



# TRANSCENDENT WISDOM (*AL-HIKMAT AL-MUṬA'ĀLIYAH*) IN DĀWŪD AL-QAYŞARĪ AND SADR AL-DĪN SHIRĀZĪ

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## ABSTRACT

This study compares the philosophical thought of Dāwūd al-Kāyserī and Sadr al-Dīn Shirazī, which they call Transcendent Wisdom (*al-Hikmat al-Muṭa'āliyah*). Dāwūd al-Kāyserī, who is considered one of the leading representatives of the Sufi tradition in the Islamic world, has an important place in shaping the philosophical and mystical thought and has influenced many thinkers of the following generation, especially Mullā Sadrā. Sadr al-Dīn Shirazī, known as Mullā Sadrā, is considered to be one of the rare philosophers who established a system with an original and bold synthesis-based perspective that gave a new impetus to Islamic philosophy in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. With this important achievement, Sadrā not only occupies a unique place in the history of Iranian thought but also has a global value that transcends the borders of the country. In this study, based on the idea that Hikmat al-Muṭa'āliyah is the name of a third school alongside the two main schools of Islamic philosophy, namely Peripateticism and Illuminationism, it will be emphasized that this school is not the discovery of a new truth, but a new interpretation of the same truth that has always existed and will always exist. The meaning attributed to this concept by Dāwūd al-Kāyserī, who is considered to be one of the first to use this name in his works, will be revealed. Then, Hikmat al-Muṭa'āliyah, which has been identified with Molla Sadrā's effort to establish a unique philosophical system, will be looked at from another perspective. Finally, by comparing the thoughts of the two scholars, the similarities and differences between their readings of Hikmat al-Muṭa'āliyah will be tried to be determined. The aim of the study is to compare the understanding of Hikmat al-Muṭa'āliyah as the representatives of eternal wisdom in their own periods of two famous figures who have an important place in the tradition of philosophical and mystical thought.

**Keywords:** Dāwūd al-Qayşarī, Sadr al-Dīn Shirazī, Transcendental Wisdom.

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The concept of wisdom, i.e. *al-hikmah*, has been used in the Islamic intellectual tradition as the general name of the system of rational and spiritual, or better calls it self-experiential (*irfanī*) sciences in contrast to the Greek word “*philo-sophia*”, which means the love of wisdom. According to the famous Greek thinker Pythagoras, who is known as the first person to define himself as a philosopher, the true sage is God. For this reason, instead of “sophist” meaning “wise”, the more modest term “philosopher” meaning “lover of knowledge” and “friend of knowledge” should be used.<sup>1</sup> Plato, who introduced his teacher Socrates as “philosopher” in the sense of “lover of knowledge”, defined philosophy as “*man’s endeavour to emulate God to the extent of his power*”<sup>2</sup> based on the fact that the true sage is God like Pythagoras. Wisdom, which is used as an interchangeable term for philosophy in the Islamic intellectual tradition, is not only a theoretical science consisting of the search for truth through rational reasoning, but also a science that has a practical and ethical dimension, such as bringing the person closer to God with his words and behaviors, as Plato pointed out. As a matter of fact, al-Kindī, who is considered the first Islamic philosopher, defines philosophy as “*knowing the truth of existence to the extent of one’s power*” and emphasizes that the main purpose is to transform knowledge into behavior.<sup>3</sup> Again, according to Ikhwān al-Safā, “*the beginning of philosophy is to love the sciences, the middle is to comprehend the truths of beings to the extent of human capacity, and the end is to speak and act in accordance with science.*”<sup>4</sup> Avicenna, on the other hand, defines wisdom, which he often uses instead of philosophy, as “*the perfection of the soul by conceiving facts to the extent of one’s power and verifying them with theoretical and practical truths*”.<sup>5</sup> As can be seen, Islamic philosophers drew attention to the theoretical and practical dimensions of philosophy, kneaded these two dimensions with the yeast of wisdom, and combined them in a unity of knowledge-behavior.

Wisdom, which is used as the common name of all rational and spiritual sciences in the Islamic intellectual tradition, contains the meaning of “philosophy” in Greek literature. Still, it is not conceived as a new invention or a miracle of a Greek or another nation. Wisdom, whose most basic characteristics are eternal, continuous, and universal, was considered by

1 Melek Dosay Gökdoğan. “Pythagoras”, *Diyanet İslam Ansiklopedisi (DİA)* (Istanbul: TDV Publications, 2007), 34: 293.

2 Plato. *Dialogues (Theaitetos)*, translated into Turkish by Teoman Aktürel (Istanbul: Remzi Publication, 2010), 176 b-c.

3 Ya’qūb b. Ishāq al-Kindī. “fi Hududi’l-Eşyā ve Rusūmihā”, in *Rasāil al-Kindi al-Falsafiyyah* (Cairo: Ebu Ride, 1978), 1: 121-122.

4 Ikhwān al-Safā. *Rasā’il* (Beirut: Daru’s-Sadr, 1957), 1: 48.

5 Ibn Sinā. *Uyūn al-Hikmah* (Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, 1980), 16.

Islamic philosophers as “the lost property of the believer” and was embraced without being monopolized by any nation or race. As a matter of fact, Ibn Miskawayh, one of the Islamic philosophers, states that there is wisdom that emanates from God and diffuses the whole universe and that both philosophers and prophets teach this wisdom that permeates the universe.<sup>6</sup> Suhrawardī, the founder of Ishrāqī philosophy, on the other hand, states that the eternal wisdom that Babylonian, Iranian, Indian, Egyptian and Ancient Greek scholars have always been after, which he calls *hikmat al-atika*, has always existed and that this wisdom will exist as long as heaven and earth exist. He sees himself as the meeting point of these wisdom traditions and *hikmat al-ishrāq* as the revival of this ancient wisdom.<sup>7</sup> The characteristics of this wisdom, which has always existed and will always exist in the universe, can be seen in Suhrawardī’s conception of *hikmat al-ishrāq* as well as in Avicenna’s perspective of *hikmat al-mashriqiyyah*, which is the manifestation of Avicenna’s effort to establish an original philosophy. At the basis of both of them lies the idea that Aristotle’s discursive philosophy (*hikmat al-bahsiyyah*), based on rational endeavor, should be integrated with the experiential wisdom (*hikmat al-dhawkiyyah*), based on mystical experience and the purification of the soul.<sup>8</sup>

One of the philosophical conceptions of Islamic thinkers concerning the concept of wisdom is the idea of *hikmat al-Muṭa’āliyah*. Translated into English as “transcendent wisdom” or “divine wisdom”, this school deserves to be referred to as a third school besides the two main schools of Islamic philosophy, namely the Peripatetic and Illuminationist schools. This school has brought a breath of fresh air to Islamic philosophy by defeating the claim that Islamic philosophy has remained stagnant in the past after Ibn Rushd. Also, it has brought solutions to many problems that were the subject of dispute among the former currents with a strong and courageous synthesis-based perspective. Although the term *hikmat al-muta’āliyah* has been identified with the school founded by Mullā Sadrā, it should be noted that this name was actually mentioned in the works of Avicenna, Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī and Dāwūd al-Kāyserī long before him.<sup>9</sup> In this study, which comparatively analyses two different interpretations

6 İlhan Kutluer. “Hikmet”, *DİA*, 17: 507.

7 Suhrawardī. *Hikmat al-Ishrāq*, ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran: Mewsuāt-i Mutalaāt ve Tahqiqat-i Ferhengī, 1373<sup>H</sup>), 11. See also Suhrawardī, “Se Risale Ez Şeyh-i İşrak, Kelime-i Tasavvuf” in *Mecmua-yi Musannifāt*, ed. Henry Corbin, Seyyed Hosein Nasr and Necefkuli Habibī (Tehran: Intisharat-i Muessese-i Mutalaāt ve Tahkikat-i Ferhengī, H. 1375), 3: 117.

8 İlhan Kutluer. *İslam’ın Klasik Çağında Felsefe Tasavvuru* (Istanbul: İz Publication, 2017), 35.

9 Ibn Sinā. *al-Isharāt wa al-Tanbihāt* (Kum: Nashr al-Balaghah, AH 1375), 151; see also Naṣīr al-Dīn Tūsī, *Sharh al-Isharāt ve wa al-Tanbihāt* (Kum: Nashr al-Balaghah, AH 1375), 2: 417, also vol. 3: 399-401. Dāwūd

of the concept of *Hikmat al-Muta'aliyah* from the perspectives of two thinkers, firstly, the interpretation of *Hikmat al-Muṭa'aliyah* by Dāwūd al-Qayşarī, who is considered a pioneer in the history of Sufism and philosophy in the history of Islamic thought. Then, the philosophy of Mullā Sadrā, whose name is identified with the idea of *Hikmat al-Muṭa'aliyah* and who is accepted as the founder of a new school in Islamic thought and one of the rare philosophers who established a system, will be discussed. In the final analysis, the similarities and differences between the two thinkers as representatives of eternal and perpetual wisdom in their own times will be pointed out.

## I. HİKMAT AL-MUTA'ĀLIYAH IN DĀWŪD AL-QAYŞARĪ

Dāwūd al-Qayşarī, better known by the title of truth-verifier (*muhaqqiq*) because of his commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's famous masterpiece *Fusus al-Hikam*, has an important place in the Sufi tradition, especially in understanding sufi teachings based on Wahdat al-wujūd. However, he deserves the title of a sufi philosopher or theosopher, and that is why it is better to call him a 'truth-examiner or verifier rather than a muhaqqiq or a pure Sufi because of his original thoughts on the difficult problems of Islamic thought such as the Imaginal world (*âlem-i mithal*), prophet-hood (*nubuwwa*) and sainthood (*walaya*). One of the most important aspects of Qaysari's fulfillment of this title is that he was one of the first to use the concept of *hikmat al-muṭa'aliyah* in his works.

In the introduction to his masterpiece, *Sharh Fusus al-Hikam (Commentary on the Fusus al-Hikam)*, Qaysari presents the concept of *hikmat al-muta'aliyah* as a deep and profound form of comprehension and a superior way of thinking. In the aforementioned work, Qaysari criticizes the ideas of the later thinkers about God's knowledge and states that God's knowledge of things is an aspect of Him according to those who have the vision of *hikmat al-muṭa'aliyah*, which he refers to as the doctrine of the muwahhids.<sup>10</sup> In the ninth chapter of the same work on *al-Khalifa of al-ḥaqīqa al-Muhammadiyya* he states that the reality of Muhammadiyya is a reality that flows in all levels of existence and that this reality is one of the teachings

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al-Qayşarī, *Sharh al-Fusus al-Hikam, Mukaddimat*, ed. Seyyed Jalaaluddin Ashtiyānī (Tehran: Shirket-i Intishārât-i Ilmî ve Ferhengî, AH 1375), 48, 131, 275, 290; see also: Murtaza Mutahharî, *Felsefe Dersleri 1*, translated into Turkish by Ahmet Çelik (Istanbul: İnsan Publications, 1997), 333; Seyyed Hosein Nasr, *Molla Sadra ve İlahi Hikmet*, translated into Turkish by Mustafa Armağan (Istanbul: İnsan Publication, 2009), 107.

<sup>10</sup> Qayşarī, *Muqaddimat*, 48.

of *hikmat al-muṭaʿāliyah*.<sup>11</sup> In the chapter on the levels of existence in his treatise *fi't-tawhid wa'nubuwwa wa'l-walayah*, Qaysarī, while explaining the relation between the levels, says that this relation is not as some people (most probably he means the Peripatetic) think and describes these people as those who do not know *hikmat al-muṭaʿāliyah* as veiled/obstructed (*mahjubun*) people.<sup>12</sup> When we look at the above usages, we can say that he refers to a divine and transcendent doctrine for which reasoning alone is not sufficient for understanding.

Qaysarī refers to this supreme vision of wisdom as *divine wisdom* in some of his works. For example, in his long commentary on the famous sufi poet Ibn Fārid's *al-Ta'īyyat al-Kubra*, he describes the concept of *hikmat al-ilāhi* as witnessional knowledge (*ilm-i shuhudī*) and a supreme metaphysical comprehension. According to him, only the pilgrim (*sālik*) who is not deceived by the deceptive perceptions of the intellect can reach this deep level of comprehension. This is because the level of realization of the pilgrims is above the intellectual perceptions that are incapable of grasping the being of the Only (*Zāt-e-Ahediya*).<sup>13</sup> In the same work, by saying "O pretender (*tālib*), hold on to the proofs of divine wisdom that emanates from Almighty Allah"<sup>14</sup> Qaysarī states that this wisdom is not an acquired knowledge obtained as a result of an intellectual endeavor or a rational deduction.

In order to properly understand Qaysarī's interpretation of *hikmat al-muṭaʿāliyah*, it is useful to look at his definition of wisdom. Qaysarī defines wisdom as "knowing existence as it is, in accordance with the truth it possesses, and acting accordingly" and divides it into two as theoretical (*ilmī*) and practical (*amelī*) by emphasizing two dimensions of wisdom.<sup>15</sup> Saying that understanding existence in its truth is a difficult task, Qaysarī argues that only those whose hearts are illuminated by the light of God and the veil between them and the Absolute Existence (*al-Wujud al-Mahd*) is removed can have such clairvoyance.<sup>16</sup>

Qaysarī states that this perspective, which he refers to as *hikmat al-muṭaʿāliyah* or *hikmat al-ilāhi*, is unique to the science of sufism (*tasawwuf*) and can only be attained through the method of *seyr-u suluk*, and that the highest and most honorable of sciences is Sufism. According to him, the purpose of studying science is to draw close to God not only intellectually

11 Qaysarī, *Muqaddimât*, 131.

12 Dāwūd al-Qaysarī, "fit-tevhid ve'n-nubuwwa wa al-walayah", in *Resail* (Tehran: Enjumen-i Hikmet ve Felsefe, AH 1357), 16.

13 Dāwūd al-Qaysarī. *Sharh al-Kayseri āla Taiyyeti Ibn al-Fārid*, ed. Ahmed Ferdi el-Mezidi (Beirut: Darü'l-Kütübü'l-İlmiyye, A H 1425), 82.

14 Ibid, 171.

15 Qaysarī, *Muqaddimât*, 294, 323.

16 Qaysarī, *Muqaddimât*, 67.

but also in terms of developing spiritual states (*hâl*). Although the subjects of theology and philosophy are the same, they do not provide information on how to be close to God as Sufism does.<sup>17</sup> According to Qaysarī, who defines the knowledge obtained by philosophers and the learned scholars through the five senses and intellect as the apparent knowledge (*ilm al-zahir*), this knowledge can only give knowledge of the forms of objects, not their truth, since it is obtained only through the external senses. This kind of knowledge is a veil or a shadow in understanding the truth of things. For with this knowledge, we can only see the shadow, not what is behind the curtain or what casts a shadow. According to Qaysari, who defines the intellect as a “barrier” (*haciz*), the intellect limits the human being just as the shackle keeps the horse limited and restricted.<sup>18</sup> True and certain knowledge, on the other hand, is innate *ladunni* knowledge, the truth of which is known through experience and is free from human impurities. According to Qaysarī, who also calls this knowledge of unveiling (*kashfi*) and knowledge of witnessing (*shuhūdi*) when a person starts the process of *seyr-u sulūk*, which is a spiritual journey, the truths behind the curtains become apparent to him through the internal five senses, which are the originals of the five external senses. When he realizes these truths, he gains knowledge of unveiling, and when he observes them with the eye of clairvoyance, he gains knowledge of witnessing.<sup>19</sup> Qaysarī does not deny the knowledge gained through reason and the senses, but he says that this knowledge is insufficient for understanding the truth and knowing God, which is the ultimate goal of knowledge. He states that true and transcendent knowledge, which he calls *hikmat al-muṭa’āliyah*, can only be possible as a result of a spiritual journey of sufism and of course with the grace of God.

As can be seen, true knowledge in Qaysarī is not the product of an intellectual endeavor but a knowledge that can be defined as granted (*wahbī*). We can say that he interprets the phrase *hikmat al-muṭa’āliyah* in this sense, i.e., as a form of understanding and knowing based on unveiling and a transcendental form of understanding and knowing that cannot be achieved through the method of rational deduction, perhaps through an inner enlightenment.

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17 Mehmet Bayrakdar. *Dāvūd el-Kaysarī* (İstanbul: Kurtuba Book, 2009), 53-54.

18 Ibid, 55.

19 Bayrakdar, *Dāvūd el-Kaysarī*, 56.

## II. *HIKMAT AL-MUTA'ĀLIYAH* IN ŞADR AL-DĪN SHIRĀZĪ

Şadr al-Dīn Shirāzī, known also as Sadr al-Mutallāhīhīn<sup>20</sup>, or just Sadra, owes his real fame to his successful combination of the four main branches of the Islamic intellectual tradition: i.e., the Mashsha'i, Ishrāqī, Akbarī, and Kalam School. Sadra tries to combine reason, revelation and mystical vision, which are the main sources of Islamic thought, with the explanations, criticisms and original expansions he brings to the teachings of the aforementioned schools. As a result of this endeavour, he brings solutions to many problems that are the subject of dispute between these schools with a unique perspective and a strong synthesis. Formulating this perspective as *hikmat al-muta'āliyya*, al-Sadrā, although he is not the first to use this term, presents it as a school whose foundations are based on a three-legged trivet: rational inference, mystical vision, and revelation.

With this school, Sadrā aims to unite all different modes of perception and knowing - whether these modes are revelation, rational inference, or inner enlightenment - around a single spiritual truth that he calls *muta'āl/transcendent* and to melt them into the same pot. According to him, this spiritual truth is a single truth that manifests itself clearly in the revealed scriptures, in the soul and mind of man, in the universe, or in Qur'anic terminology, in the 'afaq'.<sup>21</sup> He identifies the concept of *hikmat al-muta'āliyya*, which he regards as a human competence, with a wisdom or theosophy that is attained through rational intuition, presented in a rational form using rational arguments, and based on a pure metaphysical foundation. According to Sadrā, this wisdom is closely related to the realization of the soul (*tahaqquq*) and the transformation of its existence with the support of revelation.<sup>22</sup> As a matter of fact, in his work *al-Hikmat al-Muteāliye fi'l-Asfāri al-Aklyyyati al-Arbaā* (known as *al-Asfar* for short), in which he elaborates his thoughts in detail, he deals with the procedure for obtaining the purest and perfect metaphysical knowledge, "transcendent wisdom". In the words of Seyyed Hossein

20 It means the exemplar or chief of the divine philosophers, or God-like, God's caliph on earth. This name was given to him by his other students and followers, especially his disciples Mullah Feyz Kāshānī and Abdurrezzak Lahijī. For more detailed information: Ibrahim Kalin, "Mulla Sadra's Theory of Knowledge and The Unification of the Intellect and the Intelligible", PhD Thesis, The Faculty of Columbian College of Arts and Science of the George Washington University, 2003, 7. See also Gholam Reza A'wanī, "Why is Mulla Sadra Called Sadr al-Mutaallih (Foremost Among Philosophers)?" *Mulla Sadra's School and Western Philosophies* (Tehran: Sadra Islamic Philosophy Research, 2005), 1: 233-238.

21 Seyyed Hosein Nasr, *Makaleler II*, translated into Turkish by Şehabeddin Yağın (Istanbul: İnsan Publications, 1997), 85-86.

22 Nasr, *Molla Sadrā ve İlahî Hikmet*, 112.



Nasr, this title, which is the most perfect testimony of Sadrā's life, was deliberately given to this work by its author and was a decisive factor in the identification of his philosophy with this name.<sup>23</sup>

Before moving on to the four intellectual journeys in this work, which reflect the methodology of Sadrā's philosophy of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya*, we need to look at how Sadrā defines the terms philosophy and wisdom. According to Sadrā, who uses philosophy and wisdom almost synonymously, "Wisdom is the means through which man becomes a similar intelligible realm in the universal layer of being."<sup>24</sup> Sadrā, whose definition of wisdom here refers to *hikmat al-muta'aliyya*, in *al-Asfâr* defines philosophy as follows after citing the relevant views from Plato to Suhrawardî:

Know that philosophy is the perfection of the human soul (*nafs*) through the knowledge of the truths of beings to the extent of human capacity and judgment about the existence of beings based on research and based on evidence and not based on suspicion and imitation.<sup>25</sup>

As can be seen, Sadrā, like the other philosophers, draws attention to the dimension of philosophy reflected in practical life rather than the acquisition of theoretical knowledge, in other words, to the unity of knowledge and practice. And in this sense, he emphasizes the identity of philosophy and wisdom, which has been dominant in Islamic philosophers since al-Kindî.

Sadrā symbolizes the attainment of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya* with "journey" (*safar*), which is used as a common element in mystical religions and Sufi teachings for the soul's attainment of God. In his work called *al-Asfâr*, which is the plural of the word journey (*safar*), Sadrā, in describing the process of reaching the ultimate truth through the four rational journeys of the soul in the spiritual realm, attributes to the word *asfâr* both ontological, epistemological and mystical developmental meanings.<sup>26</sup> The first of these four journeys, which is the process

23 At the end of the introduction of *Esfâr*, it is mentioned as follows: "we have organized this work into four journey and called it *hikmat al-muta'aliyya*" Mulla Sadrâ, *al-Hikmat al-Muta'aliyya fi'l-Asfâri al-Aqliyyat al-Arbaâ* (Beirut: Dar al-Akhyâ-ut-Turas, 1981), 1: 13. (This work will be referred to hereafter as *Asfâr*.) See also Nasr, *Mollâ Sadrâ ve İlahî Hikmet*, 70-71.

24 Nasr, *Mollâ Sadrâ ve İlahî Hikmet*, 110.

25 Mulla Sadrâ, *Asfâr*, 1: 20. For Sadrâ's definitions of philosophy and wisdom, see also: Seyyid Cafer Seccadî, *Ferheng-i Istilâhât-ı Felsefi-yi Molla Sadrâ* (Tehran: Vezâret-i Ferheng u Irshad-i İslâmî, H. 1379), 210-211, 381.

26 Alparslan Açıkgeç, "el-Esfâru-l'Erba'a", *DİA*, (1995), 11: 374.

of the soul's purification and progression in an enlightening journey, is from the creatures to God (*min al-khalq ila'l-Haqq*), in other words, from the universe to God. In the words of Muhammad Reza Qumshahī, one of the most prominent sages and wise of the last century, the first journey is the ascent from the station of the nafs to the station of the heart, from the station of the heart to the station of the soul, and finally from the station of the soul to the highest goal and ultimate bliss, in Qur'anic terms, the paradise<sup>27</sup> of the pious.<sup>28</sup> After the first journey, the second journey of the traveller (*sālik*), who has reached the level of saint (*wali*) by reaching God (*Haqq*), is from God to God with God (*mine'l Haqq ila'l-Haqq bi'l-Haqq*). This journey ends with the traveller's witnessing of the essence, attributes and essence of the Truth, and his finding his annihilation (*fana*) in its perfections. The third journey, which is in the opposite direction of the first journey, is from God to the creatures (*mine'l-Haqq ila al-khalq*), that is, from God to the universe. At this stage, the traveller, having arrived at the state of annihilation, becomes subsistent with God, and thereby enjoys the pleasures of prophethood through witnessing, while going through from the realms of *nasut*, *jabarut* and *malakut*. The fourth and the last journey one is the expedition between God and the creatures. In this stage of the journey, which takes place together with God, the traveler plays the role of a mentor (*murshid*) who guides people and shows them the right path.<sup>29</sup> *Al-Asfâr*, which is organized in four journeys/sections, is not a simple sufi work as briefly mentioned above. In fact, it is possible to see the truths of ontology, psychology, physics, and metaphysics from a transcendental perspective that combines the perspectives of Peripatetic philosophy, Illuminationist wisdom, and self-experiential knowledge (*irfanî*).

The foundation of Sadrâ's philosophy of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya*, which brings together and harmonizes what is seen from these different perspectives, rests on his epistemology, based on three main sources: Intellectual intuition or enlightenment; reasoning and rational deduction; and *Shari'ah* or revelation. Based on these sources of hikmat-i mutâliye, we can deduce two approaches that its epistemology approves and adopts: The inadequacy of the reason in obtaining the truths, the inadequacy of the mystical intuition in realizing the truth, the apparent language in dealing with the *Shari'ah*, and the surface (*zahirî*) perspective can be considered as the negative approaches rejected by this epistemology. As for the accepted

27 Kur'ân, Shu'ârâ, 26/89-90.

28 Nasr, *Molla Sadrâ ve İlahî Hikmet*, 73; S. Mustafa Muhakkık Damâd, "Raz-ı Berteri-yê Hikmet-ı Sadrâ (Hikmet-i Mûteâliye)", *Hiredname-ı Sadrâ*, 2004/32, 14.

29 Mutahharî, *Felsefe Dersleri*, 1: 334; Nasr, *Molla Sadrâ ve İlahî Hikmet*, 73-75; Açıkgenç, "el-Esfârü-l'Erbaa", 375; Muhakkık Damâd, *Raz-ı Berteri-yê Hikmet-ı Sadrâ*, 14.

approach, it is the balanced kneading of reason and mystical vision, and the use of Shari'ah as a verifier and confirming in understanding beyond these two knowledge, and in the final analysis, the harmonization of demonstration, mystical vision and Shari'ah in reaching the truth.<sup>30</sup> Sadrā criticizes the epistemology of the existing methods and condemns them for their weaknesses in obtaining the truth, while stating that he puts forward a method that is different and superior to these methods. Sadrā expresses his thoughts on this subject as follows:

I ask Allah's forgiveness for wasting a part of my life on the views, analyses and deceptive teachings of those who considered themselves to belong to philosophy and struggled with the people of theology. Finally, by the light of faith and the grace of Allah, I realized that their measures/comparisons were fruitless and their methods were wrong. Henceforth, I left the helm of my affairs to Him and His Messenger.<sup>31</sup>

Sadrā, referring to the level reached by those who deepened in Divine wisdom with God's gift before him, says that he was also given this Divine grace in solving some hidden and difficult to understand philosophical problems.<sup>32</sup> In this sense, we can say that Sadrā uses the concept of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya* in a special sense, that is, in the sense of a special path and methodology in reaching the truth. According to Sadrā, who puts forward some conditions and reasons for the attainment of wisdom and self-experiential knowledge (*marifah*), this wisdom is a divine favor and not everyone can attain these sublime truths:

Undoubtedly, in order to obtain the light of wisdom and self-experiential knowledge, some conditions are to be met, such as having a sound nature, a good temperament/creation, a right view, a sharp mind, a quick perception, and the ability to have the unveiling (*mukashafah*). In addition to all these, there must be a spiritual light from Allah in the heart. One who has the power of understanding and comprehension, but who is deprived of experiential unveiling (*dhawqī kashf*) and who does not carry a light in his heart to illuminate the way ahead cannot be granted wisdom.<sup>33</sup>

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30 Ahmed Ebu Turabî, "Revîsh-i Shinasi-yi Hikmet-i Muta'aliye", *Marifet-i Felsefî*, 2005/1, 27.

31 Mulla Sadrā, *Aşfâr*, 1: 11.

32 Mulla Sadrā, *Aşfâr*, 2: 292; Mulla Sadrā, *Mefâtiḥü'l-Gayb*, ed. Muhammed Kwajevî (Tehran: Müessesesi Tahkikât-ı Ferhengî, H. 1363), 387. Mulla Sadrā, *Şevâhidü'r-Rubûbiyye fi'l-Menâhici's-Sulûkiyye*, ed. S. Jeleddin Ashtiyani (Meşhed: Merkez-i Neşr-i Danişgâh, Meşhed, H. 1360), 136, Mulla Sadrā, *Asrâr al-Ayât*, ed. Muhammed Hacevî (Tehran: Encümen-i Hikmet ve Felsefe, H. 1360), 143.

33 Mulla Sadrā, *Aşfâr*, 6: 6-7.

With the above statements, Sadrā underlines the impotence of mere reason and the insufficiency of rational evidence while explaining the epistemology of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya*. However, with these statements, it should not be inferred that Sadrā ignores the role of reason in obtaining wisdom. On the contrary, he just wants to point out the inadequacy of the intellect without the support of revelation and the inner enlightenment. And he explains this inadequacy in several ways. According to Sadrā, “Truth is wider than the area covered by the reason alone,” the reason may fall under the influence of emotional tendencies, moral deviations, and unwarranted prejudices.

When the prudent reason contemplates well and is free from tendencies, deviations, contradictions and stubbornness, and does not deviate from the pursuit of justice, and when it thinks that there is a group of intelligent people whose inner world is not contaminated with the evils of ignorance and inner stains and who do not deviate from the right path, then it will firmly believe in the truths that exceed the limits of its intellect.<sup>34</sup>

After these statements, we can formulate the epistemology of Sadrā's philosophy of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya* as follows: As in the Peripatetic and Illuminationist schools, the intellect is the basis. The starting point should be the intellect both in the intuitive knowledge attained through intuitions of the heart and in the interpretation of the manifest expressions of revelation. However, the intellect's capacity of comprehension is not infinite. Moreover, the intellect may not always make prudent judgements due to some obstacles. Therefore, sublime truths that exceed the limits of the intellect should be reached through unveiling (*mukashafa*) and witnessing (*shuhud*), and in order for the intellect to always make prudent decisions, it should be guided by revelation.

### III. A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BOTH PHILOSOPHER

After seeing the interpretation of *hikmat al-muta'aliyya* by the two scholars, in this part of our study, we will try to examine the similarities and differences between their views. It should be noted that Dāwūd al-Qaysarī, who lived about three centuries before Mullā Sadrā

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 7: 327.

and was one of the first users of the concept of *hikmat al-muta'aliyyah*, was very influential on Mullā Sadrā. Moreover, we should say that the influence of Ibn 'Arabī's school is the most prominent among the previous schools in Sadrā's synthesis of *hikmat al-mutāliyyahh*. As a matter of fact, in addition to his frequent references to the works of Ibn 'Arabī and al-Qūnawī, he also makes long quotations from Qaysarī's *Muqaddima*.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, we can easily state that similar and even common aspects are more dominant between the two views.

One of the main points on which the two views are united is the superiority of transcendent wisdom over deductive knowledge. The common purpose of using the phrase *hikmat al-mutāliyyah* is the necessity of a superior vision to access these truths and the existence of truths that exceed the capacity of the human intellect. This transcendence and superiority stem from the fact that they are not contented with mere philosophy of theology, but complement it with experimental wisdom based on tasteful unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhud*).

The second point is that both scholars describe the attainment of this sublime wisdom through the spiritual journey of the traveler (*sālik*), who is always on the way to reach reality and the Truth. The fact that the attainment of this supreme wisdom is closely related to the purification and realization of the soul (*nafs*) is another prominent point in both interpretations.

The third and perhaps the most important common point is the ultimate goal that is aimed to be achieved by the two Sages through *hikmat al-mutāliyyah*. The ultimate goal in both scholars' understanding of *hikmat al-mutāliyyah* is to attain the knowledge of God, which is the highest and most abstract of sciences.

In addition to these common points, it is also possible to mention some points where the two views differ. Although Sadrā adopted the teachings of Ibn al-'Arabī's school to a great extent, he tried to create a common mind, so to say, in his wide-ranging philosophical synthesis embracing all schools of Islamic thought. He did this by taking what he deemed appropriate from the teachings of each school, completing what they left incomplete, and kneading them into a harmonious consistency. As a matter of fact, even if we accept that he borrowed the concept of *hikmat al-mutāliyyah* from Avicenna or Qaysarī, he provided an intellectual basis for Qaysarī's idea of *hikmat al-mutāliyyah* based solely on the unveiling (*kashf*) and witnessing (*shuhud*), which excludes rational knowledge. With this, Sadrā pointed out that the *hikmat al-mutāliyyah*, which Qaysarī regarded as granted or *wahbī*, also had an obtainable aspect based on demonstrative (*istidlālī*) knowledge. Moreover, whereas Qaysarī restricted *hikmat al-mutāliyyah* to a narrow framework as a type of knowledge attained through a sufi journey, Sadrā transformed it into a

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35 For example, see *Shawahid al-Rububiyyah*, 316; and *Asfār*, 9: 349.

philosophical system based on a broad perspective and a logical foundation from epistemology to ontology, from physics to metaphysics, from psychology to mysticism.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the tradition of Islamic thought, the idea that the argumentative philosophy based on the method of reasoning was insufficient to reach some metaphysical truths compelled Islamic thinkers to endeavor to look for another type of philosophy. This endeavor had already appeared in the philosophy of Ibn Sina as “al-ḥikmat al-mashriqiyyah” and in that of Suhrawardī’s as “ḥikmat al-ishrāq” in the philosophy of Mullā Sadrā, in the form of “*ḥikmat al-mutāliyyah*”. *Hikmat al-mutāliyyah*, as we have observed two different projections above, was developed as a superior and transcendent way of thinking in both of our thinkers due to the incapacity of the intellect to comprehend pure metaphysics and divine truths. The most specific characteristic of this way of thinking is that it is a witnessing knowledge (*shuhudī*) based on mystical experience and the purification of the soul (*nafs*) and is considered as a level of perfection in the process of realization of the human soul.

Although two thinkers’ perspectives on *ḥikmat al-muta’aliyyah*, lived about three centuries apart from each other, have many common aspects, as well as some points of divergence. While Qaysarī conceived of *ḥikmat al-mutāliyyah* in a purely spiritual form and as a mystic experimental knowledge, Mullā Sadrā gave a rational basis to *ḥikmat-i muta’aliyah* both by trying to remove the obstacles on the way to inner enlightenment through the intellectual endeavour and by preferring to explain the truths he reached through logical methods. In this sense, we can say that every inner enlightenment is accompanied by a rational consciousness in Sadrā’s vision of *ḥikmat al-muta’aliyyah*. Finally, we should note that although the concept of *ḥikmat al-muta’aliyyah* had been used in a very close sense by Qaysari before Sadrā, Sadrā, in turn, developed it into an independent system by processing it and expanding its boundaries.

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