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# **The Quiddity of Iranian Philosophy**

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## **Abstract**

Iranian Philosophy is a philosophical tradition developed by intellectuals of the great cultural Iran, focusing on theoretical and practical wisdom, particularly in ontology, epistemology, and anthropology. This tradition is original and independent rather than imitative. Iranian philosophy is independent of Greek philosophy. In the Iranian tradition of philosophy, philosophy and mysticism (*ʿIrfan*) are generally intertwined. *Ḥukamā'* (theosophists) refers to philosophers and mystics in the history of Iranian intellectual thought. In this tradition, *Ḥikmah*, which renders wisdom or philosophy, refers to a philosophy based on intellect and the heart. Prominent schools of thought in this tradition include Avicennian, Illuminative, and Transcendental philosophy. We can divide Iranian philosophy into two periods: before and after Islam.

Of Iran's most important philosophical-mystical figures, we can mention Zoroaster, Fārābī, Ferdowsī, Ibn Sīnā, Khayyām, Suhrawardī, Rumi, Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī, Mullā Ṣadrā, Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī, and Seyyed Hossein Nasr.

There is disagreement about the characteristics of Iranian philosophy. This article explores eight key topics: defining Iranian philosophy, examining its characteristics, its encounter with modernity and technocracy, the relationship between Iranian philosophy and Islamic philosophy, and the global influence of Iranian philosophy.

**Keywords:** Iranian Philosophy, The perennial philosophy, Ferdowsī, Ibn Sīnā, Khayyām, Rumi, Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī, Mullā Ṣadrā.

## Introduction

In the modern era, Iranian philosophy has been a research topic for philosophers in Iran, Europe and America. The contemporary French philosopher Henry Corbin (1903 – 1978 CE) was influential in introducing Iranian philosophy in Europe.<sup>1</sup> There is disagreement about Iranian philosophy's characteristics. This article explores eight key topics: defining Iranian philosophy, examining its characteristics, its encounter with modernity and technocracy, the relationship between Iranian philosophy and Islamic philosophy, and the global influence of Iranian philosophy.

## Definition of Philosophy

Researchers disagree on the meanings of "philosophy" and "Iranian." As such, before discussing the quiddity of Iranian philosophy, we will present a definition of the terms "philosophy" and "Iranian."

The meaning of philosophy in terms of its subject, method and objective has been contested by philosophers from Plato to Alfred Ayer. For example, although metaphysics is an important part of the philosophy of Plato<sup>2</sup> and Aristotle<sup>3</sup>. Alfred Ayer, a contemporary English philosopher, believes that metaphysical believes that metaphysical propositions are meaningless and nonsensical.<sup>4</sup>

Philosophy, in terms of evaluating the truth and falsity of philosophical propositions, is traditionally divided into at least two approaches: rational and empirical. These methods are often seen as opposing, and each challenges the validity of the other.

Some philosophers consider the objective of philosophy to be understanding reality (Avicenna), while others consider it the perfection of the self (Mulla Sadra).<sup>5</sup> Thus, in order to reconcile these conflicting views and place them under a common field of study in a way that encompasses all perspectives and is independent of science and revelation, we can say that the intellectual endeavours of humanity throughout history about the general topics of ontology, epistemology, ethics and politics including rational, spiritual and empirical methodologies are in the field of philosophical studies. The foundation of philosophical thought is a critical and innovative approach, not imitation. Philosophy is the interpretation of the world for the purpose of transforming humans and society.

### **Definition of Iranian**

A few years ago, in the Iranology conference in Moscow, Russia (September 2016)<sup>6</sup> critical differences of opinion between the Iranology schools of Russia, Germany and Britain were discussed. The most critical questions in the field of Iranology are: What geographical location does Iran refer to? To which language and to which race does it refer? Does Iranology refer to modern-day Iran, defined by its current geopolitical borders, with the Caspian Sea to the north, the Persian Gulf to the south, and Afghanistan to the east? Or does it refer to historical Iran or geographical cultural Iran, referred to as "the great cultural Iran"?

From an academic perspective, "Iranian" refers to the great cultural Iran, which extends from Samarkand and Bukhara to Kashmir. As

“Iranian” is defined based on the geopolitical borders of Iran today, many of the great intellectual and cultural figures who are interconnected intellectually, artistically, linguistically and religiously will become displaced, losing the cultural context in which they have breathed and based upon which their thought has been developed, this would be a completely unscientific approach. For example, Rumi, Sanā’ī, Fārābī, Niẓāmī and Bīdel Dihlawī cannot be referred to as Turk or Indian, rather they belong to the great cultural Iran. Rumi and Niẓāmī have not written a single line of poetry in Turkish. Similarly, Bīdel Dihlawī has not written any poetry in Hindi; their poetry is not only written in Persian but is deeply rooted in the intellectual and cultural tradition of Iran.

The “Great Cultural Iran” includes present-day Iran, a large part of the Caucasus, Afghanistan, and Central Asia encompassing present-day Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Transoxiana, Khwarezm, Pakistan, Kashmir, the Hindu Kush mountains, and the western regions of today's China. It also includes the southern shores of the Persian Gulf and, in the west, all of Kurdistan and the eastern part of present-day Turkey and Anatolia. The historical application of the term “Iran” is not limited to solely the western part, which is now referred to by this name, but includes all the political borders of the countries that were under Iranian rule.

Richard Nelson Frye, the prominent American scholar specialising in Iranian and Central Asian studies, said in an interview with CNN on 20 October 2007, "I spent all my life working in Iran. And as you know, I don't mean Iran of today; I mean Greater Iran, the Iran that in the past extended all the way from China to the borders of Hungary and from other Mongolia to Mesopotamia." <sup>7</sup>

## **Defining Iranian Philosophy**

Iranian philosophy is the philosophy that has been innovatively produced throughout history by the intellectuals of the Great Cultural Iran on theoretical and practical wisdom, particularly ontology, epistemology, and the study of human nature. It is not imitative or derivative. Iranian philosophy is independent of Greek philosophy. In the tradition of Iranian philosophy, philosophy and gnosis (*ʿIrfān*) are generally intertwined.<sup>8</sup> In the history of thought, it is referred to as *Hikmah* (wisdom), and its practitioners are referred to as *Hukamāʾ*. Examples include *Hikmat Sīnāwī* (Avicennian philosophy), *Hikmat al-Ishrāq* (illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī) and *Hikmat Mutaʿāliyah* (Transcendent philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. Prime examples of the intertwined nature of intellect, heart and love in Iranian philosophy can be seen in the works of Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā and the philosophical and gnostic literary works of Iran, such as the *Shāhnāmah* of Ferdowsī.<sup>9</sup> and the *Mathnawī* of Rumi.<sup>10</sup>

## **Periods of history of Iranian philosophy**

Iranian philosophy can be divided into two periods: before Islam and after Islam.

### **Iranian philosophy before Islam:**

The history of ancient Iran includes a large expanse of philosophical thought such as *Hikmat Khusrawānī*, *Hikmat Zartushtī* (Zoroastrian Wisdom), *Hikmat Mānawī* (Manichean Wisdom) and *Hikmat Mazdakī* (Mazdakite wisdom). The book of *Jāwīdān Khirad* (Eternal Wisdom) or *Pandnāmah-yi Hūshang* (The advice of Hushang) is one of the oldest Iranian philosophical texts.

## Iranian Philosophy after Islam:

Iranian philosophy after Islam can be divided into classical and modern. In the classical period, Ferdowsī, Ibn Sīnā, Khayyām, Suhrawardī, Nizāmī Ganjavī and Mullā Ṣadrā continued the tradition of Iranian philosophy before Islam. In dialogue with revelation, they established the new philosophies of *Mashshā'* (Peripatetic philosophy), *Hikmat Ishrāq* (Illuminationist philosophy), and *Hikmat Muta'āliyah* (Transcendent philosophy), which contains the essence of Iranian philosophy before Islam, namely mysticism, intellectualism and the light.

The foundation of Suhrawardī's Illuminationist Philosophy is light, which is also the basis of Iranian philosophy before Islam. Also Mullā Ṣadrā, in his book *al-Asfār al-Arba'ah* (The Four Journeys), makes many references to the philosophy of *Pahlavīyūn*.<sup>11</sup>

The symbolic stories of Suhrawardī are the best examples of Iranian philosophical stories. These include

Red Intellect (عقل سرخ), Western Exile (الغربت الغريبه), The Language of Termites (لغت موران), A Day With the Sufi Congregation (روزی با جماعت صوفیان), and The Song of Gabriel's Wing (آواز پر جبرئیل)

If Iranian 'Irfan (mysticism) is considered part of Iranian philosophy, many great intellectuals such as Mansoor Ḥallāj, Sanā'ī, 'Aṭṭār, Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī, Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, and Shāh Ni'mat Allāh Walī appear in this sphere of meaning. Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn Ardabīlī is the spiritual father of Modern Iran and the independence of Iran after the invasion of Arabs and Mongols.<sup>12</sup>

## **Iranian Philosophy in The Modern Era**

In the modern era, Iranian philosophy has advanced in three aspects. First, it expanded to critique modern Western philosophy, which had become popular in Iran. It was particularly engaged in the critique of Materialist philosophy; the prime example of this critique is *Uṣūl-i Falsafah va Rāwīsh-i Rīyālīsm* (The Principles of Philosophy and The Method of Realism) of Allamah Tabatabai. The second aspect of advancing Iranian philosophy was engaging with areas of philosophy that were of lesser focus during the classical period. Such as the philosophy of art, which can be seen in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr<sup>13</sup>, Muhammad Madadpoor<sup>14</sup> and Seyed Salman Safavi<sup>15</sup>. The third aspect of advancement was engaging in answering new topics and challenges, such as Modernity, Human Rights, Technocracy, and the Crisis of Climate Change, from the perspective of Iranian–Islamic philosophy, as can be seen in the works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr.<sup>16</sup>, Dariush Shayegan, Mustafa Mohaqqueq Damad, Reza Dawari and Seyed Salman Safavi. Henry Corbin had an important role in introducing Iranian philosophy to Europe.<sup>17</sup>

Recently (1999 – 2014 CE), Professor Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Dr Mahdi Amin Razavi published *An Anthology of Philosophy in Persia* in five volumes in English. The anthology includes selections of philosophical, theological, and Sufi thought in Iran from the period of Zoroaster to the contemporary period. Each section has a selection of the thinker's works and an introduction by the editors.

## **Two Important Points That We Must Consider**

First, it is incorrect to assume that the philosophy of any Iranian engaged in philosophy is part of Iranian philosophy. Instead, the philosopher of Iranian philosophy is the individual who continues the thought of "The perennial philosophy" and is its representative, such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Mehdi Haeri Yazdi, Ibrahim Dinani, Gholamreza Avani, Mohaghegh Damad and Reza Davari in the



contemporary period. The Iranian commentators of the philosophy of Kant, Popper, Wittgenstein, and others are transmitters of Western philosophy, not Iranian philosophy. Some European philosophers, such as Louis Massignon and Henry Corbin, are closer to Iranian philosophy than some who were born in Iran and are engaged in philosophy. Secondly, it is better to refer to Iranian philosophy after Islam, based on the cultural developments in Iran and the advancements in philosophy, as Iranian–Islamic philosophy.

### **Fundamental Elements of Iranian Philosophy**

Iranian philosophy is the mother of “Perennial Philosophy” or “Transcendental Philosophy”. Perennial philosophy expresses eternal truths and eternal values. The essence of Iranian philosophy is Necessary Being, spirituality, Ahura Mazda, Unity of Being, Gradation of Light, the Union of the Intellect and Heart, the Union of this Life and the next Life, and Love are foundations of Iranian philosophy. The person who has memorised certain information is not a philosopher; rather, the philosopher is the individual whose being has reached perfection in heart and mind, for knowledge is acquired through the heart and the intellect.

There is no contradiction between Iranian philosophy and Divine religion, rather, philosophy is a way of gaining a deep knowledge and understanding of metaphysical and revealed knowledge. The majority of Iranian Philosophers, such as Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī and Mullā Ṣadrā, believed in the concept of the *Ḥakīm Muta'allih* (Transcendent philosopher), the intellect of the transcendent philosopher is connected to the Divine intellect and her/his heart becomes illuminated by the Divine Light. She/he has become like the Universal Intellect (*Ḥakīm Kull*). Thus, Iranian philosophy is fundamentally in conflict with modern Western philosophy. Iranian philosophy is founded upon theocentrism, while modern Western philosophy, based on Descartes's "Cogito ergo sum", is

anthropocentric. The foundation of Iranian philosophy is intellection by the intellect and the heart.

In all three orders of Iranian philosophy, the intellect has a lofty place. Philosophical thought is based on the intellect. However, the intellect has different ranks. In the Mashā'ī philosophy of Ibn Sīnā, illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī and the Transcendental philosophy of Mulla Sadra, "the intellect connected with the Active Intellect", "the intellect illuminated by the light of the first light (*nūr al- 'Awwalīn*)," and "the intellect connected to the Universal intellect (*'Aql Kul*)" are the highest states of intellection. Intellect also has a significant place in 'Irfan (Islamic spirituality), the third and fourth books of the *Mathnawī* of Rumi are about different types of intellect.<sup>18</sup>

In Iranian–Islamic philosophy, intellect and intellection differ from rationalism in Western philosophy. Western rationalism presents the lowest rank of the intellect, which is referred to as reason. There is a difference between reason and intellect in classical philosophy, whereas intellect in Iranian–Islamic philosophy is the first emanation from the supreme origin.<sup>19</sup>

Contrary to the opinion of some, the most prominent characteristic of Iranian philosophy is not dualism; instead, its most fundamental characteristic is Waḥdat Wujūd (Unity of Being), which has developed over time and, in particular, has become manifested in the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, the poetry of Baba Taher, the *Mathnawī* and *Ghazliyyat* of Rumi<sup>20</sup>, the Illuminationist philosophy of Suhrawardī, and the Transcendental philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā. It has reached its apex in the thoughts of Seyed Haidar Amoli, Imam Khomeini, Hasan Zadeh Amoli, and Javadi Amoli. It is presented under the theory of Waḥdat-e Shakhṣīya-ye Wujūd (Personal Unity of Existence).<sup>21</sup>

Mullā Ṣadrā explicitly states in his works that he has deduced the "unity of existence" from the philosophers of ancient Iran. Hakim Sabzevari, the commentator on Mullā Ṣadrā's Transcendental Philosophy, refers to the qualitative unity of existence from the

perspective of the Pahlavis, the philosophers of ancient Iran, in his work *Manzūmah*.

الفهلويون الوجود عندهم \*\*\* حقيقه ذات تشكك تعم  
مراتباً غنى و فقراً تختلف \*\*\* كالنور حيثما تقوى و ضعف<sup>22</sup>

The Pahlavis believe that existence is,  
A truth that is inherently ambiguous,  
It has different levels of richness and poverty,  
Like light, it grows stronger or weaker.

Iranian philosophy shares similarities with the philosophies of Plato and Plotinus, but it stands in contrast to modern Western philosophy, with the two following conflicting paths. While the West has faced significant challenges in epistemology and ontology, Iranian philosophy presents an alternative solution to this philosophical crisis.

The theory of the Perfect Human (*Insān Kāmil*) is one of the key elements of Iranian *Hikmah* that is discussed in depth in the works of Fārābī<sup>23</sup>, the *Shāhnāmah* of Ferdowsī and the *Mathnawī* of Rumi.<sup>24</sup>

The *Hukamā'* of Iran did not only play an essential cultural role but were also crucial actors in forming Iranian society and socio-political transformations throughout the history of Iran. For example Shaykh Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Ardabīlī<sup>25</sup> (1252 – 1334 CE) is the spiritual father of modern Iran, and Imam Khomeini is the founder of Iran's Islamic revolution.<sup>26</sup>

Empirical sciences, or natural sciences, are disciplines that focus on studying the physical properties of the natural world. Natural sciences are the detailed analysis of the natural world, while philosophy is a universal science. From the order of the universe, we are led to the Organizer of the universe. That is, scientists in empirical sciences prove various aspects of the order of the natural world, and based on this, the philosopher presents the argument from design, asserting that the existence of order in the universe indicates the existence of a singular creator. In Iranian philosophy, science and

philosophy are interdependent and cooperative, not opposed to each other.

Iranians have been pioneers in empirical sciences such as chemistry, physics, astronomy, pharmacy, and medicine. Examples include:

Jābir ibn Hayyān: A chemist, astronomer, physicist, and philosopher, regarded as the father of modern chemistry. He discovered numerous chemical substances.

Zakariyyā al-Rāzī (Rhazes), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), and Omar Khayyām: Empirical sciences in Islamic thought and Iranian philosophy are not opposed to metaphysics but are rather foundational and integral to it.

Muḥammad Zakariyyā al-Rāzī: A chemist (discoverer of alcohol), physician, pharmacist, and philosopher.

Muḥammad ibn Mūsā al-Khwārizmī: An astronomer, historian, geographer, mathematician, and philosopher known as the father of algebra.

Abū ‘Alī Miskawayh: A physician, chemist, historian, and philosopher.

Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna): A prominent figure in Iranian philosophy, as well as a physician, pharmacist, and philosopher.

Omar Khayyām: An astronomer and philosopher.

Sheikh Bahā’ī: An astronomer, engineer, and philosopher."

### **Iranian Philosophy and the Crisis of Modernity**

Cartesian philosophy became a foundation of modernity in the West. The study of the soul in Iranian philosophy contrasts Descartes' view

of the soul.<sup>27</sup> From the Renaissance onwards, the West has been obsessed with quantification, and cartesian philosophy ultimately led to the denial of metaphysics. Initially, Immanuel Kant denied the possibility of knowing the noumenal world. In his prolegomena, he questioned the possibility of understanding metaphysics. Subsequently, in the Western philosophical discourse, it was asserted that there is no noumen; what exists is solely the phenomenon, which is material. This led to the rise of materialism (as seen in Feuerbach and Marx) and later the denial of metaphysics (as in the philosophy of Alfred Ayer). In this worldview, the essence of the world is unknowable, and God is dead. Metaphysical considerations are meaningless and nonsensical, and the world is entirely material, devoid of spirituality.

The philosophical crisis in the West has had a destructive effect on their socio-political thought. The exploitation and destruction of nature and the environment under the guise of asserting dominance over nature, World War I and II, the use of nuclear weapons on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the rise of the imperialism of the USA and the mass killing of thousands of innocent civilians in Vietnam and Palestine, are symptoms of a world view bereft of spirituality and sacred philosophy. In this context of global crisis, which has also led to a strong reaction from Western intellectuals, Iranian philosophy in its broader sense (encompassing Iranian philosophy and gnosis), rooted in light, sacred matter, and the unity of being, offers a new beacon of light to the West. To address the environmental crisis and end the perpetual destructive wars and the threat of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the West can utilise the potential and philosophical doctrines of the Iranian *Hukamā*.

The West has encountered philosophical challenges in epistemology and ontology; Iranian philosophy represents one path to alleviating this philosophical crisis.

## **Iranian Philosophy and Technocracy**

Technocracy is the government of society by technocrats, in which the political, economic, and social order are managed by technocrats, and technological solutions to societal problems are prioritised. Technocracy is closely related to machinism as they both focus on technology and the mechanisation of societal processes. A negative tendency amongst some contemporary Iranian technocrats is the belief that the only path to achieving technology is the transfer of technology from the West or cooperation with Western companies. From the standpoint of Iranian philosophy, technology qua technology is perceived as neutral. It is not the technology in and of itself that holds intrinsic value but, instead, the values attributed to it, the nature of its utility, and how it is employed within the context of the environment, socio-political structures, and economic affairs. The positive or negative connotation associated with a particular technology arises from these factors—how it aligns with ethical principles, impacts society, and interacts with the natural world. It is important to note that Iranian philosophy is opposed to technocracy in several aspects.

Firstly, technology is not the solution to all of humanity's cultural and civilisational problems. Humanity's ethical and spiritual problems are not only not solvable through technocracy, but overreliance on technocracy leads to alienation and results in humanity becoming one-dimensional.

Secondly, technology is dependent on quantification and the philosophy of pure materialism, in contrast to metaphysical thought. A society without God, without attention to eternal life and noble ethics, creates a human being and a society that is ill and one-dimensional. Sacred metaphysics bestows a framework of "good" on technology.

Thirdly, the result of technocracy is the environmental crisis, weapons of mass destruction and the mass killing of innocent humans

with the excuse of dominance over natural resources and dominance over the global markets.

Fourth, the “particular intellect,” which is the architect of technology, is too limited to identify all humanity's interests and blights and prescribe a solution for them. An example of this is the crisis of modernity, which philosophers such as René Guénon, Herbert Marcuse, and **Eugène Ionesco** have critiqued.

Iranian philosophy does not consider technology as the solution to global problems; rather, it is the internal peace of humanity with itself that paves the path to solving global problems. As long as humanity does not change and does not place its internal power in positive balance and cooperation with itself, society and the natural world, a harmonious virtuous society will not be constructed. A harmonious, virtuous society and the ideal healthy human being can be formed under the guidance of the Divine intellect. Iranian philosophy is not opposed to technological innovation or the machine; rather, it is opposed to one-dimensional thought and one-dimensional culture and society, which defines felicity as savouring life's material pleasures to the fullest. Iranian philosophy considers the ultimate human happiness to be found in the encounter with the Sacred Love (God). A world devoid of sacred love is the scene of the opposition of national interests and monopolism of the cartels of power. Humanity's felicity is found in the union of the good of this world and the eternal life of the next world.

Science is based on philosophy, and scientific discoveries give rise to new philosophical questions. The problems of the Muslim world result from the disconnection between philosophy, empirical science, and social sciences, while the West's crisis is the shrinking space for metaphysics due to an obsession with scientism.

## The relation between Iranian philosophy and Islamic philosophy

Ancient Iranian philosophy continued to evolve and flourish after the advent of Islam, both in its scope and depth. The term "Islamic philosophy" is a modern term. For instance, philosophers like al-Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, Mullā Ṣadrā, Ḥakīm Sabzawārī, and ‘Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā’ī never used the phrase "Islamic philosophy." Instead, they consistently referred to it as "*Ḥikmah*" (Wisdom), as seen in works like *Bidāyat al-Ḥikmah* and *Nihāyat al-Ḥikmah*. In the contemporary era, what has been termed Islamic philosophy by historians to distinguish it from Western philosophy is essentially the continuation of Iranian philosophy.<sup>28</sup> For in addition to sharing the same fundamental themes, the vast majority of its figures are Iranian philosophers such as Fārābī, Ibn Sīnā, Suhrawardī, and Ṣadr al-Muta’allichīn. "Good thoughts, good words, and good deeds," "light," and "unity of being" are the timeless philosophical issues that have shaped and continue to shape Iranian philosophy, yesterday and today.

The term "Arab philosophy", a construct of orientalists, is fundamentally flawed and unscientific, as the majority of philosophers associated with it, except for Ibn Rushd and Kandi, are Iranian. Furthermore, Ibn Rushd was an Andalusian. If the justification for labelling the philosophy of Iranian philosophers as "Arab" is simply because they composed their works in Arabic, this reasoning would be analogical to categorising the philosophical works of Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Haeri Yazdi, William Chittick, James Morris, and Seyed Salman Safavi, who write in English, as "Anglo-Saxon philosophy." However, their philosophy belongs to the perennial or Iranian-Islamic philosophy, not the language in which it has been written.



## **The global influence of Iranian philosophy**

Historical sources portray the influence of Iranian philosophy and *Hikmah* on Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. Based on Whitehead's famous saying that "the safest general characterisation of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists in a series of footnotes to Plato,"<sup>29</sup> we can consider all European philosophy to be a footnote to Iranian philosophy. In medieval philosophy, where the influence of Avicennian philosophy is as clear as day, the "Proof of Truth" (*Hujjat al-Haqq*), Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna), had a profound impact on the thinking of European philosophers such as Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Roger Bacon, Duns Scotus, and Meister Eckhart. The influence of Ibn Sīnā on the cosmology of Thomism, which is the most esteemed philosophical system in Catholicism, is particularly notable. The articulation of the "relationship between creation and eternity" and the "interaction between reason and revelation" are among the most significant influences of Ibn Sīnā on Christian philosophy in general. Ibn Sīnā's philosophical theory of "necessity and possibility" forms the foundation of the philosophical system of Christian Europe. The articulation of the relationship between "temporality and eternity" ("*hudūth*" and "*qidam*") and "the cooperation between reason and revelation" are among the most significant influences of Ibn Sīnā on Christian philosophy in general. Ibn Sīnā's philosophical theory of "necessity and contingency" forms the foundation of the philosophical system of Christian Europe.

Albertus Magnus accepted the "classification of the soul" and the "levels of intellect" in Ibn Sīnā's philosophy, and these Avicennian theories subsequently exerted significant influence on European philosophy through him. In addition, Thomas Aquinas drew upon Ibn Sīnā's 'science of the soul,' 'theory of the common sense,' and 'the immateriality of perceived forms.' Étienne Gilson and Frederick Copleston, the most important contemporary philosophers of Neo-Thomism, are also influenced by Ibn Sīnā and hold his philosophical ideas in high regard. Copleston describes Ibn Sīnā as a philosopher with original thoughts, not merely a follower of Greek philosophy.

Generally, European philosophers from the 11th century onwards have been influenced by Ibn Sīnā's philosophical ideas in the fields of "ontology," "theology," "cosmology," "psychology," "eschatology," "epistemology," and especially the "relationship between reason and soul." Ibn Sīnā's theory of the "Proof of the Truthful" (*Burhān al-Ṣiddīqīn*) forms the foundation of philosophical theology in Christian Philosophy in Europe.

In Romantic philosophy, particularly in the works of Goethe, Saʿdī and Ḥāfiẓ have a significant presence and influence. Zarāthuštra influenced Nietzsche. The *Mathnawī* by Rūmī and the philosophical quatrains of Ḥayyām have also had a profound impact in Russia, Europe, and America. In Russia, Ḥayyām is the most well-known of the Persian poets and sages.

The translation of Saʿdī's work to French at the end of the 17th century CE and later to other European languages laid the groundwork for the influence of his critical and ethical thought in Europe. 18<sup>th</sup>-century French Enlightenment considered Saʿdī's works a form of social, political, and ethical critique based on the specific characteristics of their own society, which they modelled after.

In France, Jean de La Fontaine, one of the most renowned French novelists, was influenced by Saʿdī's *Golestān*, particularly in his poem *Le Songe d'un habitant du Mogol*, which reflects themes from the story in the second chapter of Saʿdī's *Golestān*, 'On the Morals of Dervishes,' specifically from the 16th tale. Voltaire, the famous writer of the Enlightenment era in France, was influenced by Saʿdī's *Golestān* in certain parts of his philosophical novel *Candide*. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Victor Hugo and André Gide were also among the French thinkers and literati somewhat influenced by Saʿdī.

In Germany, Goethe, the German poet and sage, is among the European poets influenced by Saʿdī, particularly in his *West-östlicher Divan* (West-Eastern Divan). Portions of this book include poems adapted from Saʿdī's *Būstān* and *Golestān*. One such adaptation is

the story of a raindrop that, upon seeing the vast ocean, considers itself insignificant; due to this humility, a shell embraces it, transforming it into a pearl. This tale is directly borrowed without alteration from a piece beginning with the verse ‘One raindrop from a cloud fell...’ in Sa‘dī’s *Būstān*. Goethe concludes this Divan with the Persian text and German translation of one of the poems from Sa‘dī’s *Golestān*.

In Russia, Alexander Pushkin, the renowned Russian poet and writer, begins his poem *The Fountain of Bakhchisarai* with the line: ‘Many, like me, have visited this fountain; but some are no longer here, and others are wandering far away.’ This line is a direct quote from verses 479 and 480 of the first chapter of Sa‘dī’s *Būstān*, and Pushkin explicitly attributes it to Sa‘dī.

Ivan Bunin, the contemporary Russian writer, poet, and Nobel laureate in literature, frequently mentioned the influence of Sa‘dī’s poetry on him. He often carried Sa‘dī’s works with him during his travels—particularly the *Golestān*. Bunin’s works reflect traces of Sa‘dī’s themes and symbols, and in some instances, he explicitly references Sa‘dī by name. In his story ‘The Death of the Prophet,’ Bunin openly speaks of Sa‘dī’s influence, concluding the story with a quotation from the preface of the *Golestān*. In this work, he refers to Sa‘dī by name: ‘We have become eloquent with the help of the poetry of Sheikh Sa‘dī, which, like pearls, adorns our verses.’ The comparison of Sa‘dī’s words to pearls is also derived from Sa‘dī’s expression.

Rumi also enjoys worldwide fame, and Western intellectuals find their lost spiritual path in Rumi’s spiritual thought in the *Mathnavī Ma‘navī*. Dozens of books have been published in English, German, and French by Rūmī scholars in the United States and Europe, utilising scientific methods. Examples include Reynold Nicholson’s *Translation and Commentary of the Masnavī Ma‘navī*, William Chittick’s *The Sufī Path of Love*, Annemarie Schimmel’s *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi*, Seyed

Salman Safavi's *The Structure of Rumi's Spiritual Masnavi – The First Book*, Mahvash al-Sadat Alavi's *Decoding the Masnavi – The Structure of the Second Book*, and Franklin Lewis's *Rumi - Past and Present, East and West: The Life, Teachings, and Poetry of Jalal al-Din Rum*, which illustrate his influence on both the East and the West, from ancient times to the present day. These works demonstrate his impact in research centres, on Sufis of various Western orders, in the works of artists, and on the thoughts of philosophers, poets, and writers worldwide.<sup>30</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Iranian philosophy was established before Greek philosophy and has continued to evolve to this day. Iranian philosophy is one of the pinnacles of perennial wisdom. The main ontological themes of Iranian philosophy are 'being as being' and 'light.' Experience, reason, and the heart are the primary tools of epistemology in Iranian philosophy. Metaphysical knowledge and 'love' are the path to the perfection of the soul. The ultimate goal of Iranian philosophy is the 'meeting with God.' Iranian philosophy offers solutions to the Western world's metaphysical, epistemological, ethical, and spiritual crises.

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