

FROM THE EDITOR

The lofty aspiration of Shaykh al-Ishraq bids us to seek light in ourselves and in the horizons. Seeking light is seeking knowledge and awareness. This, by definition, requires separation from what is darkness of ignorance and unawareness. Any academic inquiry, if carried out with due earnestness, is a daring journey towards light. We would like to hope this is going to be the case with our *Ishraq* project, launched two years ago, as a whole, and with each of its respected participants in particular.

The first issue of our yearbook came out, with some delay (every beginning is difficult!), in April 2010. The comments are still coming in and, we admit, there might be several important lessons to be learnt, once a comprehensive analysis of the received feedback is performed. This may (or may not) result in making some strategic decisions, which, however, can only be implemented in the third and subsequent issues. As for the current issue, the reader will notice one major change: the yearbook has become trilingual, French being added to English and Russian. The decision was made after careful consideration and we believe it to be well weighed: a great number of important articles and monographs on Islamic philosophy and Sufism appear in French every year and it still remains the first foreign language in the western part of the Muslim world (Maghrib and, to a great degree, the Levant States).

In certain cases, articles in other European languages (such as German, Spanish and Italian) might also be accepted for publication. However, the would-be contributors of such articles are kindly requested to contact the editor in advance: an individual decision will be made by the editorial board in each case.

As it was announced earlier, the main theme of the second issue is **Suhrawardi's philosophy of Illumination**. We are very pleased that around a dozen scholars, many of whom are notable authorities in the field of Illuminationist philosophy, have contributed articles and/or annotated translations of Suhrawardi's texts. These materials elucidate different aspects of the philosopher's life, works and thought and, to some extent, trace the development of his ideas in the later *Ishrāqī* tradition.

Unfortunately, some prominent experts on Suhrawardi, because of other pressing engagements, were unable to prepare their articles for the current issue. It was agreed that they will submit their materials later and these will be published in one of the subsequent issues.

Apart from the special section devoted to Suhrawardi and his philosophy of Illumination, the issue contains the traditional sections of ontology and episte-

mology, logic, philosophy of religion and Kalām, ethics and political philosophy, philosophy of art and Islamic mysticism. As the reader will notice, the last one is particularly big, most of its articles dealing with the thought of Ibn al-‘Arabi or that of his predecessors and followers. Furthermore, some authors have attempted to provide a more or less detailed comparison of certain elements of Suhrawardi and Ibn al-‘Arabi’s doctrines (such as their teachings on light and imagination). These attempts can be treated, we believe, as a prelude to the main theme of the third issue, which will be **Ibn al-‘Arabi and his school**.

After that, in the three subsequent issues (four to six), God willing, we intend to focus on Nasir al-Din al-Tusi (#4), Mulla Sadra and the School of Isfahan (#5) and Sabzawari and Tabatabai (#6), returning to the Mu‘tazilites and al-Kindi in the seventh issue.

It is expected, as we wrote in the first issue, that the commissioned articles and translations devoted to the main theme of the issue will constitute roughly half of the volume. Another half will consist of the articles of our regular and would-be regular contributors, arranged in traditional sections.

On behalf of the editorial board, the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Iranian Institute of Philosophy and the Islamic Cultural Research Foundation, we would like to sincerely thank all authors of the current issue for their valuable contributions and express a hope that our successful cooperation with all of them will continue.

Mehdi Aminrazavi’s article “How Avicennian was Suhrawardi’s Theory of Knowledge?”, published in this issue, is a revised version of a previously published text. We express our gratitude to the journal *Philosophy, East & West* (Honolulu, USA) for its kind permission to republish this material in our yearbook.

In conclusion, let me remind once again that all researchers on Islamic philosophy (including Kalām and theoretical Sufism) and the related fields (Islamic science, art, literature and music) are kindly invited to contribute their articles and/or annotated translations of important Islamic texts to subsequent issues of our yearbook.