

Hossein Ziai

NŪR AL-FU'ĀD, A NINETEENTH-
CENTURY PERSIAN TEXT IN
ILLUMINATIONIST PHILOSOPHY
BY SHIHĀB AL-DĪN KUMĪJĀNĪ

Seyyed Hossein Nasr's well-known pioneering studies on the great Iranian philosopher, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, have helped demonstrate the continuation of philosophical discourse within Islamic philosophy after Avicenna. In his seminal work, *Three Muslim Sages*, as well as in his numerous articles, Nasr has made major contributions to the analysis and explication of Suhrawardī's Illuminationist philosophy. In part due to Nasr's careful and penetrating studies we are now in a better position to revise the earlier Orientalist view that Islamic philosophy ends with Averroes, and that the spirit of free philosophical analysis and discourse ceases to exist after the end of the twelfth century. On the contrary, Islamic philosophy after Avicenna is developed in ways even more innovative than before, where the earlier dominant Greek element is transformed within new reconstructed holistic systems with their own distinguishing characteristics. There are many such distinguishing components of post-Avicennan developments in Islamic philosophy, specifically in the Illuminationist system (some will be discussed later in this essay). Foremost is the principle position of "knowledge by presence" (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) as a unified epistemological theory which is capable of describing types of knowing, including the obtaining of primary principles. Also the Illuminationist theory of light and vision, and the principle ontological position of the "sameness of knowing and being" rank among the technical refinements specifically of the Illuminationist system. As demonstrated in the works of such scholars as H. Corbin, S. H. Nasr, S. J. Ashtiyani, M. Ha'iri Yazdi, Gh. H. Dinani-Ibrahimi, S. J. Sajjadi, J. Walbridge, M. Aminrazavi, and others, the main conduit for post-Avicennan developments in Islamic Philosophy has been Suhrawardī's

Suhrawardī's holistic reconstructed system named "Philosophy of Illumination." The epistemology of knowledge by presence serves to distinguish the new system from the earlier Avicennan Peripatetic philosophy.

Soon after his execution in Aleppo in 1191, Suhrawardī's innovative philosophical work was hailed as a major achievement and he was bestowed with the epithet "founder" of the new system and given the title "Master of Illumination" (Shaykh al-Ishrāq). Foremost among the thirteenth-century philosophers who wrote commentaries on Illuminationist texts was Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī, author of *Sharḥ Hikmat al-Ishrāq*. The Illuminationist tradition became widely recognized as the second school of Islamic philosophy (after Avicenna's Peripatetic), and following Shahrazūrī, thinkers such as Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Sa'd b. Maṣṣūr Ibn Kammūnah (thirteenth century); Qiyās al-Dīn Maṣṣūr Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries); Nizām al-Dīn Harawī (sixteenth century); and Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī (seventeenth century), among others, wrote extensive commentaries on Illuminationist texts. The last great Illuminationist work is recognized to be Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's *al-Ta'līqāt 'alā sharḥ hikmat al-ishrāq*. However, considerable further research is required in order to ascertain the nature and extent of texts composed in the Illuminationist tradition after the seventeenth century. The discovery of the manuscript of the text *Nūr al-fu'ād*, here introduced for the first time, is a clear indication that during the nineteenth-century Illuminationist texts were studied and independent works were written in this tradition.

During my research on Arabic and Persian manuscripts of UCLA's Special Collections I have discovered a unicom autograph Persian manuscript titled *Nūr al-fu'ād* written by the nineteenth-century Illuminationist philosopher, Shihāb al-Dīn Kumījānī.¹ The author is reported to have been a strict follower of the Illuminationist school and was given the title "The Second Master of Illumination," which is of historical significance indicating the status of Illuminationist philosophy as a living tradition in the nineteenth century. The work is an original and engaging Illuminationist text of a period in Islamic philosophy which has remained mainly neglected in Western scholarship. The author, Kumījānī, was one of Hādī Sabziwārī's students for nearly two decades in the city Sabzivār in northeastern Iran. The author's full name, as it appears in the manuscript, and also reported by Manuchehr Saduqi in his pioneering study of post Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn philosophers in Iran, *Tārīkh-i ḥukamā' wa 'urafā'-i muta'akhhir bar Ṣadr al-Muta'allihīn* is: Shihāb al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Mūsā al-Buzshallū'ī al-Kumījānī with the title "The [Second] Master of Illumination" as reported by Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar.² The style and contents of the text plus the author's presumed title are clear indications of the significance of Illuminationist philosophy in nineteenth-century Iran.

innovative, and on occasion creative philosophical text is important for several reasons, some philosophical per se, and some of relevance to the study of nineteenth-century intellectual history of Iran. Given the Orientalist view that creative philosophy suddenly died out altogether after Avicenna in eastern Islam, such fresh discoveries will help the new revisionist trends in Islamic philosophy. These trends address philosophical problems systematically, and this point is evident in the present text here introduced. Kumījānī's text is testimony to the fact that philosophy in the eastern lands of Islam did not die, nor did it deteriorate to some kind of ill-defined "sagesse oriental." There has been, it seems at this point, a continuous line of creative thinkers who kept the creative endeavor of philosophy alive; and this activity found a renewed energy in nineteenth-century Iran.

The text *Nūr al-fu'ād* is written in an elegant philosophical Persian, it is replete with standard Illuminationist terminology, but also introduces a number of new technical terms. The text itself is divided into four main chapters with the heading "*Ishrāq*" (Illumination); with further divisions in each chapter under the heading "*Tajallī*" (Manifestation); with a few lemmas and corollaries added. In what follows I will present a synopsis of the text's contents:

THE FIRST ISHRĀQ

Introduction; discussion of methodology of Illuminationist philosophy named "the science of lights" (*ilm al-anwār*); and establishing the priority of knowledge by presence.

Tajallī I

A correspondence is shown between demonstrated science (that is, deductive metaphysics) and the purely empirical—the sense-data prior to demonstration. Here a most significant methodological principle informing of Illuminationist "realist" principles is discussed.

Tajallī II

Light is self-evident and cannot be known by definition and is known by "sight" which informs of the Illuminationist epistemological principle of the correspondence of *mushāhada* and *ibṣār*.

THE SECOND ISHRĀQ

On the reality of light and the sameness (*'ayniyyat*) of light with the sequence of all existent entities.

Tajallī I

Examines the term “Allāh.”

Tajallī II

Discusses the stated main purpose of the work which is analysis of the proposition sameness (*‘ayniyyat*) of the essence light with each and every existent entity in reality. The discussion informs us of the sameness of knowing and being from the perspective of Illuminationist principle epistemological and ontological views.

Tajallī III

To know light is to see light. The Illuminationist ontological position is that “light” is the most well-known real thing and cannot be known primarily by the construction of essentialist definitions. Epistemological priority is given to knowledge by presence when established by the “Illuminationist relation” (*idāfah ishrāqiyyah*) between the knowing subject and the manifest object in durationless time.

THE THIRD ISHRĀQ

On Platonic Forms.

Tajallī I and II

Makes the distinctions among Form, image, and paradigm.

Lemma I

The epistemology of unified vision requires the proper functioning of the subject as instrument (say, eye); visibility of object (say, lit entity); and the medium (say, light). Relational, identity preserving correspondence between subject and object is thus defined.

Lemma II and III

On the Illuminationist theory of sight and vision.

This part of the text is indicative of one of Illuminationist philosophy’s significant principles regarding the unified theory of knowledge and incorporates a rather novel view of physical sight. From the Illuminationist perspective, theories of the natural philosophers, Peripatetics, and others are discussed and mostly rejected: the corporeality of rays (*jismiyyat al-shu ‘ā’*), the view that holds rays to be colors (*lawniyyat al-shu ‘ā’*), and the theory

which holds that sight (*ibṣār*) takes place solely because rays leave the eye and meet (*yulāqī*) objects of sight, are all rejected. The Illuminationist also rejects the view that the act of “sight” takes place when the form of the thing (*ṣūrat al-shay'*) is imprinted in the “vitreous humour” (*al-ruṭūbat al-jalīdiyya*). Illuminationists argue that “vision” has no temporal extension, so there is no need for a material relation (*rābiṭat*) between the “seer” and the “thing seen,” which means that “sight” or “vision” are prior to syllogistic deductive reasoning and superior to it. The mechanism which allows for the subject to be “illuminated” is a complicated one and involves a certain activity on the part of the faculty of imagination. When an object is “seen,” the subject has acted in two ways: by an act of vision and an act of illumination. Thus, vision-illumination is actualized when no obstacle intervenes between the subject and the object. This general theory of vision requires the description of reality as a continuum. Let us explain further: This world of sense-data is a “segment” continuous with and in the whole, wherein its locus time is the usual Peripatetic time as measure, and space as the extended—Euclidean, to put it simply. But, as the “subject” moves away from the center of this segment, nearing the boundaries with the non-corporeal segment, strange things begin to happen. This is when the subject actually “enters” the intermediary realm—a “boundary” realm—called “*ālam al-khayāl*,” or “*ālam al-mithāl*,” which is as real as the other segments, all of them part of the existing whole as continuum. As in all immense (qualitative) and critical changes associated with boundary-value problems (that is, $1/x$, as x nears the “boundary” zero), things: time, space, motion, shape, and so on, rapidly and suddenly change. This is a wondrous, amazing realm, *Hūr qalyā dhāt al-'ajāyib*, but the fundamental principles and mechanisms that regulate things remain the same. For example as with sight in the corporeal, in the “boundary” realm, “visions” take place where the subject, whose material body has changed qualitatively to an “Imagined, or Formal” one (*badan khayālī aw mithālī*) will move in a time-frame, not as measure, from “here” to “there” in a different space where no longer the shortest distance between the two points “here” and “there” is necessarily the single straight line between them—rather “here” is some other kind of space which we may name non-Euclidean.

THE FOURTH ISHRĀQ

On cosmology and generation.

Tajallī I and II

Discusses the effects of Heavenly principles on existent entities in the sub-Lunar realm.

Illuminationist Corollary

Relates Shī'ah principles regarding *Imāmat* and *Vilāyat* (*Wilāyat*) to Illuminationist cosmological and epistemological principles.

The treatise is fraught with Illuminationist technical terminology, but more significantly a number of the basic Illuminationist principles that clearly distinguish this system from the Peripatetic are presented, discussed, and in a few cases, philosophically refined. Perhaps the most technically refined philosophical argument is where Kumījānī elaborates the idea of “sameness” between subject and predicate, and/or substance and attribute said of specific constructed and formulated propositions that relate to primary principles, and from the distinctly Illuminationist perspective, between “light” (*nūr*) as subject, and “evidence” (*zuhūr*)/“presence” (*ḥudūr*), as attribute, or object. The discussion of the related epistemology of knowledge by presence also serves further to confirm the distinct Illuminationist nature of the text *Nūr al-fu'ād*. I will later discuss the distinguishing Illuminationist epistemology in more detail. Before doing so, however, it is important to examine views concerning the position and nature of schools of Islamic philosophy, thus to recognize and confirm the place of the text *Nūr al-fu'ād* as an Illuminationist text.

It is generally accepted that Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī's interpretations of Islamic philosophy have played the dominant role in scholastic centers in Iran from the seventeenth century to the present. Therefore, it is against his views that Kumījānī's position will be gauged.

While the development of philosophy in Iran from the thirteenth to the seventeenth century has not yet been systematically studied, one of the main characteristics of this period that can be identified is its fundamentally non-Aristotelian “attitude” to philosophical investigation and construction. This also serves to characterize Illuminationist philosophy. This “attitude” is explained by Mullā Ṣadrā in his *al-Asfār al-arba'ah* in terms of the divisions within philosophy. He makes specific references to many works he designates “Illuminationist,” such as Ibn Kammūnah's *Commentary on the Intimations* (*al-Tanqīhāt fī sharḥ al-talwīhāt*), Shahrāzūrī's *Commentary on the Philosophy of Illumination* and his *al-Shajarat al-Ilāhiyyah*, as well as others. The references are notably to be found in the *Asfār* where Mullā Ṣadrā discusses problems taken from logic, physics, epistemology, metaphysics, and eschatology, in relation to which he carefully delineates the philosophical positions of the various “schools.”

One of the many such specific references is the following taken from Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*: *al-safar al-thālith: fī al-'ilm al-ilāhī: al-*

mawqif al-thālith: fī 'ilmihi ta 'ālā: al-faṣl al-rābi': fī tafṣīl madhāhib al-nās fī 'ilmihi bi-al-ashyā'. Here Mullā Ṣadrā distinguishes seven schools of thought, four philosophical, two “theological,” and a “mystical” (the latter combining ‘*irfān* and *taṣawwuf*). This is typical of Mullā Ṣadrā’s classification of the history of philosophy, theology, and mysticism, and also reflects an earlier, albeit incomplete, classification found in Shahrazūrī’s *al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah* three centuries before the composition of the *Asfār*. Only the four philosophical “schools”—referred to as *madhhab*—need concern us here, for the theological and the mystical fall outside of the domain of philosophy proper. The four in Mullā Ṣadrā’s order are:

1. “The school of the followers of the Peripatetics (*madhhab tawābi' al-mashshā'in*).” Included in this category are the “two masters” (*al-shaykhān*) al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Followers of the two masters such as Bahmanyār (Avicenna’s famous student and author of *al-Taḥṣīl*), Abū al-'Abbās al-Lawkaī, and “many later Peripatetics” (*kathīr min al-muta'akhhirīn*) are also included in this group. Mullā Ṣadrā’s group “later Peripatetics” is confined to philosophers in Islam, but al-Kindī is not included. The philosophical position of this group concerning being is called “primacy of being” (*aṣālat al-wujūd*); adherents of this school are said to uphold the principle of the eternity of the world (*qidam*); they are said to reject bodily resurrection and posit that the soul is separated from the body, but their position is said to be unclear on the question of the immortality of the individual soul. Of their views Mullā Ṣadrā only accepts the ontological principle of the “later Peripatetics.”

2. “The school of the Master Shihāb al-Dīn [Suhrawardī] al-Maqtūl, follower of the Stoics (*madhhab shaykh atbā' al-riwāqīyyah Shihāb al-Dīn al-Maqtūl*), and those who follow him, such as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Kammūnah, al-'Allāmah [Quṭb al-Dīn] al-Shīrāzī, and Muḥammad al-Shahrazūrī, author of *al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah*.” The addition of the attribution “Stoic” to the Illuminationist school appears in many places in the *Asfār*. However, concerning certain “novel” philosophical issues, such as the distinction between the idea of “intellectual form” (*al-ṣūrat al-'aqliyyah*) and the idea of “archetypal form” (*al-ṣūrat al-mithālīyyah*)—the latter also as “the idea shape,” or “imagined shape”—Mullā Ṣadrā is careful to use only the attribution “Illuminationist.” In general the epithet “Stoic” is added to the Illuminationist designation only in conjunction with questions that relate to logic and physics, but in matters that pertain to epistemology, cosmology, and eschatology, “Illuminationist” is used alone. Among the central doctrines of this “school” is said to be the position that upholds the real existence of the forms of things outside the mind (*al-qawl bi-kawn wujūd ṣuwar al-ashyā' fī al-khārij*), be the things corporeal or not (*mujarradāt aw*

māddiyyāt), or simple or not (*murrakabāt aw basā'it*). As I have explained elsewhere, this type of a “realism” is a cornerstone of the philosophy of illumination.

3. “The school attributed (*al-mansūb*) to Porphyry, the First of the Peripatetics (*muqaddam al-mashshā'in*), one of the greatest followers of the First Teacher.” It should be noted that the reference to Aristotle in relation to Porphyry includes views of “Aristotle” of the *Uthulūjiyā*, i.e., to Plotinus. Among the views associated with this “school,” their view of the “unity” (*ittihād*) of the intelligible forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ma'qūlah*) with God, and through the Active Intellect with a “select” number of humans, is considered central to their philosophical belief (*'aqīdah*). Aristotle himself is not always associated with a “school,” but is deemed an exemplum against whom every philosophical position is to be judged.

4. “The school of the divine Plato.” It is possible that Mullā Ṣadrā here means Plato himself and not a “school of thought” that may have continued after him. I so surmise from his statement: *mā dhahaba ilayhi Aflātūn al-ilāhīyyah*. The distinction would indicate an attempt on the part of Mullā Ṣadrā to define the philosophical position of Plato himself as distinct from later syncretic texts designated “Platonic.” For example, Mullā Ṣadrā in the *Asfār* (Vol III: 509), clearly attempts to refer specifically to Plato himself by stating “*qāla Aflātūn al-sharīf*,” and not as elsewhere “*fī madhhab al-aflātūniyyah*.” The central philosophical doctrine here is said to be the “objectified” reality of the Separate Forms (*al-ṣuwar al-mufāraqah*) and the Intelligible Platonic Forms (*al-muthul al-'aqliyyat al-aflātūniyyah*), a position upheld strongly by Mullā Ṣadrā, who adds that in reference to this position God’s knowledge of all existent entities (*'ilm Allāh bi-al-mawjūdāt kulluhā*) is proven.

The “second school” of philosophy here mentioned, namely the Illuminationist, is distinguished from the other schools in every philosophical domain: methodology and the division of the sciences, logic, ethics and political philosophy, physics, metaphysics and eschatology. This school’s main philosophical position, as examined and identified by Mullā Ṣadrā throughout the *Asfār*, gives it a distinct position in the history of philosophy. The main philosophical position may be outlined as follows: Philosophical construction is founded on a primary intuition of time-space, and visions and personal revelations are valid epistemological processes. Knowledge by presence is considered prior to predicative knowledge, and the separate intellects (*al-'uqūl al-mujarradah / al-'uqūl al-mufāraqah*) are considered multiple, and said to be uncountable (*bi-lā nihāyah*). The ontological position of this school is one designated “primacy of quiddity” (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*), which, briefly stated, holds “existence” (*wujūd*) to be a derived

This “realist” position is one of the most essential overall features of Mullā Ṣadrā’s characterization of the Illuminationist position, which he also discusses in great detail in his *al-Ta’līqāt (Glosses on Hikmat al-ishrāq)*. Intensity, or its lack (more and less) is considered an attribute of categories, in which motion does enter—a view itself related to Mullā Ṣadrā’s own notion of transubstantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah*). The immortality of the soul and its “ranks” after separation from the body is a fundamental eschatological position of this school. The Platonic Forms are considered objectified, and the *mundus imaginalis* of Illuminationist cosmology is considered a separate realm whose existence is attested by experience.

Finally, metaphysics is divided into two parts: *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*, which was so indicated for the first time in the history of Islamic philosophy systematically by Shahrazūrī in his *al-Shajarat al-ilāhiyyah*. The Illuminationist treatment of *metaphysica specialis* (*al-ilāhī bi-ma’na al-akḥaṣṣ*) gradually departs from the Avicennan view of a pure ontology (*wujūd bi-mā huwa wujūd*) and includes discussion of such subjects as mystical states and stations, love, secrets of dreams, prophecy, sorcery and the arts of magic. Though we may characterize this philosophical attitude as Platonist, which it is in many essential ways, it is best described as a “new” non-Aristotelian philosophical constructivist endeavor. The problems discussed from the distinct perspective of Illuminationist philosophy, taken together, overturn the foundation of the Aristotelian scientific method, the imprint of early Islamic philosophy, and pave the way for every major philosophical (and gnostic) reconstruction culminating with the seventeenth-century Transcendental Philosophy (*al-Hikmat al-muta’āliyah*) of Mullā Ṣadrā himself. Regarding all of the above stated philosophical positions, *Nūr al-fu’ād* must be indeed seen as a distinctly Illuminationist text.

Mullā Ṣadrā’s view of the Illuminationist methodology of philosophy may be further summed up as follows. This philosophy posits that philosophical construction is founded on a primary intuition of time-space, and that visions and personal revelations are valid epistemological processes. Illuminationist philosophy, Mullā Ṣadrā surmises, holds that knowledge by presence (*al-’ilm al-ḥudūrī*) is prior to predicative knowledge (*al-’ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*), and he further contends that the multiplicity of intellects is an “improvement” of the Peripatetic model. We are finally told that the ontological axiom known as “primacy of quiddity” (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*), is central to the Illuminationists’ view of being, but must be rejected in favor of Mullā Ṣadrā’s own position “primacy of being” (*aṣālat al-wujūd*).

Illuminationist epistemology, as I indicated, is the single most significant distinguishing characteristic of this school in Islamic philosophy, a view

upheld by Kumījānī as well. Here knowledge, according to the Illuminationist theory of knowledge by presence, is not founded on the input of sense-data and the extrapolation of universal concepts. At best the universals established in logic are nothing but relative truths. Knowledge rests on: (1) a knowing subject, *al-mawdū' al-mudrik*, who is self-conscious and knows its "I" necessarily—*al-'ana' iyyat al-muta'āliyah*—by means of the principle of self-consciousness, the "I" recovers, intuitively, primary notions of time-space, accepts the validity of such things as the primary intelligibles, and confirms the existence of God (unlike the host of philosophical and quasi-philosophical proofs for the existence of God, like the so-called "ontological proof" of Avicenna). Thus knowledge is founded on innate principles, which in a somewhat Platonic manner are "recovered" in the knowing subject's being. (2) Knowable objects, in accordance with Illuminationist cosmology, are part of the continuum of luminous entities (*al-anwār al-mujarrada*) and are inherently knowable. (3) An "a-temporal" relation between the knowing subject and the object takes place in a durationless "instant" (*ān*). This type of knowledge is called "knowledge by illumination and presence" (*al-'ilm al-ishrāqī al-ḥudūrī*), which is activated whenever an Illuminationist relation (*al-idāfat al-ishrāqiyyah*) is obtained between the subject and the object. The religio-mystical and political implications of this epistemology are to be held premier in our understanding of all subsequent *ḥikmah* compositions in Iran, and the text of *Nūr al-Fu'ād* falls within this category, as is evident in the Third Ishrāq of the text outlined above.

Intuition (*ḥads*), personal revelation (*ilhām*), and insight (*mukāshafah*) are integral constituents of Illuminationist theory of knowledge by presence. And knowledge at every age rests on a "superior" individual's personal experience of reality. Illuminationists argue that just as astronomers observe the heavens—*irsād jismānī*—and arrive at certitude vis-à-vis planetary motion and are thus able to predict such phenomena as eclipses and so on, so too the divine philosophers, *al-ḥukamā' al-muta'allihūn* (who combine discursive philosophy with intuitive philosophy to a perfect degree), observe reality as-it-is and are thus the most perfect potential "leaders" of society, which in the text *Nūr al-fu'ād* are the Shi'ah Imams who act according to the principle of *Vilāyat (Wilāyat)*. The result of such non-Aristotelian philosophizing paves the way for the triumph of *al-ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah* in Iran, and is indicative of the victory of practical reason over theoretical science in Islamic philosophy by the seventeenth century. Theoretical philosophy fails because of the impossibility of constructing valid universal, always true, propositions, formalized and employed as the building block of science. In its stead "living" sages at every era determine what "scientific" attitude the

society must have, which is based on their own individual experiential, and subjective knowledge. The real, separate Platonic Forms may be known, not by the Aristotelian demonstration (*burhān*) of the *Posterior Analytics*, but by intuition and vision-illumination, which is a coupled atemporal epistemological process initiating from the knowing “I” of the subject, and is considered prior to the Peripatetic conception-assent (*taṣawwur-taṣḍīq*) which is temporally extended.

The notion of philosophical “intuition” is of central importance for the constructivist methodology of Illuminationist philosophy. Intuition, in the Illuminationist sense is: (1) similar to the Aristotelian “quick wit,” *agkhinoia*, where the truth of propositions may be known immediately, or stated otherwise, prior to constructing a syllogism the conclusion may be struck at once; and (2) recovery by the subject of universals, and of sensible objects. But intuition plays a further fundamental role in that it is an activity of the self-conscious being in a state where the subject and the object are undifferentiated (of things existing in the separate realm of the *imaginalis*). To use the Illuminationist technical terminology, this activity is the “unity of perception, the perceived and the perceiver” (*ittihād al-mudrik wa'l-idrāk wa'l-mudrik*) as an altered state in the consciousness of the knowing subject. This altered state, when it is “linked” or “related” to the separate realm, is the *mundus imaginalis*. This philosophical position further posits a multiplicity of self-conscious, self-subsistent “monads” designated “abstract light” (*al-nūr al-mujarrad*) in place of the finite number Peripatetic “intellects” (*al-'uqūl al-mujarradah*). The “abstract lights” which are continuous one with the other, differing only in their relative degree of intensity, form a continuum as the whole (*al-kull*), also conscious of its self.

This type of a cosmology bears directly on the question of God’s knowledge. The designation “intuitive philosophy” (*al-hikmah al-dhawqiyyah*) is employed to distinguish Illuminationist philosophy from the purely discursive (*al-hikmah al-baḥthiyyah*). Kumījānī in his *Nūr al-fu'ād*, by clearly stipulating the essential priority of knowledge by presence of the sage-philosopher (but also of the inspired knowledge of the Imāms), hence the essential priority of Vilāyat (Wilāyat), has further expanded on the basic views of Suhrawardī.

Finally, the use of the term “sameness” (*'ayniyyat*) by Kumījānī is perhaps philosophically the most significant aspect of the text *Nūr al-fu'ād*. Here the term *'ayniyyat* is employed to present the idea of the unity of the knower and the known which, in Peripatetic texts, is normally presented in the form of the proposition *ittihād al-āqil wa'l-ma'qūl*. The term “unity” (*ittihād*) / “conjunction” (*ittiṣāl*) was seen by the Illuminationist philosophers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to be problematic for a complex

number of reasons, but mainly because the relation “sameness” must be an identity-preserving relation, and concepts such as *ittiḥād* and/or *ittiṣāl* do not fulfill this requirement. It seems that by his statements “sameness of light and manifestation” (*‘ayniyyat-i nūr va tajallīyāt-i wujūd [wujūd]*) and “sameness of light and presence” Kumījānī has refined the argument pertaining to the problem of the sameness of being and knowing, and of knower and object of thought. It is testimony to the living legacy of Suhrawardī’s Philosophy of Illumination that Kumījānī was recognized as “The Second Master of Illumination” in nineteenth-century Iran.

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NOTES

1. M. T. Dānesh-Pajhūh named the text in his *Nuskhīhā-yi khaṭṭī* (Tehran: Tehran University Press, 1980, p. 347), but did not mention its distinct Illuminationist nature.

2. See Manūchehr Ṣadūqī, *Tārīkh-i Ḥukamā’ va ‘ūrafā’-i muta’akhhir bar Ṣadr al-Muta’allihīn* (Tehran: Anjuman-i Islāmī-i Ḥikmat va Falsafah-i Īrān, 1980), p. 123. Ṣadūqī writes that Badī’ al-Zamān had personally told him Kumījānī’s title on “the day 16/9/1345” (December 7, 1966).

REPLY TO HOSSEIN ZIAI

Professor Ziai is one of the foremost scholars of the School of Illumination (*ishrāq*) today and his essay containing an unexpected discovery of a new *ishrāqī* work is a further contribution to the field of study of this important philosophical school. At the same time it affords me the opportunity to clarify further some of my views concerning the School of Illumination to which I have devoted a number of studies over the years. At the outset I should mention that I became deeply attracted to the School of *Ishrāq* and its founder Suhrawardī in my twenties, and he has remained a most appealing figure to me throughout my scholarly and philosophical life. His mastery of discursive philosophy in combination with spiritual vision, his universalist view of philosophy along with his espousal and explicit use of the term “perennial philosophy,” and his combining the rigor of logic and beauty of poetic expression so evident especially in his Persian works, which took me many years to edit critically for the first time, are all close to my mind and heart. My own thought and its expression have in fact sought to incorporate these and other elements associated with his philosophy. Just the title of the treatise analyzed by Ziai, namely, *Nūr al-fu’ād* or *The Light of the Heart*, so rich in symbolism and of such poetic quality, reveals something of the characteristics of the School of Illumination and more particularly its incredible founder, Suhrawardī.

Of all the major figures of Islamic thought, there are a few with whom I have always felt a very close personal affinity for one reason or another and have studied not only their thoughts but also their lives carefully. These figures include Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazzālī, Suhrawardī, Ibn ‘Arabī, Rūmī, Afdal al-Dīn Kāshānī, Shabistarī and Mullā Ṣadrā. Each has left an indelible mark upon my thought and has been a constant source of inspiration for me. In the field of philosophy, in the more technical sense of the term, no person has attracted me, *qua* person, more than Suhrawardī, whose life combines such brilliance and tragedy. I remember that when I stood long ago inside the fort of Aleppo and within the prison room in which Suhrawardī was incarcerated just before his death and where he perhaps died, I felt as if his very presence

were there. He was also the only figure about whom I consented to make an hour-long film, which I did for the National Iranian Television in the '70s when I was living in Iran. For that occasion I flew with a helicopter to the completely isolated village of Suhraward in the heart of the rugged Zagros mountains and wondered how a philosopher of the magnitude of Suhrawardī could have hailed from such a far away place and yet was able to illuminate the Islamic world with the light of his *ishrāqī* philosophy (which Corbin and I have also called "theosophy" in the original sense of the term). The sources of his philosophical knowledge, especially the elements drawn from the Mazdean tradition, as well as of his personal inspiration, remain obscure, but the results of what he drew from these sources are luminous in both form and content. To understand fully my synthesis of the perennial philosophy in its contemporary expression and traditional Islamic philosophy, the role of Suhrawardī and the School of Illumination remains of great importance.

Ziai writes of the importance of the *Ishrāqī* School in later Islamic philosophy. This goes without saying but needs to be repeated again and again because those who hold tenaciously to the old view that considers Ibn Rushd as the end of Islamic philosophy do not want to relinquish such a view despite the vast amount of evidence to the contrary. There is in fact a new wave in the Arab world which in face of such figures as Suhrawardī, Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā, still considers Ibn Rushd to be the last so-called Arab philosopher (which for them means Islamic), because its members believe that, since these later philosophers were not rationalists, they were not really philosophers at all. Therefore they can be dismissed as not being real philosophers while they themselves, being out and out rationalists, are good second-rate philosophers in the modern Western definition of the term, while Ibn Rushd as seen by them in his Latin incarnation as Averroes, the arch rationalist, is of course a true philosopher. It is against such unbelievable misinterpretations of Islamic philosophy that the words of Ziai serve as a precious response. If Suhrawardī were not a philosopher, then neither were Pythagoras, Empedocles, Parmenides, Plato, Plotinus, Proclus, Erigena, St. Bonaventure, St. Thomas, and even Aristotle.

Coming back to the later *ishrāqī* tradition, years of studying later Islamic philosophy in Persia, and to some extent India and the Ottoman world, have made it clear to me that Mīr Dāmād and Mullā Ṣadrā were of course deeply influenced by Suhrawardī and the latter integrated many *ishrāqī* teachings into his *ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah* or "transcendent theosophy," but the vast influence of these figures, and especially Mullā Ṣadrā, was not the only channel through which Suhrawardī's teachings were propagated in later centuries. Rather, parallel with the Ṣadrian School, the *Ishrāqī* School continued to be cultivated as a distinct philosophical tradition.

In Persia itself today many people think that as soon as the teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā were propagated, they dominated the whole philosophical

scene. That is in fact not true. For some time his teachings were eclipsed and *mashshā'ī* thought continued to be widely cultivated as we see in the works of Mullā Rajab 'Alī Tabrīzī and Sayyid Ahmad 'Alawī. Even when in the Qajar period the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā became resurrected by Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and others, and soon became the most dominant school of philosophy, three other philosophical schools survived and were in fact active outside the dominant Ṣadrian School. These three schools were the *mashshā'ī* or Ibn Sīnan, represented by Mīrzā Abu'l-Ḥasan Jilwah, the philosophical Sufism of the school of Ibn 'Arabī, whose most luminous representative in that period was Aqā Muḥammad Riḍā Qumshā'ī, and the school of Suhrawardī, represented by Kumījānī whose important treatise has been brought back to life by Ziai. When I was studying Islamic philosophy with traditional masters in Persia in the late '50s, as well as the '60s and '70s, they attested to this fact. Especially Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm 'Aṣṣār would often mention the continuation of the *ishrāqī* tradition even after the spread of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā. 'Aṣṣār was himself in a sense both an *ishrāqī* philosopher and a Ṣadrian one; that is, he could place himself in each perspective and teach it in a masterly fashion as one possible metaphysical formulation of the truth.

In the Ottoman world there is hardly a trace of the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophy until quite recently, while there is definitely a whole *ishrāqī* tradition in that world which has not been as yet fully investigated. The recent study of Ismā'īl Anqarawī by Bilal Kuşpınar is a good example of the richness of this tradition. As for India, there the situation was different from both Persia and the Ottoman world. Islamic philosophy itself first spread to India on the wings of Suhrawardī's *ishrāqī* philosophy, rather than through the works of al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, who became widely known in that land only after the fourteenth century. But the teachings of Mullā Ṣadrā also spread to India rapidly even in his own lifetime. The *Ishrāqī* School, however, guarded its independence from Ṣadrian teachings fully and the *ishrāqī* current remained stronger and more distinct as an independent school of thought than in the case in Persia. In Persia the *Ishrāqī* School continued while the Ṣadrian School became the most dominant, but in India probably the reverse is true. Of course one cannot judge fully the relative significance of the two schools until a thorough study is made of later Islamic philosophy in the Subcontinent, a task which has not been accomplished as yet. But judging from the presence of many *ishrāqī* texts in India, one of which has been edited and published by Professor Ziai himself, and the importance of the Nizāmī curriculum for Islamic *madrasahs* in which *ishrāqī* teachings played a major role, one can only conclude that the school of Suhrawardī remained of major intellectual concern for many Muslims in the Subcontinent. Can it be an accident that the most philosophically minded of the modern Muslim reformers of the Subcontinent, Muhammad Iqbāl, should

have devoted his doctoral thesis, published later as *The Development of Metaphysics in Persia*, primarily to *ishrāqī* teachings?

To understand fully the history of the later *ishrāqī* school one would have to know in detail the development of the School of Illumination not only in Persia, the Ottoman world (including the Arab east, especially Iraq and Syria and to some extent Egypt) and the Indian Subcontinent, but also the development of *ishrāqī* teachings in Jewish philosophy, medieval Christian philosophy and even certain strands of medieval Hindu thought. When I wrote *Three Muslim Sages* nearly forty years ago, the text serving as the basis of a series of lectures delivered at the Center for the Study of World Religions at Harvard University in 1962, I already referred to some of these influences, and in later essays I pointed out the necessity of pursuing the study of all these branches of the *Ishrāqī* School. Since then, a number of important studies have been carried out on the later *ishrāqī* tradition by a number of scholars, foremost among them Ziai himself; but much remains to be done as the author himself mentions. The presentation and analysis of Kumjānī in this essay is itself a step in this effort and therefore has provided me with the occasion to return to the question of the importance of the later *ishrāqī* tradition.

In mentioning later *ishrāqī* thinkers the author includes the name of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī whose *Ta'liqāt 'alā sharḥ ḥikmat al-ishrāq* he calls, "the last great Illuminationist work." I agree completely with this assessment, at least given our present state of knowledge of later *ishrāqī* texts. But I want to take this occasion to add that this work is also one of Mullā Ṣadrā's own greatest masterpieces, a work which has not received its due until now. I am glad that Professor Ziai has prepared a critical edition of this text and hope that it will see the light of day soon. The study of this work reveals Mullā Ṣadrā's incredible depth of understanding of Suhrawardī, and at the same time shows his vast knowledge of other earlier schools of Islamic thought. Paradoxically enough, therefore, Mullā Ṣadrā is at once a philosopher who created a new school which integrated much of *ishrāqī* thought and became dominant in the philosophical scene in Persia from the Qajar period onward, and himself an *ishrāqī* philosopher in the line of Muḥammad Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī and Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī. The interaction between the Ṣadrian and the *Ishrāqī* Schools from the seventeenth to the twentieth century in Persia would constitute the subject of a most fascinating and revealing study, because these two major metaphysical syntheses, one based on the principiality of essence and the other the principiality of existence, both remained realities to be contemplated and studied by those attracted to the intellectual sciences in general and to philosophy in particular.

Ziai mentions that Kumjānī was given the title of "The Second Master of Illumination." One wonders when this title began to be used because it is certainly significant and points possibly to the singular importance of

Kumījānī in Qajar Persia as the foremost authority in *ishrāqī* teachings of that time. We know that Āqā Muḥammad Ridā Qumsha'ī, his contemporary, was given the title of "The Second Ibn 'Arabī" because he stood out as the foremost expositor of theoretical gnosis (*'irfān-i nazari*) of the nineteenth century in Persia. If the title given to Kumījānī is born out in other documents, it would put him in a position parallel with Qumsha'ī and would be further reason for turning to his other writings and studying him as the torch bearer of the *Ishrāqī* School in his day. Unfortunately, this subject has been neglected not only in Western scholarship, as mentioned by Ziai, but by contemporary scholarship in Iran as well.

Ziai writes quite justly that "Kumījānī's text is testimony to the fact that philosophy in the eastern lands of Islam did not die." Then he adds, "nor did it deteriorate to some kind of ill-defined '*sagesse orientale*.'" In defense of Corbin who used this term, let me say that in a world in which philosophy is reduced to rationalism or sub-rationalism, and in which positivists believe that there was no serious philosophy before Hume and Kant, it is necessary to take recourse to terms which do not share this limitation in definition and meaning. If we define philosophy as love of *sophia*, then there is no need of using any other term than "philosophy" when speaking of a Suhrawardī or a Mullā Ṣadrā, but if philosophy is confined to logical positivism or existentialism, then a term such as *sagesse orientale* can be a means of opening the reader's intellectual horizon and showing that there is more to philosophy than rationalism or sub-rationalism, as Suhrawardī would be the first to accept. Besides, Corbin translated *al-ḥikmat al-mashriqiyyah* as *sagesse orientale*, a term which has had a long honored history in Islamic thought, and while not confined to rationalism, has always emphasized the necessity of logical rigor in the understanding of *ḥikmah*.

There is no need for me to go over again Ziai's analysis of the text itself which is carried out in a clear and masterly fashion. There are only a few points upon which I would like to make brief comments. In enumerating the schools of philosophy according to Mullā Ṣadrā, Ziai mentions under the second category the term *riwāqī* or "Stoic" which Mullā Ṣadrā identifies with the school of Suhrawardī. Despite a few studies carried out on the subject, the usage of the term "Stoic" in this context is still a mystery to me, seeing how different Stoic philosophy is from that of Suhrawardī. Since in more specific cases Mullā Ṣadrā adds the epithet "Stoic" to *ishrāqī* only when issues of physics and logic are concerned, could one say that in these two domains the Stoics influenced Suhrawardī, or that Mullā Ṣadrā, having studied directly through some source unknown to us Stoic logic and physics, saw such a parallel and therefore equated the two? When one studies Stoic physics as expounded by specialists such as Samuel Sambursky and compares it with *ishrāqī* physics, one does not find such close resemblances, although there are points of accord. The case of logic is somewhat easier and

one could make a case that Suhrawardī's criticism of Aristotelian formal logic reflects his knowledge of Stoic logic. In any case I have not been able to find a solution to this enigma and hope that Professor Ziai, who is well versed in classical logic and physics as well as *ishrāqī* teachings, will be able to cast light on this matter.

I confirm fully Ziai's emphasis on the *ishrāqī* theory of knowledge by presence (*al-'ilm al-ḥudūrī*) and its difference from predicative knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*). But I do not understand his assertion that "such non-Aristotelian philosophizing . . . is indicative of the victory of practical reason over theoretical science in Islamic philosophy." Even in the case of the Imams "who act according to the principle *Vilāyat (Wilāyat)*," to quote Ziai, knowing always preceded acting. Perhaps Ziai has something in mind of which I am not aware. As far as I can see, in Islamic thought the *nazarī* or theoretical element has always accompanied the '*amalī* or practical element and has preceded it in principle. In the teachings of traditional philosophy the theoretical branches of philosophy were in fact held in higher esteem than the practical, while at the same time all masters of traditional thought emphasized that knowledge without the appropriate action is like a tree that bears no fruit (repeating the famous Arabic aphorism).

One of the most interesting parts of Ziai's essay is the last part of his analysis where he speaks of Kumjānī's views of the inspired knowledge of the Shi'ite Imāms and the priority of *vilāyat (wilāyat)*. In the writings of Suhrawardī there are no signs of distinct and explicit Shi'ite doctrines, although he was accused by his opponents of *Bāṭinī* (that is, Ismā'īlī) sympathy. The *Nūr al-fu'ād* seems to present Suhrawardī in Shi'ite dress in the same way that Haydar Āmulī integrated Ibn 'Arabī into the matrix of Shi'ite gnosis. If such is in fact the case, there is an added significance to Kumjānī. The early schools of Islamic philosophy continued and were revived in the Shi'ite Persia of the Safavid period by being brought into the Shi'ite intellectual universe and being made "Shi'ite." We have ample evidence of this process in the case of al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Ibn 'Arabī, and even al-Ghazzālī. Now with Kumjānī we see the same process taking place for Suhrawardī and his *ishrāqī* teachings.

I am grateful to Professor Ziai for not only unveiling another monument of *ishrāqī* thought in his indefatigable effort to bring back to life the major works of the *ishrāqī* tradition, but also for affording me the opportunity to clarify further some of my views on this school. As I wrote nearly forty years ago, I still believe that the School of Illumination founded by Suhrawardī is not only one of the richest philosophical schools in the Islamic world, but it is also one that is still alive today and that has much to offer to both the contemporary Islamic world and to those in the West in quest of a philosophy which combines the rigor of logic and the ecstasy of spiritual vision.