

ISLAMIC POLITICS IN SUHRAWARDĪ'S THOUGHT

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of Suhrawardī's thought, which was inspired by the work of Hossein Zain entitled *The Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of al-Suhrawadi's Illuminationist Political Doctrine*. This study is intended to try to extract Suhrawardī's political concept of his works even though he never discusses that particular concept specifically. Through literature studies, the writer found that his political concept pivots on the definition of an ideal leader. Suhrawardī saw Prophets, kings and philosophers as ideal leaders. He believed that any philosopher can be a leader, but he/she must possess what is referred to as the spiritual aspects. He argued that a leader is not only a thinker, but spiritually he also a Sufi. On political matters, Suhrawardī clearly emphasize on the aspect of divinity. The beginning and the end of any political activity has to be on the nature of divinity.

Keywords: Suhrawardī, Politics, Leadership

A. INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the birth of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad as a community leader who united religion with the guidance of the life of the people of his time. Because of his position as a saint, when there is a problem of life in society, the Prophet Muhammad can answer directly and his followers carry out what he was told to do. The concept of the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad was strengthened and validated by the Revelations - these revelations were then believed to be guidelines for the life of the adherents of Muhammad ¹.

The legitimacy of leadership then changed when the Prophet Muhammad died. The followers of the Prophet Muhammad were then confused, who replaced his leadership. Because there are no words or implied messages that want to be written who is appropriate to lead Muslims after the legacy of the Prophet Muhammad pbuh. At the beginning of the death of the Prophet Muhammad, his leadership was replaced by the Caliphs of the Prophet who were appointed by the people, either because of their services or their ties to the family of the Prophet ². The problem of who leads after the Prophet Muhammad then raises equality among Muslims how to choose a leader.

With problems after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, in early Islamic politics, the leadership of the Muslims was chosen because of the closeness and services of the companions to their lives in helping the Prophet Muhammad. Until finally Muslims were made hierarchical, in which leaders could only be chosen because of their personal closeness to the Prophet Muhammad ³. However, the leadership of Khulafaur Rashidun has many problems in the leadership system. During the time of the Prophet

¹ Hans Daibe, *Filsafat Politik, Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2003).

² Moch Yunus, "Konsep Politik Islam Klasik (Suksesi Kepemimpinan Muhammad SAW dan Khulafa' ArRasyidin)" 5 (2016).

³ Daibe, *Filsafat Politik, Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam*.

Muhammad, he was able to unite the various factions, but after his death many of these tribes were separated and hostile ⁴.

Problematic in leadership is then many philosophers or Islamic thought who gave the concept of good leadership, even how to lead close to the Prophet Muhammad. The character of the traditional Islamic concept that is deterministic about belief in Allah encourages members of the Muslim community to think constantly about the role of humans in relation to the leader of a religious state and determine the duties and qualities of the leader ⁵. Debate and development of political concepts in Islamic societies, also closely tied to the translation of political writings, especially Plato's work (summary of Republic, Laws, and Politics) and Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, translated into Arabic by Ishaq ibn Hunain. Finally, in addition to the early development of the Caliphate and Islamic and non-Islamic ethical traditions, theological discussions about a fair Imam by the Shiites and Mu'tazilites since the 2H / 8th century AD and by the Ash'ariyyah since the 10th century AD which redefined the role of leader, priest, and function in the community ⁶.

The function of the leader not only limits to worldly interests, but also becomes a bridge to the spiritually to the Creator. With this consideration, the leader is responsible to the people and must have knowledge about the law, morals, and religion and must be independent in making consideration. Only the best can become a true priest. The pioneers of political philosophy in the 3rd century AD restricted themselves to individual ethics in a community and continued the tradition of Islamic and non-Islamic gnomology utterances. ⁷.

Seeing the development of Islamic political philosophy, in the early days of ethical leadership, until finally Muslims thought of an ideal leader - even his characteristics approached the personality of the Prophet Muhammad. Like the Twelver Shiite Imam bases his Imamate doctrine on the need for an infallible leader (awake from wrong) for humans, a priest who becomes a religious guide who is guided by God and thus equals the Prophet, even without carrying a holy book. This conception of God-led leadership greatly impressed Islamic political philosophers starting in the 4th century AD.

One Muslim philosopher who talked about a leader not only discussing the world's problems, but becoming a spiritual intermediary to spiritual perfection was Shihab Al Din Al-Suhrawardī - later the writer called him Suhrawardī. In Suhrawardī's philosophical thinking, he did not specify how politically, but rather he described a leader in leading a country. And what is the nature of leadership in Suhrawardī's shadow? Then it will be discussed in the following paper.

B. METHOD

In this research which is based on history, at least the researcher uses the Library Research. Literature research is research conducted using literature (literature) in the form of books, notes and reports of research results from previous researchers, by examining and reviewing the literature. The data sources of this study include two things, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources. The primary data source is the data source directly collected by researchers from the first source, both works written

⁴ Yunus, "Konsep Politik Islam Klasik (Suksesi Kepemimpinan Muhammad SAW dan Khulafa' ArRasyidin)."

⁵ Sakdiah, "Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Dalam Islam (Kajian Historis Filosofis) Sifat-Sifat Rasulullah" 22 (2016).

⁶ Daibe, *Filsafat Politik, Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam*.

⁷ Sakdiah, "Karakteristik Kepemimpinan Dalam Islam (Kajian Historis Filosofis) Sifat-Sifat Rasulullah."

directly by Suhrawadi. Meanwhile, there are secondary sources from previous studies related to the theme of this study.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Suhrawardī Biography

Suhrawardī, so many say, his full name was Abu al-Futuh Yahya ibn Habash bin Amirak a-Suhrawadi al-Kurdish. He is known as al-Hakim (the Wise), al-Maqtul (the Martyr, the Martyr), or even Shaykh al-Isyraq (Master of Illumination, the Master of Light). He was born at 549 H / 1153 AD in Suhraward region of northwestern Iran, near a modern Persian city, Zanjan, an area that has produced many prominent figures in Islam ⁸.

Like Muslim philosophers in general, the education they go through is quite long and does not just stop in one teacher. When Suhrawardī, he began his education at Maraghah, which is in the territory of Azerbaijan. In this place, Suhrawardī learned about law, philosophy and theology at Majd al-Din al-Jili who was a student of Fakhr al-Din al-Razi. After studying with Majd al-Din al-Jili, Suhrawardī then deepened his philosophical study to Fakhr ad-Din al-Mardini - some literature states that the figure of al-Mardini was the most important philosophical tutor for Suhrawardī ⁹.

Unfinished there, Suhrawardī went to Isfahan, Central Iran, to further his studies at Zahir al-Din Qari and Fakhr al-Din al-Mardini (d. 1198 AD), where the latter was allegedly the teacher of Suhrawardī the most important. In addition, he also studied logic at Zahir al-Farsi who taught al-Bashâr al-Nashîriyah, the book by 'Umar ibn Sahlan al-Sawi (d. 1183 CE), a well-known logician and one of the early thinkers of illumination in Islam ¹⁰.

After gaining his formal knowledge, Suhrawardī went to Persia, which was known as the place where the Sufi movement began and the storehouse of Sufi figures. Suhrawardī was interested in the teachings and doctrines of Sufism and finally he pursued mysticism. In this case, Suhrawardī did not simply study theories and methods to become Sufis, but directly practiced them as true Sufis. He became an ascetic (zahid) who lived his life with worship, contemplation, contemplation and philosophy ¹¹.

The end point of the odyssey stops in Syria. From Damascus he then went to Aleppo, where he met and became friends with the ruler of Aleppo, Malik azh-Zhahir, son of Saladin al-Ayyubi al-Kurdi, known as the star of the Crusades. Because of his genius, Suhrawardī became a friend of Malik and caused his jealousy towards other ulemas ¹². Not only that, because religion-socio-political conditions did not support Suhrawardī's superiority and intelligence. At that time, competition between figh experts (fuqaha) and Sufism experts (Sufis) had begun.

Many intrigues are played by the jurists to bring down Suhrawardī. In joint discussion sessions, Suhrawardī always gets questions from fuqoha. One of Suhrawardī is "Is Allah Most High. in power to create a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad? This question was answered by Suhrawardī with the

⁸ Abdullah Mahmud, "Falsafah Iluminasionisme Menurut Shihabuddin Suhrawardī" 26 (November 2014): 159–71.

⁹ Mahmud.

¹⁰ A Khudori Soleh, "Falsafah Isyraqi Suhrawardī" 7 (Januari 2011).

¹¹ Daibe, *Filsafat Politik, Ensiklopedi Tematis Filsafat Islam*.

¹² Soleh, "Falsafah Isyraqi Suhrawardī."

saying, "The Power of Allah, there is no limit". From that answer, the jurists concluded that Suhrawardī believed in the possibility of a prophet after the Prophet Muhammad, because the power of Allah is unlimited. And even though the Prophet Muhammad - in the belief of fuqaha, is the closing of the prophets and apostles. With this conclusion, the jurists concluded that Suhrawardī had heretical teachings, until he was finally hanged. Suhrawardī died on July 29, 578 AH / 1191 CE, at the age of 36 years according to the Shamsiyah calendar or 38 years according to the Qamariyyah calendar ¹³.

After Suhrawardī left the gallows, he left several books of his thoughts, even his work was estimated at 50 titles, both in Arabic and Persian ¹⁴. Some of the papers still exist today. These works are written in a beautiful style and of high literary value. It is a Persian work which is among the greatest masterpieces of prose writing in the language and is in fact a model for subsequent narrative and philosophical prose. These writings have several different types which can be grouped into five categories.

First, four major works that are doctrinal and contain didactic elements. All in Arabic, which forms a tetralogy which first speaks of peripatetic philosophy as interpreted and modified by Suhrawardī, then speaks of the Ishraqi theosophy itself which follows earlier doctrinal foundations. The series of works consists of: *Talwihat* (Book of Signs), *Muqawamat* (Book of Resistance), *Al-Masyari 'wa al-Mutharahat* (Book of Debates), all three discussing the modification of the philosophy of Aristotle. His monumental work, *Hikmat al-Isyraq* (Theosophy of Eastern Light), is related to his illumination doctrine ¹⁵.

Second, short treatises in Arabic and Persian. The works are more simple explanations and in a more concise form. Included in the work are: *Hayakil al-Nur* (Light Pyramid) *Al-Alwah al-Imadiyyah* (Sheets Dedicated to Imaduddin, *Partaw Namah* (Minutes of Illumination), *Fi l'iqad al-Hukama'* (Philosophical Beliefs), *Al -Lamahat* (Flashes of Light), *Yazdan Shinakhi* (Knowledge of God), and *Bustan al-Qulub* (Garden of Hearts), the latter two are also attributed to 'Ain al-Qudhat al-Hamadani and Sayyid Sharif al-Jurjani, even though he seems more likely to be the work of Suhrawardī ¹⁶.

Third, symbolic and mystical stories, or novels depicting the journey of the soul across the cosmos to the liberation of illumination and its ultimate attainment, almost entirely in Persian, a small part in its version. Included in these works are: *Aqli Surkh* (Reason / Red Angel, The Red Arch-Angel), *Awazi Pari Jibril* (Song of Jibril's Wings), *Jibril Wings*), *Lughati Muran* (Animal Language, Termites), *Risalat fi Hayat al-Thufuliyyat* (Minutes about Situation A nak-anak), *Ruzi ba Jama'ati Sufiyan* (A Day with the Sufi Community), *Risalat fi al-Abraj* (Minutes of Travel at Night), and *Shafiri Simurgh* (Song of the Griffins) ¹⁷.

Fourth, transcripts, translations and descriptions of earlier philosophical works and sacred and religious texts such as the Persian translation: *Risalat al-Thair*, by Ibn Sina; Description and Commentary on Ibn Sina's *Isyarat*; composition of *Risalat fi Haqiqat al-Isyq* which is based on *Risalat fi al-'Isyq* by Ibn Sina; and interpretation of some verses of the Qur'an and certain Prophetic traditions. And, fifthly, prayer and petition in Arabic, which in Middle Ages Islam is often called *Kutub al-Sa'at* (The Book of Hours), where Syahrazuri calls it *al-Waridat wa al-Taqdisat* ¹⁸.

¹³ Amroeni Drajat, *Suhrawardi: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik* (Yogyakarta: LKiS, 2005).

¹⁴ Drajat.

¹⁵ Fathurrahman, "Filsafat Iluminasi Suhrawardi al-Maqtul" 2 (2018).

¹⁶ Drajat, *Suhrawardi: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik*.

¹⁷ Mahmud, "Falsafah Iluminasionisme Menurut Shihabuddin Suhrawardi."

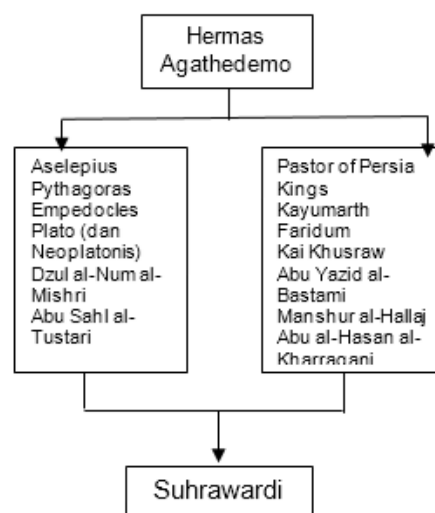
¹⁸ Mahmud.

The birth of these vast and numerous thoughts, not apart from the socio-cultural influences at that time, there were even some figures who greatly influenced Suhrawardī's thoughts. Basically, Suhrawardī considers himself to be a collector of what he calls al-hikmah al-laduniyyah (Divine Wisdom), al-hikmah al-atiqah ¹⁹. He believes that divine wisdom is universal and perennial. On the basis of this belief, Suhrawardī concocted his thoughts from various sources.

With such confidence, Suhrawardī believes that wisdom or theosophy was revealed by God through Hermas or the Prophet Idris who is considered a builder of philosophy and science. From this wisdom, then divided into two branches, namely the Persian branch and the Egyptian branch. Wisdom from Egypt then spread to Greece. In turn, the source of wisdom from Persia and Greece also entered into Islamic civilization ²⁰.

Based on the division of the origins of philosophy and science Suhrawardī regards himself as a unifier of the two branches of human civilization that come from God. Schematically, Hossein Nasr described the flow of universal wisdom meetings through classical figures - among them were wise figures and kings from Persia, as follows:

The Origins of Philosophy and Science



From the map, among the sources of Suhrawardī's thought was Hermeticism, which hinted at the scientific field he possessed; namely prophethood, wisdom and kingdom. As a figure who made the main character of Greek mythology, Hermes is believed to be one of the gods whose job is to mediate between Zeus and Humans. God as the creator of the universe wants to maintain and make it order ²¹. Therefore, God's rules in the form of revelation need to be conveyed to the inhabitants of the earth to be obeyed and implemented.

Subsequent influences came from ancient Persian teachings which originated in Zoroastrianism. A school that was pioneered by Zoroaster (Life around 628-551 BC). He was a teacher during Solon and Thales. Zoroaster inherited two basic principles from his ancestors, namely: first, there are laws in nature, and

¹⁹ Fakhri Majid, *Sejarah Filsafat Islam* (Bandung: Mizan, 2016).

²⁰ Majid.

²¹ Hossein Nasr, *Filsafat Islam* (Yogyakarta: Ircisot, 2018).

second, there are conflicts in them. Law enforcement and the conflicts that occur in the universe have continuously formed the philosophical system. From this foundation, a new problem arises, how to unite evil with the eternal goodness of God ²².

In explaining the monistic concept Zoroaster states that there is only one true God, Ahuramazda, advocate of truth and honesty. But Zoroaster followers believe in an evil spirit, Ahriman, which reflects evil and falsehood. They believe, the natural universe is a vehicle for both struggles. And Humans as a struggle picture of the two forces that exist in him. With this condition, humans have the duty to control and defeat the forces of evil and to side with the forces of light. This perspective influences Suhrawardī's thought, especially regarding the concepts of light and dark ²³. This doctrine was hidden until the middle of the XII century AD, before Suhrawardī appeared again and again through his illumination.

Suhrawardī was also influenced by Greek philosophy, such as the philosophy of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus which he called the peripatetic philosophy (masysya'iyah). Suhrawardī called Plato the imam of al-hikmah. If in Islamic philosophy, Suhrawardī is influenced by al-Farabi and Ibn Sina, the two philosophers whose ideas deeply colored Suhrawardī's thought, even though in the end he criticized certain parts of their second thought ²⁴.

2. Politics of Illumination

In Suhrawardī's works nothing is found concerning practical political thought; where politics is used immediately in a particular situation, but presented by Suhrawardī is a political concept that requires a long term and when this concept runs then it has an extraordinary influence on people's lives - especially on Muslims. In his framework of thought the politics that Suhrawardī had built were always based on divine rules. Because every opportunity Suhrawardī discusses the concept of regulation / law, he always relates it to the "rules of God" and never to specific political processes both actual and theoretical. For him, political science or political regime will be very meaningful only if it represents the divine dimension ²⁵.

After the death of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions, who carried out the "rule of God"? In this context Suhrawardī argues that the person who carries out these rules is in the hands of the prophets, theocracy or a special category of philosophers-wise ²⁶. Where these people have a direct reflection of the power of God. When the Prophet will get the power of God directly, because he received revelations from God. Whereas besides the Prophet, like philosophers need a practice and direct experience.

A good leader, for Suhrawardī must master the wisdom of nazhariyyah and the wisdom of 'amaliyyah. What is meant by the wisdom of nazhariyyah is philosophy while the wisdom of 'amaliyyah is Sufism. So, a leader is a person who is able to marry between theoretical intellectual training through philosophy by purifying the soul through Sufism. Therefore, not only being the owner of rational knowledge through thinking activities, but also becoming a saint through the process of taste ²⁷.

²² Drajat, *Suhrawardī: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik*.

²³ Drajat.

²⁴ Nasr, *Filsafat Islam*.

²⁵ Hossein Zain, *The Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Political Doctrine* (America: Princeton University Press, 1992).

²⁶ Zain.

²⁷ Drajat, *Suhrawardī: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik*.

To reach the top of a good leader requires a direct mystical practice. Acting directly based on divinity will provide a mystical experience, but in this experience, there will be an authority that leads to divinity. Because with the claims built by Suhrawardī, as stated by Zain, that someone who has received authority from the Divine, he has the right to rule ²⁸.

In Suhrawardī's political pressure point, regarding the way to govern based on divinity. To show that they are based on shrewdness, a leader who has divine authority is seen from the ability to control the quality of subjects who can run people's lives. Everything that this leader does cannot be separated from his connection with divine inspiration ²⁹.

One of the main pillars of the political view of illumination is the way of life of the government which develops the capacity to be the recipient of divine commands. In addition they must show that they have the divine authority given to them in the form of the ability to control the quality of the subject which is usually associated with divine inspiration ³⁰.

In the introduction to the book of Wisdom al-'Isyraq, Suhrawardī alludes to the rank of philosophers and Sufis. According to him, there are ten ranks of philosophers and Sufis, but the ten ranks basically depart from the three main ranks which are then added to the variation in the intensity of the tendency of each culprit. In the book of Syarh al Hikmah al 'Isyraq Syahrururi asserted that the ranks (scientists) are many and they can be grouped into three; firstly, Sufis who deal with matters of divinity but not those of philosophy, namely saints and prominent Sufi figures; such as Abu Yazid al-Busthami, Sahl bin Abdullah at-Tustari, and Husayn bin Manshur al-Hallaj. Second, philosophers who do not study divinity, such as Aristotle and his followers, al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, and other peripatetic followers. Third, Sufism which engages in divinity and philosophy of "taste" ³¹.

According to him Suhrawadi, only a theosophist (qutb) is entitled to be the caliph of God on this earth, namely the group of people who are entitled to leadership on earth ³². A theophosite is a person who is able to treat his body like a shirt that can be removed anytime and anywhere and can use it again as he pleases, so that a theosophist is able to change forms into other forms in accordance with his wishes ³³.

A theophos, in Suhrawardī's view, that supermen (Ziai 1992,313), where one can rule. And a ruler can perform miracles, it is his authority must be greater than just uniawi. For Suhrawardī, as Zain wrote, to get this authority was obtained from special training. The recipient of the wisdom of illumination feels the light of the majesty of God and obtains qualities - described as light - that bestows the ability to act extraordinary. The political dimension in this theme is the identification of governing authority with a form of magical action ³⁴.

Unlike al-Farabi, Suhrawardī states that since humans have the innate ability to seek wisdom, they have the potential to become leaders. As noted the fundamental conditions set by Suhrawardī to obtain lead

²⁸ Alex Dijk, *Employing Suhrawardi in the Field of Islamic Political Philosophy* (Radboud University, 2017).

²⁹ Drajat, *Suhrawardi: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik*.

³⁰ Zain, *The Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of al-Suhrawardi's Illuminationist Political Doctrine*.

³¹ Drajat, *Suhrawardi: Kritik falsafah Peripatetik*.

³² Drajat.

³³ Mahmud, "Falsafah Iluminasi Menurut Shihabuddin Suhrawardi."

³⁴ Dijk, *Employing Suhrawardi in the Field of Islamic Political Philosophy*.

legality were the attainment of wisdom, and this doctrine became the rationale for his political illumination³⁵.

The thought developed by Suhrawardī falls into the *irfani* category. Wisdom *isyraqiyyah*, which by al-Jabiri is distinguished from *al-hikmah al-Bahtsiyah*, is a philosophy that not only uses the senses and reason in reaching knowledge, but with *kasyf*. This method has the characteristics of being direct and without intermediaries, does not require reasoning about something requires an effort to uncover the veil between the subject and God through the mechanism of *riyadhah* and *mujahadah* (Supriyadi, 2010).

Applicatively, in the epistemology of illumination, there are four stages that must be passed to become a leader who has the authority to carry out God's commands. The first three stages work on the problem of knowledge, followed by the fourth stage which presents experiences. The first stage is marked by the preparatory activities of the philosopher; he must 'leave the world' in order to easily receive 'experience'. The second stage is the stage of illumination (enlightenment), when the philosopher reaches the vision (seeing) 'divine light' (*an-nur-al-divine*). The third stage or stage of construction, which is characterized by the acquisition and achievement of unlimited knowledge, that is the knowledge of illuminationists (*al-'ilm al-israqi*) itself. The fourth and final stage is documentation, or a form of visionary experience that is rewritten³⁶. According to Suhrawardī, a part of the "light of God" resides in the self of a philosopher, who has intuitive power. Thus, by undergoing activities in the first stage, the philosopher can, through "personal inspiration" and "vision" (*musyaadah wa mukasyafah*), accept the reality of his existence and recognize the truth of his own intuition³⁷.

Thus, a leader in *isyraqi* not only relies on intuitive strength but also the power of ratio. It even combines both, intuitive and discursive methods. Intuitive methods are used to achieve everything that is not reached by the power of ratio so that the result is the highest and most reliable knowledge, while the power of ratio is used to explain logically the spiritual experiences that are experienced in the process of receiving an abundance of knowledge and self-awareness.

The picture of the relationship with the leader, one question arises whether this introduction does not suggest a doctrine of political illumination, that is, a rule inspired from the divine through wisdom as a political foundation. Politically, this important dimension of thought, contrary to the juridical view that was prevalent in its time, was its prerequisites related to revelation and wisdom would be endless and unspecified for a group, Muslim or otherwise. This means that as was the divine inspiration of the prophets, legislators, or sages of the past, (whether from Greece, Persia, Egyptians, Brahmins or from the line of the Jewish-Islamic prophets and their descendants) who had led the previous kingdoms, so also leaders today must receive divine inspiration. The leader, the representative of God, was identified as an enlightened philosopher, an individual who was able to combine himself into a perfect level, both intuitive and discursive wisdom (Ziai 1992, 323).

D. Conclusion

The leader imagined by Suhrawadi had a perfect and ideal concept in Islamic theology. Because the main foundation used by Suhrawadi to lead is divinity. Where a leader has full authority in carrying out

³⁵ Zain, *The Source and Nature of Authority: A Study of al-Suhrawadi's Illuminationist Political Doctrine*.

³⁶ Nasr, *Filsafat Islam*.

³⁷ Fathurrahman, "Filsafat Iluminasi Suhrawardi al-Maqtul."

God's commands. The weakness that was built by Suhrawadi was based on personal experience. Because personal experience cannot compare to one another about meeting God. The abstractness of this experience, when applied to the practical realm, is easily misused. Because personal experience cannot be proven materially, it does not even have definite limits on leaders who have clear divine authority. Resulting in a variety of interpretations.

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