulḥk indicates 'going' generally. The walker may make physical journeys or he may make trips to the realms of the mind or the heart. To the Sufis or mystics, sulḥk means a special going: (38) moving or going towards God, and moving or traversing within the Divine Realm. Going to the Lord is finite but moving within Him is infinite.

Sayr or movement towards God implies that the itinerant, the mover, should continue in the path until he ceases to exist as he is and finds survival in God. In other words, he hears, sees, speaks and knows through the Lord.

Thou art the Path, the Journeyer, and the Destination.

Sayr in God means that when the sġlik or the aspirant is to meet with the Lord, he finds new life, after submitting his being to Him. By His Will, he shall continue his sayr, or journey of discovery until the time that he can see and know all things in detail as they truly are and that nothing, whatever, on earth, in Heaven or else where in the Almighty's Domain, remains unknown to him. (39) Know that by sulġk, the mystics means moving from bad words to worthy argument; from bad deeds to good deeds; from bad conduct to good conduct and from one's own essence and being to that of the Lord. (40)

X: The reality of wayfaring

The reality of wayfaring is to overwhelm the body and the soul or self under the banner of faith through the decrees and commands of the fiqh (religious laws and edicts) as pertain to the body and the mind under the Almighty's divine banner. The entirety of the ups and downs of the path, its pursuits, crises and consequences are registered in these stages. (41)

XI: Intention (niyyat) in sulġk

Actions are judged by their intention. (42)

The declaration of intention, that is, a deliberate, conscious, and wilful undertaking of sulġk is extremely important. Fiqh has decreed the enunciation of the intention to ensure that religious rituals like daily prayers are correct and acceptable. However, in mystical knowledge, every act and deed of man whether the compulsory ones, or the recommended acts, should express as their intention nearness to God. The sġlik's wish behind his declared intentions should not be a request for material well-being, it should not be a request for knowledge and gnosis; it should not be a request, a wish to be human and have all human values and grades developed in him. For, if this is realised, all the above wishes shall be granted, even things that the sġlik has not dreamed of. (43)

XII: Aspects of sulġk

The sulġk consists of the following qualities: silence (samt), abstinence (or hunger), seclusion (khalvat), wakefulness (yaq'a), nocturnal devotion or vigilance (tahajjud). The elders, or authorities of Sufism, hold that sulġk is based on four pillars: frugal consumption, saying little, sleeping little, and staying in seclusion from people. (44)

Samt or silence is of two types. General silence is keeping one's tongue from all that is unnecessary and talking only when necessary and avoiding speech in excess of what is necessary. It is to avoid talk that is not of God. Such silence must be maintained at all times. The a'ġdġth (traditions) and narratives indicate this type of silence. According to one ġadġth,

Silence is the motto of the lovers. It pleases God. Silence is the practice of the prophets and the elite.

Special silence safeguards one's tongue in talking with people or with non-initiates in the absolute and, in this sense, it is regarded as a necessary condition in all exclusively theological recitals. (45) This category is silence by the heart, that is, keeping silence for the sake of what is not of God. (46) Thus he who is silent by the tongue has lightened his burden. But he who keeps silent by word and heart, seek him for Almighty God has made His Will manifest in him.

He, whose tongue is not silent but is silent in his heart, is a speaker in terms of hikmat (wisdom). He, who will not keep silent in words or in his heart, is possessed by the devil. Silence by the tongue is only the goal of the masses. Silence of the heart is an attribute of those who are near to the Lord and they are men of perception, insight and vision.

There is no worship like silence  
He remains safe who remains silent. (47)

Hunger (or abstinence) is also of two types, deliberate and of constraint. Deliberate abstinence belongs to the peripatetics. Abstinence of constraint is that of the searchers. A mu'ajiq or seeker does not hold the soul in hunger but his food intake is little. Hunger in any condition and for any reason it may be, is the strength of a s'lik's claim and reveals great things to the seekers (of truth). Abstinence has states and stages such as humility, respect, courtesy, mendacity absence of excess, quiescence of limbs and destruction or eradication of unworthy memories. Such are the states and stages of abstinence of the walkers of the Path.

But the abstinence or hunger of the mu'ajiq or seekers is sympathy, serenity, fellowship, non-being and purification from human characteristics. It is divine seclusion from the veils of time, a most sublime status namely, Yamadin, an attribute of God meaning absolute lack of want and need but wanted and needed by everything and everyone, a status that contains secrets and revelations.(48). It is better that abstinence be observed in such a way as not to weaken the s'lik's conduct and upset the mind and heart. In this connection, Imam al-'idiq ('A) has said,

Abstinence insures the believer's constant progression, is food for the soul and nourishment for the heart. (49)

Hunger is a great aid to refresh the soul and to break habits. (50)

There are two types of seclusion (khalvat), general and private. General seclusion (also called withdrawal) is staying away from all that is not of God, especially from such people who are sinful and seekers of this world. Association with these groups or individuals is permissible only to the extent that it is absolutely necessary. Association with the chaste, the faithful does not negate such seclusion. The words of the Immaculate Shi'i Imams indicate that this is the type of seclusion that must be observed. As Imam 'usayn ('A) has said,

There never was a prophet, messenger or apostle who did not go into seclusion at one time or other, in the beginning, during or at the end of his life. (51)

The occasional retiring of the Prophet to the Cave at Hira is an indication of this type of seclusion. At any rate, this is the preferred variety of seclusion. Private seclusion implies being alone and staying away from upsetting noises. It calls for remembrance of God and saying prayers in isolation in an enclosure not much larger than the, s'lik himself. The place should be clean and lawfully occupied and it is better that it have no window. This type of seclusion is observed and recommended by certain elders, if not by all, who perform recital exercises in remembrance of God. (52)

Solitude is of two kinds. The solitude ('uzlat) of the devotees is observed by avoidance of physical association with others. The solitude of the seekers (mu'ajiq) is the exercise of the heart in

avoiding all things and objects and keeping the heart free and open only to God and His Knowledge. This leads to awareness of the Lord and to the divine secrets of the oneness of God. Seclusion and solitude purge the *ṣīlik* of any non-divine trait or impediment. Seclusion and solitude afford the seekers (of the Lord) the highest standing and opportunity for intuitive knowledge of God and for witnessing His Presence. (53)

Wakefulness (or sleeping a little) refers to the alertness of the mind and heart and it is either through the eyes staying open, or by the heart being on the alert. Alertness of the heart means putting an end to being negligent, remiss and heedless and to seek and ask for divine perception. Wakefulness of the eyes means remaining in the wakeful state with eyes open to beseech for the alertness and vigilance of the mind and heart. Know that action of the heart is void with eyes close (negligence of watchfulness). If the *ṣīlik* keeps a vigilant heart with his eyes closed, he shall witness the alertness and the watchfulness of his eyes. (54)

Therefore, the fruit of wakefulness will be the perpetuation of the heart's action and ascension of the *ṣīlik* to exalted places that are reserved for the Lord. The state of wakefulness is to maintain and cherish those states that befall the *ṣīlik* or are bestowed upon him as he advances toward his goal. The searcher or seeker (*mu'āqqiq*) enjoys divine qualities through the wakeful stage.

As for nocturnal devotion or vigilance (*tahajjud*), the holy Qur'ān says:

Pray during the latter part of the night, an additional duty for which your Lord may exalt you to a position of praise and glory. (55)

It is recommended that the *ṣīlik* spend half the night, or a third, or two thirds in prayers and devotion. The Qur'ānic verse which is addressed to the Prophet confirms this as we read:

O you who are wrapped up in your mantle, rise to pray by night except a little, half the night or little less or little more. (56)

There have been eager *ṣīlik*-s who did not let up on their nocturnal devotions until daybreak and so were able to say the morning prayer with the ablution they had for evening prayers. Shaykh Abū ḥilīb al-Makkī (d. 996) has mentioned the names of forty such men, followers of the Prophet in the book named *Qūt al-qulūb* (Nourishment of the hearts). (57) It is recommended that nocturnal devotions take no less than one-sixth of the night time. Know that staying up at night is by Divine Grace and not merely the act of a seeker going in search of his beloved. (58) The light of love for getting up at night shall not be kindled in a *ṣīlik*'s heart unless the real Beloved has first made itself manifest in the heart of the believer. When the heart receives such an inkling, the willing soul is awakened and in all honour and ecstasy stands in prayer before the Creator of all goodness and asks relief from the agony of separation of lovers and the Beloved. (59)

Shaykh-s who achieved spiritual states, all observed nocturnal vigilance. One can find many references to the excellence of *tahajjud* or nocturnal devotion, in the rising at nights to spend time in prayers of supplication in numerous Qur'ānic verses and traditions. (60) It is related that the most despicable men in the eyes of God are those who lie down like corpses all night and waste their days in loafing. (61) Therefore, *tahajjud* means wakefulness as the Holy Qur'ān directs night prayers, prayers of supplication, repentance, remembrance of God, reckoning with the self and reprimanding it. These are some of the major rites and exercises of 'irfān.



### XIII: The Four Journeys in Mysticism

Journeys are of various types in mysticism. There is the physical journey which the *sīlik* or walker along the Path undertakes. Then there are the inner journeys and journeys that imply a beginning and an end with superior destinations. These moral or spiritual journeys are divided into four journeys, each of which is endowed with very subtle points. The depth of *ʿirfān* and its *sayr* and *suḥk* rest in these journeys. We shall not analyse them here in any detail but merely mention the most concise text concerning the four divine journeys:

Know that four journeys exist for the seekers among the mystics and divine authorities. These are the journey from men towards God, journeying along with the Lord within Him. The third journey is the opposite of the first, it is from God to man with God and the fourth journey is in some respects opposite to the second for it is journeying with God among men. (62)

The first journey is devoted to the removal of all curtains or veils of darkness and light and the entering the world of matter, the Heavens and the Lord's divine domain. The second journey is passing through the world of spirit. However, the third journey, the journey from God to man is superior to the second journey because the latter is *sukr* or intoxication in reaching God and disappearing in Him, which when achieved, the *sīlik* finds new life in the Lord and by his eyes, and through every means. In this fourth journey, he sees and perceives the entire world of matter and Heaven and witnesses the grandeur of the Divine Domain of Power and Majesty and imparts knowledge of actions, attributes and of essence. (63)

### XIV: Sufi character and conduct

The most significant feature of the Sufis or mystics is their behaviour or conduct which consists of patience, humility, advice, sympathy, kindness, moderation, devotion, service, fellowship, joy, generosity, compassion, friendliness, pardon, munificence, fidelity, decency, affection, cheerfulness, calmness, prayer, good temperament, soothed ego, respect for brothers, honoring the elders, mercy toward minors and adults, belittling the ego of himself and rating high all that comes unto him. (64) The Prophet said,

I have been sent down to destroy bad habits and teach proper conduct to the servants (of God). (65)

In his counsel to Mu'jdh ibn Jabal, the Prophet in fact compiled all good and proper conduct as he says and ruled out improper conduct:

O Mu'jdh! Practice chastity and virtue, be truthful in word and action, fulfil promises and return to the owner all that has been left with you in trust. Avoid treason and observe neighbourliness; have mercy and compassion for orphans", talk softly and offer greetings, do good and do not seek plenty. Treat this world with disdain but cherish the next. Beware the Day of Reckoning. Try, O Mu'jdh, not to curse the patient and the meek. Make sure you commit no sin; repent immediately if you do and continue in a state of repentance. Know that Almighty God admits those of His servants to His Presence who are equipped with these qualities.

These are some of the qualities that a Sufi must possess:

#### 1. Humility

A Sufi's best quality is his humility. He who entertains humility in his heart can benefit by it all the time. He will be at ease in his association with others and others will be comfortable when dealing with him. The Prophet of God, in spite of his glorious status, set examples of humility by darning his own clothes and shoes with his own hands. He sat down and spoke with the poor, the orphaned and aided them. Biyazîd Bisîmî (d. 875) said,

A man is humble who belittles his own ego and holds it at the lowest level and regards himself as the worse and lowliest living creature.

## 2. Moderation and Leniency

Another Sufi characteristic is moderation and leniency, forbearance and toleration of others. The Prophet never said an unkind word to anyone. He never derided a food (put before him), nor did he punish a servant. It must be born in mind that the general moderation that people observe is a Sufi characteristic. It is said that everything has an essence. Man's essence is reason and patience is reason's essence. The proof of a man's reason is his tolerance of the pains and hardships inflicted on him by others and also courteous treatment of the people which purges the ego of impurities and palliates mulishness and quick anger. It is recorded in a ḥadīth (tradition) that he who enjoys being lenient most shall reap more benefits.

## 3. Sacrifice

Another quality of the Sufis is their readiness for sacrifice. Sacrifice generates from a powerful sense of compassion and mercy. It implies the strength of the soul to give away an only available object in sacrifice to others. It also implies patience and independence. Abū 'afṣ Suhrawardī (d. 1234) said,

Sacrifice means preferring brothers and friends to oneself in all affairs of this and of other world, so that there be no distinction among blood brothers, relatives, and friends.

## 4. Pardon or Forgiveness

Pardoning of others is another Sufi trait. Mystics go to the extreme in overlooking the wrongs done to them by others. Sufyīn al-Thawrī (d. 778) said,

If you do good to someone who has harmed you, then it can be said that you have done good, for returning good for good is the work of tradesmen.

The Prophet said,

To do good means to pardon the cruelty of other's to yourself and to make up with and join him who severs his ties with you and to be generous to him who withholds things from you.

## 5. Cheerfulness

Good-naturedness and cheerfulness are other Sufi characteristics. It warms the hearts and pleases others. Their joyfulness is a sign of the light of their hearts. As Almighty God says

..There shall be beaming faces, smiling and cheerful. (66)

## 6. Indulgence

Another of the qualities of the mystic is that he is opposed to formalism and fastidiousness in his manner and conduct. A condition for this is imitation of the Prophet in softness of speech and joviality. The prophet once said,

I do not make jokes and do not utter anything except the truth.

Taking things hard or being hard to please is bad in everything including dress, food, reception of guests, in asking questions, in speech and in all other things pertaining to this world.

## 7. Generosity (Infiq)

Infiq is another specified characteristic of the Sufis. Hoarding is abhorrent because the Sufi sees himself as residing by the seaside. He considers that divine blessings shall remain with him indefinitely, and if one who lives by the sea takes to hoarding water he will be open to ridicule and accused of ignorance. The Prophet says

Each day two angels make the following declamation: "O Lord bless him with plenty who is busy performing charitable deeds and destroy the assets and holdings of him who is miserly and withholds things from the people."

## 8. Contentment

The Master of the Faithful and Preceptor of seekers, Imam 'Alī ('A) said,

Contentment is a blade that never becomes blunt.

Dhī l-Nĕn al-Miṣrĕ (d. 859) said:

He who exercises contentment shall be free of and at peace with the people and shall gain superiority and excellence over his peers.

## 9. Putting Off Enmity and Anger

A Sufi must purge himself of all feelings of anger and animosity. There should be no such feelings in a Sufi's heart toward anything or anyone. Such feelings should be replaced by spiritual qualities in a Sufi and by himself. The Messenger of God has said:

Power and might do not consist in overwhelming someone by force. Mighty is he who controls his feelings of anger.

## 10. Peacemaking

The Sufi is able and willing to make peace, to agree with and befriend others and to give up a feud. The Lord has described His Messenger's Apostles in these words:

Let them be hard on Our enemies but lenient and merciful to Our friends.

### 11. Proper Gratefulness

When a *sġlik* is first developed into a fountainhead for monotheism, he loses all beings in Almighty God. He sees the Lord as the source of all generosity and prohibitions. As he proceeds and develops farther and reaches monotheism in its pure and absolute form, he finds the proof and reason for divine bestowals and withholdings. He sees the cause first and next the effect and such awareness and knowledge is gained by insight. The *sġlik* will then offer thanks first to the Benefactor, the Absolute Donor and then to the Cause that has acted as intermediate. It is recorded in a *ġadġth* that the first and foremost group of people to be invited to Heaven shall be the thankful ones, those who are grateful in prosperity in hardship, in sorrow and in joy.

### 12. Status and Dignity

Whenever a *sġlik* has knowledge and is aware of the blights of ego it maybe that he confers of what he has to assist friends and uses his status and wealth to improve and reform relations. A man's integrity comes to a test in four things: interdiction, charity honor and lowliness. (67)

### XV: The Stages and Journeys of *suluk*

We conclude this paper with a discussion of the stages of the Path. The *sġlik* (seeker) goes through numerous states, positions, waystations from the beginning to the end of his procession toward God. (68) There are various views regarding the number of such stages. Shaykh Maġmġd Shabistarġ (d. 1337), says in his book, the *Gulshan-i rġz* (The Rose garden of secrets):

Two steps to a *sġlik's* path  
But nine perils they contain  
Loss of identity comes first  
Next to cross the wilderness  
Known as life's domain.

However, prominent mystics contend these positions are seven. Abġ Naġr al-Sarrij (d. 988), in his authoritative book *al-Luma'*, discusses seven stages, namely, repentance, abstinence, asceticism, mendicancy, patience, trust, resignation or consent. (69) In his *Manġiq al-ġayr* (Language of the birds), Farġd al-dġn 'Aġġir (d. ca. 1221) considers the following stages: begging, love, knowledge, independence, monotheism, mendicancy and annihilation (*fanġ*) or ceasing to exist. The highest figure for a *sġlik's* positions and stages provided in the books *ġad Maydġn* (One hundred Fields) (70) and *Manġzil Al-Sġ'irġn* (Stations of the wayfarers), (71) by Khwġja 'Abd Allġh Anġirġ (d. 1089) is one hundred. (72) The main reason for this discrepancy lies in the mystics' elaborations or in their summarizing or in the differences of their statuses and points of destination. Or, they may each have posed the issue from a different view.

From the expanse of oneness  
'A word was heard, saying:  
"I am the Lord"  
Another went by distance covered

By boats near and far  
Yet another remarked  
Of the tress, the mole and line Of the Beloved by candle and wine  
When destination came to the fore  
Men of understanding reasoned no more. (73)

Finally, we conclude our short paper and shorter excursus on mystic states with a summary of the states, stages and waystations that a *ṣalik* must go through as given in Suhrawardī's *ʿadīb al-murādīn*:

1-Awakening (*intibāḥ*) from the torpor of neglect.

2-Repentance (*tawba*), that is returning from all that is not of God after having gone astray and to maintain a state of constant repentance.

3-*Injbat* is going back to the remembrance of God. Some have said that repentance is by fear and *injbat* is by desire and choice. A third group maintains that repentance is external and *injbat* is internal.

4-*Waraʿa* is foregoing something about which a doubt has risen. It means abstinence and self-restraint.

5-Taking stock of oneself and examining one's soul (*muḥāsabat al-nafs*), reflecting upon one's actions.

6-Sincerity implies tolerance of pain and forsaking comfort.

7-Renunciation (*zuhd*) is turning away from things that are permissible or religiously sanctioned and to guide or re-channel the desires and passions.

8-Mendacity (*faqr*) involves absence of self and property and removing from the heart all that leaves the hand.

9-Truthfulness (*ʿidq*), both external and internal.

10-*Taʿabbur*, or tolerance is forbearance of bitterness and these are the final positions or stages of the novitiates (*murādīn*).

11-Patience (*ṣabr*) that relinquishes complaints.

12-Submission is the enjoyment of *mishap*.

13-*Ikhlāṣ* (sincerity) implies forcing men out of the Lord's business.

14-Resignation or trust (*tawakkul*) means relying upon Him, who destroys lust for all except Him.

Notes:

1-*Maḥmūd Shabistarī*, *Gulshan-i rīz*, ed. Ṭ. Muvaḥḥid, Tehran: ṭahīrī 1368 Shamsī, first stanza. On this theme in his thought, see L. Lewisohn, *Beyond faith and infidelity: The Sufi poetry and teachings of Mahmud Shabistari*, Richmond: Curzon Press 1995, pp. 217ff.

2-*Al-Qurʿān*, *al-muʿminīn* (The Believers) 23: 115.

3-Ibn 'Arabç, al-FutE'it al-Makkiyya, Cairo: BElıq 1911, vol. II, pp. 231-32, 310; Mu'ammad al-Khwırızımç, Shar'ı Fu¥E¥ al-'ıkam, ed. S.J. shtiyınç, Tehran: Intıshırıt-i °ıkmıt 1364 Shamsç, pp. 285, 242; Qııç Sa'çd al-Qummç, Shar'ı Taw'ıçd al-`adEıq, ed. N. °abçbç, Tehran: vol. I, pp. 40; 54, 101, 507, 686, 703; Javıdç mulç, Ta'rçr Tamhçd al-qawı'ıd-i `ı'in al-Dçn 'Alç Ibn Mu'ammad al-Turka, Tehran: Intıshırıt-i Zahrı' 1372 Shamsç, p. 510. Cf. A. Schimmel, Mystical dimensions of Islam, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press 1975, pp. 139, 189, 268, 291, 382; W. Chittick, The Sufi path of knowledge: Ibn 'Arabç's metaphysics of imagination, Albany: State University of New York Press 1989, pp. 66, 126, 180, 204, 250.

4-Al-Qur'ın, al-Dhıriyıt (The scattering winds) 51: 56.

5-Al-Qur'ın, al-°ashr (The resurrection) 59: 19.

6-Al-Qur'ın, al-°ıjr (The Rock) 15: 26.

7-Al-Qur'ın, al-Tçn (The Fig) 95: 4.

8-Shabıstarç, Gulshan-i rız, couplet 151.

9-Al-Qur'ın, al-A'ı zıb (The Confederates) 33: 77.

10-Al-Qur'ın, al-ısrı' (The Night Journey) 17: 70.

11-Al-Qur'ın, al-Baqara (The Cow) 2: 31 and al-'Alaq (The Clot) 96: 6.

12-Shabıstarç, Gulshan-i rız, couplet 329.

13-midç, Ghurar al-'ıkam wa durar al-kalım, ed. J. Urmawç, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1366 Shamsç, vol. V, p. 108, 'ıadçth # 7569; Maytham al-Ba'rınç, Shar'ı mı'at kalıma, ed. J. Urmawç, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamç li l-maşbE'ıt 1996, pp. 52ff; °aydar mulç, Tafsr al-Mu'ıçş al-A'°am wa l-ba'r al-khııam, ed. S.M. Musawç Tabrçzç, Tehran: Vizırat-i farhang va irshıd-i İslımç 1374 Shamsç, vol. I, p. 249;

14-Shabıstarç, Gulshan-i rız, couplet 411.

15-Shabıstarç, Gulshan-i rız, couplet 395, referring to the 'ıadçth

My heavens and My earth embrace Me not, but the heart of My believing servant does embrace Me.

See Ghazılç, I'ıyı' 'ulEm al-dçn, Cairo: BElıq 1908-09, vol. III, pp. 1, 12; Ibn 'Arabç, al-FutE'it, vol. I, p. 216 and vol. III, p. 250 inter alia; 'Allıma Majlısç, Bi'ır al-anwır, 3rd edition, Beirut: Dır i'ıyı' al-turıth al-'arabç 1983, vol. LV, p. 39; Qummç, Shar'ı Taw'ıçd, vol. I, p. 414. Cf. Chittick, The Sufi path of knowledge, pp. 107, 276, 339-40, 348, 379; Schimmel, Mystical dimensions, p. 190.

16-Ibn 'Arabç, Rası'il, ed, N.M. Hiravç, Tehran 1369 Shamsç, p. 70; eadem, FutE'it, vol. II, p. 262; Qummç, Shar'ı Taw'ıçd, vol. I, p. 491; Majlısç, Bi'ır, vol. LV, p. 44, 'ıadçth # 9-13. Cf. Schimmel, Mystical

dimensions, p. 96; Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge*, pp. 217, 328, 364; al-Ghazali, *The niche of lights*, tr. W.H.T. Gairdner, New Delhi: Kitab Bhavan 1991, p. 44.

17-Ibn 'Arabī, *Rasā'il*, p. 29; eadem, *Futūḥ*, vol. II, p. 553; Kulaynī, *al-Kifāy*, ed. 'A. Ghaffārī, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1957-60, vol. II, p. 352; Majlisī, *Biḥār*, vol. LXVII, p. 22; Qummī, *Sharḥ Tawḥīd*, vol. I, 29-30, 702. Cf. Chittick, *The Sufi path of knowledge*, pp. 176, 326-29; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, pp. 43, 133, 144, 277.

18-Qummī, *Sharḥ Tawḥīd*, vol. I, pp. 736-37; cf. Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 136.

19-Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rjz*, couplets 397-99, 402, 409, 410.

20-Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, pp. 98-108.

21-Lewisohn, *Faith and infidelity*, pp. 274-77, 304ff.

22-See the classic work of Shī'ī Sufism on this topic, *Asrār al-sharī'a* of Sayyid 'aydar 'amulī (d. after 1385), tr. A. Yate as *Inner secrets of the Path*, London: Element Books for the Zahra Trust 1991.

23-Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rjz*, couplet 455.

24-Shabistarī, *Gulshan-i rjz*, couplet 575-580.

25-'Abdul 'usayn Zarrīnkāb, *The value of the Sufi heritage*, Tehran 1362 Shamsī, p. 101.

26-Murtaḥī Muṣahharī, *'Ulūm-i Islāmī*, Tehran: Intishārāt-i 'adri 1366 Shamsī, vol. II, pp. 94-95.

27-Cf. the ḥadīth in Mūrzi 'usayn Nūrī, *Mustadrak al-wasī'il*, Qum: Ismī'īliyyīn n.d., vol. XI, p. 173; 'amulī, *Tafsīr*, vol. I, p. 195 and pp. 227-28 for discussion; Schimmel, *Mystical dimensions*, p. 99.

28-'Azīz-i Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Insān al-Kāmil*, ed. M. Molé, Tehran: 'ahārī 1362 Shamsī, p. 3.

29-Rāmī, *Mathnavī-yi Ma'navī*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London: Gibb Memorial Trust 1925-40, preface to Book Five.

30-On these concepts, see Martin Lings, *The book of certainty*, Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society 1992, pp. 1-11.

31-Al-Qur'ān, al-An'ām (The Cattle) 6: 162.

32-Ibn Sīnī, *al-Ishārāt wa l-tanbihāt* with commentaries, ed. M. Shihābī, Qum: Nashr al-balīgha 1375 Shamsī, vol. III, p. 369.

33-'Aṣṣīr, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, ed. R.A. Nicholson, London: Gibb Memorial Trust 1905-7, vol. II, p. 34.

34-'Aṣṣīr, *Tadhkirat al-awliyā'*, vol. II, p. 34.

35-Murtaḥī Muṣahharī, *'Ulūm-i Islāmī*, vol. II, pp. 87, 90-91.

36-Shabistarç, Gulshan-i riz, couplet 121; Muḥammad Lihçjç, Mafjtçḫ al-l'jiz, eds. M.R. Khiliqç & 'l. Karbiç, Tehran: Intishjrit-i Zavvir 1371 Shamsç, pp. 66-72. Cf. Lewisohn, Faith and infidelity, pp. 228-37.

37-Ibn Sçni, al-lshjrit wa l-tanbçhjt, vol. III, p. 375.

38-Nasafç, Insjn-i Kimil, pp. 12-3, 84.

39-Nasafç, Zubdat al-ḥaq'iç, ed. °aqq-varðç Niḫirç, Tehran: ±ah£rç 1985, p. 111.

40-Sayyed Mahðç Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, ed. S.M. °usaynç ±ehrjnç, Tehran: Intishjrit-i °ikmat 1981, p. 131.

41-Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, p. 131.

42-Jamil al-Dçn Khwjsjç, Sharḫ ghurar al-ḥikam, ed. J. Urmawç, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1366 Shamsç, vol. I, p. 260, ḥadçth # 1040 and vol. IV, p. 191 ḥadçth # 5792.

43-Nasafç, Insjn-i Kimil, p. 86.

44-Ab£ °afs 'Umar Suhrawardç, 'Awjirif al-ma'jirif, tr. Q. Anḫjç, Tehran n.d., p. 104. Cf. The 'Awarif al-ma'arif, tr. H.W. Clarke, Lahore: Mohammad Ashraf 1979 repr., pp. 44-45, 72-73.

45-Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, p. 148.

46-Ibn 'Arabç, Rasi'il, p. 11.

47-Khwjsjç, Sharḫ ghurar al-ḥikam, vol. VI, p. 3 ḥadçth # 10471.

48-Ibn 'Arabç, Rasi'il, p. 15-6.

49-Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, p. 150.

50-°amidç, Ghurar al-ḥikam, vol. VI, p. 163 and 166 ḥadçth # 9918 and 9942.

51-Kulaynç, al-Kjifç, vol. II, p. 225; Majlisç, Biḫjir, vol. XV, p. 140; cf. Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, p. 161.

52-Baḫr al-'ul£m, Sayr va sul£k, p. 151-53.

53-Ibn 'Arabç, Rasi'il, p. 13-14; °amidç, Ghurar al-ḥikam, vol. VI, p. 124 ḥadçth # 9758.

54-Ibn 'Arabç, Rasi'il, p. 17-8.

55-Al-Qur'jn, al-lsri' (The Night Journey) 17: 79.

56-Al-Qur'jn, al-Muzammil (The Shrouded One) 73: 1-3.

57-'lzz al-Dçn Maḫm£d Kishjnç, Miḫbiḫ al-hidjya, ed. J. Humi'ç, Tehran: Majlis 1946, p. 314.



58-Suhrawardċ, 'Awjirif al-ma'irif, p. 147.

59-Suhrawardċ, 'Awjirif al-ma'irif, p. 147.

60-Javid Malikċ Tabrċzċ, Sayr ila Lljh, tr. M. ĩhirschċ, Tehran 1984, p. 106.

61-Javid Malikċ Tabrċzċ, Asrjr al-ŷalit, tr. R. Rajabzida, Tehran 1985, p. 457.

62-Mullj ĩadri Shċrjzċ, al-Asfjr al-Arba'a, ed. R. Luŷfċ et al, 3rd edition, Beirut: Djr i'yi' turjth al-'arabc 1981, vol. I, p. 13.

63-Mullj ĩadri Shċrjzċ, al-Asfjr al-Arba'a, vol. I, p. 13, scholia of Mu'ammad Riĳi Qumshehċ.

64-AbĒ Najċb Suhrawardċ, ĩdjb al-murċdċn, tr. M. Shċrkhjn, Tehran 1363 Shamsċ, p. 72. Cf. A Sufi rule for novices: Kitjb ĩdjb al-murċdċn, tr. M. Milson, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press 1975, p. 37.

65-ĩabarsċ, Majma' al-bayjn, Beirut: Mu'assasat al-a'lamċ 1995, vol. X, pp. 86-7.

66-Al-Qur'jn, 'Abasa (He frowned) 80: 38.

67-Suhrawardċ, 'Awjirif al-ma'irif, pp. 108-20.

68-Cf. S.H. Nasr, "The spiritual states in Sufism," in Sufi essays, Albany: State University of New York Press 1991, pp. 68-83; Schimmel, Mystical dimensions, pp. 98-129.

69-Al-Sarrjĳ, Kitjb al-luma', ed. R.A. Nicholson, Leiden: Gibb Memorial Trust 1914, p. 42. Cf. Nasr, "The spiritual states," p. 76.

70-Khwjja 'Abdalljh Anŷjrċ, ĩad maydjn, ed. Q. Anŷjrċ, Tehran: ĩahĒrċ 1360 Shamsċ. Cf. Chemins de Dieu, trois traitĒs spirituels, tr. S. de Laugier de Beauceuil, Paris: Sindbad 1985.

71-Khwjja 'Abdalljh Anŷjrċ, Manjzil al-sj'irċn, ed. A. 'Aŷwa, Cairo: Maktabat Ja'far al-'adċtha 1977; cf. French translation by S. de Laugier de Beauceuil, Cairo: IFAO 1962.

72-Ravan Farhadi, Abdullah Ansari of Herat, Richmond: Curzon Press 1995; S. de Laugier de Beauceuil, Khwjdja 'Abdalljh Anŷjrċ, mystique hanbalite, Beirut: Dar el-Machreq 1965.

73-Shabistarċ, Gulshan-i rjz, couplets 25-30.

74-Suhrawardċ, ĩdjb al-murċdċn, pp. 74-75. Cf. A Sufi rule, p. 38.

Mullj ĩadri in the Narrative of Henry Corbin

Dr. Karċm Mujtahidċ, University of Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Henry Corbin, in his ingenuity, adroitly tries to open the doors for Western scholars to realities that many scholars of philosophy, due to their failure in appreciating the terminology of Islamic philosophy, have never realized. His studies on Mullī ḥadrī and his other works deserve serious attention. In his desire to understand Mullī ḥadrī, Corbin immersed himself in the subtle meanings of what Mullī ḥadrī expounded. He was not merely a peripheral, or disinterested, observer and did not study the divine sage superficially. He opted for understanding the truth to assimilate it and pioneer a path of inquiry for those who followed him. A lucid example of this endeavour is his translation of Kitāb al-Mashīʿir (The book of Metaphysical Penetrations) with glosses on the exposition of the critical terminology that Mullī ḥadrī employs. Corbin's analyses of the corpus of Mullī ḥadrī reveals him to be profoundly connected to the mental universe of the Iranian philosopher. He regards Mullī ḥadrī as 'an Illuminist Avicennian deeply infused with the opinions of the divine theosopher and gnostic of Andalusia- Ibn ʿArabī, who himself ranks as one of the greatest intellectual figures in all times.' Doctrines such as the principality of existence do not go unnoticed in his broad vision. He observes that, unlike philosophers preceding him, Mullī ḥadrī has no place in his thought for an 'established realm of quiddities'. Rather in his innovative lexicon, one may speak of a certain kind of motion of existence called the trans-substantial motion (ḥarakat-i jawharī), 'a motion,' observes Corbin, 'which is not the kind that is known as 'change' by the West. Rather it is in the form of progress and perfection.' The importance of understanding Mullī ḥadrī and his transcendent philosophy can easily be appreciated on realizing that it is the key to initiating a fruitful dialogue between the philosophers of the Orient and those of the Occident. Such a dialogue would enable both sides to decipher the common origins of some of their ideas, and unveil the curtain of ignorance that divides them.

Perhaps some Iranians, who are well versed in Islamic philosophy, feel no need to acquaint themselves with the views of Orientalists on Mullī ḥadrī (d. 1641). This is even if those works are scholarly and even if their understanding is subtle and penetrating. This inevitable precaution is historically explainable and their stance from a psychological perspective is completely understandable. Nevertheless, the denial of another's opinion without consideration, and the contradiction of another's view without having made a painstaking analysis of it cannot solve any problems. Nor can it guarantee the life of traditional thought or prepare the ground for progress.

From this viewpoint, the studies of Western scholars about our traditional works, whether historical, lexical, or philosophical possess substantial importance. Understanding their research contributes to our understanding especially if their contribution is of the scale of Henry Corbin on the Illuminist (ishrīqī) and gnostic (ʿarfīnī) traditions of Islamic thought in Iran.

Henry Corbin (d. 1978) (1) stands like a colossus in the study of Islamic philosophy. No scholar worth the name can afford to ignore his work, even if with the intention of refuting his method. In Iran, some of his works have been translated into Persian and at times books and articles about him and his thought have been published. Without claiming to be an expert on this subject, I intend to consider Corbin's opinion about Mullī ḥadrī. Needless to say, Corbin's opinion on Mullī ḥadrī cannot be considered in isolation from his view of philosophy among Muslims. For his distinct and specialized research in this field is in reality not limited to him. Rather, according to Corbin, Mullī ḥadrī hails from a very grand intellectual and philosophical tradition. Not only is he known to be their inheritor, but in reality, the reviver of this very original intellectual heritage as well as the guardian of its strength.

In the manner in which Corbin considers Islamic philosophy, Mullī ḥadrī is not only the most important thinker of his age and the expositor of the most intricate and attractive form of the traditional

philosophy of our nation. Rather, akin to Avicenna (d. 1037), Shaykh al-Ishriq Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and other prominent figures, he is the crystallization of philosophy itself during his time. Hence his thought not only forms a part of the political and social material history in its meaning prevalent today, but rather, it is as if, in order to understand it properly one must look beyond history, and history itself too must be analyzed on this basis. Thought that does not transcend history is not deemed to be original even though it may have originated from the heart of history. On the other hand, wherever Corbin alludes to Shi'ite thought, he primarily refers to Mullī ṭadrij's thought, even if he were to delve in the thinkers preceding Mullī ṭadrij or consider his legacy in traditional thought.

Mullī ṭadrij, in the history of Islamic thought as understood by Henry Corbin, is recognized to be one of the original luminaries. He is not only the follower of previous masters and inspirer of the later thinkers, but also, occupies the spiritual horizon of that group of souls who are able to safeguard their inner realm from every kind of intrusion of outer history and be the guardians of the continuity of a single torch, under whose rays each one of them, during the opportunity that they have been provided with, can show its presence with relation to his specific real existence, and through unity (ittiḥīd) or intellection (ta'āqul) that overwhelms it, can return to his original end.

In this tradition, philosophical thought is not separate from the levels of spiritual wayfaring and mysticism and such a philosopher knows no age. On the contrary, were he to possess perfect knowledge of his age, he would never be overpowered and daunted by it in any way. The detritus of his age and the mundane tedium of its thought would not affect him. For he has opted for a place other than the fallen shore, and the specific motivation and bravery that he has made obligatory on himself protects him from superficial thinking until his end.

Mullī ṭadrij is not only known to be the most important relational link between previous and later mystical philosophers. Rather, his work synthesizes and harmonizes the different manifestations of culture and divine teachings that come from remote times and places. In this connection, we cannot use the word 'mixture' (iltiqā), for only one can dare venture to undertake such a task, who himself is foreign to the issues and cannot appreciate and understand their depth. He intuitively and covertly in the realm of his soul contemplates 'quantity' (kamm) and 'quality' (kayf) and their subjective consideration, and most important of all, on the possibility of their actual harmony (insijim). Mullī ṭadrij is a harmonizer and not a syncretic borrower.

With regard to the work of Mullī ṭadrij, it would not be correct to employ the commonly used word 'authoring' (ta'līf). For many a contemporary writer, even if he were to be the best, due to fear of not revealing the truth, maintains his aloofness from the subject and does not apprehend it intuitively. He limits himself conceptually in preserving the 'external' and sometimes is even accused of inappropriate exaggeration. Sometimes, he is even led to silence or repetition, in such a manner that is known to be acceptable only among a particular and distinct class.

If Mullī ṭadrij was led to isolation during his life and even practically limited his socialization to a particular group of people, it was perhaps because he did not want, or the circumstances did not allow him to be an officially recognized innovative master. His commitment to knowledge and philosophy, which he considered as his own research, would not permit him to be widely recognized in his time.

From this perspective, it can be suggested boldly and without exaggeration that theosophy and philosophy in its inner movement among Muslims, during a particular epoch of history found the actuality of its substance in Mullī ṭadrij, and in his words 'it had attained a crystallization of its essential

form'. Hence, to prove or disprove superficially the ideas of Mullī ṭadrī, which in any way keeps us estranged from the broad dimensions and vast horizon of his mind, does not benefit us much to understand and recognize his thought.

The reader of his works, regardless of him being a specialist or an amateur, a Muslim or a non-Muslim, an Iranian or a non-Iranian must possess at the onset such a mode of spiritual preparation that he is able, out of sympathy (or perhaps it is better if we say 'confidence'), to listen to some allusions and subtleties of the spiritual tongue as well as their inner musical sound. Such works, which have cognates in various cultures of other nations as well, do not address themselves to everyone. They cannot be summarized in a few phrases, and until they reach the hands of a real decipherer of gem, they do not find their necessary brilliance and radiance. Without such a condition, the criterion for their correct evaluation cannot be easily obtained.

In considering Corbin's views on Mullī ṭadrī, I shall briefly mention some of his writings concerning Mullī ṭadrī, especially his translation on *Kitāb al-Mashj'ir*.

1. His speech "Mullī ṭadrī Shāhīzād's position in Iranian Philosophy", (2)

which was delivered on 28 November 1962 at the Association of Iran and France in Tehran, and printed in that very year in Paris, is one of his earliest works on him. It was probably the first serious contribution to locating him within the wider parameters of Islamic thought and philosophy in Iran.

2. *Terre céleste et corps de résurrection*. (3) This was first printed in Paris in 1960.

In a section of this book that is allocated to translations of works by Iranian thinkers, Corbin has directly translated a part of the book *al-'ikmah al-'Arshiyyah* (The Wisdom of the Throne) into the French. (4) According to Corbin, on the basis of such works, an astonishing proximity and nearness is observable between Iranian and Cambridge Platonists such as Henry More. (5)

3. A complete French translation of the *Kitāb al-Mashj'ir* of Mullī ṭadrī with an introduction on the terminology and a comparative study of European existentialism exemplified by Sartre and Heidegger and Iranian philosophy. It was published together with an edition of the original Arabic text and a Persian translation by the Qajar prince *Bad'ul Mulk Mīrzā* in 1964, among a collection of works that he initiated called *Bibliothèque Iranienne*. (6)

4. *En Islam Iranien*. (7) It consists of a total of four volumes and was printed in 1972. In volume four of the book, he discusses the life, history and thought of Mullī ṭadrī.

Clearly all the deliberations of Corbin on Mullī ṭadrī's thought cannot be limited to these few significant examples. For Corbin's approach Mullī ṭadrī demands that we study him in connection with a wider methodological approach to Islamic philosophy. In a way he seeks to establish a lineage of a family among whom a strong inner bond has been realized, and each of whom do not necessarily proceed from the other, but rather in reality live and subsist together and besides one another. Even if, on the basis of studying the historical path of the concepts and terminology, we have no option but to refer from one philosopher to another, it is still as if the inward intuition of each of them portrays a perfect visage of all that transcends historical time. Together, the roots of their spiritual life are from the eternal world, and it is only on this basis that the personality of each of them is understandable.

Henry Corbin, considering the dimension of Mullī ṭadrī's stance on the principality of existence, while comparing him with Thomas Aquinas, (8) writes:

It may have been possible to consider Mullī ṭadrī as the Thomas Aquinas of Iran if the latter too would be able to be a divine philosopher at the same time, and a gnostic like Jacob(9) Boehme. (10)

Thereafter Corbin, once again, historically explains this issue as follows:

If we would like to, as historians, determine the general characteristics of the thought of Mullī ṭadrī, we must say that we are faced with one of the followers of Avicenna. Mullī ṭadrī was completely familiar with the works of Avicenna and used to write commentaries on them. Nevertheless, he is an Avicennian of Suhrawardian Illuminationism, who not only transcends the differences that exist between Avicenna and Suhrawardī, but also presents a completely personal exposition on Illuminationism. We must also add that this thinker is an Illuminationist Avicennian, and deeply infused with the opinions of the divine theosopher and gnostic of Andalusia Ibn 'Arabī, who himself ranks as one of the greatest intellectual figures in all times. (11)

According to Corbin Mullī ṭadrī was successful in apprehending and finding an existential exposition of Illuminationist theosophy. For, in his opinion, it is only an 'act of existence' that can bestow individuation to quiddity. Otherwise existence can in no way be attained from quiddity.

Corbin continues:

There no longer exists in Mullī ṭadrī's philosophy, contrary to philosophers preceding him, an established realm of quiddities. Rather, in his philosophy one may speak about a particular motion. By that he means 'the instability of existence' [trans-substantial motion]. According to the capacity of a quiddity, a set of existential changes can be acquired. (12)

After a gap of one sentence, Corbin adds:

For example, let us consider the perception of body. In order for us to understand what sustains existence, its existential action should not be limited to the realm of the corporeal world and sense perception. We must perceive it through a simple [and non-composite] element. We know that in traditional physics this word stands for 'how-ness', that crosses a path of successive changes, sequentially beginning from an inanimate entity, a plant, an animal, and attains the status of a living and rational body, which understands spiritual matters. It is as if there exists a great plan of existential motion that traverses from the depths of inorganic entities to the dehiscence of the earthly form of man and thereafter beyond that, for in the present world the existence of the human being in his existential action is still in anyway no more than an entity of the intermediate level. (13)

Again, in continuation of the same discussion, after some lines below, he says:

Motion, as understood by Mullī ṭadrī and all the thinkers that I consider over here, is not the kind that is known as 'change' by the West. Rather it is in the form of progress and perfection. Besides, it is not behind us, but rather, in a way, below us. The direction of the world's movement in their consideration is vertical and can be said to resemble a kind of Gothic architecture, and it is in conformity with the

origin (mabda') and the return (ma'jd) and the principle of raj'ah on whose basis history in the world comes into existence. (14)

It must be said that Henry Corbin, in the texts that he has written generally about the Islamic theosophers of Iran, addresses primarily a Western readership. He tries to show the historical importance of the theosophers in the development of the thinking of the Christian West, especially their spiritual change in the 12th and 13th centuries. But moreover, fundamentally he tries to prove the harmony between the true followers of Avicenna and Suhrawardī and the extent to which it is in conformity with the beliefs of Shi'ite Muslims in Iran.

The stance that Corbin takes concerning Islamic philosophy is in sharp contrast to people like Ernest Renan. This latter approach considers Islamic philosophy to have ended after Averroes, and regards the later works, of which they are oblivious, as ineffective, or colorless reflections of a forgotten tradition. Obviously, such a conclusion springs from a superficial vision, which considers knowledge and conviction to have ended prior to any kind of reflection and contemplation.

In such a 'narrow strait', not only are the paths connected to unknown realms, rather due to the inevitable prevalence of compounded ignorance, but also a search for ideology and thought comes into existence. Apart from its negative social dimensions, this is very dangerous from an individual point of view, since it is practically by the person himself upon whom 'inspection' is imposed. The apparent result is to become fascinated and daunted by modern sciences and arts. The inner result is despondency and the denial of every kind of originality and innovation that is based on intellectual and volitional means.

In such cultural conditions, problems afflict people who live in technologically developed and in so-called developing countries. The latter, especially if they, similar to Iranians, were to possess a radiant cultural past, are susceptible to dangers whose multiple facets cannot be easily enumerated. The problems, due to their inevitable intricacies, cannot be perfectly clarified and distinguished, up to the extent that supposedly even if the people had no evil intention, still one cannot reach once and for all, one definite and intellectually accepted desired conclusion.

Often it is better that our discussion does not achieve closure and the continuation of the open discussion and the authenticity of the future in the utter import of the word is guaranteed. It is only by confronting the problems that are inevitably present, according to their natural direction, that one can, not only in the process, attain necessary definite solutions, but rather, can also come to understand the meanderings of the main path (tradition) and always maintain the creativity and productivity of thought. If sometimes the spiritual facet can be known better in the depths of the horizons, it is from this perspective that finally in the heart of the spirits too the secrets of the horizons can be better seen.

Finally, concerning the overall view of Henry Corbin about Mullī ṭadrī and other great figures among Muslim philosophers, it is worth being reminded that a unanimous and perfectly congruous opinion cannot be achieved in complete isolation from other interpretations. Nevertheless, one cannot doubt the broad horizon of his knowledge and his multi-dimensional foundation, which is based upon accurate knowledge of classical languages such as Greek and Latin, and modern languages like French, German, Arabic, and Persian. Nor can one reject the significance of his particular style of research, equipped with Husserl's phenomenology and hermeneutics in the mode of 'spiritual interpretation' (ta'wḥīd-i rē'ī) and 'revelation of concealed matters' (kashf al-ma'jūb), applied in the analysis of Shaykh al-Ishrīq and Mullī ṭadrī. One cannot doubt the power and penetration of his philosophical contemplations that are

coupled with intense inclinations toward the primacy of the soul (aḫīlat al-rūḥ) and his struggle in comprehending the occultation and disclosure of existence and understanding the stages of spiritual wayfaring.

Naturally, as we explained earlier, a personality of such caliber not only did not engage with Mullī ṭadrij's works by accident or under the pretext of skilful awareness, and did not consider them to be independent from the spiritual traditions of this land. Rather, in view of their centrality, he considered them to be the home, and more importantly, the place of connection and harmony, and even in relation to the future, the very 'possibility through preparedness' itself and the possible point of renewal and prosperity and the zenith of the tradition.

Corbin has considered every aspect of the life, works, and thought of Mullī ṭadrij. Each examination consists of beneficial glosses and expositions that reveal his grasp of the subject. In these glosses, Corbin alludes to problems in rendering the equivalents of subtle Arabic technical terms, especially if the later interpreters of Mullī ṭadrij are taken into consideration, and also if the exposition of all the terms are considered to be a key for the Westerners to enter the realm of his thought. The Western reader's initiation must be thorough so that the load of the meaning of the words increases as much as possible. For the struggle is not only in revealing the original characteristics of Oriental thinking. Rather more important than that it is to strive to uncover common roots between the twin traditions of the Orient and the Occident, on whose basis a dialogue can be undertaken between thinkers, that despite the remoteness of place and time, are related to one spiritual family.

Notes:

1-For more on Corbin, see *Cahiers de l'Herne*: Henry Corbin, ed. C. Jambet, Paris: l'Herne 1981; C.J. Adams, "The Hermeneutics of Henry Corbin," in *Approaches to Islam in religious Studies*, ed. R.C. Martin, Tucson: University of Arizona Press 1985, pp. 129-50; Hamid Algar, "The study of Islam: the work of Henry Corbin," *Religious Studies Review* 6.2 (1980) pp. 85-91; Hermann Landolt, "Henry Corbin, 1903–1978: Between philosophy and orientalism," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119 (1999) pp. 484-90.

2-"La Place de Mollī ṭadrij Shčrīzč (ob 1050/1640) dans la philosophie iranienne," *Studia Islamica* 18 (1962) pp. 81-113.

3-Terre céleste et corps de résurrection: de l'Iran mazdéen à l'Iran Shč'ite, Collection "La Barque du soleil", Paris: Buchet-Chastel 1960. This work has been translated in English by Nancy Pearson as *Spiritual body and celestial earth: From Mazdean Iran to Shč'ite Iran*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1990.

4-Corbin was using the lithographed edition of the book (Tehran, 1315 AH Solar). He has translated pp. 148, 151-155, and 195-198. For a study and an English translation of this work, see James W. Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne*, Princeton: Princeton University Press 1981. Another major translation is Corbin's rendition of Mullī ṭadrij's scholia on the *Wisdom of Illumination of Suhrawardč* - see *Le Livre de la sagesse orientale*, ed. C. Jambet, Paris: Verdier 1986, pp. 439-669.

5-Henry More (d. 1687). s.v. *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, gen. ed. E. Craig, London: Routledge 1998.

6-Le livre des pénétrations métaphysiques, Tehran: Departement d'Iranologie à l'Institut Franco-Iranien 1964.

7-En Islam Iranien (Aspects Spirituels et Philosophiques), 4 tomes, Paris: Gallimard 1972. It is a matter for deep regret that this work has never been translated into English.

8-St. Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274).

9-Jacob Boehme (d. 1624).

10-Cf. Corbin, "La place de Mollī ʿadrij Shčrijzč," p. 91.

11-Corbin, "La place de Mollī ʿadrij Shčrijzč," p. 95.

12-Corbin, "La place de Mollī ʿadrij Shčrijzč," p. 105.

13-Corbin, "La place de Mollī ʿadrij Shčrijzč," pp. 105-6.

14-Corbin, "La place de Mollī ʿadrij Shčrijzč," p. 106.

Majoritarianism and Constitutionalism

Hamid Hadji Haidar, Institute of Islamic Studies, UK

## Abstract

Democratic institutions are best founded upon constitutionalism. In this article, the author examines some issues of majoritarianism in democratic theory and poses some objections. The two main objections concern the rights of minorities and those who may not have voted for the largest bloc, which lacks an absolute majority. Two alternatives to majoritarianism, namely unanimity and supermajority will then be discussed. The critique of majoritarianism will conclude with an analysis of the relationship between democracy and constitutionalism.

## Introduction

Before I begin discussing majoritarianism, I would like to explain something concerning democracy itself. In short, we can define the term democracy as 'rule by the people'. (1) According to Lincoln, democracy is a kind of government in which the people have the power to govern over the people to satisfy the requirement of the people. (2) Here, we are not concerned with elaborating on the meaning of 'popular rule'. Does it mean that all people should be engaged in all public decision-making or, at least, on some basic issues? Does it mean that rulers have to be accountable to the ruled or to their representatives? Or should the ruled or their representatives elect the executive? Or does it just mean that the government should satisfy the needs and benefits of the electorate? (3) Instead, we are only concerned with democracy as a sort of government that derives its power and legitimacy from people, rather than from God, inheritance and so forth. This theory philosophically derives from the belief in 'human dignity' that emphasizes the importance of the fact that every human being is equally entitled to respect through the right to participate in decision-making, which affects his or her interests. (4)



So far, we have considered the term democracy as a system of governance. In this sense, we can describe a government as democratic if it derives its power from people. Apart from this approach, we may consider democracy as a process of decision-making. In this notion, according to the principle of political equality, democracy is a process through which members of a community have an 'equal effective input into decision' that is made collectively. (5) This collective decision-making can be imagined when people vote in a national election or referendum as well as when members of a parliament, 'a representative assembly or a committee' cast their votes. (6) In these cases, when it comes to voting for a proposal or a candidate the question of how to make a decision arises. (7) What should the rule of collective decision-making be in order to accord with democratic principles and political equality?

Ideally, if all members of the community in each case come to unanimous conclusions, it seems obvious that the requirements of democracy and political justice are materialised. In this assumed situation, everyone agrees on every issue and no one protests against the outcomes. However, in the real world, this assumption is unlikely to occur and we always face disagreement in public affairs. Therefore, we have to discover a rule by which we can choose an alternative amongst the options and adopt it as the outcome of the collective decision-making. This rule has to be 'decisive', 'feasible', and 'just'. (8)

Majoritarians believe that the 'least worst option', if not the best, for collective decision-making is majority rule; (9) that is, in every case in which consensus is not achievable, reason requires that we follow majority preference and prioritize it over other possibilities. By the majority principle, they mean 'more than half'. (10) This notion is called 'simple majority', (11) 'absolute majority', (12) or 'strict majority' (13) as opposed to super majority, unanimity, and so forth.

In this essay, we shall first explore the justifications posed by theorists in favour of 'simple majority'. Then, we shall examine some of the shortcomings that the majority principle may confront. Furthermore, we shall discuss two main alternatives to simple majority that replace majority rule in some cases and in some countries. In this respect, unanimity and supermajority will be discussed. Finally, we shall examine the relationship between democracy and constitutionalism. Whereas the latter is considered as an alternative to pure majority rule (in the name of judicial review, quasi-guardianship or supermajority) it is worth discussing separately on its own, as far as this essay is concerned.

## Part One: Justifications for Majority Rule

### 1. Maximising Utility

Elster quotes that some theorists who believe that majority rule serves utilitarian principles. He argues that when unanimity becomes impossible, we should choose between two options. If more voters choose (a) than (b), then by adopting (a) we can obtain more interest than when (b) is adopted. (14) According to Dahl, this argument is based on certain presuppositions. First, it presupposes that the people vote directly on the laws, and not through their representatives. In addition, it assumes that the sum of the benefit each member in the majority will obtain is equal to the sum of the benefit each member in the minority will lose. Finally, it presumes that the majority's choice is consistent with the majority's interest.

However, these presuppositions are criticised. Firstly, one can justifiably assert that in the real world direct law-making is unlikely to happen. Moreover, Elster notices the difference between real interest

and 'standing passion' by asserting that no one can convincingly guarantee that whatever the majority decides upon is really to its benefit. Hence, if the majority decides under the influence of manipulation or standing passion, not only does the majority not achieve the more interest, but also the least utility is lost. (15) Finally, it is unreasonably assumed that the enjoyment of each individual in the majority is equal to the deprivation of each individual in the minority, whilst it may sometimes happen that even the whole benefit is far less than the whole deprivation. (16) Based on this argument, we cannot find strong evidence to prove that majority rule often culminates in more interest than other alternatives.

To support majority rule, one might distinguish between the majority of the population and the majority of the representatives by denying the criticism in the latter. First, because it is expected that the assembly of representatives consists of the educated, scholars, and individuals familiar with the issues concerning the assembly involved. In addition, not only are they more aware of the issues involved, but also they are less open to influence by manipulation whilst deciding on proposals. Thus, one cannot differentiate between real interest and standing passion, as far as representative assemblies are concerned. What is more, if we assume that the probability of the average voter being wrong is more than being right, no other alternative to majority rule can culminate in a better outcome in cases where that assumption is true.

Altogether, since we need a decision-making rule in representative assemblies, it seems that majority rule brings about more utility than other options, while containing fewer defects.

## 2. Maximising Self-Determination

Dahl approaches the issue in a relatively similar way but with a stronger argument. He argues that when a community cannot reach unanimity, however hard it tries to find a consensual solution, and they have to choose one option between two, it seems more rational to 'let the majority go its way'. In this way, consequently, more people enjoy self-determination than if the minority is allowed to choose what it prefers. (17)

Does this argument merit more attention than Elster's? Here, the critic may not oppose the argument by separating the majority's choice and self-determination. Because self-determination is considered per se as a value in this argument and it is, obviously, consistent with the majority's choice. This is unlike the previous argument in which the majority's choice was considered as an instrumental value that does not necessarily culminate in the majority's interest.

## 3. More likely to Produce Correct Decisions

Dahl further maintains that majority rule in specific situations is more likely than other alternatives to produce the correct decisions. (18) He definitely does not mean that whatever the majority decides upon is true and that the minority makes a mistake by disagreeing with the majority. (19) Instead, he merely holds that wherever a majority of the group who have knowledge of an issue makes a certain decision on that issue, the probability of them being correct is greater. He continues by arguing that although every member of the community in question generally may be right or wrong, the probability of the majority being right is greater than the probability of the minority being right. Consequently, the judgement of the majority should take precedence. (20)

Yet, one suggests that this assertion is correct if we can evidently prove that the 'average voter is more likely right than wrong', (21) otherwise, the result may be the opposite. Again, as we discussed in the

first argument, if we assume that the average voter may be less right than wrong, we can find no other solution to replace majority rule. In other words, with the assumption that the average voter is more likely right than wrong, majority rule has a merit, whilst without this assumption there would be no merit in any alternative.

#### 4. Necessary Consequence of Reasonable Requirements

Following Kenneth May, Dahl asserts that if we accept four requirements of decision-making in a democratic community, we definitely should accept majority rule in collective decision-making. Here are those requirements:

A rule for collective decision-making ought to be 'decisive', that is, if voters face two options, (a) and (b), the outcome of the rule for decision-making should certainly be (a), (b) or none of them.

According to the principle of 'anonymity', a decision-making rule must not be biased in relation to any voter. Consequently, each voter should be considered equally and with the same respect.

Likewise, a decision-making rule should be 'neutral with respect to the alternatives'. In other words, there must not be any differentiation between options, whatever each one would be. Consequently, the rule should consider the proposal to change the current situation and the proposal to preserve the status quo equally; that is, favouring the status quo is not fair.

Finally, if all members of the community are indifferent to both alternatives and just one person prefers one option to another, reason requires that we choose his or her option. To put it in 'a utilitarian perspective, one person would be more satisfied with the outcome, and no one would be any worse off'.

By admitting all the assumptions above, the best rule for collective decision-making is majority rule. (22)

However, the neutrality with respect to the issue, which means the equality of changing and preserving the status quo, is seriously controversial. (23) We shall discuss it later when examining the alternatives to majority rule.

So far, we have dealt with reasons and justifications favouring majority rule, some of which can be seriously rejected. Now, we shall discuss some shortcomings and disadvantages that, allegedly, majority rule contains. Before examining the reasons for criticising majority rule, it is worth noticing that there are two sorts of criticism. Some arguments are intended to support other means of decision-making in democratic process, whereas some others seek to defend constitutionalism in opposition to absolute democracy.

#### Part Two: Defects of Majority Rule

##### 1. Violation of Minority Rights

Elster points out that majority rule with no restriction from the constitution may result in a minority being deprived of especially its political rights. First, Elster argues, a government that is free to enact any law by majority rule may change the law about the election, or change the time of the election so as to increase the possibility of being elected again. Moreover, the government may abuse the media to do so. In these situations, not only can the majority in the parliament oppress the minority, but also it can oppress the majority in the population by abuse of its legal power or by manipulation. Second, an absolute majority may ignore the rights of some minorities under the influence of 'standing passion' or

in some emergency occasions like wartime and deprive them of their basic rights permanently. Through these arguments, he suggests the necessity of controlling majority rule by a constitution. (24)

Similar to the previous account, some critics argue that the majority principle can certainly result in creating a 'permanent minority' that is deprived of basic rights and lives under the domination of a permanent majority. In other words, there arises the problem of 'majority domination', (25) or 'tyranny of the majority'.(26)

Dahl mentions a critic who supposes that there is a permanent majority and a permanent minority. In this assumption, specific group always wins and specific group always loses. Hence, the majority principle will result not in self-determination, but in 'self-determination for the majority and external determination for the minority' forever. (27)

To overcome this problem, Lively argues that this assumption rarely happens in real political life. Because there is not a majority that consists of certain persons who always agree on every issue. Instead, in reality, people change their position towards different issues so that specific persons are in the majority in some cases and in the minority in others. Moreover, Lively argues that in certain cases, as blacks in the United States and Catholics in Northern Ireland, in reality, groups can be identified as permanent minorities and we can find some particular solutions to the problem. One solution might be to give the minority 'over-representation by some system of weighted voting', whereas in cases where the minority is 'geographically concentrated a federal system' can, surely, change the minority to the majority in a specific area. (28) Therefore, we can benefit from the majority principle as a rule and compensate for its shortcomings in specific cases by resorting to some complementary solutions.

However, it is worth noticing that Elster's account is relevant when the majority principle is applied to democratic assemblies, as parliaments and committees. Whereas Dahl's account is more relevant to the majority of the population in national elections. As far as the first account is concerned, one might be inclined to favour restricting majority rule by a constitution from two angles. First, from a democratic point of view, democracy itself can surely bind democracy and it has to do so if necessary. (29) Therefore, in a case in which democracy in the parliament may threaten democracy in the whole nation, from which the power originates, we have to limit majority of the representatives. In addition, as we shall discuss later, some more significant values, though not democratic, can justifiably limit democracy. These values include freedom, security, and efficiency of political actions, all of which are guaranteed by constitutional democracy. Especially, if we look at the constitution as a 'contractual pre-ordained' (30) ratified by the majority itself, the constitution becomes more capable of restricting democracy. Again, it seems democratic to restrict majority rule by the constitution.

## 2. Cyclic Majorities

When we were analysing majority rule in part one, we assumed that voters confront two alternatives, one of which they should chose. Therefore, if we assume differently that three or more voters, for instance, should choose between three or more alternatives, and we also assume that they are asked to rank their preferences, majority rule will face 'cycling'. Suppose there are three options: (A), (B) and (C) and suppose, too, there are three groups to vote for them with ranking their preferences. Then, assume they vote as following: (31)

Group	I	II	III		
Ranking of Alternatives	A	C	B		

	B	A	C
	C	B	A
Votes	40	30	30

In this case, A will defeat B, 70 to 30 (Groups I and II against Group III); B will defeat C, 70 to 30 (Groups I and III against Group II); and C will defeat A, 60 to 40 (Groups II and III against Group I). In such a case, since none of the alternatives enjoys absolute majority, majority rule has no answer to adopt any choice as a collective decision. (32) This is the main problem that majority principle confronts.

However, theorists who favour majority rule suggest some solutions to overcome this problem. Saward approaches this argument by suggesting a two-round voting in which in the second round, voters have to choose between the two most favoured candidates or proposals of the first round, as in French presidential and legislative elections. (33) Therefore, by planning the election in such a way that voters avoid choosing between more than two alternatives, as well as eliminating the ranking preferences, the problem of cycling disappears. Furthermore, Saward by referring to Miller's argument about deliberative democracy asserts that through discussion and reasoning on the agenda, participants are able to reduce the number of options and make it easier to decide on the agenda. (34) Dahl's approach to the problem is different. He suggests the principle of the 'relative majority' to solve the problem of cycling. In this suggestion, as is the case in Britain, we do not need to reduce the number of candidates or options. Yet, the meaning of majority changes a little.

It does not mean more than half, instead, it means the largest number in comparison to the others. In the example above, for instance, option A, which enjoys the most votes (40 against two 30s), should be adopted. Consequently, the minority of the voters, which is larger than other minorities, can choose the outcome.(35)

We can consider here that neither of Saward's suggestions would be helpful. As for the system of two-round voting, the problem remains in the first round, unless we resort to the relative majority principle suggested by Dahl. In addition, it does not seem that deliberation would definitely culminate in two-side proposals, though it might reduce the alternatives. This is unlikely. Dahl's proposal looks plausible, for there may be no better resolution in these cases, even though it makes some changes to the meaning of majority rule.

Since it still means majority in opposition to minority, thus it enjoys all those merits that belong to the majority in comparison to the minority.

### 3. The Mixed Motivation Problem

Wolff notices another problem with the majority principle when taking into consideration the motives of voters. Suppose that the members of the community should choose between (a) and (b); suppose, too, that 30% will benefit from (a) while 70% will benefit from (b); assume that 30% sees (a) as common good, whereas 70% sees (b) as common good; and finally, assume that when it comes to voting, all who will benefit from (a) vote on the basis of self-interested motive (30% vote for a) and the rest vote on the basis of their notion of common good. Consequently, (a) with 51 votes will be chosen while the majority of 70% believe that (b) is in the common interest and also the same percentage can benefit from it. With these assumptions, (a) will be chosen with a very weak majority, whereas (b) is seen as the common good by the majority and would benefit a larger majority. (36)

However, this argument cannot affect the value of majority rule; because first, in real political life the motives of voters are more complicated than what is supposed here. Moreover, 'part of democracy's justifiability is that it is more likely than other systems to contribute to the peaceful resolution of social conflict'. (37) Finally, one may argue that through deliberative democracy, in which participants discuss and reason in favour of and against different alternatives openly and with equal opportunity, (38) the members of the community can improve their motives as well as their opinion before voting. Hence, by deliberation the problem of mixed motivation seems to be solved.

#### 4. The Attenuation of Majority Rule in the Real World

The last criticism to majority rule relates to the practice of this principle. In elections in some countries, as in Britain for instance, where the system is 'constituency-based simple majority', the minority of the population may elect the majority of the parliament. (39) Besides, in the United States in some cases, it happens that just less than 50% of the population participate in the election. Consequently, not only the majority of the elected, but also the whole elected body is chosen by the minority of the population. What is more, 'a majority of the voters may slim down into a minority of legislators'. This criticism, however, is related to a certain electoral system, rather than to democracy or the majority principle itself. Therefore, in some other countries, apart from Britain and the United States, they have adopted some sorts of proportional representation that quite 'fit between electoral and legislative majorities'. (40)

### Part Three: Some Alternatives to Majority Rule

#### 1. Unanimity

Unanimity is a procedure in which all members of the community should vote for a given proposal to be adopted. Otherwise, if just one member disagrees with the proposal, it cannot be adopted. In other words, the unanimity procedure gives each member the right to veto the decision of the majority, no matter how high that majority would be. On the surface, unanimity seems to attach importance to voters more than simple majority does, but one may consider that in this procedure the will of the minority, even one person, prevails over majority. (41) Before we mention justifications related to unanimity, one definition of equality should be mentioned. As Lively put it, there are two sorts of equality: 'retrospective' and 'prospective'. Prospective equality is materialised when every member in the community has determined a decision that was made. Retrospective equality is materialised when no one is unable to determine a decision that is to be made. (42)

One argument to favour unanimity asserts that this procedure uniquely guarantees retrospective equality. This argument, however, presupposes that preserving the status quo is not accounted a decision. Therefore, in a proposal to change a current situation if the majority votes in favour of that proposal and the minority votes against that proposal, the application of majority rule breaks the retrospective equality in relation to the minority, which did not determine that decision. Conversely, by application of the unanimity rule, retrospective equality is materialised. As no decision has been made here, one cannot argue that equality in relation to the majority is broken. Lively rejects this argument by denying the presupposition. He holds that 'maintenance of the status quo is no less a decision than changing it'. Accordingly, he argues that based on his assumption, 'in this instance the decision conforms to the preference of a single person against the preferences of all others'. (43) Therefore, unanimity cannot serve retrospective equality as the argument tries to prove.

The way for further argument is open here. For instance, we can deny that the maintenance of the status quo is a decision, or even, we can deny that the maintenance happened. The status quo does not need to be extended or renewed. Every law, which is approved, can potentially remain forever, unless legitimately a contradictory law is ratified. Therefore, if we confirm the veto of the minority concerning the new law, nothing would happen. Nevertheless, the problem arises from another angle. One can support the status quo justifiably if it has been established justly. Otherwise, the preservation of the current situation would extend injustice, which might not be favoured. Therefore, we have to give the radical majority the right to change the situation for the better.

Buchanan and Tullock defend unanimity in a different way. They presuppose that the status quo is established in accordance to every member's interest and with every member's consent. Consequently, any changing proposal may impose external costs upon them, and therefore, needs the consent of all. Lively criticises this argument through following observations. First, he holds that as seen previously, unanimity does not bring about retrospective equality. Furthermore, the assumption that the status quo is established to the benefit of all, and consequently, the conflict between majorities and minorities is about the redistribution of goods is obviously unreal. Above all, Lively maintains, while proposals are usually aimed to change the current situation conservative minorities, who are privileged by the status quo, can veto the proposals to the disadvantage of the radical majorities, accordingly. Therefore, the prospective equality is not achieved either. (44)

## 2. Supermajority

Supermajorities are 'majorities of between 50 per cent and 99 per cent of the voting body'. This rule, in practice, is usually used in order to change constitutional rules. Although Lively acknowledges that there are reasons to support supermajority in some cases, he maintains that those reasons are not democratic. (45) Again, this procedure gives a veto to minorities to preserve their privileges and block the way to reform, which can change the situation to the benefit of radical majorities. (46) It seems that all arguments favouring majority rule and opposing unanimity are relevant here as well. However, unlike in unanimity, in supermajority rule, a larger minority has the right to veto majority vote.

## Part Four: Democracy and Constitutionalism

The last alternative to 'absolute majority rule' is a trade-off between democracy and constitutionalism, according to which the constitution takes precedence over and restricts majority decisions. As mentioned earlier, since this option contains a very significant discussion, we will examine it separately here.

Some thinkers hold that there is a permanent tension between democracy in the sense of majoritarianism and constitutionalism. Sunstein, for instance, believes that 'constitutions are naturally taken to be antidemocratic'. (47) Some others maintain that both principles are similar with respect to 'human dignity' though they differ in the way in which they protect that value. Whilst democracy tries to protect human dignity through the participation of citizens in political decision-making, constitutionalism intends to fulfil that task by putting some legitimate restrictions on governmental actions. (48) The main concern of democracy is to preserve the self-determination of citizens, whereas constitutionalism aims to protect 'natural and inalienable human rights' (49) and maximising the freedom of citizens. (50) However, the rights, which are to be protected by constitutions, limit the exercise of majority rule and any other kind of 'absolute power'. (51) Judith Squires distinguishes between two elements of constitutionalism, 'rights provisions' and 'structural provisions'. She further

maintains that the former is intended to protect individual space from threats of majority rule, whereas the latter (such as the separation of powers, judicial review or quasi-guardianship and so on) practically makes it difficult for the majority to exercise some changes through ordinary legislation.(52) Lane adds to this list the supremacy of the constitution over all other laws in the country. (53) Therefore, a constitution can protect and guarantee liberty in three ways, all of which limit majority rule.

Briefly, we can find the following values as products of constitutionalism:

First, a constitution provides a set of supreme laws that are 'relatively fixed, open, clear and prospective'. Therefore, momentary whim, standing passion, and manipulated decisions are replaced with stable laws. As a result, predictability in relation to laws and policies bring about security. In addition, individual freedom and basic human rights are guaranteed for both majority and minority groups through the declaration of rights in the document and through the exercise of the separation of powers. Moreover, the separation of powers by 'division of labour' makes political actions more efficient and beneficial. (54) By contrast, absolute majority would produce more self-determination and more equality. As far as democratic values are concerned, the advantages of constitutionalism are all external to those of democracy itself. (55)Therefore, it seems that since royal democrats believe in democracy being self-binding, and consequently, can be limited only in the name of democracy, (56) they prefer to maintain absolute democracy with all its shortcomings.

However, if one intends to arrange hierarchically all significant political values, one may prioritise some constitutional values to majoritarianism and believe in a combination of both principles. In this way, it is more likely for society to achieve the most significant values insofar as possible.

## Conclusion

In this essay, we have discussed some main arguments regarding majority rule as a democratic procedure for decision-making. To put it more simply, there are two main attitudes towards majority rule. On the one hand, majoritarians favour the absolute majority principle as the least worst option to make collective decision-making. They hold that democratic values like self-determination, equal effect in public policies, as well as some other values such as more utility and more probability to make correct decisions can best be achieved by majority rule. They also argue that following the majority's preferences is a reasonable action since it is rational. In fact, they are inclined to assert a sort of self-evident value for the strict majority principle. They attach importance to democratic values, mainly self-determination, the most and above all other human values.

On the other hand, there are constitutionalists who hold that we should limit the majority's decision to protect democracy itself in some cases as well as to achieve other significant values. As we discussed earlier, in order to maintain democracy we can, and we have to, restrict the majority's decisions in political assemblies by the constitution, if it is ratified by the majority's representatives through a democratic process. So too is the case if the majority of population accepts the constitution, though implicitly, if they do not participate in making it. In these two assumptions, the restriction of majority rule by the constitution is both rational and democratic. Constitutionalists go beyond this and assert that even if the scholars and rational elite of the society, who have not been representatives of the majority, establish the constitution it can obtain legitimacy from another origin. In this assumption, unlike the previous ones, legitimacy comes not from the origination but either from the destination or from the fact that the rights declared in the constitution are natural and self-evident. (57) In this



account, the alternatives to majority rule, such as unanimity and supermajority are subjects to constitutionalism and its philosophy.

To sum up, the ideal is a combination of democracy and constitutionalism, insofar as possible, through the supremacy of a democratically established constitution over majority decisions. If not ratified democratically, the constitution may still have more significant value, provided that it is established properly and justly. However, the need for majority rule is such that we cannot replace it in every case with a better scenario.

Notes:

1-Iain Maclean (ed.), *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996, p. 129.

2-Jan Erik Lane, *Constitutions and Political Theory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press 1996, p. 244.

3-Jack Lively, *Democracy*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell 1975, p. 30.

4-Walter F. Murphy, "Constitutions, Constitutionalism, and Democracy", in Douglas Greenberg et al (ed.), *Constitutionalism and Democracy, Transition in the Contemporary World*, New York: Oxford University Press 1993, p. 3.

5-Michael Saward, *The Terms of Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Blackwells Publishers 1998, p. 68.

6-Lively, *Democracy*, p. 13.

7-Lively, *Democracy*, p. 10.

8-Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and its Critics*, New Haven: Yale University Press 1989, p. 136.

9- Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 82.

10-Maclean (ed), *Dictionary*, p. 303.

11-Lively, *Democracy*, p. 14.

12-Luigi Ferrajoli, "Democracy and Constitution in Italy," in Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione (eds.), *Constitutionalism in Transformation: European and Theoretical Perspectives*, Oxford: Blackwells 1996, p. 53.

13-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 135.

14-Jon Elster, "On Majoritarianism and Rights," <[http://www.sintercom.org/polinfo/polessays/elster\\_on\\_majoritarianism.html](http://www.sintercom.org/polinfo/polessays/elster_on_majoritarianism.html), 24/11/2000>, p. 2.

15-Elster, "On Majoritarianism," p. 2..

16-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 151. Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, pp. 77-8, posed this criticism as "intensity of preference".

17-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 138.

18-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 141.

19-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 69.

20-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, pp. 141-42.

21-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 142.

22-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, pp. 139-141.

23-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 141.

24-Elster, "On Majoritarianism," p. 3.

25-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 147.

26-Lively, *Democracy*, p. 25.

27-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 147.

28-Lively, *Democracy*, pp. 25-6.

29-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, pp. 53, 54.

30-Ferrajoli, "Democracy and constitution in Italy," p. 52.

31-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 145.

32-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 145.

33-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 74.

34-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 74.

35-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 146.

36-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, pp. 74-5.

37-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 75.

38-Joshua Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy," in Robert E. Goodin and Philip Pettit (eds.), *Contemporary Political Philosophy*, Oxford: Blackwells 1997, pp. 146-47.

- 39-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 76.
- 40-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 149.
- 41-Lively, *Democracy*, p. 13.
- 42-Lively, *Democracy*, pp. 12-3
- 43-Lively, *Democracy.*, p. 17.
- 44-Lively, *Democracy*, pp. 18-9.
- 45-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 71.
- 46-Dahl, *Democracy and its critics*, p. 153.
- 47-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 56.
- 48-Murphy, "Constitutions," p. 4.
- 49-Lane, *Constitutions*, pp. 19-22.
- 50-Jean Blondel, *Comparative Government- an Introduction*, London: Philip Allan 1990, p. 211.
- 51-Ferrajoli, "Democracy and constitution in Italy," pp. 52-3.
- 52-Judith Squires, "Liberal Constitutionalism, Identity and Difference," in Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione (eds.), *Constitutionalism*, p. 209.
- 53-Lane, *Constitutions*, p. 261.
- 54-Richard Bellamy, "The Political Form of the Constitution: the Separation of Powers, Rights and Representative Democracy," in Richard Bellamy and Dario Castiglione (eds.), *Constitutionalism*, p. 26.
- 55-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, p. 72.
- 56-Saward, *Terms of Democracy*, pp. 53-4.
- 57-Steve Kangas (ed.), *In Defence of Democratic Government, Spectrum Three: Democracy vs. Constitutionalism*, <<http://home.att.net/~Resurgence/L-spectrumthree.htm>>, 02/11/2000, p. 3.

The Fundamental Principles of Ibn S̄anj's Ontology

Reza Akbarian, Tarbiat Modarres University, Iran

## Abstract

This paper introduces some of the fundamental principles of Ibn Ṣṇj's ontology focusing upon his distinction between existence and essence in contingent beings in order to bring out the radical contingency of all-other-than-God. Some central implications of this doctrine including the proof of God as the necessary existent are drawn out.

## Introduction

The metaphysics of Ibn Ṣṇj (d. 1037) is critically significant in Islamic thought. In his works, there is much material concerning the manner of belief in the Supreme Existence and His Attributes, the distinction between the First cause and the world of existence, the question of creation and perpetual creation (*creatio continua*), immateriality and eternity, and immortality of the soul. One must recognize that Ibn Ṣṇj explained the most fundamental concepts in metaphysics and epistemology and delineated their limits exactly. He made a lasting contribution to philosophical theology in Islam.

Ibn Ṣṇj considers the question of existence to be the most fundamental problem in his philosophical meditation. Undoubtedly, a true understanding of his philosophical system rests upon an exact analysis of this question. What distinguishes Ibn Ṣṇj's philosophy from Greek philosophy is that he bases his philosophy on a conception of the Divine Existence. From Ibn Ṣṇj's point of view, God, or 'pure existence', is the source and creator of all objects. Such a conception of God has an intimate relationship with his view on existence. As a result, by proposing new philosophical principles, Ibn Ṣṇj reconstructs the intellectual heritage of Greek philosophy and attempts to explain many religious principles and subjects through reasoning.

What follows in this article is a brief survey of Ibn Ṣṇj's views on the question of existence. This paper consists of three sections. The first section addresses the subject of metaphysics and considers the role of existence in its formulation. The second section analyses the distinction between 'quiddity' and 'existence' in contingent existents as the most fundamental principle in Ibn Ṣṇj's ontology. In the third section in place of a conclusion, the philosophical consequences of this principle are presented.

### A: The concept of existence and the subject of metaphysics

Whether 'existence' is the subject matter of metaphysics has been a central question in philosophy historically. Ibn Ṣṇj's answer to the question of existence differs from that of Aristotle. Ibn Ṣṇj considers metaphysics as the knowledge of existence, and divides existence into 'necessary' and 'contingent'. From his viewpoint, a philosopher analyses both the Necessary Existence and its attributes, and contingent existence.

Ibn Ṣṇj makes a radical distinction between the study of being as theology and the study of being as ontology. He refutes the theory that God is the subject of Divine Knowledge. (1) In his opinion, the subject of metaphysics is 'being qua being' (*al-mawjʿd bi-mi huwa mawjʿd*), that is 'existence in the absolute sense and not the absolute existent'. Such existence is absolute and free from all restriction, even the restriction of absoluteness. So metaphysics is not a science whose subject is one of the existents, such the sensible existent or the intelligible or even the absolute existent. Rather, its subject is the absoluteness of existence that neither has a physical restriction, nor is a mathematical being, nor even a Divine Existence. (2)

Aristotle considers metaphysics as the science of existence as well, but he considers existence as substance. (3) For Aristotle, 'existent' and substance are the same in the first instance. Aristotle sees in substance all forms of being, intellect, soul, matter, form and body, and does not consider accidents independent of substance. He establishes substance as the subject of metaphysics and, as a result, defines philosophy as the science of substance and of the essence of objects. But Ibn S̄c̄n̄j cannot consider substance as the subject of philosophy, for substance, being a quiddity, is a contingent existence, and metaphysics is not to be confined to the study of the contingent only.

On this basis, Aristotle considers the ten categories as the categories of existence and not categories of quiddity, while Ibn S̄c̄n̄j, following Firj̄b̄ç̄ (d. 950), takes contingent existents to be consisting of two intellectual analytical parts, namely, 'existence' and 'quiddity'. Then, based on quiddity, he divides them into ten categories of substance and accident. One should not consider this division as a minor change in one of the branches of philosophy, since this division turns out to be the source of many fundamental issues in Islamic philosophy, which cannot be found in Greek philosophy.

A key term in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's ontology that is considered the pivot of his philosophical discussions is the word 'existent' (mawj̄d̄), and not 'existence' (wuj̄d̄). By dividing 'existent' into 'necessary' and 'contingent', Ibn S̄c̄n̄j introduces the concept of the existent, since it functions as a pointer to the existent itself. This is because pure existence, without considering other aspects, is not divisible into necessary and contingent. What can, indeed, be divided into necessary and contingent is the concept of the existent insofar as it points out to an existent that may be essential or non-essential. Thus one must accept that Ibn S̄c̄n̄j remains within the domain of Aristotelian metaphysics, which is primarily and directly concerned with the 'existent' and not 'existence'. Transition from the 'existent' to 'existence' is a feature of Mulli ĩadri's metaphysics. This reveals the primary importance that he lays on existence as the actual existence.

Without stressing the distinction between 'existence' and 'quiddity' and the division of existent into necessity and contingency, Mulli ĩadri (d. 1641) establishes the notion of the principiality or the fundamental reality of existence (aĳ̄ilat al-wuj̄d̄) as the basis of his metaphysical system. He consistently emphasizes the necessity of differentiating between the two meanings of existence, that is, the existent, which is the philosophical secondary intelligible (ma'q̄l̄ th̄jn̄ç̄), and the concrete and external reality of existence. (4) By transferring from the concept of existence to the reality of existence, he no longer considers the combination of existence and quiddity as the criterion for contingent dependency and its difference from necessity. He proposes possibility in the sense of need (imk̄jn̄ faqr̄ç̄) in place of essential possibility (imk̄jn̄ m̄j̄huw̄ç̄), and, instead of the distinction between the referents of necessity and contingency, which are both considered existent, he postulates the distinction between stages of the reality of existence. (5) Moreover, not finding the distinction between existence and quiddity consistent with the principle of the principiality of existence, and not finding it sufficient for the dependence of the world upon God either, he sets the above principle as the foundation of 'burh̄jn̄ al-ĳ̄idd̄ç̄q̄ç̄n̄' (ontological proof for the existence of God) in his philosophy. In this way, he inspires the spirit of Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's argument in its principiality of existence and through this recreation he releases himself from dividing existents into the necessary and the contingent, which is related to the principiality of quiddity.

B: The distinction between 'quiddity' and 'existence' as a fundamental principle in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's Ontology

Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's theory of existence is based on the distinction between 'quiddity' and 'existence'. According to Aristotle, this is a logical distinction; (6) but Ibn S̄c̄n̄j extends this distinction, converting it into an

ontological one. There is no reason for Aristotle to move from the domain of logic to the domain of metaphysics. (7) The world, from his point of view, is both eternal and necessary so that in the other world the proof of the reality of an essence means proving its existence. In this regard, Etienne Gilson says that in the case of Ibn S̄n̄j, the Islamic philosopher, it is not like that. He is well aware of the Jewish-Christian concept of creation, and with the concept of the real gap that exists, both in reality and in logic, between essence and existence. Essence is exactly the presence of the contingent before the knowledge of God, and that essence, in itself, does not contain the reason of its real existence. If God does not grant it real existence, essence never comes into being. To understand the concept of God, one must conceive of Him as an existence to whose case this problem does not apply, and the only way to fulfill this point is to think of God as if he has no essence, or no quiddity.

To emphasize the distinction between 'existence' and 'quiddity' or 'essence', (8) Ibn S̄n̄j follows the ideas of F̄r̄j̄b̄ç̄. Based on this distinction, he introduced into Islamic philosophy the concept of existence as a metaphysical element distinct from quiddity. Doing so, he went much further than Aristotle and pushed the analysis of the concept of existence beyond the domain of substance into the domain of actual existence. (9) He shows that appending a non-individuated and general quiddity to another non-individuated, general quiddity does not prompt its individuation. According to him, the criterion of individuation may not be sought in the appending and conjunction of quiddities. Individuation is the essential property of existence and quiddity is only determined within the domain of existence.

This statement is considered a turning point in the history of philosophical thought, since before its time philosophical discussions were based on the premiss that external existents must be identified only by means of quiddities. In fact, quiddity was the fundamental basis of philosophical discussions, while after F̄r̄j̄b̄ç̄, the attention of philosophers was turned towards existence, and they came to know that concrete existence has special properties that cannot be understood by means of essential properties.

While discussing existence in his *Metaphysics*, (10) Aristotle explicitly distinguishes two kinds of existence. By existence he primarily means substance. The theory of existence in Aristotle's philosophy cannot be studied independently of his theory of substance. Substance, in Aristotle's opinion, is either pure form, if it is immaterial, or it is the unity of form and matter, if it is body. According to Aristotelian philosophy, each of them, with regard to itself, is an existent by itself, which is independent of others in order to survive. Aristotle considers the contingent a mobile existent composed of potentiality and actuality, which in the end leads to the necessary existent, that is the first Unmoved Mover, which is the final cause of actualizing potentiality. The first mover is the everlasting principle of the everlasting motion, which moves the world as the final cause, meaning that it belongs to desire and love. In Aristotle's view, if the first mover, as the efficient cause, were the cause of motion, then itself would undergo change as well.

As a result, one must not take the relationship between necessary and contingent in Aristotle's philosophy as if the contingent were the created thing of the necessary and the necessary its creator and creative efficient cause. Aristotle uses the terms necessary and contingent in a totally different way from Ibn S̄n̄j. Ibn S̄n̄j's approach leads to the concept of a God without quiddity. Existence in this metaphysical system is something that can not be explained and justified only by means of the essential nature of quiddity. Existence is something more than quiddity and extrinsic to it. (11)

Ibn S̄n̄j shows quite explicitly that a finite being which is composed of quiddity and existence can not be the cause of its own existence. Its existence must be emanated from, or occurrent to quiddity, from

another source, that is, the creator and the grantor of existence. In this way he proves the distinction between quiddity and existence. He says,

The quiddity of anything is distinct from its existence; for man to be 'man' is distinct from his 'existing'. (12)

He adds,

Whatever that has quiddity is an effect, and existence is a meaning occurring to it from outside. (13)

From a metaphysical point of view, this theory intends to change the Aristotelian hylomorphic analysis according to which any material being is composed of two parts, matter and form. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j believes that it is not possible to grasp concrete being out of form and matter alone. This statement refutes Aristotle's view on explaining the concrete existence of objects. That is why Ibn S̄c̄n̄j analyzed the relationship between form and matter in *al-Shifī'*, (14) concluding that both form and matter are dependent upon the active intellect. It must be noted that in this theory, existence is not a constituent part of objects in addition to matter and form; rather, it is a relation with God. It is the relative aspect, which is called accident by Ibn S̄c̄n̄j, who says existence is an accident. (15)

The accidental aspect of existence is an important problem that Ibn S̄c̄n̄j bequeathed his followers. Ibn Rushd takes Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's view concerning the accidental aspect of existence as meaning that existence is an ordinary accident like whiteness, and as a result criticizes Ibn S̄c̄n̄j very severely. (16) But this is a misunderstanding of Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's view, since existence and quiddity in the external world are the same for Ibn S̄c̄n̄j, and the concept of accident from an ontological point of view is the result of an intellectual analysis of something which is in actuality existent. In *al-Ta'ālīqī*, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j distinguishes between two kinds of accident and shows that his idea of accident is not an accident like whiteness, which is immanent in a subject. (17) Rather, to say that existence is an accident of quiddity means that existence is not essential to quiddity.

C: Philosophical consequences of the principle of the distinction between 'quiddity' and 'existence'

First, the most fundamental division of existent in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's thought is its division into 'necessary' and 'contingent'. A contingent being is something which, in-itself, is the same with regard to existence and to non-existence and, in order to come into existence, it must attain existence from outside. This does not mean that it must somehow have had some kind of realization before its existence. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j and his followers did not accept this kind of pre-existence realization, which has been specifically attributed (18) to some Mu'tazilite scholars, and they did not believe that contingent essence had subsistence before its existence. (19) Contingency, in the sense that Ibn S̄c̄n̄j attributed to beings, is not the same as the concept among Greek philosophers. Undoubtedly, in Plato's view, the multiplicity of the visible world with regard to the unity of the world of Ideas is like a contingent subject. According to Aristotle, those existents that are subjected to the process of realization in the world are in the process of being contingent in relation to the necessity of the first immovable mover. The conception of contingency in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's philosophy is not possible without the belief in a Lord creator, who brings objects into existence from non-existence by a simple word 'Be!'

Second, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's theory of causality differs from that of Aristotle. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j considers the agency of the Truth as creative and inventive agency. Invention is something that becomes the origin of the existence of another thing without the intermediary of matter, tool, or time. When analyzing the relationship

between the sensible, changing world and the pure actuality, Aristotle considers pure actuality as the final cause of existents. (20) The pure act is not the efficient cause of the world. He is the pure thought and has knowledge of himself, which means that He is thought of thought, but has closed the door to the world and has nothing to do with it. Aristotle considers the world eternal. Ibn Ṣṇj accepts this idea but interprets it according to his own philosophy. Naturally Ibn Ṣṇj does not accept Aristotle's theory, because for him God is the creator of the world, and that is why he rejects the theory that the world is eternal and uncreated. Ibn Ṣṇj challenges Aristotle on this point. On the one hand, he takes God as the creator, the guardian, and the intelligent Designer of the world and, on the other hand, he rejects the infiniteness and the eternity of the world.

Ibn Ṣṇj's position on the origination of the world is closely related to his conception of the possible (contingent) and the necessary existent. In his opinion, the origination of the world exactly means that between two totally different existents- that is, that which is necessary in itself and that which is contingent in itself but becomes necessary through relationship with the necessary existent- there is an intermediate process known as origination (ʾudʿth). As a result, the world is contingent and God is pre-eternal. (21) Origination, in this sense, could not have been conceivable for Aristotle, since the world he is concerned with is one whose non-existence is inconceivable. There is no place for the concept of distinction and of the relationship between the necessary and the contingent in such a metaphysical system. In criticizing and challenging the views of theologians (mutakalliṃn), whose arguments on the existence of the creator is based on the temporal contingency of the world, Ibn Ṣṇj considers the combination of existence and quiddity and the precedence of existence over non-existence as the necessary condition for the potential of an object to be created. (22) In Ibn Ṣṇj's opinion, invention is a higher stage of creation and evolution. So the existence of the world, be it eternal or non-eternal and whether having a temporal beginning or not, in any case, requires a Maker. Both in origination and in survival, the world requires a Maker.

Third, in Ibn Ṣṇj's ontology, the discussion of the necessary and the contingent has a close relationship with his theology. Ibn Ṣṇj's theology, based on the ontology of necessary and contingent, is presented in various ways in al-Shifī', al-Najit and al-Ishīrijit, and his other writings. (23) The basis of this division is the distinction between existence and quiddity, which counts as one of the important philosophical problems. In Ibn Ṣṇj's philosophy, the discussion of the necessary and the contingent naturally leads to the discussion of the necessary existence in itself, which is beyond the world of contingencies, and is exempt from any type of composition, including the composition of existence and quiddity. In Ibn Ṣṇj's opinion, the essential characteristic of such a being is the necessity of existence and the reason for his existence has a logical relationship with this attribute.

Ibn Ṣṇj establishes the concept of the 'necessary existent' as the foundation of his theology. Among the names and attributes used in religious texts, the one closer to 'necessary existent' is 'self-sufficient' or 'rich'. He always emphasizes that the necessary existent is pure existence and absolute entity and does not consist of quiddity. This is because whatever that has quiddity is a cause while an absolute existence, which is essential in itself, is not a cause. Such a being is the Truth and anything other than Him is false. The Truth is the one whose existence comes from Himself. (24)

In his interpretation of the Qur'ān's Ṣf̣rat al-Tawḥīd, which contains his deep insights concerning the knowledge of the Truth, His Names, and Attributes, Ibn Ṣṇj indicates the above mentioned truth. (25) Then, commenting upon the Holy verse *alḷihu l-ʿamād* (Allah is he on whom all depend), he attempts to interpret the meaning of 'ʿamād', the impenetrable, which is totally compatible with the concept of 'Necessary Existence' (26) In this way, being inspired by religious texts, Ibn Ṣṇj proposes a principle,



which was followed in Islamic philosophy. He considers God as the sole being in whose realm there is no room for non-existence, meaning that quiddity and existence are identical in God. This principle turns into an effusive source for Islamic philosophy, so much so that all studies which were done afterwards can be considered as its results. Such an idea cannot be found in the philosophical systems of Plato and Aristotle. The source of this idea must be sought in *Fırıbcı*. Existence in this metaphysical system is something that can not be explained and accounted for by means of the essential nature of quiddity. This is true in the case of all contingent existents. God and only God is absolutely simple in his existence.

By simple, Aristotle means some form that is not mixed up with matter. He considers the first mover the pure actuality in whom one can find no composition, no potentiality and matter, no change and motion, and no recipient and agent. In Ibn Sıcnı's philosophy, and after him in all Islamic philosophy, simplicity is proved more precisely for the Supreme God, which requires rejection of any type of composition, even composition of the rational analytic parts. On this basis, the necessary existent is neither to be made definite nor to be proved; no composition of existence and quiddity exists in his essence and no composition of genus and differentia is attributable to his essence. (27)

Fourth, the concepts of unity and creation are explicitly posited in Islamic philosophy. In Ibn Sıcnı's philosophy, the discussion of unity and multiplicity inevitably leads to the discussion of the First principle of existence, which is the same as the One in the absolute sense, (28) and there is nothing like him, *laysa ka-mithlihi l-shay'*. (29) Ibn Sıcnı's monotheism has no precedent in the Hellenic tradition. In none of the philosophical systems of Greece does one find a single existence called God upon whom the existence of the whole world is then made dependent. Never has such a success been achieved even in the Divine knowledge of Plato and Aristotle.

According to Plato in the *Timaeus*, there is the Demiurge who cannot be considered the principle of principles, since ideas are above and beyond him, and the Demiurge, by considering the Ideas as a prototype, designs the world by copying them. The *Timaeus* indicates Plato's attempt to recognize a God, who even though he occupies the first rank amongst the Gods, nevertheless counts as one of them. The Demiurge, according to what we see in the *Timaeus*, cannot be a religious God. One cannot obtain the concept of creation from Plato's view of the Demiurge. The same goes true with Aristotle as well. Even though the concept of the single God may be found in Aristotle's works, in the 10th book of the *Metaphysics* one can find polytheism. (30) Aristotle's God, compared with the God of Islam, is a separate, immovable mover who is pure act and the thought of thought and has not brought our world into existence. The God of Islam is pure existence, and the giver of existence to the world and the creator of the world. From a philosophical point of view, the multiplicity of the immovable mover is not impossible, while in Ibn Sıcnı's philosophy the Necessary Existent is essentially free from any kind of multiplicity.

Fifth, to prove the reality of monotheism, which is a rational concept, Ibn Sıcnı attempts to grasp a proper concept of God. This is because the nature of this truth, which has a decisive effect on the evolution of philosophical thought, becomes clearer by the attempt to relate the question of the essence of God to the question of his Unity. The reason that Greek philosophers were unable to understand the unity and the oneness of God and make it the basis of their principles is that they did not recognize God in His true sense, which is incompatible with plurality. God in Aristotelian philosophy is the First mover and is devoid of any change and motion; that is, God is the pure actuality and separate from matter. In Ibn Sıcnı's opinion, instead, God is a being without any kind of Need and dependence on another and is self-existent and self-sufficient. Ibn Sıcnı goes beyond the distinction between material and immaterial, as stipulated in Aristotle's philosophy, and gets to the distinction between necessity and

contingency. In fact, the criterion presented by Aristotle to clarify the distinction between material and non-material substance cannot explain the distinction between God and material and immaterial substance. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j, who considers God as Necessity and all other than God- be it material or immaterial- as contingent, is able to prove the belief in God in a philosophical and intellectual manner. (31)

The God that Ibn S̄c̄n̄j seeks to know and considers the source of all objects is not itself one of the abstract universal concepts, neither is its content in any way to be conformed to such concepts. God is beyond all imaginal and sensible forms and all concepts that we may have of him. There is no possible definition for his essence, since he does not have genus and differentia. (32) No reference to him is possible but through pure intellectual gnosticism. (33) God is the actual absolute existence with regard to pure actuality. Reason cannot apprehend his innermost core and the truth of such an existence. He has a reality without a Name. The necessity of existence and the absolute unity are either lexical explanation of that reality or a requirement of His requirements. (34)

Ibn S̄c̄n̄j considers the perfection and the infiniteness of the Divine Truth, which are interdependent, as two necessary aspects of an existence who is necessarily existent and for whom existence is essentially necessary. To prove the infiniteness of the essence of the Truth and his names, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j starts with a meditation upon the concept of existence and concludes that one must accept the necessity of an existence that is the First being. Afterwards, he considers other attributes of the First being and proves that he is the efficient cause, and has knowledge and will. He is knowledgeable about his own essence and about all the objects in the world.

Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's opinion in this regard differs from that of Aristotle. Aristotle asserts that the subject of God's knowledge is the same as the Divine essence, and proposes God's knowledge as his knowledge of his own essence. (35) But Ibn S̄c̄n̄j is a Muslim sage and does not accept such a concept of God, which is totally inconsistent with the omniscient, omnipresent and observant God of the Qur'ān. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j explicitly claims that God is aware of his essence, and he is the efficient cause of every thing. He is knowledgeable about whatever is emanated from him; he even knows particulars. In the language of the Qur'ānic verse, He declares, (36) "Not the weight of an atom becomes absent from Him in the heavens or in the earth". Ibn S̄c̄n̄j accounts for such knowledge by recognizing the first causes of particulars. Since particulars necessarily originated from their cause, "the First existent, who is knowledgeable about these causes and their consequences, is necessarily knowledgeable about particulars themselves." (37) In addition to proving knowledge, will and other attributes of God, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j also proves that his essence contains these attributes infinitely. To achieve such a conclusion implies having the most perfect conceivable concept about God.

Sixth, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j regards God as the pure act of existence, while Aristotle considers him the pure act of thought. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j always emphasizes the point that if by pure act one means the pure act of existence, then the totality of the actuality of existence makes the infinite existence one beyond which nothing may be found. The logical necessity of such an idea is the proof of God by a new argument that is called burhān al-ʾiddāqīn, the first version of which he has the honour to present. In section four of al-Ishārāt wa l-Tanbīhāt (Remarks and Admonitions), after presenting arguments which were unprecedented in the words of the earlier scholars, he prides himself. (38)

With this argument, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j opens a new chapter in Islamic philosophy in proving the existence of God and prepares the ground for the appearance of a fundamental theory in discussions of God, a theory based on which we will be able to conceive the existence of the world, assuming the existence of God. It

is inconceivable that philosophers like Plato and Aristotle, who did not consider God as the very existence, would be able to present such an argument to prove the existence of God. Utilizing a pure rational analysis and independently from the interference of objects and created beings, Ibn S̄n̄j both proves the existence of God and states God's pre-knowledge over all incidents; at the same time, he shows that the whole world is contingent and becomes necessary by assuming the existence of God.

Seventh, Ibn S̄n̄j's attitude of interpreting the world is intimately related to the distinction between necessary and contingent, and ensuing that, with the distinction between quiddity and existence. Ibn S̄n̄j founds his ontology upon this distinction. This distinction is important because based on it, Ibn S̄n̄j regards God as the very existent. Inevitably, our interpretation of the world should change. It is only God whose existence is real. Apart from Him, all are contingents and do not hold a position higher than a contingent position. In every moment of their existence, they require a necessary existent who, by perpetually shining his light upon them, bestows the station of existence on everything.

The world that Ibn S̄n̄j conceives of on the basis of the teachings of Qur'ān and ḥadīth, and which is presented by Islamic philosophers in a philosophical language, differs from that of Plato and Aristotle. The Aristotelian world is an eternal and everlasting one and has an everlasting necessity; his Supreme God has not created the world. Such a world is actually existent and the possibility of its non-existence is inconceivable. In contrast, Ibn S̄n̄j is perfectly aware of the Islamic concept of creation. He constantly attempts to reveal the contingent aspect of all created beings with regard to the necessary creator; in this way, he tries to remain faithful to a principle that is fundamental in Islam. That is why Ibn S̄n̄j's conception of such a world can be regarded as one of the chief elements of Islamic philosophy. As a result, the world in his view is a contingent existent that requires a cause, if it is attributed to existence. It is not the case that the world comprises a pre-eternal matter with forms bestowed from the Giver of forms or that the world simply owes its motion to the First Principle. Rather, the world owes its total entity to God. In Ibn S̄n̄j's opinion, God and only God is necessary in his existence, and the existence of other objects is contingent. That is why they are all emanated from the existence of God. (39)

Eighth, let us consider the problem of motion for Islamic philosophy. This is one of those cases that show how, on account of delving into some issues common to both philosophies, Islamic thought developed beyond Hellenic precursors. Ibn S̄n̄j came to believe that motion does not simply mean the possibility of various modes of existence in beings that come into being constantly, and then disappear. Rather, he believes, motion means the essential possibility of existence in the very beings that undergo change. He, who believed in the God of Islam, introduced the distinction between existence and quiddity in order to illustrate the eternal world, which, according to Aristotle persisted outside of God and without God. In this way he managed to prove the createdness of the world. In his opinion, all contingent and sensible beings possess a kind of decline, since their existence depends on another. In al-Ishārāt, Ibn S̄n̄j refers to the opinions of thinkers concerning the necessity and the contingency of external existents and states the truthful word based on the holy verse "I do not love the setting ones" (40) This essential contingency makes the world- be it material or immaterial, but owing to its connection to the metaphysics- gain a new manifestation which is very important, and we come to realize its importance when we propose the problem concerned with the existential agency of the Truth.

Ninth, by accepting the problem of creation, which is explicitly found in religious sources and texts, Ibn S̄n̄j totally departs from Greek philosophy. In numerous verses, the Qur'ān refers to God as the Creator of everything and emphasizes His Absolute Power. Also, in contrast with the gods of the polytheists, it regards creativeness and power as the exclusive attributes of God. (41) The first verse sent down upon the prophet of Islam in order to declare to him the mission bestowed upon him on monotheism starts

by pointing out the problem of creation. (42) The holy Qur'ān regards creation and command as the sole property of God, (43) and states so about the manner of creation: "His command, when He intends anything is only to say to it: Be, so it is" (44)

There is no sign of philosophy in these verses, yet meditation upon these verses, which denote his action, has had a deep influence upon the philosophical thinking of Muslims. Belief in creativeness cannot be attributed to Aristotle and Plato. In the *Timaeus*, Plato portrays the Demiurge as giving everything to the world without giving its existence. Plato, contrary to Islamic philosophers, cannot accept that God may bring an object from non-existence into existence simply by saying, "Be!" In Plato's view, the manner of the activity of the Demiurge is giving form, not giving existence. At the same time, the First immovable mover, whom Aristotle believes in, is considered the cause of all other than God; however, one should not attribute the belief of the creation of the origin of the world to Plato. In his philosophy, he does not discuss the relationship between the First cause and existence. He reaches the truth that God is the final cause of the world. Had Aristotle realized that God is the very existence, it would not have been possible to excuse him for his ignorance to accept Creation.

Tenth, in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, the world is conceptualized in a way that God not only grants existence to it, but also maintains it at each moment. Such a world depends on a will that is permanently determined to create it. Ibn Sīnā is completely aware of the Islamic concept of the permanent relationship between God and the world. Based on such an interpretation of the world, one must note that objects, not only based on their forms and the combination of these forms with each other, but also based on their existence, are not confined to essence. Since the created world has possibility-by-itself, and is essentially preceded by non-existence, it is continually and automatically heading towards non-existence, and in no moment may it get rid of non-existence, unless an existence is granted to him, which it can not grant itself, nor can it maintain it for itself. In this world nothing may exist, be it the cause of an action or be it exposed to a reaction, without its existence and realization and its action and reaction having been originated from an absolute, self-subsistent, immovable, infinite existence.

Eleventh, Ibn Sīnā's opinion about the relationship of the world with God differs from that of Greek philosophers. That is why the arguments for the existence of God acquired new meanings. Since Ibn Sīnā accepts the creativeness and the essential possibility of the world as two fundamental principles in his philosophy, one can clearly interpret the arguments to prove the existence of God based on the recognition of the world. While quoting from Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā sometimes quotes Aristotle's exact words, but he proceeds in a way other than the one that Aristotle takes. In the world that Aristotle portrays, God and the world go parallel with each other from pre-eternity to eternity. Unlike Aristotle, Ibn Sīnā's view denotes an Islamic tradition, for the God of this sage is not considered as the first being of the world; rather, he is the 'First' with respect to the existence of this world and is its causer and creator.

Proving the existence of God through his artifacts implies accepting his existence as the creator of the world, and it implies the acceptance of the idea that the efficient cause of the world cannot be anything but its creator. The point to be accepted as a general chapter in the Islamic philosophy is that the concept of creativeness is the foundation of any types of argument which have been proposed by Islamic philosophers in order to prove the existence of God. Like any other Islamic thinker, Ibn Sīnā establishes a relationship between cause and effect, which is the means of connecting the world to God by taking existence into account.

In his view, there is no doubt that whatever that exists owes its existence to God. In Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's opinion, the creative power of God, with respect to any act, does not involve any matter to which that act applies. Being a potential existence, how can matter be considered a condition, making the act of existence conditional upon itself? In fact, everything, including the matter itself, is subject to the act of creation. Thus, one must accept that God is the cause of the existence of nature before being the cause of any other event in nature. As a result, all the arguments put forward by F̄ir̄j̄b̄ĉ and Ibn S̄c̄n̄j, and following them by all other Islamic philosophers to prove God as the efficient cause, prove the creative power of God as well.

Twelfth, even though he makes use of the wordings of Aristotle's argumentation, the argument proposed by Ibn S̄c̄n̄j in order to prove the existence of God under the title of the First mover has its own unique meaning, which cannot but belong to Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's philosophy. Aristotle's argument by motion does not imply the proof of the existence of a God who has created the world preceded by non-existence; it only proves the existence of a God who is the ultimate end of all beings, and attracts beings towards himself. In Aristotle's view, what sets skies and stars into motion is their own desire towards God, while in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's view the affection and the favor of God towards the world is the origin of creation. The same kind of distinction existing between the final cause and the efficient cause also exists between these two kinds of causations. Even though Ibn S̄c̄n̄j refers to Aristotle on the problem of the efficient cause, since the concept of efficiency does not have identical referents within these two philosophies, it must be acknowledged that the argument proposed by him to prove God as the efficient cause totally differs from that of Aristotle. The result of his argument is that beyond a series of causes whose effect shows up in the form of motion and change, there exists a cause that is the First source of existence, and that is God. So the act of God is not confined to the causation of motion and change; rather, it is the granting of existence.

Thirteenth, Ibn S̄c̄n̄j attempts most explicitly to differentiate between Natural Agent and Divine Agent. The former is the granter of motion, but the latter is the granter of existence. (45) That is why Ibn S̄c̄n̄j does not accept any kind of argument to prove God by simply relying on the knowledge of nature. He only accepts those arguments that are related to existence by its very nature of being existence. Ibn S̄c̄n̄j regards Aristotle's scientific and intellectual status too high to attempt to prove God through natural phenomena like motion. So he comments on it thus,

It is very hard for me to accept that belief in the origin and his unity be based on motion and the unity of the mobile world. It is conjectured as such in Aristotle's metaphysics. Such a conjecture, though not surprising on the part of a beginner, is indeed surprising on the part of the great scholars of the field. (46)

Fourteenth, nature, in Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's philosophy, is a domain of reality, created for a specific, ultimate goal, and all its phenomena are meaningful, and the wisdom of its creator is evident every where. (47) Nature has been created under the design and the Divine system, and its ultimate goal is the realization of the best order. (48) In Ibn S̄c̄n̄j's opinion, since the Divine essence conceives of itself as the pure intellect and as the origin and source of all the contingent beings, he brings the created world into existence directly and without any intermediary, and sets an order which permeates throughout the world. What Ibn S̄c̄n̄j is looking for is the cause of the existence of order, if there is, in fact, an order. In the same way that his argument for the existence of God as the first mover does not mean that he considers him as the principal mover of nature, proving his existence as the final cause does not mean that he is only a regulator of this entirely orderly and exact world either. His words can be well understood if we ascend the stage of making into the stage of creating. Belief in such a designer, thus, is not the result of our

attention to the precision in the order of the world, since we may consider nature without such a precision in many respects; rather, it is because wherever there exists order, there must also be a cause to bestow its existence.

Notes:

1-Ibn S̄cni, al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit, ed. I. Madk̄r et al, rpt., Qum: Maktabat ʿayatuljih al-Mara'sh̄c al-Najaf̄c 1404 H, pp. 5, 14; eadem, 'Uȳn al-ikma, ed. 'A-R. Badaw̄c, 2nd edn., Beirut: D̄j al-Qalam 1980, p 47.

2-Ibn S̄cni, al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit, p. 13.

3-Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1028 b 2.

4-Mullī ʿadri, al-Mashī'ir, ed. H. Corbin, Tehran: Institut Franco-Iranien 1964, p. 4.

5-Mullī ʿadri, al-Shawihid al-rubʿbiyya, ed. S.J. ʿshtiyin̄c, Mashhad: Mashhad University Press 1967, p. 14. Cf. F. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mullī ʿadri, Albany: SUNY Press 1975, pp. 27-74.

6-Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, 92 b 10.

7-Aristotle, Metaphysics, 1003 b 26-27.

8-Ibn S̄cni, al-Shifī': al-Man̄shiq - al-Madkhal, ed. M. Khuḡayr̄c et al, Cairo: Wiz̄rat al-ma'irif 1952, p. 15; eadem, al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit, pp. 31; 344. Cf. eadem, Al-Ishir̄jt wa l-tanb̄ch̄jt, ed. M. Shih̄j̄c, rpt., Qum: Daftar-i nashr-i kit̄jb 1403 H, vol. III, pp. 11-14; eadem, Man̄shiq al-mashriqiyȳc̄n , rpt., Qum: Maktabat ʿayatuljih al-Mara'sh̄c al-Najaf̄c 1405 H, pp. 17-19. Cf. T. Izutsu, "The problem of quiddity and the natural universal in Islamic metaphysics," in Études philosophiques, ed. O. Amine, Cairo: Gebo 1974, pp. 131-77.

9-Al-Fir̄j̄c̄, Fuḡ̄l̄ al-ikma , Qum: Intishir̄jt-i B̄c̄d̄j̄r 1405 H, pp. 47-50; Ibn S̄cni, al-Ta'lc̄q̄jt, ed. J. ʿal-Yis̄c̄n, rpt., Tehran: Intishir̄jt-i ʿikmat 1992, p 139; eadem, 'Uȳn al-mas̄i'il, Cairo 1328 H, p. 50; eadem, Al-Da'jw̄c̄ l-qalbiyya; Hyderabad: D̄j'irat al-ma'irif al-'uthmaniyya 1345 H, pp. 2-3.

10-Aristotle, Metaphysics, 12, 7, 1072 b 11. Cf. J. Barnes, "Metaphysics," in The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle, ed. J. Barnes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995, pp. 66-108.

11-Ibn S̄cni, al-Shifī': al-Madkhal, p. 34; eadem, al-Ishir̄jt wa l-tanb̄ch̄jt, vol. I, pp. 42-43.

12-Ibn S̄cni, al-Ta'lc̄q̄jt, ed. 'A-R. Badaw̄c, rpt., Tehran: Maktabat al-a'lam al-isl̄m̄c̄ 1404 H, p. 143.

13-Ibn S̄cni, al-Ta'lc̄q̄jt, p. 185.

14-Ibn S̄cni, al-Ta'lc̄q̄jt, p. 67.

15-Ibn S̄cni, al-Shifī': al-ʿab̄c'iȳjt, al-sami' al-ṣab̄c'c̄, rpt., Qum: Maktabat ʿayatuljih al-Mar'ash̄c̄ al-Najaf̄c 1404 H, p. 27; Ibn S̄cni, al-Ta'lc̄q̄jt, pp. 143, 185 & 186.

16-Ibn Rushd, Taf̄s̄r̄ M̄j̄ ba'd al-ṣab̄c'ā, ed. M. Bouyges, rpt., Tehran: Intishir̄jt-i ʿikmat 1377 S., vol. I, pp. 313, 315. See the clarification in Fazlur Rahman's two articles, "Essence and existence in Avicenna,"

Mediaeval Studies 4 (1958) pp. 1-16, and "Essence and existence: the myth and reality," *Hamdard Islamicus* 4 (1981) pp. 3-14. Cf. the survey in Sajjad Rizvi, "Roots of an aporia in later Islamic philosophy: the existence-essence distinction in the metaphysics of Avicenna and Suhrawardi," *Studia Iranica* 29 (2000) pp. 61-108.

17-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ta'liqat*, p. 143.

18-See: Fakhr al-D̄n al-Riz̄, *al-Mabjūth al-mashriqiyya*, Tehran: Maktabat al-Asad̄ 1966, vol. I; Sa'd al-D̄n Taftaz̄n, *Sharḥ al-Maq̄id*, Cairo 1305 H, vol. I; 'Alljma al-'ill̄, «ḫ̄ al-maq̄id, ed. A. Munzav̄, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1337 S., p. 22. Cf. R. Frank, "The non-existent, the existent and the possible in the teaching of Ab̄ Ḥshim and his followers," *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Études Orientales du Caire* 14 (1980) pp. 185-209.

19-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit*, p. 291.

20-Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1074 a.

21- Ibn S̄cni, *Rasī'il*, *Risalat al-'arshiyya*, Qum: *Intishrīt-i B̄d̄ir* n.d., pp. 254-255.

22-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ishirīt wa l-tanb̄h̄t*, Vol. III, pp. 67-75. Cf. W. Lane Craig, *The kalam cosmological argument*, London: Macmillan 1979.

23-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ta'liqat*, p. 175; eadem, *al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit*, pp. 37-39; eadem, *al-Najit*, ed. M.T. D̄nishpaz̄h̄, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1364 S., p.546; eadem, *al-Ishirīt*, Vol. III, p. 18.

24-Qur'̄n, *S̄rat al-'Imr̄n* 3: 18; Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ta'liqat*, p. 70.

25-Ibn S̄cni, *Rasī'il*, *S̄rat al-taw'̄d*, pp. 313-14.

26-Ibn S̄cni, *Rasī'il*, *S̄rat al-taw'̄d*, pp. 317-318.

27-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit*, p. 348; eadem, *al-Ishirīt*, vol. III, p. 65.

28-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Shifī': al-Iljhiyyit*, p. 327; eadem, *al-Najit*, p. 235.

29-Qur'̄n, *S̄rat al-Shu'ari'* 26: 11.

30-Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1069 b; eadem, *Physics*, 285 b II, 259 a 6-13, 259 b 28-31.

31-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ishirīt*, vol. III, pp. 472-73.

32-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ishirīt*, vol. III, p. 63.

33-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ishirīt*, vol. III, p. 65.

34-Ibn S̄cni, *al-Ta'liqat*, pp. 185-186, 34.

35-Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1074 b 15-35.

36-Qur'ın, Sferat Sabi' 34: 3.

37-Ibn Sçni, al-Shifî': al-Iljhiyyit, p. 360.

38-Qur'ın, Sferat °j Mçm 36: 53; Ibn Sçni, al-Ishjrit, vol. III, p. 66. For a recent discussion, see Toby Mayer, "Ibn Sçni's 'Burhın al-ıddçqçn'" *Journal of Islamic Studies* 12 (2001) pp. 18-39.

39-Ibn Sçni, Rasi'il, Risilat al-'arshiyya, p. 254.

40-Qur'ın, Sferat al-An'ım 6: 76; Ibn Sçni, al-Ishjrit, Vol. III, p. 127.

41-Qur'ın, Sferat al-Rfm 30: 40.

42-Qur'ın, Sferat al-'Alaq 96: 1.

43-Qur'ın, Sferat al-A'rif 7: 54.

44-Qur'ın, Sferat Yenus 10: 83.

45-Ibn Sçni, al-Shifî': al-Iljhiyyit, p. 257.

46-Ibn Sçni, al-Mubi'ıathıt, ed. M. Bçdjrfar, Qum: Intishjrit-i Bçdjr 1992, p. 184.

47-Ibn Sçni, al-Ishjrit, vol. III, p. 51; eadem, *Al-Mabda' wa l-Ma'id*, ed. 'A. Nferinç, Tehran: Tehran University Press 1984, p. 88.

48-Ibn Sçni, al-Ishjrit, vol. III, pp. 153-4.

Two Critical Issues in Sadrian Philosophy: Substantive Motion and its Relation to the Problem of Time, and the Principality of Existence

M. T. Mişbjı Yazdç, Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Iran

Abstract

This paper considers two related issues in Sadrian philosophy. The first concerns the nature of motion within substance and its relationship to time. Corporeal beings have, in addition to the three sensory dimensions that comprise their volume, a fourth dimension, which is not directly perceived by senses. The existence of this fourth is demonstrated rationally. It is time. This paper considers the relationship between time and motion in the doctrine of existence of Mullı adrı. The second issue confirms the theory of substantive motion by affirming the principality of existence within contingent and corporeal beings.

Introduction

Before moving onto the central issue, we shall consider the concept of motion itself. Motion is usually defined as, 'the displacement of an object from one point to another'. (1) It also takes place when the



constituents of an object, and not the object itself, change place like the spin of a windmill. (2) However, in philosophical terms, motion has a wider meaning: in an apple, the change of colour from green to yellow and red is called 'qualitative motion' (ʿaraka kayfiyya) and the growth of a tree from a sapling to a big tree is called 'quantitative motion' (ʿaraka kamiyya). On this basis, motion falls into four categories: spatial motion (ʿaraka intiqiliyya), spin (ʿaraka waḥḥiyya), quantitative motion (ʿaraka kamiyya) and qualitative motion (ʿaraka kayfiyya). (3) However, it should be noted that, in philosophical terms, every change does not constitute motion. Rather, displacement or change of state in an object is called motion, provided that two conditions are fulfilled. First, the change should not be 'sudden' (dafʿi) but gradual (tadrīji) and having temporal extension though it may have a short duration. Second, the change should have an infinitely divisible extension, not a set of indivisible atoms (in conformity with atomism). (4) It should also be noted that, similar to any single line, and not sections of line with a beginning and an end, the extension of each motion should not have any actual parts that would discern a distinct point or points. (5) Otherwise, it would not make a single motion. In other words, a single motion is like a single line and not a collection of sections of line that are restricted with points. Now, taking these points into consideration, we turn to the main discussion.

#### A brief consideration of the history of the issue

Ancient philosophers who believed in the existence of motion (contrary to the Eleatics who denied it) limited motion to its four aforementioned accidental categories and thought of motion in other categories, especially in substance, as impossible. (6) Their argument for the impossibility of the motion in substance was that they believed that motion was a state attributed to a subject with a constant substance. If the substance itself underwent flux or change, we could no longer have a subject to which motion could be attributed. In other words, they believed that, the hypothesis of substantive motion is the hypothesis of a motion without the moving object or a characteristic without the object to be characterised. (7)

This position was accepted by the Islamic philosophers both Peripatetics and the Illuminationists. For centuries it was perceived as a unanimous problem until Mullī ḥadri (d. 1641) presented his famous and original doctrine of substantive motion (ʿaraka jawhariyya). (8) He disputed his predecessors' arguments and uncovered their weaknesses. In this short study, first, we state one of Mullī ḥadri's reasons about substantive motion, a reason which also reveals the truth of time, and then proceed to criticise the reason given by those who deny the substantive motion.

#### A proof for substantive motion

Corporeal beings have, in addition to their three sensory dimensions that comprise their volume, a fourth dimension which is not directly perceived by senses but that its existence is demonstrated with the assistance of reason: that fourth dimension consists of their temporal dimension. For instance, a plant grows on a certain day, starts blossoming and producing flowers, then perishes and dies on a certain day and so, it would live, for instance for a hundred days. This period is an indivisible extension of its being which is its fourth dimension. Time is nothing more than this extension. Assessing the relation of this extension to any other being, creates their specific time, as from assessing and distinguishing the volume and local dimension of objects, we recognise their place. The main difference between the temporal extension and local extensions is that in the former, the potential constituents of time come into existence one after the other and in succession. For the realization of one constituent should die out. (We should bear in mind that extensions have potential constituents, because no extension has actual existence.) (9)

Therefore, time is a dimension and a characteristic of corporeal beings. Contrary to our general understanding, it is not an independent entity that contains objects. When we say time is a dimension of corporeal beings, we mean that their existence has a passable extension which has unlimited division. Each given constituent of it is on the point of passing, flowing and then extinction. It is the transition and then the annihilation of that particular constituent which creates another constituent. In other words, each corporeal being has a certain duration and is always in flux. Its potential constituents come gradually into existence and lapse out of existence. This is, in philosophical terms, 'substantive motion'. (10) In many cases this motion is coupled with the evolution of the moving object like the evolution of a sperm till it turns into an animal or a full human being. (11)

It would be wrong to extrapolate that this duration and gradual realisation also includes separable beings and the holy Essence of God. Some philosophers have supported this generalisation saying that Almighty God undergoes evolution. (12) But this generalisation is only a reproduction of our imaginative mind – as when we think (wrongly) that all beings occupy a place – and cannot be endorsed by reason and demonstration. Every separable being does not have temporal dimension as it does not have a local dimension. God is omnipresent and therefore has identical control over anything anywhere at any time. To impute deficiency to God or think of transformation, evolution, or degeneration in Him is because of our deficient knowledge in knowing His Exalted Essence.

A critique of the denial of motion in the category of substance

At the end of this article we deal with the criticism of the argument of those who deny substantive motion. As we have mentioned, the gist of their argument is that if the essence of a substance – regardless of its accidents and states – has motion, then it would be identical with motion itself. (13) A motion, which would not have a concrete subject of a moving object, is impossible (it is impossible to have motion without the moving object). (14) In response, it should be said that accidents and characteristics which are attributed to objects are sometimes 'outward accidents' which have a different existence from that of the subject, as, for instance, attributing laughter or crying to human beings in the following two sentences: 'man is happy' and 'man is crying'.

These characteristics and accidents should have independent subjects, which have a different existence from that of those accidents. But there are sometimes accidents and characteristics attributed to subjects which are not 'outward accidents' but 'analytical accidents'. These accidents do not have an independent existence from that of their subjects. It is our analytical mind that differentiates between the subject and the given feature. These accidents include movement, immovability, mutability and constancy. (15) For example, when we say 'that object is static', its immovability does not have an existence different from that of the object itself. Or when we say that absolute separable beings are stable, their stability would not be different from their existence. Also, when we say 'the essence of an object has motion', it is not necessary for the motion to be different from that essence. Rather, the very existence of the corporeal essence is identical with motion and flow, and unlike separable beings, it is not stable. Above all, when we say 'the colour of apple is red', redness is nothing different from colour, even though in the above sentence 'colour' is subject and 'red' its attributed feature. Or when we say 'the colour of apple changes (moves) from yellowness to redness', this movement is defined in terms of the change and metamorphosis in the 'colour' itself. Therefore, one cannot always find any outward difference between every given subject and its attributed characteristic. Rather, in many cases, like when we say 'corporeal essence has motion', there is an analytic difference between the subject and its given feature. (16)

## The Principality of being in the philosophy of Mullī ʿadrij

The success of an argument requires a clear understanding of the subject of study or the given problem. This is especially important in philosophical problems that include abstract and difficult concepts. The question of what was principal in the distinction between existence and essence was first posed by Mullī ʿadrij and has been an independent and basic problem. (17) Even though this question has its motifs and roots in the discussions of predecessors, it is one of these subtle philosophical problems, the understanding and conception of which requires talent in metaphysics.

Accepting the 'principality of being' has some consequences for other philosophical debates. This short article cannot comprehensively deal with the issue of the principality of existence.

We have dealt with it partly in our book *Philosophical instructions*, designed for the new students of metaphysics and in the *Ta'liqqa 'alij Nihyat al-ikma* written by the late professor 'Allīma ʿabīṣabī' (may God be pleased with him). (18) Now, in this article, it would be sufficient to mention some significant points that might guide a beginner in this field.

1) When philosophers attribute existence and essence to outward objects, they do not mean that they have two distinct and separable properties for their outward realisation. Rather, they mean that it is our mental analysis that tends to dichotomise and make a difference between these two properties. For example, when we hear of the existence of an element like uranium, even though we have become aware of one object, we tend to express our awareness in a proposition, which has, at least, two concepts, and say 'there is uranium' or 'uranium exists'. Here, the concept of 'uranium' displays a specific essence and the concept of 'exists' its outward realisation. Therefore, any reality possesses two properties: its essential property and its existential property. Our mind tends to see them numerous and different, otherwise, in outward realisation, we do not have two separate things as 'uranium' and 'existence'. (19)

2) We know that from antiquity, sceptics have disputed the universe, the outward existence of objects and the possibility of their recognition. The most extreme saying in this regard is that of Gorgias: 'nothing exists; if anything exists we cannot recognise them'. (20) This kind of discourse, first, denies the outward existence of objects or, at least, doubts their existence; and second, denies our knowledge of them or doubts our recognition of their reality and essence. Therefore, the duality of the ontological and epistemological discussions can, in its own turn, lead to the duality of existential and essential properties. This indicates to us the mental distinction between 'existence' and 'essence'.

3) According to existentialist philosophy, existence precedes essence in humans while in other creatures the reverse is the case. That is to say, every human being attains a certain essence with his own personal choice and will. This has nothing to do with the principality of existence in the philosophy of Mullī ʿadrij. (21) Therefore, it becomes clear that the concept of 'principality' should be explained more in this discussion. In this regard, it is necessary to mention the roots of this discussion and the factors that shaped it in the philosophy of Mullī ʿadrij.

4) We know that, from antiquity, creatures were categorised according to their basic differences from each other. All creatures, which had common basic features, were considered to belong to one group even though they had some trivial differences. Those philosophers who were meticulous in discerning the boundaries of 'basic features' (and non-basic features), divided the existing differences into two

groups: essential and accidental. They believed that the difference in one essential matter caused the numerousness of species and in more matters the numerousness of genus. Aristotelians categorised all possible creatures under ten supreme genera. For example, they considered horse and cow as two species but tree and animal as two genera, and categorised both under one supreme genus called substance. (22)

On the other hand, the commonality among most subjects in all essential features revealed the unity of substance and characteristics pertaining to species. To recognise the essential features common to most subjects (the constituents of characteristics pertaining to species), meant the full recognition of their truth and essence. For example, population, growth, and reproduction formed the constituents of the essence of a 'plant'. All these plus sensation and wilful movement comprised the constituents of the essence of 'animal', and all these, added to the rational faculty formed the essence of 'human being'. As we can see, these essential matters – at least potentially – are common among all subjects of one species. In other words, the essentials of species are a series of common generic features among their subjects. In consequence, the essence of every being comprises one or several generic features. In reply to the question, 'in what manner, does a general essence become a certain person?' it can be said that the attachment of personal accidents like form, colour, time and place help identify a being. This position was widely held in philosophy. Therefore, the core of all philosophical discussions was generic essences and inspired 'the principality of essence' in the minds of people. But the basic difficulty about this theory was that 'accidents' too, in their own turn, are generic essences, which have been categorised under nine of the ten Aristotelian categories. In this case, the argument over the distinction of each of the accidents has to be repeated. For example, how can white or black, which is a generic accidental essence, find distinction – so that its attachment to substantive essence causes its distinction?

To the best of our knowledge, the great Islamic philosopher, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 950) solved this problem when he stated that no essence has distinction by nature. The attachment of tens or hundreds of general essences to another essence does not cause its distinction. It is existence that is distinctive. The distinction of accidental and substantive essence is due to their existential distinction. So, metaphorically speaking, the seeds of the principality of existence were planted as an insightful and efficient subject in philosophy. (23) After a period of time, Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā Suhrawardī (d. 1191), called Shaykh al-Ishrāq (the master of Illumination) investigated rationally valid concepts that do not have 'outward appearance'. However, he considered the 'concept of existence' as a rational validity and a 'being of reason', and because of this, he was assumed to be the precursor among those who believed in 'the principality of essence' in Islamic epoch. (24) It seems as if this attribution is worth pondering over, because, to attribute the belief in 'the principality of existence' to the followers of Peripatetics too, is not free from controversy; at least, in the speeches of each group, one can find arguments that are related to each other. However, centuries passed before Mullī ḥadī turned his attention to the very important role of 'the principality of existence' in solving philosophical difficulties. Even though, at the beginning, he believed in the principality of essence and, as he tells us, strongly defended it, he accepted the belief in the principality of existence and proved it with all he could and removed all doubts of those who believed in the principality of essence. (25)

One of the intricate questions, which in the light of the principality of existence found a clear answer, was that essences are stable and changeless. In other words, the 'essentialist revolution' was impossible, whereas in the external world, we have creatures that undergo evolutionary movement and in each part of their evolution, they have a specific essence. If one holds the principality of essence, one should say that, in each process, one specific essence is realised and then removed in the next, so that a

new essence is formed anew that cannot be 'the same' as the previous one or be 'one' with it! However, according to the principality of existence, the identity of the changeable and evolutionary creatures is kept once it is coupled with the description of their 'personal unity'. Above all, their existence gets stronger and more complete, while their existential limits change. Existences, in fact, are mental moulds, which are abstracted from the limits of the limited beings. So, as the existential limits of a unique being change during the course of its evolutionary movement, the conformity of numerous essences does not disturb its personal unity. (26)

5) To clarify the position of essence in Sadrian philosophy as compared to existence, we can cite the following example. If we cut a piece of paper into different figures like a triangle, a square and so on, no objective feature is added to it, but each bit would have its own special limit, which is, in reality, a non-existent feature. We abstract the concept of triangle or square by joining the non-existent limits of each figure. When a creature evolves from the class of inanimate objects to a growing and reproducing plant, its personal unity is not annihilated. Rather, in the new state, it assumes another conceptual mould, which is called 'plant'. When it attains sensation and wilful movement, it assumes the mould of a third concept or another essence called 'animal'. Therefore, it is existence that has objective realisation; essences are the entities that only refer to the special limitations of beings. In other words, essence is an empty mould, the content of which is existence. (27)

6) Another conclusion derived from the principality of existence is that if a being has infinite existential accomplishments (for example, the existence of Almighty God) because it does not have non-existent limits, one cannot attribute any essence to it. Rather it should be considered as 'absolute existence'. (28) Naturally, one cannot recognise the innermost nature of such a being by one's mental faculties, because, our mind cannot perceive the unlimited and cannot have domination over an unlimited (without essence) being. It is only through abstract concepts that one can refer to its unrecognisable truth. On the other hand, the objective recognition of the infinite being is possible only through mystic intuition and intuitive knowledge ('ilm ḥaqīqī). This is dependent on the existential capacity of the mystic and not his comprehension of the object to be known, in this case God Almighty.

7) Finally, we would like to consider the clearest argument for the theory of 'the principality of existence' propounded by Mullī ḥadī. That reason is that if we reflect on the property of essence and separate it from every other property, we would see that essence does not deserve to be realised in the external world. We can even negate its outward existence. (29) For example, we can say that 'there is no real circle in the external world' – regardless of whether this proposition is true or false. Therefore, the property of essence is an indifferent and unnecessary one as contrasted to existence and non-existence. Such a property can not be basic or the origin of objective signs. Rather, essence is nothing more than a mould of a void concept, and therefore, principality and originality in things (signs) is due of existence.

We came to the conclusion that every outward being is an individual thing and, in philosophers terms, 'existence is entwined with distinction', whereas, essence never finds distinction even though it may be coupled with thousands of substantive and general conditions. Still, there are some other reasons which, due to the shortage of space, will not be mentioned. However, readers are referred to the first volume on general metaphysics of al-Asfīr written by Mullī ḥadī.

Notes:

1-Miḥāj-i Yazdī, ḥamāshah-i falsafa, trs. M. Legenhausen & A. Sarvdalīr as Philosophical instructions, New York: SSIPS in association with Global Publications, Binghamton University 1999, p. 445.

2-Thus in Islamic philosophical traditions preceding Mulli ʿadri, motion was seen as an unreal entity, a stable condition of flow (ʾijla sayyila) perceived only by the mind as a process. See Mulli ʿadri, al-ʾikma al-mutaʾiliya fī l-asfīr al-ʾaqliyya al-arbaʾa, eds. R. Luṣfī et al, 3rd edition, Beirut: Dīr iʾyīʾ al-turjith al-ʾarabī 1981, vol. III, p. 59; cf. Fazlur Rahman, The philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, Albany: State University of New York Press 1975, p. 95.

3-Miʾbīʾī Yazdī, Philosophical instructions, pp. 467-72. Cf. Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 211, on accidental and essential types of motion.

4-Fazlur Rahman, The philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, pp. 94-5.

5-Miʾbīʾī Yazdī, Philosophical instructions, p. 451.

6-Miʾbīʾī Yazdī, Philosophical instructions, pp. 446, 472. Cf. Fazlur Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, p. 95.

7-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. II, p. 176, vol. III, p. 229.

8-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, pp. 109-111. Cf. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, p. 108.

9-Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, p. 109; Cf. ʾabiṣabiʿʿs note in Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 140.

10-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, pp. 61-4; Cf. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, p. 96.

11-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, pp. 353-54. Cf. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, p. 103.

12-As some process theologians hold – see Nicholas Rescher, Process metaphysics, Albany: State University of New York Press 1996, p. 156.

13-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 85, vol. IV, p. 271.

14-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 176.

15-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 61.

16-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. III, p. 74.

17-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. I, pp. 38-60; cf. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, pp. 31-4.

18-Miʾbīʾī Yazdī, Philosophical instructions, pp. 213-30; Miʾbīʾī Yazdī, Taʾlīqa ʾalī Nihiyat al-ʾikma, Qum: Dar rjīh-i ʾāqq 1405 Q, pp. 19-39.

19-Mulli ʿadri, al-Asfīr, vol. I, p. 87; cf. Rahman, The Philosophy of Mulli ʿadri, pp. 27-31.

20-Terence Irwin, Classical thought, Oxford: Oxford University Press 1996, pp. 63, 97-8.

21-See Henry Corbin, "Aperçu philosophique," in his edition of Mulli ʿadri's Kitāb al-Mashj'ir as *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, Tehran: Institut Franco-Iranien 1964, pp. 73, 77-9.

22-Irwin, *Classical thought*, pp. 20-35, 47-57; Geoffrey Lloyd, *Early Greek science*, Bristol: Bristol Classical Press 1999; Hankinson, "Philosophy of science," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle*, ed. J. Barnes, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1995, pp. 110-111, 124-25.

23-See the relevant chapter in Fadlou Shehadi, *Metaphysics in Islamic philosophy*, New York: Caravan Books 1982.

24-Suhrawardī, *ʿikmat al-ishrīq [The Philosophy of illumination]*, eds./trs. H. Ziai & J. Walbridge, Salt Lake City: Brigham Young University Press 1999, pp. 45-51.

25-Mulli ʿadri, *al-Asfīr*, vol. I, p. 49.

26-Mulli ʿadri, *al-Asfīr*, vol. I, pp. 54, 66.

27-Mulli ʿadri, *al-Asfīr*, vol. II, pp. 16, 36.

28-Mulli ʿadri, *al-Asfīr*, vol. I, pp. 96-7.

29-Mulli ʿadri, *al-Asfīr*, vol. II, pp. 10-13.

*The Shape of Things: A Philosophy of Design*  
Flusser, V., London: Reaktion Books 1999.

*Towards a Philosophy of Photography*  
Flusser, V., London: Reaktion Books 2000.

Reaktion Books are to be congratulated for having brought out in English for the first time some of the key works by Vilém Flusser, the cultural theorist born in Prague and then resident in Brazil and France. In many ways typifying the insecurity of the twentieth century, Flusser was attracted to describing its defining features. In the book on photography he is fascinated by the contrast between a text-based and an image-based culture, between a concept of history as a linear process and the two-dimensionality of magic. Photography is part and parcel of the move from work to play, from realism to postmodernism, and yet we must try to assert ownership of the images we allow to dominate our lives, Flusser argues. Yet ultimately this is a rather pessimistic book, since it is clear that we shall no more control those images than in the past we managed to control texts, and indeed he suggests that we are less likely to be successful in the future than we were in the past. This is because the very momentary nature of such images makes them appear to be non-serious, and yet their omnipresence makes them very powerful indeed, so powerful that they are unnoticed and unobserved while at the same time being constantly observed.

It is impossible to describe adequately the richness of the discussion in this very short book, but few readers will not be impressed by it and in particular by its conceptualisation of what Flusser calls the grammar of images. There is a tendency to locate this sort of analysis together with the work of Baudrillard and Virilio, but many will feel that Flusser writes more from the perspective of someone like

Benjamin, with appropriately deeper metaphysical insight and without a facile fascination with the specificities of the latest developments in media technology.

On the other hand, in his book on design, which consists of a collection of individual essays, Flusser does argue that the specific design philosophy of a particular culture defines that culture, it is not just a superficial aspect of something more profound. How a designer sees, if anything can be called a general theme of these essays this is it. Some of the topics are very specific - carpets, wheels, pots - while others are much more general, but they are united by a sort of wonder which Flusser thinks appropriate for even the most everyday item of our modern material world. The important thing to note about that world is that there is no possibility of distinguishing radically between the material and the spiritual, between the technical and the metaphysical. Our everyday objects are redolent with wider theoretical histories and concepts which we have to grasp if we are to understand the significance of those objects. Nothing then is so extraordinary as the ordinary. Flusser's remarks are sometimes annoying, but often revealing in their originality, and in a very un sentimental way he re-enchants the modern world.

One of the frustrating features of Flusser's style is that he rarely mentions other thinkers, or he mentions them in such an abbreviated way that it is difficult to pin down precisely what sorts of text he has in mind. On the other hand, he has such control over his sources that he manages to merge them into a very satisfying hermeneutic whole, and this paradoxically gives his perspective a rather childlike naiveté which almost conceals an immense sophistication.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

L'Imam Khomeyni, un gnostique méconnu du XXe siècle: Métaphysique et théologie dans les oeuvres philosophiques et spirituelles de l'Imam Khomeyni

Yahya Christian Bonaud, Paris/Beirut: Editions al-Bouraq 1997, pp. 560, cloth, FF 137.

The late Ayatollah Khomeini needs no introduction. Or so one would think. Bonaud's work reveals just how little we have known (at least in European languages) about him. The present work under review is a revised version of Yahya Bonaud's doctoral dissertation defended at the Sorbonne in 1995 and represents the first major attempt at analysing the content and appeal of contemporary Islamic philosophy and mysticism in Iran. It portrays a side of Ayatollah Khomeini that is quite unknown to most people in the West. The very title will come as a surprise to many: a revolutionary leader as a 'gnostic'! But the intellectual history of Iran in the twentieth century and the 'taste' of the seminary demonstrate how this is not quite extraordinary. Indeed, recent works have begun to recognise the importance of philosophy and mysticism in the intellectual formation of Khomeini, providing certain indications of connections. But Bonaud's work is the first systematic presentation of the man, his works and his ideas. In the Preface, he discusses the choice of subject. Much ink has been spilt (quite wantonly and opportunistically) on the political thought of Khomeini, the formation of 'Islamic ideology' and the Revolution. But the philosophical and mystical character of his works that was his first love is ignored. Hence, Bonaud decides to forgo issues of politics and sociology and focuses on his works and ideas because it was this aspect that intrigued him. Even whilst avoiding politics, as Bonaud says (page 20 note 20), he was not spared the vagaries of French foreign policy which ensured that his work was rejected from the publications of the L'Institut Français de Recherches en Iran. Any work on Khomeini is clearly seen as undesirable, especially one that might portray him in a good light as a mystic and thinker.



Bonaud describes four events that spurred him to write the study. First, while writing his masters' dissertation on North African Sufism, he came across two mystical works of Khomeini's commenting on the famous 'Morning Supplication' (du'ā al-Sa'ar) of the Shi'i Imam 'Alī. Until then he had only been familiar with Khomeini the political leader. Second, he came across a transcript of the lectures commenting on the opening chapter of the Qur'ān, which Khomeini gave immediately following the revolution and was intrigued by their recourse to mystical thought. A revolutionary leader giving lectures on self-purification and the path of the soul was quite a revelation! Third, he remembers seeing the letter that Khomeini wrote late in life to major world leaders such as Gorbachev urging them to reflect upon the philosophical and mystical beauty of Islam expressed in the works of the Andalusian Sufi Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240). A politician urging others to read mystical, quite otherworldly works and enjoining righteous behaviour and the development of a perfected self is quite a rarity! Fourth, he read the short article of Alexander Knysh on Khomeini's 'irfān and felt the need for a corrective to such a jaundiced and ill-digested inquiry.

The Khomeini of Bonaud is thus quite a different person in comparison to what most people would assume. And Bonaud's aim is to show how wrong that assumption would be. Bonaud's Khomeini is concerned with four major themes (page 30). First, he recognises that the spiritual path is oriented towards the gnosis of God. Second, man is capable of spiritual perfection and once he has attained it along the path he becomes the Perfect Man (insān-i kāmil) and is the true authority and vicegerent of God on earth. Third, the spiritual path is man's self-realisation and the way for his return to God. Fourth, prayer, and other rituals that play an axial role in Islam, is the vehicle for man's progress towards God insofar as they internalise and symbolise the metaphysical truths of the faith. Man's spiritual and intellectual life, the true 'examined life', is thus Khomeini's major concern.

The work is divided into two parts: the man, his intellectual life and his works, and his 'theology'. Both are major contributions to our understanding of the psychology of the seminary and philosophical inquiry in Iran, and the nature and value of contemporary Islamic philosophy and mysticism.

Part One comprises two chapters. Chapter One is an intellectual biography of Khomeini that describes the nature of study and inquiry in the Shi'i seminary and gives a detailed account of the curriculum. Bonaud introduces the reader to the texts, style of debate and pedagogy of the 'ulūwze (seminary). Along the way, one becomes acquainted with the intellectual history of the seminary in the twentieth century and is given a sketch of the development of the study of philosophy ('ikmāt) and mysticism ('irfān) in Iran since the Qajar period. Bonaud's presentation of the mysticism and philosophy taught in the seminary is complemented by a highly useful description of the key texts, their contents and their significance, namely al-Asfār al-Arba'a of Mullī 'Adrij (d. 1641), Sharḥ al-Manẓuma of Mullī Hīdā Sabzavīrī (d. 1873), Miẓbāj al-Uns of 'Amza al-Fanjīrī (d. 1430) and Sharḥ Fuṣṣal al-'Ikām of Djwād-i Qayṣarī (d. 1350). Chapter Two is an exhaustive inventory and description of his works. Since Bonaud wishes to present Khomeini in his own words, copious translations are made from his work, a strategy followed most assiduously in Part Two. The deep commitment of Bonaud to this corpus is quite evident.

The analysis of Khomeini's ideas on the three central realities of mystical philosophy in Islam, God and cosmos and man (the microcosm) constitutes Part Two. The different chapters of this part follow the well-known paradigm of the four journeys of the mystic. Beginning with ontology and the discussion of existence, one moves onto God, his nature and attributes, His manifestation through the divine Names and the Imams to the nature of spiritual authority and divine friendship (wilāya). The results of this analysis are to demonstrate Khomeini's mastery of the philosophical and mystical traditions of Islam as

transmitted, developed and nurtured in Iran, an intellectual and spiritual phenomenon which, as Khomeini's example amply shows, is alive and well even today. One might quibble at times on certain points since arguably Bonaud is anachronistic in his exposition of certain doctrines as seen through the eyes of Khomeini. But this reveals a critical and contemporary engagement with the ideas that makes this work so valuable. It also shows Bonaud to be a keen and committed thinker, a worthy student of Sayyid Jalil al-Din 'Ashtiyani, a veritable Mulli 'adri revivendus in the words of the late Iranologist and philosopher Henry Corbin.

The bibliography and indices appended allow one to utilise the work as an important companion to the study of Islamic philosophy and mysticism. Bonaud's work is highly recommended and because of its clear exposition of key ideas, it can be fruitfully used in classes on Islamic intellectual traditions. Certainly, it deserves a wide readership beyond those who might be narrowly interested in contemporary Iran and its politics. Plans are afoot to prepare an English edition, which would be most welcome. In the meanwhile, Al-Bouraq should be congratulated for their support and encouragement of serious scholarly works produced by Muslims in French on Islamic thought. Bonaud's work has done them proud.

Sajjad Rizvi

Pembroke College, Cambridge

The Ruby of Badakshan. A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher

Hunsberger, A., Nasir Khusraw: Ismaili Heritage Series, London: I B Tauris 2000.

Nasir Khusraw lived in the 5th/11th century and is an interesting thinker, in some ways more for the life he led than for the theoretical ideas he produced. From a philosophical point of view his thought is rather unoriginal, he adheres to the main tenets of Ismaili thought and does not add to or subtract from them. What is remarkable about him is first of all his style of writing, and he is a remarkable poet. Even his prose is impressive, both crisp and at the same time lyrical, a difficult style to translate properly, and the author is to be congratulated here for having carried out so well a difficult task. What is also remarkable about him is his travelling around the Islamic world, and his descriptions of some of the main cities are fascinating.

What the author does is rather intriguing. Most books on a thinker would separate the theoretical parts dealing with his thought and writing from the more personal parts which deal with his activities and experiences. Hunsberger thinks it is important to merge these aspects of his life, since his travels emerged out of his spiritual search for the truth, and his writing is clearly closely linked with his particular experiences. That is true, and it does result in a book with an interesting style. It is sometimes difficult to see the links between the cities of Cairo, Mecca and Jerusalem and the particular topics which Hunsberger discusses, and this sort of segmentation of his thought perhaps goes against the approach she takes to his thought as a unified whole, but it is surprisingly effective. What is very skilful about the author's approach, though, is not this linking of the theoretical with the personal in Nasir Khusraw's life, but the clear way in which she explains and interrogates both his life and ideas. He is not after all the most perspicuous of writers, and his poetry in particular requires a good deal of understanding of the cultural background within which he was working, and Hunsberger does a very good job of explaining his views and also some of the attractiveness of his verse. Anyone interested in

Islamic philosophy and the history of the Islamic world during this period will find much to learn from this impressive book.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought

Michael Cook, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, pp. xvii + 702, cloth, £54.50.

One of the unique features of the Islamic creed and scholarly tradition is the location of moral agency as a religious imperative, moral agency both as an exhortation to good and a prohibition of wrong and as a moral act. This impressive and weighty tome under review is probably one of the most exhaustive surveys on the moral imperative of commanding right and forbidding wrong (*amr bi l-ma'ruf wa l-nahy 'an al-munkar*) in any language. The breadth of Cook's erudition is quite astonishing at times and he does not fall into the trap to focussing narrowly on a specific area of Islamic thought and applying it essentially to Islamic thought as such. Rather, he considers in detail the scriptural bases for the discussion on 'forbidding wrong' as he summarises it and then examines the discussions in all the major schools of Islamic thought from *'anbalç* to *lbiçç*.

The work is divided into five sections. Part One introduces the topic and considers the scriptural discussion of forbidding wrong taking as his central motif what he calls the 'three modes' tradition (*çadçth*). According to this text attributed to the Prophet and narrated by the companion *Abç Sa'çd al-Khudrç* (d. 74/693), the believer or moral agent faced with a wrong has three courses of action. He can put it right with his hand, or by his tongue through agitation and argument, or at the very least, he must oppose the wrong in his heart and that 'is the bare minimum of faith'. Thus there are three levels of moral agency. The survey of Islamic thought that follows considers positions in light of this tradition. It becomes clear that the later scholastic traditions expand and expound the concept far beyond the simple exhortation of the scripture. Furthermore, because the tradition considers action in the face of a wrong, Cook summarises the theological issue as 'forbidding wrong' which does seem to be proscriptive and negative. There is unfortunately much less in this work on the positive moral exhortation and homiletics of 'commanding the right' or 'enjoining the good' as it is more commonly translated. Since the positive literature is quite extensive, it is perhaps surprising that Cook seems to pay very little attention to it. Another important feature of the provenance of the tradition is, as Cook shows, how it reveals the political tensions between the Umayyad centre of power in Syria and the more resistance-minded groups in Kufa. While most of the traditions affirming the duty of forbidding wrong are Kufan, those that dilute the duty or impose stringent conditions are Syrian in provenance. Thus the texts are adduced within the struggle between upholders of political power and those confronting the state.

Part Two considers the *'anbalç* positions on forbidding wrong taking the discussion up to the formation of the *Sa'çdç Wahhjbç* state. The *'anbalç* position reveals a fairly standard origins in quietism and a non-confrontational attitude to other sects and the state, developing into activist intervention with *Sa'çdç* state. The gradual radicalisation and encroaching interventionism begins with the *'anbalç*s of Damascus such as *Ibn Taymiyya* (d. 1328).

Part Three examines Mu'tazilī and Shāfi'ī Imjīmc views. The duty of forbidding wrong in the social sphere is qualified by the respect for the honour and integrity of the rights of a believer. The believer's privacy and the obligations of his brother to protect his rights and not to intervene in his private affairs, not to violate his private space and not to spy upon him greatly restrict the duty. Whilst the °anbalī positions are characteristically concrete, the Mu'tazilī ones are far more abstract and metaphysical in their ethics. The discussions are categorical, ontological and hypothetical. Imjīmc literature is rich in investigations on the duty and given their location as a marginal oppositional group often separated from power, the doctrines of resistance are well articulated. Similarly one also finds the most eloquent qualifications of the duty on the part of those preserving the community from extinction and urging dissimulation (taqiyya). It is only more recently that the Imjīmc position has become more radically political and committed to activist intervention.

Part Four summarises the major remaining sects among the Sunnīs and the Ibīḫīs and ends with an assessment of the role of forbidding wrong in classical Islam and its role in juxtapositions and conflicts of power and authority in medieval Islam. The Ibīḫī position shares with the Imjīmc in associating the duty of forbidding wrong with the institution of the Imamate.

Part Five brings the discussion up to the present with contemporary political and moral investigations and attempts a comparative analysis of the moral imperative with cognate positions in the Abrahamic traditions and in non-monotheistic moral systems. This section is significant because it locates the contemporary Islamic discourses of rights and moral exhortation within a larger and earlier context of classical Islam. Thus, the contemporary exhortations couched in the political language of naḫīḫa need to be understood with the background of political, social and moral dissent on the part of sectors of classical Islamic societies. What these different positions reveal is how the scholarly classes are torn between articulating a law of rebellion and a moral right of resistance to political authority and affirming their own power as arbiters of justice and guardians of the moral and political order. What is also clear is how especially the °anbalī and the Imjīmc positions have become radicalised. Cook concludes his work with a comparative consideration of the intelligibility of the duty in the West. The issue raises the spectre of moral and cultural relativism. Where does the division between the public and private reside and how culturally specific is it? Each society has its concepts of right and wrong, of theories of rescue and of enjoining morally correct action. But a society stripped of a concept of pure wrong and of standing before God clearly will favour a less interventionist and laissez-faire attitude to moral agency. Most Islamic theories cannot do that.

The subject raises important moral questions. What is the ontological status of 'right' and 'wrong'? How are they determined or recognised? Are they authorised by reason or revelation? What is the status of actions before revelation? What type of moral agency is entailed? Who is the author of the moral agency? Issues of free will and determinism naturally arise. Then there is the extensive scholastic literature on the conditions for forbidding wrong, on the authority to carry out the prohibition. Who is the 'forbidder of wrong'? Who has the authority to do so? Is this authority hierarchically arranged? Is forbidding wrong the prerogative of a certain class of people such as the 'ulema? This implies an elitist social construction of the duty. Is it an individual right/obligation or a communal one? This implies a theory of dissent and even one of rebellion if necessary against an unjust and impious ruler. What sorts of social arrangements between civil society's institutions and governmental and judicial authority are assumed? Given the centrality of issues of authority, dissent, opposition, it is not surprising that Cook states that his interest in the subject is aroused by his interest in Islamic social history.

Cook's work is a major pioneering effort on Islamic moral law and ethics and deserves to inspire many different avenues of research indicated but not followed up in this work. It is well produced and the annotations are scholarly and wide-ranging. It ought to be read by all scholars interested in Islamic moral thought and will no doubt become essential reading for students of Islamic thought.

Sajjad Rizvi

Pembroke College, Cambridge

Spirits and Clocks: Machine and Organism in Descartes

Des Chene, D., Ithaca: Cornell University 2001.

Spirits and Clocks fills an important gap in the study of the history of ideas. The book stands on its own, but is also a companion to Des Chene's *Life's Form*. Together, both books investigate changes in the concept of life in early modern philosophy. *Life's Form* concentrates chiefly on Jesuit authors, whereas *Spirits and Clocks* concentrates on Descartes. It locates Descartes' often studied arguments about the relation between the human body and the human mind within the larger context of Descartes' understanding of all living beings as machines.

Des Chene gives us details of the contemporary context behind the Cartesian position that all animal bodies can be understood as automata, and closely examines Descartes' works and correspondence in order to show us the scientific experiments behind and conceptual revolutions associated with Descartes' conclusion that animals are simply a variety of self-moving machine. It is relatively well known that Descartes contends that, of all living things, only humans have souls. Des Chene convincingly argues that Descartes' understanding of life was more radical than even this break with Aristotle in that he argued that we should not treat the living as a natural kind. Physiology is simply a species of physics.

In the course of his investigation into Descartes' ideas, the texts that Des Chene examines most closely are the *Traité de l'Homme* and the *Description du corps humain*, but these lesser texts are carefully located in relationship to all of Descartes' writings, both published and unpublished. Those with an interest in Descartes' *Les passions de l'âme* will be particularly fascinated by the way in which Descartes' physiology developed, and how his understanding of the human body fits more broadly into his conception of living things as governed by the same physical laws as all other bits of matter. Human bodies are in principle no different from, not only other animals, but also plants and inorganic matter. They differ only in what they are related to, since they, and no other pieces of matter, are united to a soul. However, Descartes makes no argument that human bodies are more suited to be united to a soul than any other conglomerate of matter, and indeed forbids speculation as to God's reasons for so uniting them.

The book is divided into two parts. Part I is entitled 'Tales of the Bête-Machine'. It gives us a very close look at the details of Descartes' rather absurd and discredited claims about the functioning of the human body. Des Chene makes no attempt to defend Descartes here, but instead gives us an understanding of the magnitude of the tasks that Descartes set for himself, and something of an etiology of his errors. Part II will be of more broad interest to philosophers. Along with an investigation of the meaning of machine and mechanism both in this period generally and for Descartes in particular, Des Chene also gives us an analysis of the difficulty Descartes had making sense of an animal body as a unity. This section of the book takes a serious look at the strategies used by Descartes and his

contemporaries as they attempted to treat physiology as a species of physics. Scholars are bound to be particularly interested in the analysis of Descartes' use of simulation and illusion in his works on the human body.

In his other works, Des Chene has done much to locate the natural philosophies of Descartes and his scholastic contemporaries and predecessors in relationship to Aristotle's work, and he continues to make use of his extraordinary knowledge of these different periods of philosophy in *Spirits and Clocks*. This helps us appreciate both the magnitude of Descartes' attempted reworking of Aristotle, and the differences and similarities between his and others' receptions of Aristotle.

My one criticism of the book is that I would like to have seen the author do more to interact with Descartes scholars working today on issues related to those discussed in *Spirits and Clocks*. Where Des Chene does venture to engage with aspects of Descartes' attitude toward the body, link Descartes' analysis of the virtue of generosity to his physiology, or give an account of the reasons for Descartes' errors, he is always insightful, and I wish that he had expanded these sections of his book. Overall, the book is an excellent piece of scholarship, with particular appeal to historians of ideas.

AMY MULLIN

University of Toronto

Se rendre immortel suivi du Traité de la résurrection de Mullî ṭadrî Shḥrîzḥ

Christian Jambet, Paris: Fata Morgana 2000, pp. 191 (broché), paper, FF 143.

Jambet is probably the most faithful follower of Henry Corbin's philosophical hermeneutics still writing and working in the present day. Profoundly influenced by his master's method (and some might say uncritically slavish in his application of 'Corbinism'), he has recently been furthering the Corbinian project with respect to the Safavid sage, Mullî ṭadrî Shḥrîzḥ (d. 1641). This book analyses aspects of Sadrian ontology and psychology and is appended with a translation of a short treatise on resurrection, *Risālat al-ḥāshr* that illustrates Sadrian psychology and its implications for the soul's afterlife. It continues the theme established in his recent article on Sadrian psychology. His interest in Illuminationist metaphysics as a philosophically viable Platonism was already visible in his earlier work on Oriental philosophy and major themes of it are picked up in this work, a trend that draws its inspiration from Corbin's own 'conversion' from the philosophy of Heidegger to that of Suhrawardī.

The work thus comprises two parts, an introductory study and a translation. First, let us consider the introductory study. I shall pass over the brief biography because it does not add anything to the account already given by Corbin and others (and one which I have recently argued is severely flawed). The subject discussed concerns the nature of the resurrection. Now before one gets to grips with a philosophical presentation of bodily resurrection, one needs to understand the nature of entities and especially of the soul as expounded in Sadrian philosophy. What mode of existence is resurrected and what is the soul itself? The issue concerns the Sadrian doctrine of the intensification of being and 'substantial motion'. The human soul evolves and develops towards perfection as it realises its origins in the One and thus desires to return to its previous blissful state. Thus the knowing self undergoes 'substantial motion' and progresses to the point of return. Since this world of material baseness is like a prison for a pure spiritual substance like the soul, the existence of the resurrection and the afterlife is superior to that of this world. Necessarily, the existence of the resurrection is a more intense existence

than that of our phenomenal world. The return is also gradational. The modalities of necessity and contingency operate at levels of intensity. Privation of existence and its relative privation determine grades of contingency. The reversion to the One is both a movement towards the Truth, a return to beauty, and a process of self-realisation.

Corbin's great contribution to our understanding of Sadrian ontology (one propagated by Jambet) was to recognise in it a metaphysics of processual acts of existence, of being as presence. Sadrian metaphysics was thus seen as a sort of phenomenological existentialism marked by the experience of self-knowledge and existence of the self. Being in its constant flux and process continually transforms, discloses and deploys itself. The life-cycle of being commences with the manifestation and disclosure of forms from the One and reverts to the One once those multiple reflections see within the mirrors of their selves the true One within.

Resurrection concerns all types of beings. Jambet considers the return of intelligibilia and of intellects as envisaged by Ṭadrij, an account in which his Neoplatonic sympathies are quite clear. Intellects are pure lights and as such pure acts of being. The source of being is the One and indeed the intellects themselves issue from the mind of the One wherein all noetic and psychic life resides. The resurrection of these intelligibilia is prefigured and rehearsed in a quotidian manner by the nature of cognition and perception. True knowledge lies in unitive presence with the objects of knowledge in a pure immediate and non-propositional relationship, which can only take place in the intelligible realm. Clearly, Ṭadrij, like most Neoplatonists, prefers the intelligible, necessarily the higher and more intense world, to the world of sensibilia that we inhabit most of the time.

One of the thorniest issues in resurrection concerns the nature of bodily resurrection. Most classical Islamic philosophers famously posited that the demonstration of the revealed doctrine of the resurrection of the body to safeguard the revealed account of reward and punishment in the afterlife was invalid. Certainly, it was a major point of contention between philosophers and theologians. Ṭadrij uses philosophy as a means for interpreting revelation and tries to save the Qur'anic account. Certainly in the text translated, citations of the Qur'ān abound. But Jambet does not really explain their usage. Philosophers such as Avicenna were mainly concerned with the afterlife of perfected souls. Imperfect souls were unimportant to them and there was even a suggestion that they could not persist. But Ṭadrij is concerned not only with individual souls but with the destiny of man, one who retains an identity after the death of his earthly body. Of course, the body as base matter is too problematic an entity to existence in the more perfect existence of the resurrection. Thus Ṭadrij posits two types of corporeality, physical and spiritual. Man's lifecycle comprises different levels of 'birth'. His body and soul are born together when he comes into this world. He is then born again at the resurrection and again at the greater Resurrection. At each level, the intensity of his being differs and the nature of his body and soul differ. Substantial motion accounts for the different nature of corporeality of the resurrection body. But it is through the account of intensification and of different births of man that Ṭadrij can defend bodily resurrection as well as a philosopher's account of how bodily resurrection as commonly understood is untenable.

However, Jambet's study is marred by some serious misconceptions and like Corbin, he takes liberties with the Sadrian text and makes unsubstantiated claims. First, although Ṭadrij's psychology draws upon the earlier discussions of Suhrawardī (d. 1191) and Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240), the three thinkers are not akin in thought. For example with respect to illuminationist ontology, it is an anachronistic retrojection to consider the Suhrawardian account of intensifying grades of light as grades within a unitive structure of

being. Suhrawardī has little time for the concept of being (*wujūd*) as discussed by either Ibn 'Arabī or Ṭadrī, and even less time for the monistic doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*.

Second, the Corbinian emphasis on the spiritual and esoteric approach is also highly suspect. Jambet's description of *ta'wīl* as an exegesis that delivers one from formalism and literalism, and indeed as an infinite way of liberty is very misleading and quite against the spirit of Sadrian philosophy (pages 9-10). Ṭadrī is not a *bīṣīnī*. Form and essence, the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects are not opposed concepts and natures. Rather, exegesis that takes one to the origins of meaning, to the most essential reality of things cannot forsake the exoteric. Even if one assumes a highly allegorical hermeneutics on the part of Ṭadrī, one cannot disclose meaning by forgoing those bearers of meaning, words and expressions. Indeed Corbin himself recognised that when he advocated a phenomenology that would 'save the appearances'.

Third, he insists that Ṭadrī adheres to a Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul (page 96). Strictly speaking this is incorrect as the famous doctrine of the 'incipience of the soul with the body' suggests. Certainly there is a tension in the Neoplatonic Sadrian account between the need for reversion to the One and the Aristotelian denial of pre-existence. These criticisms notwithstanding, Jambet's analysis of Sadrian psychology is precise and useful.

So what about the translation of the text contained in the work? It is fluent and reads well. The text itself mirrors the discussion of resurrection found in Ṭadrī's *al-Asfīr al-arba'a* and discusses five categories of beings and their resurrection, making up the five chapters of the text, namely, separable intellects, commanding intellects, imaginal souls, earthly souls, and bodies. One would have hoped for a glossary of terms. The key to understanding a philosopher's work often lies in grasping the meaning of the technical terms that he deploys. However, it seems that Jambet uses terms in the way that Corbin renders Sadrian prose. Some translations require explanation. For example, how does *possibilité prééminente* render *inkīn ashraf* (page 125)? Jambet emphasises the importance of a Neoplatonic paradigmatic approach to the text and usefully refers to the Theology of Aristotle in his notes to the translation to explain some of Ṭadrī's positions. The notes are brief but adequate.

Despite some reservations, Jambet's latest work is a welcome contribution to Sadrian studies. Useful translations of texts with introductions on the philosophical content will help to encourage historians of philosophy to extend their vision into the later Islamic philosophical traditions.

Sajjad Rizvi

Pembroke College, Cambridge

Averroes, *a Rationalist in Islam*, trans. R. Sleight

Arnaldez, R., Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 2000.

Like all Arnaldez's work, this book is scholarly, judicious and helpful. It consists of treatments of his thought and times, ranging from Averroes as judge, physician and philosopher, as theologian and commentator. I have to say from the outset that I am in entire agreement with the author's view that Ibn Rushd is not hiding anything in his writings of his real views, but that he expressed himself clearly most of the time and thought that there was no difficulty in reconciling his theoretical views on philosophy with his general religious commitments to Maliki Islam. It is worth pointing out that if he was



concealing his real heterodox views then he did make a very good job of it, given the persecution to which he was subject at different stages of his career!

A particular strength of the book is that it provides not only an accurate account of ibn Rushd's views, but it also links his works with the cultural context within which he was working, and this is well done. The reader who knows nothing of this period will gain a solid understanding of it, and appreciate how creative a period of human thought this was. Readers will also appreciate the difficult circumstances under which intellectuals often operated, and yet the equally rich culture which stimulated them to work in areas like philosophy and law.

The most annoying feature of the book is actually its title. It suggests that there are thinkers who are rationalists and those who are not in the Islamic world, but this is a gross oversimplification. Virtually all Muslim thinkers valued reason in some form or another, since if they did not how could they be intellectuals? We really must get away from using terms like 'rationalist' as though during this period it means anything. Is ibn Rushd more of a rationalist than al-Ghazali, for example? Well, the latter also used reason in his arguments and defended the use of logic in theology. Even ibn Taymiyya used arguments to defend his conclusions, and it is difficult to see how one group of thinkers could be called rationalist and another group something hostile to the use of reason. If by 'rationalist' is meant someone who thinks that reason is the only means of knowledge, it is difficult to label ibn Rushd rationalist, since he seems to think that religion is also a source of knowledge, one most appropriate to those unwilling or unable to approach theoretical topics from a philosophical point of view. Another problem with the discussion is that Arnaldez seems to treat ibn Rushd's hostility to mysticism as a surprising lapse on the thinker's part, whereas his approach to mysticism is really part and parcel of his thoroughgoing commitment to what he sees as Aristotelianism. There are many religious thinkers who are far from friendly to mysticism, so ibn Rushd's position on this issue does not cast doubt on his depth as a religious philosopher.

These cavils aside, this is a very helpful book. It has a glossary and a list of important proper names, but no index, which would have been useful. It is well worth translating, and provides an indication of some of the very best of French scholarship on Islamic philosophy.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

Ernest Renan als Orientalist, trans. P. Zalan

Goldziher, int. F. Niewoehner, paper sfr. 42-, DM 44, o.Sch. 361, Zurich: Spur Verlag, 2000

This is an interesting piece of work, translated from Hungarian into German for the first time, and representing the views of a distinguished orientalist Ignaz Goldziher on another distinguished orientalist, Ernest Renan. Goldziher clearly had nothing but respect for the French thinker, but this did not prevent him from occasionally being critical of his approach. What makes this discussion particularly interesting is that it takes place during the heyday of European orientalism, when the philological, cultural and historical rules of the game were being established and yet had not quite been laid down. What Goldziher emphasizes is the specific approach to philology which Renan follows, and the wider theoretical implications which he draws from those investigations into language. Although Goldziher tends to be complimentary of the Frenchman, it is clear that he is often rather hesitant about the very

broad implications which Renan felt could be drawn from his research into language. It is as though he admired the boldness of Renan while worrying about its adequacy as a scientific approach to the topic. We tend to talk about orientalism as though it were just one sort of theoretical approach, but of course it is far more complicated than that, even in the nineteenth century when it was being developed into the system which was to have such an impact on Western attitudes to the Middle East in that and subsequent periods.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

Chinese gleams of Sufi light: Wang Tai-yu's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm, with a new translation of *Jīmċ's Lawj'i'* by William Chittick

Sachiko Murata, Albany: State University of New York Press 2000, pp. xiv + 264, paper, £15.

Drawing on the pioneering work of her teacher Toshihiko Izutsu's Sufism and Taoism (reprinted Berkeley: University of California Press 1984) and her own pioneering work on cosmic gender relationships, *The Tao of Islam* (Albany: State University of New York Press 1993), *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* presents, almost for the first time, translations of original Chinese Muslim texts. The study of Chinese Islam has been much neglected in Islamic studies, yet it provides an important example of cultural acclimatisation and naturalisation in a non-Arab sphere and a stimulating alternative to studies on South and Central Asia. Interest in classical, pre-modern Chinese Islam has been rather lacking with a focus on more contemporary political issues of separatism and human rights in China drawing the attention of scholars mainly in political science and international relations. The twenty million odd Muslims in China are an important minority community and their location at the periphery in Xin Jiang makes them strategically significant. However, the focus of this work is upon classical, mainly early modern Chinese Islam, the development of a Chinese Islamic scholarly class and its literary culture defined in terms of 'Islamic Neo-Confucianism as Murata puts it.

Alongside introductions and annotations on the nature of classical Chinese Islam, Murata translates two key texts of the sapiential tradition in China penned by two pre-eminent Chinese 'ulema. *Great learning of the Pure and Real* by Wang Tai-yu (d. ca. 1658) is an attempt to present Islam within a Chinese idiom for the Chinese Muslim community and probably the first such work since Chinese Islamic scholarship up until then had mainly been composed in Arabic or Persian. The aim is to provide philosophical, ethical and theological justification and understanding of the faith for the community of believers and it is unconcerned with matters of ritual as such since such teaching would be conveyed within the family and community. As such it is a work on the principles of Islam informed by a Sufi worldview that presents *tawċd* couched in a Neo-Confucian moral language. *Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm* by Liu Chih (d. after 1724) is a Chinese paraphrase of the Persian classic *Lawj'i'* (Gleams) of 'Abd al-Raċmċn Jīmċ (d. 1492) on the Sufi doctrine of the oneness of existence (*waċdat al-wujċd*) and is replete with references to the Persian Sufi classics. Alongside the translation of the Chinese text is a new English translation of the original Persian work undertaken by William Chittick that allows the reader to compare the different idioms and hence audiences of the works. Thus the language of classical Persian Sufism is contrasted with the Neo-Confucian idiom of Liu Chih's work. The text is well supported by annotation and a useful bibliography and indices.

The main theme of Murata's work is Islamic Neo-Confucianism and naturalisation of Islam in China and its concomitant problems of translations and communication of doctrine within a language that is far removed from the Semitic Arabic of traditional Islamic scholarship. How does one convey the concept of God, the Qur'an, prophecy and the afterlife in Chinese? Murata shows how these authors used existing Neo-Confucian terms and conventions and located Islam and Islamic discourse within the literary culture of early modern China. More significantly, she shows the cognate nature of much of Neo-Confucian metaphysics and ethics with an Islamic ethos and weltanschauung.

Murata continues her joint project with her husband William Chittick to present Sufism as the heart of classical and traditional Islam. She demonstrates the success of the naturalisation of Islamic thought in the difficult terrain of the Chinese language and the versatility of the sapiential tradition (as she calls it in *The Tao of Islam*) stemming from among others the teachings of the Sufi Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240). Murata focuses upon points of complementarity. Both Confucianism and Sufism stress the importance of the 'heart' as the true faculty of perception. They both have a profoundly moral outlook on life and prefer acknowledging an intimate connection between moral knowledge and moral agency. They both stress the innate nature of human goodness and urge man to realise himself through acculturation, self-improvement and spiritual purification. The divine message of Islam is explained through the Neo-Confucian mandate of heaven.

The language of the texts is significant and provides us with a valuable insight into the self-perception of classical Chinese Islam. This is another key theme that ought to be of interest to scholars working on minority (religious) communities. These texts are for a Muslim community educated in Neo-Confucianism, seeking an understanding of themselves and their faith. They are not apologies aimed to non-Muslims though they do provide arguments and examples of argumentation with mainly Buddhist and Taoist sages. Given the Neo-Confucian idiom of the works, it is significant that far less ink is expended on criticising that tradition than on attacking Buddhism and Taoism. A major feature of minority discourse is the way in which pejorative appellations are transformed into badges of honour. The term *hui* is a term of abuse used by the Chinese for Muslims. But Wang shows how the term refers to the privileged nature of Chinese Muslims as microcosmic figures who represent the harmony of heaven and earth and manifest the Real (that is, God) on earth. Such are the real *Hui*.

Religious pluralism, multiculturalism and religious dialogue are key features of contemporary theology and religious studies. To a large extent, dialogue occurs within cognate traditions such as the Abrahamic faiths of Islam, Christianity and Judaism. But increasingly, at points of juncture, scholars are looking at wider relationships such as the meeting of Hinduism and Christianity in India. One such relationship is the encounter of Confucianism and Islam in the Chinese world and South-East Asia. Murata's work is highly significant in further facilitating this dialogue. A genuine work of comparative scholarship that contributes to the Islamic-Confucian dialogue initiated by Sayyid Hossein Nasr and Tu Weiming, *Chinese Gleams of Sufi Light* deserves a wide audience in Islamic Studies, comparative religion and all those interested in intellectual and spiritual dialogue.

Sajjad Rizvi

Pembroke College, Cambridge

Denying Divinity: Apophasis in the Patristic Christian and Soto Zen Buddhist Traditions

Williams, J., New York: Oxford University Press 2001.

There is a long tradition in a variety of religions of apophysis, describing the divine in negative terms. This book compares two important traditions in this area, traditions which could not be said to have been in contact with each other, and so one has to assume that the idea of using negation as a means of definition arose within each tradition in an entirely original way. The author outlines the background of the discussion for Christianity in the Greek world, and in particular in the thought of the Jewish philosopher Philo, and then looks at the development of this idea by Dionysius and Maximus the Confessor. He goes on to discuss the Zen Buddhist account provided by Dogen, linking it with earlier Buddhist thinkers, and in particular with the concept of emptiness, and there are clearly many similar arguments and ideas advanced here as in the Christian tradition. In the last and hardest chapter Williams considers the apophatic tradition as a whole, linking it with modern thinkers in both Japan and the West, and arguing that it is clearly linked with recent developments in postmodernism. Again, what is interesting about the discussion here is not the assertion of a simple causal connection, but rather the idea that similar ideas can arise in very distinct cultures when they are trying to come to grips with the same sort of problem.

Comparative theology is often at its weakest when it adopts the 'compare and contrast' methodology of college examinations, but here it is successfully undertaken. The reader gets a solid account of how both Christianity and Buddhism dealt with the issue of how to define the transcendent, and the very varied responses which resulted. And yet one cannot help wondering how appropriate it is to compare Buddhism with any of the monotheistic religions on this point. Judaism, Christianity and Islam place such emphasis on the existence of a transcendent divinity, by contrast with most forms of Buddhism, that it is difficult to see what may be usefully abstracted from a comparison between them on this topic. The author very helpfully explores the wide variety of meanings of negative theology, pointing out that negativity can be taken in a number of ways, either as posing a very radical doctrine or as being quite mild in its implications. He is aware of the very different meanings of negativity in a religion like Christianity which is based to a degree at least on the activities of a particular individual and the connection of those activities with God, as compared with Buddhism which does not have the same concept at all of a transcendent divinity. Of course, there are versions of Buddhism which are quite similar to Christianity, and vice versa, and the author implies that the significance of negativity as a theoretical concept lies in its ability to show how at the essence of both traditions very similar forms of spirituality may arise. I was not convinced by this argument, since these forms may be similar in appearance but very distinct in reality.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

Wittgenstein in Ireland

Wall, P., London: Reaktion Books 2000.

The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein spent in total around two years of his life in Ireland, and this period is often not much discussed in the many accounts of his life. I do not think that Patrick Wall intends to argue that anything especially crucial occurred to him or his thought in Ireland, it was just one of the places, like Norway, in which the simplicity of the life he managed to construct around himself fell in with his asceticism and concentration on a life of thought. Wittgenstein seemed to play out a role, entirely unknowingly, of the solitary thinker, the romantic individual for whom personal relationships

had to be kept to a minimum in order to ensure enough room was made available for philosophy. This does not mean that personal relationships were not important for Wittgenstein, on the contrary, his friendships were obviously very important to him, and he had the ability to inspire long-lasting friendships which were obviously not based entirely on those interested in his ideas. To be a friend of Wittgenstein one obviously had to be prepared for long periods of absence from him, with occasional periods of intense and lengthy conversation.

This book gives a good introduction to some of Wittgenstein's views in his later period, and combines this with an account of modern Irish history. This is not as incongruous a mixture of themes as might appear to be the case, and the excellent photographs which Wall took of the Irish countryside and Dublin are really impressive. They give a sense of Ireland in the period when Wittgenstein knew it, and they emanate both charm and a notion of stability which contrasted with the insecurity of the philosopher's life. And yet interestingly although he lived at a very difficult time for someone of his background and had a variety of medical and personal problems, one often gets the impression that this was largely ignored by Wittgenstein. His life in Ireland, like his life as a whole, was a period of his history which he traversed without really concentrating on what was around him except as a backdrop for what he really regarded as important, his ability to think.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky

Notes:

1-See, for example, Roy Mottahedeh, *The mantle of the Prophet: Religion and politics in Iran*, London: Penguin 1985.

2-Baqer Moin, *Khomeini: Life of the Ayatollah*, London: I.B. Tauris 1999; Vanessa Martin, *Creating an Islamic state: Khomeini and the making of a new Iran*, London: I.B. Tauris 2000.

3-Alexander Knysh, "Irfān revisited: Khomeini and the legacy of mystical philosophy," *Middle East journal* 46 (1992) pp. 631-53.

4-See A. Kevin Reinhart, *Before revelation: the boundaries of Muslim moral thought*, Albany: State University of New York Press 1995.

5-For more on legitimation of resistance against tyranny, see Khalid Abou El Fadl, *The Islamic law of rebellion*, unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University 1999, supervised by Michael Cook.

6-Christian Jambet, "L'âme humaine d'Aristote à Mullī ṭadrij Shāhīzādeh," *Studia Iranica* 26 (2000) pp. 211-36.

7-See Henry Corbin, "De Heidegger à Sohrevardī," in *Cahiers de l'Herne*, ed. C. Jambet, Paris: l'Herne 1981; Jambet, *La logique des orientaux: Henry Corbin et la science des formes*, Paris: Seuil 1983.

8-Sajjad Rizvi, "Reconsidering the life of Mullī ṭadrij Shāhīzādeh (d. 1641): Notes towards an intellectual biography," *Iran* forthcoming.

## Books Published in Iran

### Works on mysticism

'Alç Faqçr Shçrjzç İstahbanjç, Khjiniqih: Mathnavç-yi 'irfjnç va akhliqç bih pçravç az Bçstjn-i Sa'dç (Khaniqah, a mystical and ethical poem in the style of Sa'di), ed. Mançchehr Djnishpazhçh, Tehran: Mçrjth-i maktçb 2000, pp. 289.

Faqçr Shçrjzç (d. 1930) was a Qajar poet who belonged to a period of literary revival and restoration of classical styles. He is famous for his imitations and reconstructions of the work of Muçliç al-Dçn Sa'dç Shçrjzç (d. ca. 1292). The present collection is a long poem of rhyming couplets inspired by and in the style of Sa'dç's famous work Bçstjn (The Perfumed Garden). It is the poet's most important work. Another collection of his poems imitates the style of Sa'dç's Gulistjn (The Rose-garden).

The work is divided into four sections, each dealing with Sufi themes, namely seclusion (khalvat), silence, hunger and vigilance (murjçabat). These are then divided into ten mystical and ethical stations each. All in all, it is a classic mathnavç based upon a template of the Sufi poem of classical Persianate Sufism. Each station is further composed of stories and anecdotes to illustrate the ethical qualities mentioned. The editor's explanatory notes and useful indices enhance the contribution of the work.

\*\*\*\*\*

Abç çjmid Muçammad al-Ghazjç, Gçzçda-yi Kçmçyi-yi Sa'jdat (A selection from the Alchemy of Happiness), ed. Sa'çd Yçsuf-niyj, Tehran: Qadyjnç 2000, pp. 264.

This work is a selection from a classic of Persian Sufi literature from the Seljuk period, the Alchemy of the pre-eminent Sunni Sufi theologian al-Ghazjç (d. 1111), which in itself is a Persian epitome of his magisterial and voluminous lçyi' 'ulçm al-dçn (The Revivification of the religious sciences). It is thus a summary of a summa of Islamic learning and scholarship about the spiritual and ethical excellences of a Muslim life. The editor provides a useful introduction to the life of al-Ghazjç. The main text of selected excerpts is divided under two headings: being a Muslim and the fundamentals of being a Muslim. Each section is amply illustrated with scriptural references to the Qur'jn and the Prophetic çadçth. Major issues examined include self-knowledge and awareness, the truth of the heart, prophecy and sainthood (wiliyat), knowing God and the world, knowledge of the hereafter, death and the resurrection, the virtues of prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, the deliverance of the soul and the soul's contentment, remembrance of death, self-vigilance, fear and hope and love and yearning.

\*\*\*\*\*

'Alç-Riçj Dhikjvatç-Qjriguzlç, 'Irfjniyyjt: majmç'a-yi maqiljt-i 'irfjnç (Mystica: A collection of articles on mysticism), Tehran: İntishjrt-i çaqçqat 2000, pp. 415.

This collection is a dispassionate, disinterested and scholarly attempt at a critical historical assessment of Sufism. The author forgoes superficial analysis and unlike most authors on the subject is neither motivated by an absolute rejection of mysticism nor is his uncritically enamoured of the thought of Sufis. He discusses most of the major figures of Persian Sufism. Some of the more significant articles include an analysis of the life of 'Ayn al-Quçjt Hamadjnç (d. 1132) and his critics, the life and thought of Khwija Yçsuf Hamadjnç (d. 1140), the Shiraz school of Sufism in the 13th and 14th centuries, the life and

thought of Ibn Sab'īn (d. 1270), Sufism in the works of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1329), a survey of the works of Mīr Sayyid 'Alī Hamadīn (d. 1385), and the mystical and poetic commentaries of the school of 'afīz al-Dīn Ardabīlī (d. 1334).

\*\*\*\*\*

Man'chehr Dīnīshpazh'eh, Farhang-i i'şīlī 'īrīnī (A Lexicon of mystical terms), Tehran: Farzīn Rēz 2000, pp. 190.

A central problem faced by scholars of Persian mysticism is unlocking the terminology and language of texts, finding adequate expressions and translations for key terms. This work is intended as a glossary to help the student work along the difficult path of understanding mystical texts and poems. It utilises and builds upon previous lexicons published on the subject. The author focuses on mystical connotations of words, gives sources and full references of their instances and clear and concise meanings. A full bibliography of sources is appended. The book also includes an edition of a short treatise describing human anatomy in the way of the poets. The text is called An'ās al-'ushshīq (Friend of the lovers) and is by Sharaf al-Dīn Rīmī. The treatise is organised like a dictionary and has separate sections for each organ with their Arabic and Persian names, poetic analogies associated with them, samples of relevant poetry and comparative framework.

\*\*\*\*\*

Louis Massignon (ed), Four texts on the life of al-'allīj (Chahīr matn az zīndagī-yī 'allīj), tr. Qisim Mīr-ākh'ērī, Tehran: Yīdīvarīn 2000, pp. 247.

This work is a translation of Massignon's edition of four texts, Maq'at al-'allīj (The Death of al-'allīj), the History of the Sufis, Bid'iyat 'īl al-'allīj wa nih'yatihī (The Life of al-'allīj) and Akhbīr al-'allīj (Stories of al-'allīj). It is introduced by a narrative account of the life of al-'allīj (d. 922).

The opening article by Massignon considers the life of this most famous Sufi and examines the historical accounts. The first text was composed by Ismī'īl ibn Abī 'Abd Allīh Mu'ammad ibn Zanjī, the son of the secretary of the court during the trial of al-'allīj. The second text is taken from al-Sulamī's history Ta'rīkh al-'āfiyya. The final text is narrated by Ibn Bīkē Sh'arīzī, a Sufi adherent of al-'allīj from the Seljuk period.

\*\*\*\*\*

Al-'allīj, Majm'ā'a-yī 'īthīr-i 'allīj (Collected works of al-'allīj), ed./tr. Qisim Mīr-ākh'ērī, Tehran: Yīdīvarīn 2000, pp. 504.

This study comprises six texts presented and translated along with brief commentaries. The texts are reconstituted from extant fragments given that after the execution of al-'allīj, his works were scattered and destroyed. Such reconstitution is not without its problems as Massignon's editions reveal.

The texts included are the 'awī'īn and the B'istīn al-ma'rifa, a collection of 'ad'īth, a commentary on some verses of the Qur'ān, a collection of some three hundred anecdotes about the life of al-'allīj, a collection of his poetry numbering around 100 poems, and Kalimat al-'allīj (a collection of his aphorisms and bon-mots).

\*\*\*\*\*

Ibrîhîm ibn Mu'ammad GulshanÇ, A`har-i gulshan (Manifest rose-garden), ed. J. TajlÇl, Qum: Dîr al-thaqalayn 2000, pp. 176.

GulshanÇ was an important Sufi authority and poet in the Timurid period. His work was composed in verse in the form of questions and answers discussing major issues of mysticism. In this sense, the work is similar to ShabistarÇ's Gulshan-i riz (The Rose-Garden of secrets). The text is preceded by a useful introduction on the life of the poet and his method of mystical teaching. It examines the content of the poetry and the use of scriptural proofs and allusions in the verse.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nargis `abyir, Dîstîn-i zindagÇ-yi Rîbî'a 'Adawiyya (A biography of Rîbî'a 'Adawiyya), Tehran: Daftar-i nashr-i farhang-i Islîm 2000, pp. 127.

This work provides a biographical account of the life of the famous female Sufi of Basra, Rîbî'a 'Adawiyya (d. ca. 800). It is written in the form of a fictionalised narrative, a novel-like story of her life. Unfortunately, the author fails to provide references or sources for her fictionalisation, though at the end a few short biographies of relevant Sufis are mentioned.

\*\*\*\*\*

MahdÇ 'ImîdÇ ShÇrîzÇ, DÇdÇ kih riz-i pinhîn îkhir shud îshkîra (How the secret was finally divulged), Tehran 2000, pp. 247.

This book discusses the legitimacy, beliefs and practices of Sufism. It is a critique of a defence of Sufism entitled Kasf al-asrîr (Disclosure of secrets). The author dismisses the defence and presents historical evidence of the inner contradictions of the practices and doctrines of the Ni'matullîhÇ GEnîbîdÇ Sufi order. The work is an anti-Sufi polemic in the vein of some classical Shi'î condemnations of Sufi orders. The work begins by considering the rise of Sufism and its relationship to Islam, the views of the Shi'î Imams and scholars condemning Sufism, an analysis of some of the fabricated 'adÇth current in Sufi circles, unlawful tithe collection by Sufi authorities and Shi'î legal rulings against Sufi practices.

\*\*\*\*\*

'Abbîs ShîhriyîrÇ MahdÇshahrÇ, Sîlik: Guftîr-hî-yî 'îrfînÇ (Wayfarer: mystical discourses), Tehran: Mihr-AndÇsh 2000, pp. 129.

This work analyses the spiritual journey of the Sufi wayfarer. It deals with some central themes of Sufi doctrine such as divine love, the soul, ethical conduct, miracles, jealousy and excess.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mu'ammad Riÿî YazdÇ, Sajjida-nashÇnîn-i 'îshq: Shar'î-i 'îl-i farzînîgîn-i 'îrfîn (Masters of love: biographies of the luminaries of mysticism), Tehran: Nashr-i 'ilm 2000, pp. 425.



The author in this work differentiates between mysticism as practised in the Sufi orders and a 'pure Islamic mysticism'. He rejects the Sufi orders that claim a lineage tracing from Imam 'Ali and attempts a thorough documentation of the licenses of the Sufi masters in their chain of initiation. He evaluates the validity of the attribution of these licenses in their various forms. He believes that Imam 'Ali was indeed the first in the line of Sufi masters and that the licenses of initiation were transmitted through the companions of the Prophet to the Sufi masters. The work has extensive analyses of the Chishtiyya, Qādiriyya, Rāzbiḥiyya, Kubrawiyya, Dhahabiyya, and Nerbakhshiyā Sufi orders.

\*\*\*\*\*

'Alī Namjz Shahrīd, Tīrkh-i falsafa va ta'āvvuf (A history of philosophy and Sufism), ed. M. Biybjn Usk'ay, Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi farhang 2000, pp. 328.

This work is in the form of a dialogue between proponents and opponents of Sufism, in which mysticism, philosophy and their practitioners are strongly condemned. In this vehement polemic, the author attempts to provide evidence of the 'untold secrets' and 'corrupt practices' of Sufis and unmasks the falsity of the claimants to visions and intuition. He similarly exposes the 'unreliability' of philosophy. The author claims that such beliefs and practices are unconnected with any religious tradition and emerged from 'paganism before the time of Jesus'. This is shown by the way in which the divine law 'contradicts' their methods and practices and how the Qur'ān and Prophetic sayings testify to their falsehood.

\*\*\*\*\*

Works on Mullī 'adrij Sh'rijz

Njh'cd Bīqir' Khurramdasht', Kitābshinjs'-yi jimi'-yi Mullī 'adrij (A comprehensive bibliography of Mullī 'adrij), Tehran: 'adrij Islamic philosophy Institute and the National Library 2000, pp. 506.

This compilation by a librarian at the national Library is a useful guide to the work of this most significant Safavid age including a survey of the manuscripts of his works available (mainly in Iran). Unfortunately libraries in India and Turkey have not on the whole been surveyed and the secondary bibliography is quite incomplete. The work is divided into two parts, the first on manuscripts and the second on printed works. Part one classifies the works into six categories: literature, exegesis, Prophetic and Imamic sayings and their exegesis, mysticism and Sufi ethics, philosophy, theology and logic, and miscellanea. Lithographs (which are often superior in quality to modern editions) are often cited. Part two deals with dissertations, works in Persian and European languages and is the more unsatisfactory and incomplete part. Nevertheless it is a highly useful tool for scholars in Sadrian studies.

\*\*\*\*\*

Mullī 'adrij, al-Ma'jhir al-ilḥiyya f' asrīr al-'ulm al-kamīliyya (Divine manifestations concerning the secrets of sciences that lead to perfection), ed. M. Khīmīnīh, Tehran: 'adrij Islamic Philosophy Institute 2000, pp. 317 (introduction in Persian) + 188 (Arabic text).

This is a new edition of this short work of mystical philosophy first edited some thirty years ago by Sayyed Jalīlod'n 'shtīyīn'. The editor has used six key manuscripts as well as the lithographs and the earlier edition in preparing this work. The critical apparatus and variant readings are provided in the footnotes to the text and useful indices of sayings, verses and terms are appended. A lengthy

introduction (longer than the text itself) discusses the history of philosophy up to the Safavid era and analyses the relationship between philosophy and Shi'i theology and mysticism in the work of Mullī ʿadrij. A brief biography and discussion of his legacy and the preparation of the edition conclude the introduction.

The text itself concerns the origin and the return, both ontology and psychology of the soul's descent from the One to its reversion to the One. Part one on ontology discusses divine unity, divine names and attributes, divine knowledge, creation and the return. Part two focuses on eschatology and has chapters on bodily resurrection, death, suffering, reward and punishment and states of the afterlife. An epilogue presents some of the conditions of the Day of Judgement.

\*\*\*\*\*

Jamīl Yēzbakç, *Ghaḫbat al-falāsifa aw ghaḫbat al-mutaʿiliya* (The wrath of the philosophers: transcendental wrath), Tehran: ʿadrij Islamic Philosophy Institute 2000, pp. 592.

This work in Arabic purports to being a biography of Mullī ʿadrij, but is in fact a highly rhetorical and fictionalised piece of writing. It attempts to present a readable intellectual biography, locating him in his time, tracing his sources and his legacy. Like many other 'biographies', it contains little in the way of fact and much in the way of opinion. It is in fact a novelised work and as such quite innovative in its blend of historical circumstance and the imagination of the novelist.

\*\*\*\*\*

Abī ʿAbdallīh al-Zanjīnç, *al-Faylasf al-«rijnç al-kabçr, ʿadr al-Dçn al-Shçrijç Mullī ʿadrij, ʾayituhu wa uʿl falsafatihi* (The great Iranian philosophy Mullī ʿadrij, his life and principles of his philosophy), 2nd edition, Tehran: Muʿtamar iʿyī dhikrij al-Faylasf ʿadr al-Dçn al-Shçrijç 2000, pp. 72.

This brief work is a reprint and abridgement of a long original intellectual 'biography' by the author written some thirty years ago. The author discusses his life and thought, his method and reviews some key aspects of his doctrine and philosophy.

Muḫammad Nērç, Iran

Sajjad Rizvi, Pembroke College, Cambridge

#### Books Received

The titles mentioned here are either reviewed in the current issue or will be reviewed in future issues of the journal.

ʿAbbīs Shīhriyirç Mahdçshahrç, *Sīlik: Guftjir-hi-yi ʿirfjnç* (Wayfarer: mystical discourses), Tehran: Mihr-Andçsh 2000, pp. 129.

ʿAlç Faqçr Shçrijç Istahbanjtç, *Khīniqih: Mathnavç-yi ʿirfjnç va akhliqç bih pçravç az Bēstjn-i Saʿdç* (Khaniqah, a mystical and ethical poem in the style of Saʿdi), ed. Manēchehr Dīnishpazhēh, Tehran: Mçrijth-i maktēb 2000, pp. 289.

'Alç Namjzç ShahrEdç, Tjrkçh-i falsafa va taʔavvuf (A history of philosophy and Sufism), ed. M. Biyjbnç UskEyç, Tehran: Mu'assasa-yi farhangç 2000, pp. 328.

'Alç-Rixj Dhikjvatç-QiriguzlE, 'Irfiniyyit: majmE'a-yi maqiljt-i 'irfinç (Mystica: A collection of articles on mysticism), Tehran: Intishjrt-i 'aqçqat 2000, pp. 415.

AbE 'Abdalljh al-Zanjnç, al-FaylasEf al-«rjnç al-kabçr, ʔadr al-Dçn al-Shçrjzç Mullj ʔadri, 'ayituhu wa uʔEl falsafatihi (The great Iranian philosophy Mullj ʔadri, his life and principles of his philosophy), 2nd edition, Tehran: Mu'tamar i'yi' dhikri al-FaylasEf ʔadr al-Dçn al-Shçrjzç 2000, pp. 72.

AbE °jmid Mu'ammad al-Ghazjlç, GEzçda-yi Kçmçyi-yi Sa'jdat (A selection from the Alchemy of Happiness), ed. Sa'çd YEsuf-niyj, Tehran: Qadyjnç 2000, pp. 264.

Al-°allij, MajmE'a-yi ithir-i °allij (Collected works of al-°allij), ed./tr. Qisim Mçr-ækhErc, Tehran: Yidjvarjn 2000, pp. 504.

Arnaldez, R. (2000) Averroes: A Rationalist in Islam, trans. D. Straight, Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press 0-268-02008-6

Christian Jambet, Se rendre immortel suivi du Traité de la résurrection de Mollj ʔadri Shçrjzç, Paris: Fata Morgana 2000, pp. 191 (broché), paper, FF 143.

El-Bizri, N. (2000) The Phenomenological Quest between Avicenna and Heidegger, Binghamton: Global Publications.

Flusser, V. (1999) The Shape of Things: A Philosophy of Design, London: Reaktion Books

Flusser, V. (2000) Towards a Philosophy of Photography, London: Reaktion

Hunsberger, A., Nasir Khusraw: The Ruby of Badakshan. A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher, Ismaili Heritage Series, London: I B Tauris 2000.

Ibrjhçm ibn Mu'ammad Gulshanç, A'har-i gulshan (Manifest rose-garden), ed. J. Tajlçl, Qum: Djr al-thaqalayn 2000, pp. 176.

Jamjl YEzbakç, Ghaæbat al-faljsifa aw ghaæbat al-muta'jliya (The wrath of the philosophers: transcendental wrath), Tehran: ʔadri Islamic Philosophy Institute 2000, pp. 592.

Kapstein, M. (2000) The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory, New York: Oxford University Press, \$55

Louis Massignon (ed), Four texts on the life of al-°allij (Chahjr matn az zindagç-yi °allij), tr. Qisim Mçr-ækhErc, Tehran: Yidjvarjn 2000, pp. 247.

Mahdç 'Imjdç Shçrjzç, Dçdç kih riz-i pinhn jkhir shud ishkjra (How the secret was finally divulged), Tehran 2000, pp. 247.

Manḩeḩr Dġnġshpazḩḩ, Farhang-i iḩḩilġ ġt-i 'irfġnḩ (A Lexicon of mystical terms), Tehran: Farzġn Rḩz 2000, pp. 190.

McDermott, R. (2001) *Singing to the Goddess: Poems to Kali and Uma from Bengal*, New York: Oxford University Press, \$39.95/19.95

McEvoy, J. (2000) *Robert Grosseteste*, New York: Oxford University Press 0-19-511450-7

Michael Cook, *Commanding Right and Forbidding Wrong in Islamic Thought*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2000, pp. xvii + 702, cloth, £54.50.

Muġammad Riḩġ Yazdḩ, *Sajjida-nashḩnġn-i 'ishq: Sharġ-i ġġl-i farzġnġġn-i 'Irfġn* (Masters of love: biographies of the luminaries of mysticism), Tehran: Nashr-i 'ilm 2000, pp. 425.

Mullġ ḩadri, *al-Ma'ġhir al-ilġhiyya fḩ asrġr al-'ulḩm al-kamġliyya* (Divine manifestations concerning the secrets of sciences that lead to perfection), ed. M. Khġminġḩ, Tehran: ḩadri Islamic Philosophy Institute 2000, pp. 317 (introduction in Persian) + 188 (Arabic text).

Nġḩḩd Bġqirḩ Khurramdashtḩ, *Kitġbshġnġsḩ-yi ġġmi'-yi Mullġ ḩadri* (A comprehensive bibliography of Mullġ ḩadri), Tehran: ḩadri Islamic philosophy Institute and the National Library 2000, pp. 506.

Nargis ḩbyġr, *Dġstġn-i zġdagḩ-yi Rġbi'a 'Adawiyya* (A biography of Rġbi'a 'Adawiyya), Tehran: Daftar-i nashr-i farhang-i Islġm 2000, pp. 127.

Sachiko Murata, *Chinese gleams of Sufi light: Wang Tai-yu's Great Learning of the Pure and Real and Liu Chih's Displaying the Concealment of the Real Realm*, with a new translation of *Jġmḩ's Lawġ'i* by William Chittick, Albany: State University of New York Press 2000, pp. xiv + 264, paper, £15.

Wall, R. (2000) *Wittgenstein in Ireland*, trans. M. Chalmers, London: Reaktion

Williams, J., *Denying Divinity: Apophasis in the Patristic Christian and Soto Zen Buddhist Traditions*, New York: Oxford University Press 2001.

Yahya Christian Bonaud, *L'Imam Khomeyni, un gnostique mḩconnu du XXe siḩcle: Mḩtaphysique et thḩologie dans les oeuvres philosophiques et spirituelles de l'Imam Khomeyni*, Paris/Beirut: Editions al-Bouraq 1997, pp. 560, cloth, FF 137.