

Imagining the Beyond: the Imaginal World in Suhrawardi's Philosophy

Summary

The article focuses on a specific concept of imaginative eschatology in Suhrawardi's philosophy - *'ālamu l-mithāl*, better known in the West under the name *mundus imaginalis*, popularized by the French scholar Henry Corbin. The imaginal world, generated by the *imaginatio vera*, which is different from the ordinary imagination and lies between the earthly and the heavenly, can be reached during sleep, meditation or after death.

The article discusses the terminological and semantic problems of *'ālamu l-mithāl* in order to clarify and propose the most accurate Lithuanian equivalent. Knowing the syncretic origins of Sufism, the philosophical traditions of ancient Egypt, Platonism and the Neoplatonists are considered as possible sources of the concept of *'ālamu l-mithāl*, developed in the Islamic Golden Age. The conceptually closest paradigms of earlier civilizations are used: the Egyp-

tian Fields of Reed, Plato's "true earth", the Theory of Forms and Plotinus' Hypostasis of the Soul. The ideological origins of the Suhrawardic *'ālamu l-mithāl* are presumed to lie in these traditions. Specifically transformed and integrated into the early world of Islamic philosophy based on the Word of God (the Qur'ān), in Suhrawardi's philosophy they are finally transformed into the Sufi concept of *'ālamu l-mithāl* and become one of the main constants of *Išrāqī* philosophy. Drawing on Suhrawardi's original work *Ḥikmatu l-išrāq* (The Philosophy of Illumination), I will show that by introducing epistemological innovations, Suhrawardi is the first to give *'ālamu l-mithāl* a separate ontological level: a fourth world, that of Image, appears in addition to the worlds of the Intellect, the Soul, and the Matter, thus resolving the long-standing religious and philosophical antagonism concerning the Afterworld.

Keywords: Arab-Islamic philosophy, Suhrawardi, Comparative Cultural Studies and Philosophy, Imaginative Eschatology, Imaginal World, *mundus imaginalis*, *'ālamu l-mithāl*.