

prescription for that laxative?" He said, "The ingredients of that are attained by you". I said "What are the ingredients?" He said, "Whatever is dear to you from wealth, property, possessions, and the pleasures of the body eat pure but little food... If you must use the bathroom soon, then the medicine has been effective, your sight will be illuminated, and if the need arises, for another forty days fast and use the same laxative so it may work this time. If it does not work, apply it time and time again, it will work..."

I asked the Shaykh, "Once the inner eye is opened, what does the seer see?" The Shaykh said, "Once the inner eye is opened, the external eyes and lips should be shut and the five external senses should be silenced. The inner senses should begin to function so that if the patient grasps, he may do so through the inner hand and if he sees, he sees with the inner eye and if he hears, he hears with the inner ear and if he smells, he smells with the inner sense... [then] he sees what he sees and when he sees¹."

On mysticism both Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi follow the same path and even predict that the same set of ascetic practices may lead to the same result. Their respective views on mysticism are neither conjecture nor relying on a single passage as Gutas states "on the basis of a single paragraph in Ibn Sina's prologue to the *Shifa*, then Ibn Tufayl has created the following fiction... the truth, however, is something else and it is contained in Ibn Sina's other book²."

The fact is that mysticism, both in its philosophical and practical sense is a component of the philosophical edifice of Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi and the type of knowledge that is attained through mysticism is regarded by both philosophers to be the purest form of knowledge, one which is clear, distinct, unmediated and direct. The knowledge attained through mysticism for Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi is not only informative but transformative as well, a quality which both philosophers allude to in a very specific and clear language leaving no doubt that mysticism is an inseparable and integral part of the philosophical schools of Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi.

1. *Ibid.*, p.248.

2. D. Gutas, "Ibn Tufayl on Ibn Sina's eastern Philosophy", p.231.

The attainment of knowledge for Suhrawardi too, as we have discussed is hierarchical with the direct and unmediated mode of cognition being the most desirable one. Suhrawardi in his numerous Persian Sufi narratives¹ has discussed the spiritual path in great length and detail stating:

Know that the "I" (nafs natiqah) is of a divine substance which the powers and engagements of the body withdrew it from its abode. Whenever, the soul is strengthened through spiritual virtues and the body is weakened through fasting and not sleeping, the soul is released and unites with the spiritual world².

Suhrawardi whose choice of titles for his mystical narratives are based on traditional Sufi themes in a highly metaphorical language reveals his esoteric epistemology. This epistemological doctrine which is discussed throughout Suhrawardi's Persian writings resembles to a great degree Ibn Sina's esoteric views as it can be seen in the following passage in the *Bustan al-qulub*.

Know that there are two tendencies in your "I" just as there are in the body. One tendency is toward the spiritual world from which it attains knowledge and benefits [from it] and that is called scientific and theoretical knowledge. The other tendency aims at the corporeal world from where it attains perfection and that they call practical knowledge³.

Similar to Ibn Sina, Suhrawardi distinguishes between practical and theoretical knowledge each of which pertains to a different domain. The knowledge of the incorporeals for Suhrawardi is only possible if one is engaged in austere forms of asceticism in particular hunger, as Suhrawardi says "Know" that the foundation of asceticism is hunger"⁴ The spiritual and the intellectual prescriptions of both Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi correspond to one another both acknowledging that asceticism leads to the opening of the intellectual intuition, the highest form of knowledge possible for man kind. Suhrawardi in an explicit language of fers the following instructions:

I asked the Shaykh, "I do not have that insight. What is the solution?" The Shaykh said, "You have indigestion. Fast for forty days and then drink laxative so you may vomit and your eyes may open". I asked, "What is the

1. See Opera 3 and the introduction of S.H. Nasr to Suhrawardi's Sufi narratives. Also see Kazem Tehrani, *Mystical Symbolism in Four Treatises of Suhrawardi*, Ph.D. dist., Columbia Univ., 1974.

2. Opera 3, p. 107.

3. Opera 3, p.373.

4. Ibid., p.396.

The name ascetic is reserved for one who shuns the delights and goods of this world. The name worshipper is reserved for one who persists in exercising worship by prostration, fasting and what resembles them. The name knower is reserved for one who disposes one's thought toward the sanctity of divine power, seeking the perpetual illumination of the light of the truth into one's innermost thought¹.

Ibn Sina disregards asceticism and piety through worship alone as "a kind of business deal"² and considers the context within which asceticism and worship takes place to be the determining factor in the final outcome of these activities. If asceticism and worship are performed on utilitarian grounds, then they are inconsistent with what he calls "the proper objective of the knower". This object Ibn Sina states, is one which only the true seeker may pursue and says "the knower seeks the First Truth not by anything other than Itself and prefers nothing to the knowledge and worship of It alone"³.

Ibn Sina in a clear and radical departure from the principles of the peripatetic philosophy advocates two stages for the attainment of truth through direct experience. First is the stage of willingness (al-iradah) or as some Sufis have called it himah, to be followed by the second stage, spiritual exercises. The latter consists both of asceticism and such traditional Sufi practices as the invocation of divine names (dhikr), prayer, etc. Ibn Sina then in a detailed manner explains stations and states of the spiritual path and alludes to various types of knowledge that are attained through asceticism and other spiritual exercises. Some of what Ibn Sina discloses are traditionally considered to be too esoteric to reveal the uninitiate but in *On the Stations of the Knowers* puts the number of stations and the states of the path at twenty seven⁴. In a chapter entitled "On the Secrets of Signs"⁵, Ibn Sina offers a prescription for the spiritual illnesses of the soul which range from abstinence from food to the observation of various spiritual substances. For those who cast doubt on the presence of a mystical dimension or "Oriental Philosophy" to Ibn Sina's thought⁶. *On the Stations of the Knowers* leaves no doubt regarding the presence of a mystical component to Ibn Sina's philosophy.

1. Ibid., p.81.

2. Ibid., p.82.

3. Ibid., p.83.

4. Ibid., pp. 81-91.

5. Ibid., p. 92.

6. For more information see D. Gutas, "Ibn Tufayl on Ibn Sina's Eastern Philosophy" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*.

impossible. Therefore, from his second argument he concludes that the correct mode of knowledge is one by which the self comes to know itself through its mere presence.

Suhrawardi's third and final argument for knowledge through self awareness or knowledge by presence is from attributes.

Indeed the thing which necessarily exists and which is self perceived does not know itself from a representation of itself, in itself. If it knows [itself] through its representation, and the representation of I-ness is not itself, then in regards to it [I-ness], it is the one perceived and it is the representation at that time. The perception of I-ness must be by itself, the perception of that which it, itself, is, and must be the perception of itself, by itself, just like the perception of other than itself-and that is impossible in contrast to the external, representation and that which it has of it are both it. Moreover, if it is through a representation, it itself, did not know it was a representation, and thus then it knew itself through representation, And how was it not? It imagines that it knows the very thing by that which is attributed to itself from outside. It is an attribute of it. If it is judged according to every super-added attribute to itself, then it is a knowledge of other than itself. It already knew itself before all attributes and the like. It did not know itself through attributes which are super added¹.

In this argument which is a modified version of the previous two arguments Suhrawardi once again establishes the impossibility for the I to know itself through its representation. If the self comes to know itself through its representation, then it must have known itself, otherwise, how did the self know that is this representation which matches this self? Furthermore, knowing oneself through its representation would lead to a succession of contingent dependent representations that continues *ad infinitum*.

5. Knowledge through direct experience: Mysticism

A direct result of knowledge by presence is that it paves the path for mysticism to be taken seriously by both masters². For Ibn Sina who devotes the fourth chapter of his *al-Isharat wa'l-tanbihat* to Sufism and irfan (he uses them interchangeably) mystical knowledge is not only a possibility but a necessary consequence of asceticism. Ibn Sina distinguishes between an ascetic, a worshiper and the knower and states:

1. Ibid., p.111.

2. For more information on Ibn Sina's view on mysticism see Shams C. Inati, *Ibn Sina on Mysticism*, London: Kegan Paul International, 1996, p. 81.

then follows that I have come to know my I through what is not my I and this is a contradiction. As Suhrawardi states:

A thing that exists in itself (al-qaim bidhdhat) and is conscious of itself does not know itself through a representation (al-mithal) of itself appearing in itself. This is because if, in knowing one's self, one were to make a representation of oneself, since this representation of his "I-ness" (anaiyah) could never be the reality of that "I-ness", it would be then such that representation is "it" in relation to the "I-ness", and not "I". Therefore, the thing apprehended is the representation. It thus follows that the representation of the apprehension of "I-ness" would be exactly what is the apprehension of "it-ness" (huwa), and that the apprehension of the reality of "I-ness" would be exactly the apprehension of what is not "I-ness". This is an absurdity. On the other hand, this absurdity does not follow in the case of apprehension of external objects, for the representation and that to which that representation belongs are both "it"s¹.

Suhrawardi's second argument relies on the necessity of the existence of a precognitive knowledge of the self if the self is to be known at all. If the self is not known directly then it must have been known indirectly, i.e. through X. This however implies that when I "see" X, I realize that this is the representative of the self, a clear indication that I must have already known myself otherwise I would not recognize its representation. If one is seeking that which is completely unknown to him, then one will not recognize it even if one comes upon it. From this it follows that the self is either completely or partially known to itself. On this Suhrawardi states:

Indeed, that which is unknown to you, if it becomes known, then how do you know that it is what you sought? For inevitably either [your] ignorance remains, or [your] prior knowledge of it existed so that it could be known as such [...] For that which is sought, if it is unknown from all aspect, it could never be known².

Suhrawardi argues that if the self knows itself through its representation A then the question can be raised as to how does the self know that A represents the self? If this knowledge is not direct then it should be through some other representation of A such as B. But the same problem arises with regard to B which can be said to have known itself through C and this process can go on *ad infinitum*, a process Suhrawardi considers to be

1. Opera 2, p.111.

2. Opera 2, p.110.

Furthermore, by what means does this self-conscious is the consciousness of itself, an argument which is remarkably similar to Suhrawardi's on the distinction between self-consciousness and consciousness through consciousness. Ibn Sina tells us the fact that I perceive myself as myself is not verifiable neither by outsiders nor by myself. How do I know that I am who I think I am? In order for I to recognize myself, I must have known myself. prior to the act of recognition. Even if I am to recognize myself through the accidental attributes of the self i.e. body, etc. I must know that it is this self which matches this body and this knowledge has to be present to the self at all times.

The knowledge of myself therefore, has to be of a primary nature, an a priori concept which knows itself through itself directly and without mediation and it is in this sense of knowing that al-shuur bi'l-shuur is arrived at. Ibn Sina maintains that had this not been the case, we would have had to assume that the self knows itself through something else, i.e. A, but A through which the self is known can only be known through B and this process can continue *adinfinitum*¹ F. Shayegan in her analysis of Ibn Sina's argument states:

one can conclude that self-conscious is the pre-judgment state of grasping of existence and consciousness though consciousness is the judgment of cognition of existence².

Where as clearly the theory of knowledge by presence exists in its early form in Ibn Sina whereby the self is conscious of itself through itself, it is Suhrawardi who brings this theory to its fruition and treats it extensively.

Suhrawardi offers three arguments for knowledge by presence³ which in a sense are elaborations and Ellucidations on Ibn Sina's who equates the consciousness of one's self with the reality of one's self.

Suhrawardi's first argument which can be labeled as I.It distinction is as follows: If my knowledge of my self is not direct and unmediated, i.e. my knowledge of my head, then I had come to know myself through something other than myself, i.e. X. Since clearly X is not but a representation of the I, it

1. F. Shayegan, *Avicenna on Time*, Ph. D. Dissertation, Harvard University, 1986, p.24.

2. Ibid., p. 24

3. For an extensive discussion of Suhrawardi's theory of knowledge by presence see the following works: M. Hairi Yazdi, *The Principle of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence*, New York: SUNY Press, 1993. pp. 43-114. M. Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardi, and the School of Illumination*, London: Curzon Press, 1997, pp. 102, 117. Gh. Dinani, *Shua andish-i wa shuhud dar falsafa-yi Suhrawardi*, Tehran: Hikmat Press, 1364.

place of empiricism and rationalism Suhrawardi states:

As we observe the sensible world through which we gain certainty of their states of affairs, we then base at thorough and precise science on this basis (math, astronomy). By analogy, we observe certain things in the spiritual domain and then use them as a foundation upon which other things can be based. He whose path and method is other than this will not benefit from this and soon will be plunged into doubt¹.

4. Knowledge by presence

Now that we have established how knowledge of the external world is determined, let us go further and investigate how knowledge of one's self is attained, a knowledge that is regarded by Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi to be the necessary condition for the attainment of any knowledge. The theory that addresses this epistemological concept is referred to as "knowledge by presence" (ilm al-huduri), a perspective which both Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi elaborate upon.

Traditionally, the theory of knowledge by presence is identified with Suhrawardi and is regarded to be his major contribution to Islamic philosophy. However, I am inclined to say that the theory of knowledge by presence in its early forms is found in Ibn Sina's philosophy. Ibn Sina's concept of knowledge by presence, as will be shown is not as refined as Suhrawardi's who makes that to be the center piece of his epistemology.

Ibn Sina distinguishes between two cognitive (self-consciousness) processes with regard to the knowledge of the self. The first one he calls al-shuur bil-dhat (consciousness in itself) and the second one al-shuur bi'l shuur (consciousness through consciousness)². One's self-consciousness, Ibn Sina argues, is a continuous stream whose beginning and end are unknown. "Our self-consciousness occurs in an unqualified sense" Ibn Sina states and goes so far as to say that "my self-consciousness is my very existence"³. This is a major claim since it implies the following:

- A. Selfconsciousness is that which constitutes the identity of a person.
- B. To be conscious of one self is "to be".

Ibn Sina then turns to the underlying epistemological questions by asking how it is that one is conscious of himself at all times and all places?

1. Ibid., p. 161.

2. Ibn Sina, al-Ta liqat, ed. A. Badawi, Cairo, 1973, pp. 160-161

3. Ibid., p. 79

part of a concept can not be heterogeneous unless it is as the parts of a definition: genus and differntia And since every portion would have to be so as well, if ideas were materially embodied... But it is well established that genera and differntia, the components of t he definition of a single thing, do not go on forever but are finite in every sense-and if they were not, they certainly could never be gathered up in a single body!¹.

Suhrawardi also addresses the subject of knowledge through innate ideas in his Hikmat al-ishraq² by showing the place and significance of rationalism among four different modes of cognition. He arg ues that in order to know something one has to know it at least partially otherwise a thing that is completely unknown can never be known. If partial knowledge of an object or subject is required prior to its knowing, then it follows that which is known must have come to beknown through prior knowledge of the known and so on. This process which can go on *ad infinitum*, Suhrawardi maintains, is impossible and therefore, the only explanation is that there are innate ideas which provide the required pre-knowledge of that which one seeks. As Suhrawardi states:

Human knowledge is either innate (fitriyyah) or it is not. Whenever in recognizing an unknown, if focusing one's attention [i.e. sense perception] and referring to one's heart is not sufficient, and if it is not an affair that can be known through the vision (mushahidah) that is a characteristic of the great hakims, then necessarily in knowing we need pre-given knowledge ... and the process, if carried out in certain order will lead to the innate ideas³.

Having briefly discussed Ibn Sina's and Suhrawardi's theories of knowledge by sense perception, definigion and a priori concepts, we can now summarize them as follows: Both philosophers recognize the epistemological significance of sense perception and its by-product, knowledge by definition as well as innate ideas. furthermore, these two modes of cognition are interdependent each one relying on the other one. As Suhrawardi says:

All definitions inevitably lead to those a priori concepts which themselves are in no need of being defined; if this were not the case there would result in infinite succession⁴ To further emphasize the limited role and

1. Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa: De Anima*, Vol.2, ed. and trans. F. Rahman, Oxford: Univ. Press, 1952.

2. Opera 2, p.18.

3. Opera 2, p. 104.

4. Ibid., p.13.

empiricism and for rationalism. The first is similar to Hume's criticism of induction and the second one is concerned with the location of concepts in our anatomy. Induction, Ibn Sina argues, is merely universalization of finite experiences which does not lead to universally true conclusions nor does it imply necessity¹ Regarding a physical location for rational knowledge, Ibn Sina states that it can not be in body since it is a single simple truth and indivisible. Therefore, it can not have a physical location and be in matter for that would make it divisible. On this Ibn Sina states:

One thing of which there is no doubting is that a man has something in him, some substance responsive and receptive to conceptual ideas, and we argue that the substance which is the seat of these ideas is not a body and does not depend for its existence on a body, even though in a certain sense it is a power in a body, or a form to a body. For if the locus of our concepts were a body, or and sort of extended thing, such ideas would have to be located either in a single, indivisible part of it, in some divisible part. But the only thing that is indivisible in a body is a point ... and a point is a final limit of a line, or of an extended body in a particular location; it can not be separated from that line or body, allowing something else to exist in it, as opposed to existing in that body...

So suppose now that conceptual ideas were located in some divisible body. It would follow that they would be divided when that body was divided, and their parts would be either homogeneous or heterogeneous. If homogeneous, how could they be conjoined to form something different from themselves, for the whole as such is not the same as its parts unless it is the sort of whole that is augmented by mere addition to its measure or its number, not by a specific form. If a concept could be formed in this quantitative way, it would be some figure or number. But not every quantitative way, it would be some figure or number. But not every quantitative way, it would be some figure or number. But not every idea is a mere shape or number. That would make concepts nothing more than images and not conceptual at all. Concepts, in fact, as you know, can not be treated as formed of homogeneous parts. How could they be, when one part of a concept implies another, and is in turn implied by a third... Obviously... the

Brill, 1988, 19n. 15, 49n. 22, 50n. 1, 55-6, 62, 159-76. and H. A. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna and Averroes on Intellect*, New York, Oxford Univ. Press, 1992., pp. 95-103.

1. Ibn Sina, *al-Shifa: Burhan*, ed.A. Afifi, Cairo, 1956, pp. 93-98, 222-224.

commonest. Examples are the burning of fire and the purging of bile by scammony¹.

Suhrawardi's approach though different than Ibn Sina's bears some resemblance to it. In the *Hikmat al-ishraq* he elaborates on the inadequacy of sense perception in a chapter entitled "On the Evidence that Peripatetic Principles Necessitate that Nothing Be Known or Defined."² Having offered a number of arguments, Suhrawardi concludes the following: The simple truth such as colors can only be known by sense perception, these truths neither lend themselves to analysis nor description. It is from this conclusion that Suhrawardi draws his second inference against Peripatetic's concept of definition that is, knowledge of these simple truths are private, exclusive and non-verifiable by outsiders.

3. Knowledge through a priori concepts

Suhrawardi, having demonstrated the inadequacies of knowledge by sense perception, then offers an argument which brings him and Ibn Sina closer together. In fact, both philosophers seem to realize the need for a precognitive ability that is based on a priori concepts and which serves as the fundamental epistemic ground. One of the many arguments Ibn Sina offers in this regard is his ontological argument for the existence of God. He maintains that since God is incorporeal it cannot be known by the senses and therefore either God cannot be known or it can be known through some other way. He then argues that since we know God it follows that empiricism fails and rationalism or mysticism may be the other available alternatives. Ironically, as we will see, rationalism and mysticism are unified in what Ibn Sina calls "Oriental philosophy" (*hikmat al-mashriqiyyah*) and Suhrawardi calls (*hikmat al-dhawqiyyah*) "experiential wisdom". Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi who seem to agree with regard to the above proceed to maintain that if sense data are synthesized by the mind and the construction of new conceptual and intellectual schemes are made possible in the mind, there has to be more basic and primitive concepts which constitute the mind and are not made by it. L. E. Goodman argues³ that Ibn Sina offers two lines of arguments against

1. Ibn Sina, *Danish-nama-yi alai*, ed. by M. Mishkat and M. Mu in, Tehran: Tehran Univ. Press, 1353 A.H.S, p. 111

2. Opera 2, p. 73

3. L. E. Goodman, *Avicenna*, London: Routledge Press, 1992., p. 136 Also, for Ibn Sina's rational intuition see D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, Leiden:

collective body is an indication of particularity.¹

2. Knowledge by sense perception

Both Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi react to Aristotle's notion of sense perception but it is interesting to see how their approach is different. Ibn Sina's critique reduces empiricism to rationalism by showing that sense perception necessitates a priori concepts in order to be functional. Before analyzing Ibn Sina's critique of sense perception, let us see what the first teacher has to say about this. Aristotle states:

Out of sense-perception develops what we call memory, and out of frequently repeated memories of the same thing comes experience. For multiple memories make up a single experience. From experience in turn, the universal, now stabilized in its fullness within the soul, the one standing over and against the fullness within the soul, the one standing over and against the many, as a single identity running through them all. Here arise the skill of the craftsman and the knowledge of the scientist-skill in the realm of what comes to be; and knowledge, in that of what is. In short, these states of knowledge are neither in us in their determinate form, nor derived from a priori, higher states of knowledge. Rather, they emerge from sense perception-as in a battle a out is stopped if one man makes a stand, and then another, until the company is regrouped. And the soul is so constituted as to be capable of this.

Relying on the above argument, Ibn Sina directs his criticism at the assumptions that sense perception makes, that is, if repeated instances of observation gives rise to a conclusion, there must be more primitive and fundamental concepts which allow observation and inference from sense perception to be made².

Empiricism therefore, for Ibn Sina is of a lower order since it has to rely upon rationalism. On this Ibn Sina states:

These are the assumptions which are warranted neither by reason alone nor by senses alone but which can be known by the two working together. Thus, when the senses always find the same behavior in a given thing, or see the same state always having the same outcome, reason can recognize that this is by no means the result of chance. Otherwise the same pattern would not be repeated, and the observed pattern would not be the

1- Opera 2, p. 21

2. Aristotle, Posterior Analytics, II, 19, 100a 4-14

offers his criticism of knowledge by definition as an inadequate means of cognition and argues that a good definition is one that is not only inclusive of the essence but should also include the attributes which Suhrawardi regards to be "other constituent elements"³.

This radical departure from the Aristotelian approach implies that since all the constituent elements of attributes of an existent being cannot be known, of the *al-Talwihat*. "Essential Nature", "Description," and the "Fallacies in the Construction and Use of Definition,"⁴ Suhrawardi undertakes a discussion concerning the shortcomings of knowledge through definition. Also, in the *al-Mutarahat*.⁵ Suhrawardi maintains that Ibn sina is mistaken in attributing a large epistemic role to definition since clearly simple entities (*haqa iq basitah*) such as colors do not lend themselves to definition. Suhrawardi's treatment of the problem of definition is not limited to his Arabic works but in some of his Persian works such as *Partaw namah*⁶ and *Hayakil al-nur*⁷ he continues to stress that an acceptable definition is one in which the genus, species and differentia as well as all other existing attributes are addressed and not only the essence as Aristotle and his followers have been indicated. In his major work *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhrawardi sums up his criticism of the Peripatetics theory of definition and states:

He who mentions a number of essentials cannot be certain that there may not be another essential which he has ignored.

Commentator and critic should inquire (of his certainty), and if he says that were there another essential. we would have known it, (we should say) there are many attributes that are unknown to us... The truth of things is known only when all of the essentials are known, and if there be another essential that we are unaware of, then knowledge of the thing is not certain. Thus, it becomes clear that the limits and the definitions (*hadd*) as the Peripatetics have accepted will never become possible for man. The master of the Peripatetics (Aristotle) has confessed to this existing difficulty. Therefore, the limit and definition cannot exist except in regard to those items whose

2. Ibid., Vol. 1, p.199

3. Ibid., Vol. 1, p.14

4. Opera 1, p.14

5. Ibid., p. 116

6. Opera 3, p.2

7. Ibid., p.85

regard, both Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi follow the same ontological structure although the "fabric" of their ontologies are different, for Ibn Sina it is Being and for Suhrawardi it is light. It is this similarity which allows us to engage ourselves in comparative study of their respective views on the question of knowledge.

Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi both adhere to a hierarchical ontology whose various levels are emanations from One source. For Ibn Sina, this source is the *wajib al-wujud* whom he equates with pure Being and for Suhrawardi it is pure light whom he refers to as the Light of Lights. Since it is only the Absolute Truth (God) which knows itself absolutely, it then follows that the knowledge of all other beings of the Absolute is relative. While the relativity of knowledge in acts of cognition with regard to the knowledge of God is self-evident, how it is that the knower comes to know the object of its cognition is complex and subject to debate.

Both masters begin by offering what amounts to be the place and significance of empiricism and rationalism in acquiring knowledge. Since particulars are known only through the senses it can be concluded that knowledge on its most basic and concrete level is that which is acquired through the sense perception. Ontologically speaking, as we move away from Ibn Sina's pure Being and Suhrawardi Light of Lights, abstraction and purity decreases and the hierarchy solidifies until it loses its purity completely and that is the material domain where particulars are to be found. Therefore, since particulars represent the knowables on the lowest level the means by which particulars are known, i.e. sense perception, are of the least significance in so far as epistemology is concerned.

1. Knowledge by Definition

Sense perception itself is the basis for knowledge by definition, a method elaborated upon by both philosophers and criticized severely by Suhrawardi who realized the limited scope of it in providing us with knowledge. According to Peripatetics, an existent being consists of its essence and existence and all attributes are merely accidental. In a chapter entitled "Destruction of the Rules of Definiotin" in his *Hikmat al-Ishraq*, Suhawardi criticizes the Peripatetics for having distinguished between "general essence" (*jins*) and "differential" (*fasl*). Also, in *al-Mutarahat*¹ and *al-Talwihat*² he

1. Ibid., Vol. 1, p. 17

نظر ابن سینا و سهرودی در باره چگونگی اکتساب علم

مهدی امین رضوی

چکیده

نویسنده در این مقاله دلیل می‌آورد که به رغم اختلافات ظاهری و تعلق به دو مکتب فکری متفاوت، ابن سینا و سهرودی در بن و بنیاد نظریه‌ای واحد در خصوص علم پیشنهاد می‌کنند. و در پی آن دلیل می‌آورد که سمت‌گیری مشابهی ابن سینا و چشم‌انداز اشراقی سهرودی، هر دو به یک نظام معرفت‌شناسی تعلق دارند و این در حالی است که زبان فلسفی آنان در نظام معرفتی‌شان با یکدیگر مغایر است.

کلید واژه‌ها: عرفان، علم‌حضور، حکمت مشرقیه، حکمت ذوقیه.

Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi on How Knowledge Is Attained

Dr. M. Amin Razavi

In what follows, I Will argue that despite apparent differences and adherence to two different schools of thought, Ibn Sina and Suhrawardi essentially offer the same theories of knowledge. It will be argued that Ibn Sina's peripatetic orientation and Suhrawardi's Ishraqi perspective have both maintained and adhered to the same epistemological framework while the philosophical language in which their respective epistemologies are discussed are different. Of particular interest in our investigation is to show that both masters have adhered to a hierarchy of knowledge which is as follows:

1. Knowledge by definition
2. Knowledge by sense perception
3. Knowledge through a priori concepts
4. Knowledge by presence
5. Knowledge through direct experience: Mysticism

To begin with, the question of epistemology is inevitably intertwined with the ontological scheme upon which a philosophical school is built. In this