

muta'āliyah, chosen by Mullā Ṣadrā to specify his predominantly reconstructed system of metaphysics, when translated “transcendental theosophy”, will at best lead to a misunderstanding for those interested in the analytical aspect of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought.

- 10 S. H. Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and his Transcendent Theosophy: Background, Life and Works* (Tehran, 1978), and his “Mullā Ṣadrā”, in Sharif (ed.), *A History of Muslim Philosophy*.
- 11 See James Morris, *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton, 1981). Morris, too, emphasizes a presumed “transcendental” element in Mullā Ṣadrā's thought, which is, however, a clear and systematic concern on the part of the great thinker to construct a valid, consistent system of metaphysics where a well-defined philosophical terminology is employed to refine mostly classical ontological and epistemological arguments. The new system is called *al-hikmat al-muta'āliyah*, best translated as “metaphysical philosophy”. This philosophical system bears little resemblance to the theosophical writings of Swedenborg (as claimed by Corbin) or Rudolf Steiner, or the ideas of the Theosophical Society (although it does share elements in common with theosophy as it was originally understood namely as *theosophia* (literally divine wisdom or *al-hikmat al-ilāhiyyah*)) [eds].
- 12 See Mehdi Ha'iri Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence* (Albany, 1992).
- 13 This epistemological principle is among the set of twelve philosophical problems commonly believed to constitute Mullā Ṣadrā's greatest achievements in advancing philosophical arguments. See, for example, Qazwīnī, *op. cit.*: 4–5; and Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *op. cit.*: 21–5. I have elsewhere shown, however, that the principle of the unity of the subject and object as intuitive consciousness of a thing as-it-is was first fully developed by Suhrawardī in his theory of knowledge by Illumination. See my *Knowledge and Illumination* (Atlanta, 1990): 143–55.
- 14 See Ṭabāṭabā'ī, *op. cit.*: 25–6. For a bibliography of Mullā Ṣadrā see Nasr, *Ṣadr al-Dīn*: 40–50.
- 15 Many of these works remain unpublished, some have been printed in facsimile editions, and *Sharḥ al-uṣūl al-kāfi* has been published in an as yet incomplete version in Tehran (1992).
- 16 This work has been edited and published by M. Ridā al-Muẓaffar (Tehran, 1960); an older facsimile edition of this work is also available (Tehran, n.d.).
- 17 This work has been edited and published by Jalāl Āshṭiyānī (Mashhad, 1967).
- 18 Both are printed in facsimile editions: *Sharḥ al-shifā': al-ilāhiyyāt* (reprint: Tehran, 1988); and *Ta'līqāt* (Gloss on *Hikmat al-Isbrāq*) in Shīrāzī, *Sharḥ hikmat al-Isbrāq* (Tehran, 1895), margins.

CHAPTER 36

Mullā Ṣadrā: his teachings *Seyyed Hossein Nasr*



Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, known as Mullā Ṣadrā, appeared nearly a thousand years after the rise of Islam and his works represent a synthesis of the millennium of Islamic thought which preceded him. He was thoroughly versed in the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*, Islamic philosophy and theology, Sufism and even the history of Islamic thought, and must have had access to an unusually rich library. To all his knowledge must be added his own intellectual powers as a philosopher and visionary and intuitive capabilities as a gnostic (*ʿārif*) who was able to have direct experience of Ultimate Reality or what in the later school of Islamic philosophy and theosophy is called “gnostic experience” (*tajruba-yi ʿirfānī*). His knowledge of the revealed sources of Islam was probably more extensive than that of any other Islamic philosopher. It included intimacy not only with the Qur'ān, but also well-known commentaries, not only prophetic *Ḥadīth* but also the sayings of the Shi'ite Imāms whose philosophical significance he revealed for the first time. His Qur'ānic commentaries and *Sharḥ uṣūl al-kāfi* (“Commentary upon the *Uṣūl al-kāfi*” of Kulaynī) and commentary upon the Light Verse (*āyat al-nūr*), both among the premier masterpieces of Islamic thought, attest to his incredible mastery of the Qur'ān and *Ḥadīth*.

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ AND EARLIER ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY

Mullā Ṣadrā was also knowledgeable in the deepest sense in the schools of Islamic philosophical thought before him. He knew Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy intimately, especially the thought of Ibn Sīnā, upon whose *Shifā'* he wrote a major commentary. But he was also well

acquainted with later Peripatetics, such as Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī and Athīr al-Dīn Abharī, upon whose *al-Hidāyah* ("The Guide") he wrote a commentary which was destined to become one of his most popular works, especially in India. He was also a master of *ishrāqī* thought and copied a number of the visionary recitals of Suhrawardī in his own hand as well as writing a major commentary in the form of glosses upon the *Hikmat al-ishrāq* ("Theosophy of the Orient of Light") of the master of the School of Illumination. He was also well versed in both Sunni and Shi'ite *kalām* or theology, especially the works of al-Ghazzālī and Imām Fakr al-Dīn Rāzī whom he cites often especially in the *Asfār* ("The Four Journeys") which is his masterpiece and like the mother of all his other books. Moreover, he was well acquainted with Shi'ite *kalām* which included Twelve-Imām Shi'ism to which he belonged as well as Ismā'ilism whose works he studied carefully including philosophical tracts such as the *Rasā'il* ("Treatises") of the Ikhwān al-Ṣafā'.¹

Finally, it is most important to realize Mullā Ṣadrā's mastery of the doctrines of Sufism or gnosis especially as taught by Ibn 'Arabī. In certain issues such as eschatology, he borrows heavily from the Andalusian master, and the last book of the *Asfār*, in which he deals with *al-ma'ād* or eschatology is in fact replete with extensive quotations from Ibn 'Arabī's *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah* ("The Meccan Illuminations"). Moreover, he had a special love for Persian Sufi poetry and quotes from its masters such as 'Aṭṭār and Rūmī even in the middle of his Arabic works. Part of this knowledge is derived from the earlier masters of the School of Iṣfahān such as its founder Mīr Dāmād, a school to which Mullā Ṣadrā belonged, but his knowledge in these matters goes beyond any of his teachers and represents his own extensive study of the major works and sources of Islamic thought.¹

THE SYNTHESIS OF PREVIOUS SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT AND MODES OF KNOWING

Mullā Ṣadrā synthesized not only various schools of Islamic thought but also the paths of human knowledge. His own life, based upon great piety, deep philosophical introspection and reasoning and purification of his inner being until his "eye of the heart" opened and he was able to have a direct vision of the spiritual world, attests to the unity of the three major paths of knowledge in his own person. These three paths are according to him revelation (*al-wahy*), demonstration or intellection (*al-burhān*, *al-ta'aqqul*) and spiritual or "mystical" vision (*al-mukāshafah*, *al-mushāhadah*). Or, to use another terminology prevalent among his school, he followed a way which synthesized *al-Qur'ān*, *al-burhān* and *al-'irfān*, which correspond to the terms above.

Mullā Ṣadrā's epistemology is directly related to that of Suhrawardī and the school of Illumination in general, a school in which distinction is made between conceptual knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*) and presential knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥudūrī*),² forms of knowledge which are unified in the being of the possessor of knowledge on the highest level, a person whom Suhrawardī calls *ḥakīm muta'allih*, literally a wise man, philosopher or theosopher who has become imbued with Divine Qualities and become "God-like". Conceptual knowledge is gained through concepts in the mind of that which is to be known whereas presential knowledge implies the presence of the very reality to be known in the human intellect without the intermediary of mental concepts such as when one knows oneself, the intelligibles or the divine realities. Such knowledge is illuminative and beyond the realm of ratiocination, but it is not without intellectual content. Mullā Ṣadrā accepted this *ishrāqī* thesis, to which he added the significance of revelation as a foundational source for knowledge of a philosophical and theosophical order. The tradition of Islamic philosophy in Persia accepted fully this truth and awarded to Mullā Ṣadrā the title of Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn, that is, foremost among those who according to Suhrawardī belong to the highest category of possessors of metaphysical knowledge. No higher title could be given to anyone in the context of the world view in which later Islamic philosophy functioned.

In any case the grand synthesis of Islamic thought created by Mullā Ṣadrā is based on the synthesis of these three ways of knowing through which he was able to integrate the earlier schools of Islamic thought into a unified world view and create a new intellectual perspective known as *al-ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* which a number of leading scholars of Islamic philosophy who have written on him in European languages, such as Henry Corbin and Toshihiko Izutsu, have translated as the "transcendent theosophy"³ while a number of scholars have protested against using such a term.⁴ In any case the "transcendent theosophy" marks the birth of a new intellectual perspective in the Islamic world, one which has had profound influence during the later centuries in Persia as well as in Iraq and India, while the term *al-ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* had been used in a more general and less defined sense by a number of earlier Islamic thinkers such as Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī.⁵ In analysing the various aspects of Mullā Ṣadrā's thought we are in reality studying the *ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* which became a distinct school of Islamic thought much like the Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) and Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) schools. Mullā Ṣadrā was in fact so devoted to this term that he used it as part of the title of his major opus which is *al-Asfār al-arba'ah fi'l-ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* ("The Four Journeys Concerning Transcendent Theosophy").

The foundation of the "transcendent theosophy" and the whole metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā is the science of being (*wujūd*), which is used by him to denote both existence, in the sense of the existence of

objects, and existence that is not in any way privative but which also includes the Divine Principle, Pure Being and even the Absolute, which is beyond Being as ordinarily understood. Much of his writings, including nearly all of the first book of the *Asfār*, is devoted to this issue and he returns again and again to it in such works as *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* ("Divine Witnesses"), *al-Hikmat al-arshiyyah* ("The Wisdom of the Throne"), *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād* ("The Origin and the Return") and especially *Kitāb al-mashā'ir* ("The Book of Metaphysical Penetrations") which is the most important summary treatment of this subject in his writings.⁶

❧ THE STUDY OF BEING ❧

At the heart of the whole philosophical exposition of Mullā Ṣadrā stands the gnostic experience of Being as Reality. Our usual experience of the world is that of things which exist, this ordinary experience serving as the basis of Aristotelian metaphysics which is based on existents (*mawjūd*). For Mullā Ṣadrā, however, there occurred a vision in which he saw the whole of existence not as objects which exist or existents but as a single reality (*wujūd*) whose delimitations by various quiddities (*māhiyyāt*) gives the appearance of a multiplicity which "exists" with various existents being independent of each other. Heidegger complained that Western metaphysics had gone astray since the time of Aristotle by studying the existent (*das Seiende*), to use his vocabulary, and that the proper subject of metaphysics was existence itself or *das Sein* with whose study he was starting a new chapter in Western philosophical thought.⁷ As far as Islamic philosophy is concerned, such a distinction was made three centuries before Heidegger by Mullā Ṣadrā who according to himself received through inspiration a vision of reality in which everything was seen as acts of existence (*wujūd*) and not objects that exist (*mawjūd*). The vast development of Ṣadrian metaphysics is based upon this basic experience of Reality and subsequent conceptual distinctions made on the basis of this experience of *wujūd* as being at once one, graded and principal.

Mullā Ṣadrā distinguishes clearly between the concept of being (*mashūm al-wujūd*) and the reality of being (*ḥaqīqat al-wujūd*). The first is the most obvious of all concepts and the easiest to comprehend while the second is the most difficult for it requires extensive mental preparation as well as the purification of one's being so as to allow the intellect within to function fully without the veils of passion and to be able to discern *wujūd* as Reality. That is why one of Mullā Ṣadrā's most famous followers, Ḥājī Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī, writes in the *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*, which is a summary of the master's doctrines,

Its [*wujūd*'s] notion is one of the best known things,
But its deepest reality is in the extremity of hiddenness.⁸

A consequence of the gnostic experience of being is the realization of its unity, which is called *waḥdat al-wujūd*. This fundamental doctrine of Sufi metaphysics is associated with Ibn 'Arabī but has possessed many interpretations ranging from the extreme interpretation of it by the Andalusian Sufi and philosopher Ibn Sab'īn, according to whom only God is real and nothing else exists in any way, to Ibn 'Arabī's interpretation, which sees the manifested order as theophanies (*tajalliyāt*) of the Divine Names and Qualities upon the mirror of nothingness, to the view of Mullā Ṣadrā, who conceives the unity of being in relation to the multiplicity of existence as the rays of the sun in relation to the sun. The rays of the sun are not the sun and at the same time are nothing but the sun. In the *Asfār*, which contains a history of Islamic philosophy⁹ as well as his own teachings, Mullā Ṣadrā deals extensively with various understandings of this central doctrine before turning to the exposition of his own views.¹⁰ In any case, *waḥdat al-wujūd* is a cornerstone of Ṣadrian metaphysics without which his whole world view would collapse.

A companion doctrine is *tashkīk al-wujūd* or the gradation of being. Being is not only one but it also participates in a gradation or hierarchy from the Being of God to the existence of the pebble on the beach. Every higher level of *wujūd* contains all the reality that is manifested below it. Here Mullā Ṣadrā bases himself upon the Suhrawardian doctrine of differentiation and gradation according to which things can be distinct from each other through the very element that unites them such as the light of the candle and the light of the sun which are united by being both light and yet are distinct from one another also by light which is manifested in the two cases according to different degrees of intensity. Being is like light in that it possesses degrees of intensity while being a single reality.¹¹ The universe in its vast multiplicity is therefore not only unified but is also thoroughly hierarchical. One might say that Mullā Ṣadrā accepted the idea of the "great chain of being" which has had such a long life in the West from Aristotle to the eighteenth century but in the light of the unity of being which gives a completely different meaning to the doctrine of cosmic and universal hierarchy.

The views of *wujūd* are complemented by the principle of *aṣālat al-wujūd* or principality of existence. To understand this doctrine, it is necessary first of all to turn to the classical distinction in Islamic philosophy between existence (*wujūd* in its meaning of being related to the world of multiplicity) and *māhiyyah* or quiddity which in its original Latin form is derived directly from the Arabic *māhiyyah*.¹² All objects are composed of these two components, the first corresponding to the answer given to the question "is it?", and the second to the question

"what is it?". The question posed in later Islamic philosophy, and especially by Mullā Ṣadrā, is which of these elements is principal and bestows reality upon an object. Mullā Ṣadrā's own teacher Mīr Dāmād and Suhrawardī are considered as followers of the school of principiality of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*) while Ibn Sīnā is considered as a follower of *aṣālat al-wujūd*, although in his case this doctrine takes on a completely different meaning than in Mullā Ṣadrā since the former did not believe in *wahdat al-wujūd*.

In any case in his youth, Mullā Ṣadrā followed his teacher Mīr Dāmād and only after another visionary and gnostic experience came to realize that it is *wujūd* which bestows reality upon things and that the *māhiyyāt* are literally nothing in themselves and are abstracted by the mind from the limitations of a particular act of *wujūd*. When we say that a horse exists, following common sense we think that the horse is a reality to which existence is added. In reality, however, what we are perceiving is a particular act of *wujūd* which through the very fact that it is manifested is limited to a particular form which we perceive as horse. For those who have realized the truth, the fact that a horse exists becomes transformed into the reality that the act of being has manifested itself in a particular form which we call horse. The form or *māhiyyah* of the horse has no reality of its own but derives all of its reality from the act of *wujūd*.¹³

Reality is then nothing other than *wujūd*, which is at once one and graded, existentiating the reality of all things. The metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā can in fact be understood by understanding not only these principles but also their interrelations. *Wujūd* is not *only* one but also graded. And it is not *only* graded but also principal or that which bestowed reality upon all quiddities, which in themselves possess no reality at all. The vast metaphysical edifice created by Mullā Ṣadrā and his whole theology, cosmology, psychology and eschatology rely upon the three principles of *wahdat al-wujūd*, *tashkīk al-wujūd* and *aṣālat al-wujūd* and it is only in the light of these principles that his other doctrines can be understood.

TRANS-SUBSTANTIAL MOTION AND THE CREATION OF THE WORLD

One of the most striking doctrines of Mullā Ṣadrā is trans-substantial motion (*al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah*) which is the basis of his explanation of many of the most difficult problems of traditional philosophy including the creation of the world and the whole meaning of becoming in light of the Immutable and the Eternal.¹⁴ As is well-known, earlier Islamic philosophers, especially Ibn Sīnā, had followed Aristotelian natural

philosophy in accepting motion (*al-ḥarakah*) only in the categories of quantity (*kamm*), quality (*kayf*), situation (*wadʿ*) and place (*ʿayn*), all of which are accidents and denied explicitly the possibility of motion in the category of substance. Ibn Sīnā's main argument was that motion requires a subject that moves and if the very substance of an object changes through transubstantial motion, then there will be no subject for motion.

Mullā Ṣadrā opposed this thesis directly by saying that any change in the accidents of an object requires in fact a change in its substance since accidents have no existence independent of substance. He asserts that there is always "some subject" (*mawḍūʿun mā*) for motion even if we are unable to fix it and delimit it logically. Mullā Ṣadrā asserts that the whole of the physical and even psychic or imaginal universes which extend up to the Immutable or luminous Archetypes are in constant motion or becoming. Were it to be otherwise, the effusion (*fayḍ*) of Being could not reach all things. This trans-substantial motion, which Henry Corbin calls "l'inquiétude de l'être" referring to the existence of the universe below the level of the intelligible and archetypal realities, is not to be, however, confused with the re-creation of the world in every instant as taught by the Sufis.¹⁵ In the Sufi doctrine at every moment the universe is annihilated and re-created. Previous forms return to the Divine Order and new forms are manifested as theophany. That is why this doctrine is called *al-labs ba'd al-khal'* (literally, dressing after undressing of forms).

In contrast Mullā Ṣadrā's doctrine has been called *al-labs ba'd al-labs* (that is, dressing after dressing). This implies that the form and matter of an existent become themselves the matter for a new form and that this process goes on continuously as if one were to put on one coat on top of another. All beings in this world are moving vertically as a result of trans-substantial motion until they reach the plenum of their archetypal reality. The sperm becomes a foetus and grows to the form of a baby who is then born and continues to grow from one form to another until he or she reaches full maturity and the body becomes weaker as the soul grows stronger until one dies and reaches the "imaginal world" and finally the Divine Presence. Each state of this movement contains the forms of its earlier states of existence, while this transubstantial movement continues throughout all these stages.

It is important to emphasize that Mullā Ṣadrā's dynamic vision of the world in constant becoming, which implies the continuous intensification of the act of *wujūd* within a particular being, must not in any way be confused with Darwinian evolution. For Mullā Ṣadrā, the beings of this world are manifestations of the light of *wujūd* cast upon their archetypal realities which through the arc of descent (*al-qaws al-nuzūlī*) bring various creatures into the realm of physical existent. Trans-substantial motion marks the arc of ascent (*al-qaws al-ṣuʿūdī*) through which the

ever-increasing intensity of light of *wujūd* allows existents to return to their archetypal realities in the supernal realm. For Darwinism, on the other hand, there are no such things as archetypal realities and the species, far from reflecting celestial archetypes, are merely forms generated by the flow of matter in time. Furthermore, for evolution the role of *wujūd*, its unity, gradation and principiality are meaningless whereas for Mullā Ṣadrā they constitute the very foundations of his metaphysics. Also for Mullā Ṣadrā trans-substantial motion is telological and has an important spiritual role to play. The universe is moving toward a perfection which is its purpose and end and the spiritual progress of humanity is also achieved through a mode of trans-substantial motion. A saint is not only more perfect than others. It might be said that he or she is more than others in the sense that the act of *wujūd* in him or her is of a more intense degree than in less perfect human beings. It would therefore be a grave mistake, as committed by a number of modernist Muslim thinkers, to equate *al-ḥarakat al-jawhariyyah* with Darwinian evolution.

The doctrine of trans-substantial motion is the key for the solution of many problems for Mullā Ṣadrā, including that of the creation of the world debated for eight centuries before him by the Islamic philosophers and theologians. As is well known, the *falāsifah* believed the world to have had no origination in time but to have been originated beyond time by God, the world thus being eternal (*qadīm*) while the *mutakallimūn* claimed that the world was created in time (*ḥādīth*), an issue which was discussed in many classical works of Islamic thought such as al-Ghazzālī's *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*.¹⁶ The philosophers claimed that if the world were created in time, it would require a change in the Divine Nature which is impossible because God is immutable. The theologians believed that if the world were *qadīm*, then something eternal would exist besides God and would not even be caused by Him. Different Islamic thinkers sought to solve this problem in various ways, including Mullā Ṣadrā's own teacher, Mīr Dāmād, who came up with the idea of *al-ḥudūth al-dahrī*, which means origination of the world not in time (*zamān*) nor in eternity (*sarmad*), but in *dahr* or aeon, and he became celebrated for the exposition of this doctrine.¹⁷

Mullā Ṣadrā rejected this dichotomy of views altogether by pointing to the doctrine of trans-substantial motion. If the cosmos is changing at every moment, at each instance of its being, it is different from what it was before and what it is now was non-existent before (*masbūq bi'l-'adam*). Therefore, one can accept the doctrine that the world was created from nothing (*ex nihilo*) while accepting the continuous and uninterrupted effusion (*ḥayd*) of the light of Being which is none other than the Divine Light.¹⁸ He thus seeks to provide a philosophical explanation for one of the most difficult of philosophical issues in not only Islamic thought but Jewish and Christian thought as well.

THE UNION OF THE INTELLECT AND THE INTELLIGIBLE

Another of Mullā Ṣadrā's major doctrines, again related inextricably to the rest of his metaphysics, is that of the union of the intellect and the intelligible (*ittiḥād al-'āqil wa'l-ma'qūl*). This doctrine was asserted by Abu'l-Ḥasan al-ʿAmīrī in the fourth/tenth century but rejected thoroughly by Ibn Sīnā and later Islamic philosophers. But it was resurrected by Mullā Ṣadrā and given a new meaning in the context of the unity of *wujūd* and trans-substantial motion. According to him at the moment of intellection the form of the intelligible (*ma'qūl*), the possessor of intellect (*'āqil*), and even the intellect itself (*'aql*) become united in such a way than one is the other as long as the act of intellection lasts.¹⁹

This doctrine is not only important for Mullā Ṣadrā's theory of knowledge, but is also of great significance for the understanding of the role of knowledge in human perfection. Through trans-substantial motion the act of knowing elevates the very existence of the knower. According to a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, "knowledge is light" (*al-'ilm nūrun*), a principle which is also foundational to Mullā Ṣadrā's thought.²⁰ The unity of the knower and the known implies ultimately the unity of knowing and being. The being of man is transformed through the light of knowing and being. The being of man is transformed through the light of knowledge and also our mode of being determines our mode of knowledge. In this profound reciprocity is to be found the key to the significance of knowledge for Mullā Ṣadrā and of the idea that knowledge transforms our being even in the posthumous state. The writings of Mullā Ṣadrā are replete with various applications of this doctrine and he returns again and again to the principle of the ultimate unity of being and knowing.

THE IMAGINAL WORLD AND THE ARCHETYPES

Mullā Ṣadrā accepted the reality of the archetypes (*al-a'yān al-thābitah* or *al-muthul al-nūriyyah*) in conformity with the view of Suhrawardī and against the claims of Muslim Peripatetics such as Ibn Sīnā. And he brought many philosophical arguments to refute those who have denied them.²¹ There is in fact no doubt concerning the major role performed in Mullā Ṣadrā's thought by the archetypes or "Platonic Ideas", pure intelligibles belonging to the domain of immutability which many have confused with forms in the imaginal world which although beyond matter nevertheless still participate in becoming and transubstantial motion. The latter play a crucial role in the "transcendent theosophy" without in any way replacing the immutable archetypes or luminous "ideas" in the Platonic sense.

Considering the absence of the imaginal world in Western philosophy for many centuries, it is necessary to delve more deeply into the meaning of the *‘ālam al-khayāl*, the *mundus imaginalis*, which Corbin and I have translated as the imaginal rather than imaginary world, considering the pejorative connotation of the latter term in modern European languages. The traditional hierarchy of being in the mainstream of Western thought goes from the realm of material existence, to the psyche, to the intelligible or angelic world with its own vast hierarchy and finally to God who is Pure Being and for some Western metaphysicians, the Beyond-Being. This scheme was more or less followed by early Islamic philosophers with adjustments related to the fact that they were living and philosophizing in an Islamic universe. Suhrawardī was the first person to speak of the imaginal world at least in the microcosm. He was soon followed by Ibn ‘Arabī who elaborated upon this theme and expanded the understanding of the imaginal world to make it a central pillar of his metaphysics.²² Henceforth, the imaginal world became part and parcel of the understanding of the Islamic universe upon which numerous Sufis and philosophers were to write important treatises.

It was, however, Mullā Ṣadrā who gave the first systematic and philosophical explanation of this world. He added to the view of Suhrawardī that this world was connected to man’s microcosmic reality (*khayāl al-muttaṣil*), the thesis that the imaginal world has also a macrocosmic and objective reality independent and disconnected from man (*khayāl al-munfaṣil*). He emphasized that this world has even more reality than the physical world. As for its characteristics, it is a world possessing forms called *al-ṣuwar al-khayālīyyah* (imaginal forms) which, however, are not wed to matter, at least not the matter of the physical world. That is why they are also called *al-muthul al-mu‘allaqah* (suspended forms). Nevertheless they are forms having colours, shapes, odours and everything else that is associated with the forms of this world. This is a world of concrete realities which, however, are not physical, the world immediately above the physical, identified with the mythical cities of Jābulqā and Jabulsā, a world which the seers can experience in this life and into which human beings enter at the moment of death. It is a world in which we have subtle or imaginal bodies (*al-jism al-khayālī*) as we have a physical body in this world.²³

❧ ESCHATOLOGY AND RESURRECTION ❧

No Islamic philosopher has dealt in such great detail as Mullā Ṣadrā with eschatology and resurrection (*al-ma‘ād*) concerning both the individual and the cosmos. The fourth book of the *Asfār*, much of it based on Ibn ‘Arabī, is the vastest and most detailed study in Islamic philosophy of the

soul (*nafs*) from its birth to its final meeting with God and includes elements concerned with the phenomenology of death. If we were to seek something like the *Tibetan Book of the Dead* in Islamic sources, probably this fourth book of the *Asfār* would be the best candidate. Moreover, Mullā Ṣadrā devoted much space in his other major writings such as *al-Mabḍā’ wa’l-ma‘ād* and *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah* to the subject and wrote separate treatises devoted only to this subject such as the *Risālat al-ḥaṣhr* (“Treatise on Resurrection”).²⁴

Basing himself completely on traditional Islamic description of the posthumous states and eschatological events, Mullā Ṣadrā seeks to interpret such terms as the Bridge of *Ṣirāt*, the Balance and the lower paradisaical states as well as the infernal states in terms of the imaginal world. All these events related to death, judgment and the like as mentioned in the Qur’ān and *Ḥadīth* take place in this world which itself is an intermediate realm (*al-barzakh*) between the physical world and the world of purely angelic or intelligible substances. Moreover, this world is comprised of many intermediate realms (*barāzikh*) stretching from the *al-barāzikh al-a’lā* or higher intermediate realms to *al-barāzikh al-asfal* or lower ones. The higher comprise paradisaical states although still not the supreme heavens and the lower the infernal ones. This realm is in fact also a kind of purgatory through which souls pass on their way to their final beatitude or damnation.

Mullā Ṣadrā speaks of a doctrine which at first seems somewhat strange and can be understood only in the light of the doctrine of transsubstantial motion. He claims that the soul (*nafs*) is created with the body but becomes immortal and spiritual through the Spirit, or, using his own terminology, the *nafs* or soul is *jismāniyyat al-ḥudūth wa rūḥāniyyat al-baqā’*. Its vertical ascent through transsubstantial motion in fact does not cease in this world but continues after death as the soul journeys through various intermediate realms in conformity with the types of actions it has performed and its mode of being in this world.

In the great debate about whether resurrection is spiritual (*rūḥānī*) or bodily (*jismānī*), Mullā Ṣadrā categorically favours bodily resurrection but he points out that, upon death, individuals are bestowed with subtle bodies (*al-jism al-laṭīf*) which correspond in many ways to the astral body of Paracelsus. After death they are therefore not simply disembodied souls but possess bodies which are “woven” of the actions that they have performed in this world. They also enter a world which conforms to their inner nature. In a sense an evil soul chooses hell because of the nature of its being at the moment of death. Moreover, the reality of the body in this world is the form of the body and not its matter. In the final resurrection all of the levels of one’s being are integrated including the form of the physical body, which is the reality of the body, so that one can definitely accept bodily resurrection as asserted by the Qur’ān

and *Hadith* and at the same time provide intellectual demonstrations for it on the basis of the general principles of Ṣadrian metaphysics.

❧ GOD'S KNOWLEDGE OF THE WORLD ❧

Another difficult question discussed by numerous Islamic philosophers and theologians is that of God's knowledge of the world. Al-Ghazzālī in fact considered the Peripatetic's view that God only knows universals and not particulars as one of the views of the philosophers which were not only erroneous but heretical. In his *al-Asfār*, Mullā Ṣadrā discusses and rejects seven different views of earlier thinkers concerning this issue,²⁵ while in *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*²⁶ he claims that God knows everything in a special way which was unveiled to him by God and because of its complexity and the difficulty of understanding it by the great majority of men he finds it wiser not to reveal it fully.²⁷ In other writings, including one of his letters to his teacher, Mīr Dāmād, he insists that he gained full knowledge of this great mystery through inspiration (*ilhām*), unveiling (*kashf*) and the "eye of certainty" (*ʿayn al-yaqīn*).²⁸

What Mullā Ṣadrā does reveal of God's knowledge of the world is based on the thesis that whenever *wujūd* is not mixed with non-existence and not veiled by it, it is manifest to itself and never absent from itself. Therefore the essence of this *wujūd* knows itself and its essence is both knowledge of itself and known by itself, since the light of *wujūd* is one, the veil covering the reality of things being nothing but non-existence. And since the Necessary Being possesses an Essence which is beyond all composition and contingency, it is at the highest level of perceiving and being perceived, of knowing and being known. This means that since ultimately there is but one *wujūd* which is the *wujūd* of all things, therefore His Essence knows all beings that exist and there is not an atom that He does not know as asserted by the Qur'ān. The very presence of the Divine Essence to Itself is none other than undifferentiated knowledge which is at the same time also differentiated knowledge. And God's differentiated knowledge is none other than their *wujūd*. God's knowledge of existents is the very cause of their existentiation.

Mullā Ṣadrā also asserts that God's knowledge of things has its own hierarchy. There is first of all the level of solicitude (*al-ināyah*) which is His knowledge of things on the level of His own Essence. The second level is that of undifferentiated decree (*al-qadā' al-ijmālī*) which is interpreted as the Pen (*al-Qalam*). As for forms which subsist by the *Qalam*, their subsistence is subsistence by emergence (*al-qiyyām al-ṣudūri*) for the *Qalam* has full dominion over all forms below it. The third level is the Tablet (*al-lawḥ*), also called differentiated decree (*al-qadā' al-taḥṣīlī*), which contains the archetypes and Platonic Ideas of things, and their relation

to the forms of this world is that of principles to their reflections. The fourth level is destiny through knowledge (*al-qadar al-ilmī*) comprising the imaginal world and that of suspended forms discussed above. The fifth level is destiny through objectification (*al-qadar al-ʿaynī*), which consists of the forms of the physical world. Mullā Ṣadrā considers this last level to be below the level of direct Divine Knowledge since it marks the mixture of forms with matter. But it is indirectly the subject of Divine Knowledge since the principles of these forms belong to the worlds above which God knows in an absolute and direct sense. Moreover, every level mentioned by Mullā Ṣadrā possesses *wujūd* which gives it reality and, according to the argument given above, since there is only one *wujūd* as asserted by the doctrine of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, God knows all existents by virtue of knowing His own Essence which is none other than absolute *wujūd*.

❧ SOME OTHER PRINCIPLES OF ṢADRĀN TEACHINGS ❧

There are numerous other principles expounded by Mullā Ṣadrā and founding elements of the "transcendent theosophy". In fact whereas Muslims inherited some two hundred topics from Greek philosophy, Mullā Ṣadrā discusses over six hundred, many of which are drawn from further encounters between philosophy and the Islamic revelation and others are philosophical and theosophical meditations upon the sayings of the Shī'ite Imāms along with the Qur'ān and *Hadith*. Here, because of the constraint of space, we shall mention only two of the best known of these principles, not already discussed above. One is the famous thesis that "the Truth in its simplicity contains all things" (*basīṭ al-ḥaqīqah kull al-ashyā'*) which is a direct consequence of the unity and principiality of *wujūd*. By this principle Mullā Ṣadrā means that the truth (*al-ḥaqīqah*) in its state of pure simplicity and before becoming "combined" with quiddity (*al-māhiyyah*), that is, Pure Being, contains all things since the reality of things is their existence and Pure Being is the source of all *wujūd* and therefore in a sense contains the reality of all things. Mullā Ṣadrā appeals to this principle in many of his writings in solving some of the most complicated philosophical issues.

Another well-known principle is that "the soul in its unity is all of its faculties" (*al-nafs fī waḥdatihi kull al-quwā'*). This is also a consequence of his ontology as well as trans-substantial motion. It means that the various faculties of the soul are not like accidents added to the substance of the soul. Rather, the soul is each of its faculties when it identifies itself with this or that function related to a particular faculty. That is why the perfecting of any faculty affects the soul itself in its unity and the

perfection of the soul through trans-substantial motion also affects its faculties. It also emphasizes the unity of the soul above and beyond what one finds in the faculty psychology of the Peripatetics.

Also many of the older topics of philosophy are changed completely by seeing them in the light of Ṣadrian metaphysics. An outstanding example is the question of cause and effect or causality (*al-illah wa'l-ma'lūl* or *al-illiyyah*). Mullā Ṣadrā accepts the Aristotelian doctrine of the four causes and commentaries upon it by Ibn Sīnā and other earlier Islamic philosophers, but transforms them completely by considering the relation between cause and effect in light of the doctrine of the principiality of *wujūd*. He thereby combines horizontal and vertical causes and his discussion of this subject in all his works²⁹ contain some of his most exalted gnostic (*irfānī*) expositions. In studying them one is presented with a knowledge which satisfies both the mind and the heart and can lead those who can understand and have sympathy for gnosis and sapience practically into a state of ecstasy. There are many other principles transformed by Ṣadrian metaphysics which we cannot discuss here because of the limitation of space. What has been presented here is only by way of example.

MULLĀ ṢADRĀ'S QUR'ĀNIC COMMENTARIES

None of the philosophers throughout the history of Islamic philosophy has paid as much attention to the Qur'ān as source of philosophical and theosophical knowledge and none has written as many commentaries upon the Qur'ān as has Mullā Ṣadrā, whose commentaries are the continuation of his "transcendent theosophy" and the "transcendent theosophy" an organic outgrowth of the inner meaning of the Qur'ān as understood by Mullā Ṣadrā who asserts again and again the harmony between revelation (*al-wahy*) and intellect/reason (*al-aql*). He in fact asserts that the intellect, of which reason is the reflection upon the mental plane, is humanity's inner prophet which manifests itself only in those who are, in the language of the Qur'ān, "firmly rooted in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fi'l-'ilm*).³⁰

Mullā Ṣadrā wrote commentaries upon a number of chapters and verses of the Qur'ān: *al-Fātiḥah* ("The Opening"), *al-Baqarah* ("The Cow"), *āyat al-kursī* ("The Throne Verse"), *āyat al-nūr* ("Light Verse"), *Sajdah* ("Prostration"), *Yā Sīn* ("YS"), *al-Wāqī'ah* ("The Event"), *al-Hadīd* ("Iron"), *al-Jum'ah* ("The Congregation"), *al-A'lā* ("The Most High"), *al-Ṭariq* ("The Morning Star") and *al-Zalzāl* ("The Earthquake").³¹ Moreover, he wrote a number of works dealing with the science of Qur'ānic commentary. These include *Asrār al-āyāt* ("Mysteries of Qur'ānic

Verses"), which deals especially extensively with eschatological matters to which the Qur'ān refers; *Mutashābih al-qur'ān* ("On the Metaphorical Verses of the Qur'ān"), dealing with those verses of the Qur'ān whose outward meaning is not clear in contrast to the *muḥkamāt* or "firm" verses whose outward meaning is clear, and *Mafātīḥ al-ghayb* ("Keys to the Invisible World"), which is one of his most important works and in which he discusses his method of Qur'ānic commentary.³²

Mullā Ṣadrā distinguishes between commentators who see only the outward meaning of the Sacred Text and who are like those who see only the shell of a nut and disregard the fruit within, and those who pay attention only to what they consider the inner meaning while disregarding the outer form. He opposes both methods and states that, if these were to be the only choices, he would prefer the exoteric commentaries because they at least preserve the outward container of the revelation. But the best method is to deal with the inner meaning without going against the external sense of the words of the Qur'ān as understood by the Islamic community. And he adds that only those whom the Qur'ān calls "firm in knowledge" (*al-rāsikhūn fi'l-'ilm*), who have received their knowledge through divine inspiration without any spectre of doubt in their minds and hearts, have the right to carry out spiritual hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*) of God's Word.

Mullā Ṣadrā considers the Qur'ān to be the same as Being itself. Being, like the Qur'ān, possesses letters (*ḥurūf*) which are the "keys to the invisible world" and from their combinations verses (*āyāt*) are formed and from them the chapters (*suwar*) of the Sacred Book. Then from the combinations of the chapters, there results "the book of existence" (*kitāb al-wujūd*) which manifests itself in two ways as *al-furqān*, or discernment, and *al-qur'ān*, or recitation (both of these terms being names of the Qur'ān). The *furqānī* aspect of the Book is the macrocosm with all its differentiations, and the *qur'ānī* aspect is the spiritual and archetypal reality of man or what is generally called universal man (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Therefore, the keys (*mafātīḥ*) to the invisible world, as far as the revealed Qur'ān is concerned, are also the keys to the understanding of the invisible dimension of the world of external existence and man's inner being and vice versa. The Qur'ānic commentaries of Mullā Ṣadrā occupy an exalted place in the annals of Qur'ānic commentaries as well as in the philosophical hermeneutics of a sacred text, and it is a pity that so little attention has been paid to them in scholarship in Western languages.³³

THE INFLUENCE OF MULLĀ ṢADRĀ

The vast synthesis created by Mullā Ṣadrā was to have a profound influence upon later Persian thought as well as in India and Iraq. It is not

true that his thought dominated the whole philosophical scene in Persia, because it has had its detractors to this day, but it has certainly been the most important influence on the intellectual scene in Persia during the past three and a half centuries. Temporarily eclipsed after his death because of adverse political conditions, the "transcendent theosophy" was revived during the Qajar period in both Iṣfahān, the older centre of Islamic philosophy, and Tehran which was now becoming the foremost centre for the study of *ḥikmah*.³⁴ Revived by the great masters of Iṣfahān, Mullā 'Alī Nūrī and Mullā Ismā'īl Khwājū'i, it was continued by later authorities in the Ṣadrian school such as Hājji Mullā Hādī Sabziwārī in Khurāsān and Mullā 'Alī Mudarris in Tehran. They continued very much in the lines of Mullā Ṣadrā although they began to write more in Persian rather than Arabic in accordance with the general tendency of the period which was witness to the revival of philosophical Persian. And this tradition has continued unbroken to this day to such an extent that the extensive group of students studying Islamic subjects in the traditional *madrasahs*, especially those of Qom, and who are interested in the "intellectual sciences" (*al-'ulūm al-'aqliyyah*), are mostly followers of Mullā Ṣadrā.

In India the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā began to manifest itself from the middle of the eleventh/seventeenth century almost from the time of his death. His writings, especially the *Sharḥ al-hidāyah* ("Commentary upon the 'Guide'" of Athīr al-Dīn Abharī) became widespread, and the latter book even came to be known as *Ṣadrā*; people received distinction by saying that they had studied *Ṣadrā*. This tradition affected many later figures and has survived to this day. It is interesting to recall that Mawlānā Mawdūdī, the founder of the Jamā'at-i islāmī of Pakistan and India, that is, the founder of one of the most important politico-religious movements in the Islamic world in the fourteenth/twentieth century, translated parts of the *Asfār* into Urdu in his youth. As for Iraq, Mullā Ṣadrā has been taught continuously during the past three centuries especially in centres of Shi'ite learning such as Najaf. One of Iraq's foremost Islamic thinkers of the fourteenth/twentieth century, Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr, displays in a typical fashion the influence of Mullā Ṣadrā upon contemporary Iraqi religious scholars with a philosophical bent.

In conclusion it is interesting to note that the revival of Islamic philosophy in Iran during the Pahlavi period, especially from the 1950s onward even in semi-modernized circles, was primarily around the figure of Mullā Ṣadrā, many of whose works have been edited and printed during the past forty years while numerous analyses of the "transcendent theosophy" have been made in Persian as well as Arabic. At the same time Mullā Ṣadrā has now been introduced to the West and other parts of the non-Islamic world by such scholars as Henry Corbin, Toshihiko Izutsu, S. H. Nasr and Mehdi Mohaghegh, with the result that there is now a

great deal of interest in his works in the West as well as in parts of the Islamic world such as the Arab countries, Turkey, Indonesia and Malaysia which did not show much interest in later Islamic philosophers in general and Mullā Ṣadrā in particular until recently. Moreover, numerous theses are being written throughout the world on him and his school. In any case Mullā Ṣadrā is not only one of the greatest intellectual figures of Islamic history, but his thought is very much a part of the contemporary Islamic world and continues to exercise great influence upon many aspects of current Islamic thought, especially the philosophical, theological and theosophical.

NOTES

- 1 I have dealt extensively with Mullā Ṣadrā's intellectual and philosophical background in my *The Transcendent Theosophy of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shirāzī* (Tehran, 1978): 19–29 and 69–82. See also Muḥammad Khwājawī, *Lawāmi' al-'arīfīn fī aḥwāl Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn* (Tehran, 1988): 39ff.
- 2 For a detailed discussion of this subject by one of Persia's leading contemporary philosophers and masters of the School of Mullā Ṣadrā see Mehdi Ha'iri Yazdi, *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy – Knowledge by Presence* (Albany, 1992).
- 3 I also fully support the translation of this term as "transcendent theosophy" and have used it in my studies on the subject in English.
- 4 Such scholars as the late Fazlur Rahman in his works on Mullā Ṣadrā and Hossein Ziai in essays which appear in these volumes and elsewhere protest that the usage of such a term prevents Western philosophers from taking Mullā Ṣadrā seriously as a philosopher. The answer to this protest is that philosophy as defined by logical positivists, deconstructionists and other such modern schools which deny even the category of truth in an ultimate sense in philosophy, will disregard a person such as Mullā Ṣadrā no matter how the name of his school is translated into English. Moreover, the term "theosophy" is now regaining the respect it possessed before the Theosophical Society founded in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries began to use the term. Many of the thinkers of the West such as Jakob Böhme and Rossmini, who have much more affinity with Mullā Ṣadrā than they do, let us say, with Voltaire, Kant, Comte or Quine, are called theosophers in an honourable way. In any case, no apology is needed in calling Mullā Ṣadrā's *al-ḥikmat al-muta'aliyah* the "transcendent theosophy" in order to distinguish it from merely rationalistic and logical philosophy and relate it to earlier strands of Western thought most akin to it in nature, strands which are now being avidly revived especially in France, Italy and Germany.
- 5 See my *The Transcendent Theosophy*: 85ff.
- 6 See his *al-Asfār al-arba'ah*, ed. 'Allāmah Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'i (Qom, 1968) or *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*, ed. Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Aṣhtiyānī (Mashhad, 1967); *The Wisdom of the Throne*, trans. James Morris (Princeton, 1981); *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*, ed. S. J. Aṣhtiyānī (Tehran, 1976): 10ff; and *Kitāb al-*

- mashā'ir*, *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*, ed. and trans. Henry Corbin (Tehran and Paris, 1964). See also Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī, *Hasti az nazar-i falsafah wa 'irfān* (Mashhad, 1960), which is devoted to a large extent to an analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā's metaphysics of *wujūd*.
- 7 See the introduction by Corbin to *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques*: 62ff; also Toshihiko Izutsu, *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things* (Ashland, 1994): 178ff.
 - 8 See M. Mohaghegh and T. Izutsu, *The Metaphysics of Sabzawari* (Delmar, 1977): 31–2. On Sabziwārī see S. H. Nasr, "Sabziwārī", in M. M. Sharif (ed.) *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2 (Wiesbaden, 1966): 1543–56.
 - 9 See S. H. Nasr, "Mullā Ṣadrā as a Source for the History of Islamic Philosophy", in *Islamic Life and Thought* (Albany, 1981): 169ff.
 - 10 See the *Asfār*, 1: 23ff.
 - 11 On *tashkīk* see the *Asfār*, 1: 36ff., and 427ff. See also 'Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī, "Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī the Renewer of Islamic Philosophy in the 11th/17th century", in S. H. Nasr (ed.) *Mullā Ṣadrā Commemoration Volume* (Tehran, 1962): 22ff., where one of the greatest of the contemporary masters of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā summarizes his metaphysics and ontology.
 - 12 See Nasr, "Existence (*Wujūd*) and Quiddity (*Māhiyyah*) in Islamic Philosophy", *International Philosophical Quarterly*, 29(4) (December 1989): 409–28. Mullā Ṣadrā gave an extensive discussion of *māhiyyah* in his *al-Asfār*, 2: 2ff.
 - 13 Mullā Ṣadrā offers numerous rational arguments for the principiality of *wujūd*, arguments which have been summarized by Sabziwārī in his *Sharḥ al-manẓūmah*. See Mohaghegh and Izutsu, *op. cit.*: 32ff., and the *Asfār*, 1: 38ff.
 - 14 On transubstantial motion see the *Asfār*, 3: 80ff.
 - 15 See Izutsu, *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things*: 119ff.
 - 16 See al-Ghazzālī, *Tahāfut al-falāsifah*, trans. Sabih Ahmad Kamali (Lahore, 1963): 13ff.
 - 17 See S. H. Nasr, "The School of Isfahan", in Sharif (ed.) *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2: 916ff.
 - 18 For an explanation of Mullā Ṣadrā's views concerning the relation of God and the world see Fazlur Rahman, "The God–World Relationship in Mullā Ṣadrā", in George Hourani (ed.) *Essays on Islamic Philosophy and Science* (Albany, 1975): 238–53.
 - 19 See Mullā Ṣadrā, the *Asfār*, 3: 278ff. See also Fazlur Rahman, "Mullā Ṣadrā's Theory of Knowledge", *Philosophical Forum*, 4(1) (fall 1972): 141–52.
 - 20 For a most profound discussion, according to the School of Mullā Ṣadrā, of the truth that knowledge (*'ilm*) is being and light and not merely the imprint of forms upon the tablet of the soul see Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim 'Aṣṣār, *'Ilm al-ḥadīth* (Tehran, 1352 (AH Solar)/1973) chapter 1: 1ff.
 - 21 See Mullā Ṣadrā, the *Asfār*, 2: 46ff., and his *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*: 159ff.
 - 22 In one of his major works, *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabī*, trans. Ralph Mannheim (Princeton, 1981), Henry Corbin introduced this doctrine in its full amplitude for the first time in the modern West. His exposition was so influential that a whole centre was established in France by the French philosopher Gilbert Durant for the study of the imaginal world or *l'imaginaire* while in England the journal *Temenos* was founded by Kathleen Raine to propagate art in its relation to the imagination as understood by Muslim thinkers

- seen through the eyes of Corbin. For Ibn 'Arabī's views of the imaginal world to which he returns again and again in his works, especially *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyyah*, see William Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge* (Albany, 1989): 112ff.; and his *Imaginal Worlds* (Albany, 1994), especially part 2: 67ff.
- 23 Corbin has dealt with this theme extensively in his *Spiritual Body and Celestial Earth*, trans. Nancy Pearson (Princeton, 1977). See especially pp. 164–70, which contains the text of Mullā Ṣadrā from his *Kitāb al-ḥikmat al-'arshīyyah* dealing directly with this subject.
 - 24 For a detailed analysis of Mullā Ṣadrā's views on eschatology in relation to the reality of the imaginal world see the long introduction of S. J. Āshtiyānī to his edition of *al-Mabda' wa'l-ma'ād*.
 - 25 See the *Asfār*, 6: 263ff.
 - 26 See *al-Shawāhid al-rubūbiyyah*: 39ff.
 - 27 On this issue as a whole see Khwājawī, *Lawāmi' al-'arīfīn*: 79ff.
 - 28 Mullā Ṣadrā refers often in his writings to the three degrees of certainty, *'ilm al-yaqīn* (knowledge of certainty), *'ayn al-yaqīn* (eye of certainty), and *ḥaqq al-yaqīn* (truth of certainty) which mark the hierarchy of knowledge in Sufism and correspond to hearing of fire, seeing fire and being consumed by fire. See Abū Bakr Sirāj ad-Dīn, *The Book of Certainty* (Cambridge, 1992).
 - 29 See for example, the *Asfār*, 2: 127ff.
 - 30 For an outline of Mullā Ṣadrā's method of commentary see Muḥammad Khwājawī, *Tarjuma-yi mafātīḥ al-ghayb* (Tehran, 1984): 84ff.
 - 31 A complete list of his commentaries, including verses of chapters upon which he commented, is given in Nasr, *The Transcendent Theosophy*: 48.
 - 32 All of Mullā Ṣadrā's commentaries have been published together for the first time by Muḥammad Khwājawī in several volumes under the title *Tafsīr al-qur'ān al-karīm ta'līf Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn* (Qom, 1987).
 - 33 See L. S. Peerwani, "Qur'anic Hermeneutics: the Views of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī", in *BRISMES Proceedings of the 1991 International Conference on Middle Eastern Studies* (Manchester, 1991): 118–27. The commentary upon the "Light Verse", which is one of the greatest masterpieces of Islamic thought, has been translated and analysed by Muḥsin Ṣāliḥ in a doctoral thesis at Temple University in America (1993); this has not as yet been published.
 - 34 See S. H. Nasr, "The Metaphysics of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī and Islamic Philosophy in Qajar Persia", in Edmund Bosworth and Carole Hillenbrand (eds) *Qajar Persia* (Edinburgh, 1983): 177–98.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Corbin, Henry (1963) "La Place de Mollā Ṣadrā dans la philosophie iranienne", *Studia Islamica*, 18: 81–113.
- (1964) *Le Livre des pénétrations métaphysiques* (Tehran and Paris). The French part of this edition minus the Arabic and Persian texts was published with the same title by Verdier (Paris, 1993).
- (1967) "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): 71–115.
- (1972) “Mollā Ṣadrā Shīrāzī”, in *En Islam iranien*, 4 (Paris): 52–122.
- (in collaboration with S. H. Nasr and O. Yahya) (1993) *History of Islamic Philosophy*, trans. Liadain and Philip Sherrard (London): 342ff.
- Ha’iri Yazdi, Mehdi (1992) *The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy – Knowledge by Presence* (Albany).
- ‘Abdul-Haq, Muhammad (1970) “An Aspect of the Metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā”, *Islamic Studies*, 9: 331–53; “The Metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā II”, *Islamic Studies*, 10 (1971): 291–317.
- Horten, Max (1913) *Das philosophische System von Schirāzi (1640)* (Strassburg).
- Izutsu, Toshihiko (1968) *The Fundamental Structure of Sabzawāri’s Metaphysics* (Tehran).
- (1994) *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things* (Ashland).
- Mohaghegh, Mehdi and Izutsu, Toshihiko (eds and trans.) (1977) *The Metaphysics of Sabzavari* (Delmar).
- Morris, James (ed. and trans.) (1981) *The Wisdom of the Throne* (Princeton).
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein (1966) “Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, ‘Mullā Ṣadrā’”, in M. M. Sharif (ed.) *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, 2: 932–61.
- (1978) *The Transcendent Theosophy of Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī* (Tehran).
- (1981) *Islamic Life and Thought* (Albany).
- Rahman, Fazlur (1976) *The Philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā* (Albany).

CHAPTER 37

Shah Waliullāh

Rahimuddin Kemal and Salim Kemal

Shah Waliullāh – Quṭb al-Dīn Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Raḥīm – was born near Delhi at sunrise on 4 Shawwaal 1114 (Wednesday 21 February 1703) to a distinguished family, known for its contribution to the educational, intellectual and religious life of Delhi. On his paternal side Shah Waliullāh claimed descent from the second caliph while his mother’s family claimed descent from the Prophet’s grandson. His paternal grandfather, Wajih al-Dīn Ghāzī Shahīd, had been a commander in the army of Aurangzeb, who bestowed on him the title of *ghāzī*; his father, Shah ‘Abd al-Raḥīm, was an eminent savant who gave up his imperial nobility in order to devote himself to learning and mysticism.

Shah Waliullāh was educated at a school established by his father. He studied Arabic and Persian, the Qur’ān, *Ḥadīth*, *tafsīr*, *fiqh*, *manṭiq*, philosophy, mysticism, medicine, rhetoric and mathematics before graduating in 1130/1718. In that year his father initiated him into the Naqshbandi Sufi order and in the following year granted him *ijāzah* in that order. On his father’s death in 1131/1719, Shah Waliullāh took charge of the school, remaining there for the next dozen years, guiding students and developing his own theories.

Shah Waliullāh had married in 1130/1718. He had a son and a daughter from this marriage and, following his wife’s death a few years later, married again at the age of forty-three. This marriage yielded him four sons. In 1143/1731 he made his *ḥajj*. He stayed in Mecca and Medina for more than a year to study with a number of eminent scholars and mystics, including the notable Shaykh Abū Tāhir al-Madanī.

On returning to India he engaged with the political and social turmoil afflicting the country. His life spanned the reign of ten rulers in Delhi, who cumulatively added to the problems facing the populace. Central Muslim power had dissipated to provincial governors and nobles; other groups such as the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats and Europeans were vying