Contents

On Justice
The Honorable Ayatollah Ali Khamenei,
The Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran .................. 1

A Translation of Ṭūsī’s Three Philosophical Questions
Edited and Translated by Pirooz Fatoorchi (Independent Scholar; Tehran, IRI) ................................. 5

On the Greek and English Renderings of Technical Terms Used in Ṭūsī’s Corpus in the Light of the ibn Sīnan Tradition
Parviz Morewedge (State University of New York at Old Westbury) .......................................................... 15

Beyond Metaphysical Idolatry: Mullā Ṣadrā on Mental Constructs of God
Mohammed Rustom (Carleton University) ................................. 41

The Contemporary Shī‘ī Significance of the Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā
‘Ali Asgariyazdi (Tehran University) ........................................ 63

New Development in the World and the Necessity of Considering the Third way
Mansour E’tesami (Tarbiat Modares University) ......................... 79

Foreign Policy In Islam: A Shī‘ī Approach
Mohsen Eslami (Tarbiat Modares University) .......................... 95

The Status of Mysticism and Mystical Education in Contemporary Iran
Mohammad Fanaei Eshkevari (The Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute) ......................... 129
Monotheism, System of God’s Names and System of Values
Ali A. Khandan (Imam Sadiq University).................................151

Book Review Article

Review of Al-Kafi Book I: Intellect & Foolishness, by Muḥammad ibn Yaʿqūb al-Kulaynī. Translation and commentary directed by Rizwan Arastu
Idris Samawi Hamid (Colorado State University, Fort Collins).................................................................167
The Contemporary Shīʿī Significance of the Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā

ʻAli Asgariyazdi
(University of Tehran, Iran)

ABSTRACT

Mulla Sadra’s (1572-1640) original contribution to phenomenological ontology, such as the concept of “substantial motion” (ḥarakat-i jawharriya) has been well recognized by a majority of investigators. While taking account of his basic phenomenological methodology and process ontology, this essay singles out a specific Shi‘a doctrine of Mullā Sadra, as embedded in a majority of Shi‘a thinkers from Nasir ad-Din Tusi (1201-1274) to Imam Rohallah Khomeini (1902-1989). A major difference between a majority of Shi‘a and Sunni thinkers lies in the relationship between religious, philosophical and mystical studies. In this context, a majority of Shi‘a thinkers apply the principle of unity (tawḥīd) to different fields of knowledge--religion, philosophy and mysticism--writing on all three topics. In contrast, some major Sunni thinkers recommend a separation between religion, philosophy and theology. This attitude towards separation from religion holds not only in early theological schools, as it appears in the 9th-10th century al-Ash‘rites’ criticism of the Mu‘tazilites. At the present, in some predominately Sunni nations, philosophy as an academic discipline does not exist in universities; when professional philosophers return to their homeland, they usually teach “sociology.” In the early phase of Islamic philosophy, Shi‘a thinkers, such as Nāṣir Khosrow (1004-1088) (see The Agreement Between Two Sages (religious and philosopher) (jam‘i al-Hikmatain), and Nāṣir ad-Dīn Tūsī, apply the principle of unity (tawḥīd)
to integrate (jam`) various fields of inquiry. In contrast, major Sunni thinkers, such as Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (1058-1111) and Taqī ad-Dīn Aḥmad ibn Taṣqīyyah (1263-1328), opted for a different route. Ghazali rejects philosophers’ attempts to be involved in theology, while he approves of logic and Sufism. Ibn Tamiyya goes further than Ghazali in criticizing Greek logic and rejecting many types of mysticism, labeling mystics as heretical. Without making explicit references, treatises of a majority of Iranian philosophers, such as Abū ‘Alī ibn Sīnā (980-1037) and Shihāb ad-Dīn Suhrāwardī (1154-1191), include religious, philosophical and mystical texts. However, it is our philosopher, Mulla Sadra, who made an explicit impression by integration of these three fields in a Shi`a vision of philosophy. The importance of his Shi`a method became clear when a number of subsequent thinkers, notably Imam Ayatollah Khomeini, followed the Sadrian Shi`a approach of the application of Unity (tawḥīd) in the realm of knowledge. Mulla Sadra goes even further, unlike ibn Sina, in following the Neoplatonic philosopher and the editor of Plotinus’ The Enneads, Porphyry (234-305 AD) in his proffering unity to the knower and the known.

Salient Methodological and Content Related in Islamic Philosophy

Prior to my investigation of Mulla Sadra’s philosophy, let me depict some methodological and content-related issues in Islamic philosophy, an investigation that will clarify our subsequent discussions on Mulla Sadra.

A preliminary inquiry of our concerns is on the origin and the scope of philosophy in Islam. To begin with there are three traditions in Islam, religious, philosophical and mystical, which differ in their primary aims, methodology and content. However, usually philosophy has a theologi-
ical beginning. In an examination of any work of a religious thinker such as Al-Ghazali, Fakhr ad-Din Razi (1149-1209), ibn Tamiyyah, or any of the members of the 9th-10th century schools of Islamic dialectical theology, such as the Zahirites (the followers of Dawud ibn `Ali (815–883 AD)), al-Asha`rites or the Mu`tazilites, we note the following: the primary aim of a theologian is to focus on issues related to religion such as Good and Evil, theodicy of free will and determinism, God’s rewards for the believers and punishments for the sinners. In this light, theologians freely make use of the arguments from the authority of the Sunna, quoting Qur`an and Hadith, assuming that it proves their points. However, the use of an argument from authority is restricted to debate between groups who accept the same authority. For example, the Qur`an may be used in debates between Sunnis and Shi’a, but not in transpersonal truth debates between a Muslim and a follower of Daoism. A Muslim, like a believer in any creed, retains the right to ground his/her belief in a sacred text. Obviously Muslims went beyond using arguments from authority. To that end, the Mu`tazla also uses Greek logic, which is supposed to be acceptable universally to all rational thinkers. In this light, to be fair, we should note that the debates between the Muslim dialectical theologians contain sophisticated philosophical arguments. For example, the so-called “occasionalism” of the Ashrites was reformulated by the French philosopher Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715), and here is the major thesis of this school. God is the only ultimate cause of all events; there is no need for concern about explaining a cause and effect relationship as concerned al-Ghazali and the Scottish philosopher, David Hume (1711-1776). However, this doctrine, as shown by the Mu`tazila, raises the question—if human beings are not free, then how can they be punished for their sins?—as a person is responsible only for his or her free acts. Many professional philosophers such as N. Tusi and Gottfried Leibniz (1646-
attempt to solve this problem in the context of the doctrine of the “best of all possible worlds” (Nizām-i Khair-i Kullī). In this light, we could actually state that Islamic philosophy was initiated when Muslim religious thinkers began to reflect on the meaning of Qur’anic passages and propose different readings and interpretations. We note that one can never “escape” philosophizing in content, as life with its sleep and dreams, love and hate, passions and reasons, anxiety and hope, involves philosophical reflections. If so, then we can propose that philosophy began in the 9th Century with dialectical theology or Kalām. How about the poetry of the mystics such as the works of Jallāl ad-Dīn Rūmī (1207-1273) and Hafez (1325-1389)? In this light, we can agree that, in one sense or another, the aim of their poetry is to depict some kind of mystical message of harmony and spiritual peace. But these doctrines are also philosophical, as the following reflections reveal: is life to be viewed in terms of phases (darajāt), stations (maqāmāt) and states (ahwāl)? Is an important aim of the human being to reach salvation (najāt, shifā’) by some kind of union or harmony with God? Indeed, looking at life as a way (tarīqa) is universal; for example the Chinese have a similar idea of the way (Dao) to describe intimate human experience. A number of thinkers have focused on the philosophical and mystical visions of our Iranian poets. For example, our Supreme leader, Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamenei has written an entire essay on the mysticism of poet Hafiz (see Khamenei). In this light, we should all agree, if poets do not use exact logical arguments, often their poems contain much philosophy. A paradigm example is al-Hajj Mulla Hadi al-Sabzawari’s (1797/8-1873) Sharḥ al-Manzuma, a commentary on his own Ghurar al-farā’id (The Blazes of the Gems), a didactic poem (manzuma) describing in a systematic fashion an exposition of the existentialist philosophy of Mulla Sadra. Incidentally, the works of Plato (4th C. BC) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900)
are like poetry; some philosophers such as Martin Heidegger (1899-1976) claim the true philosophy of poetry. In sum, we propose that in our inventory of Islamic philosophy, we should include a number of philosophical poets, besides Jallāl ad-Dīn Rūmī and Hafiz, Sheikh Mahmūd Shabistārī (1288–1340) (especially his Golshān-i Rāz) and Nūr ad-Dīn ʿAbd ar-Rahmān Jāmī (1414-1492). If we follow this path, the contribution of Iranians to Islamic philosophy increases, as a majority of so-called Muslim philosophers and poets were Iranians.

An important lesson given by the prophets has been the lesson of ‘thinking;’ thinking about the world and the relationship between human beings and the world; is it to be considered as an orderly cosmos (dahr) or a chaos? As pointed out by the Greek philosophers, especially Socrates, who reflected on ethics, beyond the naturalistic Greek Ionian thinkers; these reflections extend beyond abstract concepts and sense perception to the aesthetics of “beauty,” and personal ethical issues, and, since a human being is a political animal, also social ethics, politics and laws. There are also different visions of inquiry, love of knowledge (philosophy), or possession of wisdom (hikmat, sophia). Let us proceed by examining a few philosophers who elaborated on the dictum of our Prophet: “seek wisdom, even as far as China.” A major issue that divides, in general, Shi’a and Sunni approaches is the relationship between religious writings, philosophy and mysticism.

The first philosopher of Islam, Abū Yūsuf Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq Al-Kindī (800–870), held that there are different techniques in gathering truth in Islamic studies. In the first section of his book on “First Philosophy,” Kindī remarks,

_We must not be ashamed to admire the truth or to acquire it, from wherever it comes. Even if it should_
come from far-flung nations and foreign peoples, there is for the student of truth nothing more important than the truth, nor is the truth demeaned or diminished by the one who states or conveys it; no one is demeaned by the truth, rather all are ennobled by it. [Kindi]

Once philosophy became better established, as indicated by the period from Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (872-950) onward, there were delineations between purely philosophical and religious topics. Some held that Religion is then taken to represent the route to truth, available to the unsophisticated and simple believer; when compared to philosophy it appears to be a version of the truth, albeit perhaps of poorer conceptual quality. The most determined defender of this view is undoubtedly Ibn Rushd (Averroes, 1126-1198), who attempted a refutation of al-Ghazali against philosophy in his celebrated book *The Incoherence of the Incoherence*.

**Philosophy (falsafa) and Wisdom (ḥikmat)**
Peripatetic philosophy in the Islamic world came to have considerable importance for a fairly limited period, from the third to sixth centuries after the hijrah (ninth to twelfth centuries AD). Sometimes the distinctness of this form of reasoning from traditional Islamic methodologies was emphasized by the use of the term ‘falsafa.’ Often, however, the familiar term ḥikma was used. Ḥikma means ‘wisdom’ and has a much wider meaning than falsafa. Aristotle specified wisdom as a combination of having scientific knowledge and intuition. In many circles, ‘ḥikma’ designates many meanings, including being wise in both practical as well as theoretical issues, while having a calm temperament–qualities that usually come with growing older and expanding one’s experience. Plato, in the *Theatetus*, asserts that while younger persons can learn mathematics, the practice of philosophy in life, if it ever comes, comes after age 40.
Muslim philosophers, however, used the term freely. For example, Shahāb ad-Dīn Al-Suhrawardī, the founder of the philosophy of illumination, selects the title of Ḥikmat al-Ish-rāq (Wisdom of the Illuminists), a title which was taken up later by Mulla Sadra. This manner of philosophy involves the study of the phenomenological sense of reality, which transforms the soul and is never really separated from spiritual purity and religious sanctity. Philosophy as wisdom (ḥikmat) has the advantage of referring to a wide range of conceptual issues within Islam. Philosophy can then deal both with the exoteric aspects of the Qur’anic revelation and the esoteric dimensions which lie at the heart of religion. Both the Qur’an and the universe are often viewed as aspects of divine revelation, which require interpretation, and philosophy, in its widest sense, has a vital role here.

A good example of this wider notion of philosophy lies in the controversy over the ‘oriental philosophy’ (al-ḥikmat al-mashriqiyya) of Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna). Ibn Sīnā is well known as the major philosopher who was aware of the Greek Peripatetic philosophical system, which came to have considerable significance within both Islamic and Western philosophy. His book, Manṭiq al-Mashriqiyyīn (Logic of the Orientals), deals largely with logical differences between him and Aristotle; it also includes a reference to other of his own works in which he claims to have gone in an entirely different direction from that of the Peripatetic (mashshā’ī) thinkers. From what we find in his surviving works, a picture of the ‘oriental philosophy’ can be constructed. The Aristotelian universe becomes transformed, reason is linked to the intellect, the external universe becomes interiorized, facts become symbols and philosophy itself becomes a type of gnosis or sophia. The aim of philosophy is not only the theoretical knowledge of the substances and accidents of the universe, but also the experience of their presence and instantiation in such a way as to enable the soul to free itself
from the confines of the universe. The notion of this ‘oriental philosophy’ has played an important part in the development of future philosophers of illumination and Sufism; these schools seek not only a rational model for the external universe and seek to understand the universe rationally, but, also, to analyze the wonder we feel when we contemplate the divine mystery of that universe.

Mulla Sadra
Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm ibn Yaḥyā al-Qawamī al-Shīrāzī, known also, as Mulla Sadra or Sadr al-Muta’ālīhīn was born in Shiraz, Iran in 979-80 of Hijrah calendar, AD 1571-2. He began his studies in Hozeh of Isfahan; subsequently he went to village named Kahak, near Qum for several years, where he completed the first part of his major work, The Asfār (The Four Journeys).

He studied under two prominent geniuses and scientists, that is, Shaykh Bahā’ al-Dīn ‘Amlī (1547-1621) and Bāqir Mīr Dāmād (d. 1631). Shaykh Bahā’ was not only an expert in Islamic sciences such as jurisprudence, ḥadīth, interpretation, theology, and gnosis, but also a master of astronomy, theoretical mathematics, engineering, architecture, medicine, and some secret supernatural fields of knowledge. Mīr Dāmād was a master of both the Peripatetic and Illuminationist branches of Islamic philosophy. Mulla Sadra obtained most of his knowledge of philosophy and gnosis from Mīr Dāmād.

At the present, Mulla Sadra is viewed by many as the most important and influential philosopher in the Muslim world in the last four hundred years. He stayed for some years in the village of Kahak, near Qom. Then, he returned to Shiraz, where he stayed and taught for the rest of his life. Finally, he died in Basra in AH 1050/AD 1640 while on his seventh pilgrimage to Mecca.
He is the author of about forty treatises and texts. He constructed a critical philosophy that brought together Peripatetics, Illuminationists and Gnostic philosophers along with Shi‘ite theology within the compass of what he termed a ‘meta-philosophy,’ advocating a phenomenological approach to philosophical investigations; moving beyond the simple realism of the major peripatetic thinkers. Accordingly, Mulla Sadra’s thought comprises a coherent philosophical system, including ontology, theology, psychology, eschatology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and logic. His epistemological views are presented under subjects such as mental existence, psychological qualities and accidents, the unity of the knower and the known, and the unity of the intellect and the intelligible. He gives importance to the knowledge of the soul on the basis of the Islamic tradition of ‘know yourself to know God.’ His phenomenological method used immediate experience of phenomena-reality (wujūd). Existence was for him the unique source of both unity and diversity. In this tenor, Mulla Sadra was able to solve many of the logical, metaphysical and theological difficulties that he had inherited from his predecessors. His major philosophical work, the *Four Intellectual Journeys*, points to a model of self-realization, taken by some to be a model of Islamic Philosophy, which integrates the experiential-phenomenological method with the clarity of the conceptual method. Mulla Sadra’s teachers and the impact of the Qur’an and hadith, planted the seeds for transcendent philosophy, the most important school in the history of Islamic philosophy and thought. Clearly an independent school of thought in his philosophical system comprises all central philosophical issues and is well equipped to solve even philosophical issues that might arise in the future. At its surface, Mulla Sadra’s philosophy is similar to peripatetic philosophy. In fact, one can say that the body of this philosophy is peripatetic, while its soul is illumination.
Another important point is that Mulla Sadra holds a strong belief in revelation–sunna and, thus, Qur’an and ḥadīth. As such, he held that the human intellect confirms revelation and revelation supplements intellect. A religious person should believe in the role of intellect for understanding and discovering the truth.

Consequently, Mulla Sadra uses Qur’anic verses as part of his philosophical reasoning. He is inspired by the spirit of the Qur’an in solving some philosophical complexities and problems as he tries to expand the dimensions of his philosophical ideas and thoughts with support from the ḥadīth and sunna (traditions) of the Holy Prophet (p.b.u.h.) and his descendants. At the same time, he sometimes directly refers to some Qur’anic verses as evidence for his arguments and, thereby, demonstrating the rationality of the Holy Qur’an. For him, the Qur’an contains the most profound verses and statements about theology, worldviews, and anthropology. It introduces many important philosophical topics, for example God’s knowledge, Will and Attributes, the concepts of Divine Decree and Destiny, predestination, renunciation, life after death, resurrection, the hereafter, the quality of the material world, creation, the birth of prime matter, the end of the world, and the annihilation of matter. Besides the Qur’an, Mulla Sadra has also profoundly benefited from Peripatetic philosophy, Ishrāqī philosophy, theology, and the traditions of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.), Imām ‘Alī (a.s.) and the Prophet’s descendants. He was influenced by Muḥyaddin Ibn al-‘Arabi in mysticism, Ibn-Sina, Aristotle, Plotinus, Suhrawardi, Naṣīr al-Dīn Tusī, Qiyath al-Dīn Dashtakī ((1462–1543) and Jalāl al-Dīn Dawānī (1426-1502); see his Commentary on Suhrawardi’s “Temples of Light, and Flashes of Illumination on Praiseworthy Ethics, or the Jalalian Ethics). We take Mulla Sadra’s system to be a consistent and a coherent philosophical system. Ontology and the issues related to metaphysics have the greatest part of it. Then the
discussions that are related to theology, psychology, eschatology, epistemology, ethics, aesthetics, and logic, respectively, have shared in this system. It is worth noting that Mulla Sadra included issues of love and aesthetics as a part of theology. Finally, the most important purpose of Islamic philosophy is to know the real world, including God, nature, man and their relationship, knowing through reason, argument, and understanding. Islam also traces this purpose, because Islam has sought to know the truth and the real world, to know the existence of God, and to know man’s duties before God, his creator.

In addition, Islam includes much appreciation as well as emphasis on understanding, reasoning, and knowledge. If the principles of Islam are not understood and proven by reason, then we cannot either be pleased by our beliefs and also cannot attempt to convince others. An Islamic principle asserts that “whatever intellect judges, Islam accepts it and judges according to it.” So there is no conflict between Islam as religion and Islamic philosophy. Revelation and knowledge, intellect and faith do not contradict each other. Thus, in Islamic Philosophy, the results of revelation, intellection, faith, knowledge, and religion harmonize and corroborate each other. This perspective is perhaps the foundation of the Mulla’s Shi’a vision of the unity of knowledge, the theme of this essay.

--------------------------
Bibliography

For brief summaries of Mulla Sadra’s views please consult the following encyclopedia essays. Please note how ‘wujūd’ is translated differently, both as “being” as well as “existence”.


Here are examples of major studies in the works of Mulla Sadra


5. Nasr, S. H. (1978) Sadr al-Din Shirazi and His Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works, Tehran: Imperial Academy of Philosophy. (The first part of a planned, but so far uncompleted, two-volume work, the second volume of which is intended to deal with Mulla Sadra’s philosophical ideas; contains the best bibliography of Mulla Sadra’s works.)


7. Rahman, F. (1975) The Philosophy of Mulla Sadr (Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi), Albany, NY: State University of New York Press. (To date, the only full-scale study of Mulla Sadra’s philosophy in English.)

Mulla Sadra's influence and works.

**Biographical guide**
This biographical guide aims to introduce the reader to the rich variation of Mulla Sadra’s works.

*A Collection of Scientific-Literary Notes* - On some short notes of his own poetry, the statements of philosophers and gnostics, and scientific issues remaining from his youth.

*Ajwabah al-masā’il* - Three treatises in which Mulla Sadra responds to the philosophical questions.

*Al-alfadh al-mufrajadh* – A dictionary for interpreting words in the Qur’an.

*Al-Hikmat al-muta‘āliyah fi’l-asfār al-arba‘ah* - A philosophical encyclopedia and a collection of important issues discussed in Islamic philosophy.

*Al-Hashr* - On resurrection in the Hereafter.

*Al-Hashariyyah* - A treatise on resurrection and people’s presence in the Hereafter.

*Al-Mashā’ir* - On existence and its related subjects and recently translated into English.

*Al-Mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād* - A summary of the second half of Asfar.

*Al-Masā’il al-qudsiyyah* - He has combined epistemology and ontology.

*Al-Maẓāhir* - This book is similar to al-Mabda’ wa’l-ma’ād, but is shorter.

*Al-Mizāj* - He wrote this treatise on the reality of man’s temperament and its relation to the body and soul.

*Al-Qaḍā’ wa’l-qadar* - about the Divine Decree and Destiny.

*Al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* – On the Illuminationist style, and represents his early ideas of his philosophical thoughts.

*Al-Tafsīr (A Commentary upon the Qur’an)* – He interpreted some chapters (Surahs) of the Qur’an: (1. chapter 57: al-Hadid, 2. Commentary on Ayat al-kursi (chapter 2:...

Al-Tanqīḥ – On formal logic.

Al-Taṣawwur wa’l-taṣdīq – On the philosophy of logic and enquires into concept and judgment.

Al-Tashakhkhhus – On individuation, its relation to existence, and principality of ontological issues. Al-Waridat al-qalbiyyah - An inventory of the Divine inspirations and illuminations he had received.


Dīwān shīr (Collection of Poems) - On scholarly and mystic poems in Persian.

Ḩudūth al-ʿalam – Proof of his theories of solid theory through the theory of the trans-substantial motion.

Iksīr al-ʿārifīn – Focuses on Gnostic learning

Īqāẓ al-nā’imīn – On theoretical and practical gnosis, and on the science of monotheism.

Iṣālat-i ja’l-i wujūd - On existence and its principality as opposed to essences.

Ittiḥād al-ʿāqil wa’l-ma’qūl - On demonstration of the philosophical theory, the Unity of the Intellect and the Intelligible.

Ittiṣāf al-māhiyyah bi’l wujūd – On the essence-existence distinctions.

Kasr al-aṣnām al-jāhiliyyah – On demolishing the period of ignorance.

Khalq al-aʿmal - on free will and determinism.

Letters <correspondence between Mulla Sadra and his former teacher, Mīr Dāmād.

Limmiyyah ikhtiṣāṣ al-manṭiqah - A treatise on logic

Mutashābihāt al-Qurʾān - This treatise consists of his interpretations of those Qura’nic verses that have secret and
complicated meanings.
*Radd-i shuhbat-i Iblis* – He explained Satan’s seven paradoxes and provided appropriate answers.
*Sarayān nūr wujūd* - On the quality of the descent or diffusion of existence from the True Source to existents.
*Sharḥ-i shiflower* - He wrote this book on some issues discussed in the part of Ibn Sina’s al-Shifa theology.
*Sharḥ al-hidayah* - On the basis of Peripatetic philosophy.
*Sharḥ-i ḥikmat al-ishrāq* - A useful and profound commentary or collection of glosses on Suhrawardī’s Hikmat al-ishaq and Qutb al-Dīn Shirazi’s commentary upon it.
*Sīh Aṣl* - This is his only book in Persian concerning three moral principles.
*Zād al-musāfir* (or *Zād al-sālik*) In this book, he has tried to demonstrate resurrection and the hereafter using a philosophical approach.