

PSYCHOLOGY, ESCHATOLOGY, AND IMAGINATION  
IN MULLĀ ṢADRĀ SHĪRĀZĪ'S COMMENTARY  
ON THE ḤADĪTH OF AWAKENING

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This article examines the most salient aspects of the commentary upon the well-known '*ḥadīth of awakening*' by the famous Safavid philosopher, Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī. In the context of his commentary upon this tradition, Ṣadrā discusses the nature of imaginal forms and provides a general explanation of how death is a type of awakening. He then goes on to tackle a problem in the history of Islamic philosophy concerning the modality of rewards and punishments in the Afterlife. Here, Ṣadrā challenges some of the eschatological views of Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, while drawing upon both Ibn 'Arabī's teachings on imagination and his own philosophical genius to systematically demonstrate how, in the final analysis, our bodily deaths mark an awakening to the reality of our selves on the plane of imagination.

**Keywords:** Mullā Ṣadrā; Islamic philosophy; Islamic perspectives on death, sleep, and dreaming; imaginal forms; destiny of souls; perception; awakening.

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"People are asleep; when they die, they awaken" (*al-nās niyām fa-idhā mātū intabahū*). This tradition, which will be referred to as the *ḥadīth of awakening*, suggests an affinity between this worldly life (*ḥayāt al-dunyā*) and the state of sleeping. Since death in the eyes of Muslims is indeed a type of awakening from the sleep of heedlessness which characterizes human existence, the *ḥadīth of awakening* could not but capture the imagina-

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*Islam & Science*, Vol. 5 (Summer 2007) No. 1  
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ISSN 1703-7603 (Print); ISSN 1703-7602X (Online)

tion of Islam's foremost thinkers since it succinctly summarizes the essence of Islamic eschatological teachings.<sup>1</sup> Allusions to this tradition in Islamic mystical literature abound.<sup>2</sup> Yet very few authors have commented upon its significance at great length. A noteworthy exception is Mullā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1641), who wrote an important commentary upon it.<sup>3</sup> Ṣadrā's commentary on this *ḥadīth* is a unique contribution to Islamic

1. The *ḥadīth* of awakening is often ascribed to the Prophet or Imām 'Alī. It is not to be found in the major Sunnī *ḥadīth* collections. In his *Aḥādīth-i mathnawī* (Tehran: Chāp-khānah-yi Dānishgāh, 1956), 181 (# 433), Badī' al-Zamān Furūzānfar notes that this tradition is attributed to the Prophet by Ibrāhīm b. 'Alī al-Ḥuṣrī (d. 413/1022) in the latter's *Zahr al-ādāb*, 4 vols. (Cairo: Al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, 1953), 1:60. For an attribution of this tradition to 'Alī in Shī'ī sources, see Muḥammad Bāqir Majlisī, *Biḥār al-anwār*, 110 vols. (Tehran: Jawwād al-'Alawī wa Muḥammad Ākhwundī, 1956-1972), 4:43. The *ḥadīth* of awakening does not appear to be cited in the *Nahj al-balāghah*.
2. See Muḥyī al-Dīn b. al-'Arabī, *Al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, n.d.), 1:207, 313; 2:313, 351, 379, 380; 4:19, 404, 434 (cited twice); *Idem*, *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*, ed. A.'A. 'Afīfī (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1946), 99, 159; Abū Ibrāhīm Mustamlī Bukhārī, *Sharḥ-i ta'arruf* (Lucknow, 1910), 3:98; Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, 6 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Wa'ī, 1997), 1:15; 3:381; 4:246, 260; *Idem*, *Al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*, ed. 'A.Ḥ. Maḥmūd (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub, 1968), 79; Aḥmad al-Ghazālī, *Risālat al-tayr*, 6, in Ghazālī, *Majmū'ah-yi athār-i fārsī-yi Aḥmad Ghazālī*, ed. A. Mujaḥid, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Intishārāt wa Chāp-i Dānishgāh-i Tīhrān, 1991), 218; 'Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī, *Tamhīdāt*, 108, in Hamadānī, *Muṣannafāt*, ed. 'A. Osseiran (Tehran: Chāp-khānah-yi Dānishgāh, 1962); 'Azīz al-Dīn Nasafī, *Sukhan-i ahl-i waḥdat dar bayān-i 'ālam*, 271, in Nasafī, *Le livre de l'homme parfait*, ed. M. Molé (Tehran: Departement d'Iranologie de l'Institut Franco-Iranien, 1962). As noted by Furūzānfar (*op. cit.*), the *ḥadīth* of awakening is alluded to by Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī (d. 672/1273) in book 3, line 1729 of his famous *Mathnawī*. See Rūmī, *The Mathnawī of Jalaluddin Rumi*, ed. and trans. R.A. Nicholson, 8 vols. (London: Luzac, 1924-1940), 3:99 (Persian), 4:97 (English). Outside Sufi literature, the tradition appears (unattributed) in the *Rasā'il* of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā' (fl. 4<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> c.). See Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Al-Rasā'il*, 4 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Ṣādir, 1957), 2:455.
3. Although Mullā Ṣadrā wrote a partial *ḥadīth* commentary on al-Kulaynī's (d. 329/941) *Uṣūl al-kāfī* (available in four volumes as *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfī*, ed. M. Khwājāwī (Tehran: Mu'assasah-yi Mu'āla'āt wa Taḥqīqāt-i Farhangī, 1366 A.H. solar)), his commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening is to be found in his *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-karīm*, ed. M. Khwājāwī, 7 vols. (Qom: Intishārāt-i Bīdār, 1987-1990), 5:239-248. The commentary

thought because it brings together some of the most important psychological and eschatological ideas in Islamic philosophy and theoretical Sufism from the 4th/10th to the 11th/17th centuries.<sup>4</sup> In the pages which follow I will therefore discuss the most important features of Mullā Ṣadrā's commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening, highlighting how one of Islam's most important philosophers was able to expound his teachings on psychology, eschatology, and imagination within the context of a *ḥadīth* commentary.

### Forms in this World and the Next World

Mullā Ṣadrā begins his commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening by stating that the nature of forms in the Afterlife, while resembling the imaginal forms experienced in our dream state or in mirrors in this life, are not essentially the same: "The existence of things (*umūr*) in the Afterlife, although resembling the existence of forms which people see in sleep or in a

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occurs in the context of Ṣadrā's discussion of verse 57 of *Sūrah yāsīn*. According to one of the past century's leading authorities of Islamic philosophy, 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Ṣadrā's commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening was written as a separate treatise. See Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Shirāzī: the renewer of Islamic Philosophy in the 11<sup>th</sup>/17<sup>th</sup> Century," trans. S.H. Nasr in Nasr (ed.), *Mullā Ṣadrā Commemorative Volume* (Tehran: Dānishgāh-i Tih-rān, 1961), 33. See also S.H. Nasr, *The Transcendent Theosophy of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī*, 48; 52, n. 27. Ṣadrā cites the *ḥadīth* elsewhere in his oeuvre, often attributing it to 'Alī. See, for example, his *Al-Ḥikmat al-muta'āliyah fī al-asfār al-'aqliyyah al-arba'ah*, 9 vols. (Beirut, Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 2002, repr. ed.), 7:28; *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb*, ed. M. Khwājawī (Beirut, Mu'assasah al-Tārīkh al-'Arabī, 2002, repr. ed.), 81; *Tafsīr*, 2:5, 6:202. In his *Al-Mabda' wa al-ma'ād*, ed. Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1976), 427, Ṣadrā seems to attribute this tradition to the Prophet. He also cites it at least one other time in this work, namely on p. 409, this time without attributing it to anyone. See Sayyid Sadrudin Taheri, "A Critical Study of Resurrection in the Qur'anic Commentary and Philosophical Ideas of Ṣadr al-Muta'allihin (sic)." *Islam-West Philosophical Dialogue: The Papers Presented at the World Congress on Mulla Sadra (May, 1999, Tehran)*, vol. 10 (*Eschatology, Exegesis, Hadīth*) (Tehran: Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research Institute, 2005), 59. In the context of his treatment of Ṣadrā's views on resurrection, Taheri discusses a few passages from Ṣadrā's commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening. See Taheri, *op. cit.*, 50, 66-67.

4. For a survey of the nature and development of theoretical or doctrinal Sufism, see S. H. Nasr, "Theoretical Gnosis and Doctrinal Sufism and their Significance Today" in *Transcendent Philosophy* 6 (2005): 1-36.

mirror in one respect, are not so [in actuality].”<sup>5</sup> This is due to the fact that in the Afterlife, the things people see and experience are imaginal representations of the fruits of their actions in this world. But those forms which appear to us in sleep are not real in the way the images we experience in our waking state are, nor are they real in the way the forms presented to us in the Afterlife will be. Because of these considerations Ṣadrā goes on to say that “the existent form (*al-ṣūrah al-marwūdah*) [which appears] in sleep and in the mirror is an impotent thing whose appearance is pure fancy (*al-ḥikāyah al-mahḍah*).”<sup>6</sup> Dreams imaginably represent to the dreamer the contents of his conscience. The same idea holds true for objects reflected in mirrors. The reflection of an object in a mirror is not the object itself. At the same time, it does capture something of the true nature of the object placed before the mirror. If it were otherwise, people would not, for example, brush their hair in front of mirrors, nor would they rely upon them for any representations of reality. The forms people receive in their dreams and in mirrors are therefore both real and unreal. In the Afterlife, those things which are the imaginalizations of our actions in this world, or, rather, the things which are represented to us as the ‘physical’ manifestations of our deeds here on earth, also reflect something of the reality with which we were engaged in the previous world. On the other hand, these forms are not simply representations, as are the objects reflected in mirrors or those images produced in dreams. They are more real than either of these, since these forms belong to a different order of reality:

As for forms (*ṣuwar*) which exist in the Afterlife, they are things potent with existence and intense in effects. Their relation to worldly forms is like the relation of sensory forms to existent forms in sleep, among which are the remnants from the impressions of sense-intuition and the storehouses of imagination.<sup>7</sup>

Thus Mullā Ṣadrā begins his commentary by discussing the correlation between the things in the Afterlife and those things which are experienced in a dream state or reflected in mirrors. He then shows how the Afterlife actually deals with real forms whereas the contents of dreams or objects reflected in mirrors do not. Why he frames the discussion in this way is not readily apparent. It is only when he introduces the *ḥadīth* of

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5. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:239. Unless otherwise stated, translations are my own.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

awakening that the significance of his opening lines emerges:

It is just as it has been related in the *ḥadīth* about his saying (God bless him and his family), “People are asleep; when they die, they awaken.” So it is known from this that existence in [this] world is sleep and life therein is a dream.<sup>8</sup>

It therefore becomes clear that what Mullā Ṣadrā was trying to do by juxtaposing the existence of things in the Afterlife with the existence of such things as the objects of our dreams in this life was to provide an analogy of the relative unreality of this world. When we awaken from our dreams in this world, we look back upon them and marvel at how ‘real’ they seemed while they were taking place. Our dreams seem so real because they capture something of the reality with which we are familiar in our waking state. But the forms in our dreams are nothing but the imaginalized projections of the furniture which makes up ‘reality’ in our waking state. Likewise, when we die, our present waking state will seem like nothing but a dream in relation to our new form of existence. Just as we awaken to ‘reality’ in this life from our dream state, so too do we awaken to the reality of the Afterlife from the dream of this life when we die. Yet the things in the Afterlife will convey to us something of the reality with which we were familiar in the previous life, and this is the point that Ṣadrā would like to drive home.

### **The Soul’s Imaginal Potency and its Awakening**

As was seen above, Mullā Ṣadrā has in mind the imaginal nature of the contents of our dreams when he calls them ‘pure fancy.’ Yet he is also aware of the fact that these imaginal representations in our dreams are connected to the individual soul. Such images belong to the contiguous imagination (*al-khayāl al-muttaṣil*), as opposed to the discontinuous imagination (*al-khayāl al-munfaṣil*). The former term denotes the fact that there is a subjective element to the imaginal forms presented to us. In other words, the imaginal objects which appear to us are intimately connected to our personality, human experience, and nature. The latter term, on the other hand, denotes the fact that there is an objective element to the imaginal forms presented to us. But those images which come to us from the world of imagination objectively are nonetheless conditioned by the ‘field’ of our contiguous imagination.<sup>9</sup> It is therefore the contig-

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8. Ibid.

9. See Henry Corbin, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn ‘Arabī*, trans.

uous imagination which can produce forms in this world and the next world. When the soul dies, it simply awakens to the reality of imagination itself. It is here that Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 638/1240) has immediate relevance. In his works he makes it very clear that the dream state of this world is nothing but a dream within a dream.<sup>10</sup> When people pass from this life to the next, they move on to another dream state. This time, however, the dream in which they partake is seen for what it really is. They will never cease being in a dream state, since existence itself is nothing but God’s dream. For Ibn ‘Arabī, this dream is what allows for existence to emerge, for if there were no dreaming, there would be no creation.

Souls which depart the world and are still very much drawn to the body will not be able to clearly make their way about the terrain of the Afterlife. Their potency will be weakened by their attachments to those material forms—now non-existent—to which they were attached during their earthly existence. On the other hand, those souls which are able to free themselves from the shackles of materiality during their stay on earth will, once freed from the body, be able to actualize their full potentialities, and will therefore be able to perceive the forms in the next world with utmost clarity. But the clarity of the soul’s vision is always colored by one’s contiguous imagination, as has been demonstrated above. Yet insofar as the soul remains pinned down by matter, the forms it imaginalizes will be blurred. They will be distorted images of the true nature of things:

So long as the soul remains attached to this dense, darkish body—comprised as it is of contraries—it will not be possible for it to bring about the forms and shapes which it desires and wills, but will [bring about] impotent and bodily existence [which proceeds] from the station of remnants and traces, from which the sought after effects do not result.<sup>11</sup>

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Ralph Manheim (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997), 219-224; William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn al-‘Arabī’s Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 116-117. For Mullā Ṣadrā’s teachings on imagination, see Henry Corbin, *En islam iranien*, vol. 4 (Paris: Gallimard, 1972), 106-122; Christian Jambet, *The Act of Being: The Philosophy of Revelation in Mullā Ṣadrā*, trans. Jeff Fort (Brooklyn: Zone Books, 2006), 283-345.

10. See Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fuṣūṣ*, 99-100; Toshihiko Izutsu, *Sufism and Taoism: A Comparative Study of Key Philosophical Concepts*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1984), 7-22.

11. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:240.

What Mullā Ṣadrā is saying here appears to be contrary to the influential doctrine of the soul developed by Ibn Sīnā (d. 428/1037). For Ibn Sīnā, the soul is not a composite thing (*murakkab*) but is simple (*basīl*).<sup>12</sup> Because it is simple, it cannot be composed of both form and matter. The soul for Ibn Sīnā does not consist of matter and is therefore pure form. Since it is pure form, it can only possess actuality (*fi'l*), and never potentiality (*quwwah*).<sup>13</sup> If this is the case, then the function of the soul is purely active. Ibn Sīnā held that the state of actuality which characterizes the soul obtains even when it is attached to the body (the soul is not 'attached' to the body essentially but rather accidentally). Ṣadrā maintains that insofar as the soul is in some way attached to the body it will remain only potential. The tenebrous matter of the body will not allow the soul to actualize its potentialities because of the nature of the body itself:

We have alluded to the fact that the descent of something from its original disposition (*fiṭrah*)<sup>14</sup> [entails] its becoming compounded and weakened. These senses, because they are compounded, [act] as if they are the existent attributes of the soul in its essence, which becomes satiated with one [mode] of existence and compounded in the body. Weakness is what necessitates compoundedness and division, like the pulse whose [speed] multiplies and rapidly pulsates because of [the person's] weak state.<sup>15</sup>

In other words, so long as the soul is attached to the body, it is in some way to be understood as compounded and therefore not active but merely potential. It will thus not be able to bring about the true imaginalized forms appropriate to it. But souls free from the body, that is, souls which are not compounded, are active, and can thus produce forms in accordance with their true natures. Such souls will be felicitous in the next

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12. Abū 'Alī b. Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, ed. F. Rahman (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 231. In his *Avicenna's Psychology* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), 109, Rahman rightly observes that Ibn Sīnā's doctrine of the soul is, in the final analysis, a combination of Neo-Platonic and Aristotelian notions of the soul.
  13. Ibn Sīnā, *Avicenna's De Anima*, 231.
  14. For the soul's 'second *fiṭrah*' in Ṣadrā's eschatology, see Maria Massi-Dakake, "The Soul as *Barzakh*: Substantial Motion and Mullā Ṣadrā's Theory of Human Becoming" in *Muslim World* 94 (2004), 124.
  15. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:241. See also William Chittick, "Eschatology" in *Islamic Spirituality: Foundations*, ed. S.H. Nasr (New York: Crossroad, 1987), 389-391.

world because their knowledge will be active while their sense perception will be potent, this being an inversion of their state while attached to the body on earth: “When the soul returns from this world to its original disposition and essence, its perception of things will become its very potency (*qudrah*); its knowledge will become active and its sense perception potent.”<sup>16</sup>

As the soul rises away from the material realm and intensifies in being (*wujūd*) through the process of substantial motion or change (*al-ḥarakah al-jawhariyyah*), it partakes in higher degrees of perception (*idrāk*).<sup>17</sup> This is why Ṣadrā also states that some souls can witness the things of the Other World even while still attached to the body. Although Ṣadrā does not speak of ‘perception’ as such, he does say that such a state is possible for some souls on account of their sublimity and their proximity to God, as well as

[t]heir shaking off the dust of these sense perceptions from the hems of their souls, and their not looking upon the forms of this [worldly] abode except with the eye of derision. None of the world’s affairs occupy them, and no station veils them, *nor does buying or selling divert them from God’s remembrance. They are in contemplation of the matters related to the next world, which are like the active principles in their essence, attribute and action.*<sup>18</sup>

Such souls are able to exercise what Ṣadrā refers to as free disposal (*taṣarruf*) over the two configurations (*al-nashʿatayn*).<sup>19</sup> Ṣadrā’s usage of the

16. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:241.

17. For perception in Ṣadrā, see S.G. Safavi (ed.), *Perception According to Mulla Sadra* (London: Salman Azadeh, 2002).

18. Ibid. The words in italics allude to Q. 24:37.

19. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:241. *Taṣarruf* becomes a key technical term in later Islamic thought, largely due to Ibn ‘Arabī’s influence. For *taṣarruf* in Ibn ‘Arabī’s writings, see Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 99, 114. By ‘the two configurations’ (*al-nashʿatayn*), Ṣadrā has in mind the configuration of this world, or ‘the first configuration’ (*al-nashʿah al-ūlā*, referred to in Q. 56:62) and the configuration of the next world, or ‘the last configuration’ (*al-nashʿah al-ukhrā*, referred to in Q. 29:20, 53:47). See Ṣadrā, *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, trans. William Chittick (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2003), 98, n. 31; Idem, *The Wisdom of the Throne*, trans. James Morris (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 250, n. 302. For Ṣadrā’s discussion of ‘the three configurations’ (the intellect, the soul, and sense perception/nature) and their correspondence to this world, the next world, and the world of the Command respectively, see *The Elixir of the Gnostics*, 11.



term *taṣarruf* is another way of stating that the unbounded soul will become active. Insofar as the soul is not ‘bound’ to the body—although still attached to it in this worldly life—it is uncompounded and can, in turn, exercise free disposal over the images it brings about. Such unbounded souls are therefore fully awake and “have the ability to existentiate forms and to bring about entities. This is because the authority of the next world and [the fact of] their being resurrected from these trial-filled graves is manifest upon their hearts.”<sup>20</sup> What such souls experience in this world, every other soul will experience in the Afterlife. At death every soul shall indeed awaken:

It is known that every soul, whether it be felicitous or miserable, while it is disengaged from the body and travels to this abode—and is taken from being occupied with the company of others, returning to its essence and its world—its inner faculties [will] become powerful and piercing because of [its] perception of the matters related to the next world, as in His Most High’s saying, [*You were in heedlessness concerning this*] but *We have now lifted your covering from you, so today your sight is piercing!* (Q. 50:22). The unseen forms which store the results of the soul’s actions, its ambitions, the intentions of its disposition and the aims and shortcomings of its aspirations, will be witnessed.<sup>21</sup>



The second part of Mullā Ṣadrā’s commentary on the *ḥadīth* of awakening is a kind of polemic against another towering figure of Islamic thought, Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191). At issue here is Ṣadrā’s contention with a notion in Islamic philosophy concerning the soul’s attachment to one of the celestial bodies after it departs from its terrestrial body. Ṣadrā already explained how the human soul will awaken after departing the body. But what he has not discussed is the question of the different types of souls and their corresponding states of awareness once they are separated from the body. It is clear that some souls will be more awake than others. Yet, insofar as death is an awakening as such, each soul must go through a process of awakening appropriate to its own nature.

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20. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:241.

21. *Ibid.*, 5:242.

In earlier Islamic philosophy some held the position that non-philosophical or non-intellectual souls would encounter imaginalized forms of rewards and punishments in the Afterlife. Why this was even an issue is the result of the ambiguous nature of the destiny of the souls of non-philosophers expounded by the first Neoplatonic Islamic philosopher, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī (d. 339/950). Al-Fārābī believed that many of the souls of non-philosophers who were wicked would simply perish after their bodily deaths.<sup>22</sup> Such a position could not characterize the wider perspective of Islamic philosophy's eschatological teachings because Islam places so much emphasis on the fact that all souls will live on after their bodily deaths. It was through the conception of imagination that a solution was offered which would allow for the souls of non-philosophers, whether good or evil, to continue on into the Afterlife, experiencing a posthumous state commensurate to their non-intellectual natures.

The way this problem was resolved was alluded to by Ibn Sīnā in the section devoted to metaphysics (*ilāhiyyāt*) in his monumental *Shifā'*. It was believed that in the Afterlife non-intellectual souls would attach to one of the celestial bodies in order to imaginalize their rewards or punishments. Discussing the views of those scholars who upheld this position, Ibn Sīnā states:

The instruments [these scholars go on to explain] by means of which [such souls] are enabled to imagine would be something that belongs to celestial bodies. They thus experience all that they have been told in the [terrestrial] world about the states of the grave, the resurrection, and the good in the hereafter.<sup>23</sup>

This is in fact a point to which Ibn Sīnā gives credence but is not dogmatic about. He does not state whether or not he adheres to it and Ṣadrā notes this in his commentary.<sup>24</sup> But in the case of Suhrawardī, the situa-

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22. Majid Fakhry, *Al-Fārābī: Founder of Islamic Neoplatonism: His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2002), 119.

23. Ibn Sīnā, *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, trans. M.E. Marmura (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 2005), 356.

24. Ṣadrā ascribes this same view to Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) at *Tafsīr*, 5:243. In order to refute Ibn Sīnā's position on the non-resurrection of the body, Ghazālī hypothetically argued in his *Tahāfut al-falāsifah* that a 'replica' of the human body would be reproduced for the soul to attach to it at the time of resurrection. See M.E. Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Bodily Resurrection and Causality in the *Tahāfut* and the *Iqtisād*" in *Aligarh Journal of Islamic Thought* 2 (1989), 46-75, reprinted in M.E.

tion is quite different. As Ṣadrā himself remarks, he is particularly at odds with Suhrawardī since he upheld belief in a version of this position.<sup>25</sup> In his *Talwīḥāt* Suhrawardī states:

As for what some of the scholars have said about there being a celestial body which acts as a place for the imaginalizations [of either rewards or punishments] for groups amongst the blessed and the damned—this being so because the intellectual world was not comprehended by them and [because] their attachment to [terrestrial] bodies was not severed, while still [having] the [imaginal] faculty from whose standpoint the soul needs to be attached to the body—this is sound. As for the blessed, they shall imaginalize wondrous and delightful images and forms and shall enjoy them. In this way shall the case be with all that is enjoyed [by them], in our opinion.<sup>26</sup>

Suhrawardī, although acknowledging the general truth of this idea, only goes on to explain the state of the blessed and not the damned. Ṣadrā is aware that Suhrawardī in fact disagrees with the view of his predecessors that the damned should attach to the same celestial bodies as the blessed.<sup>27</sup> This is because the celestial bodies to which the blessed attach are themselves noble and luminous and thus cannot allow for the souls of the damned to attach to them.<sup>28</sup> In order to overcome this problem Suhrawardī says that the damned will go to an interstitial world (*barzakh*) in order to undergo the imaginalizations of their wicked deeds on earth: “Therein shall their evil actions be imaginalized for them [in the form of] images such as fire, biting snakes, stinging scorpions, and the [tree of] *Zaqqūm* [whose fruit] is eaten.”<sup>29</sup>

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Marmura, *Probing in Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Global Academic Publishing, 2005), 273-299.

25. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:243.

26. Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī, *Oeuvres philosophiques et mystiques*, eds. H. Corbin (vols. 1-2) and S.H. Nasr (vol. 3) (Tehran: Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1976-1977, repr. ed.), 1:89-90. Ṣadrā cites most of the passage in question at *Tafsīr*, 5:242-243.

27. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:243.

28. Suhrawardī, *op. cit.*, 1:90, cited by Ṣadrā at *Tafsīr*, 5:243.

29. Suhrawardī, *op. cit.*, 1:90-91, cited by Ṣadrā at *Tafsīr*, 5:243. The last part of the sentence literally translates as follows: “and [the tree of] *Zaqqūm* which is drunk.” The tree of *Zaqqūm* is indirectly referred to in Q. 17:60 and explicitly mentioned in Q. 37:62-66, Q. 44:43-46, and Q. 56:52-53.

### Şadrā's Response to Suhrawardī

In his response to Suhrawardī Mullā Şadrā says that the only way good non-philosophical souls can be attached to celestial bodies is positionally (*wad'ī*); that is, where the body acts as a type of mirror which reflects the soul's state to itself.<sup>30</sup> Since a soul's state reflects into the mirror of the celestial body, the image which is reflected by it is an imaginalization of the state of the soul.<sup>31</sup> In other words, the celestial bodies are unable to affect the souls attached to them. But the celestial bodies, owing to the fact that they play a purely passive and representational role for that which is placed before them, cannot be said to actually reflect the imaginalizations of the soul. Şadrā explains why this is the case:

Assuming that they [the celestial bodies] are in fact mirror-like (*mirā'ī*), the forms impressed upon their mirrors would be the imaginalizations of the celestial spheres (*aflāk*) and whatever is under their control, not the imaginalizations of these souls. So how can they state that it is possible for these forms to be that which the blessed enjoy or [that] through which the damned are punished?<sup>32</sup>

Şadrā then says that the soul is the locus of imaginalizations, which means that it need not attach to any type of celestial body. For him, the events which take place during man's posthumous state occur within the human soul itself:

Rather, the truth is that the forms of enjoyment for the blessed and punishment for the damned will be in the second configuration (*al-nash'ah al-thānīyah*) just as the true, Prophetic Sacred law has promised. [...] Their loci are the souls of these two groups.<sup>33</sup>

After expressing his disagreement with Suhrawardī concerning the destiny of good non-philosophical souls, Şadrā draws on the authority of one of the key members of the school of Ibn 'Arabī, Dāwūd al-Qayşarī (d. 750/1350).<sup>34</sup> He quotes al-Qayşarī as saying that the bodies to which the

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30. Şadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:243-244.

31. *Ibid.*, 5:244-245.

32. *Ibid.*, 5:244.

33. *Ibid.*, 5:246. 'The second configuration' is a synonym for 'the last configuration.' See n. 19 above.

34. For the life and thought of Qayşarī, see Mehmet Bayrakdar, *La Philosophie Mystique chez Dawud de Kayseri* (Ankara: Editions Ministère

souls become attached are nothing but the actual imaginalizations of the acts people performed during their earthly existence.<sup>35</sup> He then ends his discussion by quoting from the sixty-third chapter of Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Futūḥāt*. In this chapter Ibn ‘Arabī discusses the nature of the *barzakh*, likening the entire situation of existence to a horn of light.<sup>36</sup> The things which will be perceived in the Afterlife, Ibn ‘Arabī tells us, will appear to us as imaginalized representations of our actions, depending on the degree of the light’s intensity which colors them within the horn: “All of the things which man will perceive after death in the *barzakh* will only be perceived through the very forms in which they are in the horn, and through its light, which is true perception.”<sup>37</sup> Souls closer to the tip of the horn will be characterized with more light. The imaginal images which will appear to these souls will be clearer and truer than those imaginal images which appear to souls closer to the wider end of the horn. Ṣadrā then cites Ibn ‘Arabī’s closing lines of this chapter:

Every man in the *barzakh* will be recompensed with what he has earned, [being] confined to the forms of his actions until he is taken on the Day of Resurrection from these forms to the last configuration (*al-nash’ah al-ākhirah*). And God speaks the truth, and He guides the way (Q. 33:4).<sup>38</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā clearly distances himself from Suhrawardī’s position that good non-philosophical souls will attach to one of the celestial bodies in order to experience the imaginalizations of their good deeds. What is interesting to note is that Ṣadrā’s general position concerning the imaginalized state of the Afterlife is almost identical to Suhrawardī’s position concerning the destiny of wicked non-philosophical souls. Ṣadrā, like Ibn ‘Arabī, believed that souls must attach to bodies in order to experience

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de la Culture, 1990).

35. Ṣadrā, *Tafsīr*, 5:247. Khwājawī notes that Ṣadrā attributes this statement to Ibn ‘Arabī in two of his other works (*Al-Asfār* and *Al-Mabdā’ wa al-ma’ād*). Khwājawī traces the statement back to al-Qayṣarī’s famous introduction to his commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ*. See *Tafsīr*, 5:247, n. 1.
36. A diagram of the horn of light can be found in Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge*, 16. The section where Ibn ‘Arabī discusses the horn of light in this chapter is translated in Chittick, *op. cit.*, 122-123.
37. Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:307. Ṣadrā cites this passage, worded slightly differently, at *Tafsīr*, 5:248. Cf. Corbin, *En islam iranien*, vol. 4, 107 ff.
38. Ibn ‘Arabī, *Futūḥāt*, 1:307. This entire passage, minus the Qur’anic verse, is cited by Ṣadrā at *Tafsīr*, 5:248.

the imaginalizations of their actions. But this occurs for every individual soul, not simply for the non-philosophical ones, let alone the wicked non-philosophical ones. These bodies to which the souls attach in the Afterlife are formed in the *barzakh*,<sup>39</sup> and are therefore subtle and psychic, not material.<sup>40</sup> The most important point which obtains from Ṣadrā's 'critique' of Suhrawardī is that Ṣadrā holds the position that souls become the very mirrors which reflect the imaginalizations of their actions to themselves. That bodies are still required for the souls' imaginalizations to come about should not be confused with Ṣadrā's disapproval of Suhrawardī's belief in the destiny of good non-philosophical souls becoming attached to celestial bodies. There, as we have seen, the celestial bodies somehow become mirrors which reflect the souls' imaginalizations to themselves. Yet for Ṣadrā, upon dying each individual will awaken to his own reality reflected in the mirror of his soul.

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39. See Chittick, "Eschatology", 389-391.

40. See Massi-Dakake, *op. cit.*, 124-127.