

## An investigation into the formation and acceptance of philosophy in Islamic Civilization

*Mohammad Shokri Chaharborj*

*Assistant professor, Department of Islamic studies, Sahand University of Technology, Tabriz, Iran.*

### ABSTRACT

*The foundation and inherent structure of Islamic philosophy are based on Qur'ān and Sunnah. It has also derived its formal nature and scientific and classical structure from predecessors and the events that occurred in Islamic society and civilization. In the "Translation movement", the important and influential political and cultural elements, as well as the revelatory sources, led to an intrinsic revolution in philosophy. Thus, Islamic philosophy was born. Islamic philosophy was not merely an interpretation of Greek philosophy. In fact, Islamic scholars derived the basic materials from Greek philosophy, refined, revised, completed, and justified them based on the revelatory sources. Accordingly, the pure Islamic philosophy was developed, which is the very Divine philosophy. The present study was conducted using the desk research methodology. The purpose of the study was to shed more light on Islamic philosophy and its evolution and, accordingly, to expand the boundaries of knowledge.*

*Keywords: Islamic philosophy, political and cultural elements, Islamic civilization, school of division, revelatory sources.*

### Introduction

Literally, philosophy refers to a specific technique based on thought and rational reasoning. It is derived from Greek. In Islamic civilization, philosophy is referred to as wisdom. In the present sense, the meaning of philosophy is beyond metaphysics, involving "all sciences which rationally, critically, and systematically explore the fundamental and ultimate questions" (Fanāī Ashkurī, 2014, p. 16). In other words, the philosophical topics are fundamental and explore and explain the whys. Philosophy of religion, Philosophy of ethics, and Philosophy of politics focus on the fundamental questions and whys of their respective sciences. Generally, philosophers seek to answer two fundamental questions: efficient cause and final cause. For example, in the philosophy of religion, the philosopher investigates the efficient cause and the bearer of the religion. He also focuses on the telos of religion.

One important characteristic of Islamic philosophy is the spirit of Truth-seeking which had been neglected by its predecessors. The essence of Islamic philosophy is gradational and bi-rank. The Infallibles (AS) were favored with the pure philosophy, i.e., the knowledge and worldview which show the realities

of the world as they are and as presented in the Qur'ānic verses and the narratives. In its weak version, the Islamic philosophy has not completely been derived from revelatory sources, rather has been compiled by philosophers over time. The strong version of the philosophy is the one Islamic philosophers refer to in explaining their theories, and contains the Islamic hallmarks, focuses on some specific issues, and proposes new philosophical topics, new arguments for the old issues, refinement, purification, and justification of the issues covered in Greek philosophy (*Ma'rifat-i-falsafī*, 2004).

The present study seeks to describe the process the Islamic philosophy has undergone to be placed along with the holy sources such as "Qur'ān" and "*Sunnah*", helping the Islamic civilization develop and expand. This authentic philosophy which is well-known in the Islamic world, particularly in Shi'ite school, enjoys higher power of competition, strength, and intellectual proof, compared to the Western philosophical schools. The formation of philosophy in Islamic civilization will be studied based on three elements: political, cultural, and revelatory sources.

### **Political elements**

The revelatory sources, particularly Qur'ān, do not deny Human sciences. Rather, they encourage people to gain knowledge. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) also invited Muslims to acquire knowledge. One of the sciences of the time was Greek philosophy. One way to teach and acquire Greek philosophy was through the translation movement. In this Movement, different sciences were translated into Arabic and, then, were analyzed and reviewed. Although the Holy Prophet (PBUH) also called for the translation of other science into Arabic, though it did not happen during his life since people took advantage of the Prophet's (PBUH) blessing presence. In addition, since the Islamic society had been newly established, people did not have time to process philosophical and intellectual issues. On the other hand, since the Islamic society had not been integrated with other societies, there were no philosophical and doctoral doubts. Muslims spent most of their time acquiring fundamental, epistemological issues, and ontology of religion, and extracting religious rulings and practical and moral instructions of the religion. After the Demise of Prophet Muḥammad (PBUH), a great deviation occurred in the Islamic state. Muslims deviated from the main path. They fought over the Caliphate (governing the state). The first three Caliphs spared no effort, even inhuman and anti-religion, to maintain their position. They aimed at nothing but governing. For them, Islam was a means to keep their government. The main teachings of Islam- i.e., acquiring knowledge and science, Closeness to God, mankind's prosperity and salvation- were neglected. To establish their status and superiority against *Ahl al-Bayt* (the Holy prophet's family) (AS), who were the true successors of the Islamic community, the deviated current launched the translation movement, translating and promoting the Greek philosophy. Some of the political factors are as follows:

#### ***Coping with Ahl al-Bayt's (AS) knowledge***

The main purpose of the political government in launching the translation movement and introducing Greek sciences into the Islamic community was to maintain their regime and to lead people of science to the non-religious scientific sources so that people didn't refer to the true successors of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) to get guidance. To do so, they home-arrested *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS), engaged people with such sciences as philosophy, logic, medicine, mathematics, geometry, astronomy, music and its history, mechanics, and chemistry, and, accordingly, prevented people from referring to the true commentators of Qur'ān. They aimed to guide people to refer to non-Qur'ānic and non-religious sources to solve their scientific problems and even to change the behavior of Muslims. They believed that if people were trained by the true heirs of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the ruling of the caliphs would be weakened. Regarding the purpose of promotion of Greek philosophy by the political figures of the time, Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, writes,

it was seemingly done in order to strengthen the foundation of the Islamic community and to realize the goals of the religion, as Qur'ān places a great emphasis on reflecting on all aspects of the creation and the existence of the heaven, the earth, humans, animals, etc. Accordingly, Muslims should acquire all kinds of sciences. On the other hand, the caliphs of the time resorted to any means to criticize Imams (AS) and

prevent people from referring to them and taking advantage of their knowledge. It can be said that the translation of theology was done to cut the relationship between people and *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS)" (2008, v. 2, p. 173).

Since the intellectual and philosophical sciences are consistent with the spirit of Islam, the followers of the school of *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) made the best use of the threat and malice of the caliphs and confronted them using the same intellectual sciences. Thus, Muslim scholars could prove their right beliefs and use the intellectual sciences and philosophy to serve Islam.

### ***Widening division and conflict in Islamic Ummah***

As a result of the translation of the Greek philosophical books and contrasting them with Qur'ān and *Sunnah*, along with preventing people from referring to *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS), different sects emerged, each of which had its own beliefs. This resulted in struggle and dissension among the sects. In the meantime, the Caliphs widened the division and conflict between Muslims by supporting one sect and rejecting others. Caliphs welcomed this situation in order to maintain their caliphate. They also home-arrested the *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) and banned anyone from recording the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) ḥadīths. In order to dominate the Muslim community, they resort to the "divide and rule" policy (Ḥakīmī, 1998, pp. 325-26).

### ***Cultural invasion***

Another way to establish and maintain the caliphate was to influence Muslims by a culture different than that of Qur'ān. The eclectic Greek, Iranian, Syrian, and Indian culture which had entered the Muslim community through the translation movement was the best means to influence Muslims. To do so, the political government used two groups: the seemingly pious Muslims who falsified ḥadīths of *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS), and the anti-religious infiltrator who promoted foreign cultures among the Muslims to deny the "Qur'ānic unity". The author of the book the *history of Mu'tazilah* writes

in the history of politics, there has been no man like Mu'āwiyah ... Mu'āwiyah used a cultural policy against The *Banū Hāshim* [the clan of the *Quraysh* tribe to which the prophet Muḥammad belonged], which involved the tradition of cursing Imam Ali (AS), his family and supporters, and confronting Islamic culture ... to implement this cultural policy, he integrated the Christian *Lāhūt* (divinity) into the Islamic culture, inviting the public to accept it. He also designated Damascus as the cultural center, instead of Medina, so that people would not refer to Imam Ali's (AS) family to acquire Qur'ān and ḥadīth (Ja'fari Lankrudi, as quoted in Ḥakīmī, 2004, p. 215).

As a result of the translation movement, Christian cultural figures entered the caliphs' court. Full attention was given to the "early sciences" to fulfill the intellectual and scientific needs of Islamic *Ummah* so that people did not need to refer to the "guardian of Qur'ān". They intended to divert people's attention from the truths of Qur'ān and prevent them from referring to the real commentators of Qur'ān, which resulted in a gap between people and Qur'ān, leading to the emergence of the deficient and incorrect understanding of Qur'ān.

### ***Analysis of the Political Elements***

In analyzing the political elements that influenced the formation of Islamic philosophy, we should mention the well-known rule "What happened was not intended and what intended did not happen". What did they expect from introducing Greek philosophy to the Islamic community, and what did happen? Islam emerged in a land where there was no recorded scientific and historical evidence in order to transform it into the "city of knowledge". In fact, the emergence of Islam revolutionized and fundamentally changed Arabs, placing them at the forefront of science and knowledge.

Accordingly, Islamic society would be the best refuge for the Divine and human sciences. However, even if there had been no deviation, Muslims would not have been divided into sects, and Umayyad and

Abbasid caliphs had not usurped the caliphate, over time and by the establishment and expansion of the Islamic community, Muslims would have felt the need to acquire different sciences and would have launched the translation movement to translate, refine, and modify sciences according to the needs of the society, and aligned the human sciences with the Divine knowledge to help man reach prosperity and happiness. Throughout the history of Muslims, philosophical thinking has increasingly flourished. The storm of "Incoherence" and "challenges" not only did not quench its radiant flames but also made it brighter. This indicates the deep relationship between intellectual thinking and the eternal school of Islam (Irshādī-Nīā, 2003).

Science, the scientific values, and training are rooted in religion and are intertwined with religious teachings. Qur'ān, the eternal miracle of Islam, confirms this. In Qur'ān, worship comes with knowledge and piety, which together ensure man's happiness.

In the first century, the Umayyad engaged in expanding the realms of the Muslims' world, conquering Iran, Greece, Egypt, India, etc., and usurped great scientific heritages of different sciences. In the second century, the translation movement was launched. According to the needs of society, different books on medicine, astronomy, logic, literature, and history were translated. Given the influence and expansion of the Mu'tazilah and the need for proving their beliefs, they resorted to philosophy and logic. By the end of the fourth century, a large number of books were translated into Arabic.

As a result of the political influences, the intellectual sciences were introduced into the Islamic world. The given sciences had been developed through thinking and contemplating on the creation of God- i.e., the Universe- thought they were mainly introduced into the Islamic community due to unjustified political goals (Allāmeḥ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1982). Allāmeḥ also states that the evil purpose of the translation movement does not prevent us from using intellectual discussions to prove religion. He further writes

But do the unjustified reason of the then government and their misuse of the translation and promotion of theology prevent us from engaging in any discussion on theology? The theology literature consists of a set of absolute intellectual discussions the result of which is to prove the Creator, the necessity of His existence, his Unity, and other Attributes, and that His existence is one of the requirements of prophecy and resurrection. These are the principles of the religion, which must first be proved through reason and intellect to ensure the validity of the descriptions of the Book and *Sunnah*. Otherwise, arguing for the validity of the descriptions of the Book and *Sunnah* based on the *religion and Sunnah* themselves is void and vain. Even the issues related to the principle of the religion, such as the existence of God, His unity, and His Lordship that are mentioned in the Book and *Sunnah* have all been argued through intellect (V. 2, p. 173).

According to this contemporary philosopher and commentator, the Islamic world needs an Islamic philosophy, and Greek philosophy is a basis to extract the authentic provisions of the Islamic philosophy, distill the existing philosophy and develop the Islamic Divine philosophy.

### **Cultural Elements**

From the first moment when it was revealed to the heart of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the Harā' cave, Islam have a rich culture and was based on science and knowledge. Islam started with the meaningful word '*Iqra*' (read) and founded a community and civilization based on reason, thinking, contemplation, education. Not surprisingly, such civilization developed a flourished community with rich culture, which outperformed other ancient religions in terms of scientific, intellectual, and philosophical sources. And appropriate cultural context and the potential talent inherent in the Islamic civilization encouraged the governments of the time to exploit it. Some of the cultural elements are discussed below.

### ***Congruity between the reasoning and religiousness in Islam***

The promoters of the translation movement used the latent cultural force of the Islamic civilization to reach their goal. Accordingly, they paved the way for the development of philosophy. But the fact is

that if the original Islam had not been rich in culture, reasoning, and contemplation, the science, reasoning, and philosophy would have declined in this civilization, as in other religions. Due to their rich culture, Philosophy was prevalent in Greek and Rome. However, when Rome converted to Christianity, philosophy started to decline. Some philosophical books were burned, some were hidden, and people were not allowed to discuss philosophy. It was because Christian culture considered philosophy to be against the religious laws. Then, Rome abandoned Christianity and turned to philosophy. The culture of the civilization determines "the direction of its development" (Nadim, 2009, p. 351).

Shahīd Muṭahharī in his book *Mutual service of Islam and Iran* investigates the process of the formation of the philosophy in Islamic civilization based on the rich Islamic culture. He argues that without understanding the categories of the philosophers in terms of time, we cannot study the course and process of the formation of philosophy in Islamic civilization. In categorizing Islamic philosophers, Shahīd Muṭahharī begins with the famous philosopher Al-Kindī. He finally reaches the thirty-third category which belongs to his teachers. In these thirty-three categories, he only mentions the philosophers who had significant roles in the development of philosophy, those who were the pioneers of philosophy, as well as influential cultural figures.

### ***Precedence of Culture in the development of the philosophers***

As a result of the translation movement, Greek philosophy was introduced into Islamic society. Most translators were Jewish, Christian, or *Sāb'ei*. There were few Muslim translators (Safā, 1977). Although the translation movement was not ineffective, the Muslims were also willing to know philosophy. For example, "Al-Kinidi, the well-known philosopher, was studying in Basra and Baghdad at the time of the Translation movement period" and there was no other philosopher in Basra and Baghdad at that time" (Shahīd Muṭahharī, 2008, V. 14, P. 461). Although Al-Kindī lived in the translation era, Ibn al-Nadim has attributed about two hundred and seventy books and treaties to him. Al-Kindī is considered one of the geniuses of the World, one of the pioneers of Islamic philosophy, and an influential intellectual figure in human history. There is "no Muslim or non-Muslim philosopher like him, or greater than him, in his category" (Shahīd Muṭahharī, V. 14, p. 461). From a sociology point of view, regarding the effect of Islamic culture on the development of philosophy, it should be noted that during the translation period, the philosophers and scholars who presented their own thoughts and philosophical propositions were all Muslims. There was not even one non-Muslim theorist-philosopher. In other words, the culture of the Islamic civilization trained philosophers.

The influence of the culture of Islamic civilization on developing Islamic philosophy can be traced back to the period between the translation movement and the seventh century AH. This period is known as the "medical philosophy" era. Muslims, Jewish, and Christians were active in this period. Some Jewish and Christian skillful physicians were also philosophers, though not theorists. However, in the constructive Islamic civilization, many philosophers have emerged who are also well-known in medicine. Regarding the effect of Islamic culture on the philosophers, Shahīd Muṭahharī writes "this statistics can be an interesting research topic for the sociologists. For example, among the "translator-philosophers and philosopher-translators", the most well-known scholars are all Muslims, or among the "philosopher-physicians" and "physician-philosophers", all reliable philosophers are Muslims. Although Non-Muslims are great physicians, they are not expert in theorizing about philosophy. This is because the "spirit of Islam is consistent with the philosophical thoughts", compared to other religions" (Shahīd Muṭahharī, p. 543). Pre-Islam Iranians who were leading the science and culture were Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, or *Sāb'ei*. They had established *Jundi Shapur* University. After the emergence of Islam, they could participate in the scientific, cultural, and philosophical movement. The Jewish and Christian scholars partially did so. However, the Zoroastrian scholars denied doing so. According to Shahīd Muṭahharī, the fact was that the spirit of Zoroastrianism was not consistent with science and philosophy. In case, scholars attempted to acquire science, they had to abandon Zoroastrianism.

### ***The inherent richness of the Shiite culture***

Due to using the Islamic pure culture, Islamic sects play significant roles in intellectual and philosophical fields. Most Muslim philosophers are Shi'ites since they had more access to the knowledge and wisdom sources and the flowing spring of the Islamic culture. Early Shi'a Muslims trained themselves to think philosophically. This culture passed from one generation to the next generation. In recent centuries, from the Mongol period, particularly since the tenth century, Shi'a culture spread across Iran. Islam with its cultural richness made Iran well-known in terms of Islamic philosophy. Although Iranians were not initiators of the Islamic philosophy, they have been more willing to acquire it than other nations. This is because the Shi'a culture promotes intellect, contemplation, science, and wisdom among Iranian Muslims. Inspired by this culture, Iranian philosophers like Ibn Sīnā moved the educational center of philosophy from Baghdad to Iran. The genius and reputation of Ibn Sīnā made the seekers of wisdom and philosophy visit Iran. His books have replaced the works of predecessors. Given Ibn Sīnā's influential philosophical thoughts, his unique books, and his Iranian students who mastered his books, Baghdad was not the center of philosophy anymore.

### **Revelatory sources**

The intellectual life of Islam is rooted in Qur'ān. According to various Qur'ānic verses, Islamic civilization was familiar with thinking and contemplation, or the so-called philosophy, much before the translation of the Greek intellectual books. In their debates, the Infallibles (AS) referred to these verses to present logical arguments and philosophical proofs. Religion is aimed only to help people to understand the realities of the supernatural world using argument, rational logic, and reason. This is what philosophy looks for. Therefore, the True religion invites people to think and contemplate about the universe, which is the so-called "modern philosophy". Qur'ān elegantly expresses this in a short but meaningful sentence: "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden, and He has knowledge of all things" (Qur'ān, 57:3). Accordingly, everything philosophy seeks to know is presented in the revelatory sources which have been sent down by God. In addition, the issues raised in Qur'ān such as the guarded tablet, the tablet of elimination and affirmation, determinism and free will, revelation, enlightenment, etc. cannot be solved unless through the spiritual journey to which Qur'ān as a supernatural source invites people. A comprehensive spiritual journey is the one done based on Qur'ān, arguments, and mysticism, which can only be gathered in Islamic philosophy which is called the "transcendent wisdom".

Āyat Allāh Jawādī Āmulī (2011) in his book *The Role of the Intellect in the Geometry of Religious Knowledge* proves the authority of the intellect as a source of religious knowledge, saying philosophy is a rational science. There is no contemplation, thinking, and intellect out of the scope of philosophy. If the authentic narration is "what Allah has sent down", then the argumentative intellect is also "What God has inspired", and both are sources of religious knowledge, leading to understanding the religious truths ... If intellect is a religious argument and conveys the ruling of religion, then the products of intellect, in its broad sense, including natural sciences, humanities, mathematics, and philosophy, convey religious content. Accordingly, the rulings of the intellect and philosophy about religion are the same. Just as religion and *Sunnah* view the rulings of the intellect as the rulings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) and the inner argument, the findings of the pure and authentic Islamic philosophy are also confirmed by the religion, and there will be no conflict between the findings of the intellect and philosophy. Therefore, true religion invites people to nothing but the Divine philosophy. True religion and the Divine philosophy have both a single goal, i.e., to instruct people to understand the supernatural realities (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1982). Some of the revelatory sources of Islamic philosophy include the following.

### ***The Holy Qur'ān***

Philosophical expression of Qur'ānic verses

Imam Ali (AS), the true interpreter of the revelation and the only heir of the Prophetic knowledge- "God taught Qur'ān and other sciences to His Prophet and the Holy Prophet (PBUH) taught them all to Ali (AS)"

(Saffār, 1983, p. 291) - who was aware of the knowledge of the Book and the secrets and mysteries of God has interpreted various verses which required philosophical interpretations. Here are two examples.

The interpretation of "He is the First and the Last, the Manifest and the Hidden" (Qur'ān, 57:3): "He manifests Himself over the earth with His authority and greatness. He is aware of its inside through his knowledge and understanding" (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 186), "Every manifest thing other than Him is hidden, but every hidden thing other than Him is incapable of becoming manifest" (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 65), or " He is the First and from ever. He is the everlasting without limit ... He is apparent, but it cannot be said "from what". He is hidden, but it cannot be said "in what"" (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon: 163).

The interpretation of "Indeed we belong to Allah and to Him do we indeed return" (Qur'ān, 2: 156): "our saying *inna li'llah* (Verily we are Allah's) is an admission of His Majesty over us and our saying "*wa inna ilayhi raji 'un*" (and verily to Him shall we return) is an admission of our being mortal." (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 99).

### ***Prophetic lifestyle and tradition***

The first fundamental step in this path was taken by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the owner of *Shari'a* and the first creature, the first emanation, or the first intellect. The narratives quoted from the Holy Prophet (PBUH), along with the Quranic verses, effectively encourage people to seek and acquire knowledge. Every Muslim has heard the ḥadīth "Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China" (Muḥammadī Rei shahrī, 2005). Muslims responded to that revelatory call and began to search for knowledge. However, neither the Holy Prophet (PBUH) nor Imams (AS) instructed people to acquire specific knowledge, since it is obvious that acquiring knowledge is only possible when one uses the previous sciences.

Regarding teaching and learning, importance and the position of knowledge, and the knowledgeable people, some narratives use the term "wisdom" as a synonym for philosophy. For example, the Messenger of God (PBUH) states "Wisdom is the lost property of the Believer, so wherever he finds, then he is the most worthy of it" (Muḥammadī Rei shahrī, 2005, v. 3, p. 1260); Imam Ali (AS) says "Wisdom is the lost property of the believer, so seek it, even if with a polytheist, you would be more deserving of it" (Muḥammadī Rei shahrī, 2005, v. 3, p. 1260). It is narrated from Jābir ibn Ḥayyān that "by His Grace, God has granted us something which he has denied from others. This knowledge, i.e., philosophy, is our sustenance ... we were favored with living in Imam Sadiq's (AS) time. Then, He taught us the philosophy so that we did not need to be taught by others" (Musawī, 2003, p. 127)

### ***Ahl al-Bayt's (AS) lifestyle***

Learning from the Logos, Imam Ali (AS), the executor and my successor of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), played a significant role in orienting as well as the development and emergence of the Islamic philosophy. In fact, his perfect and unique personality paved the way for such an impact. Ibn Sīnā (1987) narrates a ḥadīth from the Messenger of God (PBUH) addressing Imam Ali (AS), saying "O Ali! When the servants resort to goodness in order to be close to their Creator, you should approach your Creator with your intellect in order to overtake them" (p. 94). Moreover, Ibn Abī al-Ḥadīd (1961) argues that the same virtues made the philosophers call Imam Ali (As) "the Arab Sage" (V. 11, p. 48). Some of the important elements in monotheistic sermons and the ḥadīths quoted from Imam Ali (AS) affecting the formulation of the Islamic philosophy include:

### ***Expressing intellectual arguments in doctrinal issues***

During the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) life, Muslims relied only on his words. They followed Qur'ān and the Prophet's teachings. Regarding Unity, they took Qur'ān's words for granted. Accordingly, their Questions were mainly about practical issues such as *Jihad* (struggle), fasting, *Hajj* (an annual Islamic

pilgrimage to Mecca), *ṣalāt*, etc. After the Holy Prophet (PBUH), the discussions and questions regarding doctrinal issues increased, and Ali ibn Abi Ṭālīb (AS) was the only authority to respond to these problems. In fact, Islamic theologians owe their knowledge to the philosophy of Imam Ali (AS) (Muffatiḥ, 1981). Imam Ali (AS) used this opportunity and proposed the argumentative and intellectual issues in Islamic theology. He guided Muslims and the Islamic community in the path of contemplation and argument. In expressing Islamic teachings, his Sermons and ḥadīths, he mostly used logical proofs and analogy, and philosophical issues, for example, categorical syllogism (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 91), Proof by contradiction (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 186), compound categorical conjunctive syllogism with dependent conclusions (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 1).

Imam Ali's (AS) intellectual, argumentative, and philosophical discussions led Shiites to overtake the followers of other religions, even other sects of Islam, in terms of Philosophical issues. Ahmad Amin, an Egyptian historian, and writer, admits that philosophy is more compatible with Shi'a than Sunni.

### ***Theological and doctrinal disputes***

In order to establish the doctrinal issues through argument, rational proofs, and debate, Imam Ali (AS) encouraged those interested in these issues, and the enemies and those who made Muslims skeptical about Islam, to participate in such debates. Many narrative books such as Ṭabarsi's *Al-Ihtijāj* have recorded a large number of such intellectual and doctrinal debates. It is said that Imam Ali (AS) "engaged in such debates even in the middle of the war to encourage and contend the enemies to accept them" (Al-Shaykh al-Sadūq, 1978, p. 83). In another case, on his way back from the Battle of Ṣiffīn, Imam Ali (AS) debated with a Syrian old man on the Divine *Qaḍā* and *Qadar* (predestination) to prevent him from believing in the determinism.

### ***Presenting philosophical and intellectual issues in the form of Sermons and prayers***

During Imams' (AS) lives, particularly Imam Ali's (AS), people were more accustomed to the issues related to devotion than intellectual and philosophical issues. In addition, due to the differences in people's talents and their capacities in understanding philosophical issues, the context was not appropriate to reveal intellectual secrets and knowledge. Imams (AS) had to teach the complex and deep knowledge only to their special companions. However, in order not to deprive the Islamic community of teachings and to pass this invaluable heritage to the next generations, Imams (AS) expressed complex monotheistic teachings through prayers and sermons. Today, these sermons and prayers are strong evidence proving that philosophical and intellectual issues are consistent with religious ideas. For example regarding the 186<sup>th</sup> sermon, Sayyid Radhi states ". This sermon contains principles of knowledge which no other sermon contains ". Moreover, Ibn Abi al-Hadīd (1961), a Sunni scholar, swears to God and says he has read the 12<sup>th</sup> sermon over a thousand times during 50 years, and every time he recited it, he learned a new thing. Regarding the sermon cited in *Uṣūl al-kāfi*, the chapter on *Jawāmi* ' al-Tawhid (v. 1, p. 134), Al-Kuleinī writes "and this sermon is sufficient for those who seek the knowledge of monotheism provided that they contemplate it. Should all humans and jinns, except the Holy Prophet, gather and put their knowledge together to explain the Divine monotheism, they will not be able to explain the way Imam Ali (AS) has explained in Nahj al-Balāghah". And about the prayers, *Kumayl* and *Sabah* prayers are the best proofs for our claim.

### ***Introduction of philosophical terms into Arabic***

Before the translation movement, there were no philosophical terms in Arabic. The translation movement reached its peak during the third century. Imam Ali (AS) was the first Muslim who used philosophical terms in Arabic. His arguments and sermons which were articulated eloquently and rhetorically played significant roles in this process. Some of the philosophical, intellectual, and argumentative terms used by Imam Ali (AS) in his sermons include existence, Being, acting without movement, creating without undergoing reflection, oneness but not by counting, eternity, Creativity, distinct of beings, effect (of a cause), knowing before Creation, being near thing by way of touch,



manifestation, understanding the essence of the attributes, etc. (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermons: 126, 115, 232, 96, 41, 258, 217, 184,181, 1, 227). Since then, these Arabic philosophical terms have been used in Islamic philosophy and are used today as key concepts in transcendent wisdom.

### ***Formulating philosophical rules***

In most of his sermons, Imam Ali (AS) discusses monotheism and theology and presents novel rules by giving examples. One of the rules is related to completeness of the general and specific causes, which requires the effect to be inferior to the cause: "He is one, but not by counting, He is everlasting without any limit"(Nahj al-Balāghah, sermons: 185). The Almighty God is eternal and substantive the prerequisite of which is Non-multiplicity and complexity. God (The Necessary Existence) is the general and specific cause of all existence and is free from the attributes of His effects such as incidence, number, analogy, incapability, and annihilation. In other words, the rule of contraction in imperfect attributes holds in the Necessary Existence, which is the complement of the cognation rule. That is, any perfection in the effect must exist in the cause most perfectly. According to the contradiction rule, the general and specific causes must contain the most perfect attributes given to the effect, not the imperfect attributes which result from imperfection (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon:186). Scholars use the "contradiction in the imperfect attributes" of the following effects to present philosophical arguments: "He provides evidence through the creation of things of His being from ever, through their marks of incapability of His power, and through their powerlessness against death of His eternity" (Nahj al-Balāghah, Sermon: 185).

Another rule mentioned by Imam Ali (AS) is the rule of abstraction. According to this rule, the perfect attributes of the creatures can be attributed to God only when they are refined in terms of imperfection, non-existence, relativity, incidence, and place. Some examples of the abstraction rule used in Nahj al-Balāghah include: He is near to things but not (physically) contiguous (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermons: 1, 179), He is far from them but not (physically) separate(Nahj al-Balāghah, sermons: 1, 179), He moves, but not with (the assistance of) limbs (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermons: 1, 179), he initiated most initially and commenced it originally, without undergoing reflection(Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon: 1), He is Merciful but cannot be attributed with weakness of heart (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon: 79), Stillness and motion do not occur in Him (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon: 186), dignity without disdain (Nahj al-Balāghah, sermon: 45). Imam Ali (AS) used philosophical and intellectual rules in his speech to show Muslims the necessity of them in understanding the religion.

### **Ahl al-Bayt (AS) and philosophy**

The translation movement was politically launched to prevent people from referring to the Infallibles (AS), but what were Imams' (AS) ideas about the translation movement? Did they support it? Did they encourage their companions to engage in translation? Or were they mainly against the translation of Greek books into Arabic, and did they ban their companions from doing it? One way, or it can be said the first way, to acquire knowledge was to translate the existing sciences. The ḥadīth "Seek knowledge even if you have to go as far as China" encouraged people to do so. Due to the obligatory implication of this ḥadīth, religious leaders instructed people to translate different sciences to acquire knowledge.

If the religious leaders were against philosophy and viewed it as a threat to the religion, they should have warned about it and explicitly stated philosophical issues were void and destructive and were not accepted by them so that the Shi'a scholars would have been informed early. In the *Tawḥīd al-Mufaḍḍal* ḥadīth, Imam Sadiq (AS) quotes from some Greek philosophers without denying them. In order to reject the accidental creation of the Universe, he quotes Aristotle's ideas. In another ḥadīth, Imam Sadiq (AS) refers to Plato as "the head of the sages" whiteout condemning him (Majlisī, 1983, p. 172). In addition, Jābir ibn Ḥayyān, one of the students of Imam Sadiq (AS), presented his knowledge of Greek philosophy to Imam (AS), but Imam (AS) did not discourage him from acquiring it.

Accordingly, *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) was not against philosophy. Otherwise, they would view philosophy against Shi'a and Divine and religious teachings and would deny it just like analogy and *Istihsan* (Discretion). Whereas there are a number of ḥadīths in which they have praised philosophers and considered some of them as Prophets of God. For example, it is narrated that whenever a Muslim reached an accomplishment in knowledge, the Holy Prophet (PBUH) would address him "O Aristotle of the *Ummah*" (Shahrūzī, 1956, p. 30). Moreover, Imam Ṣādiq (AS) states, "May those who claim about philosophy face loss, deprivation, and despair! How can their hearts not see this amazing creation, and how do they deny the tact and intention, and the will behind the Creation? ... "(Majlisī, 1982, V. 3, P. 75; v. 61, p. 327). Imam Sadiq (AS) also states "O Hisham, you will not fall on your feet (as if there is no answer for you); before you reach the ground, you will fly (as soon as the sign of defeat appears, you will save yourself). Someone like you must talk to people. Keep yourself from making any deviation. Afterward, we will intercede. God willing" (Al-Kuleinī, 2004, v. 1, p. 224). In this ḥadīth, Imam Sadiq (AS) praises Hisham's work and confirms the theological debates the issues of which are based on intellectual arguments.

The above ḥadīths quoted from the Infallibles (AS) show that they endorsed philosophers and rejected the false philosophers, encouraged theological, argumentative, and philosophical debates. They role-modeled and prepared the context for people to use philosophical and intellectual sciences in explaining and proving the legitimacy of Islam.

### **Imam's companions and philosophy**

The Infallibles (AS) supported philosophy and guided their companions to acquire philosophy. Their companions did not accept philosophy without doing research and examining the quotes and sayings. Rather, after the translation movement, they engaged in refining and revising the translated sciences, wrote books to revise or reject some Greek philosophical issues. During Imam Sadiq's (AS) time when Muslims were less or more familiar with the Greek philosophers' beliefs and books and the translation movement was in its heyday, it was not such that the caliphs encouraged translation movement, and *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) and their companions were indifferent about the Islamic beliefs and Islamic community. In fact, *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) and their companions were guardians of the religion and examined any sciences which were introduced into the community to evaluate their authenticity. As to philosophy, after understanding philosophy and contemplating it, they evaluated it against Qur'ān and *Ahl al-Bayt's* (AS) teachings to identify its weaknesses, flaws, and false and unreal issues. They, next, refined and revised it to reach a pure Islamic philosophy. Then, when it was the time, they presented the pure Islamic philosophy to the Muslims and the Islamic community through scientific circles and debates.

Accordingly, acquiring the philosophy, refining, revising, and purifying it based on the Divine knowledge [i.e., Qur'ān and Imams' (As) teachings], Shi'ites and Imams' (AS) special companies found out they were more in need of *Ahl al-Bayt's* (AS) knowledge and referred to them more consciously and insightfully. After understanding, evaluating, and contemplating philosophy, they found it consistent with the religion and considered it one of the sources of the religion, along with *Sunnah* and ḥadīth. Moreover, they did their best to analyze and refine the philosophical issues. Accordingly, relying on the infinite knowledge of *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS), they engaged in revising the philosophical contents and distinguished the authentic contents from unauthentic ones. Finally, they reduced the original two hundred philosophical issues to seven hundred. Thus, Philosophy was inherently revolutionized and Islamic philosophy emerged.

### **Conclusion**

The philosophy which is used today in Islamic world, particularly in Shi'a school, represents the Divine philosophy. From early Islam to the present century, it has been affected by political, cultural, and revelatory elements, with seemingly contradictory purposes.

The Islamic philosophy in its present form is the result of a great scientific endeavor that took centuries. It can be claimed that philosophy started its evolutionary journey in two separate yet parallel

paths: one path began with adapting Greek philosophy and the translation movement. It started in the second century, reached its relative peak during the third century, and evolved during the fourth century. The second movement had begun before the translation movement with the advent of Islam. Qur'ān, the Holy Prophet's (PBUH) ḥadīths, narratives, and teachings of Imams (AS) were the sources of Islamic philosophy. Islamic philosophers attempted to explain and interpret, refine and revise Greek philosophy. In the meantime, they examined the Infallibles' (AS) sayings and teachings to infer and extract the philosophical rules. Over time, different philosophical schools were founded and paved the way for the development of philosophy. Ibn Sīnā refined Aristotle's Peripatetic school and logically organized philosophy and revised Greek philosophy which believed in the temporal creation of the world and the temporal creation of the soul, attempting to align these two paths.

Moreover, the School of Illumination was founded based on mystical revelations. According to this school, the True Being and the Origins of the Universe, i.e., God, is the essence of Light or the Illuminator of all lights, and all levels of existence are His beams. The Illuminator of all lights is the Pure Light, the Absolute existence, and the *Wajib al-Wujud* (the Necessary Being). Accordingly, philosophy took another step towards flourishing, yet it was still far from the Divine philosophy, and the wisdom to which Qur'ān and *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS) invited people had not been realized. The School of Illumination had brought the two separated paths closer to each other, but there was a missing piece that could align the three sources of understanding, i.e., revelation, intellect, and intuition.

Philosophy was waiting for the last scientific philosophical revolution to become the pure Islamic philosophy. Philosophy is increasingly getting closer to the scientific sources of *Ahl al-Bayt* (AS). They are almost compatible with each other. This is the very philosophy that has evolved in the Islamic context, integrating Quran, mysticism, and proof.

It is Mullā Ṣadrā's philosophical system that integrated Peripatetic philosophy, Philosophy of Illumination, mystical revelation, and, thus, revived the Islamic philosophy. Mastering Peripatetic philosophy and Philosophy of Illumination as well as contemplating the Qur'ānic verses and ḥadīths, Mullā Ṣadrā was able to solve important and confusing issues of the Divine philosophy. Were it not for Islamic philosophy, there would be a large number of unsolvable and incomprehensible issues in the religion. Then, there would be no choice but to surrender, keep silent, and blindly imitate. The only way out was a spiritual journey based on Qur'ān, mysticism, and proof, which can only be integrated in Islamic philosophy, the one that is called transcendent wisdom.

## References

- The Holy Qur'ān, English Translation, Sayyid 'Alī Qulī Qarāī.  
Nahj al-Balāghah, Arabic-English version compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī  
Al- Kuleinī, M. I. Y. (2004). *Usūl min al-Kāfi* (7<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmīyya.  
Al- Kuleinī, M. I. Y. (2005). *Al-Furu' min al-Kāfi* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmīyya.  
Al-Sadūq, A. J. (1978). *Al-Tawhīd*. Tehran: jāmi' al-mudarrisin.  
Al-Ṭūsī. A. M. H. (nd.). *Al-fihrist*. Qom: al-Sharīf al-Raḍī.  
Fanā'ī Ashkurī, M. (2014). *An introduction to the Islamic philosophy* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Qom: Imam khomeini educational institute press.  
Ḥakīmī, M. R. (1998). *School of division* (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Islamic culture publication.  
Ḥakīmī, M. R. (2004). *Ijtihād and imitation in philosophy* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Qom: Dalīl-e-mā.  
Ibn Abī al-Hadīd, (1961). *Sharḥ Nahj al-Balāghah*. Qom: Dār al-Kitāb al-Islāmīyya Isma'īlīān Najafī.  
Ibn Sīnā, H. B. A. (1984). *Al-Shifā' al-ilāhīyāt*. Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī al-Najafī.  
Ibn Sīnā, H. B. A. (1987). *Mi'rāj-Nāmih* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Mashhad: Islamic studies of Āstān-Quds-Raḍāvī.  
Irshādī-Nīā, M. R. (2003). *A review of the theory of division* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Qom: Bustān kitāb.  
Isfahānī, M. (1984). *Abwāb al-Hudā*. Mashhad: Sayyid Muhammad Bāqir najafī Yazdī publication.  
Jawādī Āmulī, 'A. (2011). *The Role of the Intellect in the Geometry of Religious Knowledge*. Qom: Isra' publication.  
*Ma'rifat-i-falsafī* (2004). Tehran: Imam Khomeini educational and research institute.

- Majlisī, M. B. (1983). *Biḥār al-Anwār al-Jāmi'at la-Durr Akhbār al-A'immat al-Aṭhār*. Beirut: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Mullā Ṣadrā, M. I. 'A. (1989). *Al-ḥikmat al-muta'ālīyyah fī al-asfār al-'aqlīyyah al-Arba'ah*. Beirut: Iḥyā al-Turāth al-'Arabī.
- Musawī, S. M. (2003). *Rituals of thinking* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Hikmat.
- Muffatiḥ, M. (1981). *Al-ḥikmat wa Nahj al-Balāghah*. Tehran: payām Āzādī.
- Muṭahharī, M. (2008). *Collection of works* (11<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Ṣadrā publication.
- Muzaffarī, H. (2005). *Bunyan Marṣūṣ* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Qom: Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute Publications.
- Nadim, M. I. (2009). *Al-fihrist*. Tehran: Furqān lil- Turāth al-Islāmī.
- Muḥammadī Rei shahrī, M. (2005). *Al-mizān al-ḥikmah* (5<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Qom: Dār al-ḥadīth.
- Safā, Z. (1977). *The history of intellectual science in Islamic civilization* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Amir Kabir.
- Saffār, M. H. (1983). *Basā'ir al-darajāt*. Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Mar'ashī al- Najafī.
- Shahrūzī, U. 'A. T. (1956). *Fatāwā-i Ibn al-Ṣahāḥ*. Dīārbake: Maktabat al-Islāmīyyah.
- Shoki, M. (2015). *The Role of philosophy in understanding the religion* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation], Islamic Seminary of Qom.
- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, S. M. H. (1981). *'Alā wa al-falsafat al-Ilāhīyyah* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Tehran: Maktabat al-Islāmīyyah.
- Ṭabāṭabā'ī, S. M. H. (2008). *Islamic studies* (1<sup>st</sup> Ed.). Qom: Bustān kitāb.