

## CHAPTER I

# The meaning and concept of philosophy in Islam

*Seyyed Hossein Nasr*



In the light of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* in both of which the term *ḥikmah* has been used,<sup>1</sup> Muslim authorities belonging to different schools of thought have sought over the ages to define the meaning of *ḥikmah* as well as *falsafah*, a term which entered Arabic through the Greek translations of the second/eighth and third/ninth centuries. On the one hand what is called philosophy in English must be sought in the context of Islamic civilization not only in the various schools of Islamic philosophy but also in schools bearing other names, especially *kalām*, *ma'rifah*, *uṣūl al-fiqh* as well as the *awā'il* sciences, not to speak of such subjects as grammar and history which developed particular branches of philosophy. On the other hand each school of thought sought to define what is meant by *ḥikmah* or *falsafah* according to its own perspective and this question has remained an important concern of various schools of Islamic thought especially as far as the schools of Islamic philosophy are concerned.

During Islamic history, the terms used for Islamic philosophy as well as the debates between the philosophers, the theologians and sometimes the Sufis as to the meaning of these terms varied to some extent from one period to another but not completely. *Hikmah* and *falsafah* continued to be used while such terms as *al-ḥikmat al-ilāhiyyah* and *al-ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* gained new meaning and usage in later centuries of Islamic history, especially in the school of Mullā Ṣadrā. The term over which there was the greatest debate was *ḥikmah*, which was claimed by the Sufis and *mutakallimūn* as well as the philosophers, all appealing to such *Ḥadīth* as "The acquisition of *ḥikmah* is incumbent upon you and the good resides in *ḥikmah*."<sup>2</sup> Some Sufis such as Tirmidhī were called *ḥakīm* and Ibn 'Arabī refers to the wisdom which has been unveiled through each manifestation of the *logos* as *ḥikmah* as seen in the very title

of his masterpiece *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*,<sup>3</sup> while many *mutakallimūn* such as Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī claimed that *kalām* and not *falsafah* was *ḥikmah*,<sup>4</sup> Ibn Khaldūn confirming this view in calling the later *kalām* (*kalām al-muta'akkkhirīn*) philosophy or *ḥikmah*.<sup>5</sup>

Our discussion in this chapter is concerned, however, primarily with the Islamic philosophers' understanding of the definition and meaning of the concept of philosophy and the terms *ḥikmah* and *falsafah*.<sup>6</sup> This understanding includes of course what the Greeks had comprehended by the term *philosophia* and many of the definitions from Greek sources which were to find their way into Arabic sometimes with only slight modifications. Some of the definitions of Greek origin most common among Islamic philosophers are as follows:<sup>7</sup>

- 1 Philosophy (*al-falsafah*) is the knowledge of all existing things *qua* existents (*ashyā' al-mawjūdah bi mā hiya mawjūdah*).<sup>8</sup>
- 2 Philosophy is knowledge of divine and human matters.
- 3 Philosophy is taking refuge in death, that is, love of death.
- 4 Philosophy is becoming God-like to the extent of human ability.
- 5 It [philosophy] is the art (*ṣinā'ah*) of arts and the science (*ilm*) of sciences.
- 6 Philosophy is predilection for *ḥikmah*.

The Islamic philosophers meditated upon these definitions of *falsafah* which they inherited from ancient sources and which they identified with the Qur'ānic term *ḥikmah* believing the origin of *ḥikmah* to be divine. The first of the Islamic philosophers, Abū Ya'qūb al-Kindī wrote in his *On First Philosophy*, "Philosophy is the knowledge of the reality of things within people's possibility, because the philosopher's end in theoretical knowledge is to gain truth and in practical knowledge to behave in accordance with truth."<sup>9</sup> Al-Fārābī, while accepting this definition, added the distinction between philosophy based on certainty (*al-yaqīniyyah*) hence demonstration and philosophy based on opinion (*al-maznūnah*),<sup>10</sup> hence dialectic and sophistry, and insisted that philosophy was the mother of the sciences and dealt with everything that exists.<sup>11</sup>

Ibn Sīnā again accepted these earlier definitions while making certain precisions of his own. In his *Uyūn al-ḥikmah* he says "*Al-ḥikmah* [which he uses as being the same as philosophy] is the perfection of the human soul through conceptualization [*taṣawwur*] of things and judgment [*taṣdīq*] of theoretical and practical realities to the measure of human ability."<sup>12</sup> But he went further in later life to distinguish between Peripatetic philosophy and what he called "Oriental philosophy" (*al-ḥikmat al-mashriqiyyah*) which was not based on ratiocination alone but included realized knowledge and which set the stage for the *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* of Suhrawardī.<sup>13</sup> Ibn Sīnā's foremost student Bahmanyār meanwhile identified *falsafah* closely with the study of existents as Ibn Sīnā had done in

his Peripatetic works such as the *Shifā'*, repeating the Aristotelian dictum that philosophy is the study of existents *qua* existents. Bahmanyār wrote in the introduction to his *Tahṣīl*, "The aim of the philosophical sciences is knowledge of existents."<sup>14</sup>

Isma'īlī and Hermetico-Pythagorean thought, which paralleled in development the better-known Peripatetic philosophy but with a different philosophical perspective, nevertheless gave definitions of philosophy not far removed from those of the Peripatetics, emphasizing perhaps even more the relation between the theoretical aspect of philosophy and its practical dimension, between thinking philosophically and leading a virtuous life. This nexus, which is to be seen in all schools of earlier Islamic philosophy, became even more evident from Suhrawardī onward and the *ḥakīm* came to be seen throughout Islamic society not as someone who could only discuss mental concepts in a clever manner but as one who also lived according to the wisdom which he knew theoretically. The modern Western idea of the philosopher never developed in the Islamic world and the ideal stated by the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' who lived in the fourth/tenth century and who were contemporary with Ibn Sīnā was to echo ever more loudly over the ages wherever Islamic philosophy was cultivated. The Ikhwān wrote, "The beginning of philosophy (*falsafah*) is the love of the sciences, its middle knowledge of the realities of existents to the measure of human ability and its end words and deeds in accordance with knowledge."<sup>15</sup>

With Suhrawardī we enter not only a new period but also another realm of Islamic philosophy. The founder of a new intellectual perspective in Islam, Suhrawardī used the term *ḥikmat al-ishrāq* rather than *falsafat al-ishrāq* for both the title of his philosophical masterpiece and the school which he inaugurated. The ardent student of Suhrawardī and the translator of *Ḥikmat al-ishrāq* into French, Henry Corbin, employed the term *theosophie* rather than philosophy to translate into French the term *ḥikmah* as understood by Suhrawardī and later sages such as Mullā Ṣadrā, and we have also rendered *al-ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah* of Mullā Ṣadrā into English as "transcendent theosophy"<sup>16</sup> and have sympathy for Corbin's translation of the term. There is of course the partly justified argument that in recent times the term "theosophy" has gained pejorative connotations in European languages, especially English, and has become associated with occultism and pseudo-esoterism. And yet the term *philosophy* also suffers from limitations imposed upon it by those who have practised it during the past few centuries. If Hobbes, Hume and Ayer are philosophers, then those whom Suhrawardī calls *ḥukamā'* are not philosophers and vice versa. The narrowing of the meaning of philosophy, the divorce between philosophy and spiritual practice in the West and especially the reduction of philosophy to either rationalism or empiricism necessitate making a distinction between the meaning given

to *ḥikmah* by a Suhrawardī or Mullā Ṣadrā and the purely mental activity called philosophy in certain circles in the West today. The use of the term *theosophy* to render this later understanding of the term *ḥikmah* is based on the older and time-honoured meaning of this term in European intellectual history as associated with such figures as Jakob Böhme and not as the term became used in the late thirteenth/nineteenth century by some British occultists. Be that as it may, it is important to emphasize the understanding that Suhrawardī and all later Islamic philosophers have of *ḥikmah* as primarily *al-ḥikmat al-ilāhiyyah* (literally divine wisdom or *theosophia*) which must be realized within one's whole being and not only mentally. Suhrawardī saw this *ḥikmah* as being present also in ancient Greece before the advent of Aristotelian rationalism and identifies *ḥikmah* with coming out of one's body and ascending to the world of lights, as did Plato.<sup>17</sup> Similar ideas are to be found throughout his works, and he insisted that the highest level of *ḥikmah* requires both the perfection of the theoretical faculty and the purification of the soul.<sup>18</sup>

With Mullā Ṣadrā, one finds not only a synthesis of various earlier schools of Islamic thought but also a synthesis of the earlier views concerning the meaning of the term and concept philosophy. At the beginning of the *Asfār* he writes, repeating verbatim and summarizing some of the earlier definitions, "*falsafah* is the perfecting of the human soul to the extent of human ability through the knowledge of the essential reality of things as they are in themselves and through judgment concerning their existence established upon demonstration and not derived from opinion or through imitation".<sup>19</sup> And in *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* he adds, "[through *ḥikmah*] man becomes an intelligible world resembling the objective world and similar to the order of universal existence".<sup>20</sup>

In the first book of the *Asfār* dealing with being, Mullā Ṣadrā discusses extensively the various definitions of *ḥikmah*, emphasizing not only theoretical knowledge and "becoming an intelligible world reflecting the objective intelligible world" but also detachment from passions and purification of the soul from its material defilements or what the Islamic philosophers call *tajarrud* or catharsis.<sup>21</sup> Mullā Ṣadrā accepts the meaning of *ḥikmah* as understood by Suhrawardī and then expands the meaning of *falsafah* to include the dimension of illumination and realization implied by the *ishrāqī* and also Sufi understanding of the term. For him as for his contemporaries, as well as most of his successors, *falsafah* or philosophy was seen as the supreme science of ultimately divine origin, derived from "the niche of prophecy" and the *ḥukamā'* as the most perfect of human beings standing in rank only below the prophets and Imāms.<sup>22</sup>

This conception of philosophy as dealing with the discovering of the truth concerning the nature of things and combining mental knowledge with the purification and perfection of one's being has lasted to this day wherever the tradition of Islamic philosophy has continued and is in

fact embodied in the very being of the most eminent representatives of the Islamic philosophical tradition to this day. Such fourteenth/twentieth-century masters as Mīrzā Aḥmad Āshtiyānī, the author of *Nāma-yi rahbarān-i āmūzish-i kitāb-i takwīn* ("Treatise of the Guides to the Teaching of the Book of Creation"); Sayyid Muḥammad Kāzīm Aṣṣār, author of many treatises including *Wahdat al-wujūd* ("The Transcendent Unity of Being"); Maḥdī Ilāhī Qumsha'i, author of *Ḥikmat-i ilāhī khwāṣṣ wa 'āmm* ("Philosophy/Theosophy – General and Particular") and 'Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i, author of numerous treatises especially *Uṣūl-i falsafā-yi ri'ālizm* ("Principles of the Philosophy of Realism") all wrote of the definition of philosophy along lines mentioned above and lived accordingly. Both their works and their lives were testimony not only to over a millennium of concern by Islamic philosophers as to the meaning of the concept and the term philosophy but also to the significance of the Islamic definition of philosophy as that reality which transforms both the mind and the soul and which is ultimately never separated from spiritual purity and ultimately sanctity that the very term *ḥikmah* implies in the Islamic context.

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- 1 For the use of *ḥikmah* in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* see S. H. Nasr, "The Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* as Source and Inspiration of Islamic Philosophy", Chapter 2 below.
- 2 *Ālayka bi'l-ḥikmah fa inna'l-khayr fi'l-ḥikmah*.
- 3 See Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *The Wisdom of the Prophets*, trans. T. Burckhardt, trans. from French A. Culme-Scymour (Salisbury, 1975), pp. 1–3 of Burckhardt's introduction; and M. Chodkiewicz, *Seal of the Saints – Prophethood and Sainthood in the Doctrine of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. S. L. Sherrard (Cambridge, 1993): 47–8.
- 4 See S. H. Nasr, "Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī", in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 1 (Wiesbaden, 1963): 645–8.
- 5 'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhijī, the eleventh/seventeenth-century student of Mullā Ṣadrā who was however more of a theologian than a philosopher, writes in his *kalāmī* text *Gawhar-murād*, "Since it has become known that in acquiring the divine sciences and other intellectual matters the intellect has complete independence, and does not need to rely in these matters upon the *Sharī'ah* and the proof of certain principles concerning the essence of beings in such a way as to be in accord with the objective world through intellectual demonstrations and reasoning . . . the path of the *ḥukamā'*, the science acquired through this means is called in the vocabulary of scholars *ḥikmah*. And of necessity it will be in accord with the true *Sharī'ah* for the truth of the *Sharī'ah* is realized objectively through intellectual demonstration" (*Gawhar-murād* (Tehran, 1377): 17–18). Although speaking as a theologian, Lāhijī is admitting in this text that *ḥikmah* should be used for the intellectual activity of the philosophers and not the *mutakallimūn*, demonstrating the shift in position in the understanding of this term since the time of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī.

- 6 There is considerable secondary material on this subject in Arabic as well as in European languages. See 'Abd al-Ḥalīm Maḥmūd, *al-Taḥkīm al-falsafī fi'l-islām* (Cairo, 1964): 163–71; Muṣṭafā 'Abd al-Rāziq, *Taḥdīd li-ta'rīkh al-falsafat al-islāmiyyah* (Cairo, 1959), chapter 3: 48ff.; G. C. Anawati, "Philosophie médiévale en terre d'Islam", *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales du Caire*, 5 (1958): 175–236; and S. H. Nasr, "The Meaning and Role of 'Philosophy' in Islam", *Studia Islamica*, 37 (1973): 57–80.
- 7 See Christel Hein, *Definition und Einleitung der Philosophie – Von der spätantiken Einleitungsliteratur zur arabischen Enzyklopädie* (Bern and New York, 1985): 86.
- 8 This is repeated with only a small alteration by al-Fārābī in his *al-Jam' bayn ra'ay al-ḥakīmayn*. According to Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'ah, al-Fārābī even wrote a treatise entitled *Concerning the Word 'Philosophy'* (*Kalām fi ism al-falsafah*) although some have doubted that this was an independent work. See S. Strouma, "Al-Fārābī and Maimonides on the Christian Philosophical Tradition", *Der Islam*, 68(2) (1991): 264; and *Aristoteles – Werk und Wirkung*, 2, ed. J. Weisner (Berlin, 1987).
- 9 Quoted in Ahmed Fouad El-Ehwany, "Al-Kindī", in M. M. Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 1 (1963): 424.
- 10 *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, ed. M. Mahdi (Beirut, 1969): 153–7.
- 11 *Kitāb Jam' bayn ra'ay al-ḥakīmayn* (Hyderabad, 1968): 36–7.
- 12 *Fontes sapientiae ('Uyūn al-ḥikmah)*, ed. 'Abdurrahman Badawī (Cairo, 1954): 16.
- 13 On Ibn Sīnā's "Oriental philosophy" see Chapter 17 below.
- 14 *Kitāb al-Taḥṣīl*, ed. M. Mutahharī (Tehran, 1970): 3.
- 15 *Rasā'il*, 1 (Cairo, 1928): 23.
- 16 See S. H. Nasr, *The Transcendent Theosophy of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī* (Tehran, 1977).
- 17 See his *Talwīḥāt*, in H. Corbin (ed.) *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, 1 (Tehran, 1976): 112–13.
- 18 See S. H. Nasr, *Three Muslim Sages* (Delmar, 1975): 63–4.
- 19 *Al-Asfār al-arba'ah*, ed. 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī (Tehran, 1967): 20.
- 20 Mullā Ṣadrā, *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, ed. S. J. Āshtiyānī (Mashhad, 1967).
- 21 See the Introduction of the *Asfār*.
- 22 Muḥammad Khwājawī, *Lawami' al-'arīfīn* (Tehran, 1987): 18ff., where many quotations from the different works of Mullā Ṣadrā on the relation between authentic *ḥikmah* and revelation and the spiritual power and sanctity of the Imāms (*walāyah*) are cited.

## CHAPTER 2

# The Qur'ān and *Hadīth* as source and inspiration of Islamic philosophy

*Seyyed Hossein Nasr*



Viewed from the point of view of the Western intellectual tradition, Islamic philosophy appears as simply Graeco-Alexandrian philosophy in Arabic dress, a philosophy whose sole role was to transmit certain important elements of the heritage of antiquity to the medieval West. If seen, however, from its own perspective and in the light of the whole of the Islamic philosophical tradition which has had a twelve-century-long continuous history and is still alive today, it becomes abundantly clear that Islamic philosophy, like everything else Islamic, is deeply rooted in the Qur'ān and *Hadīth*. Islamic philosophy is Islamic not only by virtue of the fact that it was cultivated in the Islamic world and by Muslims but because it derives its principles, inspiration and many of the questions with which it has been concerned from the sources of Islamic revelation despite the claims of its opponents to the contrary.<sup>1</sup>

All Islamic philosophers from al-Kindī to those of our own day such as 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī have lived and breathed in a universe dominated by the reality of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of Islam. Nearly all of them have lived according to Islamic Law or the *Shari'ah* and have prayed in the direction of Makkah every day of their adult life. The most famous among them, such as Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna) and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), were conscious in asserting their active attachment to Islam and reacted strongly to any attacks against their faith without their being simply fideists. Ibn Sīnā would go to a mosque and pray when confronted with a difficult problem,<sup>2</sup> and Ibn Rushd was the chief *qāḍī* or judge of Cordova (Spanish Cordoba) which means that he was himself the embodiment of the authority of Islamic Law even if he

were to be seen later by many in Europe as the arch-rationalist and the very symbol of the rebellion of reason against faith. The very presence of the Qur'ān and the advent of its revelation was to transform radically the universe in which and about which Islamic philosophers were to philosophize, leading to a specific kind of philosophy which can be justly called "prophetic philosophy".<sup>3</sup>

The very reality of the Qur'ān, and the revelation which made it accessible to a human community, had to be central to the concerns of anyone who sought to philosophize in the Islamic world and led to a type of philosophy in which a revealed book is accepted as the supreme source of knowledge not only of religious law but of the very nature of existence and beyond existence of the very source of existence. The prophetic consciousness which is the recipient of revelation (*al-wahy*) had to remain of the utmost significance for those who sought to know the nature of things. How were the ordinary human means of knowing related to such an extraordinary manner of knowing? How was human reason related to that intellect which is illuminated by the light of revelation? To understand the pertinence of such issues, it is enough to cast even a cursory glance at the works of the Islamic philosophers who almost unanimously accepted revelation as a source of ultimate knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Such questions as the hermeneutics of the Sacred Text and theories of the intellect which usually include the reality of prophetic consciousness remain, therefore, central to over a millennium of Islamic philosophical thought.

One might say that the reality of the Islamic revelation and participation in this reality transformed the very instrument of philosophizing in the Islamic world. The theoretical intellect (*al-'aql al-naẓarī*) of the Islamic philosophers is no longer that of Aristotle although his very terminology is translated into Arabic. The theoretical intellect, which is the epistemological instrument of all philosophical activity, is Islamicized in a subtle way that is not always detectable through only the analysis of the technical vocabulary involved. The Islamicized understanding of the intellect, however, becomes evident when one reads the discussion of the meaning of *'aql* or intellect in a major philosopher such as Mullā Ṣadrā when he is commenting upon certain verses of the Qur'ān containing this term or upon the section on *'aql* from the collection of Shi'ite *Ḥadīth* of al-Kulaynī entitled *Uṣūl al-kāfī*. The subtle change that took place from the Greek idea of the "intellect" (*nous*) to the Islamic view of the intellect (*al-'aql*) can also be seen much earlier in the works of even the Islamic Peripatetics such as Ibn Sīnā where the Active Intellect (*al-'aql al-fā'āl*) is equated with the Holy Spirit (*al-rūḥ al-qudus*).

As is well known to students of the Islamic tradition, according to certain *ḥadīth* and also the oral tradition which has been transmitted over the centuries, the Qur'ān and all aspects of the Islamic tradition which are rooted in it have both an outward (*ẓāhir*) and an inward (*bāṭin*)

dimension. Moreover, certain verses of the Qur'ān themselves allude to the inner and symbolic significance of the revealed Book and its message. As for the *Ḥadīth*, a body of this collection relates directly to the inner or esoteric dimension of the Islamic revelation and certain sayings of the Prophet refer directly to the esoteric levels of meaning of the Qur'ān.

Islamic philosophy is related to both the external dimension of the Qur'ānic revelation or the *Sharī'ah* and the inner truth or *Ḥaqīqah* which is the heart of all that is Islamic. Many of the doctors of the Divine Law or *Sharī'ah* have stood opposed to Islamic philosophy while others have accepted it. In fact some of the outstanding Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Rushd, Mīr Dāmād and Shah Waliullāh of Delhi have also been authorities in the domain of the Sacred Law. The *Sharī'ah* has, however, provided mostly the social and human conditions for the philosophical activity of the Islamic philosophers. It is to the *Ḥaqīqah* that one has to turn for the inspiration and source of knowledge for Islamic philosophy.

The very term *al-ḥaqīqah* is of the greatest significance for the understanding of the relation between Islamic philosophy and the sources of the Islamic revelation.<sup>5</sup> *Al-ḥaqīqah* means both truth and reality. It is related to God Himself, one of whose names is *al-Ḥaqq* or the Truth, and is that whose discovery is the goal of all Islamic philosophy. At the same time *al-ḥaqīqah* constitutes the inner reality of the Qur'ān and can be reached through a hermeneutic penetration of the meaning of the Sacred Text. Throughout history, many an Islamic philosopher has identified *falsafah* or *ḥikmah*, the two main terms used with somewhat different meaning for Islamic philosophy, with the *Ḥaqīqah* lying at the heart of the Qur'ān. Much of Islamic philosophy is in fact a hermeneutic unveiling of the two grand books of revelation, the Qur'ān and the cosmos, and in the Islamic intellectual universe Islamic philosophy belongs, despite some differences, to the same family as that of *ma'rifah* or gnosis which issues directly from the inner teachings of Islam and which became crystallized in both Sufism and certain dimensions of Shi'ism. Without this affinity there would not have been a Suhrawardī or Mullā Ṣadrā in Persia or an Ibn Sab'īn in Andalusia.

Philosophers living as far apart as Nāṣir-i Khusraw (fifth/eleventh century) and Mullā Ṣadrā (tenth/sixteenth century) have identified *falsafah* or *ḥikmah* explicitly with the *Ḥaqīqah* lying at the heart of the Qur'ān whose comprehension implies the spiritual hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*) of the Sacred Text. The thirteenth/nineteenth-century Persian philosopher Ja'far Kāshifī goes even further and identifies the various methods for the interpretation of the Qur'ān with the different schools of philosophy, correlating *tafsīr* (the literal interpretation of the Qur'ān) with the Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) school, *ta'wīl* (its symbolic interpretation) with the Stoic (*riwāqī*),<sup>6</sup> and *tafhīm* (in-depth comprehension of the Sacred Text) with the Illuminist (*ishrāqī*).<sup>7</sup> For the main tradition of Islamic

philosophy, especially as it developed in later centuries, philosophical activity was inseparable from interiorization of oneself and penetration into the inner meaning of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* which those philosophers who were of a Shi'ite bent considered to be made possible through the power issuing from the cycle of initiation (*dā'irat al-walāyah*) that follows the closing of the cycle of prophecy (*dā'irat al-nubuwwah*) with the death of the Prophet of Islam.

The close nexus between the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, on the one hand, and Islamic philosophy, on the other, is to be seen in the understanding of the history of philosophy. The Muslims identified Hermes, whose personality they elaborated into the "three Hermes", also well known to the West from Islamic sources, with Idrīs or Enoch, the ancient prophet who belongs to the chain of prophecy confirmed by the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.<sup>8</sup> And they considered Idrīs as the origin of philosophy, bestowing upon him the title of Abu'l-Ḥukamā' (the father of philosophers). Like Philo and certain later Greek philosophers before them and also many Renaissance philosophers in Europe, Muslims considered prophecy to be the origin of philosophy, confirming in an Islamic form the dictum of Oriental Neoplatonism that "Plato was Moses in Attic Greek". The famous Arabic saying "philosophy issues from the niche of prophecy" (*yanba'u'l-hikmah min mishkāt al-nubuwwah*) has echoed through the annals of Islamic history and indicates clearly how Islamic philosophers themselves envisaged the relation between philosophy and revelation.

It must be remembered that al-*Ḥakīm* (the Wise, from the same root as *ḥikmah*) is a Name of God and also one of the names of the Qur'ān. More specifically many Islamic philosophers consider Chapter 31 of the Qur'ān, entitled *Luqmān*, after the Prophet known proverbially as a *ḥakīm*, to have been revealed to exalt the value of *ḥikmah*, which Islamic philosophers identify with true philosophy.

This chapter begins with the symbolic letters *alif, lām, mīm* followed immediately by the verse, "These are revelations of the wise scripture [*al-kitāb al-ḥakīm*]" (Pickthall translation), mentioning directly the term *ḥakīm*. Then in verse 12 of the same chapter it is revealed, "And verily We gave Luqmān wisdom [*al-ḥikmah*], saying: Give thanks unto Allah; and whosoever giveth thanks, he giveth thanks for [the good of] his soul. And whosoever refuseth — Lo! Allah is Absolute, Owner of Praise." Clearly in this verse the gift of *ḥikmah* is considered a blessing for which one should be grateful, and this truth is further confirmed by the famous verse, "He giveth wisdom [*ḥikmah*] unto whom He will, and he unto whom wisdom is given, he truly hath received abundant good" (2: 269).

There are certain *Ḥadīth* which point to God having offered prophecy and philosophy or *ḥikmah*, and Luqmān chose *ḥikmah* which must not be confused simply with medicine or other branches of

traditional *ḥikmah* but refers to pure philosophy itself dealing with God and the ultimate causes of things. These traditional authorities also point to such Qur'ānic verses as "And He will teach him the Book [*al-kitāb*] and Wisdom [*al-ḥikmah*]" (3: 48) and "Behold that which I have given you of the Book and Wisdom" (3: 81): there are several where *kitāb* and *ḥikmah* are mentioned together. They believe that this conjunction confirms the fact that what God has revealed through revelation He had also made available through *ḥikmah*, which is reached through 'aql, itself a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic reality which is the instrument of revelation.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of this doctrine later Islamic philosophers such as Mullā Ṣadrā developed an elaborate doctrine of the intellect in its relation to the prophetic intellect and the descent of the Divine Word, or the Qur'ān, basing themselves to some extent on earlier theories going back to Ibn Sīnā and other Muslim Peripatetics. All of this indicates how closely traditional Islamic philosophy identified itself with revelation in general and the Qur'ān in particular.

Islamic philosophers meditated upon the content of the Qur'ān as a whole as well as on particular verses. It was the verses of a polysemic nature or those with "unclear outward meaning" (*mutashābihāt*) to which they paid special attention. Also certain well-known verses were cited or commented upon more often than others, such as the "Light Verse" (*āyat al-nūr*) (24: 35) commented upon already by Ibn Sīnā in his *Ishārāt* and also by many later figures. Mullā Ṣadrā was in fact to devote one of the most important philosophical commentaries ever written upon the Qur'ān, entitled *Tafsīr āyat al-nūr*, to this verse.<sup>10</sup>

Western studies of Islamic philosophy, which have usually regarded it as simply an extension of Greek philosophy,<sup>11</sup> have for this very reason neglected for the most part the commentaries of Islamic philosophers upon the Qur'ān, whereas philosophical commentaries occupy an important category along with the juridical, philological, theological (*kalām*) and Sufi commentaries. The first major Islamic philosopher to have written Qur'ānic commentaries is Ibn Sīnā, many of whose commentaries have survived.<sup>12</sup> Later Suhrawardī was to comment upon diverse passages of the Sacred Text, as were a number of later philosophers such as Ibn Turkah al-Iṣfahānī.

The most important philosophical commentaries upon the Qur'ān were, however, written by Mullā Ṣadrā, whose *Asrār al-āyāt* and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*<sup>13</sup> are among the most imposing edifices of the Islamic intellectual tradition, although hardly studied in the West until now. Mullā Ṣadrā also devoted one of his major works to commenting upon the *Uṣūl al-kāfī* of Kulaynī, one of the major Shi'ite texts of *Ḥadīth* containing the sayings of the Prophet as well as the Imāms. These works taken together constitute the most imposing philosophical commentaries upon

the Qur'ān and *Hadīth* in Islamic history, but such works are far from having terminated with him. The most extensive Qur'ānic commentary written during the past decades, *al-Mīzān*, was from the pen of 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, who was the reviver of the teaching of Islamic philosophy in Qom in Persia after the Second World War and a leading Islamic philosopher of this century whose philosophical works are now gradually becoming known to the outside world.

Certain Qur'ānic themes have dominated Islamic philosophy throughout its long history and especially during the later period when this philosophy becomes a veritable theosophy in the original and not deviant meaning of the term, *theosophia* corresponding exactly to the Arabic term *al-hikmat al-ilāhiyyah* (or *ḥikmat-i ilāhī* in Persian). The first and foremost is of course the unity of the Divine Principle and ultimately Reality as such or *al-tawḥīd* which lies at the heart of the Islamic message. The Islamic philosophers were all *muwaḥḥid* or followers of *tawḥīd* and saw authentic philosophy in this light. They called Pythagoras and Plato, who had confirmed the unity of the Ultimate Principle, *muwaḥḥid* while showing singular lack of interest in later forms of Greek and Roman philosophy which were sceptical or agnostic.

How Islamic philosophers interpreted the doctrine of Unity lies at the heart of Islamic philosophy. There continued to exist a tension between the Qur'ānic description of Unity and what the Muslims had learned from Greek sources, a tension which was turned into a synthesis of the highest intellectual order by such later philosophers as Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā.<sup>14</sup> But in all treatments of this subject from al-Kindī to Mullā 'Alī Zunūzī and Ḥājji Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī during the thirteenth/nineteenth century and even later, the Qur'ānic doctrine of Unity, so central to Islam, has remained dominant and in a sense has determined the agenda of the Islamic philosophers.

Complementing the Qur'ānic doctrine of Unity is the explicit assertion in the Qur'ān that Allah bestows being and it is this act which instantiates all that exists, as one finds for example in the verse, "But His command, when He intendeth a thing, is only that he saith unto it: Be! and it is [*kun fa-yakūn*]" (36: 81). The concern of Islamic philosophers with ontology is directly related to the Qur'ānic doctrine, as is the very terminology of Islamic philosophy in this domain where it understands by *wujūd* more the verb or act of existence (*esto*) than the noun or state of existence (*esse*). If Ibn Sīnā has been called first and foremost a "philosopher of being",<sup>15</sup> and he developed the ontology which came to dominate much of medieval philosophy, this is not because he was simply thinking of Aristotelian theses in Arabic and Persian, but because of the Qur'ānic doctrine of the One in relation to the act of existence. It was as a result of meditation upon the Qur'ān in conjunction with Greek thought that

Islamic philosophers developed the doctrine of Pure Being which stands above the chain of being and is discontinuous with it, while certain other philosophers such as a number of Ismā'īlīs considered God to be beyond Being and identified His act or the Qur'ānic *kun* with Being, which is then considered as the principle of the universe.

It is also the Qur'ānic doctrine of the creating God and *creatio ex nihilo*, with all the different levels of meaning which *nihilo* possesses,<sup>16</sup> that led Islamic philosophers to distinguish sharply between God as Pure Being and the existence of the universe, destroying that "block without fissure" which constituted Aristotelian ontology. In Islam the universe is always contingent (*mumkin al-wujūd*) while God is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*), to use the well-known distinction of Ibn Sīnā.<sup>17</sup> No Islamic philosopher has ever posited an existential continuity between the existence of creatures and the Being of God, and this radical revolution in the understanding of Aristotelian ontology has its source in the Islamic doctrine of God and creation as asserted in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth.<sup>18</sup> Moreover, this influence is paramount not only in the case of those who asserted the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in its ordinary theological sense, but also for those such as al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā who were in favour of the theory of emanation but who none the less never negated the fundamental distinction between the *wujūd* (existence) of the world and that of God.

As for the whole question of "newness" or "eternity" of the world, or *ḥudūth* and *qidam*, which has occupied Islamic thinkers for the past twelve centuries and which is related to the question of the contingency of the world *vis-à-vis* the Divine Principle, it is inconceivable without the teachings of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. It is of course a fact that before the rise of Islam Christian theologians and philosophers such as John Philoponus had written on this issue and that Muslims had known some of these writings, especially the treatise of Philoponus against the thesis of the eternity of the world. But had it not been for the Qur'ānic teachings concerning creation, such Christian writings would have played an altogether different role in Islamic thought. Muslims were interested in the arguments of a Philoponus precisely because of their own concern with the question of *ḥudūth* and *qidam*, created by the tension between the teachings of the Qur'ān and the Ḥadīth, on the one hand, and the Greek notion of the non-temporal relation between the world and its Divine Origin, on the other.

Another issue of great concern to Islamic philosophers from al-Kindī to Mullā Ṣadrā, and those who followed him, is God's knowledge of the world. The major Islamic philosophers, such as al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Ibn Rushd and Mullā Ṣadrā, have presented different views on the subject while, as with the question of *ḥudūth* and *qidam*, they have been constantly criticized and attacked by the *mutakallimūn*, especially over the question of God's knowledge of particulars.<sup>19</sup> Now,

such an issue entered Islamic philosophy directly from the Qur'ānic emphasis upon God's knowledge of all things as asserted in numerous verses such as, "And not an atom's weight in the earth or the sky escapeth your Lord, nor what is less than that or greater than that, but it is written in a clear Book" (10: 62). It was precisely this Islamic insistence upon Divine Omniscience that placed the issue of God's knowledge of the world at the centre of the concern of Islamic philosophers and caused Islamic philosophy, like its Jewish and Christian counterparts, to develop extensive philosophical theories totally absent from the philosophical perspective of Graeco-Alexandrian antiquity. In this context the Islamic doctrine of "divine science" (*al-'ilm al-ladunī*) is of central significance for both *falsafah* and theoretical Sufism or *al-ma'rifah*.

This issue is also closely allied to the philosophical significance of revelation (*al-wahy*) itself. Earlier Islamic philosophers such as Ibn Sīnā sought to develop a theory by drawing to some extent, but not exclusively, on Greek theories of the intellect and the faculties of the soul.<sup>20</sup> Later Islamic philosophers continued their concern for this issue and sought to explain in a philosophical manner the possibility of the descent of the truth and access to the truth by knowledge based on certitude but derived from sources other than the senses, reason and even the inner intellect. They, however, pointed to the correspondence between the inner intellect and that objective manifestation of the Universal Intellect or *Logos* which is revelation. While still using certain concepts of Greek origin, the later Islamic philosophers such as Mullā Ṣadrā drew heavily from the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* on this issue.

Turning to the field of cosmology, again one can detect the constant presence of Qur'ānic themes and certain *Ḥadīth*. It is enough to meditate upon the commentaries made upon the "Light Verse" and "Throne Verse" and the use of such explicitly Qur'ānic symbols and images as the Throne (*al-'arsh*), the Pedestal (*al-kursī*), the light of the heavens and earth (*nūr al-samāwāt wa'l-arḍ*), the niche (*mishkāṭ*) and so many other Qur'ānic terms to realize the significance of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* in the formulation of cosmology as dealt with in the Islamic philosophical tradition.<sup>21</sup> Nor must one forget the cosmological significance of the nocturnal ascent of the Prophet (*al-mi'rāj*) which so many Islamic philosophers have treated directly, starting with Ibn Sīnā. This central episode in the life of the Prophet, with its numerous levels of meaning, was not only of great interest to the Sufis but also drew the attention of numerous philosophers to its description as contained in certain verses of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. Some philosophers also turned their attention to other episodes with a cosmological significance in the life of the Prophet such as the "cleaving of the moon" (*shaqq al-qamar*) about which the ninth/fifteenth-century Persian philosopher Ibn Turkah Iṣfahānī wrote a separate treatise.<sup>22</sup>

In no branch of Islamic philosophy, however, is the influence of the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth more evident than in eschatology, the very understanding of which in the Abrahamic universe was alien to the philosophical world of antiquity. Such concepts as divine intervention to mark the end of history, bodily resurrection, the various eschatological events, the Final Judgment, and the posthumous states as understood by Islam or for that matter Christianity were alien to ancient philosophy whereas they are described explicitly in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth as well as of course in the Bible and other Jewish and Christian religious sources.

The Islamic philosophers were fully aware of these crucial ideas in their philosophizing, but the earlier ones were unable to provide philosophical proofs for Islamic doctrines which many confessed to accept on the basis of faith but could not demonstrate within the context of Peripatetic philosophy. We see such a situation in the case of Ibn Sīnā who in several works, including the *Shifā'*, confesses that he cannot prove bodily resurrection but accepts it on faith. This question was in fact one of the three main points, along with the acceptance of *qidam* and the inability of the philosophers to demonstrate God's knowledge of particulars, for which al-Ghazzālī took Ibn Sīnā to task and accused him of *kufṛ* or infidelity. It remained for Mullā Ṣadrā several centuries later to demonstrate the reality of bodily resurrection through the principles of the "transcendent theosophy" (*al-ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah*) and to take both Ibn Sīnā and al-Ghazzālī to task for the inadequacy of their treatment of the subject.<sup>23</sup> The most extensive philosophical treatment of eschatology (*al-ma'ād*) in all its dimensions is in fact to be found in the *Aṣfār* of Mullā Ṣadrā.

It is sufficient to examine this work or his other treatises on the subject such as his *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād* or *al-Ḥikmat al-arshiyyah* to realize the complete reliance of the author upon the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. His development of the philosophical meaning of *ma'ād* is in reality basically a hermeneutics of Islamic religious sources, primary among them the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. Nor is this fact true only of Mullā Ṣadrā. One can see the same relation between philosophy and the Islamic revelation in the writings of Mullā Muḥsin Fayḍ Kāshānī, Shah Walīullāh of Delhi, Mullā 'Abd Allāh Zunūzī, Ḥājji Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī and many later Islamic philosophers writing on various aspects of *al-ma'ād*. Again, although as far as the question of eschatology is concerned, the reliance on the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth is greater during the later period, as is to be seen already in Ibn Sīnā who dealt with it in both his encyclopedic works and in individual treatises dealing directly with the subject, such as his own *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*. It is noteworthy in this context that he entitled one of his most famous treatises on eschatology *al-Risālat al-adḥawiyyah*, drawing from the Islamic religious term for the Day of Judgment.

In meditating upon the history of Islamic philosophy in its relation to the Islamic revelation, one detects a movement toward ever closer association of philosophy with the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* as *falsafah* became transformed into *al-ḥikmat al-ilāhiyyah*. Al-Fārābī and Ibn Sīnā, although drawing so many themes from Qur'ānic sources, hardly ever quoted the Qur'ān directly in their philosophical works. By the time we come to Suhrawardī in the sixth/twelfth century, there are present within his purely philosophical works citations of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. Four centuries later the Safavid philosophers wrote philosophical works in the form of commentaries on the text of the Qur'ān or on certain of the *Ḥadīth*. This trend continued in later centuries not only in Persia but also in India and the Ottoman world including Iraq.

As far as Persia is concerned, as philosophy became integrated into the Shi'ite intellectual world from the seventh/thirteenth century onwards, the sayings of the Shi'ite Imāms began to play an ever greater role, complementing the Prophetic *Ḥadīth*. This is especially true of the sayings of Imāms Muḥammad al-Bāqir, Ja'far al-Ṣādiq and Mūsā al-Kāẓim, the fifth, sixth and seventh Imāms of Twelve-Imām Shi'ism, whose sayings are at the origin of many of the issues discussed by later Islamic philosophers.<sup>24</sup> It is sufficient to study the monumental but uncompleted *Sharḥ Uṣūl al-kāfī* of Mullā Ṣadrā to realize the philosophical fecundity of many of the sayings of the Imāms and their role in later philosophical meditation and deliberation.

The Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, along with the sayings of the Imāms, which are in a sense the extension of *Ḥadīth* in the Shi'ite world, have provided over the centuries the framework and matrix for Islamic philosophy and created the intellectual and social climate within which Islamic philosophers have philosophized. Moreover, they have presented a knowledge of the origin, the nature of things, humanity and its final ends and history upon which the Islamic philosophers have meditated and from which they have drawn over the ages. They have also provided a language of discourse which Islamic philosophers have shared with the rest of the Islamic community.<sup>25</sup> Without the Qur'ānic revelation, there would of course have been no Islamic civilization, but it is important to realize that there would also have been no Islamic philosophy. Philosophical activity in the Islamic world is not simply a regurgitation of Graeco-Alexandrian philosophy in Arabic, as claimed by many Western scholars along with some of their Islamic followers, a philosophy which grew despite the presence of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*. On the contrary, Islamic philosophy is what it is precisely because it flowered in a universe whose contours are determined by the Qur'ānic revelation.

As asserted at the beginning of this chapter, Islamic philosophy is essentially "prophetic philosophy" based on the hermeneutics of a Sacred Text which is the result of a revelation that is inalienably linked to the

microcosmic intellect and which alone is able to actualize the dormant possibilities of the intellect within us. Islamic philosophy, as understood from within that tradition, is also an unveiling of the inner meaning of the Sacred Text, a means of access to that *Ḥaqīqah* which lies hidden within the inner dimension of the Qur'ān. Islamic philosophy deals with the One or Pure Being, and universal existence and all the grades of the universal hierarchy. It deals with man and his entelechy, with the cosmos and the final return of all things to God. This interpretation of existence is none other than penetration into the inner meaning of the Qur'ān which "is" existence itself, the Book whose meditation provides the key for the understanding of those objective and subjective orders of existence with which the Islamic philosopher has been concerned over the ages.

A deeper study of Islamic philosophy over its twelve-hundred-year history will reveal the role of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* in the formulation, exposition and problematics of this major philosophical tradition. In the same way that all of the Islamic philosophers from al-Kindī onwards knew the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth* and lived with them, Islamic philosophy has manifested over the centuries its inner link with the revealed sources of Islam, a link which has become even more manifest as the centuries have unfolded, for Islamic philosophy is essentially a philosophical hermeneutics of the Sacred Text while making use of the rich philosophical heritage of antiquity. That is why, far from being a transitory and foreign phase in the history of Islamic thought, Islamic philosophy has remained over the centuries and to this day one of the major intellectual perspectives in Islamic civilization with its roots sunk deeply, like everything else Islamic, in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

## ~ NOTES ~

- 1 Within the Islamic world itself scholars of *kalām* and certain others who have opposed Islamic philosophy over the ages have claimed that it was merely Greek philosophy to which they opposed philosophy or wisdom derived from faith (*al-ḥikmat al-yūnāniyyah* versus *al-ḥikmat al-īmāniyyah*). Some contemporary Muslim scholars, writing in English, oppose Muslim to Islamic, considering Muslim to mean whatever is practised or created by Muslims and Islamic that which is derived directly from the Islamic revelation. Many such scholars, who hail mostly from Pakistan and India, insist on calling Islamic philosophy Muslim philosophy, as can be seen in the title of the well-known work edited by M. M. Sharif, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*. If one looks more deeply into the nature of Islamic philosophy from the traditional Islamic point of view and takes into consideration its whole history, however, one will see that this philosophy is at once Muslim and Islamic according to the above-given definitions of these terms.

- 2 When accused on a certain occasion of infidelity, Ibn Sīnā responded in a famous Persian quatrain: "It is not so easy and trifling to call me a heretic; / No faith in religion is firmer than mine. / I am a unique person in the whole world and if I am a heretic; / Then there is not a single Muslim anywhere in the world." Trans. by S. H. Barani in his "Ibn Sina and Alberuni", in *Avicenna Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta, 1956): 8 (with certain modifications by S. H. Nasr).
- 3 This term was first used by H. Corbin and myself and appears in Corbin, with the collaboration of S. H. Nasr and O. Yahya, *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* (Paris, 1964).
- 4 We say "almost" because there are one or two figures such as Muḥammad ibn Zakariyyā' al-Rāzī who rejected the necessity of prophecy. Even in his case, however, there is a rejection of the necessity of revelation in order to gain ultimate knowledge and not the negation of the existence of revelation.
- 5 See Corbin, *op. cit.*: 26ff.
- 6 The term *riwāqī* used by later Islamic philosophers must not, however, be confused with the Roman Stoics, although it means literally stoic (*riwāq* in Arabic coming from Pahlavi and meaning *stoa*).
- 7 Corbin, *op. cit.*: 24.
- 8 On the Islamic figure of Hermes and Hermetic writings in the Islamic world see L. Massignon, "Inventaire de la littérature hermétique arabe", appendix 3 in A. J. Festugière and A. D. Nock, *La Révélation d'Hermès Trismégiste*, 4 vols (Paris, 1954–60); S. H. Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (Albany, 1981): 102–19; F. Sezgin, *Geschichte der arabischen Schriftums*, 4 (Leiden, 1971).
- 9 See for example the introduction by one of the leading contemporary traditional philosophers of Persia, Abu'l-Ḥasan Sha'rānī, to Sabziwārī, *Asrār al-ḥikam* (Tehran, 1960): 3.
- 10 Edited with introduction and Persian translation by M. Khwājawī (Tehran, 1983).
- 11 The writings of H. Corbin are a notable exception.
- 12 See M. Abdul Haq, "Ibn Sīnā's Interpretation of the Qur'ān", *The Islamic Quarterly*, 32(1) (1988): 46–56.
- 13 This monumental work has been edited in Arabic and also translated into Persian by M. Khwājawī who has printed all of Mullā Ṣadrā's Qur'ānic commentaries in recent years. It is interesting to note that the Persian translation entitled *Tarjuma-yi mafāṭīḥ al-ghayb* (Tehran, 1979) includes a long study on the rise of philosophy and its various schools by Ayatullah 'Ābidī Shāhrūdī, who discusses the rapport between Islamic philosophy and the Qur'ān in the context of traditional Islamic thought.
- 14 See I. Netton, *Allah Transcendent* (London, 1989), which deals with this tension but mixes his account with certain categories of modern European philosophy not suitable for the subject.
- 15 See E. Gilson, *Avicenne et le point de départ de Duns Scot, Extrait des archives d'histoire doctrinale et littéraire du Moyen Age* (Paris, 1927); and A. M. Goichon, "L'Unité de la pensée avicennienne", *Archives Internationale d'Histoire des Sciences*, 20–1 (1952): 290ff.
- 16 See D. Burrell and B. McGinn (eds), *God and Creation* (Notre Dame, 1990): 246ff. For the more esoteric meaning of *ex nihilo* in Islam see L. Schaya, *La*

- Création en Dieu* (Paris, 1983), especially chapter 6: 90ff.
- 17 This has been treated more amply in Chapter 16 below on Ibn Sīnā. See also Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines* (Albany, 1993), chapter 12.
- 18 See T. Izutsu, *The Concept and Reality of Existence* (Tokyo, 1971).
- 19 The criticisms by al-Ghazzālī and Imām Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī of this issue, as that of *ḥudūth* and *qidam*, are well known and are treated below. Less is known, however, of the criticism of other theologians who kept criticizing the philosophers for their denial of the possibility of God knowing particulars rather than just universals.
- 20 See F. Rahman, *Prophecy in Islam, Philosophy and Orthodoxy* (London, 1958), where some of these theories are described and analysed clearly, but with an over-emphasis on the Greek factor and downplaying of the role of the Islamic view of revelation itself.
- 21 On this issue see Nasr, *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*; and Nasr, "Islamic Cosmology", in *Islamic Civilization*, 4, ed. A. Y. al-Hassan *et al.* (Paris, forthcoming).
- 22 See H. Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, 3 (Paris, 1971): 233ff.
- 23 Mullā Ṣadrā dealt with this debate in several of his works especially in his *Glosses upon the Theosophy of the Orient of Light* (of Suhrawardī) (*Ḥāshiyah 'alā ḥikmat al-ishrāq*). See H. Corbin, "Le thème de la résurrection chez Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (1050/1640) commentateur de Sohrawardī (587/1191)", in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion – Presented to Gershom G. Scholem* (Jerusalem, 1967): 71–118.
- 24 The late 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, one of the leading traditional philosophers of contemporary Persia, once made a study of the number of philosophical problems dealt with by early and later Islamic philosophers. He once told us that, according to his study, there were over two hundred philosophical issues treated by the early Islamic philosophers and over six hundred by Mullā Ṣadrā and his followers. Although he admitted that this approach was somewhat excessively quantitative, it was an indication of the extent of expansion of the fields of interest of Islamic philosophy, an expansion which he attributed almost completely to the influence of the metaphysical and philosophical utterances of the Shī'ite Imāms which became of ever greater concern to many Islamic philosophers, both Shī'ite and Sunni, from the time of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī onwards.
- 25 The Qur'an and Ḥadīth have also influenced directly and deeply the formation of the Islamic philosophical vocabulary in Arabic, an issue with which we have not been able to deal in this chapter.

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EDITED BY

*Seyyed Hossein Nasr  
and Oliver Leaman*



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