13 Ethical and political philosophy

No one within the tradition of medieval Islamic political philosophy contests the notion that human beings are political by nature. Indeed, in a now famous passage of his *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) cites a corollary of that adage – namely, "human social organization is necessary" – with approval, using it to focus on what the philosophers mean by "regime" (*siyāsa*), especially "political regime."[1] As contrasted to the way the term is understood by the jurists and theologians, the philosophers understand the "political regime" to encompass

> what is incumbent upon each of the inhabitants of the social organization with respect to his soul and moral habits so that they may entirely dispense with judges. They call the social organization that obtains what is required "the virtuous city" and the rules observed with respect to that "the political regime." They are not intent upon the regime that the inhabitants of the community set down through statutes for the common interests, for this is something else. This virtuous city is rare according to them and unlikely to occur. They speak about it only as a postulate and an assumption.

Two considerations make it probable that Ibn Khaldūn is referring to al-Fārābī (870–950) here. First, al-Fārābī is cited more frequently than any other philosopher in the *Muqaddima*. Second, he was well known as the author of the *Book of the Political Regime (Kitāb al-siyāsa al-madaniyya)*. Linking ethical training or soulcraft with the political or statecraft is the hallmark of al-Fārābī's philosophy. His prowess in directing attention to the political, in making it central to every investigation, so dominates his writing that he has long been seen as the founder of political philosophy within the medieval Islamic tradition.[2]

Indeed, setting the political above all else seems so central to al-Fārābī and those who follow his lead that it may well provide a measure by which to categorize the numerous thinkers within the medieval Arabic/Islamic philosophical tradition who have written on ethics. Al-Fārābī's two best-known predecessors, al-Kindī (d. after 870) and al-Rāzī (864–925), present an ethical teaching void of reflection on the political, while his successors – especially Avicenna (980–1037) and Averroes (1126–98) – join with him in linking ethics and politics. To defend such sweeping claims, we will examine the ethical teaching of these first two philosophers and what keeps it from being linked to a political teaching until the advent of al-Fārābī, as well as how he so persuasively manages to bring these two pursuits together, then note the way Avicenna and Averroes preserve that bond.

AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S PREDECESSORS

Al-Kindī

Al-Kindī was acclaimed "the philosopher of the Arabs"; renowned for his excursions into Greek, Persian, and Indian wisdom and for his detailed knowledge of astronomy; held to be most knowledgeable in medicine, philosophy, arithmetic, logic, and geometry; supposedly skilled as a translator and editor of Greek philosophical works; a sometime tutor and an astrologer in the courts of two caliphs; and a highly prolific author. Only a few of his works, however, have anything to do with ethics. And the teaching set forth in them is not very far-reaching.

In his *Epistle on the Number of Aristotle's Books and What is Needed to Attain Philosophy* al-Kindī speaks in passing of ethics and even of Aristotle's writings on ethics. But he does not investigate the ethical teaching set forth by Aristotle nor ethics *per se* except as a kind of appendix to metaphysics.[3] The same holds for al-Kindī's *Epistle on the Utterances of Socrates*, which consists mainly of anecdotes about the kind of ascetic moral virtue so often attributed to Socrates.[4] It is only in the *Epistle on the Device for Driving Away Sorrows* that he reflects at any length on ethics or moral virtue.[5]

In *On the Number of Aristotle's Books*, al-Kindī argues that Aristotle's philosophy offers insufficient guidance for the attainment

of man's goal, human virtue. He presents Aristotle's practical teaching as depending upon a knowledge of metaphysics, yet evinces doubt as to whether such knowledge is accessible to human beings. At the same time, he characterizes the only other science that can claim to offer such knowledge, divine science, as being beyond the reach of most human beings and without practical content. Clearly, another science is needed, perhaps a human one that presupposes neither metaphysical knowledge nor divine inspiration – one on the order of the practical reasoning presented in the *Epistle on the Device for Driving Away Sorrows*.

It is very limited in scope, and the devices presented in it for driving away sorrow are of utter simplicity. Al-Kindī reasons about a human phenomenon from the perspective of things we all know and have observed or even experienced. He calls upon that experience to set forth his teaching about the nature of sorrow. Even when he urges the reader to consider the activity of the Creator (R-W X.1–15, AB 22:1–23:4) or to entertain the notion that there is a homeland beyond earthly existence (R-W XI.53–7 and XIII.17, AB 27:13–17 and 31:12), he does so on the basis of common opinion rather than on the basis of any divinely revealed texts. And the asceticism he eventually urges is grounded upon common-sense arguments about true human needs, not upon an appeal to otherworldly goals.

From the very outset, al-Kindī assigns firm limits to the treatise and, in closing, restates them. He understands his task as that of indicating arguments that will combat sorrow, indicate its flaws, and arm against its pain. Noting that anyone with a virtuous soul and just moral habits would reject being overcome by vices and seek protection against their pain and unjust dominion, implying thereby that sorrow is to be counted among the vices, al-Kindī says simply that what he has presented here is "sufficient" (R-W Prologue. 6–7 and 3–6, AB 6:7–8 and 3–7). Admitting at the end of the treatise that he has been somewhat prolix, he excuses himself on the grounds that the paths to the goal sought here are almost unlimited and insists that reaching it provides what is sufficient. That goal is identified as furnishing the admonitions to be erected firmly in the soul as a model in order to gain security from the calamities of sorrow and arrive at "the best homeland," namely, "the lasting abode and the resting place of the pious" (R-W XIII.19–21 and 16–17, AB 31:14–32:3 and 31:11–12). Fundamental to the exposition provided here is

al-Kindī's exhortation to pay less attention to the things prized by fellow human beings and to concentrate on what is most important for a human life directed to something beyond sensual pleasure.

Al-Kindī begins by explaining what sorrow is, his supposition being that one cannot cure a sickness or ease a pain without knowing its cause (R-W I.1–2, AB 6:9–10). In his eyes, the answer is quite simple: "sorrow is a pain of the soul occurring from the loss of things loved or from having things sought for elude us" (R-W I.2–3, AB 6:11–12). Since it is clear that no one can acquire all the things he seeks nor avoid losing any of the things he loves, the only way to escape sorrow is to be free from these attachments. Dependent as we are upon our habits to attain happiness or avoid misery, we must school ourselves to develop the right kind of habits: ones that lead us to delight in the things we have and to be consoled about those that elude us. Thus, the cure of the soul consists in slowly ascending in the acquisition of praiseworthy habits from the minor and easily acquired to the harder and more significant, while inuring the soul to patience over things that elude it and consoling it for things lost (R-W IV.11–19, AB 12:1–10).

The argument up to this point is, nonetheless, more theoretical than it is practical. Al-Kindī has explained why people become sad and how they can avoid sorrow by changing their habits and their perspective on the world. In short, thus far he has set forth no practical device for driving away sorrow once it arises. He has not done so, because these changes are simply too radical; they demand too much of human beings. Moreover, it is far from clear that we can avoid sorrow while living as normal human beings. This, it would seem, is the point of the exhortation that closes the theoretical part of the epistle, namely, that "we ought to strive for a mitigating device to shorten the term of sorrow." The devices to follow will keep us from misery; they may even allow us happiness insofar as they help us overcome the effects of sorrow, but not escape the losses that occasion it.

Al-Kindī then enumerates ten devices, but digresses at one point to relate anecdotes and a parable as well as to reflect upon the way the Creator provides for the well-being of all creatures. The digression, especially the allegory of the ship voyage, moves the discussion to a higher level of analysis by indicating that our sorrows come from possessions. All of them, not merely the superfluous ones, threaten to harm us. Our passage through this world of destruction,

says al-Kindī, is like that of people embarked upon a ship "to a goal, their own resting place, that they are intent upon" (R-W XI. 1–3, AB 23:5–7).

When the ship stops so that the passengers may attend to their needs, some do so quickly and return to wide, commodious seats. Others – who also tend quickly to their needs, but pause to gaze upon the beautiful surrounding sights and enjoy the delightful aromas – return to narrower, less comfortable seats. Yet others – who tend to their needs, but collect various objects along the way – find only cramped seating and are greatly troubled by the objects they have gathered. Finally, others wander far off from the ship, so immersed in the surrounding natural beauty and the objects to be collected that they forget their present need and even the purpose of the voyage. Of these, those who hear the ship's captain call and return before it sails, find terribly uncomfortable quarters. Others wander so far away that they never hear the captain's call and, left behind, perish in horrible ways. Those who return to the ship burdened with objects suffer so, due to their tight quarters, the stench of their decaying possessions, and the effort they expend in caring for them, that most become sick and some die. Only the first two groups arrive safely, though those in the second group are somewhat ill at ease due to their more narrow seats.

Noting at the end of the allegory as at the beginning that the voyage resembles our passage through this world, al-Kindī likens the passengers who endanger themselves and others by their quest for possessions to the unjust we encounter along the way (R-W XI.48–9, AB 27:7–8).[6] Conversely, the just must be those who attend to their needs or business quickly and do not permit themselves to become burdened with acquisitions or even to be side-tracked into momentary pleasures. All the passengers are bound for their homeland, but it is not clear where that is. At one point, al-Kindī claims that we are going to "the true world" (R-W XI.48, AB 27:7) and at another that the ship is supposed to bring us to "our true homelands" (R-W XI.54, AB 27:14). There is no doubt, however, that whether the destination be one or many, it can be reached only by acquiring the habits that eschew material possessions. Beyond that, al-Kindī says nothing, nor does the rest of the epistle shed light on this issue.

The allegory emphasizes the voyage and the conduct of the passengers. As one who calls to the passengers, the captain may be

compared to a prophet. Like a prophet, he calls only once. Those who do not heed the call are left to their misery, even to their perdition. Yet the content of the call is empty: it merely warns about the imminent departure of the ship. The captain offers no guidance about what to bring or leave; he merely calls. Perhaps more precision is not needed. The allegory is presented merely as a likeness of our earthly voyage.

The goal pursued in this treatise is less that of learning about our end than learning how to make our way here comfortably. Al-Kindī has already spoken about the habits we need to acquire to accomplish this goal, but thus far his advice has seemed unduly ascetic. The allegory shows that we have nearly complete freedom over the way we conduct ourselves on our voyage. How we use it determines whether we reach our goal comfortably or suffer throughout the voyage and perhaps perish. To voyage without troubling ourselves or others, we must be almost insensitive to our surroundings.

In this sense, the *Epistle on the Device for Driving Away Sorrows* confirms al-Kindī's teaching about human virtue in the *On the Number of Aristotle's Books*. As long as we know of no purpose for human existence, virtue – above all, moral virtue – must be our goal. The virtue praised here comes closest to moderation, but is also similar to courage. And in pointing to the way others commit injustice by amassing possessions, al-Kindī alerts us – albeit in a limited way – to the requisites of justice.

The primary lesson is that these kinds of virtuous habits provide comfort during our earthly voyage and preserve us so that we may eventually arrive at the true world and our homeland, wherever it may be. Apart from pointing to our lack of wisdom as a problem, the epistle tells us nothing about that most important virtue. Nor does al-Kindī make any attempt here to tell us how we can act to improve our condition and that of those around us. His teaching provides strategies for coping, especially with personal loss, and accepts the milieu in which we live as a fixed variable – that is, as something not worth trying to alter. We learn to put up with it, even to come to terms with it in such a way that we improve our own life. At best, al-Kindī offers here a muted call for citizen education – teaching others the importance of making their possessions fewer – but he sets forth no broader political teaching.[7]

Al-Rāzī

Abū Bakr al-Rāzī was mainly a physician and teacher of medicine, but he also served as a sometime advisor to various rulers and was a prolific author. Indeed, his writings included over 200 books, treatises, and pamphlets. Though his writing apparently led to a paralysis of the hand and impaired eyesight, he nonetheless continued writing with the help of secretaries and scribes.[8]

It is difficult to form an appreciation of al-Rāzī's ethical teaching because so few of his writings have come down to us and because the major source for our knowledge of what he believed is an account his arch-enemy, the Ismāʿīlī missionary Abū Ḥātim al-Rāzī, presented of their different positions. Fortunately, we do have an important work al-Rāzī wrote late in his life, the *Book of the Philosophic Life*.[9] In it, seeking to justify his conduct against contradictory criticisms leveled against him by unnamed individuals he describes as "people of speculation, discernment, and attainment," he reflects on the importance of devoting oneself to philosophy and to the significance of taking Socrates as a model for such a way of life. His critics accuse al-Rāzī of turning away from the life of philosophy because he socializes with others and busies himself with acquiring money, activities shunned by the Socrates known to them, but also blame the ascetic life of Socrates for its evil practical consequences. In other words, al-Rāzī is as wrong to have turned away from Socrates as he was to have followed him in the first place.

Al-Rāzī answers these charges and provides insight into his fuller teaching without ever exploring why Socrates made his famous conversion, that is, changed from a youthful asceticism to a mature involvement in all too human activities. Even though he could present the turn as evidence that Socrates also deemed it wrong, al-Rāzī treats Socrates' asceticism as merely a zealous excess of youth (sects. 4–29, 99:14–108:12). Since Socrates abandoned it early on, he sees no need to consider whether a life so devoted to the pursuit of wisdom that it ignores all other concerns is laudable or whether the good life is the balanced one he describes as his own at the end of the treatise. Al-Rāzī refrains from blaming Socrates for his ascetic practices because they led to no dire consequences. He sees no reason to blame asceticism simply.

Still, the issue cannot be ignored, for it points to the broader question of whether the pursuit of philosophy must be so single-minded that it takes no account of the needs of men or, differently stated, whether the proper focus of philosophy is nature and the universe or human and political things. Al-Rāzī does not immediately distinguish between the two, for he identifies practicing justice, controlling the passions, and seeking knowledge as characteristic of the pursuit of philosophy and praiseworthy in Socrates' life. By emphasizing that Socrates abandoned asceticism so as to participate in activities conducive to human well-being, al-Rāzī avoids examining whether it is wrong *per se* or against nature. He judges it instead in terms of its results – in quantitative terms, rather than in qualitative ones – and deems it wrong only when following it threatens the well-being of the ascetic or of the human race. Such a tactic also allows al-Rāzī to avoid having his critics impugn him for being sated with desires just because he does not imitate Socrates' earlier asceticism.

The point is eminently sensible, but al-Rāzī weakens it by contending that however much he may fall short of Socrates' early asceticism (a position he has now made defensible), he is still philosophical if compared to non-philosophic people. He would have been on more solid ground had he acknowledged that asceticism is always a threat to the world we live in and then praised the salubrious consequences of the life of the reformed Socrates. By phrasing his defense in quantitative terms, he fails to give an adequate account of the balanced life. What al-Rāzī needed to do was show that Socrates' earlier asceticism kept him from pursuing philosophy fully insofar as it prevented him from paying attention to the questions related to human conduct.

He does not because it would take him away from his major goal: setting forth the argument that completes his depiction of the philosophic life. It in turn depends upon his full teaching, and he offers a summary of it by listing six principles, all taken from other works (sects. 9–10, 101:5–102:5). Nonetheless, he develops only two in the sequel. One, phrased almost as an imperative, asserts that pleasure is to be pursued only in a manner that brings on no greater pain (sects. 11–14, 102:6–103:13), and the other insists upon the way the divinity has provided for all creatures (sects. 15–22, 103:14–106:6).

This latter principle necessarily obliges humans not to harm other creatures. In his elaboration of this principle, al-Rāzī leads the reader to issues of political importance: the natural hierarchy between the

different parts of the body and between the various species, then a presumed hierarchy among individuals within the human species. Such distinctions allow him to formulate a provisional definition of morality, something he calls the upper and lower limits (sects. 23-8, 106:7-108:3). Briefly, accepting differences in birth and habit as fixed and as necessarily leading to different pursuits of pleasure, al-Rāzī urges that one not go against justice or intellect (understood naturally and according to revelation) on the one hand nor come to personal harm or excessive indulgence in pleasure on the other. The point is that since some people can afford more ease than others, the rule must be flexible. Though he urges that less is nonetheless generally better, the disparities caused by differences in fortune provoke him to no suggestions about the need to strive for a more equitable distribution of wealth or to regulate the way it is passed on. Completely eschewing such excursions into politics and political economy, al-Rāzī notes merely that the less wealthy may have an easier time of abiding by the lower limit and that it is preferable to lean more toward that limit.

All of this is captured in what al-Rāzī calls the sum of the philosophic life, "making oneself similar to God . . . to the extent possible for a human being" (sect. 29, 108:4-12). This summary statement is extraordinarily subtle and inventive. It consists of four basic parts. Al-Rāzī begins by asserting certain qualities of the Creator. He then seeks a rule of conduct based on an analogy between the way servants seek to please their sovereigns or owners and the way we should please our Sovereign Master. Next he draws a conclusion from that analogy about the character of philosophy. And he ends with the declaration that the fuller explanation of this summary statement is to be found in his *Book of Spiritual Medicine*.[10]

The interested reader must turn to it, al-Rāzī says, because it sets forth (a) how we can rid ourselves of bad moral habits and (b) the extent to which someone aspiring to be philosophic may be concerned with gaining a livelihood, acquisition, expenditure, and seeking rulership. In other words, the definition of the philosophic life set forth here raises questions that al-Rāzī identifies there as relating to moral virtue, especially moral purification, and human affairs – economics as well as political rule. Insofar as philosophy may be defined as seeking knowledge, struggling to act justly, and being compassionate as well as kindly, it does encompass matters falling

under moral virtue or ethics, household management or economics, and political rule. Allusion to the *Book of Spiritual Medicine* only underlines what has already been made clear by al-Rāzī's introduction of the two principles from his larger teaching. As he notes almost in passing, confident that the reader discerns how divine providence for all creatures warrants some serving others, it is perfectly justifiable to distinguish between human beings in terms of how essential they are to the well-being of the community.

While allowing al-Rāzī to defend himself against his nameless critics, such reflections go beyond mere exculpation to an explanation of philosophy itself (sects. 30–7, 108:13–110:15). Thus, in the concluding words of this treatise, as part of his final self-justification, he asserts that philosophy consists of two parts, knowledge and practice, and that anyone who fails to achieve both cannot be called a philosopher. His own role as a philosopher is vouchsafed: his writings testify to his knowledge, and his adherence to the upper and lower limits proves his practice (sects. 38–40, 110:16–111:7). Yet he clearly prizes knowledge more and subordinates practice, especially political practice, to it in both of these ethical writings.

AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S MORAL AND POLITICAL TEACHING

Widely referred to as "the second teacher," that is, second after Aristotle, al-Fārābī is renowned as much for his teaching as for those with whom he studied – logic with Yuhannā ibn Ḥaylān, Arabic with Ibn al-Sarrāj, and philosophy with Abū Bishr Mattā ibn Yūnus – and his travels: he is known to have sojourned in Bukhārā, Marv, Baghdad, Damascus, and Cairo. There is also some speculation, albeit now contested, that he spent time in Byzantium. His writings, extraordinary in their breadth and deep learning, extend through all of the sciences and embrace every part of philosophy. He wrote numerous commentaries on Aristotle's logical treatises, was knowledgeable about the Stagirite's physical writings, and is credited with an extensive commentary on the *Nicomachean Ethics* that is no longer extant. In addition to writing accounts of Plato's and Aristotle's philosophy prefaced by his own adaptation of it to the challenges posed by Islam in the *Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle*, he composed a commentary on Plato's *Laws*.

Of al-Fārābī's many works that illuminate his ethical and political teaching, *Selected Aphorisms* (*Fuṣūl muntaza'a*) reveals most clearly how he looks to Plato and Aristotle, the ancients, for guidance in practical and theoretical philosophy. Indeed, in the subtitle he declares his reliance upon them and then goes on in the work itself to weave together in a most novel manner key themes from Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. The goal of the work, as described in the subtitle, is to set forth:

Selected aphorisms that comprise the roots of many of the sayings of the ancients concerning that by which cities ought to be governed and made prosperous, the ways of life of their inhabitants improved, and they be led toward happiness.[11]

The emphasis here is on the partial character of the treatise: it contains selected aphorisms that encompass the foundations, principles, or grounds of several – that is, not all – of the sayings of the ancients. In the ninety-six aphorisms comprising the work (four contested aphorisms found only in the most recent and least reliable of the six manuscripts are best ignored), al-Fārābī begins with, then develops, a comparison between the health of the soul, and that of the body. Quite abruptly, he starts his exposition by defining the health of each and then explains how the health of the more important of the two – that of the soul – may be obtained and its sickness repulsed. The first word of the *Selected Aphorisms* is simply "soul," while the last is "virtue."

As he moves from "soul" to "virtue," al-Fārābī first enters upon a detailed examination of the soul, then provides an account and justification of the well-ordered political regime it needs to attain perfection. At no point does he speak of prophecy or of the prophet or legislator. He is equally silent about the philosopher and mentions "philosophy" only two times, both in the antepenultimate aphorism (94) – the same one in which he mentions, for the only time, "revelation." On the other hand, al-Fārābī speaks constantly throughout these aphorisms of the statesman (*madanī*) and of the king.

Al-Fārābī calls upon the ancients in this work to identify the political order that will achieve human happiness. The individual who succeeds in understanding how a political community can be well ordered – whether a statesman or king – will do for the citizens what the physician does for individual sick persons and will accomplish for the citizens who follow his rules what the prophet accomplishes for

those who follow his. Nonetheless, to attain such an understanding, one must first be fully acquainted with the soul as well as with political life. More precisely, the virtuous political regime is the one in which the souls of all the inhabitants are as healthy as possible: "the one who cures souls is the statesman, and he is also called the king" (4).

This is why such a patently political treatise contains two long discussions of the soul – one, very similar to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, explains all the faculties of the soul except for the theoretical part of the rational faculty (6–21), while the other analyzes this theoretical part and its companion, the practical part, by discussing the intellectual virtues (33–56) – *as well as an investigation of the sound and erroneous opinions with respect to the principles of being and to happiness* (68–87). These three groups of aphorisms constitute a little less than two-thirds of the treatise. Void of formal structure or divisions, the treatise unfolds in such a manner that each moral discussion is preceded and followed by other groups of aphorisms that go more deeply into its political teaching. Thus, the discussion of the soul in general is preceded by a series of analogies between the soul and the body as well as between the soul and the body politic (1–5), and is followed first by a discussion devoted to domestic political economy (22–9) and then by an inquiry into the king in truth (30–2). The second discussion of the soul, preceded by these three aphorisms, is followed by an inquiry into the virtuous city (57–67). This in turn precedes the investigation of sound and erroneous opinions, itself followed by the account of the virtuous regime (88–96). Subsequent to each moral digression, the tone of the discussion seems to become more elevated, almost as though the moral teaching were the driving force for the political teaching of the treatise or were at least giving it direction.

In the analogies that open the treatise, al-Fārābī not only compares the body to the soul as though it were better known than the body, but goes further and boldly defines what constitutes the health and sickness of each. The health of the soul consists in its traits being such that it can always do what is good and fine as well as carry out noble actions, whereas its sickness is for its traits to be such that it always does what is evil and wicked as well as carry out base actions. The description of the health and sickness of the body is nearly identical to that of the soul's, with one important difference: the body is presented as doing nothing without first having been

activated by the soul. Then, after the good traits of the soul have been denoted as virtues and the bad traits as vices (2), al-Fārābī abandons this analogy.

His juxtaposition of the physician to the statesman or king insofar as the first cures bodies and the second cures souls obliges al-Fārābī to move beyond the individual level. He defines the health of the body as the "equilibrium of its temperament," as distinct from the health of the city, defined as the "equilibrium of the moral habits of its people." The change thus introduced is by no means insignificant: whereas the focus of bodily health is always the individual body, so that the physician is concerned with individuals as such, the statesman or king aims at the equilibrium of the city and is concerned with the totality or at least the plurality of its inhabitants – not with each one as an individual. If the statesman or king can arrive at his ends only by establishing (or re-establishing) an equilibrium in the moral habits of all the inhabitants, so much the better for them. But al-Fārābī no longer speaks explicitly of individuals. Henceforth, he speaks more readily of the community – of the city – and rarely evokes the image of the individual soul. Here, too, he emphasizes the moral habits of the people of the city as compared to the temperament of the individual body. The effect is to underline the greater importance attaching to the statesman/king and his art than to the physician and his art. After all, it is the statesman or king who determines how the healthy body will be employed in the city. It falls not to the physician, but to the statesman or king, to prescribe what actions the healthy citizen, sound of body as well as of soul, ought to carry out.

Differently stated, another consideration that distinguishes the statesman/king from the physician is moral purpose. The physician's task is merely to heal, without asking how restored strength or improved sight will be used, whereas his counterpart must reflect upon how the benefits of the civic or kingly art will affect the persons to whom it is applied – how their souls may be healed so that they carry out actions of service to the city. In this sense, the relationship between "the art of kingship and of the city with respect to the rest of the arts in cities is that of the master builder with respect to the builders" and "the rest of the arts in cities are carried out and practiced only so as to complete by means of them the purpose of the political art and the art of kingship" (4). Because

the greater complexity of this art vouchsafes its greater importance, al-Fārābī can insist that such an individual needs to be cognizant of "the traits of the soul by which a human does good things and how many they are" as well as of "the devices to settle these traits in the souls of the citizens and of the way of governing so as to preserve these traits among them so that they do not cease" (5).

Again, this manner of beginning his discussion of "the science of morals" permits al-Fārābī not only to associate it with politics, but also to subordinate the moral part of the soul to the intellectual part – in effect, the statesman/king discerns how to legislate for the city by means of the intellectual part (see 32, 34–9, 41–5, and 52–3) – and then to establish a hierarchy among the moral habits themselves. The latter belong to the appetitive part of the soul and comprise moderation, courage, liberality, and justice (8). With the exception of justice, al-Fārābī says little of these virtues. (Though justice is investigated at some length in aphorisms 61–6 and just war considered in aphorism 67, one cannot fail to notice how this enumeration of the moral virtues confuses the teaching of the ancients in that Aristotle's generosity takes the place of Plato's wisdom as one of the four cardinal virtues.)

By the end of aphorism 21, that is, by the end of the first extensive discussion of the soul, all of the moral virtues except for justice have been discussed in some detail: al-Fārābī has explained what these habits are qua balanced traits of the soul and indicated how to bring them about. (It is not completely accurate to say that justice has been totally neglected in this account, for in aphorism 26 he indicates how the statesman/king must seek the health of each part of the city with an eye to the way its health or sickness affects the whole city, just as the physician must look to the health of the whole body when treating a particular limb or organ.) As this section closes, al-Fārābī seems to restate the parallel between the physician and the statesman/king, but does so by introducing a new term: instead of talking about the statesman (al-madanī), he now speaks of the "governor of cities" (mudabbir al-mudun). The change in terminology is minor, but it permits or calls for a new inquiry, one that explains the groupings formed by human beings. As he explains in aphorism 23, the way people live – ephemeral as such matters are – influences their characters. More important than these accidental matters, however, is what cities aim at, the common goal pursued by their citizens.

Al-Fārābī's consideration of this problem leads him to make distinctions that elevate the tone of the discussion and, above all, to introduce happiness – even ultimate happiness – into the discussion for the first time. Now, then, we need to distinguish between different kinds of rulers; we need to know who truly deserves to be called a king, and that brings us to the fourth section of the treatise. Thus, when we do learn what characterizes this individual, it becomes evident that we need to understand better how he has come to discern human happiness. Differently stated, we need to learn about the intellectual virtues: wisdom and prudence.

Although it is not possible here to follow al-Fārābī step by step through the rest of the treatise, it should now be clear how he successfully fuses statecraft with soulcraft, that is, how his ethical teaching leads necessarily to his political teaching. It should also be clear that both the ethical and political teaching draws upon Plato and Aristotle, even as both adjust them ever so subtly.

AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S SUCCESSORS

Avicenna

Of all the medieval Islamic philosophers, we are best acquainted with the life of Avicenna thanks to the efforts of his devoted pupil and long-time companion, al-Juzjānī, who preserved something resembling an autobiography along with his own biographical appendix.[12] We learn from it that Avicenna was an assiduous and devoted learner from the days of his youth to his death. Nowhere is this dedication to learning more evident than in his massive encyclopedic work, *The Healing (al-Shifā')*.

In the first chapter of the introductory volume to its logical part, Avicenna explains the general order of the whole work. After the part on logic is another part devoted to natural science. It is followed by a third part that sets forth mathematics, and the whole compendium concludes with Avicenna's explanation of the divisions and aspects of the science pertaining to metaphysics. From this account of its scope, one might think that Avicenna's *Healing* was devoted solely to theoretical philosophy or science, that it had nothing to say about practical philosophy or science. Indeed, not until the very end of his discussion of metaphysics does he speak of the practical sciences or

arts of ethics and politics. As he puts it, this "summary of the science of ethics and of politics" is placed there "until I compose a separate, comprehensive book about them."[13]

Avicenna's fuller teaching reveals, however, that ethical and political science belong after divine science intrinsically and not provisionally. Indeed, they are the human manifestation of divine science – its practical proof. They testify to divine providence for humankind and thus to the truth of revelation more clearly than any of the other sciences investigated in the *Healing*. Yet because the correctness of what they teach can also be verified by Aristotelian or pagan reasoning processes, Avicenna must elucidate the relationship he discerns between pagan philosophy and the revelation accorded the Prophet Muḥammad.

Avicenna's description of Plato's *Laws* as a treatise on prophecy provides a clue to how interrelated he deems philosophy and revelation.[14] Similarly, the attention he gives to the political aspects of prophecy and divine law in the *Healing* leads to reflection upon the most fundamental political questions: the nature of law, the purpose of political community, the need for sound moral life among the citizens, the importance of providing for divorce as well as for marriage, the conditions for just war, the considerations that lie behind penal laws, and the end of human life.[15] Avicenna's political teaching here provides an introduction to the fundamentals of political science and alerts readers to the need to think carefully about the strong affinity between the vision of political life set forth by the pagan Greek philosophers and that exceptional individual who surpasses philosophic virtue by acquiring prophetic qualities.

Averroes

Averroes was an accomplished commentator on Plato and Aristotle, physician, practicing judge, jurist, princely advisor, and spokesman for theoretical and practical problems of his day. His profound accomplishments in jurisprudence, medicine, poetry, philosophy, natural science, and theology were recognized by fellow Muslims as well as by the Jews and Christians who first translated his writings into Hebrew and Latin, but he was known above all for his commentaries on Aristotle – commentaries that range across the whole of Aristotle's corpus. He also wrote a commentary on Plato's *Republic*,

this ostensibly because Aristotle's *Politics* was unknown to the Arabs. Moreover, he composed treatises on topics of more immediate concern to fellow Muslims: the *Decisive Treatise* on the relationship between philosophy and the divine law and the *Incoherence of the Incoherence*, an extensive reply to al-Ghazālī's attacks upon al-Fārābī and Avicenna.

In these works, Averroes forcefully pleads that philosophy serves religious and political well-being. It is ever the friend of religion, seeking to discover the same truth as religion and to bring the learned to respect divine revelation. Though persuaded that science and with it philosophy had been completed by Aristotle, Averroes thought philosophy still needed to be recovered and protected in each age. To these goals he addresses himself in all of his works: the commentaries on Aristotle and Plato are intended to recover or rediscover the ancient teaching and explain it to those who can profit from it, while the public writings, written to address issues of the day, seek to preserve the possibility of philosophical pursuits in an increasingly hostile religious environment.

From Averroes' *Commentary on Plato's Republic* we learn, above all, that the simply best regime is one in which the natural order among the virtues and practical arts is respected.[16] The practical arts and the moral virtues exist for the sake of the deliberative virtues, and – whatever the hierarchical relationship between the practical arts and the moral virtues – all of these exist for the sake of the theoretical virtues. Only when this natural order is reflected in the organization and administration of the regime can there be any assurance that all of the virtues and practical arts will function as they ought. In order to have sound practice, then, it is necessary to understand the principles on which such practice depends: the order and the interrelationship among the parts of the human soul. He reaches the same conclusion, albeit much more rapidly, by identifying the best regime in his *Middle Commentary on the "Rhetoric"* as the city whose opinions and actions are in accordance with what the theoretical sciences prescribe.

These principles permit Averroes to identify the flaws in the regimes he sees around him more clearly. They are faulted either because they aim at the wrong kind of end or because they fail to respect any order among the human virtues. Thus he blames democracy for the emphasis it places on the private and for its inability

to order the desires of the citizens. In his *Commentary on Plato's "Republic,"* he first emphasizes the need to foster greater concern for the public sphere and to diminish the appeal of the private, then explains man's ultimate happiness in order to indicate how the desires should be properly ordered. A broad vision of the variety within the human soul and of what is needed for sound political life leads Averroes to endorse the tactics – and in some respects, the very principles – of Platonic politics.

The distinctions scholars habitually draw between Plato and Aristotle are precisely the ones al-Fārābī seems to delight in collapsing, overlooking, or simply obfuscating. Pursuing common goals and teachings, his Plato and Aristotle differ only in the paths they take toward them. Above all, they perceive ethical teaching to be first and foremost a political undertaking. From them, al-Fārābī learns that citizen virtue must be the primary concern of the lawgiver. Forming the character of citizens and helping them to achieve the highest of human goods – ultimate perfection – is the end at which, following them, he aims.

Consequently, character formation takes precedence over institutions and even kinds of rule. Determining who rules is less important than insuring that the ruler has the qualities – moral and intellectual – for rulership. And should a single person having the requisite qualities not happen to be found, rulership passes to two or more – assuming they come to have those qualities. This sums up what we learn from al-Fārābī and from those who, like Averroes as well to a certain extent as Avicenna, follow in his footsteps.

Or do we? If this is a correct conclusion to draw from what al-Fārābī has to say in the *Selected Aphorisms* and related writings, does it not conflict with what we know about his teaching in yet others? More important, does it not conflict with what Plato's Socrates has to say about the importance of a philosopher having some notion of the good if he is to rule well and with Aristotle's emphasis on contemplation immediately before calling attention to the need for laws as a means of making good citizens – the one in *Republic*, books VI and VII, the other at the end of the *Nicomachean Ethics*? Differently stated, is not sound theory the basis for sound practice?

The answer to that question separates al-Fārābī and Averroes (and, again, Avicenna to a certain extent) from al-Kindī and al-Rāzī.

Insofar as the latter two subordinate the practical to the theoretical, their ethical teaching is limited to the individual. Even though it is far from certain al-Fārābī and his erstwhile companions succeed in finding an independent ground for practice, they oblige a thoughtful reader to travel that road. In doing so, the reader flirts with becoming a lawgiver much as did Adeimantus and Glaucon under the spell of Socrates. That, in the end, is the significance of linking an ethical teaching with a political one.

NOTES

1   See Ibn Khaldūn, *Muqaddimat Ibn Khaldūn (Prolégomènes d'Ebn-Khaldoun): texte arabe, publié d'après les manuscrits de la Bibliothèque impériale*, ed. M. Quatremère (Paris: 1858; repr. Beirut: 1970), 2.126:16 and 2.127:1–6. For the citation that follows, see 2.127:6–14; the translation is my own.

2   See Mahdi [190].

3   These issues are discussed at greater length in C. E. Butterworth, "Al-Kindī and the Beginnings of Islamic Political Philosophy," in Butterworth [187], 11–60, esp. 23–6.

4   See Butterworth, "Al-Kindī and the Beginnings," 52–6. For anecdotes and sayings involving Socrates in Arabic, see I. Alon, *Socrates in Mediaeval Arabic Literature* (Leiden: 1991), and I. Alon, *Socrates Arabus* (Jerusalem: 1995).

5   There are two editions: H. Ritter and R. Walzer, *Uno scritto morale inedito di al-Kindī* (Rome: 1938), A. Badawī, *Rasā'il falsafiyya li-al-Kindī wa al-Fārābī wa Ibn Bājja wa Ibn 'Adī* (Beirut: 1980), 6–32. Textual references are to the sections and lines of the Ritter and Walzer edition (R-W) by means of Roman and Arabic numerals and to the pages and lines of Badawī's (AB) by means of Arabic numerals alone. For a recent English translation see G. Jayyusi-Lehn, "The Epistle of Ya'qūb ibn Isḥāq al-Kindī on the *Device for Dispelling Sorrows*," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29 (2002), 121–35.

6   Both here and in the only other passage about injustice in this treatise (R-W XXXI:6, AB 6:7), at issue is the trouble undue attachment to possessions brings upon ourselves and others.

7   For a different reading of this work see further Druart [66].

8   For al-Rāzī's works, see al-Rāzī, *Rasā'il falsafiyya*, ed. P. Kraus (Cairo: 1939; repr. Beirut: 1973); see further C. E. Butterworth, "The Origins of al-Rāzī's Political Philosophy," *Interpretation* 20 (1993), 237–57; Druart [209]; M. Rashed, "Abū Bakr al-Rāzī et le *kalām*," *MIDEO* 24 (2000), 39–54; P. E. Walker, "The Political Implications of al-Rāzī's Philosophy," in Butterworth [187], 61–94.

9   See al-Rāzī, *Rasā'il falsafiyya*, 98–111 (with an introduction by Kraus on 97–8). For an English translation, see C. E. Butterworth, "Al-Rāzī: The *Book of the Philosophic Life*," *Interpretation* 20 (1993), 227–36. Section references here are to my English translation, which is based on Kraus' edition.

10 The Arabic text of the *Book of Spiritual Medicine* or *Kitāb al-ṭibb al-rūḥānī* is in al-Rāzī, *Rasā'il falsafiyya*, 15–96. Focused primarily on how to acquire moral virtue and avoid vice, the last few pages contain a summary account of the relationship between virtue and political life; see chs. 1–16, 17.14–80.9 with chs. 18–19, 85.1–92.10. In ch. 17, 80.10–84.16, al-Rāzī explains how to earn a living within the strictures of the moral teaching already set forth, while in ch. 20, 92.11–96.9, he investigates why people fear death.

11 For the Arabic text, see Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Fuṣūl muntaza'a*, ed. F. M. Najjar (Beirut: 1971). An English translation may be found in Alfarabi [185], 1–67. The references here to the aphorisms follow Najjar's numbering, reproduced in the translation.

12 Of al-Fārābī's many successors, it is possible here only to focus upon Avicenna and Averroes. For Ibn Bājja and Ibn Ṭufayl, see above, chapter 8. Figures later than al-Fārābī who wrote on ethics include his student Yaḥyā ibn 'Adī (d. 363/974), and Ibn Miskawayh (d. 421/1030), bot of whom wrote works entitled *Tadhīb al-akhlāq*. See Yaḥyā ibn 'Ad *The Reformation of Morals*, trans. S. H. Griffith (Provo: 2003), and Miskawayh, *Tadhīb al-akhlāq*, ed. C. Zurayk (Beirut: 1966). For an English version of the latter see Miskawayh, *The Refinement of Character*, trans. C. Zurayk (Beirut: 1968). See further R. Walzer, "Aspects of Miskawayh's *Tadhīb al-akhlāq*," in *Studi orientalistici in onore di Giorgio Levi della Vida*, vol. II (Rome: 1956), 603–21, repr. in Walzer [45], 220–35. On Ibn Miskawayh generally see M. Arkoun, *Contribution à l'étude de l'humanisme arabe au IVe/Xe siècle: Miskawayh, philosophe et historien* (Paris: 1970; 2nd edn. Paris: 1982).

13 See Avicenna, *Kitāb al-shifā': al-manṭiq, al-madkhal*, ed. G. Anawati, M. El-Khodeiri, and F. El-Ahwani (Cairo: 1952), 11.12–13; see also 11.1–11.

14 See Avicenna, *Fī aqsām al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya* (*On the Divisions of the Intellectual Sciences*) in *Tis' rasā'il* (*Nine Treatises*) (Cairo: 1908), 108.1–3.

15 See Avicenna, *Kitāb al-shifā': al-ilāhiyyāt*, ed. G. Anawati and S. Zayid (Cairo: 1960), bk. 10, chs. 2–5, 441.1–455.16. For an English translation, see M. Marmura, "Avicenna, *Healing: Metaphysics X*," in Lerner and Mahdi [189], 98–111.

16 For what follows, see Averroes [186] and also C. E. Butterworth, *Philosophy, Ethics, and Virtuous Rule: A Study of Averroes' Commentary*

on *Plato's "Republic"*, Cairo Papers in Social Science, vol. IX, Monograph 1 (Cairo: 1986). Unfortunately, Averroes' *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics"* has survived only in independent Hebrew and Latin translations; see Averroes, *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's "Nicomachean Ethics" in the Hebrew Version of Samuel Ben Judah*, ed. L. V. Berman (Jerusalem: 1999) and Averroes, *In Libros Decem Moralium Nicomachiorum Expositio*, in *Aristotelis Opera cum Averrois Commentariis* (Venice: 1552; repr. Frankfurt a. M.: 1962), vol. III. A splendid edition and French translation of the *Middle Commentary on Aristotle's Rhetoric* has just appeared; see *Averroès (Ibn Rushd), Commentaire moyen à la "Rhétorique" d'Aristote: édition critique du texte arabe et traduction française*, ed. and trans. M. Aouad, 3 vols. (Paris: 2002).

19 Recent trends in Arabic and Persian philosophy

In this chapter I will discuss Arabic and Persian philosophical trends as presented in texts mainly from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and their more recent continuation. Philosophical activity continued especially in the lands marked by the geopolitical boundaries of Persianate influence, centered in the land of Iran as marked since the Safavid period beginning in 1501.[1] Of the philosophers in the earlier, formative period of Arabic philosophy, it was Avicenna whose works made the most direct and lasting impact on all subsequent philosophical trends and schools. The structure, techniques, and language of Avicenna's philosophy – best exemplified in his two main works, *al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt* and *al-Shifāʾ* – define a holistic system against which all subsequent philosophical writings, in both Arabic and Persian, are measured. Avicenna's philosophical texts give Arabic and Persian Peripatetic philosophy its technical language and methodology, as well as setting out a range of philosophical problems in semantics, logic, ontology, epistemology, and so on. Later trends must be regarded as refinements and developments from within philosophical texts already established by the twelfth century C.E.

Some Orientalist and apologetic historians have chosen imprecise, general descriptions such as "theosophy," "Oriental wisdom," "transcendent theosophy," "perennial wisdom," "mystical experience," and the like, to describe an entire corpus of texts after Avicenna.[2] I will avoid such imprecise descriptions and focus on the philosophical intention and value of the texts themselves, rather than the supposed "spiritual," "Ṣūfī," or "esoteric" dimension of a wide and ill-defined range of Arabic and Persian texts. As Fazlur Rahman has written, we

interpret post-Avicennian texts in terms of an ill-defined mysticism only "at the cost . . . of its purely intellectual and philosophical hard core, which is of immense value and interest to the modern student of philosophy."[3]

The most significant philosophical trends after Avicenna attempt to reconstruct consistent, holistic systems that *refine*, rather than *refute*, a range of philosophical propositions and problems, thus rescuing philosophy from the charges brought against it by al-Ghazālī. Increasing significance is also placed on constructing philosophical systems more compatible with religion. The philosophical system with the deepest impact on later trends, second only to that of Avicenna, is the "philosophy of Illumination" of Suhrawardī.[4] The system defines a new method, the "Science of Lights" (*'ilm al-anwār*), which holds that we obtain the principles of science immediately, via "knowledge by presence" (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*). About half a century after the execution of Suhrawardī in Aleppo in 1191, the philosophy of Illumination was heralded as a "more complete system" (*al-niẓām al-atamm*) by Illuminationist commentators starting with Shams al-Dīn al-Shahrazūrī.[5] The aim to build such "complete" or holistic systems is distinctive of later philosophical trends, especially in the seventeenth century. Such systems aim to expand the structure of Aristotelian philosophy to include carefully selected religious topics, defending the harmony between philosophy and religion.

In what follows I will therefore examine, first, the relation of these holistic systems to the older Peripatetic and newer Illuminationist traditions; second, the question of a "harmonization" between philosophy and religion, focusing on the work of the Persian philosopher Ibn Torkeh Iṣfahānī; and finally, specific philosophical problems of interest in the later tradition. It should be emphasized that though many thinkers in the later tradition, from Suhrawardī onward, do discuss "mystical" phenomena, and especially the epistemology of experiential and inspirational knowledge, they do so from the perspective of philosophy. The representative figures of later trends are rationalist thinkers and scientists (*'ulama'*); none were members of Ṣūfī brotherhoods, and almost all – especially from the seventeenth century on – belonged to the *'ulamā'*, that is, the Shī'ite clerical classes.[6]

SYSTEMATIC PHILOSOPHY

Intense philosophical activity took place from the mid-sixteenth century, first in Shīrāz and subsequently in Isfahān, lasting for about a century and a half. This has been described as a "revival of philosophy," which led to what has been called "the school of Iṣfahān." The most important figure of this period is Ṣadr al-Dīn Shīrāzī, Mullā Ṣadrā, who was the student of the school's "founder," Mīr Dāmād, and whose greatest philosophical achievement is his *magnum opus, al-Ḥikma al-muta'āliya fī al-asfār al-arba'a al-'aqliyya* (usually referred to simply as *Asfār*). His system and "school" are also called *al-ḥikma al-muta'āliya*, or metaphysical philosophy.[7] Mullā Ṣadrā's many philosophical works, as well as his commentaries and independent works on juridical and other religious subjects, fall within the school's rational and "scientific" (*'ilmī*) intention. Ensuing scholastic activity of the Shī'ite centers based on this system continues today. A significant development, which probably owes more to philosophers such as Ṣadrā than some would admit, is the theoretical Shī'ite syllabus of the intellectual sciences (*'ulūm-e 'aqlī*), the higher levels of which include the study of the *Asfār* preceded by the study of philosophical textbooks, notably Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī's *Hidāya al-ḥikma* (*Guide to Philosophy*), on which numerous commentaries, glosses, and super-glosses have been written including one by Ṣadrā himself. In short, the system *al-ḥikma al-muta'āliya* and its repercussions still define intellectual Shī'ism at present.

Unlike Avicenna's *al-Shifā'*, the *Asfār* has no separate section on logic or physics; it thus departs from the Peripatetic division of philosophy into logic, physics, and metaphysics, seen not only in Avicenna but also in such textbooks as the aforementioned *Hidāya al-ḥikma*. Instead the emphasis is on the study of being, the subject of the first of the *Asfār*'s four books. The work also differs structurally from Suhrawardī's *Philosophy of Illumination*, and Ṣadrā rejects Illuminationist views regarding many philosophical problems. Still he follows Illuminationist methodology, despite refining Suhrawardī's positions in light of Ṣadrā's understanding of Peripatetic philosophy. His overall Illuminationist outlook is evident in several domains.

(A) THE PRINCIPLES OF SCIENCE AND EPISTEMOLOGY. In the *Asfār* "primary intuition" takes the place of Aristotelian definition (*horos*, *horismos*, Avicenna's *al-ḥadd al-tāmm*) as the foundation of science and syllogistic reasoning. This non-Peripatetic position, which is claimed to be Stoic in its original formulation, posits a primary intuition of time-space, and holds that "visions" and "personal revelations" (including religious revelation) are epistemically valid. Ṣadrā here follows the Illuminationists in holding that knowledge by presence (*al-'ilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) is prior to predicative knowledge (*al-'ilm al-ḥuṣūlī*). He also dispenses, as Suhrawardī had, with the central role of the Active Intellect as the tenth intellect of a numbered, discrete (that is, discontinuous) cosmology, in obtaining first principles. He praises the Illuminationist notion of a multiplicity of intellects (*kathra 'uqūl*), which are distinguished only by equivocation in terms of degrees of "more" and "less," as an "improvement" on the Peripatetic model. This gives rise to Ṣadrā's theory of the "unity" or "sameness" of the knower and the known, perhaps the most discussed theory in all recent philosophical writings in Arabic and Persian. The influence of Ṣadrā's epistemology continues today, as in the work of the eminent Shī'ite philosopher, Seyyed Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī.[8]

(B) ONTOLOGY. The "primacy of quiddity" (*aṣāla al-māhiyya*) is a central tenet of Illuminationism, but is rejected by Ṣadrā in favor of the "primacy of being" (*aṣāla al-wujūd*). Illuminationists also divided metaphysics into two parts: *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*, that is, the study of pure being as opposed to the study of qualified being. This division, upheld and refined by Ṣadrā, is incorporated into every philosophical work in the later tradition, up to the present.

(C) SCIENCE AND RELIGION. Aristotle's views on the foundation of philosophy are refined and expanded by Ṣadrā. His theory of knowledge is more along the lines of Illuminationist principles, according to which knowledge is not founded primarily on the input of sensation and abstraction of universals, but rather on the knowing subject (*al-mawḍū' al-mudrik*) itself. This subject knows its "I" – *al-'ana'iyya al-muta'āliya* – by means of the principle of self-consciousness. The "I" intuitively recovers primary notions of

time-space, accepts the validity of such things as the primary intelligibles, and confirms the existence of primary truths and of God. The system is thus seen later as providing a philosophical foundation more congenial to religious doctrine. This paves the way for the triumph of *al-ḥikma al-mutaʿāliya* in the scholastic Shīʿite centers of Iran. If we ponder the impact of Ṣadrā's system on Shīʿite political doctrine, we may fathom how intellectual Shīʿism, as the dominant recent trend in philosophy, has embraced the primacy of practical reason over theoretical science, especially in the last century. Theoretical philosophy is subject to the Illuminationist critique that it is impossible to reach universal propositions that are always true – the Peripatetic "laws of science." Instead "living" sages in every era are thought to determine what "scientific" attitude the society must have, upholding and renewing the foundations using their own individual, experiential, subjective knowledge.

Let me explain further. An Avicennian universal proposition must be both necessary and always true. But, because of the unavoidable contingency or possibility of the future (*al-imkān al-mustaqbal*), the validity of a "law" deduced now may be overturned at some future time by the discovery of exceptions. Furthermore, the most foundational, necessary knowledge that is true at all times must, it is argued, satisfy the Platonic dictum that all knowledge is based on further knowledge. It cannot then be predicative, that is, have the form "S is P" – otherwise we would have an infinite regress. Rather, it is through knowledge by presence at a *given* time that the knowing subject "sees" (*yushāhid*, a technical term meaning both external sight and intellectual grasp of "internal" realities) the object, and obtains knowledge of this object in a durationless instant. There is thus an atemporal relation of knowledge between the subject and object, which occurs when the subject is "sound" (i.e., has a heightened intuition and visionary experience, or a functioning organ of sight in the case of external vision), when there exists an appropriate "medium," which may be "intellect," "sense," "inspiration," "dream," etc.; and when there are no barriers between subject and object. This primary, intuitive, and immediate knowledge serves as the foundation for the syllogistic construction of scientific laws. But the foundations will have to be renewed by other subjects in all future time, or in all other possible worlds, based on the "observations" of those subjects. In recent Shīʿite political

philosophy this is the role given to the most learned Shī'ite scholastic of the time.[9]

(D) HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY. This is an area first touched upon by the classical historians and biographers of scientists (including physicians, philosophers, and other specialists) such as Ibn Abī Uṣaybi'a, al-Qifṭī, Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī, Ibn Juljul al-Andalūsī, and others. Ṣadrā goes further in giving a systematic analysis of the history of philosophical ideas and schools. He divides those philosophers he deems significant into four groups: first, the Pythagoreans, Plato, and the Platonists, who agree to some extent with the Illuminationists; second, the "earlier" Peripatetics; third, the "later" Peripatetics – distinguished at times from a "pure" Aristotelian position, where Proclus and Porphyry are usually included; and fourth, the Illuminationists, whom he calls "followers of the Stoics." The division between "earlier" and "later" (al-mutaqaddimūn, al-muta'akhkhirūn) Peripatetics is also found in previous authors like al-Baghdādī, Suhrawardī, al-Shahrazūrī, and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī.

One discussion of this history is to be found in Asfār III.iii.4. Here Ṣadrā takes up, among other issues, the question of God's knowledge and the epistemology of knowledge by presence as a description of God's knowledge. He distinguishes seven schools of thought, the four philosophical ones just mentioned, as well as two "theological" schools and a "mystical" school.[10] This classification of the history of philosophy reflects Shahrazūrī's al-Shajara al-Ilāhiyya, composed three centuries before the Asfār.[11] Among the "school of the followers of the Peripatetics" (madhhab tawābi' al-mashshā'īn) Ṣadrā includes al-Fārābī and Avicenna, their followers, such as Bahmanyār (Avicenna's famous student and author of al-Taḥṣīl), Abū al-Abbās al-Lawkarī, and "many later Peripatetics" (kathīr min al-muta'akhkhirīn).[12] The "later Peripatetics" include only Muslim philosophers. Al-Kindī is not mentioned, and in fact his name appears rarely in the Asfār in general. (Notice also the exclusion of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī, who is considered a mutakallim by the Illuminationist philosophers, notably by Shahrazūrī in his history of philosophy, Nuzha al-arwāḥ, and in his philosophical encyclopedia, al-Shajara al-Ilāhiyya.[13] Ṣadrā, too, dismisses al-Rāzī's kalām methodology.)[14] This group is said to uphold "primacy of being" (aṣāla al-wujūd)

and the eternity of the world (*qidam*), while rejecting bodily resurrection. They posit that the soul is separated from the body but their position on the question of the immortality of the individual soul is unclear. Of their views Ṣadrā accepts only the ontological view of the "later Peripatetics."

Next is "the school of the Master Shihāb al-Dīn [Suhrawardī] al-Maqtūl, follower of the Stoics, and those who follow him, such as al-Muḥaqqiq al-Ṭūsī, Ibn Kammūna, al-'Allāma [Quṭb al-Dīn] al-Shīrāzī, and Muḥammad al-Shahrazūrī, author of *al-Shajara al-Ilāhiyya*."¹⁵ The attribution of "Stoic" to the Illuminationist school appears in many places in the *Asfār*. But concerning certain "novel" philosophical issues, such as the distinction between the idea of "intellectual form" (*al-ṣūra al-'aqliyya*) and the idea of "archetypal form" (*al-ṣūra al-mithāliyya*), Ṣadrā is careful to use the term "Illuminationist" (*al-ishrāqiyyūn*). The Stoic epithet is added only in conjunction with questions that relate to logic and physics, while in matters that pertain to epistemology, cosmology, and eschatology, "Illuminationist" is used alone.¹⁶ Among the central doctrines of this "school" is said to be that of the real existence of the forms of things outside the mind (*al-qawl bi-kawn wujūd ṣuwar al-ashyā' fī al-khārij*), be the things corporeal or not (*mujarradāt aw māddiyyāt*), or simple or not (*murrakabāt aw basā'iṭ*). This "naive realism" is indeed a cornerstone of the recent trends and does continue certain Illuminationist views.¹⁷

Next is "the school attributed (*al-mansūb*) to Porphyry, the first of the Peripatetics (*muqaddam al-mashshā'īn*), one of the greatest followers of the first teacher," in other words the earlier Peripatetics. The reference to Aristotle ("the first teacher") alludes to the *Theology of Aristotle*, that is, the Arabic Plotinus. Among the views associated with this "school" is their view that the intelligible forms (*al-ṣuwar al-ma'qūla*) share "unity" (*ittiḥād*) with God, and through the Active Intellect with a "select" number of humans. Aristotle himself is not always associated with a "school," but is deemed an exemplum against whom every philosophical position is to be judged.

Finally there is "the school of the divine Plato." It is possible that Ṣadrā here means Plato himself rather than a continuing "school of thought." If so then Ṣadrā is distinguishing the philosophical position of Plato himself as distinct from later syncretic, so-called

"Platonic" texts. Ṣadrā clearly attempts to refer to Plato himself by using the phrase "*qāla Aflāṭūn al-sharīf* (the noble Plato said)" rather than, as elsewhere, "*fī madhhab al-aflāṭūniyya* (in the school of the Platonists)."[18] The central philosophical doctrine here is said to be the "objectified" reality of the Separate Forms (*al-ṣuwar al-mufāraqa*) and the intelligible Platonic Forms (*al-muthul al-'aqliyya al-aflāṭūniyya*), a position upheld strongly by Ṣadrā. On this basis, he adds, God's knowledge of all existents ('*ilm Allāh bi-al-mawjūdāt kulluhā*) is proven. Thus al-Ghazālī's anti-rationalist polemic that the philosophers do not uphold God's knowledge, and that deductive reasoning cannot prove it, is rejected. The ensuing scholastic Shī'ite intellectual tradition regards this as a triumph of Ṣadrā's.

Of interest for us in this chapter is that what properly characterizes recent philosophical trends is the above-mentioned "second school," namely the Illuminationists. Recent and contemporary trends are dominated by this school, taken together with the new emphasis placed on religious philosophy by Ṣadrā. For example, in relation to the issue of immortality and resurrection, Ṣadrā seemingly attempts to "prove" the resurrection of a kind of *imaginalis* or "formal" body (*badan mithālī*, a notion later found in the nineteenth-century philosopher Sabziwarī). In doing so he departs from the Illuminationist doctrine of the immortality of a separate, disembodied soul. In many areas of detailed philosophical arguments Ṣadrā states both the Avicennian and the Illuminationist views and adjudicates between them, sometimes providing a third, more refined position. This new expression of philosophy would be accepted by the leading Shī'ite thinkers, and gradually even by the majority of Shī'ite clergy at present. This is how Ṣadrā's legacy lives, not perhaps as unbound, analytic philosophy but as an accepted religious system of thinking, with the claim that it promotes reason as the main tool of upholding the tenets of revealed religion, as well as the specifically Shī'ite doctrine of inspirational authority in the domain of political theory.

In sum, the main philosophical position of the new holistic system, metaphysical philosophy, which defines the dominant recent trends of philosophy in the Iranian Shī'ite domain, may be outlined as follows. First, philosophical construction is founded on a primary intuition of time-space, and visions and personal revelations are valid epistemological processes. Knowledge by presence is considered to

be prior to predicative knowledge, and the separate intellects are considered to be multiple, even uncountable (*bi-lā nihāya*), and to form a continuum. This is in stark contrast to the Peripatetic model of discrete, numbered, separate intellects. The ontological position of the later school is not very clear, but in my view it is more along the lines of "primacy of being" (*aṣāla al-wujūd*), though it is set out in the terms of the Illuminationist view of being as continuum. In any case, this position is central to the tradition; it is discussed in great detail in Ṣadrā's *Taʿlīqāt* (*Glosses*) on *Ḥikma al-ishrāq*.[19] The Platonic Forms are objectified, and the *mundus imaginalis* of Illuminationist cosmology is considered to be a separate realm whose existence is attested by the intuitive mode of "experience." Finally, metaphysics is divided into two parts: *metaphysica generalis* and *metaphysica specialis*. This marks an Illuminationist departure from Avicennian pure ontology, the study of being qua being (*wujūd bimā huwa wujūd*). It includes discussion of such subjects as mystical states and stations, love, secrets of dreams, prophecy, sorcery, and the arts of magic.

ṢĀ'IN AL-DĪN AND THE HARMONY OF RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

The use of epistemology to ground Islamic religious belief goes back at least as far as al-Fārābī's *Book of the Opinions of the Inhabitants of The Virtuous City*, in which the ideal ruler is the legitimate lawgiver because of his connection with the divine; this is based on the theory of union with the Active Intellect. The attempt to construct an Islamic religious philosophy continues beyond the formative period of the tenth century, and later thinkers express religious philosophy in terms more "Islamic" than Hellenic. The unbound reason of Greek philosophy, which would grant primacy to reason over revelation, was attacked by al-Ghazālī and then by a host of lesser figures, leading to the hard blow dealt by Ibn Taymiyya in his *Refutation of the Rationalists* (*al-Radd ʿalā al-manṭiqiyyīn*).[20] An influential figure who did much to recover the idea of the harmony between religion and philosophy, as well as mysticism (*ʿirfān*), was Ibn Torkeh ʿAlī b. Moḥammad Khojandī Iṣfahānī (d. ca. 1432), known often by his title, Ṣā'in al-Dīn, in Shī'ite scholarly circles.[21] Since Ṣā'in al-Dīn was identified with the emerging clerical classes, his use of

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philosophy to uphold religion was deemed acceptable, which paved the way for later, more creative thinkers like Ṣadrā. Thanks to figures like Ṣā'in al-Dīn, the Shī'ite clergy came to accept the notion of the "intellectual sciences" (al-'ulūm al-'aqliyya), which use philosophy as philosophy, without reducing it to the role of a "handmaiden," and which treat Greek philosophers with reverence instead of the hostility evinced by anti-rationalists like Ibn Taymiyya. Ṣā'in al-Dīn was an example of those educated, scholastic thinkers who also held position at courts of temporal rule (in his case the Gūrkānid Ilkhans). The manifestly political philosophical core of this trend was allied to a real political agenda.

Ṣā'in al-Dīn's works are now accepted to have been among the first to harmonize philosophical method, religious doctrine, and "mystical" ('irfān-e naẓarī) knowledge. In recent studies that discuss philosophical trends in intellectual Shī'ism, Ṣā'in al-Dīn is hailed as one of the scholars in Iran who began to construct systematic rationalist religious philosophy with a distinct "Shī'ite" emphasis on 'ilm (knowledge). He affirmed divinely inspired, but rationally upheld, principles of religion that would insure the continuance of just rule. The idea that each age has its own personification of knowledge (a'lam), and especially the popularization of this idea, are in part a result of Ṣā'in al-Dīn's work. As Sadughi has shown, significant twentieth-century Shī'ite scholars of the "intellectual sciences" ('ulūm-e 'aqlī is incidentally a term perhaps first popularized by Ṣā'in al-Dīn) such as Ziyā' al-Dīn Dorrī (d. 1336 A.H.), Āqā Mīrzā Mohammad Qomshe'ī (d. 1306 A.H.) and his mentor Mīrzā Mohammad 'Alī Moẓaffar, Āqā Mīrzā Maḥmūd al-Modarres al-Kahakī al-Qommī (d. 1346 A.H.), and Āqā Seyyed Mohammad Kāẓem al-Lavāsāni al-Tehrānī (d. 1302 A.H.) all studied Ṣā'in al-Dīn's most significant text, Tamhīd al-qawā'id.[22] This work is best described in contemporary technical language as a text on phenemenology and philosophy of religion, in which the fundamental political doctrine of the legitimacy of divinely inspired rule by select members of the 'ulamā' class is upheld.

Of interest for the understanding of how philosophical theory influences Shī'ite political thinking is the little-noticed fact that Ṣā'in al-Dīn is among the first to draw on the Illuminationist epistemology of knowledge by presence and use it to give priority to intuitive and inspired knowledge, especially in the case of primary

principles. The development of Shī'ite religious philosophy does, of course, incorporate ideas from traditions other than *falsafa*. For example, it employs non-polemical, "scientific" *kalām* to attack anti-rationalist, Ash'arite political and theological dogma. Equally, Qur'ānic exegesis is used to support rationalist jurisprudence. Here Ṣā'in al-Dīn presented easily accessible rational analyses of the five Pillars of Islam and similar subjects. As Āshtiyānī shows, Ṣā'in al-Dīn's "political" intention, as a scholar serving Gūrkānid, universalist Islamic ambitions, was to compose most of his texts in a language and style comprehensible by the multitude.[23] All of this led to wider acceptance of the doctrine that the *'ulamā'* should be entrusted with upholding just rule. Ṣā'in al-Dīn's innovative ideas, still extant in more than sixty works, played a central role in shaping the intellectual tradition of Iranian Shī'ism, especially the popularization of the core of the new Shī'ite political philosophy: the idea of rationally proven, divinely inspired knowledge in the service of just rule. Increasingly the "citizens" are not given an active role, but are led to believe in the doctrine of obedience and "imitation" (*taqlīd*) in all matters, including the political. This paves the way for the central institution of the religious leader as the "source of imitation" (*marja'-e taqlīd*).

PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS IN RECENT ARABIC AND PERSIAN TEXTS

The history of the philosophical tradition beginning a century or so prior to the School of Iṣfahān, and continuing down to the present, has yet to be written. The few texts published in critical editions do provide us with a basis from which we can select certain problems and themes of philosophical interest, but we have to proceed cautiously. There are very few philosophical treatises in Arabic or Persian prior to the sixteenth century devoted to a specific, singular topic – what we would today call a "monograph." There are exceptions, notably *al-Sīra al-falsafiyya* (*The Philosophical Way of Life*) by the brilliant ninth-century Persian scientist Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, and a few others that fall within the general domain of political philosophy. But philosophical compositions are predominantly inclusive, and treat comprehensive sets of problems. This is true of all of Avicenna's major works, and of non-Peripatetic works as well.

For example, in the technical works of Suhrawardī and others, even when the main structure of philosophical texts is changed, the philosophical problems are still discussed in a comprehensive way.[24] This tendency toward comprehensive works seems to continue up to the fifteenth or even the sixteenth century; even authors who wanted to deal with specific problems were constrained to make their innovative contributions within the context of commentaries, glosses, and super-glosses on existing comprehensive texts.

I cannot say exactly when the practice of composing separate philosophical treatises finally became widespread. This is because of the paucity of published philosophical texts, especially those from the mid-fourteenth century (the end of the scientific revival in northwest Iran, promoted by the Mongols and the first of the Ilkhāns, and directed by the Persian philosopher and scientist, Khājeh Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī) to the sixteenth century. But I have examined the few anthologies of Arabic and Persian texts, as well as the few critical editions of texts by authors from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries.[25] This allows me to indicate a fair number of monographs on specific subjects. Many of these treatises deal with specific ontological problems; notably, something like literary genres spring up devoted to the topics of the "proof of the Necessary" (*ithbāt al-wājib*), the "unity of being" (*waḥda al-wujūd*), the "relation between quiddity and being" (*ittiṣāf al-māhiyya bi-al-wujūd*), and other related ontological topics. Others deal with problems of cosmology and creation, and especially the "temporal creation" or "becoming of the world" (*ḥudūth al-'ālam*), and also "eternal creation" (*ḥudūth dahrī*). Still others deal with epistemological problems. Foremost among these are treatises on Mullā Ṣadrā's famous "unity of knower and the known" (*ittiḥād al-'āqil wa al-ma'qūl*) and related issues. Finally, a fairly large number of treatises reply to questions or objections, or take the form of dialogues or disputations between scholastic figures.

It is noteworthy that there are very few, if any, monographs (among those known to me) on topics in formal and material logic. The only such monographs are usually in the form of dialogue and disputation and deal with the philosophy of language. Prominent are the problem of the "liar paradox" and other logical paradoxes with ontological implications.[26] Those few works on logic of the seventeenth century in particular that have been published are simplified textbooks, in

the style and manner of standard Peripatetic textbooks, which follow
the structure of Aristotle's *Organon*, usually excluding the *Poetics*.
This is perhaps best exemplified in Ṣadrā's own textbook on logic,
On the Refinement of Logic (al-Tanqīh fī al-manṭiq).[27] Still, we can
isolate a few problems of interest in logical works of this period,

(A) LOGICAL PARADOXES AND PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE. The well-
known liar paradox of antiquity, that the statement "I am lying" can
be neither true nor false, becomes the subject of a heated debate in the
sixteenth century in the southern Iranian city of Shīrāz.[28] This debate
may have continued in the later tradition, along with others on topics
in theoretical logic (not counting semantics and semiotics),[29] but we
have little evidence for it. Indeed this may be an indication of the
recent lack of interest in theoretical philosophy as an independent
intellectual pursuit. The debate on the liar paradox was between two
of sixteenth-century Iran's leading scholastic philosophers, Ṣadr al-
Dīn Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī. The name of the paradox
is *shubha kull kalāmī kādhib*, which combines the term *shubha*,
literally meaning "doubt" or "ambiguity," with the short form of
the proposition *kull kalāmī kādhib*, which literally means "all of
my statements are false." In expanded expressions of the proposition, .
and by way of analysis, temporal modifiers are added, such as "now,"
"tomorrow," "forever," etc.[30]

The story of the unfolding debate is both historically and philo-
sophically interesting. Later scholars join the debate and themselves
write monographs trying to "resolve" the paradox, by upholding one
of the two positions, that of Dawwānī or that of Dashtakī. Dashtakī
first sparks the controvery in his "glosses" (*ḥawāshī*) to a commen-
tary on an earlier scholastic work by Qūshjī, which mentioned the
paradox.[31] Dawwānī then writes at least two "responses" to the posi-
tion expressed by Dashtakī, later composing a fairly lengthy mono-
graph on it himself.[32] This shows serious involvement in a theoreti-
cal issue, going well beyond what is usually assumed to have been a
lifeless scholastic tradition of glosses and super-glosses on standard
texts. Here we have important representatives of the sixteenth- and
early seventeenth-century intellectual endeavor in Iran devoting a
great deal of time to analysis and discussion of a long-standing log-
ical paradox. This is an indication of the continuity of innovative
thinking, and serves as an important historical lesson regarding later

philosophical trends in general. Philosophically, while it is not possible to go into the details of the debate here, it is worth summarizing Dashtakī's analysis. Not unlike today's logicians, he distinguishes between the first- and second-order truth and falsity of the proposition, and thus insists on the need to distinguish ordinary or natural language on the one hand, and meta-language on the other. This original insight was both deep and novel for its time: an example of how such monographs could be an instrument for genuinely analytical approaches to solving philosophical problems.

(B) ONTOLOGY. Monographs on ontological topics and problems dominate the philosophical discourse in recent Arabic and Persian philosophy. The subject also occupies the major portion in almost all books on philosophy in general. Recent philosophical discourse has refined the earlier distinction between general and special metaphysics, and focused on the study of being as being, but has also taken a phenomenological approach to the topic. However, Avicennian ideas (the essence–existence distinction, the modalities of being, and the proof of the "Necessary Being") continue to define this discipline. Suhrawardī's ideas that being is a continuum and is equivocal also exert influence. As we have seen, both live on in the systematic presentation of Ṣadrā. The disagreement between the primacy of being and primacy of essence is still debated and often used to distinguish differing camps of philosophy. Related areas of study include the question of whether the number of categories can be reduced (ḥaṣr al-maqūlāt), as first proposed by Suhrawardī, perhaps under Stoic influence. This involves removing the study of categories from the logical corpus of the *Organon*, and situating it instead in the study of principles of physics. Thus, for example, the category of substance is reduced to the category of motion: a dynamic conception referred to as "substantial motion" (ḥaraka jawhariyya), a central idea of Mullā Ṣadrā's.[33]

(C) THEORIES OF CAUSALITY. I will conclude by examining Mulla Ṣadrā's discussion of an important problem of causality. My choice of both problem and philosopher serves, I hope, to demonstrate in a final way the basic objectives of this chapter. The text in question is *Taʿlīqāt ʿalā Sharḥ ḥikma al-ishrāq* (*Glosses on the Commentary on the Philosophy of Illumination*), a highly refined philosophical

discourse in a precise technical language, which shows the amazing breadth of Ṣadrā's knowledge of philosophy up to his time, extending from the Greek masters to the great Persian figures, as well as a high level of penetrating analysis, well beyond that of the scholastic tradition of commentaries, glosses and textbooks. It is a set of glosses on a commentary by the thirteenth-century philosopher Quṭb al-Dīn Shīrāzī, which is in turn a commentary on a work of Suhrawardī's.[34] But the scholastic nature of this exercise belies the innovation of the ideas Ṣadrā presents here; ideas that he would not have presented in a more "public" discourse.

Ṣadrā presents his theory of causality by first examining the types of priority.[35] He is responding to Suhrawardī's statement that "the priority of cause over effect is a mental one, and not a temporal one." Ṣadrā explains that "priority" is when two things exist such that one may exist without necessitating the other, but the other is necessitated only when the first is necessitated. Ṣadrā now announces that, in addition to the "five famous types" of priority,[36] there are other types he will discuss. For the first significant additional type of priority, Ṣadrā has coined the phrase "priority in terms of Truth" (taqaddum bi-al-ḥaqq). This is the priority of the ranks of being generated from "the First" down to the lowest level of existence. In a way this is the same type of priority Suhrawardī called "priority in terms of nobility" (taqaddum bi-al-sharaf), yet Ṣadrā wants to distinguish his "priority in terms of Truth" from all other types. His intention is to provide an exposition of his own view of emanation, and the view of his teacher Mīr Dāmād that creation is "eternal generation" (ḥudūth dahrī). This allows him to harmonize a philosophical understanding of "causality" with religious commitment to "creation."

He does this by arguing that mere ranking of nobility does not imply the inclusion of what is lower "in" the higher, as the ranks of being are in God. Nor is priority in terms of causality adequate, according to the standard view of such priority. Priority of position, place, rank, or time also fails to capture the priority of the rank of created beings. He finally states that this type of priority by Truth (taqaddum bi-al-ḥaqq) is something "apparent" (ẓāhir), known by those who are resolute in the experiential cognitive mode. What, then, is taqaddum bi-al-ḥaqq? If it cannot be captured by any notion of causality, whether essential, natural, or mathematical, then it

can be known only by the subject's own understanding of "truth," *haqq*. It is grounded, then, in immediate and subjective knowledge by presence. Here Ṣadrā is anticipating Hume's rejection of the rationalist concept of causality, by arguing that there is neither a logical nor a metaphysical relationship between cause and effect. Only the subject's *own* understanding determines "causality," and hence defines priority in being. However, Ṣadrā's position is distinct from Hume's in that Ṣadrā does accept "real priority" (*taqaddum bi-al-haqīqa*), which he states to be priority of a thing over that which is existent because of it. So Ṣadrā's view is more realist than Hume's, where mere "perception" is the only observed "relation" between two things.

It seems to me, though, that *taqaddum bi-al-haqq* is compatible with the Illuminationist position that being is equivocal, and the ensuing doctrine that beings are ranked in a priority of nobility. Ṣadrā's position on "true priority" does favor the "religious" view of creation, evoking as it does a unique relation between God and what he creates; and he insists that we must know the truth (*haqq*) immediately in order to understand the "causal" connection between two things related "in terms of truth." Still he does not reject the traditional understanding of other types of causation, but only claims that it does not capture "priority in terms of truth." This places his thinking within philosophy rather than religion as such.

From the sixteenth century to the present, Islamic philosophy has been dominated by a scholastic tradition that continues in its interpretation of the ideals of classical Arabic philosophy, and leads to the final acceptance of philosophy by religion. In Ṣadrā's unified system, the select religious scholars, possessing knowledge and inspiration, were confirmed as the legitimate "guardians" of just rule. This system also became the basis for the continuity of philosophy. Although higher philosophy is today still mostly studied only "extracurricularly" (*dorūs-e khārej*), the scholastic tradition has incorporated certain aspects of philosophy into its core curricula. For instance, semantics is included in the study of the principles of jurisprudence, and a standard, simplified formal logic is included in "primers" studied by all beginning seminary students. Representative members of the Shī'ite clergy propose also the doctrine of independent reason

(*ijtihād*) in principles of jurisprudence, which marks the final harmonization of philosophy with religion.[37] The dominant philosophical themes in the past centuries have been ontology, creation and cosmology, theories of knowledge (especially unified theories deemed capable of describing extraordinary types of knowing such as inspiration and intuition), psychology (though this has been reduced in the main to eschatology), philosophical hermeneutics, and a few other similar topics. Much more work remains to be done in Western scholarship on this recent philosophical tradition, and this work needs to begin from the realization that there is much here that is genuinely philosophical.

NOTES

1   The wide-ranging intellectual impact of Iranian influences has led some, notably the late French Orientalist Henry Corbin, to give the name "Iranian Islam" to many domains of inquiry and expression including the philosophical. See Corbin [161].

2   Phrases like "Oriental wisdom" (as in Corbin's translation of *ḥikma al-ishrāq* as "sagesse orientale") and "transcendent theosophy" misrepresent the analytical value of the philosophy of Illumination, presenting it as mystical or visionary, rather than presenting Islamic philosophy as philosophy.

3   Rahman [167], vii.

4   See H. Ziai, "Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī: founder of the Illuminationist school," in Nasr and Leaman [34], vol.1, and chapter 10 above.

5   See Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī, *Sharḥ ḥikma al-Ishrāq*, ed. H. Ziai (Tehran: 2001), 7.

6   See the recent work by Sadughi [258], which shows that all of the hundreds of philosophers from the seventeenth century to the present were from the *'ulamā'*, with the notable exception of Muḥammad Ḥasan Qashqai and Jahāngīr Qashqai (see pp. 30, 84, 105, 167), who were noble tribal Qashqai khans.

7   Given Ṣadrā's explicitly philosophical aims, this term is to be preferred to the prevalent "transcendent philosophy." In almost every contemporary Persian book on intellectual subjects Ṣadrā is rightly hailed for his success in describing a *rational* (*'aqlī*) system, which is thought to lend philosophical legitimacy to Shī'ism as a whole. See Sadughi [258] for lists of Shī'ite scholastics who have taught Ṣadrā.

8   Āshtiyānī is perhaps the leading creative thinker ir
     Shī'ite world. He is one of the few Shī'ite scholastic
     of his scholarly collaboration with Henry Corbin, is kn
     scholarship at least in name, and a few of his text editio
     ical work are also known. For a simple overview of the
     stance see Sohravardī, *Partow Nāmeh* (*The Book of Ra*
     trans. with an introduction by H. Ziai (Costa Mesa, C/
     See also Yazdi [157].

9   See further Ziai [262].

10   Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī, *al-Asfār al-arba'a* (Tehran: n.d.)

11   See Hossein Ziai, "The Manuscript of *al-Shajara al-Il*
     sophical Encyclopedia by Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad SI
     Shināsī 2 (1990), 89–108.

12   *Asfār*, vol. VI, 187.

13   See Ziai, "The Manuscript of *al-Shajara al-Ilāhiyya*."

14   Al-Rāzī's *al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya* ought not to b(
     Illuminationist work as some have suggested: see 'Alī
     Tārikh-e Falāsefe-ye Īrānī (Tehran: n.d.), 123.

15   *Asfār*, vol. VI, 187.

16   See Ziai [158], ch. 1.

17   See Ziai [158], 34–9.

18   See for instance *Asfār*, vol. III, 509ff.

19   I have prepared a critical edition of part I of this work, v
     press (Tehran: forthcoming). Āshtiyānī makes ample u
     see his *Sharḥ-e ḥāl va ārā-ye falsafī-ye Mullā Ṣadrā* (*The
     sophical Doctrine of Mullā Ṣadrā*) (Qom: 1998), 228–31

20   See Ibn Taymiyya, *Against the Greek Logicians*, tran
     (Oxford: 1993).

21   Given Ibn Torkeh's obscurity in Western scholarship I v
     reader with a fairly detailed list of references: J. Na'ini
     to his Persian translation of Sharastānī's *al-Milal wa*
     Tanqīḥ al-adilla (Tehran: 1335 A.H.); M.-T. Danesh-Pa;
     Ketāb-Khāne-ye Ehdā'ī-ye Seyyed Mohamad-e Meshkāi
     A.H.), vol. III, 425ff.; H. Corbin [161], vol. III (Paris: 1
     Behbahani, "Aḥvāl va Āsār-e Ṣā'in al-Dīn Torkeh-yε
     Mohaghegh and Landolt [255], 87–145; Sadughi [258].
     work *Tamhīd al-qawā'id* has been edited by S. J. D. Ās
     200-page analytical introduction, and glosses on the wo
     been previous lithograph editions, not free of error.

22   Sadughi [258], 25, 45, 47, 61.

23   See Ṣā'in al-Dīn, *Tamhīd al-qawā'id*, 3–8. Āshtiyānī's
     documents Ṣā'in al-Dīn's impact on Mullā Moḥsen

'Abd al-Razzāq Lāhījī, and other Shī'ite *'ulamā'*, and shows why Mīr Fendereskī, Bahā' al-Dīn 'Āmelī, Mīr Dāmād, and Mullā Ṣadrā acknowledged Ṣā'in al-Dīn's thought. See further A. M. Behbahani, "Aḥvāl va Āsār-e Ṣā'in al-Dīn Torkeh-ye Iṣfahānī," in Mohaghegh and Landolt [255], xvi–xxii.

24   For a discussion of the new structure see, for example, Suhrawardī [152], xxiii–xxviii.

25   Perhaps the best anthology is Corbin and Āshtiyānī [254]. Twelve treatises have been published as *Majmū'eh-ye rasā'il-e falsafi-ye Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn*, edited by H. N. Iṣfahānī (Tehran: 1966). Works of the significant nineteenth-century scholastic, Hādī Sabziwārī, have been edited as *Rasā'el-e ḥakīm Sabzevārī*, ed. S. J. D. Āshtiyānī (Tehran: 1991). Also useful for the study of Arabic and Persian philosophy, especially concerning scholastic figures, is the journal *Kherad-nāmeh-ye Mullā Ṣadrā*.

26   For example, numerous short monographs responded to Ibn Kammūna's paradox on whether the Necessary Being is unique.

27   See *Majmū'eh-ye rasā'il-e falsafī-ye Ṣadr al-muta'allihīn*, 193–236.

28   This was at the time an important center of learning, which produced several scholars that would influence the development of the "school of Iṣfahān." For a discussion of the main scholastic philosophers of Shīrāz see Q. Kākā'ī, "Mīr Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī," *Kherad-nāmeh* 1, 3.3 (1996), 83–9. Ṣadr al-Dīn Dashtakī and his son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī, are two outstanding figures of sixteenth-century trends in philosophy; the father wrote a monograph on *Ithbāt al-Wājib [Proof of the Necessary Being]*, which as mentioned above is a representative work of the philosophical genres of this period. Another of his monographs on ontology is titled *Risāla fī wujūd al-dhihnī [Treatise on the Ideal or Mental Being]*. Both these works were extensively read later, notably by Ṣadrā, who mentions them in his *Asfār*. The son, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Dashtakī, wrote a commentary on one of Suhrawardī's less technical Illuminationist texts, *Hayākil al-nūr*.

29   Semantic theory in general, called *'ilm dalāla al-alfāẓ*, continues as an initial chapter (*bāb*, or *faṣl*) of textbooks on the "principles of jurisprudence" (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), but is totally removed from the philosophical discourse as such in the later tradition.

30   See, e.g., *Risāleh-ye 'ibra al-fuḍalā' fī ḥall shubha jadhr al-aṣamm*, by yet another of the sixteenth–seventeenth-century scholastic figures, Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad Khafrī, ed. A. F. Qaramaleki, *Kherad-nāmeh* 1, 4.4 (1996), 86–9. Here the paradoxical proposition is "all of my statements now are false." Note that here, in the title of the paradox, the phrase "all my statements are false" is replaced by *jadhr al-aṣamm*,

"the square root of an imaginary number" (the term *aṣamm* stands for the square root of −1; literally it means "the most dumb," i.e., "devoid of sense"). The implication here, anticipating the analysis of the paradox in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, is that the proposition is itself devoid of sense, like asking "what is the square root of −1?" according to the mathematics of the day.

31   See A. F. Qaramelaki, "Mo'ammā-ye jadhr-e aṣamm dar ḥowzeh-ye fal-safī-ye Shīrāz (The Liar Paradox in the Philosophical Circle of Shīrāz)," *Kherad-nāmeh* 1, 4.4 (1996), 80–5. The author lists (82 nn. 12–17) some of the earlier known presentations of the liar paradox in Arabic and Persian, the oldest by al-Fārābī, the most important by Ibn Kammūna.

32   Jalāl al-Dīn Dawwānī, *Nahāya al-kalām fī ḥall shubha kull kalāmī kādhib*, ed. A. F. Qaramelaki, *Nāmeh-ye mofīd* 5 (1996).

33   On notions of being in the Ṣadrian tradition, there is as yet no fully ade-quate treatment, but a good place to start is Rahman [167]. Excellent, though a bit outdated in style, is M. Hörten, *Philosophische von Shi-razi* (Halle: 1912). The best accounts in Persian are those by Āshtiyānī: not only his *Sharḥ-e ḥāl va ārā-ye falsafī-ye Mullā Ṣadrā (On Mullā Ṣadrā's Life and his Philosophical Ideas)* (Qom: 1999), but also an inde-pendent work called *Hastī (Being)* (Tehran, several reprints), which may be recommended as a representative and engaging work from the recent scholastic tradition.

34   I have prepared an edition of the *Ta'līqāt*, which is now in press; unfor-tunately only a lithograph has so far been available (Tehran: 1313 A.H.), and this is nigh impossible to use.

35   He does so against the background of his distinct Illuminationist epis-temology. Ṣadrā holds that knowledge by presence is prior to knowl-edge acquired through syllogistic reasoning, especially in the case of first principles and knowledge of the Necessary Being. And he further holds that knowledge of a thing is primarily knowledge of its cause. The Peripatetics are said to be unable to demonstrate the Necessary Being, since everything is known by its cause, and the Necessary Existent has no cause. Now, knowledge by presence takes place when the know-ing subject (*al-mudrik*) has an atemporal "relation" (*al-iḍāfa*) to the object (*al-mudrak*), as we saw above. When such knowledge is obtained, the "cause" is known in a durationless "instant" (*ān*). But, following the Illuminationists, there is no order of priority between knower and known; this is the position discussed in what follows. The view solves not only the problem of how we know God, but also rejects temporal priority as the basis for distinguishing cause and effect, as will become clear below.

36 In other words the four discussed by Aristotle at *Categories*, 14a26–
    b15, plus causation.

37 This is exemplified by many twentieth-century jurists also known
    and revered for their philosophical teachings, such as Abū al-
    Ḥasan Qazvīnī, Allāmeh Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, Mehdī Āshtiyānī, Jalāl
    Āshtiyānī, and Mehdī Ḥa'irī Yazdī.