**Illuminationist School and Critique of Avicenna’s** ***Karárs****ī****s fi ‘l-hikmah***

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**I**

***S****hahāb ad-Dīn" Yahya ibn Habash ibn Amirak* as-Suhrawardī, (also *Shaikh al-Ishraq, Shaikh al-Maqtul*) was founder of the illuminationist school (**Ar**. *Hikmat al-ishraq*; **Pers**. *falsafaye ešrāqi* ). Derived from “illumination,” a conventional translation of the Arabic term *ishraq* (lit. radiance, shining of the rising sun), “illuminationism” refers to the doctrine of the *Ishraqiyyun,* a school of philosophical and mystical thought of various Graeco-Oriental roots whose principles were propounded as an ancient “science of lights” (‘*ilm al-anwar*)[[1]](#footnote-1). He chose this title to distinguish his philosophical theory from *mashshaī*'s philosophy; and he is one of the first philosophers to elaborate on an old tradition. His approach Adopted from Zoroastrian and Platonic ideas.[[2]](#footnote-2) In fact, he associates his science of lights principally with the names of Plato, Hermes, Empedokles, Pythagoras, and the ‘Oriental principle concerning light and darkness’ of the sages of ancient Iran.[[3]](#footnote-3) Also, according to Landolt’s approach Suhrawardī created new school of Neoplatonic thought of a distinctly Iranian flavor.

Suhrawardī was coined new terms to identify various problems of logic and metaphysic. These new terms indicate the essential components of the philosophy of illumination and distinguish illuminationist methodology from the peripatetic (*mashshaī*) . In other word, Suhrawardi made an attempt to work out an alternative approach to reality toward Avicennian's tradition of metaphysic and epistemology. In fact, his philosophy is critical of Avicennian’s positions with creation of a symbolic language that derived from ancient Iranian culture (named *Hikmat-e Khosravani* ).[[4]](#footnote-4)

Illuminationist’s philosophy refined Aristotelian method and constructed a holistic system to define a new method of science, named ‘science of light’ (*‘ilm al-anwar*)[[5]](#footnote-5). Prof.Ziai believed Suhrawardī’s novel system is a scientific philosophical one intended to refine the scientific methods of the time, and closely parallels the ideals of Kant’s ‘Critical philosophy’ and Fichte’s ‘Theory of scientific Knowledge’.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Suhrawardī envisioned a dynamic world of multiple irradiations originating with the distant “light of lights” (*nur al-anwar*, the *ishraqi* equivalent of the Avicennian “necessary of existence,” that is, God)[[7]](#footnote-7). The Peripatetic philosophy and The Illuminationist philosophy are differ in terms of ontological, epistemological, and cosmological principles. Suhrawardī’s approach came to be known later as the doctrine of the primary reality of quiddities (*asala* *al-* *mahiyya*), as opposed to the primary reality of existence (*asalat al-wujud*).[[8]](#footnote-8) Suhrawardī believed that existence be real outside the mind which real must consist of two things- the principle of the ‘reality of existence’ and the being of beings, which requires a referent outside the mind. And its referent outside the mind must also consist of two things, which are subdivided, and so on *ad infinitum*.[[9]](#footnote-9)

**II**

**A**vicenna (**Pers**. Ibn Sīnā) is the most effective thinker in era of Islamic philosophy. Some Orientalists believe he was founder philosophy of illumination in last book that named "Oriental philosophy" (*hikmat-al-mashriqqiyya*). According to this view, philosophy of illumination is not essentially new. In fact, Avicenna was not intended to reconstruct Aristotelian philosophy but he Returns to Illumination by restructuring his opinion about being and nature. Avicenna in his book[[10]](#footnote-10) established Islamic theology, and he is greatest Iranian philosopher to this time.

Avicenna has changed his philosophical position in his last writings, and he named himself Oriental (*mashriqī*) philosopher. Suhrawardī emphatically rejects this alleged position of Avicenna. Avicenna had claimed inventing new philosophy that unlike previous Peripatetic works. However, I agree with Prof.Ziai views about this issue: "Philosophy of Illumination is a distinct, systematic philosophical construction designed to avoid the logical, epistemological and metaphysical inconsistencies which Suhrawardī perceived in the peripatetic philosophy of his day."[[11]](#footnote-11) Nevertheless this point, some Commentators believed that Avicennism is rooted in the rationalism of the Aristotelian tradition and it is impossible to accept he changed his views.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Suhrawardī aims to refine and augment Avicenna's peripatetic system and is careful that the philosophy of Illumination does not decline to the position of "handmaiden" of theology (*Kalaam*), as with the works of many thinkers from the late 12th century and 13th century on who followed Ğazāli's guidelines to limit philosophy by theological presuppositions.[[13]](#footnote-13)

Suhrawardī’s critique of a book entitled *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah,* attributed by Avicenna to method of ‘Orientals’ in philosophy, it is not clear what the *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah*. Suhrawardī attacked is Avicenna directly toward the essential distinction between Peripatetic philosophy and Oriental philosophy. He claimed that the *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah* is based on Oriental principles and he refute intensely Avicenna assertion that the *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah* constitutes a new Oriental philosophy.[[14]](#footnote-14) on other side, *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah* composed solely in agreement with established Peripatetic laws. In Suhrawardī’s argument *Karársīs fi ‘l-hikmah* is not significantly different from the other Peripatetic text. Indeed some researchers of Islamic theology believe that Suhrawardī perhaps for political reason turns to polemics. Hence, Suhrawardī’s philosophy of Illumination is to prescribe a clear path towards a philosophical life that is at once a more “scientifically” valid means of probing the nature of things and attaining bliss.[[15]](#footnote-15)

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1. Landolt; 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Wikipedia; 2012 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Landolt, 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ziai; 1998 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ziai; A [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Landolt; 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Ziai: A [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. *al-shifā (Healing), al-Ishārāt wa al-Tanbīhāt (Directives and Remarks), al-Najāt (Deliverance)* [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Ziai; 1998 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. IEP; 2006 [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Yarshater; 2004 [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Ziai: A [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Ziai: 1998 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)