

## **MYSTICISM**

Researches done by ISL philosophy bachelor  
students of University of Tehran

## **SUHRAWARDI**

A brief research on Suhrawardi, Founder of  
the Iranian school of "Ishraq" (Illumination)

# **A COURSE ON MYSTICISIM (2)**

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# Preface

Mysticism is popularly known as becoming one with God or the Absolute, but also refers to any kind of ecstasy or altered state of consciousness which is given a religious or spiritual meaning...

**Enjoy the journey!**



# AFFECTED NAME

**FATEMEH BAQERI**

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**The word "affected" has a chosen meaning and is one of the divine letters (names of God) that God has chosen and hidden for Himself, and therefore, the affected name is also called "hidden name" and "reserved name".**

The affected is for God and no one but God has a way with that name and is not aware of it. According to some narrations, this name is the essence of the great name of God. 1: There is a manifestation for the affected name 2: No one knows the affected name except God. 3: This name, along with other names, is manifested in the divine book - the Qur'an. 4: The Ahl al-Bayt, who are the treasurers of the secrets of this book, are aware of this name and they do not know its origin.

(Istishar) in the word means to choose and to dedicate to oneself, and the effect, which is taken from the source of istishar, means chosen. Ragheb Esfahani says in the words: The effect of a bastard is tyrannical and self-centered. Imam Baqir (AS) says in this regard: "Seventy-two letters of the letters of the great name are before us and only one letter of it is with the Almighty God who has it in his knowledge of the unseen. Has been assigned. According to the narration of bab sufficient principles are used, the affected name which is named as and , is the first divine name for the interior and the unseen.

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# THE ATTRIBUTES OF DIVINE BEAUTY

**KOSAR RAMEZANI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**The attributes of divine beauty and glory are a term in theology and mysticism for classifying the attributes of God.**

In common parlance, these two terms are equivalent to positive and negative attributes. Attributes of beauty (evidence attributes) are attributes that indicate the existence of perfection in God.

The names of beauty in theoretical mysticism are the names that cause the emergence of the right and the bestowal of perfection from perfection and the blessing of blessings on creation.

In practical mysticism, they refer to names whose manifestation becomes the source of peace and joy of the seeker.





Sama Dance-Whirling Dervishes from Turkey (2006)





# MYSTICISM IN THE 5TH CENTURY

**FATEMEH FARSI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**In the fifth century, Khorasan was one of the most important places for the promotion of Sufism. Masters such as Abu Saeed Abu al-Khair and Qashiri lived in this period.**

Here we want to examine the status of mystics in this period and the reasons for Khajeh's support for them.

They had a lot of influence among the people. They spread Sufism and Khajeh Nizam al-Mulk supported them. The presence of great jurists such as Qushiri and Abu Sa'id Abu al-Khair had caused this method to progress in this area, and this situation will improve with the support of the Seljuk emirs and kings who rule during this period.

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# NAFAS AL-RAHMAN

**FATEMEH HOSSEIN POUR**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**One of the views of Sheikh Mohi-ud-Din Ibn Arabi in "Fusus al-Hakam and the conquests of Makkah" is how to compare the soul of the Most Merciful with the soul of man. Therefore, it is necessary to study the characteristics, features, similarities and relations between the human soul and the merciful soul.**

Following this study, the profound meaning of the statement that "man was created in the image of the Merciful" will be revealed. One of the important issues in Ibn Arabi's thought is the relationship between truth and creation, which Ibn Arabi prefers to solve this complex issue through simile and allegory and using difficult virtual words, such as manifestation in the mirror and distortion and series in the world, and Explain the Impact and capture and the like.. Truth has a real existence that is inherent; And the nobles have additional existential possibilities, which are in fact the series of existence of truth, and this existence is a shadow that falls on the beings towards God, and he grants them existence with the name of "appearance".

So the world is a shadow if it is considered in terms of its object, its interior and its essence; The essence of the universe is the soul of the Most Merciful, in which the forms of existence blossom from the top to the bottom; For the soul of the Most Merciful is potentially the forms of all beings, just as the soul of man is potentially all the letters and words that come from it. It is through the Most Merciful that God expands the names from their unseen state. With this movement, he brings the names to a state of liberation and relieves that he is a state of creation and mercy. A movement evoked by creative love. The concept of love and affection depends on the concept of divine manifestation, and this concept, in turn (the passage from the unseen to the intuition), is the emancipation of the names from the corpse, which is manifested in the "merciful soul".

# SUFISM AND MYSTICISM

**NARGES ZAHEDI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**Mysticism literally means an accurate and deep knowledge of something. And in Islamic's terms, it is the acquisition of immediate knowledge of God and the attainment of the one truth of the world.**

Mysticism is divided into two categories, practical and theoretical, which are practical like ethics and theoretical like philosophy, but there are differences. Sufism also has several lexical and idiomatic meanings that have been tried to be summarized in this article.

Sufism is a mystical and ascetic Islam practiced by tens of millions of Muslims. Known as "Tasawwuf" in the Muslim world, in the West it is often erroneously thought of as a separate sect. Sufism is more prominent among Sunnis, but there are also Shiite Sufi orders, or "tariqa."

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# HABAA

**PARHAM ELYASI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**Conventionally meaning “A flock of dust floating in a pillar of light”, The term “Habaa” is of a very particular meaning in Islamic theoretical studies, precisely in mysticism.**

In order to make a better discernment of Habaa's mystical sense of term we shall compare it to the Greek concept of “Hyle”, although these two are located in two completely different sphere of thoughts\_ former, in Islamic mysticism and latter, in ancient philosophy\_ speculating the genealogic aspects of them leads to a clear perception of both “habaa” and “hyle”.

Ibn Arabi, a prominent Islamic mystic, has played a major role in theoretical mysticism found in western Islamic world, so that his works are being scrutinized in classic studies of western spirituality and other department of theological studies. The term “habaa” can be described as a key element in his system of theoretical mysticism. Habaa is the very first “Form” that God has created and all universe is based upon this intellectual \_and not sensible\_ being. In the beginning of creation, on foundations of habaa then came the graceful existential “truth” of “Muhamad”(pbuh) prophet of islam.

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'Abd ar-Rahman Jami (1414)

# "THE ARC OF ASCENT" AND "THE ARC OF DESCENT"

**REZVANEH SHOJAEI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**The truth of existence has two sides; On the one hand it leads to pure actuality and absolute perfection, and on the other hand it leads to pure power and mere acceptance, and the distance between these two parties constitutes the middle .**

stages of existence The light of existence does not reach the stage of pure power from the origin of existence, except through reviewing and passing through all the intermediate stages of existence, which is called "The Arc of Descent". Just as existence in the stages of completion does not reach from the position of mere acceptance (monster) to the position of near necessity of existence, except through reviewing and passing through all the secondary stages of existence, which is called "The Arc of Ascent".

Hence, they have likened the course of the truth of existence . to circles consisting of two arcs of descent and ascent From the point of view of mysticism in the arc of descent, man brings with him all the steps taken as a deposit until the elemental ascension, and from then on in the arc of ascension, everything that is in the arc of descent flourishes and reaches its ultimate degree of perfection.

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Mausoleum of Omar Khayyam, Nishapur





# NAME AND EPISTEMOLOGY

**SARA ARDESTANI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**In theoretical mysticism, all the living things and universe is a manifestation of divine names. In practical mysticism, every level and position of human being is affected by one or more names.**

As a result, the relationship between all living things and the Almighty is through names only. This kind of relationship includes existing and intuitive one. Names represent God in emergence. Though names and adjectives are divine attributes and have no objective existence in themselves, objective creatures rely on them. Name means the Almighty through one of His adjectives.

Divine names are divided into practical, characteristic, and instinctive plus aesthetic and majestic ones. The most grandeur name of God is the most comprehensive kind of divine names the manifestation of which is the perfect man. Praying and levels of spiritual journeys are also affected by names.

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# NAME AND KNOWLEDGE

**SARA DAEI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**Name has a special place in mysticism in theoretical mysticism. the existence of being depends on divine names in practical mysticism. every state of being depends on the divine name, the epistemological function of the name of God .**

Epistemologists examine the name of God in two titles name of the God is intrinsic name of God is descriptive the meaning of intrinsic is unattainable God's instinct and the meaning of descriptive is God's beginning if mystics say human must be the manifestation of God it means descriptive meaning not instinct meaning name is top of the theophany and all names derived from

it the name of God has existential part and he creates anything but God's beginning appears with science and eternity and power and will manifestation of the essence of God is different with theophany in emanation God finds knowledge about his instinct but in theophany God sees his adjectives and his perfection because of this epistemologists says Allah is the top of emanation .

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Mausoleum of Maruf Al-Karkhi (2017)



# NAME AND PRAISE

**FATEMEH TOWHIDI**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**'Asmā'u llāhi l-ḥusnā (Litteraly means: Allah's Most Beautiful Names) and also sifat llāhi l-ḥusnā (Litteraly means: Allah's Beautiful Attributes) are among the widest intellectual and mystical courses of Quran, Whereas it has been considered as the only epidemic connecting link between humankind and Deity.**

The essence of God almighty is utterly unknown to all prophets and clergies.

It is only Deity himself that has a proper knowledge on his true essence, Whereas the nature of his innate attributes is also unknown to all humankind.

As a result, there is no duty on people knowing the god neither they are responsible for knowledge on his innate attributes.

On the other hand, the path of discerning God is not completely obstructed. And people can make an epistemic longing to Deity by the means of figuring his attributes. For instance, human intellect can reach to god's beautiful attributes by contemplating the sphere of creation. Attributes such as creative, generous, healer, advocate, gentle etc.

Although no mystic can know the essence of god. But implicit knowledge can be possible for those who contemplate his attributes. Everyone regarding his own existential class can grant a knowledge by the means of his attributes. Essence of God can be discerned implicitly by knowing his most beautiful names.

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# PERFECT MAN

**SOGHRA NOUR ZIARAT**

(ISL PHILOSOPHY BACHELOR STUDENT AT UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN)

**Correct understanding of the meaning of the perfect man and his existential position in the system of existence and bringing its scientific reason by knowing**

Monotheism and its virtues are tied. In all cultures and schools of thought and philosophy, there are many examples of a perfect human being.

Here we study the characteristics of a perfect human being in the two philosophical-mystical schools of Sadr al-Mutallah and Sheikh al-Ishraq, may God have mercy on them

In this article, The desired and complete human being is studied and analyzed from their point of view.

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# SUHRAWARDI

10 PAGES



From Mysticism To Philosophy And Back!

(1154–1191)

# Mystic-Philosopher of Persia

Prof. Nadia Maftouni

Born in Suhraward of Zanjan—a northwest city in Iran—and died in Aleppo of Syria, Shahab ad-Din Yahya Suhrawardi (1154-1191) is reckoned an Iranian philosopher and the founder of Illumination tradition, or if you want say Illumination philosophy. Being affected by the twelfth-century trend against Farabi and Avicenna which took its cue from Ghazali's *Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tahafut al-Falasifa*), the value of reason decreased in

Suhrawardi's thought.<sup>1</sup>

Fleshing out complicated philosophical issues by allegory, Suhrawardi might be considered a philartist. Or said another way, metaphysics emerged in full force in his fictions as well as those of Avicenna and Ibn Tufail (1105–1185).<sup>2</sup> In this chapter I'd like to point out Suhrawardi's stand on love.

**Love in Illumination School.** Suhrawardi conveys mystical issues in his fictions. He has ten visionary treatises, the main theme of which is the mystical love. The hero of these treatises is a wayfarer who loves God and looks for the right way to the Divine. This love is some sort of spiritual emotion rather than passionate love. This claim would be proved by analyzing Suhrawardi's allegories. On his way to God,

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<sup>1</sup> See also Shihadeh, "A Post-Ghazalian Critic of Avicenna: Ibn Ghailan al-Balkhi on the *Materia Medica* of the Canon of Medicine", pp. 135-174.

<sup>2</sup> Allegory in Islamic literatures as a developed literary practice begins at the turn of the eleventh century, As Heath once put it. "Yet allegory draws on earlier periods for crucial constituent narrative forms, topics, themes, source materials, and interpretational frameworks." (Heath, "Allegory in Islamic Literatures", pp. 83-100.

the wayfarer became waylaid by his own perceptions, i.e., five internal and five external senses. The wayfarer must overcome these senses, that is, he should not be overwhelmed by his perceptions.

Ten senses are symbolizes in “On the Reality of Love” by five chambers and five gates, in “Treatise on Towers” by ten towers, in “A Tale of Occidental Exile” by ten graves, in “The Simurgh’s Shrill Cry” by ten flyers, and in “The Red Intellect” by ten wardens. The wayfarer conquers all of them.

**On the Reality of Love.** Suhrawardi uses the allegory of five chambers and five gates, elaborating on details in “On the Reality of Love”. In their way, the wayfarer looks for the inhabited quarter and reaches the city, catching sight of a three-storied pavilion. “The first story is fitted with two chambers. In the first is a divan placed over water, and on it reclines someone whose nature is inclined to humidity. He is extremely clever but his dominant trait is forgetfulness. He can solve any problem in a flash, but he never remembers anything.”<sup>1</sup> This first chamber alludes to *sensus communis*. The faculty of imagination is epitomized by the next chamber: “Next

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<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 64.

to him in the second chamber is a divan placed over fire, on which reclines someone whose nature is inclined to dryness. He is very nimble and quick but unclean. It takes him a long time to discover allusions, but once he understands he never forgets.”<sup>1</sup> Then the seeker goes to the second story. There are two chambers representing the estimative faculty and the imaginative power. The memorizing faculty exists in the third story, storing individual meanings and ideas:

When he reaches the third story he will see a delightful chamber ... He is absorbed in thought. The many things left to him in trust are piled around him, and he never betrays anyone’s faith in him. Whatever profit is made from these things is entrusted to him so that they may be put to use again.<sup>2</sup>

Thereafter Suhrawardi alludes to the five exterior senses, sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell by the five gates. “When [the seeker] leaves there he will be confronted with five gates.”<sup>3</sup> At first, the faculty of

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<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>2</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*



seeing is depicted:

The first has two doorways, in each of which is an oblong, almond-shaped. Throne with two curtains, one black and the other white, hung before. There are many ropes fastened to the gate. On both of the thrones reclines someone who serves as a look-out.<sup>1</sup>

The faculty of perceiving sounds:

Going to the second gate, he will find two doorways, beyond each of which is a corridor, long and twisted and talismanically sealed. At the end of each corridor is a round throne, and over the two reclines someone who is a master of news and information. He has messengers who are continually on the go seizing every sound that comes to be and delivering it to the master, who comprehends it.<sup>2</sup>

The power of smelling is represented by the third gate having two doorways from each one the seeker will go through a long corridor until he

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<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 65-66.

<sup>2</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 66.

emerges in a chamber in which there are two seats, on which someone sits. “He has a servant called Air who goes around the world every day and brings a bit of every good and foul thing he sees.”<sup>1</sup>

The fourth gate illustrates the power of tasting. “This one is wider than the other three. Inside is a pleasant spring surrounded by a wall of pearl. In the middle of the spring is a divan that moves and on it sits someone who is called the Taster.”<sup>2</sup>

The faculty of touching is the last gate.

Then he will come to the fifth gate, which surrounds the city. Everything that is in the city is within the scope of this gate, around about which a carpet is spread, and on the carpet sits someone so that the carpet is filled by him. He rules over eight different things and distinguishes among the eight. Not for one instant is he negligent in his labor. He is called the Distinguisher.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid.

<sup>2</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>3</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, p. 67.

**Treatise on Towers.** The allegory of ten towers is seen in “The Risalat al-Abraj”, “Treatise on Towers”, otherwise known as al-Kalimat al-Dhawqiya.<sup>1</sup>

This treatise is controversial. Walbridge says of it: “Its authenticity has been questioned by some modern scholars. However, the manuscripts seem to consistently attribute it to Suhrawardi, so I see no justification for questioning its authenticity. At any rate, Musannifak thought it was Suhrawardi’s.”<sup>2</sup> Anyway, the first five towers refer to the five external senses or five traditionally recognized methods of perception: sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste.

The second five towers refer to the five internal senses: the *sensus communis* or common sense that intermingles the what it receives from the five sensory perceptions; the imagination that keeps these forms deposited; the imaginative power or active imagination that mingles and separates forms kept in the imagination; the estimative faculty that figures out the individual meanings (e.g., the sheep that apprehends the perceived wolf as something it should flee from); the memory or memorizing power

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<sup>1</sup> *Majmu'a-i Musannafat-i Shaykh-i Ishraq*, vol. 3, pp. 462-471.

<sup>2</sup> Walbridge, “The Devotional and Occult Works of Suhrawardi the Illuminationist”, p. 96.

that keeps the individual meanings.

The ten towers, for Reichert, undertake these activities:

The towers are ten in number with the five exterior towers representing the five senses, and the interior towers the five parts of the brain reputed to be the seat of our mental capacities. In Suhrawardi's scheme, the first of the interior towers (the sixth of all) corresponds to the sensorium, the second (the seventh of all) to the representative imagination, the third (the eighth of all) to the estimative capacity of the brain, the ninth (the fourth interior sense) to the active imagination (in the Ishraqi and Avicennian sense) and the tenth (the fifth interior sense) to the function of memory.<sup>1</sup>

**A Tale of Occidental Exile.** The allegory of ten graves is used in "A Tale of Occidental Exile", where

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<sup>1</sup> Reichert, *Between Courty Literature and Al-Andalus: Oriental Symbolism and Influences*, p. 108.

Suhrawardi utters: “And I cast the sphere of spheres onto the heavens until the sun and moon and stars were crushed, then I was rescued from fourteen coffins and ten graves.”<sup>1</sup> The ten graves are symbols of the five internal and the five external senses.

**The Simurgh’s ShriII Cry.** “The Simurgh’s ShriII Cry” includes the allegory of ten flyers: “Those who wish to tear down the spider’s web must expel nineteen pincers from themselves: of these, five are visible flyers and five are concealed.”<sup>2</sup> The five visible flyers refer to the five external senses and the five concealed to the five internal perceptions.

**The Red Intellect.** The allegory of ten wardens is amplified in “The Red Intellect”. Some dear friend wonders if the birds apprehend each others languages. ‘Yes they do,’ the wayfarer said. ‘How do you know?’ the friend asks. ‘In the beginning,’ the wayfarer says, ‘When the Former wanted to bring me into actuality, He created me in the form of a falcon. In the realm where I was were other falcons, and we spoke together and understood each others words’.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>2</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 104-105.



‘How did you get to be the way you are now?’ the friend said.

The wayfarer said that one day the hunters, Fate and Destiny, laid the trap of Fore-ordination and filled it with the grain of Will, and in this manner they caught him. Then they took him from the realm where their nest was into another realm, where they stitched their eyes shut, put four different bonds on him and appointed ten wardens to watch over him. Five of them faced him with their backs towards the outside, while the other five faced him kept him in the world of perplexity so that he forgot their nest, their realm and everything he had known.<sup>1</sup>

**In Brief.** The theme of Suhrawardi’s stories is mystical love and the wayfarer that loves God, for his end, should dominate his own perceptions. The perceptions, i.e. ten interior and exterior senses are artistically symbolized by ten towers, ten graves, ten flyers, ten wardens, five chambers and five gates. Since the wayfarer should dominate his feelings, the mystical love is disparate from passionate love.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Philosophical Allegories and Mystical Treatises*, pp. 20-21.





Maqamat Al-Eshq (Abu Dhabi TV produced high-profile series about Sufi scholar Ibn Arabi in 2019)





**YESTERDAY I WAS  
CELEVER,  
SO I WANTED TO  
CHANGE THE WORLD.**

**TODAY I AM WISE,  
SO I AM CHANGING  
MYSELF.**

RUMI

*Thank you for joining us in the journey!*