

Volume 3 . Number 3 . September 2002

Transcendent Philosophy

An International Journal for Comparative Philosophy and Mysticism

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Persia's Mystic: Review with Rumi

Gustav Richter (1906-39)¹

Abstract

In this lecture, Richter refers to Goethe's Westoestlicher Diwan in trying to decipher the personality of Rumi. In classical Orientalist language, Richter traces the social and historical forces which would have influenced Rumi's life and work, his relationship with his father and with Shams-i-Tabriz. Finally, Richter attempts to find a method by which means the full significance of Rumi's contribution to Persian literature can be assessed.

Who is brave enough in his lifetime to search for rare and less well-known subjects, might be following the hint of a strong personality (whom he unconsciously wishes to meet in a far off region of his mind) or the attitude of his more beautiful self (that wishes to create the pure and free expression of itself with the unsaid and unseen). We intend to look at the Persian poet and mystic Djalal al-Din Rumi - his works and his character. How many questions and expectations could be linked to this name, which is not known to everyone in Occident? I guess they will be of a more general as well as of a more special nature and thus urge us into a lively discussion. They also fill us with pleasure, since they attracted us whenever we were dealing with the Master of our Nation. So we can read the following about our subject in Goethe's West-östlicher Diwan. 2

The treatment of a character so full of life asks for real effort, but Goethe gave us more than a superficial reason to attempt it. With Goethe, those almost invisible and unheard of characters can come up to us and we will joyfully welcome them. The gardens of the Orient will take us in, while not to estrange us from our own country.

In Goethe's Divan all groups of the oriental history are colorfully mixed up - as if in preparation for a game about to start. It is indeed the whole Orient, which is opening up in front of our eyes. And then again in the multitude of all its forms and relations, which invite for a special evaluation. In the multitude the will for the whole! History and art as one. Could this history have been written without poetry? We will answer this question with an analogy, which we will find in the life and work of this Persian singer whose name precedes this lecture.

If we try to put all the historical dates of the life of Djalal al-Din Rumi into an appropriate context, we will find that his life was in many ways quite typical for the development of an oriental genius. At the hand of his father Muhammad Ibn Husain al-Hatibi with the honorific title Baha al-Din Walad, he crossed the Middle East at an early age already. In the year 1212 AD he had to leave his hometown Balkh (in Afghanistan) being no more than five years old. Reliable sources tell us that Baha Al-Din's popularity caused the ruling Lord Charizmshah to be jealous of him. The close relationship with the Sultan or maybe courtly intrigues besides the interest of the people might have made his situation difficult enough. They went on the pilgrimage to Mecca, never to return. Via Nishapur, they firstly came to Bagdad, which at that time had not ceased to be the biggest town of the Islamic world.

Some decades before, the building activities of the Abbasids had enriched the town with many monuments and treasures, that can still be seen today. The political influence of the ruling dynasty was not as strong anymore. That it had survived at all was due to the fact that the different ethnic, social and religious contradictions had not surpassed the natural limits of a common cultural will. This will had grown since the 8th century, the beginning of the Abbasid rule (when the Arabic world-Reich- became Islamic) to an extent that it was in need of an authoritarian representation on the outside. The natural mid-position in Mesopotamia had called for this piece of earth and with it this town to become the intersection of far-reaching oriental forces of life, which could lead to valuable mixtures and considerable spiritual wealth. Although they might also just disperse like rays from a center, so that clever statesman-like authority would be needed to keep them from disintegrating. The more this protection became weakened, the more the spiritual productivity of this metropolis declined and the number of radical voices grew.

The Shi'a, originally a religious-political opposition from the times of the first caliphs, were increasingly pushed out of political life into the religious sphere. Instead, secret societies, fed especially by Persian blood, grew stronger, enriched by some extra in-put as it was known since the time of the pre-Islamic

Gnosis. At the famous Nizamija in Bagdad (university founded at the mid 11th century) orthodox Islam was being taught, although, as in other places no longer as Mohammed's true teachings. The young Djalal al-Din could probably only gain some superficial impression once he arrived in the town. His religious impulse, formed by his intelligent and pious father, was strengthened most once he came to Mecca. Baha al-Din now took the road to Malatia, where he stayed for four years and moved then further to Larindah. Here he spent seven years, devoted to the education of his son. Then both of them were invited by the Seljuq Prince of Rum, Allah al-Din Kaikubad, to his residence at Konia, the old Iconium in Asia Minor. Here Baha al-Din died in 1231 AD, a recognized and famous man. With the exception of a short stay in Aleppo and Damascus, Djalal al-Din remained in Konia until his death in 1273 AD. Never did this town reach the same level of spiritual importance again.

Art and science were flourishing under the protection of the Seljuq Sultans. These Sultans themselves – in a strange game of past and present - lived by a large and consciously preserved Iranian legacy, which was neither based on their blood nor the soil of their realm. Their princely names they borrowed from the old Persian legends of the heroes. Their court-life and building program followed Eastern patterns. The means offered by nature were rich and beautiful. Medieval travelers mention the healthy climate of the town, its wealth in water, the rich vegetation. On these healthy grounds arose the clear forms of the towers and walls enriched by decorations of narrow-winding Qur'anic verses, pillars with cupolas, minarets and arches of mosques and madrasas. The colors were shining through the unique fayence and tile mosaics. Whatever was spared by the storms of the following centuries modern ignorance has pulled down little by little. Only great ruins point us to the past.

We called Rumi's life to a certain degree typical. This is appropriate if we look at courtly approval and disapproval as decisive influences on the form of spiritual education. The echo of social dependence resounds deeply in the soul of the Oriental. This overwhelming power could cause spiritual powers to penetrate into the whole of the Orient. At the same time it almost found its opposite in the thirst of knowledge of untamable glowing souls who lived absorbed in themselves, mysteriously carefree about the sorrows of the coming day. They were able to keep a secret second account of the household of their individual soul's life. Like the distinction between today and tomorrow, the handling of here and there was understood. The restless never-ending wandering, an insistent counter-reaction to the despotic gestures which caused the public to kneel down and rise again. Freedom that creates culture? In this case a split term.

Far in the East lies the homeland of Rumi, his youth brings him to the South of Arabia and in the North-West of the Asian continent, he - who had seen Persia only as a child - composes the most beautiful songs of the Persian tongue. But let us also remember the lively encouragements that destiny granted him since his early days. Besides the attentive leadership of the father, history tells us also about the philosopher Burhan al-Din Tirmidi as the first teacher of Rumi. The personal relationship with the wise master always reaches for the hidden treasures of a pure oriental soul. Quickly the flames are flaming in the hands of the discoverer, one does not quite know how, the wonderful glow of revelation that dazzles the eyes and consumes flesh and blood. With joy and eagerness his pupil began the study of sciences which in its extent conformed with the various needs of the time. After the death of the teacher, the caring hand of the father was more needed than ever. And once again destiny granted him the chance to look up to a master and friend who was to determine the last and most important change in Rumi's spiritual life. It was the mystic Shams-i-Tabrizi, under whose name Rumi was later to write his works. ³ This periodical rise up to the highest experience of Islamic-oriental spirituality under the employment of greatest tension of unrest and pleasure, self-being and ethereal surrender to the great role-model in such a fundamental way cannot be called anything other than typical.

Once again we look at Rumi's life. Face to face with the tensions of the small circle destiny provided greatest disturbances in a far-reaching historical context. His hometown, Balkh, lay in the midst of great political contradictions. The lasting change of dynasties, the persistent and uncompromising pressure of the Eastern peoples, the mainly unequal interplay of the most different streams of life, never allowed the Iranian lands to calm down again after the break-down of the Sassanian empire. After the victorious approach of the Islamic Arabs, the promising cultural and political bodies of East Asia were to be tied to a center that was lying out-side their own territory. The shimmering cloth of the Islamic empire was first woven from Syria and later from Mesopotamia. But before the last knot had been affixed, the whole structure was torn apart already by the weight of all the single movements which were nourished from the outside as well as the inside. Whether good or bad, love of life has torn this shroud hastily enough. The East had its share in it – and how it had been working against it! But the whole event remains tragic for us. The East was neither unified inside itself nor happy in its opposition. A half-national renaissance, building on the lost Persia, became linked up with semi-important political courts.

In all the confusion of this confrontation Ghazna wins special recognition sometime in the 11th century under the leadership of its wise and happy Amir Mahmood. Those days were also happy for Balkh. Quickly the power of the Ghaznavids declined after Mahmood's death and Balkh became the bone of contention of new dynasties. At the beginning of the 13th century it seemed the town was yet again flourishing under the Protectorate of the victorious Charizmshah. At the same time Rumi was born, a symbol of hope. But doesn't it seem that when the father and the son left the town its lucky star came down as well? Just ten years later the East was hit by the greatest catastrophe: the Mongols broke into the Persian residences and brought these lands a history whose sad effects are well-known to us. Most important is the impetus for all this. The deep-seated opposition of West and East within the Islamic Empire had reached its peak. Charizmshah had the idea of confronting the Caliph in Bagdad with a Shi'a counter-Caliph. In this struggle for life of the Islamic idea, Bagdad thought of a device, that not even the devil could have surpassed: one had to stir up the Mongols against the enemy. With this the magic spell was spoken, the magic spell that gave the pressing and threatening powers of the Far East goal and force. The Mongols fulfilled their act of destruction thoroughly. After a few decades Hulagu was ruling in Bagdad.

Thus we can see at once the main forces of the Orient confronting each other. How dark this valley lies before us and we still hear of its worldly sorrows until today. Destiny has united them (the main forces) in a heroic rhythm. The concentrated human will and its utopia were faced by superhuman – driven movements of the life of the peoples. And into the middle of this, an astonishing symbol of this confrontation was planted. Our poet takes his way from the East. The unrest of the coming events leave him unharmed on the outside but effect his inner contemplation. From the down-fall of his exterior world he saves the noble treasures of the oriental spirit into the dome of his inner visions. The deadly peace of the Islamic Mongols is being drowned by the relieving song of the living peace. And also the worldly expression is not forgotten. In the West-Islamic territory Rumi finds a peaceful and unharmed homeland. Its history likewise includes an East-Western wave in the 11th century when the Turkish tribes, the Seljuqs came. But this process was successfully exploited by the Islamic East-Asian powers. The wave can thus only be compared to the Mongol invasion in its contradiction to it. The Seljuq-dynasty in Konia was, at the time when Rumi came, an oasis of the Orient. In despite of dynastic quarrels, Konia remained all his lifetime in the same position. The confrontations with the Mongols had probably also here effects. But they only gave proof to the high degree (in comparison to the neighbors) of political and social reason, which was to give this country power and dignity.

Great and thoughtful seem these historical contradictions. They express themselves in a monument that only takes part in the history as a symbol. Yet, it was much more than a symbol. The true faces of history are probably quite different from those which appear as a result of logical reconstructions. The true history is past processes. They are even more historical the quieter they came and employed their own laws. They have to pass quickly so as to give the pressing forces of nature another martyr. Historical is that Alexander whom Hamlet was addressing. Hence history does not get into conflict with time. History is life passed, the apotheosis of eternal oblivion. That what cannot be seen anymore because it did not have a contract with the future. Everything contemporary and natural, the things of the day! Thus such a history cannot leave traces of time-surpassing peculiarities. Willingly and self-content, history obeys the manager of the higher order. But against its inner wills it always releases creators and witnesses, who are not content with silent admiration. They call for the supra-history. With vigor they escape the stream of life and force their moment into a form. Certainly life will step over them and beyond them but coming time will see the heroic ruins of this effort. Thus one should not speak of history but supra-history or meta-history. Since everything we know well, are the unhistorical efforts of the past, not to go on but to stay. The temple of Paestum and the Acropolis or the ruins of Ekbatana –aren't they much more than history? The same holds true for this other Alexander, whose appearance has delighted so many hours of scientific work. Never-ending is the row of such unforgotten figures and things, which float, like the spirit over the waters, over the plains of history. Because of them history seems vivid, tangible to us.

This simple fact has far-reaching consequences, because we do not intend to express old terms in new expressions. We would not be interested in challenging the common notion of history as it has come down to us if it wasn't for its insistence on materialistic interpretation. The deepest understanding for this issue came from the German Romantics. It has relived the trembling tensions of creation. The German Romantics answered the icy coldness of rationalism with a decisive turn to the natural side of the being of man. The laws of human life can only be derived from projections of processes i.e.: history-the vital, tangible, lasting, contradictory, fighting creation of humanity. When during the last century the effort to understand arts historically was being exerted, they were probably in need of a hint that would point them to such a supra-historical constellation of the scientific material. Instead its interpretation was exposed to mechanical derivations and extended to endless causalities of smaller and smallest facts. As if history could ever become contemporary. Whatever reaches from the past into our time, our reason can only be used to reflect upon itself and the immediate entirety of our life. The researcher connects his intellectual visions to a unity, which he has to justify with his consciousness and his social mission. He is only allowed to consider the small things as long as he can be certain of the higher and highest relations. Thus a carefully interpreted term for history could help the self-attitude of scientific work. And here we find again Goethe's Divan in front of us, ready for everyone who wants to consider its method.

It does indeed sound a little ironic, that we need to go all the way to the Orient to make such impulses among us Germans effective again. But we can counter such arguments, because the new forms of unity the researcher is now able to produce with his hands, to see with his visionary eyes give new evidence of his productive pleasure in creation. Also the results are needed for the common requirements of education of our time. In this framework the knowledge and understanding gained by the studies of the Orient are more suitable to the interests of his surroundings than a mere materialistic approach. The understanding of processes and their categorization in the best-researched and highest relationships of reason are the basic laws of movement for a scientist of the arts. In addition to this hint of the sovereignty of the recognizing will, let us also answer with the word of national science. The laws of

room and blood of a well-established cultural unit will thus (when this kind of scientific work has been reunited with the divine drive of the creator) be able to distinguish the spirit in the world of knowledge.

In regard to the destruction that is occurring, everything that will help to regain a national vision will be useful for human society. That is why it should be hoped that many German scientists might be given the West-Oestlicher Divan. Because it is not only an account of factual events but an independent historical-poetical vision, which like the sun in spring will melt the crust of ice on the historian's winterish mistake. He will see the historical expressions of life brought into an historical unity, a unity that lives in his immediate present. He will see that the scientific judgment is true because it is also beautiful. In its present the Divan thus becomes the proof for the form of creation and knowledge, which characterizes all historical legacy. This legacy cannot come about without the categories of a personal and self-determined life. Most of this legacy, that we know, is in literary form - a composition created by the refined will of its creator. That is why all efforts to find the true and real facts lead only to relative results. The individual movements of the literary creation cannot be thought further. Every collector will admit to this. Whoever is aiming higher, will find in the science of literature an elastic tool for history. Since he is now looking into the faces of other figures. He is reading from their lips. And if he is wise he will not pull down the last veil that hampers him from seeing the final truth. He probably could not bear it. How carefully the one who wants to see has to take care of himself. With distance and respect he has to approach literature like a painting. If you look at a painting too closely you will only see meaningless strokes and dots. But we are only looking for our own purposes. With a poetic and reasonable mind Goethe has looked at the Orient. Thus the Divan can be interpreted in two ways for we Germans: firstly as an example of an epistemology, which will lead to exemplary freedom. Secondly as an immortal piece of art which answers the questions of life with poetry. The one who will take this book into the canon of his Oriental studies will certainly find the right attitude towards the literatures of the Orient. He will slowly realize the importance of the studies of literature for in the treasures of the Persian literature he will find a reflection of his own spirit.

Rumi has lead us on the way of his own life into the present of our own generation; this art he will quickly explain to us on the grounds of the literary traditions of Central Asia. Rumi's heritage stands in an obvious connection with a certain literary heritage. It is firstly related to the two names of Sana'i and Ferid-al-Din Attar 4 . The biographers like to quote Rumi saying, "Attar is spirit and Sana'i its two eyes. I followed Attar and Sana'i." If you know Rumi's poetry it is easy to believe this. Sana'i died in the middle of the 12th century 5 and is considered the first important mystic-didactic poet among the Persians. Attar continued along the same way. But the literary-historical relations are much deeper than that. Let us confine ourselves to some remarks about the Persian literary history.

The dependence of Rumi on those role-models is certain, especially for his epic-didactic literature about which we will talk in the following. It is different for his divan, which has to be considered separately from other works. Although it is obviously also connected to something else. People tended to organize Persian literature according to historical periods or leading personalities. A well-known work of that kind is the very clear and tasteful canon as we have seen it in Goethe's Divan. But a profound discourse on Persian literature demands a different principle of order. The beginning of the neo-Persian literature, which has been written under the influence of Islam is not known to us in great detail. From the 9th and 10th centuries we know some pieces of a rather balanced character with highly developed forms of expression. The poets have already taken on the Arabic meter, thus disciplining the rhythmic and linguistic niceties of the Persian tongue. One tended to list these poets in the correct timeframe as followers of specific amirs, who supported the arts. History gives a list of names, which are connected to this courtly art. They allow us only to establish an outer characterization. They do not tell us much about

their share in the inner development of Persian literature. But exactly this issue calls for investigation. The specific peculiarities of these monuments remain dubious. Their evaluation is hampered because the poets are floating around their own works in an intangible fog. Specific personalities can only be associated once a specific literary term is being mentioned. If it occurs now that the influence of the personality of the creator goes beyond his literary work and participates in different literary traits, this personality cannot provide the ground for a scientific order of the history of literature.

For the Persian history of literature such doubts are quite appropriate. Not only the early period shows this disproportion, but it is also reflected in mid and later periods if not to say in all Middle Eastern art of the word. New methods have to be sought for, which present the Persian literary monuments in all their intensity and changeability. We are dealing with a history of literary equivalents. A good idea of such 'self-history' is given by the Persians in the distinguished forms of their poetry. How these distinctions are to work in specific cases remains unclear, and could probably be established if we were to analyze the monuments. We know the *Shahname* by Firdausi, which (although it is one of the oldest monuments of neo-Persian poetry) leads us already to the peak of epic poetics. At the same time, lyric art shows also already the different kinds of abilities of the Persians, which in their relationship to each other and to later developments have not been studied sufficiently by the Occident. Also everything that has been termed romantic or didactic needs further investigation. If you look for example at the canon mentioned above, which can be found in Hammer's *Persian Literature* 6, you will find Firdausi 7 as the noblest representative of epos, Enweri of the qasid, Nizami of the romantic, Rumi of the mystic, Sadi of the ethic, Hafis of the lyric. But terms like epos, mystic and ethic are not on the same literary-scientific level. They can only be understood separately in different subjects. Von Hammer had used this method to give a first great overview over Persian literature. His geniality lies in the fact that he thought of different types of human spirits to describe this history. Through his loose usage of terms he actually provided the starting points for an analytical work. And we are not talking yet about all those shimmering treasures that he revealed and Goethe thankfully employed. In this loose usage of terms first hints are hidden, which help a critical orientation. They have been hidden so far and only now through new discoveries they become visible again. Such a hint is, for example, the categorization of Rumi as the greatest mystic. Now the question arises whether the term mystic can actually be used in the literary field.

The history of the Orient confirms that Rumi was a member of the mystic movement (as a religious-historical term). When Rumi, after the death of his father, came to stay in Damascus for a while, he got to know Ibn al-Arabi (d.1249) and his pupils, some of whom were to become famous afterwards, too. He also met with Shams al-Tabrizi there first. If we take the dates, to consider Rumi a mystic, we should likewise be allowed to expect his participation in the laws of the inner movement. The system of Ibn al-Arabi can be called the universalism of Oriental mysticism. Inside this system all extreme attempts of the spirit have been connected, which the speculative and contemplative desire for salvation of the Muslims created and developed in previous times. 8 The prehistory of this system leads into a wide garden with many strange and colorful blossoms.

The exceptional tendency of the East Asian people to overstress personal religiousness, which slowly loses the relationship with anything surrounding it, has produced its own ecstatic language. This language became as public as the language which was used by the Gnostic, and pseudo-Islamic speculation. The writers copied these forms of expression into their texts and popularized the mystic quickly. Thus they met with the literary tendencies of religious literature of edification, which without the extreme forms had already reached a certain degree of literalisation of religious ideas. This deep does the mystic penetrate into the Islamic Eastern Asian spirit, likewise into the history of its literary form of expression. The play of colors of fantastic terminology, reflected by the ancient Gnostic ideas,

had found a strange new form of continuation. Certain expressions of terminology became re-interpreted as stylistic expressions in the Neo-Persian lyric. Examples will not be given at this point. But modern research confirms what has been said here. The more general often intricate methods of the history of religion, of linguistic and literary comparisons as well as the cultural history of the Middle East have led to a unified demand for an interpretation of the mystic history in view of its own literature. It is obvious that we cannot understand any historical phenomena without having knowledge of the primary literature. But here it becomes also clear that it is only with the help of literary analyses that we will truly understand the Islamic-mystic form of life. Other approaches will not help us at all actually. They have only brought us so far as to the point where we recognize that a remarkable spiritual ability of the Orient depends innately on its cultural form of expression.

If we thus use the term of mystical-Persian literature, we mean a religious literary genre, which can be distinguished from other genres. Changeability and the ability of creating tension of this literature depend to a high degree on the form. A mystical ghazel is probably different from mystical-epic poetry, but how? If we say that the religious content is dependent upon on literary principles of form, we have to ask to what extent we can actually speak of the mystical as a separate literary style. Maybe the forms are already revealed in the non-mystical genres of literary movements, which are based on an immediate spiritual background which forces the religious will of creation to something related -but outside the religious sphere. Hafis would be a good example for this. Since the evidence for all of this is only of fragmentary nature we cannot take this assumption for certain. It is thus a task to analyze and judge the Persian works historically in their own style.

The term style is here to be understood in a wider sense: as the form of the monument, which allows for the definition of its being and character. Knowledge about the personality of the poets, which came from non-literary sources, would not hamper such task. No, it would be easier to explain the intricacy of the personality of the Orient, the parallelism of the literary ways of expression in which we find one and the same person- in these over-strong and over-personal literary laws of formation. Also it would be possible to recognize the special share of each poet in each case and thus draw more specific conclusions about his personality. Thus we should have a certain literary term in the end which would allow us to have a specific idea about the personality of Rumi on one hand and about Rumi's works based on an analyses of style and contents, which would allow for comparisons with other works on the other hand. Thus Rumi's share in the development of Persian literature would become evident on the basis of a productive and correct judgment.

Research of this kind is promising, because it takes the historical context into account as well. The relationship between literature and history can even be better explained if we look at the mission of mystic literature in its surrounding world. Rumi's mystical ghazels were meant to be for the personal meditation of the people of the order. They had an indirect liturgical meaning for a close, religious society. From early on, mystical concentration is related in Islam to a life in an order. Rumi founded a special order in Konia, the Mewlewis, which existed until the year 1925 and vanished with the oncoming of the new Turkish era. ⁹ An impressive tradition came thus to an end: it had been the custom that the abbot was a descendent of Rumi. In this visible living on of the master, the younger generation could be inspired again and again. They experienced their mission especially in this dancing form of meditation that we find so incredible and mysterious. Usually they were accompanied by a characteristic and melancholic music of the flute. Naturally, Rumi's works were considered holy literature. Thus his following served, above all, the purpose of poetry. This phenomenon has to be kept in mind for stylistic analyses, i.e., the relation of need, which the mystical art of the word has with society - the direct or indirect consideration of the audience, that the poet is addressing and to whom he speaks in special

tones or voices to further his goals. This sociological task of the research of style has already been employed for the poetry of the Occident. It promises in this case to lead to important and singular results, too. The literary-religious meditation is pressing towards the society and cannot be understood by historical analyses without considering the social background. We remember the almost mysterious importance, which the image of the friend and the master as such, has reached in neo-Persian literature. This thought of style is closely and necessarily related to a well-established social tradition. It also helped Rumi to find his words.

The friendship between him and Shams-i-Tabrizi was of the deepest kind. Tabrizi came to Konia in the year 1244/5, when our poet was already enjoying his name as an important theologian. The mystical preaching of Tabrizi gave Rumi's life a new meaning and content. Tabrizi became his teacher. History tells us many stories about this friendship. But also without these legends, the mystical esoteric in Rumi's poetry gives a clear idea about the close relationship of their souls. It doesn't matter that we do not know much about Tabrizi as a historical figure. The mystical inspiration of the pupil by the master is indeed a consistent vademecum of every teaching relationship in the history of the Islamic mystic. As teacher of Tabrizi we often hear about Rukn al-din Sindshasi. He was the one to send his student to Rumi. Even if this does not hold true, it gives some idea about tradition in mystical context. Mystics continue this chain even back to Muhammad and Ali. The end of Shams-al-Din is as surprising as his coming. In the masses of the street he suddenly disappeared with the oldest son of Rumi. Whether he was killed by an angry crowd, possibly for his offensive arrogance¹⁰, or whether it was just an accident, no-one knows. For what is important in terms of sociological analyses is this: these two figures, Rumi and Tabrizi, demonstrate the common goals of their relationship in an artistic expression, to further an intimate social purpose. This becomes even more effective once one person involves another person in this process, thus they eliminate their personal value of being for a more general appearance that can be typified.

But with these general hints we don't want to talk about the results already. The aim was to put the different subjects involved while dealing with Rumi into proper perspective.

Notes

1 This is a translation of Gustav Richter, *Persiens Mystiker Dschelál-eddin Rumi: Eine Stildeutung in drel Vortraegen*, Breslau: Frankes Verlag uind Druckerei, Otto Borgmeyer 1933, chapter 1. His German translations have been replaced by English equivalents. All the footnotes are the work of the editor as the original has no references.

2 See Shaykh Abdal-Qadir al-Murabit's *Fatwa on Goethe*, which brings to light certain proofs of Goethe's acceptance of Islam. (Diwan Press, London: 2001)

3 The taking of Shams-i-Tabriz's name came from Rumi's intense, spiritual love for this mystic, to the extent that he perceived no division between them. See also Reynold A. Nicholson, *Selected Poems from the "Divan-i Shams-i Tabriz"* (1898; reprinted., Cambridge, 1961)

4 Rumi's contemporaries, Ibnu'l-Farīd (d. 1235) and 'Attār (d.1229) wrotes moving verses about emotion, wonder, love and the 'sheer incomprehension attendant upon the mystical experience' (Fakhry, Majid. *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2nd ed., Columbia University Press, New York: 1983, p.255)

5 Abū'l-Majd Majdūd Sanā'ī (d. 1131) attacked rationalistic philosophy as a way of coming to know Allah. See Annemarie Schimmel's *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, (The University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill: 1975) pps 18-19

6 Hammer-Purgstall, Joseph von. *Geschichte der schönen Redekünste Persiens*. (Vienna: 1818)

7 Qusta ibn Lūqā al-Firdaus (d. 900) "excelled in philosophy, geometry, and astronomy... The list of his philosophical writings includes *The Sayings of the Philosophers*, *The Difference between Soul and Spirit* and *A Treatise on the Atom*" (Fakhry, Majid. *A History of Islamic Philosophy*, 2nd ed., Columbia University Press, New York: 1983, p.15)

8 See Affīfī, 'Abū'l-'Alā'. *The Mystical Philosophy of Muhyid'Din Ibnu'l-'Arabi* (Cambridge: 1938)

9 "The activities of the Mevlevi dervishes in Turkey, along with those of other orders, were banned by Atatürk in 1925." (Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.185)

10 "The sources describe Shams as an overpowering person of strange behaviour who shocked people by his remarks and his harsh words." (Schimmel, Annemarie. *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p.313)

Soul, its reality and its perfectionary journey in Mulla Sadra's philosophy

Muhammad Khājavī, Gilān University, Iran

Abstract

The soul is the first perfection of the natural body, which is created, when the preparedness of the body becomes perfect; it subsists, when it reaches its own perfection. Hence, its disposal in bodies is corporeal while its intellection of its essence and its maker is spiritual. This distinguishes it from the separated intellects, which are spiritual both in their essence and action, as well as from the natures, which are corporeal in both aspects.

The human soul has three modalities of perception:

- 1) The natural modality, the locus of whose manifestation is the external and internal senses;
- 2) The modality of formal apparitions, whose locus of manifestation is the internal senses;
- 3) The intellectual modality, whose locus of manifestation is the rational faculty, when it is actually obtained.

The first modality is the locus of the potentiality and the sowing place of the spirits and the place, where intentions and beliefs are grown, while the two other modalities are the abode of completion and of actuality, and the place gathering the fruit. Hence, the soul is the subject (hāmīl) of the body and its form, not vice versa; and the body is a descendent level of the soul and an existential trace of the separated spirit, whose properties manifest themselves in the body. A human being (insān) is the totality of the soul and the body, i.e., the human being of the sovereignty (malakūt) is the soul, while the "mortal" (bashar) human being is the body, both of them existing by the same existence. When the intellectual (noetic) existence is obtained, both of them become one thing. Hence, the real body is the body, in which the light of sense and life is essential, not accidental. The relation of this body to the soul is that of light to the sun. When the soul reaches its perfection and becomes the intellect in act ('aql bi-l-ffīl), all its faculties also ascend and reach their perfection together with the soul's essence.

Undoubtedly, the elements were given existence in order to receive life and spirit, and the first thing which received the traces of life, was the life of nourishment (ghidhā'), growth (rushd) and production (procreation) (tawlīd); it was followed by the life of sensation and motion, and then by the life of knowledge and distinction (tamyīz). Each of these kinds of life has a perfect form, through whose mediation the traces of life, by means of the faculties which serve it, effuse on the matter, and this form is called "the soul". Its lowest level is the vegetal soul, the middle level is the animal soul, and the highest level is the rational (rationally speaking) soul. These three levels have a common essential and definitive (limiting) meaning, and each active faculty from which the traces emerge not in a uniform manner is called the soul, therefore the discussion of the soul is a part of the natural science.

Philosophers have established that the soul is the first perfection of the natural body, from which the secondary and subsequent perfections emerge, by means of the tools, whose help and assistance the soul seeks in the acts of life (such as sensation and voluntary movement), and the specific feature of the first perfection of the natural body, which it effects by the mediation of the tool 1 of the action, is its being the soul (nafsiyyātihā). Hence, every faculty of the natural body which acts by employing and subjugating another faculty is called "the soul".

The soul is the substance which is independent in its essence, but in its acts it needs a tool and becomes related to corporeous bodies (ajsād) and corporeal bodies (ajsām), i.e., its relation to bodies is one of governorship (tadbīr), but in its government and operation (tasarruf) it needs another spiritual substance, whose spirituality is lesser than that of the soul. This intermediary is called "the animal spirit" (al-rūh al-hayawānī) and it, in turn, needs another intermediary – the heart (qalb).

At first, in the beginning of its engendering, the soul is empty of any conceptual (tasawwūrī) and assentive (tasdīqī) knowledge, and its first knowledge is the knowledge of its own essence, and its degree of existence in the embryonic state is within the limits of the vegetal degree, and in the stage of an infant it reaches the degree of the animal, and, after its perfection and ripening, it reaches the degree of the human being – yet the latter still belongs to the first of the several modalities, which are possessed by the rational soul. After the stage of the material intellect (al-'aql al-hayalānī), which is void of any forms and conceptions, it reaches the stage of the habitual intellect (al-'aql bi-l-malaka), in which it obtains some of the forms – and this is the very stage, in which it obtains the knowledge of its own essence and, after passing through several stages of perfection, it reaches the level of actuality and the intellect in act (al-'aql bi-l-fī'l), and then ascends to the level of the acquired intellect (al-'aql al-mustafād), which is the last degree of perfection accessible to it.

The soul is all the faculties and a single totality, and the principle and the furthest limit of them, because every higher faculty is such in regard to what is lower than it (i.e., the faculties which it subjugates).

Looking from another point of view, we see that the soul descends from the highest station of separation to the station of the nature and the station of the sensor and the sensed; and in its descendent station its rank is that of natures and senses, since, as all natural species are present in the intellect in a loftier and nobler manner, so all natural, vegetal and animal faculties exist through the existence of the soul in a loftier and nobler way than through their own existence, which they enjoy in their particular places of imposition (mawādi'). According to this principle, in the act of touching the soul becomes the toucher, and it is likewise in the acts of smelling and tasting, where the soul is the one who smells and tastes – and this is the case with the lower senses but, when the soul reaches the station of

imagination, it becomes the form-giving faculty; and, when it ascends from the kingdom of the outer sensation to the realm of the intellection and noetic perception, it unites with the active intellect and itself becomes the active intellect. Hence, the station of the soul consists in its ascending from the levels of the bodily sensation to the stations of the sacred intellects and in its unification with every intellect and intelligible thing.

The precondition of the noetic perception and intellection of any outer thing is the transmission of the reality of this thing from its corporeal kind of existence to the noetic modality of existence. Hence, the difference between the sensed (sensory perceived) heaven and the noetically perceived heaven lies in their different kinds of existence, and every existent, whose existence is that of light, one-by-reality, non-veiled, non-multiplicable and non-differentiable, is intelligible (noetically perceivable) by its essence, while every existent, whose existence is corporeal and material, is unknown, non-unifiable and absent (i.e., hidden) from its own self, not to mention the other, except (that it is perceivable) through the weak radiance which comes from the faculties, which effuse on it from this (luminous) existence. In any case, the truth is with Plato, who held that the soul is like the prisoner in the body – the one, who restrains his wrath and remains silent, and its release from this prison consists in its breaking the cave of this world and ascending to the noetic world, which is the world of its own.

In the “journey of the soul” of the “Asfār” Sadra says:

as long as the human soul is an embryo and a captive of the prison of the womb, its degree is that of the vegetal soul – with its particular degrees and levels – which it obtains when the nature has passed through the stages of the mineral faculties. Hence, the human embryo is the plant (“growing thing”) (nabāt) in actuality and the animal in potentiality, because it does not possess neither sense, nor motion (in actuality), and its being the animal in potentiality is its distinctive differentia, which distinguishes it from other plants and makes it a species which differs from other vegetal species. When a child comes out of the womb of his mother, his soul, until the beginning of the formal ripening, possesses the degree of the animal souls and, in this state, the individual is a smooth-skinned animal (al-hayawān al-basharī) in actuality and human being with the rational soul in potentiality. After that, his soul, through cogitation and reflection, and the employment of the practical intellect, perceives the (noetic) things and the faculty of this trait is a luminous and noetic one, possessor of a firmly rooted and sound existence, the one upon whom pours forth the effusion of the principle, which is the intellect in actuality, i.e., the substance which is higher than the soul and lower than the active intellect; and the affair continues in a similar way (i.e., the soul continues to employ the practical intellect) until the beginning of the spiritual ripeness and the inner growth, by means of employment of the inner acquired traits and characteristics – and this ripeness usually comes at the age of forty.

Hence, in this level he is a “human being, who possesses the rational soul” (al-insān al-nafsānī) in actuality and an angelic human being or a devil in potentiality, and in the rising he is gathered either with the angels or with the devils, i.e., if he goes along the straight path of tawhīd, and his intellect reaches perfection by means of knowledge, and he thus reaches the station of separation and deliverance from the bodies, he becomes an angel in actuality, but if he turns aside from the straight path and proceeds along the path of ignorance and delusion, he becomes one of the devils or is gathered in the crowd of animals or the throng of insects”. 2

As for the origination (hudūth) of the human souls, Sadra says that if they were preeternal (qadīm) in their essence, they would have a perfect substance as regards their innate disposition (fitra) and essence, and deficiency and imperfection would be unknown to them – and if there were no deficiency and imperfection in their essence, as far as their existence is considered, they would not need the tools and faculties (some of which are vegetal and some – animal). Moreover, should they be preeternal, their species would consist of a single individual, and in the world of the (Divine) Command they would not experience any sort of division and multiplication, because the multiplication of solitaries (=individuals) (afrād) and the oneness of the species appertain to the specific characteristics of corporeal things and material bodies, and the thing whose existence is not in any way connected with the (material) preparedness, motion, and the matter, and the receiving of activity (infi'āl), deserves that its species is confined to a single individual, while, in this world, the human souls are many in their number and unified in their species. Hence, the claim of the very preexistence of the individual human souls to their bodies is absurd, not to mention their preeternity.

Those who are firmly rooted in knowledge hold that the soul possesses many modes and stages, and believe that it has several existential states, some of which occur before the nature, some – together with it, and some – after it. They also claim that the human souls, before they become connected with the bodies, exist through the perfection of their cause and occasion, and the perfect occasion entails the occasioned thing, because the cause is the perfection of its effect. Hence, the soul exists with its occasion, because its occasion is perfect in its essence and complete in its benefaction (ifāda) and if a thing is such its effect does not become detached from it. However, the soul's operation in the body depends on a specified preparedness and certain preconditions.

Hence there is no doubt that the soul is originated when the preparedness of the body becomes complete and that, having reached perfection, it remains (subsists) after the body, because its cause is eternally subsistent. When we have ascertained the existence of the soul's cause before the body and understood the true meaning of the causation and being caused, as well as the truth that the essential occasion is the perfection of the occasioned thing and its furthest limit, there remains no doubt that the soul has existed before the body through the perfection of its existence and its independence. Hence, what depends on the body, is only one of the soul's modalities, and the preparedness of the body preconditions solely the existence of this lowest modality and engendered nature, and the aspect of the soul's need, contingency and deficiency – not the aspect of its necessity, independence and perfection. If the body were the precondition of the perfection of its ipseity and the completion of its existence, the soul would corrupt with the corruption of the body, as it happens with plants and animals – but it has been demonstrated that the soul possesses an intellectual faculty which operates in the intellectual affairs solely through its essence, without a tool – and this is the sign of the soul's essential perfection and its aspect of independence from the body. Hence, we can conclude that in the aspect of the perfection of its essence the soul exists outside the world of the permanently renewing existential states.

The truth consists in the fact that the human soul is corporeal in the aspect of its origination and operation in the body, while it is spiritual in the aspect of its subsistence and intellection (noetic perception). Hence, its operation in the bodies is corporeal and its intellection of its own self and its maker is spiritual, while the separated intellects are spiritual in both aspects – as regards their essence as well as their action, but the natures are corporeal both by their essence and action, and each of these substances (i.e., separated intellects and natures) has a certain station but this is not the case with the human soul: that is why we speak of its “going through (different) states” (tatawwur) and its passing through different levels of existence.

We should also consider the point that the soul possesses a kind of existence in the world of the intellect and has another kind of existence in the world of the nature and sensation, and these two kinds of existence are opposite to each other, because, although in the world of the intellect the soul is pure and not veiled and separated from the noetic perfection of its species, there remain many benefits, which cannot be obtained otherwise except by descending into bodies and tools, according to the appropriate times, and places, and kinds of preparednesses. Hence, the soul's operation in a particular body, after its existence in the universal separated intellects, is not meaningless and unnecessary; on the contrary, it takes place because of a great wisdom, which is not fully available to anyone, except God and those who are firmly rooted in knowledge.

The soul descended from the world of the intellect in order to take possession of the kingdom, which it did not have in that world, as it did not have any other existence except the mental existence of dependence. Besides, in the world of the intellect it was a transparent light and, as such, could not receive the pleasant reflections (reflected images) and beautiful forms, therefore it came to this world in order to receive these reflections through the connection with the dark body (this is like we cover the back side of the mirror with mercury in order to make it reflect the images).

We call the substance, which brings the soul from deficiency to perfection "the intellect" ("the bestower of the soul" (ravānbaksh) in Persian); the rational souls are the radiances of this intellect, and this human spirit, which, in the aspect of its connection with the body and its operation in the latter is called "the soul", if we consider it without regard to this operation and connection with the body, is called "the intellect"; and both of them (the soul and the body) or rather all three (the soul, the body and the intellect) have the world of their own, while these intellects or rational souls – whatever you call them – are nothing else but rays and radiances of the sun of the universal intellect. However, we must know that this intellect in the aspect of its connection with a particular body is called "the rational soul", while in the aspect of its not being related to a particular body it is called "the separated intellect". This point has often been misunderstood, therefore the great sages and philosophers call the human intellects "the particular intellects" (al-'uqul al-juz'ī) and name the separated intellect "the universal intellect".

The rational soul is always aware of itself, so it permanently knows itself and perceives itself intellectually. Since it knows itself, the object of its knowledge and intellection is itself, i.e., its essence is not veiled to itself, and it experiences itself, because "knowledge", "intellect" and "perception" means one and the same thing, as this is also the case with the knower, the one who intelligizes (perceives noetically) ('āqil) and the perceiver (mudrik) and the known, the intellectually (=noetically) perceived (ma'qul) and the perceived (mudrak). Knowledge consists in unveiling, manifestation and awareness; hence, the rational human soul is the knowledge, the knower and the known, i.e., the unification of the intellect, the one who perceives intellectually and the intellectually perceived thing takes place in it, and all three are present in it as one reality.

Mawlawi says:

Upon examination, the soul is not anything but the experience
Whoever is more experienced, his soul is greater.
Why is our soul greater than the soul of the animal?
Because it has more experience.

As the secret and the “whatness” of the soul is its having experience,
Whoever is more aware, has more soul.
Since the soul entails the awareness of the heart,
Whoever is more aware, has a stronger soul. 3

.e., knowledge which is nothing else but experience, is the thing which makes a human being the human being. Experience (khabar) is awareness (āgāhī), awareness is knowledge, and knowledge is the eternal life. Hence, knowledge and perception does not differ in their meaning. According to the principle of the unity of the perception, the perceiver and the perceived, an ipseity which is aware of itself takes different names if it is considered from different points of view. So the soul is the image of God and, like God, it is creator and originator; however, God creates the outer world with its creatures and existents and bestows upon them an entified outward existence, while the soul by means of its imaginal power creates existents in its inner (imaginal) world, bestowing upon them an existence, which is a purely mental one. The difference between the things created by God and those created by His creation (i.e., the soul), lies in the fact that the former produce real traces in the outer world, while this is not the case with the latter. In the other world (that of the hereafter), however, the sovereignty of the soul reaches its perfection, and the heaven and the earth are under its control, and the existence of the things, created by the soul, becomes real and entified there.

Hence, the soul is the shadow of God and His viceregent on the earth – and that is exactly what the Prophet had in mind, when he said: “The king is God’s shadow on the earth”, i.e., the king is nothing else but the pacified soul which has reached perfection, and its kingdom spreads from one end of the earth to another, and in the world of the hereafter it will expand even larger.

The soul, in its proper level of perfection, possesses every attribute of perfection which is possessed by God, although this possession occurs in a shadowy manner, and the relation of the soul’s creation to the soul is exactly the same as the relation of God’s creation to Him, i.e., this is the relation of abiding and the soul is the one through which its creation abides – of course, this is an affair which happens in the world of the hereafter because, due to the soul’s weakness and descent to the world of the nature, its creation does not abide in the outer (sensory perceived) world, but in the next world this weakness is taken away from the soul; and what the sages have said on the topic – e.g. in the tale of Salaman and Absal in Ibn Sina’s “Isharat”, and the tale of the dove in the “Kalyla and Dymna”, as well as in the tale of Hayy bin Yaqzan, which is told in the “Shifā’”, in response to the question about the cause of the soul’s falling, - assures us of the soul’s existence before the body in the lofty world of God and its return to the place, from which it has fallen and descended; and the sun of its reality and the stars of its faculties rise and appear over its setting-place – either luminous or dark and obscure. Hence, the falling of the soul is nothing else but its emergence from its principal cause and its descent from the presence of its holy noetic father, while the thing which necessitates its falling is the modes of its actor, and the directions and the aspects of its cause: when the effects descend and emerge from their causes, this happens because of (the presence of) the contingent directions (aspects) and concomitants of the actors, and their deficiencies and contingences, and the need of the effects in their perfect maker through which they abide; and , in the symbolic language, these deficiencies were referred to as “the mistakes” and “transgressions” of our father Adam, while the emergence of the souls from their causes and actors was called “the flight from God’s wrath”, because the deficient light cannot endure the intense one in the witnessing place of light.

The soul's (self-) transmutation from the modality of this world to that of the hereafter takes place in accordance with its acquired traits and states, and its assumption of the other-worldly forms – either luminous and beautiful or ugly and dark – which originate from the soul's actions and deeds in this world, these forms being the acquisitions of the soul.

The human soul has three perceptual modalities: 1) the first one consists of the sensory natural form, and its locus of manifestation is the five outer senses. This modality is called “the witnessed domain” and “this world” (al-dunyā); none of the existents which belong to this modality, is free from motion, transmutation and transformation, while the existence of its form does not become separated from the existence of its matter; 2) the second modality consists of imaginal forms and apparitions, which are absent from the outer senses, and its locus of manifestation is the inner senses. It is called “the absent domain” and “the last world”. This modality is divided into the Garden (the abode of the happy ones) and the Fire (the abode of the miserable ones), while the source of the happiness of the happy ones and the misery of the miserable ones is their acquired traits and characteristics; 3) the third modality is the noetic one. It is the abode of those drawn near to God and the way-station of the intellect and the intelligible. Its locus of manifestation is the intellectual faculty of man, when it becomes the intellect in actuality. This modality is a pure good and a sheer light. The first modality is the locus of the penetration (mahall) of potentiality and preparedness and the sowing place of the seeds of spirits and the cornfield of intentions and beliefs, while each of the two remaining modalities is the abode of completion and actuality, and the place of gathering the fruit and reaping what was sown.

It is important to realize that the soul is the subject (“the carrier”) of the body, not vice versa, because the soul, due to its ascent of these “stairs” (stages / levels) in its existence, is above the possibility to “follow” (“accompany”) the body; on the contrary, the body is one of the “followers” (=concomitants) of the soul in some of the lower levels of its existence: this is the soul which “obtains” the body and carries it in different directions. As long as the soul is with the body and its faculties and organs, it operates and administers it as it wants, and it is capable to make the body ascend and descend whenever it wishes, regardless of the body's compoundedness and heaviness (i.e., when it wants it to ascend, it replaces the body's heaviness with lightness, and when it wants it to descend, it changes its lightness to heaviness). However, the soul cannot rise to the spiritual heaven and ascend to the garden of spirits and the abode of the happy ones as long as it is connected with this elemental body – while it is possible, if it possesses the body of light, which belongs to that (imaginal) world – of course, when it gets rid of this dark body. The rise to the garden of those drawn near to God and the domain of the perfect ones – i.e., the separated intelligible forms and the Platonic images of light -, in turn, is impossible for the soul until it does not become free from the dimensions and (imaginable) bodies, and does not cut away the apparitions and likenesses, and is not liberated from both (previous) existential states (the world of the nature and the world of the imagination).

The body is a descendent level of the soul and the existential traces (āthār) and properties of the separated spirit, which manifests itself in the body. The soul “carries” (=is the subject of) the body, and the body does not “carry” the soul. The soul administers the body and operates in it, and the body is subjugated by it (the soul) and follows it. In fact, the soul is the form of the body and all traces of life, and the putting together of the opposite elements and giving the form to the organs and bodily members, and the perception of the outer senses, and other bodily affairs rise from the soul, and the coagulated (jāmid) body, by means of the substantial motion, passes through the stations of the sperm-drop, the clot of congealed blood, and the (foetus) lump, then reaches the stations of imagination and intellection, and becomes spiritual and unites with the active intellect, which is none else but the spirit of holiness (rūh al-qudus).

Hence, whenever the soul obtains the faculty of obtaining (the things directly, without the mediation of the body) in a greater degree, the body becomes weaker and feebler, (and this continues) until the soul becomes abiding through itself and the body perishes, therefore the destruction of the body is caused by the soul's departure from it, not vice versa.

The natural body is the shadow and the image of the governing soul and its faculties, which constitute the psychic other-worldly human being, and the human being of isthmus (barzakh), with its psychic faculties and bodily parts, is the shadow and image of the noetic other-worldly human being, with all its noetic directions and aspects, so this natural body, with its parts and accidents, is the shadow of the shadow and the image of the image of what is in the noetic human being. Hence, the noetic human being effuses its light upon the lower natural human being through the mediation of the psychic human being.

The human being is the totality of the soul and the body, i.e., the human being of the sovereignty (malakūt) is the soul, and the mortal natural human being (insān basharī tabi'ī) consists in the body, and both of these human beings, notwithstanding the difference between their levels and stations, exist by one existence, as if they were one thing which has two sides, one of which is changeable and perishable, and annihilates, and is like the branch of the tree, and the other one is immutable and subsistent, and is like the root of the tree. Whenever the soul reaches (a higher degree of) perfection in its existence, the body becomes purer and subtler, and it becomes more attributed to the soul, and their unity becomes stronger, because purity, unity and unification is the mode (of the existence) of the imaginal body. However, as the thing possesses its thingness through its form, this unity is like the unity with the natural body but when the soul achieves the noetic level of existence, both of them (the soul and the body) become one thing without any otherness, and the opinion of the common people, who hold that the soul, when it changes its this-worldly existence to the other-worldly one, leaves its body and wanders around like a naked man who has taken off his clothing, is false. The cause of this opinion, in turn, is their false belief that the natural body, which is essentially administered and operated by the soul, is this coagulated corporeous body (jasad jamādī), which is thrown away by the soul after the natural death, while this is not the case. On the contrary, this dead (lifeless) body does not belong to the subject of the soul's administration and operation; it is like the dirt, the mire and the dregs, which have been removed from the action of the nature – or it is like the hair, and the nails, and the skin of the hoof, which does not belong to the essence of the nature and serves the outer and accidental purposes, and their ruling (property) is like the ruling (property) of the house, which the man builds for his existence, or rather for the escape from the cold, and the heat, and other things – and without which (the house) the life in this world is impossible; and the life of the human being does not flow and stream in his house.

The great ones have not said in vain

(That) the body of the pure ones is nothing else but (their) pure soul. 4

Hence, the real body is the one, in which the light of sensation and life streams essentially, not accidentally, its relation to the soul being that of the light to the sun. The state of the soul in its (different) levels of separation is like the state of the outer perceived thing, when it becomes perceived by the sense, then imagined and intelligible (perceived noetically), i.e., its low and deficient existence

changes to a higher and more perfect one. Hence, the separation of the human soul and its transmission from this world to the hereafter consists in the change of its first modality to the second one. When the soul receives perfection and becomes the actual intellect, all its faculties ascend and become perfect together with the soul's essence.

Sadra says that the active intellect has an existence of its own and an existence in our souls. Hence, the perfection of the soul and the completion of its existence, its form and its furthest limit consists in the existence of the active intellect for the soul and in its unification and unity with it (the soul), because the soul, although in the beginning it is the soul in actuality and the intellect only in potentiality, through the conception of the intelligibles and the comprehension of the secondary intelligibles, after the primary ones, is capable of becoming the intellect in actuality, so that it becomes able to present to itself the forms of the known things whenever it wishes, i.e., it comes into possession of the acquired trait (malaka) of calling forth (istihdār) the intelligible forms without the hardship of obtaining ("earning") them anew, and its essence passes from the (station of the) intellect in potentiality to the (station of the) intellect in actuality. Every thing which from the limits of the potentiality and preparedness comes into the limits of actuality, cannot dispense with a thing which actualises it and brings it from potentiality to actuality. Now, if this actualizer is not an intelligible thing – as this is the case with the body or a corporeal faculty – it necessitates the lower existent's becoming a beneficent cause of a loftier and higher existent and the non-intelligible's giving the intellect to what is other than it, which is absurd. Hence, the actualizer must inevitably be the intellect.

The proof (of this benefaction) is based on the fact that, although the First One (may He be exalted!) is the Absolute Effuser and the True Benefactor of the recipient of the existential effusion, every species among the species of existents needs an intermediary which corresponds to this particular species, among the separated forms and noetic substances; and they are God's angels which are drawn near to Him, (the angels,) whom the predecessors called "the lords of the species" and the followers of Plato named them "Platonic images" and "divine forms", since they are differentiated knowledges of God, through whose mediation the outer things emerge. There is no doubt that the most proper of these angels to solicit for the perfection of the human souls is their holy father and noetic image which, in the language of Muhammad's explanation, is called "Gabriel" (Jibrā'īl) and "the spirit of holiness" (rūh al-qudus), while the Persians call him "the bestower of the soul" (ravān-baksh).

In the writings of philosophers and mystics, this angel (the active intellect, Gabriel and Ravān-baksh) is symbolically called "Angā'" or "Sīmurgh", and its dwelling-place is said to be the mountain of Qāf. Its voice awakens those, who are sleeping in the abode of darkness, and its call makes aware of (God's) signs the heedless and unaware, and its cry reaches the ears of those fallen into the abyss of ignorance and lost in the desert of darkness (both of which are situated in the world of the prime matter) – but those who hear this voice and listen to this call by the ear of the soul are few in number, because most of the individuals are deaf to hearing the call of the reality and heedless to the signs of their Creator, and they turn away their faces from these signs. God says: "They are deaf, and dumb, and blind, and they do not comprehend" (2:166). 5 He is with all creatures but the creatures are not with him.

Thou art with us and thou art not with us.

Thou art the soul, that is why thou art not alone.

'Attar says:

His name is Simurgh and "the Ruler of birds",

He is near to us but we are far from him. 6

Whoever understands his language, understands the language of every bird and knows all realities and secrets. His nest is in the east while not a particle in the west is empty of him; everyone is occupied with him while he is occupied with none; all places are full of him while he is empty of the place. All sciences and crafts were extracted from his voice, and the pleasurable tunes, marvellous melodies, and amusing music and wonderful musical instruments, and other things were deduced from the principle of the wings of this bird, the possessor of the noble essence and the blessed name.

Thou hast not seen Solomon at night –
What couldst thou know of the language of birds?! 7

Whoever is under his protection, can enter the fire without burning in it and can pass through the water without being drowned. Rather, the perfection of all creatures with all the (different) kinds of their perfections, and wayfarers' satisfaction of their needs and necessities, take place through the aid of this holy bird, 'Attar says in the "Mantīq al-tayr":

In the beginning of the affair – o wonder! –
Simurgh made himself seen in China at midnight.
His feather dropped in the middle of China;
By necessity, every country was filled with tumult.
Every one "took" (copied) the pattern of the feather;
Whoever saw the pattern, became agitated.
All these traces of artisanry (come) from his glory (farr);
All patterns come from the pattern of his feather.
Had the pattern of his feather not become manifest,
All this uproar would not have happened. 8

Notes

1 When we use the word "tool" (ālat) in the definition of the soul, we intend by this something like the nourishing, vegetative and productive (procreative) faculties in the vegetal soul, imagination, sensation and the faculty of yearning (shawq) in the animal soul; not the stomach, liver, heart, brain and sinew. So the instrumental body (jism ālī) is an alive body and possesses the soul, and the soul, in turn, is the principle and the source of sensation and voluntary motions, at the same time, it is the first perfection of the natural instrumental body, which possesses life in potentiality.

2 Sadr al-Din Shīrāzī, "Al-hikma al-muta'āliyya fī-l-asfār al-'agliyya al-arba'a", ed. R.Lutfi et als, 3rd edition, Beirut: Dār Ihyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī 1981, part 8, p. 316-317.

3 Jalāluddīn Rūmī, "The Mathnawī", ed. by R.A.Nicholson, 2nd edition, London: Luzae and Co 1971, vol. 5, p. 184-185.

4 Farid al-Dīn 'Attār, "Dīwān", ed. by T.Mufaddalī, 9th edition, Tehran: Enteshārāt-e 'ilmī wa farhangī 1375 H.S., p.337.

5 "The Holy Qur'ān", translated by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, London: Wordsworth Editions 2000, p.16.

6 Farid al-Dīn 'Attār, "Mantīq al-tayr", Tehran: Amir Kabir 1972, p.46.

7 Apart from 'Attār, the parable of Simurgh was employed by Shaykh al-Isḥrāq, who used it to illustrate the universal and all-encompassing nature of the active intellect, as well as its inaccessibility by means of logical reasoning, in his symbolic tale "The shrill cry of Simurgh" (Safir-e Sīmurgh). We have partially retold here the introductory chapter of the tale.

The latest Persian edition: Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, "Majmua'ye mosannafat-e Shaykh-e Isḥrāq", 3rd edition, vol.3, Tehran: Enteshārāt-e Moula 2001, p.204-227. The English translation: Wheeler M.Thackston Jr. (transl.), "The Mystical and Visionary Treatises of Shihabuddin Yahya Suhrawardī", London: Octagon Press 1982.

8 Farid al-Dīn 'Attār, "Mantīq al-tayr", Tehran: Amir Kabir 1972, p.67.

On "Causality and Freedom": Some Questions Concerning the Sadrian View

Timothy Chambers

Abstract

In a recent issue of this Journal (Mar 2002), Mohsen Araki limns and defends Mulla Sadra's attempt to harmonize the claims that (1) Every event has a cause, though (2) We often act freely. My Discussion briefly recounts Araki's Sadrian position, then gauges its Plausibility in light of several scenarios. Along the way, I note points of the "free will" debate in recent Anglo-American literature, and articulate how the Western "free will"-debate is continuous with that of classic scholars of Islam.

In "Causality and Freedom," Mohsen Araki presents a lucid, fascinating, account of Mulla Sadra's (1571-1640 AD) "theory of necessity".¹ Of particular interest is the Sadrian defense against charges that his theory of causality is inimical to free will. Araki surveys Sadra's defense, and proclaims it triumphant; his "responses to ... objections", we're told, "are sound" (p. 20). Araki closes his essay by signaling grounds for a sequel-discussion; to wit, we can better divine the Sadrian view's strength through further study of "the mutual relation of cause and effect" – though, understandably, such "further explanation of this point needs a separate discussion" (p. 21).

In the present essay, I'd like to further motivate, and focus, such a sequel-discussion by adducing questions engendered by Araki's existing account. To provide a backdrop for these questions, then, we first recount Araki's Sadrian theory's main claims, as well as Araki's replies to a pair of anticipated objections. Along the way, I'll also cite points urged by prominent contributors to the Western

tradition's "free will"-debate; my hope here is to illustrate the striking continuity between Western, and Sadra's, concerns about free will and causation.

I- The Theory of Necessity: Main Claims

(A) Sadras' Main Claims. On Araki's illuminating view, Mulla Sadra's theory of necessity encompasses a quartet of main claims. A suitable background, then, should motivate, and recount, these four tenets.

(1) The Sadrian view claims that "every voluntary (free) act" exhibits a tripartite structure: "(a) prerequisites of willing the act; (b) willing the act; and (c) the act itself" (p. 10). Respectively, then, a voluntary act unfolds by first "conceiving the act and affirming its benefit" (p. 15). Then, having affirmed its benefit, and wanting the act to occur, we then will the act – my will, that is to say, exerts itself; this act of will, *ceteris paribus*, is then followed by my body's executing the act. Henceforth, we will refer to this generalization concerning free acts' common structure as the Voluntary Acts' Thesis.

(2) Given the foregoing thesis, a natural question arises: What relations relate these parts of a "free act"? The Sadrian view commits itself to a pair of tenets – one commonly-agreed, the other a bit contentious. The first tenet – which, Araki notes, is "usually assumed" all around (pp. 10-11) – posits that the second event (an agent's willing an act) causally necessitates the third event (the act itself); for "to suppose otherwise ...would contradict the free will and power of the agent" (pp. 10-11). It's worth noting, in passing, that the Western tradition often concedes this tenet, too; "an uncaused act", writes philosopher John Hospers in an prominent, introductory, text,

did not issue from you, had no basis in you, and was something for which you could bear no responsibility. Freedom presupposes such determinism and is inconceivable without it. 2

But the Sadrian view goes further: not only does stage (b) causally necessitate stage (c)'s occurrence, but, more ambitiously, Sadra maintains that "the relation of *iradah* (will) to its prerequisites is also a relation of causal necessity" (pp. 11-12). We refer to this two-fold view, then, as the Dual Necessitation Thesis.

(3) Yet now a worry arises: if, as Dual Necessitation requires, an agent's act is one relatum of a necessary cause-effect relation, how does this square with the characterization of such an act as voluntary? How, that is, could a free act also be caused?

The Sadrian answer – that the concepts of "free act" and "caused act", in fact, cohere – is found in what we'll dub the Compatibility Thesis. "Freedom", Araki posits,

consists in choosing out of consent and not under an external force imposing an unpleasant choice...the main criterion for voluntariness is not contingency i.e., being unhinged from a necessary cause-effect relation ; rather, it is the consent of the agent and lack of an imposing external factor. (p. 13)

In other words, what makes an act “unfree” is not its being caused, simpliciter; rather, the unfree act is one which involves being caused by an “external” source. Such a view, it’s worth noting, is reminiscent of literature familiar to the West. Thus, Aristotle remarks:

What sorts of acts...should be called compulsory? We answer that without qualification actions are so when the cause is in the external circumstances and the agent contributes nothing. 3

(4) Now the Compatibility Thesis is an ambitious claim; so, naturally, we must ask: What evidence favors this view?

In fact, the Sadrian view maintains that the evidence is right before our eyes (ears). Specifically, support for the Compatibility Thesis finds support in the (alleged) fact that our workaday talk about voluntary acts unambiguously supports Compatibility; for, as Mulla Sadra, himself, observes:

The agent is voluntary and the act is issued from the agent because of his will, knowledge, and consent. Such an agent is not called by the public or by the elite an “involuntary agent”. Neither is the act said to be issued out of determinism, though it is necessarily issued from the agent out of his will and knowledge. 4

We call this view – that workaday usage of such expressions as “free” and “voluntary” is unambiguous, and is consistent with the Compatibility Thesis – the Common Usage Thesis.

In passing, it’s worth noting that this last Sadrian tenet also finds echoes in the Western literature. The prominent British philosopher, G.E. Moore (1873-1958), for instance, supports his own view via appeal to ordinary usage.

The suggestion is that we often use the phrase ‘I could’ simply and solely as a short way of saying, ‘I should, if I had chosen’.... There are certainly good reasons for thinking that we very often mean by ‘could’ merely ‘would if so and so had chosen’. And if so, then we have a sense of the word ‘could’ in which the fact that we often could have done what we did not do, is perfectly compatible with the principle that everything has a cause. 5

One small question arises here, by the way: Araki maintains that the Sadrian view counts “free act” as meaning “act to which an agent consents” or “act where no external factor forces an unwelcome choice.” Moore maintains, though, that “I could” means “I would, if I had chosen.” Are these two views – claims concerning ordinary usage of “free act” and “I could” – compatible? If so, how so? (Since more looming queries will soon press, we’ll let this first question pass.)

(B) A Pair of Objections. In addition to setting forth the Sadrian view, Araki presciently anticipates a pair of objections, and applies the Sadrian rubric to turning them aside. Unsurprisingly, both of these objections bear upon the contentious part of the Dual Necessitation Thesis.

(1) Dual Necessitation would have it that (a) our acts are necessitated by the will; and the will, in turn, is necessitated by its “prerequisites”. Yet (b) we don’t feel that our will is compelled by anything, nor do we feel compelled when our will engenders our acts. Yet doesn’t the second premise militate against the first – and, by implication, the Dual Necessitation thesis?

Against such an argument, we first note that premise (b) tells against premise (a) only if we also presume that (c) our wills’ (and consequent acts’) necessitation would suffice for our being (and feeling) compelled to will (and act). Yet this last presumption is false. For by the Compatibility Thesis, a compulsory (unfree) act consists in an external force’s “imposing an unpleasant choice”. If, then, our wills’ (or acts’) necessitation flows from forces internal to us, then our wills’ internally-caused necessitation does not entail our being (nor feeling) unfreely compelled to act. Contrary to the objection, then, the Dual Necessitation Thesis’ truth wouldn’t entail the patent falsehood that we would thus feel compelled in our performance of voluntary acts. (pp. 19-20)

(2) If, as the Dual Necessitation Thesis would have it, (a) all of our acts are related of necessary cause-effect relations, then how is it possible that (b) God justly holds us responsible for our acts? Doesn’t the second premise tell against the first – and, by implication, against the Dual Necessitation Thesis?

Again, the objection presumes an implicit premise: (c) that we’re responsible for an act only if it (or the will engendering the act) is not necessitated by anything. Yet as we’ve just seen, the Compatibility Thesis entails that some (many) of our acts are necessitated by forces internal to us, and are thus voluntary. Yet an act’s voluntariness suffices for our being responsible for it. So the objection’s presumption, (c), is spurious; and the objection goes by the board. (p. 20)

II- Causation and Free Will: Some Further Questions

(A) Motivation. As we’ve seen from the foregoing objections, Sadra’s Dual Necessitation Thesis appears defensible (only?) by appeal to the Compatibility Thesis. We’ve also seen, at (I.A.4), that the Sadrian, in turn, rests the Compatibility Thesis upon the Common Usage thesis – i.e., the claim that our ordinary speech concerning autonomous acts coheres with the Compatibility Thesis’ definition of “free”. Suppose, then, that further scrutiny of our workaday linguistic habits were to reveal speech at odds with Compatibility. Then this would appear to tell against the Common Usage support Sadra adduces for Compatibility. By implication this would tell against Araki’s defense of the Dual Necessitation thesis – premised, as it seems, upon Compatibility’s truth.

Yet it seems, indeed, that ordinary speech admits of more ambiguity than the Common Usage thesis allows. We exhibit these further considerations presently, then offer some concluding remarks and queries.

(B) Counterexamples to the Common Usage Thesis. Our counterexamples to Araki's framing of the Sadrian definition – that an act, recall, exemplifies “freedom” just in case that act “consists in choosing out of consent and not under an external force imposing an unpleasant choice” (p. 13) – are of three sorts. We offer examples that purport to show that the definition is too broad, an example showing the definition is too narrow, and, lastly, an indirect argument against the claim that ordinary usage of “free” unambiguously coheres with the Dual Necessitation thesis.

(1) Too Broad. We begin by conceiving of acts which, intuitively, the workaday speaker would balk at calling unqualifiedly “free” – yet which, by Araki's definition, count as “free”.

(a) To borrow from British philosopher John Locke, suppose a man enters a room to attend a party. Unbeknownst to him, the door to the room locks as he enters. Yet, since the fellow finds the party so enjoyable, the thought of leaving never enters his mind – and so, he never learns that he couldn't leave even if he'd wanted to.

Does the fellow freely remain at the party? According to Araki's definition, the answer would appear to be “yes”; for neither does the man remain at the party against his consent, nor does the locked door engender any “unpleasant choice” on his part – the man never learns of the locked door, after all. Yet there seems something intuitively implausible about calling the man's choice “free”. (Better to call the blissfully imprisoned man “fortunate”, perhaps, rather than “free”. 7) For subjunctively, if the man had wanted to leave, he wouldn't have been able to – a fact which militates, as a matter of ordinary usage, against the claim that the man could “freely leave” the party. But if the fellow couldn't “freely leave” the party, is it not intuitively strange to say that the man “freely remained” at the party? (In ordinary usage, it certainly seems that one is “free” to do X only if one is “free” to do not-X, no?)

(b) In the foregoing example, our partygoer never learns of the external circumstances barring his departure. Suppose now that the locus of involuntariness, instead, were to be his mind's internal workings – the “precursors of his will”. Specifically, consider a man who, upon entering a party, is offered, and imbibes, a glass of orange juice. Now, unbeknownst to the man, the orange juice is laced with a psychotropic agent – one which engenders an intense desire to remain at the party, no matter how boring the party might become.

Does the man freely remain at the party? Again, Araki's definition appears to say “yes” – for where there's consent (i.e., the man does as he desires), then the act is free. And, by hypothesis, the man certainly wants to remain at the party. Yet if it's a drug which is responsible for the man's “sham consent”, one may very well balk at pronouncing the fellow's behaviour “free”, no?

(2) Too narrow. There are also cases in which we would be tempted to call a person's actions “free” which fail to satisfy Araki's Sadrian definition. Suppose, for instance, a man incurs significant debts, and finds himself enticed into accepting an illicit bribe (so as to relieve his debt-ridden estate). Now the man's conscience bucks at accepting the bribe – he wishes that the “external factor” of his debt didn't “force such an unpleasant choice” upon him. Yet in virtue of being so-“forced” by an “external factor”, Araki's definition would seem to deny that the man freely takes the bribe. And yet, intuitively, we would have no problem holding such a fellow responsible for his taking the bribe – a judgment which, it

seems, redounds against maintaining (as the definition appears to) that the man acted “involuntarily” or “unfreely”.

(3) An Indirect Argument. The last challenging example derives from Oxford philosopher J.L. Austin (1911-1960). To begin with, it seems that (a) it’s right to count a person as capable of “acting freely” only if that person “can” perform the act in question. Moreover, the Sadrian view maintains that (b) a person’s capacity to “act freely” is consistent with the claim that “every event is necessitated by some cause”. Yet “consider”, Austin notes, “the case where I miss a very short putt and kick myself because I could have holed it.”

If I tried my hardest...and missed, surely there must have been something that caused me to fail, that made me unable to succeed? So that I could not have holed it. Well, a modern belief in science, in there being an explanation of everything, may make us assent to this argument. But such a belief is not in line with the traditional beliefs enshrined in the word can: according to them, a human ability or power or capacity is inherently liable not to produce success, on occasion, and that for no reason (or are bad luck and bad form sometimes reasons?). 8

This observation, if apt, would appear to put pressure upon our opening pair of claims; for Austin (renowned for his ear for ordinary locutions’ conceptual contours 9) alleges that it’s false that ordinary usage coheres with the claim that (c) if a person “can” perform a given act, and fails in an attempt to perform it, then there must be a cause – a reason – that that person failed. Yet claim (b) maintains that there must be a cause – a reason – that necessitated his failure. So our ordinary usage of “can” is inconsistent with the claim that “every event has a cause”. Yet if, as premise (a) alleges, our ordinary usage of “free” entails that one is able to “freely act” only if they “can” perform that act, then our ordinary usage of “free”, too, is inconsistent with the tenet that “every event has a cause”. But this is to say that the Sadrian Common Usage thesis is false.

Concluding Remarks

So we’ve recounted a Sadrian view of freedom and causation, and found some prima facie challenges. Specifically, our discussion engenders the following queries.

(Q1) By the Common Usage thesis, the evidence for the Compatibility Thesis is to be found in ordinary talk about autonomous actions. Yet how can the Common Usage thesis stand, in the face of such examples revealed at section (II.B)? (Is it possible, perhaps, that Sadra’s seventeenth-century Arabic expressions bearing upon autonomy translate only inexactly into such latter-day English expressions as “free”, “autonomous”, and “voluntary”?)

(Q2) Araki captures the notion of a “free act” by appeal to a definition which speaks of “external forces”. One natural question to ask, upon encountering this locution is, simply, “Well, ‘external’ to what?” (If the example at (II.B.1.b) is sound, it’s worth noting, then our answer shouldn’t be, “external to the agent’s body”; for by that example, there are “involuntary” acts which involve forces internal to the agent’s body – and psyche, for that matter.)

(Q3) Too, if the examples at (II.B) hold good, and tell against the Common Usage Thesis, then we must now wonder: if ordinary language fails to unequivocally vindicate the Compatibility Thesis, might we find a different species of evidence in favor of that thesis?

(Q4) Araki's defense of the Dual Necessitation Thesis involves appeals to the Compatibility Thesis. But it's worth wondering: could Dual Necessitation be defended against the pair of objections (marshaled at section (I.B)) independently of the Compatibility Thesis? i.e., is the truth of the Compatibility Thesis essential for defending the truth of Dual Necessitation?

One particularly intriguing corollary of Araki's fine treatment – as our occasional citations of Western scholars illustrate – is that the classical “free will”-debate, among scholars of Islam, seems isomorphic to the debate found in the West. ¹⁰ I therefore can't help but think, then, that our respective traditions' schools would do quite well to combine their resources. Perhaps the “free will”-conundrum, which has sorely perplexed our schools separately, may yet yield some ground were our schools' talents united. In any case, the alliance would surely prove illuminating.

Notes

1 Mohsen Araki, “Causality and Freedom”, *Transcendent Philosophy* no. 1, vol. 3 (March 2002): pp. 1-22. Henceforth, citations of Araki's article will be parenthesized in the main text.

2 John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis*, 4th Edition (1953: Prentice-Hall, Upper Saddle River, NJ, 1997), p. 155. Hospers' last sentence alludes to a contemporary locus classicus of causal necessitation's role in conceptualizing free will – viz., R.E. Hobart's “Free-Will as Involving Determinism and Inconceivable without It”, *Mind* vol. 43 (1934): pp. 1-27.

3 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book III, ch. 1, pp. 1110a35-1110b4, in Richard McKeon, ed. and trans., *Introduction to Aristotle* (Modern Library: New York, NY, 1947), p. 349.

4 Mulla Sadra, *Al-Asfar al-Aqliyyah al-Arbi'ah*, vol. 2, pp. 229-30, quoted in Araki, pp. 13-14 (emphases mine).

5 G.E. Moore, *Ethics* (1912; Oxford University Press, London, 1952), p. 131.

6 John Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1689), Bk. II, ch. 21, para. 10.

7 Cf. William L. Rowe, *Philosophy of Religion: An Introduction*, Third Edition (1978; Wadsworth: Belmont, CA, 2001), pp. 148-149.

8 J.L. Austin, “Ifs and Cans” in his *Philosophical Papers* (Clarendon Press: Oxford, 1962). Austin's aside, on whether luck can constitute a “reason for failing”, tantalizingly invites further inquiry. For a brief essay treating this elusive concept, see Nicholas Rescher, “The Ways of Luck”, in his *Profitable Speculations* (Rowman & Littlefield: New York, 1997), ch. 11, and his more comprehensive volume, *Luck* (Farrar Straus Giroux, New York, 1995).

9 See, e.g., Austin's well-known tour de force, “A Plea For Excuses”, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series vol. 57 (1956-57).

10 For a contemporary anthology of Anglo-American efforts, see Gary Watson, ed., *Free Will* (Oxford University Press: London, 1982).

The Hermeneutical Reflections of Heidegger Ahmad Vaezi

Abstract

Although hermeneutical philosophy or philosophical hermeneutics is extremely indebted to Hans Gadamer, its fundamental elements are rooted in Heidegger's analysis of the ontological structure of Dasein. In this essay the author discusses the hermeneutical dimensions of Heidegger's philosophy, namely, his view of human understanding, the hermeneutical circle, the pre-structure of understanding, historicity of Dasein and so on. The article ends with brief criticism and some considerations.

Introduction

Before the appearance of Martin Heidegger's book, *Being and Time* (first German edition: 1927), hermeneutics was a discipline or a technique. Originally hermeneutics as the logic of understanding a text, provided readers some rules for overcoming the ambiguities of the classical texts. Although Schleiermacher opened new horizons into the traditional method and theory of interpretation of texts, and Wilhelm Dilthey extended the realm of hermeneutics and raised it to a methodology of all human sciences, the radical turn in hermeneutics was finally made by Martin Heidegger.

Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, elevates hermeneutics from methodology and epistemology - the art and logic of understanding texts and, in Dilthey's approach, seeking the theoretical foundations of human sciences - to a philosophical level. He strives to show the unity of hermeneutics with phenomenology and true philosophy. From his point of view, philosophy is a universal phenomenological ontology and hermeneutics is nothing but phenomenology. 1

Heidegger never engaged with the traditional problems of hermeneutics. Nevertheless, he established a new perspective in hermeneutics. His hermeneutical insights were followed by some thinkers. Perhaps no twentieth century philosopher has done more on behalf of this new approach to hermeneutics than Hans Gadamer. With the publication of his famous book, *Truth and Method* (first German edition: 1960), he exalted the dignity of hermeneutics as philosophy. Gadamer's attitude to hermeneutics, like his teacher Heidegger's, is philosophical rather than epistemological or methodological. He says:

The hermeneutics that I characterize as philosophic is not introduced as a new procedure of interpretation or explication. Basically it only describes what always happens wherever an interpretation is convincing and successful. 2

As I will note, the hermeneutical insights in *Being and Time* were an implicit part of Heidegger's main philosophical projection. His debates about human understanding and the pre-structure and historicity of our knowledge is derivative in comparison with his major philosophical aims. However, Hans Gadamer concentrates on what has been called 'philosophical hermeneutics'. The hermeneutics of Gadamer makes 'understanding' the object of philosophical reflection. Therefore, it keeps aloof from the tradition of hermeneutics.

The hermeneutics developed here is not, therefore, a methodology of the human sciences, but an attempt to understand what the human sciences truly are and what connects them with the totality of our experience of world. If we make understanding the object of our reflection, the aim is not an art or technique of understanding, such as traditional literary and theological Hermeneutics sought to be. 3

Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics is significantly influenced by the phenomenological reflections of Heidegger on human understanding. Even though, thanks to Gadamer's efforts, philosophical hermeneutics has been elevated as a focal point in modern philosophy and critical discussions in different fields of knowledge, the basic elements of it are the legacy of Heidegger, so that we can claim that Gadamer's major book, *Truth and Method*, explains, develops and makes more exhaustive Heidegger's heritage in the ontology of human understanding.

The central point addressed by this essay is the clarification of Heidegger's share in philosophical hermeneutics. I will concentrate on his original hermeneutical insights, which were the fundamental starting point for subsequent philosophers such as Gadamer for improving hermeneutic philosophy. Since Heidegger's hermeneutical discussions are part of his large philosophical projection, first of all I will briefly examine his philosophical aim.

Philosophy as phenomenology of Dasein

In the introduction to *Being and Time* Heidegger criticizes the tradition of western philosophy from Plato until now. According to his view, they ignored 'Being' as the true subject matter of philosophy. He wanted to open up a productive way for ontological-transcendental philosophy. Heidegger insisted that true philosophical reflections must concentrate on understanding the meaning of 'Being'. He emphasizes that 'Being' is not an abstract conception and also is not a being among other beings, rather it is 'Being' of entities. 4

How should we understand the meaning of Being? The traditional and ordinary methods such as rational inference are not useful because these methods are applied for understanding beings, while Being is not a being. The phenomenology of Edmond Husserl provided Heidegger with the way that he was seeking. Husserl, unlike Kant, maintained that our major categories - including existence - are not the products of our intellect and subjective creations of human consciousness, rather, we understand them by intuition. They are given to us by experience. 5

Heidegger was inspired by the phenomenology of Husserl and maintains that 'Being' is not a universal and self evident conception, rather, as a phenomenon, it is presented and opened to us. Therefore, our philosophical duty is only to find the specific way for disclosure and uncovering of 'Being'.

Heidegger believed that the phenomenology of the human being - Dasein - and the analysis of his ontological structure is the unique way for understanding the meaning of Being. Even though Being manifests itself in all beings, Dasein is a being that in its existence, being is a problem. 7 Dasein is distinguished from other beings for it is seeking the meaning of Being, and the answer to the most important philosophical question: 'what is the meaning of Being?' - is one of its possibilities. 8 Dasein is explicit for Being and discloses it in a non-comparative degree with other beings.

In summary, the ontological analysis of Dasein or phenomenology of Dasein is a primordial step for the fundamental ontology that was the ultimate philosophical aim of Heidegger: the understanding of Being. In his view this philosophical, phenomenological task – the ontological analysis of Dasein - is also hermeneutical, because, the Greek verb *hermeneuō* means making some thing understandable and the phenomenology of Dasein provides us with the primordial ontological elements for transcendental ontology. Accordingly, the hermeneutical task is to employ a phenomenological analysis of Dasein in order to make 'Being' understandable. 9

Although Heidegger said, in a broader sense, that all phenomenological analysis of Dasein is hermeneutical, obviously only some of these analytical achievements have connection to hermeneutics as a specialised field of knowledge. In the last century, two philosophical currents were influenced by Being and Time: existentialism and hermeneutics. Both of them relied on the ontological structure of Dasein in different ways. Philosophers like Hans Gadamer concentrated on the Heideggerian analysis of understanding and the specific aspect of Dasein's structure which both have an ontological relationship with understanding and interpretation. In continuation, I will discuss the major hermeneutical points of Heidegger's thought which have been noted by his followers and opponents in hermeneutics.

Heidegger's Theory of Truth

Heidegger's idea of truth not only refutes the classical theory of truth but also his view does not have any connection to the other versions of propositional truth. Both the classical theory of correspondence and modern theories of truth such as 'coherence' and 'pragmatistic' theory of truth are propositional, because, they commonly believe that truth and falsity are qualities that are attributed to propositions. In other words our knowledge is capable of truth or falsities. According to the classical theory, the definition of truth is correspondence of the form of knowledge –propositional - with the reality which it describes, whereas the coherence theory believes that truth is nothing but systematic coherence between propositions and this kind of coherence is different from logical coherence. A proposition is true if and only if it is a necessary part of a coherent and systematic whole. Pragmatist thinkers, even though they insist on cash value as a criterion of truth, also attribute truth to propositions.

Heidegger, especially in Section 44 of Being and Time, discusses truth. His ideas which he describes are clearly not in line with our normal and current understanding of truth. Heidegger denied and refused the propositional truth that, according to his view, was first brought to the fore by Plato and Aristotle. He insisted that truth must be understood as 'uncovering' and 'unconcealing'. Accordingly, truth is an attribute of a phenomenon itself. The concept of truth extends to all that can be uncovered and to any

disclosure. Therefore, the concept of truth contributes to things themselves. The proposition and assertion is true when it points out or discloses the entity and its state of affairs. It is a mode of truth.

Heidegger characterizes 'truth' as pointing out and uncovering, so, truth must be understood in terms of self-manifestation and givenness. He appeals to the Greek word *aletheia* to mean truth. *Letheia* means 'hidden' or 'concealed' and *a-* is a negative preposition. Therefore, *aletheia* means 'manifestation', or 'unconcealing'.

According to this new definition of truth, *Dasein* is truth because it reveals, or discloses, itself. In *Being and Time*, he tries to explain that the 'disclosedness' of *Dasein* is the first and the most original phenomenon of truth, because the uncovering of *Dasein* is a primordial step for disclosure of the truth of being. Whereas *Dasein* is a "being-there", so that man and his world can never be separated, the disclosedness of *Dasein* means 'un-concealment' - disclosure - of his world. Heidegger's theory of truth in some aspects is similar to Husserl's phenomenological idea of truth which he explained in his sixth logical investigation.

Understanding and its Pre-structure

Man as "subject" has different possible behaviors, and understanding is one of these. Philosophical discussion about understanding usually occurs in a non-ontological mode. It is presumed to be just one of a human being's acts. For instance, the main philosophical question of Kant was "what are the conditions of our knowledge, by virtue of which modern science is possible and how far does it extend?" Heidegger opened up a new perspective in philosophical reflection on human understanding. He emphasized the ontological aspect of understanding. According to his view, understanding is essentially part of the ontological structure of *Dasein*, therefore, phenomenological analysis of understanding and its ontological conditions is the subject of philosophical hermeneutics. As Hans Gadamer points out, Heidegger's temporal analysis of *Dasein* has shown that understanding is not just one of the various possible behaviors of the subject but the mode of being of *Dasein* itself 10 .

Heidegger writes:

If we infer understanding as a fundamental existential, this indicates that this phenomenon is conceived as a basic mode of *Dasein*'s being. 11

Philosophical hermeneutics after Heidegger concentrates on the ontological aspect of understanding, so the task of this field of hermeneutics is ontological rather than methodological, and therefore Heidegger clearly established the basic elements of the new approach to hermeneutics. One of the most important results of Heidegger's phenomenology of understanding is the three fold pre-structure of understanding. He maintained that every kind of understanding is preceded by a pre-structure. Some famous theologians and philosophers followed and improved this hermeneutical insight, for example Rudolf Bultmann insisted on the role of "pre-understanding" in the process of the interpretation of texts and Hans Gadamer rehabilitated "prejudice" as a necessary condition of understanding. 12

For Heidegger, Dasein is primarily 'being-possible', the kind of being which Dasein has, is potentially-for-being. Possibility as an existential is the most primordial and ultimately positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically. Possibility signifies what is not yet actual and what is not necessary. Its being possible is transparent; there are possible ways and degrees. On the other hand Dasein is 'being-there', that is, Dasein is 'being-in-the-world'. Dasein is that entity which, as 'being-in-the-world', is an issue in itself. Both of these aspects of Dasein – 'being-possible' and 'being-there' - have a close relationship to understanding. For the kind of being which Dasein has, as potentiality-for-being, lies existentially in understanding and also Dasein only in understanding, is its 'there'. Heidegger says:

Understanding is the essential being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-being, and it is so in such a way that this being discloses in itself of what its being is capable. 13

Understanding as a disclosure always pertains to the whole basic state of 'being-in-the-world'. Through understanding, Dasein knows what it is capable of, that is, what its potentiality for being is capable of. As Heidegger emphasizes this, knowing belongs to being of the "there", that means Dasein's understanding has in itself the existential structure which Heidegger calls "projection". Any Dasein has, as Dasein, already projected itself. Projection always pertains to the full disclosure of 'being-in-the-world'. 14

Dasein has been thrown into its world. Ontologically Dasein is never free from its thrownness, so the understanding of Dasein occurs in the scope of its world. Dasein does not create its 'being-there', rather, it has fallen into its ontological facticity. Heidegger's ontological analysis of understanding is connected to this interpretation of Dasein as thrown projective: 'being-in-the-world'. According to his view, every Dasein's interpretation 15 is grounded in something we have in advance -in a 'fore-having' and also in every case interpretation is grounded in something we see in advance: in a 'fore-sight'.

Heidegger believes that fore-sight takes the first cut out of what has been taken into our fore-having. In either case, the conception of the interpretation has already been decided in a definite way and it is grounded in something we grasp in advance in a 'fore-conception'. He writes:

Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be found essentially upon fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us. 16

According to Heidegger, understanding always pertains to the whole of being-in-the-world. Every understanding operates in the fore-structure and occurs in the 'hermeneutical situation' 17 of Dasein.

In summary, Dasein in hermeneutical confrontation to every thing, puts it in to its 'content' which has been given to it according to its facticity and, examining it from its 'perspective' and 'method', is determined in advance so the process of understanding always starts from pre-supposition of Dasein.

The Hermeneutical Circle

The hermeneutical circle is not an innovation of Heidegger because nineteenth-century hermeneutic thinkers such as Schleiermacher and Dilthey emphasised the circular structure of understanding. From two aspects, Heidegger's description of the hermeneutical circle constitutes a turning point. Firstly he gives to it an existential grounding, secondly he does not restrict it to the framework of formal relations between part and whole, therefore his approach to the hermeneutical circle makes it an existential aspect of Dasein's knowledge, like the fore-structure of understanding. So, every understanding inevitably occurs in a hermeneutical circle.

Nineteenth-century hermeneutic theory often described the hermeneutical circle as a method of interpretation of texts. According to this approach, the interpretation has a circular structure and understanding is due to a circular movement. In the process of the interpretation of a text, the circular movement of understanding runs backward and forward along the text. The interpreter starts the process by an unclear guess about the meaning of the whole then refers to a part to examine the validity of this guess. His reference to parts in turn produces a new guess about the meaning of whole as a hermeneutical rule. He must understand the whole in terms of the detail and the detail in terms of the whole. This circular movement discontinues when the text is perfectly understood, therefore, the hermeneutical circle of part and whole is a subjective formal method for objective understanding of a text and other hermeneutical experiences.

From Heidegger's point of view, the hermeneutical circle is not a method, rather, it is the existential character of human understanding, so, he describes the circle in terms of an existential grounding. The hermeneutical circle is the existential condition of human understanding and is an essential attribute of Dasein's knowledge. Thus the circle of understanding is not a methodological circle, making it unnecessary for us at the end of the process of interpretation, but it describes an element of the ontological structure of understanding. An understanding is fundamentally circular. Heidegger appeals to the hermeneutical circle in order to express the existential fore-structure of Dasein - according to his view, understanding ontologically occurs in a circular manner. The world of Dasein is the mental horizon of Dasein that consists of its presuppositions, expectations, attitudes and beliefs. In fact, understanding is a dialogue between Dasein's world and the things that terminate the disclosure of its possibilities. Dasein existentially engages in the hermeneutical circle and protects itself by a circular challenge with things. Heidegger writes:

As the disclosedness of the 'there', understanding always pertains to the whole of being-in-the-world. In every understanding of the world, existence is understood with it and vice versa. All interpretations, moreover, operate in the fore-structure. This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move, it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself" 18

According to the existential hermeneutical circle, the process of understanding begins from us, not from subjects of knowledge. Dasein according to its fore-having and fore-sights, its existential structure and its facticity, protects itself from the subject and in a referential circular process, discloses its possibilities so that all understanding is ultimately self-understanding. In every case that a person who understands this, understands himself, he projects himself upon his possibilities. Heidegger says:

Dasein understands itself in terms of that which it encounters in the environment and that with which it is circumspectively concerned. Understanding signifies one's projecting oneself upon one's current possibility of being-in-the-world. 19

Even though existential hermeneutics emphasises the horizon of the interpreter as the starting point and shares the mental world of Dasein in the process, it does not mean pure subjectivism because the things outside of the horizon of the interpreter share in the circle and work out appropriate projections. Gadamer explains Heidegger's conception of the circular process of understanding as follows:

Interpretation begins with fore-conceptions that are replaced by more suitable ones. This constant process of new projection constitutes the movement of understanding and interpretation. A person who is trying to understand is exposed to distraction from fore-meanings that are not borne out by the things themselves. Working out appropriate projections, anticipatory in nature, to be confirmed. "By the things" themselves, is the constant task of understanding." 20

Dasein's Historicality

Although Heidegger had some scattered remarks on the historicity of man in *Being and Time* and more or less ignored it in his later works, his followers have taken it very seriously. Gadamer's discussions about the concept of historically effected consciousness - *wirkungsgeschichtliches bewusstsein* - and the role of 'tradition' in understanding hermeneutical experiences, obviously are influenced by Heidegger's remark on the historicity of Dasein.

Historicity for Heidegger is not an accidental attribute of Dasein, rather it is an essential aspect of its ontological structure. By 'historicity' he means the temporality of Dasein which is the primordial ontological basis for the threefold ontological structure of Dasein. He usually refers to this threefold structure with the word "care".

The being of Dasein has been defined as care. Care is grounded in temporality. Within the range of temporality, therefore, the kind of historicizing which gives existence its definitely historical character, must be sought. Thus the interpretation of Dasein's historicity will prove to be, at bottom, just a more concrete working out of temporality" 21

By historicity and temporality, he does not mean time and history in their ordinary, current meaning. By these terms he refers to existential time and span, rather than the conventional meanings. Accordingly, every Dasein has its specific existential time and history and there is no fixed, determined universal nature for human beings except of the individual historical being of each Dasein. Every Dasein by its own being in the world (historical world) is distinguished from others. My time and history, on one hand, are due to my facticity and pre-havings that are involuntary and on the other hand depend on my voluntary projections, decisions and choices.

According to the historicity of Dasein, in every case, understanding occurs in its historical world and is consistent with it. Being-in-the-world of Dasein, that is, its historical being, shares in the process of interpretation, and all understanding is historically effected, because Dasein can never come out from its historical self.

Criticism and Consideration

I presented a brief outline of four important hermeneutical points in Heidegger's thought. It is time to evaluate some deficiencies of the points. With regard to his theory of truth, it seems that he ignored some aspects of the problem of truth. Heidegger overlooks the questions of truth that traditionally have been involved in it. By offering a new definition, he not only does not present any solution to the problem but also isolates it from the question of truth. The question of truth stems from the fact that we do not have direct access to things themselves. Our relation to beings is a mediated one, so things are not given to us directly, rather, in the process of understanding they are disclosed to us by assertions and concepts, therefore, the epistemological-philosophical question is "when is an assertion or proposition true?"

By the concept of truth as uncovering and disclosure, Heidegger arrives at an unusual extension of the theory of truth accordingly: truth is an attribute of things and phenomena when they are unconcealing. Heidegger overlooks the fact that 'truth' is not an absolute and unconditional self-manifestation and givenness of things –givenness as such - but, truth must be understood and sought in a distinctive mode of self-manifestation, that is, we must be able to distinguish between a true givenness and a false one. Furthermore as Heidegger confronts the problem of criteria, he presents no criterion for distinguishing a true uncovering from a false one.

Heidegger's concept of truth is too general to rouse serious deliberation about the question of truth. If we admitted the equality of truth and uncovering it would terminate in the equality of truth and understanding, because according to philosophical hermeneutics, in every case of understanding Dasein discloses its possibilities. Heidegger writes:

Understanding is the existential being of Dasein's own potentiality-for-being, and it is so in such a way that this being in itself is what its being is capable of." 22

Gadamer says:

Someone who understands is always already drawn into an event through which meaning asserts itself... in understanding we are drawn into an event of truth." 23

If understanding something is uncovering and in every case of understanding we are drawn into an event of truth, then truth would be nothing but futile denomination. The truth as uncovering only becomes illuminating if Heidegger maintains that the false assertion does not uncover, while, he does not divide the entities and assertions into uncovered and covered. He does not define the false assertion as the completely hidden of an entity and the true assertion as the completely uncovered, but at the same time, they have been disguised. What has formally been uncovered sinks back again, hidden and disguised. 24

In this new logic of uncovering and disguising we can not draw a clear limit between true and false because a new true assertion does not replace the false assertion, rather, it replaces a disclosed assertion that becomes hidden. Heidegger writes:

Dasein should explicitly appropriate what has already been uncovered, defend it against semblance and disguise, and assure itself of its uncoveredness again and again. The uncovering of anything new is never done on the basis of having something completely hidden, but takes its departure rather from uncoveredness in the mode of semblance. Entities look as if That is, they have in a certain way, been uncovered already and they are still disguised.' 25

Apart from the problem of truth, it seems that Heidegger's views about fore-structure of understanding in the hermeneutical circle and the historicity of Dasein terminate in complete relativism. According to these hermeneutical insights, in the process of understanding we are not passive, neutral subjects. Dasein has a productive role in the process because it discloses the things in its historical world according to its fore-havings and other pre-structures of understanding. The historical world - being-in-the world - of each Dasein is unique because Dasein has its specific existential time and history, therefore, the things do not uncover in themselves, rather, they manifest in Dasein's world. In other words, understanding is a model of fusion and composition that the mental world of Dasein constitutes as its major element. Accordingly, objective, absolute and non-historical understanding is impossible.

Even though Heidegger keeps aloof from the tradition of hermeneutical objectivism, he still tries to avoid absolute subjectivism. In his explanation of the existential hermeneutical circle, he notices the danger of some fore-conceptions that hold back from coming into the hermeneutical circle in the right way. That means, Dasein has to distinguish between the correct and incorrect elements of its historical

world. Therefore, the presentation of Dasein's world in every case of understanding does not allow arbitrary subjectivism.

What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it in the right way in the circle is hidden a positive possibility of the most primordial kind of knowledge. To be sure, we genuinely take hold of this possibility only when, in our interpretation, we have understood that our first, last and constant task is never to allow our fore-having, fore-sight and fore-conception to be presented to us by fancies and popular conception. 26

His famous follower, Hans Gadamer also emphasises that we have to distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate prejudices while he speaks of prejudices as preconditions for understanding. 27

Heidegger again confronts the problem of criterion: how can we distinguish the fancies and popular conceptions - illegitimate prejudices - from others? He insists that the fore-conceptions have to be presented to us in terms of the things themselves, however he offers no criterion for recognising which fore-structures are produced in terms of the things themselves. Therefore, this is phenomenological and denies the possibility of objective knowledge.

In this brief consideration, I only mentioned some indisputable aspects of Heidegger's hermeneutical insights. The comprehensive challenge with his approach inevitably will involve us in the further development of philosophical hermeneutics, because, as I said before, the followers of Heidegger have clarified and sometimes expanded on his hermeneutical achievements.

Notes

1 Heidegger Martin, *Being and Time*, translated by John Maquarrie and Edward Robinson (Blackwell, Oxford: 1962) pps. 62, 487

2 Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Reason in the Age of Science*, translated by Fredrick G. Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass & London: MIT Press, 1981) p.111

3 Gadamer, Hans Georg. *Truth and Method*, (Sheed & Ward, London: 1999), p...

4 *Being and Time*, p. 25

5 The meaning of experience, *Erlebnis*, in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl, is different from the ordinary usage of the term. In *Logical Investigations*, especially in chapter two, he explains what he means by the term. According to his terminology, experience becomes the comprehensive name for all acts of consciousness whose essence is intentionality.

6 Heidegger usually refers to mankind with this German compound word to emphasise the finitude and limitations of human existence. "Da" means "there" and "sein" means being. Man is a "being-there" or "being-in-the-world" means that every Dasein has its specific ontological limitations and lives in his own

“world”. The term “world” refers to our ontological possibilities. We as mankind do not select our ontological situation, rather, we have been thrown into our world which never separates from us.

7 Being and Time, pps 236, 458

8 *ibid.*, p. 27

9 *ibid.*, pps 61-62

10 Truth and Method. p ?

11 Being and Time, p.182

12 Truth and Method, p.277

13 Being and Time, p.184

14 *ibid.*, pps 185-186

15 From Heidegger’s point of view, understanding is existentially prior to interpretation. Interpretation is grounded existentially in understanding. The latter does not arise from the former. Interpretation is the working out of possibilities projected in understandings, so interpretation is the development of understanding. *ibid.*, pps 188 & 189.

16 *ibid.*, p. 191

17 Heidegger calls the presupposition of Dasein a hermeneutical situation. Being and Time, p. 275

18 *ibid.*, p.194

19 *ibid.*, p.439

20 Truth and Method, p.267

21 Being and Time. p.434

Heidegger believed that the totality of being-in-the-world as a structural whole has revealed itself as “care”. In “care”, being of Dasein is included. In section 41 of Being and Time, he summarises essential elements of “care” in three points: that is, Dasein is “being ahead of itself”, “being already in a world’ and “being close to its world”, but in the beginning of division two of the book - section 45 - mentions that this threefold structure of “care” is not primordial and cannot radically clarify an essential element in Dasein’s being. He seeks a primordial ontological basis for Dasein’s existence in ‘temporality’.

22 *ibid.*, p.434

23 Truth and Method, p.184

24 Being and Time, p.440

25 *ibid.*, p. 265

26 *ibid.*, p.195

27 Truth and Method, p.298

The Epistemology of the Mystics (Part two)

Sayyed Yahya Yasrebī, Allameh Tabatabai University, Iran

Abstract

The viewpoints of the mystics concerning epistemological questions have been discussed in mystical texts although not under the title of this essay. In the last issue we discussed, with regard to this topic, the perspectives of 'Ayn al-Quzāt-e Hamadānī and in this one, we shall examine those of another mystic, Sadr al-Dīn-e Qūnyavī. Under two main headings the author first briefly describes Qūnyavī's scholarly accomplishments and then, under a third heading, proceeds to extract, classify and present his views through an examination of his *I'jaz al-Bayān*.

Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad Ashāq-e Qūnyavī (d. 673 H/ 1294 A.D), the seventh century mystic, was the direct disciple and spiritual son of Muhī al-Dīn ibn al-'Arabī and was chosen as his vicegerent. Furthermore, he is the most distinguished representative of, and commentator on, Ibn al-'Arabī's mystical doctrine and thought. 1 Chronologically speaking, he precedes other famous commentators on the works of Ibn al-'Arabī such as Talamsānī 2 (d. 736 H/ 1357 A.D), Jandī 3 (d. 700 H/ 1321A.D), Farghanī 4 (d. 700 H/ 1321 A.D), Kāshānī 5 (d. 736 H/ 1357 A.D), Qaysarī 6 (b.751 H/ 1372 A.D) and Sayyid Haydar Āmulī 7 (d. 787 H/ 1408 A.D). 8 This being the case, he must be given precedence over them when it comes to explaining and interpreting fine and difficult points in Ibn al-'Arabī's teachings. He is the author of a number of valuable works, among which one can point to *al-Nasūs fi Tahqiq al-Towar al-Makhsūs*, and *al-Fukuk fi Mustanadat Hikam al-Fusūs*. These two books deal with textual difficulties in the works of Ibn al-'Arabī. He himself describes them as 'the key to the keys to Fusūs' and 'the last word on Fusūs and the revealer of its secrets.' Among his other works one can point to *Miftah al-Ghayb* and *I'jaz al-Bayān*, both of which are based on the teachings of the mystics. Qūnyavī also wrote two books in Persian. They are *Tabzarat al-Mubtadi* and *al-Mufawizat*. Both of these deal with issues in Ibn al-'Arabī's mystical doctrines. Qūnyavī discusses epistemology in his *Miftah* more than in any of his other books, with the exception of *I'jaz al-Bayān*, the introduction to which contains valuable information about this subject. The information we encounter here is both greater in volume and more cohesive. This is why we have chosen this latter work to which to refer from the writings of the mystics. What follows is a translation of the most significant epistemological sections of this work, discussions which in fact serve as an introduction to the principles on which Qūnyavī bases his interpretation:

1. The Difficulty of Discovering the Truth Through the Intellect

A. Relativity in Judgments

"If we try to attain knowledge through reliance on intellectual and rational arguments we will definitely encounter difficulties since none of these proofs and arguments will be immune to challenge and rebuttal. This is so for the following reasons:

- The theoretical views and judgments of different thinkers differ in accordance with their varying powers of perception.
- What thinkers perceive and their perceptive faculties are influenced by their methods and on what it is that they concentrate their attention.
- Methods and approaches are in turn determined by aims and objectives.
- Aims and objectives are themselves affected by beliefs, temperaments, relationships and other such factors.
- Finally, all of the above are affected by the different manifestations of divine attributes in the realm of possibility, and these manifestations themselves differ in accordance with different aptitudes and degrees....

Because of the factors mentioned above, thinkers and philosophers fell into disagreement concerning what is necessitated by reason and the process of their own rational investigations, so that none accepted the conclusions reached by the others. What was considered a good and credible reason by one had no validity in the eyes of the other, and so they failed to reach a consensus. Thus, every thinker takes that assumption to be valid and credible which he thinks valid, has preferred and in which he has chosen to put his trust.” 9

B. Rational Proof Does Not Prove The Veracity of a Proposition

“If the proof set forth in support of a proposition seems inadequate, this does not mean that we can say with certainty that the proposition in question is in fact false. This is so since there are many propositions in support of which we cannot present rational proof, while we and many rational thinkers have no doubt whatsoever that they are correct. On the other hand there have been cases where propositions have been proved through seemingly unchallengeable rational arguments and have been accepted as true by a group of thinkers so that neither they nor others were able to discover any reason to entertain the least doubt in them. Then, after a passage of time, either they or others have discovered the fallacious nature of the foundations of these propositions and thus these arguments have been discredited. It goes without saying that the correctness of these objections and repudiations, just as that of the proofs, is not certain, and this is the source of the differences of opinion that have arisen among followers of different religions. It follows, then, that we cannot, with complete certitude, prefer one point of view or position to another. The difficulty that philosophers face here is, on the one hand, similar to that of those devoted to intuitive inner perception, who are attached to, and trust and believe in knowledge that they attain in this manner, and on the other hand, similar to those who have deluded themselves into accepting certain propositions and have therefore come to believe in false conclusions.” 10

C. Differences Among Thinkers Concerning the Laws of Reason

“There are many differences among philosophers concerning the laws of reason. These differences include the following:

- Some forms and proofs are considered unproductive syllogisms by some and productive by others.
- Some thinkers decree that certain things are necessitated by a proposition while others believe that they are not.

- There is disagreement concerning the question as to whether man needs both logic and rational laws.

Thus, conclusions reached by a process of logical reasoning are constantly vulnerable to scepticism and doubt, and he who accepts a certain perspective does not do so because he has subjected that entire position along with all its propositions, bases and arguments to a thorough rational examination. In fact, he himself would agree that the spirit of all arguments cannot usually be grasped through rational proof and that the correctness and incorrectness of propositions is not determined by decisive proof, since all such arguments and proofs are attacked by opponents who cast doubt upon their trustworthiness. Sometimes he himself is well aware of the validity of these objections but in spite of this fact continues to believe in that particular position without the least doubt or scepticism. This applies to many men and is in fact a return to the position of men of intuitive inner perception, who believe that true knowledge can only be bestowed by God and cannot be acquired..."

D. Conclusion

"We can conclude by saying that for two reasons we cannot consider rational argument sufficient in the attainment of knowledge. First, the ultimate foundation of an individual's belief in a certain proposition is an inner intuitive feeling that is not acquired through rational argumentation. He and all those who share his beliefs have this inner trust in the truthfulness of these propositions. Now, the question arises as to whether the propositions in which we have chosen to believe are indeed true, and this cannot be ascertained except through genuine spiritual realization and knowledge attained from realms lying beyond the range of human senses and understanding. Second, even if we assume the veracity of all those propositions that can be proven by logical argument, the fact still remains that they are negligible compared to all those that are probable or cannot be either confirmed or denied because logical arguments concerning them cannot be set forth. Therefore, first of all it is difficult to achieve absolute certainty through logic and rational thought and, second, even if such certitude can be attained it is so in a handful of cases." 11

2. Preference of Intuitive Perception over Reason

A. The Way of Direct Knowledge is Superior

"The wise believe there are only two paths to true knowledge. One is the path of reason and rational thought and the other is that of direct intuitive perception, and since, as has been explained above, the path of reason has been shown to be insufficient, we are left with no other choice but to tread the path of intuitive perception, which is based on inner struggle, self-purification and taking refuge in God. Thus, the wise thing to do is to set foot upon the path of inner perception and realisation, cut off all worldly attachments, purify our mind and spirit from all superficial knowledge and the rules of logic and rationality, then turn to God and try to attain the Truth." 12

B. How Shall the Journey be Made?

“Since not everyone has access to spiritual realities when he begins the journey, he should follow those who have immersed themselves in the ocean of oneness and have reached the goal, such as the prophets (peace be upon them), who are the translators of divine will and command and manifestations of His knowledge and blessing, and those who have inherited their knowledge and spiritual position, until the seeker himself becomes the direct recipient of divine grace, his soul is illuminated with spiritual realisation and, like the saints and prophets, perceives the truth as it really is.” 13

3. Another Analysis

Following what has been quoted above, Qūnyavī presents another analysis and delineation of maʿrifat, which we shall briefly discuss below:

A. All spiritual realities possess attributes, dimensions and characteristics, some of which are easier to perceive and grasp than others. He who desires to know a particular truth must, on the one hand, be distinct from it and, on the other, have a correspondence with it. Because of his unique human essence, man is distinct from all other creatures, but, because of his comprehensiveness, he has a correspondence with all of them. This correspondence is the root of his effort to know things. If it did not exist the desire and consequent search for things would not be possible either, since it is impossible to seek what is unknown. Thus, it is this correspondence that gives rise to the desire to search, and it is through this correspondence, which is known to him, that man seeks to discover the truth that is the origin of this and other correspondences. Moreover, this passage from a known correspondence and attribute to the true essence of an object is sometimes possible and at other times, for a number of reasons, impossible. In this effort sometimes we reach a close correspondence from a distant one. In any case, the seeker after knowledge is satisfied with his investigation when he has discovered what he believes to be that reality and has reached what he takes to be his goal, even though in truth he may have grasped only one of the dimensions or attributes of that reality. It may also be the case that others who seek the same truth may, through another attribute or correspondence, come to understand another dimension of it and imagine that they know the whole of that reality, while, in fact, the knowledge attained by each of these seekers is only the fruit of an investigation into only one specific attribute of the innumerable attributes and effects of that truth (refer to the story of the elephant and the group of blind men). This is why seekers after wisdom disagree in their definition and delineation of that truth. Ibn Sīnā, the greatest of all philosophers, realised this fact, whether through intellectual or intuitive realization, and asserts repeatedly that knowledge of the true nature of objects is beyond man’s capacity and the most we can hope for is to understand the attributes and effects of an object and not its essence. 14

B. Knowledge of abstract realities, as they exist in divine knowledge, is impossible. For us, as it has already been stated, knowledge is based on correspondence and there is no correspondence between abstract spiritual realities and the seekers after truth, since we are not in a position to understand such things. As knowing subjects we partake of all the attributes of conditioned temporal existence and

limited knowledge, while to be in the position to understand abstract truths we must be free from all these obstacles, for this is a minimum requirement for gaining this kind of knowledge. It follows, then, that as knowing subjects, there is no correspondence between us and abstract spiritual realities, and our intellectual grasp of them must, perforce, be limited to their attributes and effects and will not enter the realm of their abstract truth. It should be added, however, that it is indeed possible to know these realities, though not by reliance on theoretical and intellectual understanding, but rather only when the spiritual seeker has been fully liberated from all worldly limitations, conditioning and attachment. 15

Divine effusions (manifestations) – the source of all inspired and direct knowledge – are not realised by the mystic and way-farer except on the basis of certain modalities (relationships). Between the servant and the Lord there exist countless modalities and relationships. From the relationship of ‘divinity’ to the manifestation of the very essence of the servant in the realm of (divine) knowledge and its consequent existence and attribution to the divine will by way of creation, existential unity or commonality and so on. Attainment of any intuitive spiritual knowledge depends on these modalities.

Thus, gaining a clear, direct, intuitive perception of the truth in its entirety requires, besides divine grace, which is the main factor, the disabling of all outer and inner faculties and a cleansing of the mind of all knowledge and belief. One must empty one’s mind and soul from everything except the true goal and then turn wholeheartedly and with one’s entire mind and soul toward God. The seeker must then unify his mind and purify his will and purpose and rid his self of all worldly attachments, imitated and borrowed virtues and superficial and illusory limitations in their various forms. By constantly meditating upon and nourishing such an inner, spiritual state, and by guarding against the least wavering and wandering, and through perseverance and steadfastness, he can create correspondence and harmony between his soul and the invisible sacred realm that is the source of all perfection and divine manifestation. 16

Notes

1 Badi’ al-Zaman Furuzanfar, “Risālih dar Tahqiq-e Ahwāl wa Zindeganī-e Mulāwī,” Tehran, footnote on p.43; Taj al-Dīn Kharazmī, *Jawāhir al-Asrār*, Isfahan, p. 52.

2 ‘Afif al-Dīn Sulayman al-Talamsānī died in Damascus.

3 Mu’ayyid al-Dīn Jandī was initiated by Qūnyavī and wrote the first detailed commentary in Arabic on the *Fusūs* (Chittick, Ibn al-Arabi, www.arches.uga.edu).

4 Sa’id al-Dīn Farghanī put together Qūnyavī’s lectures on Ibn al-Fārid’s poetry (ibid.).

5 Jandī taught the *Fusūs* to Abd al-Razzaq Kāshānī. Kāshānī’s commentary was one of the most widely disseminated (ibid.)

6 Dāwūd Qaysarī was Kāshānī’s student, and also wrote an Arabic commentary on the *Fusūs* (ibid.).

7 Āmulī was influential in bringing Ibn al-‘Arabī into mainstream Shi’a thought (ibid.).

8 Sayyid Yahya Yasrābī, *Irfan-e Nazari*, Tehran, chapter 3, section 1.

9 Sadr al-Din Qūnyawī, *I’jaz al-Bayān fi Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, Hyderabad, 1989 exegesis of the Surah Fatihah.

10 Ibid., pp. 16-18.

11 Ibid., pp. 18-20.

12 Ibid., pp. 20-21.

13 Ibid., p. 21.

14 Ibid., pp. 22-26.

15 Ibid., pp. 26-32.

16 Ibid., pp. 33-34.

A Comparative Study on Mullā Sadrā's Philosophical Innovations Concerning Soul-Body Relationship

Mehdi Dehbashi, Isfahan University, Iran

Abstract

In this essay, Mullā Sadrā's theories on existence and essence and the soul-body relationship are compared with those of Aristotle, Suhrawardī, al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, revealing Sadrā's radical departure from and reversal of their widely revered views.

Introduction

Man, it has been said, is a mystery to himself. He knows that he is a part of nature, and yet he feels that he stands outside nature as does no other species. He knows that he shares a common evolutionary heritage with everything that lives on this planet, yet he believes that the human reality of homo sapiens is not merely another link in the evolutionary chain but a radically different and higher form of being that cannot be adequately comprehended in the categories appropriate to even the highest forms of non-human animal life. Socrates' ancient dictum 'Know thyself' identifies a task that man apparently can neither avoid nor complete.

We are all acquainted with a class of events that it seems natural and proper to describe as mental events. We know what it is like, for example, to have pleasurable and unpleasurable sensations. We know, more over, what it is like to experience emotions: love, hate, happiness and so on. Certain kinds of activities also appear to be mental, or at least partly mental, such as perceiving, remembering, imagining, deliberating and inferring. Finally, volition, willing or deciding to do something in preference to something else, is a mental activity. Events of the kinds just mentioned appear to be different in a number of ways from 'physical events'.

One of the most puzzling questions that man has posed about himself, however, is one that falls outside of the scope of biological and medical science. That is the question regarding the relation of the soul and the body.

The soul-body problem may be considered in terms of two related questions arising out of the common-sense view: are body and soul two distinct entities and substances, neither of which can be explained, or a form as a function of the other? And, how is the apparent two-way causal relation between them to be understood? The first part of the problem calls into question the dualism implicit in the common-sense view. The latter part asks for some explanation of the fact that body and soul appear to be involved in a mutual causal relation. A number of interesting and different answers have come forth in centuries past. The reason that the soul-body relation appears to be so puzzling is that it cannot be conceived how a non-spatial and non-physical entity like a soul could be involved in a mutual causal relation with an unthinking physical entity like a body. Mullā Sadrā's theory of the soul-body relation is essentially based on some of his most significant philosophical doctrines, as follows:

1. The Primacy of Existence

He asserts that existence is not the highest genus since it is not constitutive of the essence of anything, for if existence were regarded as genus, existence would still be predicated of it. Accordingly, Sadrā proceeds to establish a radical distinction between existence in the external world and existence as a general concept, as it exists in the mind. All external existence is a unique fact or, rather, a unique process intrinsically incapable of being captured by the mind, while existence as a concept is abstract and general, and does not represent true existence but is a kind of indirect index ('unwān) of it. Mullā Sadrā seeks to establish this disparateness between real existence, which is the unique mode of every reality, and existence as a concept in the mind, by saying of those aspects of reality which are capable of being effectively captured by the mind, that their essence remains stable despite a change in their modes of existence. Now, the very meaning or 'nature' of existence is 'to be in the external world'; therefore, if existence were to come into the mind, this would involve transformation of its very nature. It is, therefore, in the nature of the case, impossible that existence can be properly conceived by the mind 1 .

This doctrine, called 'the primacy of existence over essence' is, as it stands, not Aristotle's, but presupposes a development after Avicenna. In the history of Islamic philosophy in the East, however, this doctrine continued to play a central role and Mullā Sadrā formulated his view at the end of a long and controversial development in which Avicenna's ideas had undergone radical transformation 2 .

2. Equivocality (Tashkīk) of Existence

Sadrā has regarded the doctrine of 'more perfect and less perfect' as the basis of his philosophy of existence, but with Sadrā this principle undergoes two fundamental changes. The first is that this principle, called tashkīk, in contrast to Suhrawardi's view, is applied not to essence but primarily to existence and only derivatively to essences. The second all-important point of difference from Suhrawardi is that existence is not only equivocal, it is systematically equivocal 3 . This is because existence is not static but in perpetual movement.

Now that you are convinced that existence is one single reality which has no genus and no differentia and is identically the same in all things and its self-manifesting instances do not differ in their very nature, nor do they differ through additional instantiating factors (huwiyat) – rather, these instantiating factors are identical with their very nature, you must conclude, therefore, that these existential instances (which are identical in nature) are (at the same time and by virtue of the same nature) different from one another in terms of priority and posteriority, perfection and imperfection, strength and weakness 4 .

3. Unity and Simplicity of Existence

According to Sadrā, the higher mode of existence does not ‘abstract from’ nor negate the lower forms of existence but absorbs, includes, and transcends them: they exist in it in a simple manner. That is why, when characterising God, he enunciates the principle:

The Simple Reality is all things, but it is not one of them either. 5

4. Trans-substantial Motion

The corporeal world is the approximate agent of motion. It must, therefore, be essentially in motion. Nothing needs be added to it from the outside. In reality, there is nothing but a flow of forms and since this flow is uni-directional and irreversible, each successive form contains all preceding forms and transcends them. Trans-substantial motion is simply a continuum of the spatio-temporal event. Consequently, events are connected to an event-system which itself is a continuous flow.

With these general principles in mind, let us explain and analyse his special doctrine regarding the soul-body relation. At the beginning, we briefly referred to the Peripatetic Islamic philosophers. Al-Farabi, like Aristotle, identifies the human soul at the beginning of its career as a faculty or power inherent in the body and not as a spiritual substance capable of existing independently of the body. Ibn Sīnā’s conception of the human soul as an immaterial substance raised fresh objections against him.

For Mullā Sadrā, the relationship of the soul to the body is not like that of any ordinary physical form to its matter. As opposed to purely material forms, however, the soul works on its matter through the intermediacy of other lower forms or powers. On the strength of this insight he completes and interprets the Aristotelian definition that the soul, (in its conceptual and relational meaning related to the body) is ‘the first entelechy of a natural, organised body possessing the capacity of life’. 6 Accordingly, Sadrā says that the soul is the entelechy of a material body insofar as it operates through faculties. He insists and verifies that the word ‘organs’ as it appears in the Stagirite’s definition of the soul cannot mean ‘physical organs’ like the hands, liver or stomach, for example, but faculties or powers through which the soul works, such as, for instance, appetite, nutrition, and digestion. 7

It is evident that the soul must know the organ or instrument which it needs to use, because using anything depends on knowing it. Now at this point we face a significant interpretation which is a grave violation against Aristotle, since his language clearly attributes the quality of possessing ‘organs’ to ‘the

natural body', which makes the soul, strictly speaking, a function of such a body, while Sadrā attributes the quality of having 'organs' or 'faculties' to the soul. This viewpoint is, indeed, a radical departure from Aristotle and should be considered as a first step toward the final idealisation of Sadrā's explanation of the soul.

He claims that this clarification of the word 'organ' removes the difficulties experienced by the definition of the soul as an entelechy in all cases, from plants to heavenly spheres, since all souls work on their bodies, not directly, but through faculties. This way of looking at the soul is intimately related to his doctrine of 'emergence' and 'trans-substantial motion' which lies at the root of his philosophical system. From Sadrā's point of view, heavenly souls are only potential in the same way as earthly souls, even though the degree of their potentiality is less than that of earthy souls 8 . Contrary to the Peripatetic philosophers, Sadrā believes that heavenly souls, together with their bodies, are originated and subject to continuous movement and change. 9

Mullā Sadrā claims that the soul is bodily in its origin but spiritual in its survival 10 . Since the soul emerges on the basis of matter, it cannot be absolutely material, for 'emergence' requires that the 'emergent' be of a higher level than the basis out of which it emerges. Therefore, although even the lowest forms of life, like plants, are attached to and dependent upon matter, they cannot be themselves entirely material. On the contrary, they employ their matter or body as their instrument and constitute the first step away from the material to the spiritual realm 11 .

For Ibn Sīnā the term 'soul' applies only to a relation and not to a substance. He thought that the body was extrinsic to the soul when considered as a substance. According to Sadrā, both human and animal souls are free from matter and hence capable of existence independently of the body. Sadrā, in this case, is indebted to Ibn 'Arabī.

The imagination, for Mullā Sadrā, has an important role in the relation between the soul and the body. The world of images is situated ontologically between the spiritual world of pure ideas and the world of material bodies 12 . The theory of the world of images was developed after al-Ghazzālī by Suhrawardī, Ibn 'Arabī and others. According to this doctrine, the ontological system of reality comprises three worlds: at the top, that of pure ideas or intellectual entities, in the middle, pure images or figures and at the lowest level, material bodies. Through trans-substantial motion, the development of the soul is marked by successive stages of increasing unity and simplicity. Whereas the faculties of plants are diffused throughout their body, the sensitive soul of the animal achieves a higher grade of unity, since the sensitive soul, at the level of *sensus communis*, is able to combine all sense perceptions. Imagination is the first separate faculty and does not work through any bodily organ. This faculty, however, contains the extension of the image (although the image does not occupy real space and is not material) and hence, not being totally free from some notion of spatiality, it does not possess unity and simplicity proper.

The soul, for Sadrā, comprises all of the faculties 13 . It is to be understood on the basis of his general principle, that 'the simple reality is every thing.' 14 That is to say, what multiplicity is at one level of existence, unity is precisely that at a simpler, higher level of existence:

Faculties are the modes or manifestations of the soul: at their own level, faculties are real, at the higher, simpler level, they are swallowed up by the soul, whose creations they are at the lower level, but

wherein they exist as a unity at the higher level. They are connected to the soul as servants are related to the king or as angelic beings and cosmic intelligences are related to God. 15

According to the principle of trans-substantial motion, which is also stated by the doctrine of the systematic ambiguity of existence, the soul first emerges as vegetative, then as perceptive and locomotive at the animal level, then as potential intellect, and finally as pure intellect when the term soul is no longer applicable to it. The soul has its being at all these levels and at each of these levels it is the same in a sense and yet different in a sense because the same being can pass through different levels of development. 16

Mullā Sadrā 17 says that Ibn Sīnā, while describing the relationship of the soul to the body, has used contradictory language: on the one hand, he describes the faculties as emanating from illumination, the soul, which is regarded as their source, while on the other hand, he explains the soul as a pure link integrating the faculties and their activity and calls it the meeting point of latter. Now this latter conception goes against the idea of the soul as a genuine, transcendent simple entity. On the basis of transubstantial movement, when the soul achieves its highest form as true unity, it contains all the lower faculties and forms within its simple nature. Mullā Sadrā says that the philosophers who commonly held the view that when the soul becomes fully developed and separate, it negates and excludes the lower forms, made a cardinal mistake. True unity and simplicity does not negate but comprehends everything. This is why the soul at the highest stage of its development resembles God, for God, in His absolute simplicity, comprehends everything. 18

Conclusions

Let us now refer briefly to some significant and novel points, concerning the soul-body relation, derived from Sadrā's above-mentioned philosophical principles:

1. Powers and faculties are based on the body, and their organs, which are deemed naturally human, are as shadows of and as examples of the constitutive soul and its faculties. This kind of human soul is called 'other-worldly' or 'psychological', and the other one, which is called 'intermediate' with its psychological faculties and organs, is as a shadow of and as an example of the rational human soul and its rational modes and aspects. Therefore, this natural body and its form and organs are as shadows of shadows and as examples of examples of what is within the human intellect. Consequently, it is evident that all organs within the sensory human soul are included within the rational human soul in a manner appropriate to it. 19

According to these presumptions and bases, Mullā Sadrā believes in the unity and simplicity of the human soul which is in reality identical with the body but only different from it in terms of the mind. Regarding the primacy and systematic equivocality of existence, soul and body are different modes of existence, that is to say they are different in essence but identical in reality. Therefore, from Mullā Sadrā's point of view, there is no dualism between the soul and the body. The truth is that the human being has a unique identity 20 possessing modes and various stages. He also holds that the activities of the human body are manifestations of psychological behaviour, because when the soul does not intend

to do something there is no movement within the body. The soul in its unity and simplicity resembles God 21 .

2. Everything in this world moves and develops, including the human soul, the orientation of everything being towards God. The 'after life' is a relative term: the plant is the 'after life' of organic matter, the animal of the plant, and man of the animal. But there is a difference between man and lower beings: with lower beings, when they develop into higher modes of existence, they have to change their species, i.e. individuals in a lower species cannot develop into a higher species but only a species as a whole can do so. 22 For example, an individual ape cannot become a man, but the ape as a species can. It is man alone who, in his individual existence, passes once again (i.e. apart from a change in species – from a lower species into the human species) through and experiences all the levels of existence. Individuals of a lower species also move and develop, but each within its own species 23 .

3. Although the human soul is initially in matter, it is not of matter.

4. At the beginning of a man's career, his soul is 'in the body', as it were, but as the soul actualises itself, the body gradually dwindles until at the purely intellectual level, the body is literally 'in the soul' 24 .

5. The world of images is to act both ontologically and epistemologically as a link between the intellectual world and the sensory world.

6. The human soul, like God, is one by way of a true and real comprehensive unity.

7. Through trans-substantial motion, the human soul, in the process and stages of development, is related to the body until it reaches the final stage and at that point it is no longer called a soul but becomes an actual intellect and then joins the Active Intellect 25 .

8. The human soul is all of the body because of its unity and simplicity 26 .

9. All affecting powers in the human being are branches of the rational soul and they do not have independent existence, since the human being has a unique identity. Therefore, the affecting agent in man is indeed the rational soul. The nutritive, vegetative, and other faculties are under its order and in relation to soul they have a shadowy existence which is called 'sheer copulative existence' 27 .

10. The soul is the bearer of the body not vice versa 28 .

Notes

1 Mullā Sadrā, *Asfār*. Tehran edition, I, 1., p. 37, line 16 ff.

2 *ibid*, I 1., p. 37, lines 16-19.

3 See Fazlūr Rahmān's 'Sadrā's Doctrine of Being and God-world Relationship' in *Essays in Islamic Philosophy and Science*, ed. George Hourānī (SUNY Press).

4 *Asfār*, I, 1., p. 433, line 13 and p. 434, line 2.

5 *Asfār*, I, 1.

6 De Anima, II, 1. 412 a 27; 4/2 b. line 5.

7 Asfār, p.16, line 4 and p.18, line 7.

8 ibid. III, 1, p.17, lines 8-13; ibid., I, 3, p.120, lines 1 ff., and see the article 'Mullā Sadrā's Conception of Motion' in Al-Tawhid, a Quarterly Journal of Islamic Thought and Culture, vol. II, No. 1, Muharram 1405 Oct. 1984), pp.68-78.

9 See 'Conception of Motion', pp.68-78.

10 Asfār, IV, 1., p. 4, lines 3 ff; p. 35, last line ff; p. 121, lines 4 ff; p. 123, lines 16-22; ibid., p. 326, line 6 and p. 327, line 3.

11 ibid., p. 16, line 14 and p. 17, line 1.

12 See Fazlūr Rahmān's Dream, Imagination, and 'Alam al-Mithal, (Islamic Studies, Karachi-Islam Abad), vol. IV, No. 2, pp. 167-80.

13 Asfār, IV, p. 51, line 6; p. 121, lines 4 ff.; p. 123, lines 16 ff.; p. 221, lines 5 ff., 135, line 1. p. 136, line 5.

14 ibid., p. 121, lines 8-9.

15 ibid., p. 137, lines 16 ff.; ibid., p. 139, lines 13 ff., and reference to the Epistles of the Brethren of Purity.

16 ibid., IV, 2, p. 21, lines 12 ff.; ibid., p. 61, lines 1 ff.; p. 3, lines, etc.

17 ibid., IV, 1, P. 148, line 2 ff.; (ef. p. 35, line 4 ff.); see Avicenna's De Anima, p. 261, lines 7 ff.

ibid, I, pp. 110-118; Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyah, pp. 47-48; Sharhe Hekmah Muta'aliya, 'Abdullah Jawadi Amuli, part 2, vol. 6. pp. 281-328.

19 ibid., part 2, fourth journey, pp. 70-71.

20 Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyah, second edition, p. 228.

21 ibid., p. 228.

22 Asfār, IV, 2, p. 25, lines 1-3.

23 ibid., p. 24, lines 1 ff.

24 ibid., IV, 2, p. 97, line 1; p. 98, line 11; p. 99, line 8; p. 100, line 4; p. 197, last line ff.; p. 47, line 9.

25 Mullā Sadrā, al-'Arshiyah, p. 235.

26 *ibid.*, Vol. 8, pp. 11-12.

27 *Asfâr*, Vol. 5, part 2, fourth journey, pp. 70-85.

28 *ibid.*, Vol. 9, p. 47

Review Essay

Between Light and Darkness

David Kuhrt, UK

Mohammad-Rézâ Fashahi; *The Aristotle of Baghdad: from Greek rationalism to the revelation of the Qur'an* Paris: l'Harmattan; 1995 (In French.), pp 90, ISBN 2-7384-3738-9.

Contextual Remarks: The East West Divide

It is a curious fact about ourselves that the divisions we project onto the world we live in (East/West; matter/spirit; intuition/rationality) are so tenuously founded. These divisions are also divisions between ourselves and others; they reinforce each other, so that the geologically non-existent division of East and West is compounded by another which divides cultures, telling us that whereas the western world is predisposed towards materialism and rational thought the East is disposed towards spirituality and an intuitive form of knowledge.

Since 11 September, the West has been busy devising and implementing measures to perpetuate and compound this literalism, pre-empting new dialogues with otherness which the global community so urgently needs; measures whose effects have quite remarkably rebounded on their authors: we suppose, for example, the currently unprecedented sales of the Qur'an and a renewed interest in religious knowledge (and with it, a reawakened sense of moral imperative), were not the anticipated aims of those who proposed an Alliance Against Terror. Fashahi's book, published in 1995, shows some prescience of this awakening (which of course had been in progress before 11 September), by examining reciprocities between recent European thought and Islamic philosophers like Mullâ Sadrâ. *The Aristotle of Baghdad* provides a useful introduction for university programmes to reciprocities in this field: although some translations of major works by the philosophers of Ishraq (Suhrawardi, Mullâ Sadrâ) and Ibn Arabi exist (the latter, mainly in French), the average student from a conventional high school background who has only a vague knowledge even of western philosophy and is likely to consider himself agnostic, cannot be expected to read Suhrawardi on existence and essence or Mullâ Sadrâ on being and time without the availability of introductory texts like Fashahi's book. Corbin's work does not suit this purpose and few academics in Islamic Studies or Islamic Philosophy have either the desire or the capacity to address the politically-concerned and agnostic student majority in western universities as Fashahi's text succeeds in doing. It is, however, a pity that the publisher did not see fit to include an index and inexcusable that no translation is given of the important Farsi and Arabic texts in Appendix: *The Testimony of Sheikh Bahâ'i Concerning Avicenna*; *The Testimony of Ibn Arabi Concerning Averroes*; *Letter From al-Ghazâli to Sultan Sanjar*; *Letter From Mullâ Sadrâ to Mir Dâmâd*; and *The Testimony of the Ayatollah Khomeini Concerning Mullâ Sadrâ*.

As for Henri Corbin, his profound and exhaustive studies of Shī'ite Islamic philosophy have not yet penetrated the anti-metaphysical mind-set of intellectual consensus in Western liberal democracies, a prejudice which originates in the encounter between Christian schoolmen in the University of Paris and Ibn Rushd. 1 When this prejudice is finally removed, we may predict not only some astonishment in western academic circles at the degree to which the philosopher they suppose to be the pinnacle (and termination) of Islamic philosophy is obscured and contradicted by the tradition which runs from Suhrawardi to Mohammad Baqir As-Sadr; we may also predict a profound revision of the prejudice against Shi'ism which exists within Islam among intellectuals whom it suits to defer to western notions of social progress on the grounds that since Ibn Rushd, Islamic thought has failed to keep pace with reality; for this prejudice which supports the divided self of modernism and its spurious geographical boundaries (of 'East' and 'West'), is in turn compounded by philosophical and theological tendencies which attribute primary causes in the genesis of creation to either material processes which occur by chance or to divine purpose, as if the two could have no intelligible relation. We may also note the paradox by which the existence of dissenting esoteric traditions both East and West serves to converge these divisions in a single perspective (such as Rosicrucians in the West and Sufism in the East) which contains the polarities; for neither Sufism nor Rosicrucianism is concerned with the immediate temporal problem of changing the world, but only with the spiritual progress of the adept. The adept, however, demands entrance to the realm of Hurqalya where the guardian of the threshold (Khidr) is concerned to safeguard the destiny of all humanity together. 2

With only a little knowledge of cultural anthropology and geography it is possible to see how the structural oppositions on which our dialectic and reciprocity with otherness depends originate in the differing environmental conditions with which human societies contend and to which they must adapt. If technologies now exist - transport, communications etc - which liberate communities from environmental constraints which shaped their cultures throughout history, then previously esoteric tendencies in human thought, East and West, in whose narratives the material and spiritual dimensions of the evolutionary perspective cohere, will emerge from the margins to illuminate the debate: the light remains occulted so that it performs its given task in the material world. If that task is obstructed, those who will bear the light are always to be found: "Their physical presence is withdrawn; others who resemble them at heart take their place." says Corbin, speaking of "le dépôt divin" which is entrusted to mankind. 3

It is not by accident that the remarkable growth of interest in Ibn Arabi in the West has been preceded in recent decades by the popularity in intellectual circles of such texts as "Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance" and the more recent "Blackfoot Physics" 4 (which compares the cosmology implicit in current theoretical physics with the creation stories of a North American Indian tribe). The relevance of Mohammad-Rézâ Fashahí's book, however, is more fundamental: he represents to western readers the essential cosmos of Zoroastrian philosophy in which the concepts of matter and spirit (or light and darkness) are not (as in 'double truth' theory) dialogically opposed, but provide the means whereby the individually human may transcend his habitual state of semi-consciousness with regard to the atemporal and enduring reality of the fully human.

Fashahi instructs his reader that Zoroastrianism represents the struggle between two beings, Ahura Mazda who signifies light, and Ahriman who signifies darkness. Zoroaster "called his ontology 'the light of all light'. The diverse realities observed in the material world are manifestations of light whose differences are due to the degree of light they have absorbed ... the existential world is a hierarchy of light and darkness". Since light has physical properties, and particle mass is affected by velocity, there is

clear correspondence between Zoroastrian thought and modern physics, in that the degree to which material entities are stable in relation to space-time depends on their degree of volatility and their susceptibility to transformation under the influence of other material bodies or processes. For the existing object which is illuminated is, temporally, the subject of enlightened perceptions, whereas the essence of that object is given in the obscurity (occulted) of its relations with all other beings outside the conceptual context which is conditioned by the limitations of the observer: intellectually, psychologically and spatio-temporally. To the literally minded, whatever is immediately evident as reality is subjectively determined by private motivations which define its utility to himself alone, or to a limited purpose involving others with whom he is contractually or hereditarily bound. In this absolute subjective darkness only the application of experimental methods will verify the nature of an objective reality he cannot otherwise know. However, the same empirical method which is applied to the external phenomena can also be applied to the internal operation of the thinking consciousness. 5 According to Steiner, the essential nature of the world which is ordinarily perceived in semi-darkness, can only be admitted to consciousness by a will to know objectively a reality which may be contrary to perceived personal interest. This is why Schrödinger (in "Mind and Matter") asserted that "the problem of volition" was "the kernel" of the relation between subject and object: notions of truth and error cannot be separated from analogical notions of light and darkness which draw on literal experience. That the operation of thinking in human consciousness proceeds as an analogue of the generation of light in the physical realm is the foundation of both Iranian illuminationist philosophy and of Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy.

Contextual Remarks: Goethe and the Phenomenon of Light

If we need evidence that the Zoroastrian ontology is relevant to our pragmatic concern for the realities with which science deals, we may find it in the colour theory of the German poet Goethe. In the world of optical and physical theory, Goethe's and Newton's theories of colour complement each other and neither disproves the other's opposed standpoint. 6 However, Goethe's mother tongue was also Kant's, whose European Protestant idealism separates fallible human perception absolutely both from certain knowledge of the kind which the mathematical sciences provide, and from God. The existence of Goethean science, which repudiates this irreducible dualism, within the mainstream of European thought is therefore an example of how the literal divisions between East and West, between ourselves and others, rest on arguable theoretical foundations. 7 Nevertheless we build fortresses to defend them. A brief summary of Goethe's and Newton's understanding of colour will illustrate the conceptual correspondences between Goethean and Zoroastrian thought; part of the common ground between East and West which needs to be revealed.

According to Goethe, colour is produced by the interaction of light and dark. In Goethe, both the source of light and the source of darkness are real phenomena. Darkness is not, as in Newton, simply the absence of light: according to Newton, since the appearance of colour depends on chemical pigmentation, and in the absence of light there is no colour, light is the single cause. White light is a conceptual abstraction for Newton, because only the degree of its absence, absorbed in the material bodies which produce colour, is measurable. Hence, whereas you cannot mix colours as pigments on a palette to produce white, they can be combined as lights using colours as pigmentation on a rotating disc which appear as white light to the eye. Goethe therefore concluded that the eye, as an instrument of perception is an evolutionary construction given by the existence of light, and that this therefore explained the analogical experience in conceptual thought of light as the signifier of truth. The eye mediates a reality which can be understood only in the passage of time, so that its decomposition by

Newton into separated events in pigmented objects (which absorb light differently due to their chemical constituents) is a denial of reality.

Goethe's approach was not theoretical and abstract: he assumed that whether or not, without light, they are visible, colours are not, as Newton thought, subjective experiences; they are phenomenal realities in the visible world which are given by the eye, which is itself given (through time) by the existence of light. 8 The visible and invisible worlds of light and dark, spirit and matter, are therefore the inter-active constituents of a single reality which the human being embodies, via his perceptual apparatus (which is certainly not limited to the so-called five senses); a total experience whose antecedent evolutionary process accommodated the attributes of more limited creatures. Such a notion of evolutionary morphology Goethe also applied elsewhere to his study of comparative bone structures in mammals. This totalised experience (which we call human) is given in the biological organism but not in consciousness; it becomes conscious in thought as a moral confrontation between beneficent light forces (beings) and others which, if he is not conscious, are impediments to his further evolution. If this narrative entails the corollary that the impediments confronting mankind in his socio-cultural and political life are the consequences of epistemological error (wrong thinking), so that only the Good and not Evil exists in objective reality, that is because human evolution takes place in time which does not exist in objective reality. That this is an issue with which Shi'ite illuminationist philosophy deals (and is beyond the scope of this review) is a further demonstration of the degree to which that philosophy complements the conceptual dilemmas raised, but not resolved, in occidental empiricism.

For Goethe the experience given by the eye and its evolutionary relation to the phenomenon of light is objective; the eye is created, in time, by the existence of light. For Newton, since science cannot adduce veridical proofs of what is seen subjectively by any living eye, Goethe's theory is not empirically founded. However, the theoretical constructs on which Newton is obliged to base and test his hypotheses are non-living abstractions which are subjectively determined. Theoretical 'empiricism' is fundamentally pessimistic, since it isolates the ordinary experience it is designed to test from the phenomenal reality. From an epistemological viewpoint, the reality which Newton (and empiricism generally) excludes, is the passage of the subject perceiver through time: the static object which emerges from the experiment is a lifeless abstraction which does not exist in reality; for in reality, all material process is mutable: the phenomenon we ordinarily perceive is a composite formation in which mobile and invisible material elements are invested (in-formed) by formal existences which govern material process so that the physical world is sentiently perceptible. It is an epistemological error to confuse matter with the physical phenomena whose appearance depends on the material foundation. Matter is invisible; the phenomenal world as it appears to us exists not as a composition of material entities but as a being which is formally present. It is so present because, in the process of evolution, our cognitive processes and the grammatical structures informing them, have evolved so that they mirror the formative process of evolution which brought the phenomenal world into existence. Formal existences therefore determine the appearance of the phenomena to sense perception. Acts of cognition are answers to the presence of Being throughout all the phenomena in which Being becomes conscious. Thus the being of a plant which is present to the observer now cannot be reduced to the component and volatile elements which are its transitory vehicle in material reality. Nor can the being of the observer: his physical presence is equally volatile and subject to material process (with death, the physical-material vehicle of that presence is returned to the earth). Therefore, the process which constitutes the reality in the act of cognition is an entirely spiritual process, a joining of light and darkness of which the supposedly physical causal processes are merely the vehicle in the passage to consciousness.

Pessimism is the essential tendency of western science from which Goethe, the poet, dissented; for the essence of reality is not the abstract knowledge we have of the constituent properties of things in isolation, but the concrete experience of their relational being in an existential context.

In his "Faust", Goethe puts these words in the mouth of Mephistopheles (a figure of Zoroaster's Ahriman): 9

To know and describe a life which thrives

first dismiss the spirit which drives.

The parts in hand, you can depend on.

A pity if what's missing is the bond.

The issue here is Mephistopheles' reductive inference that the whole exists by virtue of its parts; the 'reality' of Newton's theoretical concept of light resides only in the measurement of the pigmental radiations of its constituent parts. But light is a phenomenal existence whose manifestation is no less material, though differently constituted, than the objects it illuminates; light is darkened by their varying degrees of absorption, and the different parts of the spectrum we perceive as colour are radiated. All the phenomena are manifest in the material foundation. The visible and the invisible, which we mistakenly equate with matter and spirit, are part of a single reality whose appearance and non-appearance in space-time depends on the density and velocity of its constituent material components. Lucifer was an angel of light. The story of his fall is the record of the descent of the enduring spiritual reality into the material realm of spatio-temporal existence.

For Goethe, therefore, the figurative and metaphysical connotation which light has in human experience, and on which both ordinary language and poetry depend, is not merely an idea imposed by human subjectivity on an otherwise indifferent material world; the light (of the world) is an objectively existing phenomenon. 10 So also the experience of light and darkness, and their cognitive associations with good and evil, are the continuing expression in consciousness of evolutionary purposefulness.

Speaking of evolutionary process, Aristotle observed that "evolution is not for the sake of the process, but of the thing finally evolved". The teleological view at the heart of religious revelation is nonsense to materialists, because in attending selectively to the nature of entities and processes under laboratory conditions which isolate space from time, they fail to perceive that the time difference between the beginning and end of any process in nature is due to the contingent nature of the individual cognitive standpoint and its limited spatial location. 11 From any other point of view, in which there are no cognate barriers between the interactive hierarchies of the creation, the contingency which determines the human dimension in space-time does not exist: the perfect man becomes, and is only in essence. That this essence is present in human existence, and that, in consequence, we aspire towards a moral and consensual viewpoint in the use of language to denominate reality, is precisely the purpose of creation. All representations of a purposeful creation therefore depend on the existence of an absolute Good, in which we recognise the necessarily unified nature of the whole thing.

Mohammad-Rézâ Fashahi: The Aristotle of Baghdad

Fashahi's contribution to this narrative opens with a discussion of the dialectic between rational and intuitive modes of knowing as it appears in the philosophers who shaped Islamic thought on the foundation of the Qur'an, making clear its point of departure from assimilated Greek and neo-Platonist traditions. Fashahi's narrative opens with a series of questions issuing from his background in Iran, where he was born in 1945 in Teheran: "I grew up with the Qur'an, learning the Suras by heart, and exposed to the theological discourse of my father (a self-taught theologian whose faith was more important than his own son) who translated, prefaced and published the works of the great Shî'ite thinkers: Sadough, Hilli, Fayz Kâshâni and others." Witnessing the emergence in 1960 (the year of Kennedy's election) of a semi-clandestine liberal opposition to the Shah, the young Fashahi would ask: "What is the nature of power? What was the scientific revolution really about? Why are there conquerors and vanquished peoples? What is liberty? Why is the Third World ravaged by economic misery and intellectually submissive?" When, a few years later, he discovered Machiavelli, Locke, Rousseau, Comte, Darwin, Marx, Freud, Spencer, Einstein, Lenin, Russell, Sartre, he realised that he had yet to come to terms with Zoroaster and Avicenna. In 1968 he was a founder member of the Association of Iranian Authors, set up by Al-e Ahmad and Behazine, an association which was regarded as subversive and illegal by those who frequented the Shah.

The Aristotle of Baghdad is less a discursive text than a diary of Fashahi's encounter with western literature and his return to the essential and unifying theses of Islamic philosophy. These he finds in the Zoroastrian influences on the pre-eminent Islamic philosophers and commentators on the Qur'an. (He emphasises the Iranian connection: "Not only the fathers of the Islamic Aristotelians, Farabi and Avicenna, and the father of Islamic Platonists, Suhrawardi, were Iranians; the most eminent commentators on the Qur'an, Mohammad Ibn Djarir Tabari and that most salient of Sunni thinkers, Imam Mohammad Ghazâli, were also Iranian".) He describes the 'pathology' of the dialectic between revelation and reason in Iranian and Islamic philosophy; it turns on the significance of the Iranian term 'âsib chénâssi', the equivalent of the Greek 'pathos', denoting "a phenomenon which disturbs, a disequilibrium, an unfulfilled desire. The utility of this operational concept on the long road towards synthesis is to signify the enduring evidence of the 'primacy of the heart' (in Ghazâli) over intellectual knowledge". However, at the same time, Fashahi asserts, "with regard to my commitment to the inherited tradition of Islamic thought, I could not dispense with literature and sociology. For me, the poetic, the philosophical and the sociological, converged."

Listing the tendencies which have nourished the conflict between heart and head (systemic simplification in Plato; Islamic opposition to Mazdaism; oriental and western fellow-travellers of mythical forms of Aryan superiority from which Mazdaism issues), Fashahi states in his preface that the ambition of his thinking had been "to demonstrate not only that the Aristotle of Baghdad scarcely resembled the Aristotle of Athens but that the Plato of Baghdad, far from conforming to the Athenian model, was much closer to Zoroaster."

In the dust-jacket summary of the contents we read (with regard to the conflict between heart and head): "In the unequal confrontation between Greek rationality and Qur'anic revelation, reason retires without comprehending its loss." On the other hand Islam has failed to confront modernity, so that the dilemma for the theocratic state in Iran is to deconstruct "the advent of a theocracy identified with generic fundamentalism", a compromise originating in "the former cohabiting of theocratic Aryan

monarchy with prophetic Shī'ite philosophy." Those of us who despair of modernity in the West and see the Messenger in Shī'ite philosophy, are dependent on those in Iran who despair of theocracy if it will not accommodate modernism. But the modernism many of us in the West repudiate is not the modernism Iran needs: when "reason retires without comprehending its loss", let those who have retained what was lost to the West with the on-set of materialism, hold to it and adapt it to the contemporary reality; for the West needs not only to be taught an epistemological lesson: it needs also to revise those currently institutionalised notions of democracy which ensure the submission of other nations to western hegemony by rather less than democratic means.

In following chapters Fashahi discusses the tensions in Islamic philosophy between universals and particulars which are typified in the foundation of philosophy by Plato and Aristotle. The importance of these philosophers for his argument about heart and head, and its relevance to socio-political structures in human society, is in the bearing they have on the different conceptions of intellect in the philosophy of those parties who claimed to be their interpreters: "For Farabi, the 'intellect' is the 'creation' of God: however, that creation has not been realised 'in time' since otherwise its cognitive identity with the separate objects of perception would sever it, in the act of knowing, from its unitary source in the Godhead". Since God must be a unitary being, Farabi depends on Aristotle's doctrine of intellect and its classification while being unable to explain how 'the matter' (of particular things) "issues from the immaterial intellect" (by which things are known). Consequently, when Plato appears in the philosophy of Farabi, "he is clothed in the likeness of a Prophet of Islam or the Shī'ite Imāms ... Thus Farabi parts company with Plato, since not only has the latter's philosopher-king nothing to do with 'revelation' but, to achieve it, he is obliged to withdraw from the intelligible world".

In pursuit of an accommodation between the intelligible world of space-time and its eternal and unitary source, Fashahi turns firstly to Suhrawardi in the 12th century. Suhrawardi's philosophy is "the philosophy of light" which, in Farsi, connotes the active radiance of sunrise. It is "an eclectic philosophy unifying the ideas of Plato, Aristotle, the neo-Platonists, Zoroaster, Hermes, Thot and the Islamic Sufi tradition ... it is a philosophy because it affirms the intellect ... It is mysticism because only through intuition are the higher stages of cognition possible ... Knowing, in other words, depends on both". In this, Suhrawardi re-states the philosophy of Zoroaster, so that the illumination of intuitive cognition depends on that prior exercise of the intellect which distinguishes different existences, for each existence darkens the light by assimilating it, according to the given nature of its species.

In three following chapters Fashahi deals with Zakaria Mohammad al-Razi (Rhazes, c 864-925 or 932) and Abu al-Rayhan Birouni (973-1048). Their works, taken together, constitute the first sustained attack on aristotelianism within Islam; Birouni also anticipated Galileo by six centuries, postulating that the sun and not the earth, was the centre of the solar system; a conclusion he owed to his encounters with mathematicians and astronomers in India.

Secondly, Fashahi discusses the School of Isfahan, (principally, Mullâ Sadrâ): "With the appearance of the School of Isfahan, the (long period of) conservative stability and stagnation in Islamic philosophy" which followed Ghazâli's attacks on aristotelianism in the 12th century notwithstanding Averroës' replies and the attempted rehabilitation of Aristotle "was interrupted by a revolution which overturned established habits of thought." Noting that philosophical conservatism characterised Sunnite but not Shī'ite Islam, Fashahi remarks that Mullâ Sadrâ, choosing between the Aristotelian Avicenna and Ibn Arabi ("the father of Islamic mysticism"), "bowed only before the latter".

These three chapters conclude with a quotation from the Ayatollah Khomeini who, in “Commentary on the Prayer of the Dawn” (written in 1927 at the age of 27), and writing on “the Gnostic thought of Ibn Arabi”, commented that (with Mir Damad) “Ibn Arabi and Mullâ Sadrâ stood at the pinnacle of achievement in human thought”.

According to Fashahi, the teaching of Mir Damad (master of Mullâ Sadrâ), affirms, following Suhrawardi, that substance is intrinsic and being extrinsic. Mullâ Sadrâ, however, proposed the contrary: that being is intrinsic and substance extrinsic, and proceeded to elaborate his highly original concept of “intra-substantial movement”. Whereas “all Islamic philosophers allowed that movement inhered in the nine categories called ‘accidental’”, according to Sadra, movement is ‘in’ substance. Mullâ Sadrâ’s system “resembles Suhrawardi in attributing equal importance to intellect and intuition. The essential concepts of his thought are movement, time, location (place), force (energy) and act (realisation). What Sadrâ and his followers called existentialism was the logical consequence of their analysis of the concept ‘becoming’”. The important consequence of “intra-substantial movement” is to have transformed “the fundamental question of ‘the contingent pre-existence of the world’ on which the argument between Platonists and Aristotelians had turned”.

It is clear, (though Fashahi does not say so) that if in Mullâ Sadrâ, contingency does not depend on a separation in time of ‘before’ and ‘after’, and if also substance is extrinsic and being is intrinsic, then the world (the whole undefined context, the reality we define relatively in language) is not contingent on anything except itself. The divine is therefore present with us in it (a point of convergence between Islam and primitive Christianity), and not outside and before it as a first cause. We may, therefore, beware of clerics and intermediaries (against which Ghazâli warns, in ‘O Disciple’) and of those Protestant varieties of science which require the subordination of free-thinking to authority, whether of religious potentates, of the state, or of philosophers of science who proclaim experimental methods as the ultimate arbiter of truth. For if the world is contingent on nothing but itself, and its conception includes (not excludes) God, then time is not ‘in’ the world and eternity ‘outside’ it: both depend on the relation established in the cognising subject (intrinsic being) of himself within that unitary whole. As Fashahi also notes, “The world is in perpetual contingency. It is nonsense to attempt to define the age of the universe.” Why? Because the notion of time is contingent on a subjective relation with the world given by being intrinsically in a body which is extrinsic. The boundaries of being and becoming are therefore set by the degree to which extrinsic discrete natures (which have spatio-temporal limits) determine the subject’s ability to know himself intrinsically in relation with the whole. Hence Mullâ Sadrâ’s philosophy elaborates a concept whose essentials were already present in Zoroaster: though the prior exercise of intellect distinguishes existences which differ according to the amount of light assimilated, this exercise of intellect, which perceives their relative natures, depends logically on the a priori intuition of the presence of the whole of which the perceiving subject is part. Thus the existence of light has literal and moral, and not only metaphorical, correlatives in human experience.

Hence (returning to Fashahi’s text): from Mullâ Sadrâ the West may learn that “Stability exists only in that metaphysical dimension in which the order of the creation exists. The difference between nature (physical) and the supernatural (metaphysical) is the equivalent of the difference between movement and stability and not between physical (matter) and spiritual (non-matter). Everything has a material basis and the difference between the physical and spiritual worlds is a matter of density of light and its velocity; that is, of actuality in space-time.

The importance of Fashahi's brief, formally uneven, but illuminating text, lies in his presentation of the figurative implications of the Zoroastrian world view: it subsumes the alternative perspectives of oriental and western philosophy. It is not for nothing that in oriental traditions, knowledge is passed on in the form of parables, leaving the cognitive moment of illumination to the imagination of the hearer. Truth is discovered by evasion; in the scientific narrative of the West (which now provides the yardstick test of knowledge), truth cannot be attained. Critical discourse thrives in this intellectual environment, as market capitalism does on the relative values it espouses. Truth, (about the contingency which necessitates reciprocity and mutual aid) is denied even if it is known to common sense in ordinary experience, and often with disastrous social consequences. This denial (of truth which is evident to common sense) occurs when the epistemological foundation of thinking stands in contradiction to the ontological reality of human nature and its transcendent form. In the western consensus, that form is visible only in its individual variants, the most admired among which become "celebrities". It seems strange that in the sociological sciences, deviance should be so intensively researched while it is regarded as politically incorrect to ask if celebrities will do for archetypes. The epistemological foundation which we are here calling in question is not only a problem in philosophy: it seems that thinking, as a free activity, is grinding to a halt. 12

Having been offered a potential perspective which subsumes the critical differences of East and West, Fashahi's concluding words seem unfortunate: "While theology and mysticism in the Islamic world have found their appropriate niche, philosophy has yet to find its place, perhaps because Iran and other Islamic countries have more need of a Machiavelli, a Hobbes or a Locke, than of a Farabi, a Suhrawardi or a Mullâ Sadrâ". Machiavelli, Hobbes and Locke, together with Francis Bacon (whom he does not mention) are the philosophers on whom the impetus in western civilisation towards materialism chiefly depends, and to whom we must attribute the construction of that edifice of darkness in which truth, defined by the positive sciences, appears to deny common sense. 13 It will therefore be salutary if the reader recalls that according to the theory of knowledge in Zoroaster and in Suhrawardi, as also in Goethe, it is a voluntary degree of opacity towards others and towards the world which determines the amount of light present in the whole. If the available light is insufficient, there is no power failure in the Heavens but an error in the epistemological foundation of knowledge.

Notes

1 To resolve the apparent conflict between Ibn Rushd's universal intellect and the doctrine that human knowledge exists in a fallen state so that the Christ or logos is accessible only through an act of Divine Grace, Siger of Brabant proposed a theory of "Double Truth" separating all knowledge between that given by faith as a matter of religion and that given in philosophy by the rational intellect. This fundamental epistemological error proceeded through Francis Bacon, John Locke, Immanuel Kant the nineteenth century utilitarians, and the logical positivists, to ensure that, in the English-speaking world today, the importance of thinkers like Goethe, Rudolph Steiner and A N Whitehead (not to mention Henri Corbin) has yet to be appreciated.

In consequence, due to the degree that developments in molecular physics, biology and theories of indeterminacy (chaos, fractals etc) since the turn of this century have influenced contemporary western thought in the direction of a post-modernity which no-one quite grasps, the sudden appearance in the West of the Iranian philosophy of Ishraq is propitious, since it provides not only answers to the epistemological and ontological issues raised in western philosophy by the tendency we described above (of 'double truth', from Siger of Brabant to positivism), but it also provides a linkage with the metaphysics of early Christian neo-platonism from which western philosophy was separated by

developments which took place between the Council of Constantinople in 869 and the emergence, after Siger of Brabant, of natural philosophy and so-called empiricism. (For an authoritative discussion of the Council of Constantinople in 869 see: A P Shepherd *The Battle For The Spirit: the Church and Rudolf Steiner*; Anastasi Ltd, 1994).

2 See 'Abd al-Karīm Jīlī, in: Henri Corbin, *Spiritual Body, Celestial Earth* (I B Tauris, 1990).

3 Henri Corbin, the meetings between the First Imām and Komayl ibn Ziyad, in: *En Islam Iranian*, Vol. 1 *le Shī'ism duodécimain* (Editions Gallimard, 1971).

4 F David Peate: *Blackfoot Physics* (Fourth Estate, 1994)

5 See Rudolf Steiner, *Man As a Being of Sense and Perception*; (Steiner Book Centre, Canada; 1981).

6 For an authoritative discussion of the relative scientific achievement in Goethe and Newton's theories of colour, see W Heisenberg, *The Goethean and Newtonian Colour Theories in the Light of Modern Physics*, in ... (the author has this paper in photocopy, but not its provenance). The first complete edition of Goethe's scientific work appeared in Kürschner's "*Deutscher Nationalliteratur*" in the 1880s and was edited, with commentaries, by Rudolf Steiner.

7 For a discussion of the spiritual reality corresponding to this geographical division see: Henri Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism* (Omega Publications, NY, 1971).

8 As Rudolf Steiner (who first edited Goethe's scientific work) perceived, the epistemological consequences of Goethe's optics are far-reaching indeed. We may therefore note the content of the following letter which appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement*, 30 March 2001 (from Jürg Rosenbusch, Department of Molecular Biology, University of Basle): In his article on "The key to life" Richard Horton arrives at some fine conclusions, while others hardly go beyond the views currently propagated by the media. Except where he says that "The debate about genetics has moved well beyond genes. The pressing field of inquiry now is ontology." ... I happen to think that the essence of being (human) requires alertness rather than the benign neglect scientists and laymen see fit to offer. Of course, the revolution in modern biology opens fascinating perspectives, but it neither takes a visionary nor a zealot or a traitor to his profession to realize that the problems that are looming should be an intriguing challenge also to philosophers to rethink not only ethics, but epistemology and ontology proper, even if that proves troublesome.

9 Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *Faust*. This verse translated from the original German by the author. For a standard English translation see Penguin Classics, 1987.

10 Among Goethe's many productions is a sequence of poems called the East-West Divan. The poem which opens the first of the twelve books in the Divan is titled "Hegira", the Arabic word for the era which began from the date (622) of Mohammad's flight from Mekkah to Medina. Following the Divan in the German text are Goethe's introductory notes to the sequence. In these, following the forward, his first four headings are "Hebrews", "Arabs", "Transition" (period of), and "Old Persia". Under this last heading, we read: "Zoroaster appears to have been the first (historical individual) to have given natural religion (paganism) a cultural structure".

11 Hence, whereas in consciousness no perception of time is possible without an apprehension of spatial extension, in the objective reality which is anterior to and transcendent of consciousness, the existence of space necessarily preceded and precedes that of time. In other words, consciousness adds the dimension of time to that of spatial extension, which obtains whether or not there is consciousness. The dimension of time is contingent on consciousness being located in a corporeal body where acts of cognition join other spatially discrete existences to the being which is present in consciousness. After the coming of consciousness however, spatial extension and its discrete created existences are, literally, re-membered in time independently of spatial extension. Thus in the spiritual realm called Hurqalya, the corporeal dimension falls away.

12 "If we do intellect existence and judge that it is not existent, then the concept of existence is distinct from the concept of the existent." In: Suhrawardi, *The Philosophy of Illumination, Part One: The Third Discourse* (56) (Brigham Young University Press, 1999). If we imagine the deliberations about existence and existents in medieval scholasticism to be redundant pedantry, the importance of Suhrawardi, whose work illuminates theirs from the century prior to Thomas Aquinas, will escape us. We shall miss the point about thinking: that dwindling species, drought where there ought to be monsoon, famine, forced migration, acts of terror and riposte are the empirical evidence of fundamental error in an instrument we believe is far more advanced than any employed by our predecessors.

13 "In Bacon's understanding ... the aim of the new 'art of interpreting nature' was to (establish) 'the kingdom of man' over nature, but that aim depended on a foundation in an amoral and power-seeking self ... Bacon reduces truth to an instrument ... nobility to a hypocritical elite, goodness to a tool of the strong, magnanimity to rising to a great place, divinity to illusory wishing for a provider ... and, above all, intellect to ingenuity or invention". Robert K Faulkener, *Francis Bacon and the Project of Progress* (Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 1993).

Book Review

Mċr Qawĳm al-Dċn Rĳzċ Tĳhrĳnċ, 'Ayn al-ĳikma wa ta'ĳċqĳt DĒ risĳlah-yi falsafċ , ed. 'Aĳ Awĳabċ, Tehran: Kitĳbkhĳnah, MĒzah va markaz-i Asnĳd-i Majlis-i ShĒri-yi Islĳmċ, 1999 (1378 Shamsċ), pp. 194, paper, Rls. 13500.

The Research Centre of the Library of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran is busily producing major editions of important philosophical texts from the intellectual heritage of the later Islamic philosophical traditions in Iran. The present work is an example of such an edition of a fairly short introduction to philosophy and philosophical theology composed by Mċr Qawĳm al-Dċn Rĳzċ (d. 1093/1683), a figure in the Safavid school of apophatic philosophy founded by his teacher, Rajab 'Aĳ Tabrċzċ (d. 1080/1679). The work under review is part of a recent trend of publishing the major works of the students of Tabrċzċ. 1 Both the texts edited are elucidations of the philosophical positions of Tabrċzċ on issues of existence and its reference, hylomorphism, causation, soul and intellect and the scheme of emanation. Through an analysis of these works, we can begin to construct an accurate taxonomy of philosophical traditions in Islam.

Awĳabċ provides a useful introduction to a little known figure and his works. We know very little about him. Born in Tehran (probably Rayy), he moved to the capital of the Safavid Empire, Isfahan to further

his studies. Having trained in the Avicennan tradition at the famous Madrasah of Shaykh Luṣf Allīh, he then attached himself to Tabrīzī and came under his influence. Tabrīzī himself was a student of the enigmatic and itinerant philosopher and Sufi Mīr Abī'l-Qāsim Fīndīrīskī (d. 1050/1641). He soon established himself as an independent teacher of Avicennan texts albeit with an apophatic approach to the question of existence whether of contingents or the Necessary. One of his students, Shaykh Bahī' al-Dīn Gīlīnī was a well-known philosopher and taught Shaykh 'Alī 'azīn-i Līhījī (d. 1180/1766), the famous man of letters and philosopher who settled in Banaras in the early years of the British Empire in India.

As a philosophical method and approach the school of Tabrīzī reveals certain key doctrinal positions. First, on the question of the subject matter of metaphysics, contrary to the Aristotelian-Avicennan consensus, they reject being qua being as the subject and instead focus on another abstract term 'thing' (shay', res). Since being is no longer the focus of metaphysics, there can be no confusion between onto-theological and ontological understandings of 'being'. Theological concerns are thus utterly removed from philosophy. Second, on the status of the distinction between existence and quiddity in contingent beings and the primacy of one of these elements (a question that was first broached in the Safavid period), they defend an essentialist ontology whilst insisting that the term being is not devoid of meaning and reference (as the Illuminationists hold). Third, consonant with their apophatic theology, they insist that the semantics of being is purely homonymous (ishtirīk-i laf'ī). Being as a term applied to both the Necessary (God) and contingents does not have the same meaning but is merely a word shared by both. Awjābī speculates that the possible influence of Indian philosophy through the mediation of Fīndīrīskī may account for this, but that is difficult to prove. Fourth, following from the previous point, being does not undergo any gradation of meaning or reality contrary to the famous postulation of tashkīk al-wujūd in the philosophy of Mullī 'adī. 2 Fifth, converse to the Sadrian position, it is quiddity that undergoes gradation, intensification and weakening in its category. 3 Sixth, they deny that there is any such thing as mental existence. The epistemic process need not be explained with recourse to such a theory. 4 Seventh, they deny motion in the category of substance (much like the Avicennan tradition). Eighth, their essentialism extends to affirming that the subject of primordial creation is essence and not existence and that in the combination of existence and quiddity in contingents, both of these elements are independently realised (whilst in the Sadrian tradition, the union of the two activates the realisation through the impetus of receiving existence). Finally, in their philosophical theology, they are completely apophatic: nothing can be predicated of God, and one cannot talk meaningfully about God.

The first text, the *Essence of Philosophy*, was translated by the author himself into Persian, and has previously been edited (uncritically) by Sayyid Jalīlodīn 'ashtīyīnī. 5 The introduction, that discusses the subject matter of philosophy (read: metaphysics), is followed by twelve chapters on ontology, category theory, causation and psychology.

The second text, *Glosses* (Ta'līqī) is a series of comments upon philosophical positions of Tabrīzī written in Persian mainly on aspects of ontology and consistently in refutation of various positions in Sadrian philosophy. Both are edited in a scholarly fashion and the critical apparatus is available in the footnotes.

The edition of these two short epitomes on ontology is to be welcomed because historians of Islamic philosophy have all too easily accepted the hegemonic discourse of Sadrian philosophy. Safavid philosophy is much more than the (no doubt significant) work of the Shirazi, and an appreciation of this fact will force us ever more to talk about the plurality of philosophical traditions in Iran.

Sajjad H Rizvi

Bristol University, UK

S. Rosenbaum, *Understanding Biblical Israel: A Reexamination of the Origins of Monotheism*, Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2002

There are some excellent features to this book. The argument which Rosenbaum produces challenges the historical accuracy of the Jewish Bible. No doubt there were times when this would have been a radical thesis, and even today among some religious communities it remains controversial, but most commentators on the Bible accept that there are problems in believing in its literal truth, or at least in the literal truth of all of it. Rosenbaum goes through the Bible drawing analogies between biblical events and more recent happenings, and this works well, bringing down to earth, as it were, some of the activities and accounts that run through the text by comparing them to events that are very familiar to us. Anyone who reads the Bible will find the comments and observations here of great interest, and there is little in the text on which the author does not reflect in some way, he really does cover a lot of ground. Rosenbaum clearly has his finger on a vast amount of biblical scholarship, and the book wears it lightly, with the author using a scattergun approach rather than spending a lot of time and space on a particular topic.

There are problems with this approach, and one problem is in deciding for which audience this book is written. There is too little basic information about the thinkers and the theories he mentions for it to be suitable for the beginner, and too little analysis for the more advanced reader. The appropriate audience is the reader who has some grasp of the controversies surrounding the text and some access to the main levels of scholarship, but one wonders whether the speed at which Rosenbaum moves through the Bible will be entirely satisfactory for this sort of reader. She will certainly be surprised at some of the comments which Rosenbaum makes. For example, he claims that Jonah's refusal to go to Nineveh was a refusal to perform an action that was merely an inconvenience. Since Nineveh was at the heart of the enemy of the time, this cannot be quite right. Similarly, Rosenbaum claims that the Bible contravenes the basic rules of (Greek) logic, and that cannot be right either, since were that to be the case even more surprising events than those with which we are familiar would have been possible! These bring out the dangers of the approach he follows, his comments on Jonah are by way of a contrast with Abraham, who agrees to do something terrible (kill his son) by contrast with Jonah who was told to do something difficult, pace Rosenbaum, but not terrible. This is an interesting contrast, and one I had not thought of, but it is so briefly considered that it is difficult to know what the reader is supposed to make of it. The author is often too reticent to follow up his comments and develop them further. This does of course leave room for readers to work out for themselves what they think the consequences are, and that is refreshing.

Few readers will not be stimulated by the comments which Rosenbaum makes in this book. He is capable of explaining a very detailed philological point in a way that makes it accessible to the average reader, no mean feat, and the book clearly represents a long period of meditation on the text by the author. The analogies that he draws are often exciting and dazzling, and the complex interrelationship between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah are shown to have played a crucial role in the text. So there is plenty here on which to reflect. This is certainly not the first book the student should use when looking at the Bible, nor is it the last book, but its place is somewhere in the middle, and it will stimulate and

intrigue. On a more minor note, it has to be said that the absence of an index seriously detracts from the book's usefulness in this respect, and how a publisher can bring out a detailed text which makes extensive references to names and ideas without an index is remarkable. This point aside, Rosenbaum is to be congratulated for having produced such a lively survey of a significant topic.

Oliver Leaman

University of Kentucky, USA

Souâd Ayada, *Avicenne, (980-1037) (Philo-philosophes)*, Paris: Ellipses Edition, 2002, 80 p. 2-7298-0918-X, (In French).

To explain in only eighty pages the main features of the thought of a major philosopher is the arduous challenge taken up by the series *Philo-philosophes*. This series, intended primarily for students, provides the reader with an outline of the thought of each philosopher and a small anthology of selected texts. This is not an easy task to accomplish, and we have to be very grateful to Souâd Ayada to have taken this on.

The book is divided into three parts, following the usual scheme of the series. In the first part the salient traits of Avicennan thought are delineated. The second part consists of a selection of extracts from Avicenna's works. In the third part, a few words or concepts are explained.

The author chooses to start from the question of being as the central issue and the very base of Avicenna's thought, "*l'ontologie avicennienne s'achevant en une théologie politique qui prend la forme d'une politique prophétique*" (p. 7). Four chapters are thus defined: one on the question of being, a second on God and the world, a third on human souls, and a fourth on politics.

In the first chapter the emphasis is laid on *wujûd* as the proper subject-matter of metaphysics, and on the two fundamental distinctions between necessary and possible being and between essence and existence. The chapter entitled "God and the world" does not study the relationship between God and the world as such, as could be thought from its title, but intends more specifically to explain how what is other than God comes into being. It deals mainly with the Intelligences and the role of the Active Intellect. The chapter on souls opens with the answer given by Avicenna to the issue of the nature of the human soul. Then human intellection, the self, and individual salvation are considered. What is said about political issues in the fourth chapter rests mostly on the last part of the *Ilâhiyyât* of the *Shifâ'*. It ends with an account on the political role of the prophet.

The rather short texts brought together in the second part of the book are mainly excerpts from the *De Anima* and the *Ilâhiyyât* of the *Shifâ'*. Three passages are taken from the *Ilâhiyyât* of the *Shifâ'* on the subject-matter of metaphysics (Book I, ch. 2) and on the essence / existence distinction (Book I, ch. 5 and Book 8, ch. 4). Excerpts from the *De Anima* of the same work are about the thought experiment of the flying man (Book I, ch. 1) and prophetic imagination (Book IV, ch. 2). There is finally a passage from the *Dânesh-nâmeh* on intellectual felicity and two others from the *Ishârât*, one on the process of human intellection expressed in terms of the Lamp allegory of the Qur'an and the other on the stages of the *hukamâ'*. Ayada gives her own translation (except for the passage from the *Dânesh-nâmeh*, translated by Jambet) and a commentary to clarify the context and the issues at stake.

In the third part of the book, entitled “Vocabulaire”, a few words or concepts are explained. These are “soul” (nafs); “love” (‘ishq); “imagination” (khayâl, mutakhayyila); “matter” (hayûla and mâdda); “emanation” (sudûr); “wisdom” (hikma) and “salvation” (najât).

To summarize, this is an interesting book for beginners, although only introductory, but this is precisely what it is meant to be. One wonders however if the French bias of the bibliography would prevent this book from being a useful first step towards further study. Only French translations of the works of Avicenna and studies in French on Avicenna’s thought are mentioned. Important books written in other languages are thus left out. Why aren’t they even mentioned? This would have given the reader the opportunity to investigate a wider range of texts on Avicenna.

Cécile Bonmariage

Fonds National de la Recherche Scientifique, Belgium

Jacques Derrida, *Acts of Religion*, Ed. Gil Anidjar, New York: Routledge, 2002.

The essays compiled in *Acts of Religion* date from 1989 through 1997 although three of the essays are published here for the first time in 2002. Together they constitute a single body of work on religion, at least in the eyes of the editor, who writes an extensive introduction. Even without that premise, the only way to adequately comment on this diverse collection is by intertextual exegesis. Each of the essays in *Acts of Religion* can be regarded as key to decoding the others. Derrida’s most recent focus, both here and in current books and lectures, uses religion as its lexicon and thus provides us with a new entree to previously gnomic terminology. He proclaims, for example (in “Force of Law”), that “deconstruction is justice” and his well known term, “différance” can now be reworked to include the Abrahamaic irreducible and ununitable (except by graft) differing of the three religions, while the compound “judeo/protestant Platonism” supplements Derrida’s earlier and most famous term ‘logocentrism.’ A previously unpublished, essay “Hospitality” adds a new term to his lexicon as he universalises and deconstructs/ constructs that concept. Derrida, born in Algiers to a French-speaking Jewish family, was himself hosted, after all, by France, after what he here terms the “exodus” from Algiers. If nothing else, then, this book provides a valuable key, in another register, to both his autobiography and to his larger oeuvre.

In “Faith and Knowledge” perhaps the kingpin of the pieces, Derrida eschews the possibility that the thing itself – religion- could actually be deciphered due to the fact that “religion” itself is a term born in the lexicon of Latin/Romance languages. Here Derrida immediately strikes the theme which plays throughout these writings, that of the impossibility of interculturality or of a linguistic common denominator. The largest barrier to discussing religion, he claims, is “what religion at present might be, as well as what is said and done, what is happening at this very moment, in the world, in history, in its name.” This includes intellectual discourse particularly the “two lobes of the Judeo-Protestant Platonism.” The essay “Interpretations at War,” originally titled, “The Jewish-German Psyche: the Examples of Hermann Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig” (throw in Geshon Scholem, Buber, Kant, the Reformation, Kepler, the Enlightenment, Plato, Philo, the patriarch Luther, Nicolas of Cusa and Fichte for good measure) further qualifies this Judeo/Protestant axis of evil. It constitutes the veil of ontotheology

that has, he discusses, in the name of Renan, resulted in “Nation as a spiritual principle” with all its insidious implications.

In the essay, “Des Tours de Babel” Derrida writes his own Midrash on the divine law that resulted in the Tower of Babel of Genesis. Here the theme of the divine command and forbidding of translation is developed further and discussed in the name of Walter Benjamin whose work on intranslatability is well known. This theme (whose subtext may be the problems of interculturality) is supplemented in the essay “The Eyes of Language.” Here the secularisation of Hebrew, wherein the original sacred language is reworked to fulfill the Zionist dream of a pragmatic spoken Hebrew, is discussed in the names of Franz Rosenzweig and Gershom Scholem, whose correspondence forms a backdrop. Derrida recognises the sin that will ensue when “the sacred surrenders itself to translation”, when sacred writing, “which keeps the speech of God in trust” is violated by being desacralised.

The thoughts that Derrida puts forth in “Faith and Knowledge” may lie close to the heart of the “really real” toward which he reaches. Here he deconstructs nature and reason as standards for anything and places justice outside the law (which we find out in “The Force of Law” involves a double binding problematic viz. to preserve law violence (the death penalty etc.) must be at its core). Messianism without religion, an infinite justice “due to the other before any contract” seems to give revelatory truth a priority over reason (logocentrism). The proclamation “deconstruction is justice” casts a new light on earlier work and we wonder if the familiar deconstructive project has all along been hostage to a more sacred quest. Once again “religion” as we know it is termed globalatinisation – the Christian hegemony based on western abstractions etc. - the usual suspects of his canonical work on “différance” now wearing the vestments of religion. Like Maimonides in the Guide to the Perplexed Derrida rejects the deceptions provided by the “justice” of the philosophers, especially the Platonico-germanico-judeo sort. We recall that Maimonides had to counter a similar adversary when he prioritised “the law given by the highest prophet” as “absolutely superior to the philosophers’ law” 6 . Real justice, as Derrida points out in “Force of Law”, “does not wait” and “always remains a finite moment of urgency.... It must not be the consequence or the effect of...theoretical or historical knowledge”. It must precede “politico-ethico-juridico deliberations.”

If, on the other hand, “A Silkworm of one’s Own” is regarded as the key piece on this multi dimensional chess board, one could ask the question of whether Derrida’s secret is that he is the Marrano, the cryptic Jew who deconstructs ontotheology the same way that the Talmudists eschewed Greek wisdom. Does he deconstruct all naming the same way the pious Jew calls G-D “Ha Shem” (the name) to avoid naming? Perhaps Derrida’s so called negative theology is not as negative as previously thought. As Derrida deconstructs all the veils of illusion leaving only the silk Tallith (the cloak of faith) and the worm (both death and creation and we find out at the end of the essay phusis) by which it got there as his cover. He confesses to caressing it everyday while eschewing the “impotent theoretical knowledge about the truth of fetishism.” Here he adds Lacan to the Greco-Judeo-paulino-islamo-freudo-hedeiggeriano-Lacanian veil of illusion. In this essay, he associates “the law of the father” with the law of hospitality (343) and in the opposition veil/tallith it is the latter that is prioritised. The tallith recalls one to the law; his father took it across the Mediterranean at the “time of the exodus.” “One can never get rid of a tallith,” he says, not exactly the case with the veil which is a vehicle of separation, of the holy from the most holy in Exodus, and with the connotations of Islamic woman, Paul, the long digression on the eye operation on his friend, Hélène Cixous that both removed the veil to sight while complicating insight. The tallith like sacred language (“as meta-language”) is opaque and irreducible. Is the “verdict” he speaks about throughout the same as the Day of Atonement when divine justice supercedes speech?

Has Derrida all along been deconstructing only profane language and at the same time pointing at the ineffability of sacred language after G-d commanded Babel.

The final essay, "Hospitality", is yet another way to decode the larger oeuvre. This essay names the only possibility for intercultural reciprocity after the hope of all possibility of conceptual synchronicity or intercultural communication is dashed. After the tower of Babel and after two millennia of Graeco-Roman-Christian religions slash scientifico-technico capitalism. Here the key to the reading is Islam as his discussion in the name of Levinas gives way to one of Louis Massignon, the great Orientalist and the founder of a sect of Christianity which become hosted in the Muslim world. Hospitality is so much more direct than mutual understanding. Here he deconstructs and reconstructs all notions of hospitality, the visit, the visitation (wanted or unwanted), Arabic hospitality, extending oneself and withholding, forgiveness and the unforgivable (the Jew after Auschwitz)- the other, humanity, hospitality which elides into hostage and substitution, the hospitality refused to Islam in non-Islamic lands and the original triple hospitality of the universal paternity of Abraham (himself hosted in strange lands such as Palestine was to him at the outset). The triple Abrahamaic, plus the idea of substitution discussed by both Levinas and Massignon, now evokes for Derrida, the triple requirement of compassion, sacrifice, and expiation. Thus at the conclusion of this essay, that triad which supercedes the opposition generic/singular (read genealogy etc), evokes again, a justice beyond reason and the possibility of redemption (of difference) after Babel.

In his 1978 "Violence and Metaphysics" (1978) Derrida discusses the parricide of the Greek father that Plato alludes to in Parmenides. Derrida asks "But will a non-Greek ever succeed in doing what a Greek could not do except by feigning to speak Greek in order to get near the king." Acts of Religion helps answer the question of why Derrida's own writing is necessary when he so clearly disdains philosophical writing. Derrida takes key words of the western canon and problematizes them while at the same time removing the veils (such as ontotheology) that keep them from us. In these essays on religion, words like 'Justice', 'violence', 'law', 'forgiveness', 'hospitality' give up their meanings so that they can truly signify. In so doing, we see, once again, as always with Derrida, the activity of genius as it picks its way through the intellectual debris of western culture and dislodges the most difficult of the barriers to understanding.

Emilie Kutash

New York, USA

Boethius, *The Consolation of Philosophy*, trans. Richard H. Green, Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc. 2002. Pp.i-121.

This delightful classic by Boethius, scholar and public servant, has just been republished by Dover Publications who must be congratulated for making it available once again. The superb English translation is by Richard H. Green and his Introduction and Summary are also extremely helpful to the reader. It is difficult to restrain one's enthusiasm about this remarkable text that deals with so many issues familiar to students of philosophy and theology and to the general public at large. It is clear from reading it why this book became so influential right up to the Renaissance period and beyond and why it was so widely translated. It still remains valuable for the contemporary reader since it deals with the

perennial issues that concern all of us, the principal one being the subject of happiness and how and where it can be found.

Boethius' own personal experience, his superb grasp of classical philosophy and logic, his literary style, and his ability to capture his own experience of intense dejection and near-despair and to communicate this in dialogue form to the reader, all make this volume a work of major personal, political, philosophical and theological significance.

By any standards, the author's life was remarkable in itself. He lived in the 5th century C.E. and his father had been a consul and when he died about the time that Boethius was seven years of age, another wealthy and eminent Roman, Symmachus, adopted the boy. Boethius later married the daughter of Symmachus and in his thirties he became Roman consul. Boethius' two sons also distinguished themselves as consuls during their father's lifetime.

Boethius was highly educated in classical learning and translated and commented on classical texts of great significance. He translated major works in Aristotelian logic, wrote on music, mathematics, geometry, philosophy and theology. He is rightly seen as a watershed figure in that he transmitted through translations classical learning to the Christian medieval world and his major project which was never completed involved translating all the works of Plato and of Aristotle and demonstrating the similarities of thought in their writings.

He was a public servant who took his duties seriously and prosecuted political corruption where he found it and generally demanded high standards of moral integrity in the lives of those who held public office. At the time of his political downfall, he was Master of the King's Offices, one of the highest positions in the Western Empire. His dispute with Theodoric, King of the Ostrogoths, a Christian Arian (who did not therefore accept the divinity of Christ) and Roman Governor who ruled Christian Rome, was based on accusations of being disloyal and Boethius was certainly involved in trying to establish doctrinal and ecclesiastical unity between Eastern and Western Christianity which would inevitably have had political implications. As a result of the accusations, he was imprisoned and sentenced to death and it was during his imprisonment that *The Consolation of Philosophy* was written.

The text consists of five books written in alternating prose and poetry and takes the form of a dialogue between Philosophy who appears to Boethius as a majestic and wise woman, and the author. This clever literary device allows Boethius to intellectually explore his own predicament to try to find solutions to it from philosophy.

Book 1 opens with Boethius in a state of total dejection and near despair whose only comfort at this stage is poetry. However, Lady Philosophy reveals herself to him as the only true source of consolation. She reminds him of other philosophers who have suffered at the hands of wicked and stupid people but claims that the wise man can transcend good and bad fortune. She listens to Boethius cataloguing all the worthy things that he has done in the public service and like the Biblical Job, he laments his lot and wonders how this terrible situation has come about. Lady Philosophy diagnoses his dejection as being due to personal weakness and reminds him that we should not expect events to have a positive outcome simply because we behave in a morally upright manner. She takes it upon herself to teach and heal Boethius' state of mind by a therapy of dialogue and she reminds him that the world is not ruled by chance but by divine reason.

Book 2 begins with an analysis of Fortune who is described as a capricious goddess who gives and takes at will. Good fortune can seduce us into a habit of expecting this to continue whereas an unfortunate person realises how unstable Fortune really is. Philosophy reminds Boethius of all the good things in his past life for which he should be thankful and states that true happiness lies within and is based on the rational possession of oneself. She analyses the principal ways through which people seek happiness: wealth, honour, wealth, fame and pleasure and finds them all limited and flawed in terms of what they offer. There are some interesting resemblances here to Spinoza's Correction of the Understanding.

Book 3 is central to the principal theme and identifies God as the good and the source of perfect happiness. Book 4 discusses other problems that arise such as the existence of evil in a world ruled by God who is good. Criminals seem to prosper more than the just, claims Boethius. Life just isn't fair! Lady Philosophy replies by identifying the wicked as sick people in need of compassion and pity rather than hate and rejection. Punishment is good for them, she argues, since it serves as a cure for their condition. Boethius then observes that divine providence acts in strange ways and there follows a discussion on fate, God's foreknowledge of future events and human freedom. The solutions offered by Lady Philosophy to the problems that arise in relation to these issues aim to develop in Boethius a new way of seeing things so that, instead of expecting God to think the way that humans do, we should accept the reality of the divine order and wisdom about the way in which the universe is structured according to divine reason. There are anticipations of Leibniz here and also echoes of Job. The simplicity of divine knowledge is beyond our comprehension, argues Lady Philosophy; hence the confusion behind Boethius' questions.

Book 5 discusses divine providence and chance. The answer to the major problem that arises in relation to human freedom is answered by recognising that God who is wholly and eternally present sees all things as they occur so there is no dispute about whether God's foreknowledge diminishes human freedom. Book 5 ends with the exhortation to all that there is an obligation to act virtuously since everything is done in the sight of the divine Judge who sees all things and rewards or punishes accordingly.

The Consolation of Philosophy is also remarkable in that its author who is a Christian makes no reference to Christ or to explicit Christian teaching in any place in the volume. Some, like Bertrand Russell in his History of Western Philosophy have wondered whether Boethius was a Christian at all or whether he might have lost or given up the faith during his imprisonment.

The text is certainly predominantly Neoplatonic in tone and fits very much into the area of philosophy now known as the philosophy of religion. It also constitutes an important treatise on ethics and the moral life and ranks beside the Apology and Plato's Phaedo as a work of major significance on the ultimate issues that confront many of us when we think about death and the meaning of life. It is also very suitable reading for an Introduction to Philosophy course, despite the sophisticated level of discussion that occurs in the text especially in Books 4 and 5. Last but not least, it is a marvellous read and engages the attention from beginning to end.

Patrick Quinn

All Hallows College, Ireland.

'Alç Awjabç (ed), Ganjçnah-yi Bahjristin: mikmat I, Tehran: Kitjbxhjah, MEzih va Markaz-i Asnid-i Majlis-i ShErj-yi Isljmç, 2000 (1379 Shamsç), Persian & Arabic Text with English Preface, pp. xxxvii + 524, paper.

The Library of the Islamic Consultative Assembly in Tehran hosts a large and valuable manuscript collection of works relating to the intellectual disciplines and products of Islamic civilisation. One of the major projects funded by the Library is to present the fruits of research among its manuscripts and popularise and inform the wider public about the written heritage available to scholars. A result of this has been the recent editions and publications of manuscripts, some of which are short treatises. The Ganjčnah publications represent editions of collected shorter treatises arranged under subject headings of which there are eight ranging from Quranic studies to Persian literature. As part of the 'heritage industry' that is presently churning out volumes of works both in Arabic and Persian in Iran, it aims as a veritable revival of the intellectual and collection heritage of Iran in the Islamic period. The work under review is the first volume in a projected series of editions of short treatises (*raŕi'il*) on the subject of philosophy, philosophical theology and philosophy of mysticism. This range of subjects all under the heading of *'ikmat* reveals the complex multivalence of 'philosophy' in the later Iranian traditions, in which different intellectual discourses combined to develop an enhanced genre of argument and speculation that comprised ratiocinative inquiry with mystical insight and a concern for the demands of a rational theology. The project is a major contribution to textual studies of Islamic philosophy and provides specialists with more texts upon which they can draw, the raw material for further detailed investigations and inquiry into rational speculation in the Islam tradition. It is only once that we have taken stock of the wealth of materials available to us and understood their chronological relationship to each other and undertaken the philological and 'archaeological' research necessary, can we begin to construct a serious and sophisticated history of Islamic philosophy (and more generally, thought). Much of the production of later Islamic philosophers remains in manuscript and hence any attempts at editing them and making them available to specialists is to be welcomed.

The 18 treatises, most of which have been edited here for the first time, are divided into logic (*manŕiq*), philosophy (*falsafah*), philosophical theology (*kalım*) and mysticism (*'irfın*). The texts include works by early philosophers such as al-Kindı (d. ca. 866) and Miskawayh (d. 1030) as well as later commentators such as Mullı 'Alı Nırcı (d. 1836). The editor of each treatise introduces the text, giving details about the research, manuscript tradition, and intellectual and biographical context of the work. The critical apparatus is provided in the footnotes and facsimiles of folios from the manuscripts are appended at the end of the volume. The texts have been edited on the basis, mainly, of manuscripts stored at the Library of the Islamic Consultative Assembly.

The first section on logic comprises three texts edited by Awjabı. The first text is a short epitome in Persian entitled *Manŕiq-i Ŕughrı*, authored by the famous Timurid scholar Sayyid Sharıf 'Alı al-Jurjinı (d. 816/1413), who wrote a longer introduction to logic (*Manŕiq-i kubrı*) that was studied in seminaries. The text is divided into a short introduction on the nature of knowledge, and two brief chapters on definition and proof theory (*mabı 'ıth-i dalı*). The presentation of the syllogistic and its figures is excruciatingly brief and yet masterful in its coverage. The second text is merely an Arabic translation of the first by al-Jurjinı's son Mırcı Shams al-Dıcnı entitled *al-Durrah*. The third text is a medium length *risıla* in Arabic commenting upon the *Isagoge* penned by Athırcı al-Dıcnı al-Abharı (d. 663/1265). The genre is of great significance for appreciating the development of semantic theory in Islamic thought and represents the critical nexus of logic and metaphysics that is so typical of Islamic philosophy. Little is known about the author of this commentary, a certain *'usım al-Dıcnı 'asan Kıtı* (d. ca. 760/1359). The work covers discussions of the five predicables, definition and proof theory and the theory of denomination and signification.

The second section includes five works on philosophical topics. The first of these is a short Arabic treatise on the proof for God's unity, *al-Ibina 'an wa'diniyyat Allah* by the famous philosopher of the Arabs, al-Kindi. The text is prefaced by a scholarly introduction by the editor Ghulim Rixi Jamshid Nazhid. The cosmological proof (taken from the tradition of commentaries on Aristotle's *Physics*) in the text bears a strong resemblance, in a more explicit form, to the proof provided in al-Kindi's *Fal-falsafa al-ili*. In terms of the arrangement of the volume, it is not clear to me why this was not placed in the section on philosophical theology. The second text is an ethical discussion by Miskawayh of the pursuit of eudaimonia entitled *Tartib al-sa'idat wa manzil al-ulm*. This is followed by a Persian translation of Avicenna's *Risala fi'l-nafs*. The section is concluded with two Arabic texts by the early Safavid philosopher and representative of the 'school of Shiraz', M'r Ghiyath al-Din Man'ir Dashtak (d. 948/1542). The first of these is a treatise on the physical theory of atoms and bodies. The second is a significant commentary on the onto-theology of Avicenna's encyclopaedic *al-Shif'*. Entitled *Shif' al-qulb*, it is particularly interesting for its discussion of the problem of predicating non-existence (*al-'adam*). The semantics of non-existence and the discussion of fallacies/paradoxes such as the Cretan Liar's seem to have been central to the metaphysical debates of the late Timurid and early Safavid period as this text indicates.

The third section on philosophical theology collects five texts. The first of these, which has been previously edited (or rather transcribed in the nineteenth century lithograph collection of his treatises), is ascribed to the Safavid philosopher Mulli 'adri. It is an Arabic discussion of the nature of the relationship of contingent beings and the Necessary Existent (*Kayfiyyat ma'iyat al-wajib bi'l-mawj'ud al-mumkinah*), defending a Sufi position on the unity of existence. The editor, Khad'jah Muqaddas-zidah, suggests that since the treatise represents an essentialist ontology that 'adri rejected, its ascription to him is doubtful and proffers the name of Ni'im al-Din Dashtak (d. 1085/1676), also a student of M'r Djimid (d. 1040/1631) and an essentialist as the real author.⁷ The text contains quotations from famous Sufi thinkers such as al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111) and contains explanations and glosses in Persian suggesting a more popular and perhaps Sufi context for the text's composition and performance. The second text is an extremely brief creedal statement (*Risala-yi itiqad*) in Arabic by the polymath Na'ir al-Din al-Isfahani (d. 1274). Since it has been edited previously and does not add much to our understanding of this figure or indeed of the genre, it is not obvious why it has been included. The third work is a brief Arabic discussion of the relationship between divine and human agency and the possibility of free will by M'r Djimid. Not surprisingly, the author presents a compatibilist position couched in strongly Neoplatonic language on the nature of good and evil. The next piece is a set of 35 questions and response in Persian addressed to Mulli 'Al' N'ir (d. 1836) on topics such as the nature of the soul, the nature of heaven, and dimension of the 'mundus imaginalis'. The final text in this section is a Persian Shi'i discussion of eschatology (*ma'id*).

The final section on mysticism brings together five treatises. The first of these is an Arabic collection of homiletic aphorisms (*na'i'i*) of the Sufi shaykh Najm al-Din Kubri (d. 540/1221), the eponymous founder of a Sufi order named after him. The edition by Awjab is based possibly on a unique manuscript. The second text by the famous Andalusian Sufi Ibn 'Arab (d. 1240) is a short Arabic treatise entitled *'aq'at al-'aqi'iq*. It argues for a mystical and intuitive experience of God and His attributes and expounds a hermeneutic of microcosmic and theomorphic man as the mirror of reality and meaning in this world. Three texts in Persian follow. The first on mystical theology by the thirteenth century proto-Kubrawi (and arguably Shi'i) Sufi Sa'd al-Din 'am'ayah (or 'am'') is entitled *La'if al-taw'ud f' ghar'ib al-tafrid*. The editor, Bih'z «mjn, indicates the significance of this Sufi, providing a bio-bibliography, and in discussing his theological affiliation suggests that he was probably a Sunni Shifi'

but with strong Shi'i and even °ur£fç tendencies. 8 The text itself utilises Avicennan philosophical language that had become naturalised in theology and betrays no sign of any Shi'i bent. The final two texts are allegorical dialogues on the nature of beauty written by two little known authors of the Timurid period, Ya|yi Nçship£rç and Mu|ammad Fuæ£Iç. Neoplatonic in theme, they represent tales of the soul's journey and reversion to the One through the pursuit of the beatific vision and experience.

My one main quibble with the production is that the introductions whilst presenting the methodology of editing in a satisfactory manner and providing the basic biographical details, on the whole, fail to contextualise fully the significance of the works before us. The mere existence or survival of a text in a manuscript does not in itself signal its importance. Furthermore, if details about the provenance of the manuscripts and their tradition were provided, it would certainly enhance our understanding of the development of Islamic philosophical traditions in Iran. The texts themselves are adequately edited and as a whole do signify a contribution to the study of Islamic thought.

Sajjad H Rizvi

Bristol University, UK

Hamid Algar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, New York: Islamic Publications International, 2002, pp. 96, \$12.95, ISBN 1-889999-31-8.

This entertaining little booklet reads like a primary source. Algar is clear in his thesis (which is stated rather than proven): Wahhabism, whilst owing its emergence to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's fury at innovation, is itself an innovation when viewed from the perspective of the Muslim tradition. The text is littered with caustic asides against Wahhabism's founder and supporters, and Algar is easily distracted from his central thesis, as he diverts his attention to matters tangential to the central aim of the piece. In the second section, a biography of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, Algar is diverted, and returns to the purpose of the section on two occasions, almost apologizing to the reader for the digressions. The first digression is a critique of the Wahhabi rejection of Muslim intellectual advances since the "Golden Age", and the second is an extensive refutation of the assertion that Wahhabism has anything in common with other early modern reformist movements. Algar is fond of including quite irrelevant detail which he believes will enlighten the reader. For example, the mention of hadith in which Najd compares unfavorably with Syria and Yemen cannot be said to be connected with the rise of Wahhabism (p.5); connection between Lawrence's death and the failure of Sharif Husayn to gain political hegemony is similarly fanciful (p.41). Algar's condemnation of Wahhabism is sometimes indicated by the insertion of a single word; for example, "A brief digression on what charitably might be termed the scholarly output of Ibn Wahhab" (p.14). At other times, he cannot resist inserting an ironic sentence; after a matter-of-fact Wahhabi description of the occupation of Karbala, Algar writes "All in a day's work, it seems." (p.25). The final section begins, "It will be abundantly clear to the attentive reader that the present writer has little liking or sympathy for Wahhabism." (p.67). One feels Algar may have over-estimated the qualities needed to discern his position. It is clear from the first page that the booklet is a polemic against Wahhabism. It contains many interesting and informative observations, but it remains a "critical" essay in only one sense of the term. The most interesting sections, from an academic perspective, are the appendices, where translations of a few paragraphs of contemporary, or near-contemporary, sources to Ibn Abd alWahhab's rise to power are presented.

Robert M. Gleave

University of Bristol, U

Notes

1 Such as Qıxç Sa'cd Qummç (d.1107/1696): Shar'ı Taw'ıcd al-adfıq, ed. Najafqulç mabçbç, 3 vols., Tehran: Vizırat-i Irshıd, 1374-6 Shamsç; Shar'ı al-arba'çn, ed. Najafqulç mabçbç, Tehran: Mçrjth-i MaktEb, 1379 Shamsç; al-Arba'çniyyit, ed. Najafqulç mabçbç, Tehran: Mçrjth-i MaktEb, 1381 Shamsç; and 'Alçqulç ibn Qarıçghı'ç Khın (d. 1091/1681): İ'ıyı'-yi °ikmat, ed. Fıřimah Fanı', 2 vols., Tehran: Mçrjth-i MaktEb, 1377-8 Shamsç.

2 Rızç, Ta'lçqıt in Df Risilah, 146-47.

3 Rızç, Ta'lçqıt in Df Risilah, 153.

4 Rızç, Ta'lçqıt in Df Risilah, 161-62.

5 ashtıyınç (ed). Muntakhabıç az ıthır-i 'ıukami'-yi ilıhç-yi «rıñ, rpt., Qum: Markaz-i İntıřırıt-i daftar-i Tablçghıt-i İslımç, 1378 Shamsç, II, 450-92.

6 Ralph Lerner. Moses Maimonides. In History of Political Philosophy, Ed Leo Straauss and Joseph Cropsey, Chicago: U. of Chicago Press, 1987, 239.

7 Interestingly, it is this same figure who is probably the author of a Risıla fç'l-wujEd attributed to Mullı adrı and edited by °ımid Nıjç İřfahınç in a collection of his treatises published in 1996.

8 For a rejection of his Shi'ism, see Jamal Elias, 'The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad' Iranian Studies 27 (1994).

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