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‘Ālam al-Mithāl (world of images, world of imaginable bodies) in the tradition of Sufism: the comparative study of Philosophical Concepts of Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi

Summary

The article seeks to reveal and to define the understanding of *‘ālam al-mithāl*, the imaginable world which is located between the material and the spiritual worlds in the philosophical concepts of Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi and so to clarify its Qur’anic-Sufi basis. Following the origin of Sufi thought and the influence of the previous traditions on its formation and the outcome of the latter factors, the paper seeks to present the concept of *‘ālam al-mithāl* in Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi philosophical systems while discussing the matter of each thinker separately: tracing the Sufi thought under Zoroastrian and sometimes almost phantasmagoric cover in Suhrawardian philosophy and unfolding the metaphysical veil and elucidating the interworldly (physical, imaginative, and spiritual worlds) body-spirit-soul interrelations in Ibn Arab’s thinking. We

can assume that, although the differences in perception of *‘ālam al-mithāl* in the philosophies of Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi are largely due to the influence of different earlier cultures, both authors „transform“ the inherited legacy into a single-purpose Qur’an-Sufi version. To accept this hypothesis, we need to trace the rational axes of the philosophies of both thinkers and shed the light on their Qur’anic basis. Also, following the evolution of *‘ālam al-mithāl* perception in Sufi philosophy, it will be sought to show that *‘ālam al-mithāl* concept developed by Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi is the basis of the concept of the imaginable world in Sufism philosophy. The previous concepts are not developed enough while the later ones are for the most part the attempts to solve the problems of the philosophy of these predecessors or just their synthesis.

Keywords: Arab-Muslim philosophy, Sufi philosophy, Suhrawardi, Ibn Arabi, comparative philosophy, *ālam al-mithāl*, imaginable world.