

AL-SUHRAWARDĪ, SHIHĀB AL-DĪN YAḤYĀ b. Ḥabash b. Amīrak, Abu 'l-Futūh, well known Persian innovative philosopher-scientist, and founder of an independent, non-Aristotelian philosophical school named "the Philosophy of Illumination" (*Hikmat al-Ishrāk*), which is also the eponymous title of his most widely-known text; he is thus commonly referred to as the "Master of Illumination" (*Shaykh al-Ishrāk*). He was born in the small town of Suhraward in northwestern Persia 549/1154, and met a violent death by execution in Aleppo in 587/1191, so ordered by the Ayyūbid sultan Ṣalāh al-Dīn. Recent studies have demonstrated that al-Suhrawardī's execution was directly linked to his involvement in politics, whereby he sought to implement the "Illuminationist political doctrine" which he had taught to several late 6th/12th century rulers, among them the prince 'Alā' al-Dīn Kay Kūbād; the Saljuq Sulaymān Shāh, who commissioned the *Partaw-nāma*; the ruler of Kharpūt, Malik 'Imād al-Dīn Artuq, who commissioned the *Awāh-i 'Imādī*; and, lastly, to the Ayyūbid Ṣalāh al-Dīn's young son, the prince al-Malik al-Zāhir Ghāzī, governor of Aleppo (see Ziai, *The source and nature of authority*).

Al-Suhrawardī first studied philosophy and theology with Maḥdī al-Dīn al-Djīlī in Marāgha, then travelled to Iṣfahān to study with Faḥr al-Dīn al-Māridīnī (d. 594/1198), who is said to have predicted his student's death (Yāqūt, *Irshād*, vi, 269; Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, *Ṭabaqāt*, i, 299-301). It is also known that Zāhir al-Fārisī, a logician, introduced al-Suhrawardī to the *Observations (al-Baṣā'ir)* of the non-Aristotelian Persian logician 'Umar b. Sahlān al-Sāwadjī (fl. 540/1145) (see *Hikmat al-Ishrāk*, 146, 278, 352). Sāwadjī's novel ideas concerning the reconstruction of the Aristotelian nine-book logical corpus of the *Organon* into more logically consistent divisions of semantics, formal logic and material logic had a major impact on al-Suhrawardī's writings on logic.

Works

In his short 36 years of life, al-Suhrawardī is reported to have composed some 50 works, many of which remain unpublished. The published texts are also incomplete in that they do not include major sections on logic and physics. The most important texts in the philosophy of illumination are al-Suhrawardī's four major Arabic philosophical works: the *Intimations (al-Takwīhāt)*, the *Opposites (al-Mukāwamāt)*, the *Paths and havens (al-Maṣḥāri' wa 'l-muṭārāhāt)* (see H. Corbin (ed.), *Opera metaphysica et mystica I*), and the *Philosophy of illumination (Hikmat al-Ishrāk)* (see idem, *Opera metaphysica et mystica II*). The four texts constitute an integral corpus and also define the "syllabus"

for the study of the philosophy of illumination (see Ziai, *Knowledge and illumination*, 9-15). Other texts, especially the *Imādiān tablets (al-Alwāh al-'imādiyya)* and *Temples of light (Hayākil al-nūr)*—both of which were composed in Arabic and Persian—plus the Persian *Epistle on emanation (Partaw-Nāma)* (see Corbin and S.H. Nasr (eds.), *Opera metaphysica et mystica III*) are of lesser theoretical significance, but are to be included in this category of Illuminationist reconstructions.

Next in order of significance are al-Suhrawardī's Arabic and Persian philosophical allegories: "A tale of the occidental exile" (*Kiṣṣat al-ghurba al-gharbiyya*); "The treatise of the birds" (*Risālat al-tayr*); "The sound of Gabriel's Wing" (*Avāz-i par-i Qibrā'il*); "The red intellect" (*'Akl-i surkh*); "A day with a group of Ṣūfis" (*Rūzī bā ḡamā'at-i Ṣūfiyān*); "On the state of childhood" (*Fi ḥālat al-ṭufūliyya*); "On the reality of love" (*Fi ḥaqīkat al-'ishq*); "The language of ants" (*Lughat-i mūrān*); and "The simurgh's shrill cry" (*Safir-i simurgh*) (see Corbin, *ibid.*; W.M. Thackston (tr.), *The mystical and visionary treatises of Shihabuddin Yahya Suhrawardi*; and O. Spies (tr.), *Three treatises on mysticism by Shihabuddin Suhrawardi Maqtul*).

The next group of works by al-Suhrawardī consists of devotional prayers and invocations, aphorisms and other short statements (see Shahrāzūrī, *Nuzhat al-arwāh*, ii, 136-43). Of specific interest are two prayers and invocations composed in an especially rich allegorical and literary style, where al-Suhrawardī addresses "the great Heavenly Sun, Hūrakhsh," and invokes the authority of "the Great Luminous Being" (*al-nayyir al-a'zam*), praying to it for knowledge and salvation (published by M. Moin, in *Madjalla-yi Āmūzish wa Parwarish*; and one reprinted in M. Ḥabībī, *Sī risāla az Shaykh-i Ishrāk*).

His Illuminationist philosophy

With a few exceptions, most notably Max Horten, Orientalist studies on al-Suhrawardī's Arabic and Persian texts have failed to recognise the systematic philosophical side of Illuminationist logic, physics and metaphysics. Al-Suhrawardī's own oft-repeated aim to compose a novel scientific system has been inadequately described by the use of such non-technical philosophical terms as "theosophy", "sagesse orientale", "transcendental theosophy", "Sophia perennis", and the like. Suhrawardī was a well-trained scientist-philosopher, whose works on logic, foundations of mathematics, cosmic continuum theories, unified epistemological laws, etc. all demonstrate his intention which may be summed as a rational attempt to, among other things, harmonise intuitive knowledge (*al-hikma al-dhawkiyya*), with deductive knowledge (*al-hikma al-baḥthiyya*) (see al-Shahrāzūrī, *Sharḥ Hikmat al-Ishrāk*, 1-9).

Al-Suhrawardī's principal novel philosophical approach is founded on his critique of the universal validity of Aristotelian scientific methodology. He is one of the first philosophers to elaborate on an old tradition, whose roots are to be found in Plato's idea of sudden inspiration put forth in light imagery in the *Seventh letter* (341C, 344B), later discussed by Speusippus, who introduced the term ἐπιστημονικὴ αἴσθησις (see Merlan, 64, n*), and the subject of an entire treatise by St. Augustine (see R. Allers, *St. Augustine's doctrine on Illumination*). The favourite Platonic metaphor of light and vision of the *Republic*, V-VIII, is repeated in almost all Illuminationist texts, but incorporated in the Illuminationist unified epistemological theory named "Knowledge by presence" (*al-'ilm al-ḥudūrī*).

Al-Suhrawardī expresses his concern with ambiguo-

ities and inconsistencies which he discovered in the Arabic Aristotelianism of his time. They cover every domain of philosophy, e.g. in logic, concerning predication and the Law of Identity; in physics, concerning the discrete and numbered separate Intellects; but especially in early passages of the *Posterior analytics*, I.2:71b.20-72a.25. The latter concern the foundations of Aristotelian scientific method, summed up as: science rests on necessary, true, primary, and most prior premises, which are known not through syllogistic deduction, but by immediate, intuitive knowledge, Ἐνάγκη τὴν ἀποδεικτικὴν ἐπιστήμην ἐξ ἀληθῶν τ' εἶναι καὶ γνωριμωτέρων καὶ προτέρων καὶ αἰτίων τοῦ συμπεράσματος. Aristotle does not systematically present what is the intuitive mode, nor does he discuss an epistemological process that could describe primary intuition nor immediate knowledge. Science is defined as a deductive theory (an axiomatic system), based on ὄροι, ἀξιιώματα, θεωρεῖν, where the latter may be known through primary ὑποθέσεις or αἴτιμα or, ὁρισμός; this view is then further refined and expanded in the *Metaphysics* E.1, 1025b ff., when Aristotle defines kinds of theoretical sciences; and in *Metaphysics* M.10, 1086b. 5 ff., it examines the two ways the term *science* is said, and emphasises that scientific knowledge is universal (the same as in *De anima*, II.5, 417b). Al-Suhrawardī's main scientific aim was to construct a unified epistemological theory that describes intuitive knowledge in a "scientific" way. For example, "I intuitively know I exist/I think, that is the same", then generalised as "every self-apprehending being is the same as its substantial existence" (cf. the *Philosophy of Illumination*, Part Two, I.5, § 114 ff.). (Illuminationist philosophy also recovers Stoic sources, e.g. relating to reduction of categories, continuum theories, etc. See Ziai, *Knowledge and Illumination*, chs. I, II.)

Al-Suhrawardī's novel system is a scientific philosophical one intended to refine the scientific methods of the time, and closely parallels the ideals of Kant's "Critical philosophy" and Fichte's "Theory of scientific knowledge". The most widespread impact of Illuminationist philosophy has in fact been in the area of epistemology. Al-Suhrawardī argues against the validity of the Aristotelian *horos* and *horismos* in the foundations of philosophy, and considers ambiguous Aristotle's use of "intuition" as a starting-point of knowledge, because the Stagirite is not clear as to whether intuitive, immediate knowledge is opinion, δόξα, valid by *common acceptance*, ἔνδοξος, or something known ἐπιστητόν as scientific knowledge. Al-Suhrawardī's main claim is that in his reconstructed system, the Philosophy of Illumination, by which a new and more consistent scientific method, the "science of lights" (*ilm al-anwār*) is defined, the ambiguity is resolved. He constructs a unified epistemological theory, knowledge-by-presence, hailed since the 7th/13th century by such creative thinkers as al-Shahrazūrī and Ibn Kammūna, and up to the present, as one of Islamic philosophy's greatest achievements and the most valid process of obtaining and describing scientific knowledge of a wider range of things in every sector of the continuum Whole, e.g. the phenomenal and the noumenal (see M. Ha'iri Yazdi, *The principles of epistemology in Islamic philosophy*). Unlike Aristotle, the theory unequivocally posits primacy to a temporal, pre-inference and immediate mode of knowledge, which, in contemporary terms, is non-propositional intuitive knowledge prior to dyadic differentiation of subject-object.

The Illuminationist ontological position, called "primacy of quiddity", is a long-standing problem that distinguishes philosophical schools in the development

of Islamic philosophy in Persia up to the present day. It is also a matter of considerable controversy. Those who believe in the primacy of being or of existence (*wuǰūd*) consider essence (*māhiyya*) to be a derived, mental concept (*amr i'tibārī*, a term of "secondary intention"); while those who believe in the primacy of quiddity consider existence to be a derived, mental concept. The Illuminationist position is this: should existence be real outside the mind (*mutahakkak fi khāriǰ al-dhāt*), then the real must consist of two things—the principle of the reality of existence, and the being of existence, which requires a referent outside the mind. And its referent outside the mind must also consist of two things, which are subdivided, and so on *ad infinitum*. This is clearly absurd. Therefore existence must be considered as an abstract, derived, mental concept (cf. William of Ockham, *Summa logice, Pars prima*, 15: "That the general term is not a thing outside the mind"). The same is said in the *Philosophy of Illumination. Part One*, I.5: "On the [principle] that the general term does not exist outside the mind").

In sum, Illuminationist philosophy contests the Aristotelian position that the laws of science formulated as A-propositions are both necessary and always true, and that they are universal. Through an elaborate process of arguments, starting in logic in the four major texts mentioned, al-Suhrawardī establishes future contingency (*al-ismkān al-mustakbal*) as a scientific principle. Using this principle and others, he further argues that, contrary to the Aristotelian position, laws of science cannot be universal.

Finally, Illuminationist philosophy is quintessentially different from philosophical "text books" composed by Muslim dialectical theologians and cannot be reduced to a state-sponsored "handmaiden of theology." Al-Suhrawardī's concepts such as *idrāk* ("apperception or 'apprehension' similar to modern philosophy's replacing *noein* with *Vernehmen*); *al-idāfa al-ishrākiyya*, (comparable to non-predicative knowledge; *idrāk al-anā'iyya* (self-awareness, *Selbstgefühl*); *mushāhada ish'rākiyya* (cf. *Selbstgefühl*, as well as *Ichheit*, as acts *Bewusstsein* of the cognitive intuitive mode, and *Anschauung*, meaning "seeing," applied to a "seeing subject," whose act of sight is identified as *Wesensschau*); and many other technical terms, are also not to be confused with their subjective use in Šūfism.

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5. Studies and other sources. B. Carra de Vaux, *La philosophie illuminative d'après Suhrawardī Meqtul*, in *JĀ*, ser. 19, vol. xix (1902), 63-4; Corbin, *Suhrawardī d'Alep, fondateur de la doctrine illuminative*, Paris 1939; idem, *Terre celeste*, tr. Nancy Pearson, Princeton 1977, 82-9; idem, *Les motifs zoroastriens dans la philosophie de Suhrawardī*, Tehran 1946; idem, *L'homme de lumière dans le soufisme iranien*, Paris: 1971; idem, *En Islam iranien*, Paris: 1971, in 4 vols. (the second vol., *Suhrawardī et les Platoniciens de Perse*, is devoted to a detailed study of Suhrawardī's life and works); other works by Corbin, esp. the *Prolegomenes* to each of his following editions of Suhrawardī's works, *Opera metaphysica et mystica I-III*; H. Ritter, *Philologica IX. Die vier Suhrawardī*, in *Isl.*, xxiv (1937), 270-86, xxv (1938), 35-86; L. Massignon, *Recueil de textes inédits*, Paris 1929, 111-13; M. Horten, *Die Philosophie der Erleuchtung nach Suhrawardī*, Halle 1912; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Three Muslim sages*, Cambridge, Mass. 1964, ch. II; idem, art. *Suhrawardī* in *A history of Muslim philosophy*, ed. M.M. Sharif, Wiesbaden: 1963, i, 372-98; idem, *An introduction to Islamic cosmological doctrines*, London, 1978, ch. XII; J. Walbridge, *The science of mystic lights. Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī and the Illuminationist tradition in Islamic philosophy*, Cambridge, Mass. 1992; Ziai, Hossein, *The manuscript of al-Shajara al-Ilāhiyya. A 13th c. philosophical encyclopedia by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Shahrāzūrī*, in *Irānshināsi* ii/1 (Spring 1990), 89-108; idem, *Knowledge and Illumination. A study of Suhrawardī's Hikmat al-ishrāq*, Brown Judaic Series, no. 96, Atlanta 1990; idem, *Vision, Illuminationist methodology and poetic language*, in *Irān Nāma*, viii/1 (Winter 1990), 81-94; idem, *Beyond Philosophy. Suhrawardī's Illuminationist path*

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SUHRAWARDIYYA, an order of Ṣūfīs of 'Irāqī origin which flourished particularly in India; devoid of a centralised organisation, the *ṭarīqa* [q.v.] split into numerous branches.

1. *The order in Irāq and Persia*. The Suhrawardiyya traces its origin back to Abu 'l-Nadḡīb Suhrawardī [q.v.], the disciple of Aḥmad Ghazālī [q.v.]. Through two of his students who became masters of Nadjm al-Dīn Kubrā [q.v.] (Djāmī, *Nafahāt*, 417-18), also the *silṣila* of the Kubrawiyya goes back to Abu 'l-Nadḡīb. Some of Kubrā's major students, such as Nadjm al-Dīn Rāzī (d. 654/1256) and Yahyā Bāḡharzī (d. 736/1335-6), were either linked with Abu 'l-Nadḡīb's nephew Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ 'Umar Suhrawardī [q.v.] or they were active in the propagation of the latter's work. Abu 'l-Nadḡīb is also at the origin of the line of the mystic poet Awhād al-Dīn Kirmānī (d. probably 635/1237-8; R. Gramlich, *Derwischorden*, i, 9; H. Ritter, *Meer*, 473-6; see *Bibl.* below).

However, it is Shihāb al-Dīn 'Umar Suhrawardī, trained in his uncle's *ribāṭ* in Baghdād, who deserves to be regarded as the actual founder of the order. On account of his close relationship with the 'Abbāsīd caliph al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh [q.v.], for whom Shihāb al-Dīn acted as a court theologian and special emissary, he obtained the privileged position of a *Shaykh al-shuyūkh* within the Ṣūfiyya of Baghdād. The caliph had a lodge built for Shihāb al-Dīn, the Ribāṭ al-Mustadḡadd, and he designated him as a patron of his knightly *futuwwa*. Shihāb al-Dīn prepared the propagation of his order through an extensive correspondence. He visited Ṣūfī lodges and received many distinguished visitors, upon whom he conferred the *khirka*, including, e.g., the poet Sa'dī [q.v.] and the historian Ibn al-Nadḡīdār [q.v.]. In Baghdād, Shihāb al-Dīn was succeeded by his son 'Imād al-Dīn Muḥammad Suhrawardī (d. 655/1257) as custodian of the Ribāṭ al-Ma'mūniyya (Ibn al-Fuwaṭī, *Hawādith*, 323). Other disciples, on Shihāb al-Dīn's orders, returned to their homelands or settled in new areas where they founded daughter lodges.

The spreading of Shihāb al-Dīn's *'Awārif al-ma'arīf*, used by him as a teaching manual, became the prime concern for his disciples. Both in the propagation of his *magnum opus* and in the dissemination of the order, Ṣūfīs of Shīrāz, in general, and the line of Nadḡīb al-Dīn 'Alī b. Buzghush (d. 678/1280), in particular, seem to have played a leading rôle: The latter's son Zāhir al-Dīn 'Abd al-Raḡmān (d. 716/1216) translated the *'Awārif* into Persian, and a great-grandson of Ibn Buzghush wrote a commentary on his grandfather's translation. Apart from these renditions, the *'Awārif* were propagated in the Persian language through the compilations of Bāḡharzī and Mahmud Kāshānī (d. 735/1334-5). The latter received the transmission of the *'Awārif* from two disciples of Ibn Buzghush, of whom 'Abd al-Ṣamad Naṭanzī may be mentioned here (Djāmī, *op. cit.*, 481; Gramlich, *Gaben*, 14; see