

SPIRITUAL HERMENEUTICS (TA'WĪL)
A Study of Henry Corbin's Phenomenological Approach*

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ملخص

نشأ هرمينوطيقا هنري كوربين (Henry Corbin) من فهمه نحو الفلسفة الغربية وعلى الأخص فكرة هيدجر الميتافيزيقية إلا أنه في تطوره يميل إلى الفلسفة الشرقية ويقوم بتحويل هرمينوطيقا هيدجر إلى الهرمينوطيقا الروحية. إن الفكرة الأساسية لهذا التفسير الروحي أو "التأويل" هو الإيمان بأن لكل ظاهر باطنا أي شيئا محتبئا روحيا. فالدين له ناحيتان: ظاهرة وباطنة. وقد أكد كوربين أن البحث عن "المعنى الصحيح" والمختبئ لهذا الدين إنما يمكن عن طريق التأويل.

ومن الملاحظ أن التفسير الروحي غير التفسير المجازي. إذ المجاز (*allegory*) - عند كوربين - عبارة عن تمثيل سطحي من الخلاصات التي يمكن تعبيرها بطرق أخرى أما الرمز فهو التعبير الوحيد للمرموز إليه. والتفسير الذي ينقل الناحية الظاهرية إلى الناحية الباطنية سماه كوربين فينومينولوجيا (*phenomenology*) ولكن بمعنى كشف المحجوب، إذ ليس له علاقة مع فينومينولوجيا الغربية. إن كوربين يريد أن يرد التاريخية التي يقلل الحوادث التاريخية إلى زمانه التاريخي وبين تلك الأحداث بأنها نتاج الظسروف والبيئة عن طريق هذا الفينومينولوجيا الذي هو طريقة كوربين التفسيرية.

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Abstrak

Hermeneutika Henry Corbin tumbuh dari pemahamannya atas filsafat Barat, khususnya pemikiran metafisika Heidegger. Tetapi, dalam perkembangan selanjutnya, Corbin lebih tertarik kepada filsafat Timur dan mentransformasikan hermeneutika Heidegger ke dalam hermeneutika spiritual. Postulat pertama dari "interpretasi spiritual" (*spiritual interpretation, herméneutique ésotérique*, atau *ta'wīl*) ini adalah kepercayaan bahwa dalam segala sesuatu yang nyata (*zāhir*) terdapat sesuatu yang tersembunyi dan bersifat spiritual (*bāṭin*). Begitu pula, agama memiliki dua aspek, yaitu *zāhir* dan *bāṭin*. Corbin menegaskan bahwa untuk melacak makna yang benar dan tersembunyi dari agama ini hanya dapat dilakukan dengan cara *ta'wīl*.

Penting untuk digarisbawahi bahwa interpretasi spiritual bukan merupakan interpretasi alegoris. Dalam pemahaman Corbin, alegori merupakan representasi artifisial dari abstraksi-abstraksi yang dapat diekspresikan dengan cara-cara lain. Sedangkan simbol merupakan satu-satunya ekspresi yang mungkin bagi yang disimbolkan. Interpretasi yang membawa aspek-aspek dari agama ini kepada aspek esoteriknya, oleh Corbin disebut "fenomenologi". Fenomenologi ini berarti "menyingkap penutup" atau *kashf al-mahjūb*, yang tidak memiliki hubungan dengan aliran fenomenologi di Barat.

Fenomenologi inilah yang merupakan metode interpretasi Corbin. Dengan metode ini ia ingin menolak historisisme yang mereduksi peristiwa-peristiwa sejarah ke dalam waktu historisnya dan menjelaskan peristiwa tersebut sebagai produk keadaan atau lingkungannya.

The modern study of Islamic hermeneutics is in its infancy. One reason for this is the vastness of its field. It involves dimensions of almost all the "traditional" Islamic sciences: Qur'ānic commentary, *hadīth* (prophetic tradition), jurisprudence, *kalām* (theology), sufism, philosophy, etc. Each of these areas created particular conceptions of textual interpretation and each has its own methodologies which have been developed over centuries.¹ These branches arose through the efforts of individuals to interpret the Qur'ān in response to the needs of particular environments and different situations.

The Arabic terms which are in various ways equivalent to the notion of hermeneutics are many: *tafsīr*, *ta'wīl*, *sharḥ*, or *bayān* - all of which reflect the exegetical procedure.² Of these terms, *ta'wīl* seems to be the most used because it concerns itself with "the ultimate intent,"³ of a thing. The term *ta'wīl* (*mā awwalahu ilayhi*) etymologically means "that which brings it/him back or lead it/him back to it/him." In the Shī'ite traditions, especially in

Ismā'īlism,⁴ this term comes to mean "the exegesis which causes to return to the origin, to its archetype (*awwal/ma'āl*)."⁵ This notion is in contrast with and at the same time complementary to the word *tanzīl*. While the latter means "to cause something [revelation] to descend" from the higher world, *ta'wīl*, conversely, means "to cause to return" to an origin by bringing back the literal form of scripture to the spiritual truth.⁵ That is why Prof. Henry Corbin (1903-1978),⁶ the French philosopher and student of Islam, in his various writings translates this *ta'wīl* as 'spiritual interpretation', 'herméneutique ésotérique,' 'herméneutique transcendante.'⁷

The present paper is an attempt to understand his notion of spiritual hermeneutics, which is in fact his very method of interpretation. My concern also in this paper is how he employed this hermeneutical technique in reading and studying Islam, a religion not his own.⁸ And since his works number in the hundreds, I will focus mainly, while sometimes referring to his other works, on his *summa*, entitled *En Islam iranien*.⁹ The latter work comprises four volumes summarizing all his major themes and interests resulting from more than twenty years of research. Finally, in order to contextualize this discussion with the contemporary work in hermeneutics, I will compare his method with the theological hermeneutics of Rudolf Bultmann in Biblical interpretation, especially with the concept of preunderstanding and de-mythologization.

I

It must be recalled, first of all, that Corbin was the first to translate Heidegger's work into French. He translated Heidegger's *Was ist Metaphysik?* into *Qu'est-ce que-la Métaphysique?* in 1939.¹⁰ At the same time, Corbin was also the first to introduce Iranian Islamic philosophy to French readers by translating the works of Iranian philosophers or editing them. In response to a question posed by Philip Nemo on how the translation of these two distinct traditions (Germanic/occidental and oriental traditions) could be accomplished by one single man, Corbin states that what he sought and found in Heidegger he also sought and found in Irano-Islamic metaphysics.¹¹ But in the latter, he continues, he found new things which are different from the former. That is why he was more attracted to the oriental philosophy than to Heidegger's.

From this statement we will see that although Corbin's hermeneutics grew out of Heidegger's, he went further by transforming it into spiritual hermeneutics. In his introduction to *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir (Le Livre des Pénétrations métaphysiques)* of Mullā Ṣadrā, an Iranian philosopher, where he compares the ontology of Mullā Ṣadrā and that of Heidegger, he states explicitly how limited and distorted is the discussion which occupies the main currents of Western philosophy. Because of that limitation, he chose no longer

to follow Heidegger's metaphysics and instead moved on to the Oriental spirit of Iranian theosophy.¹²

It is not to be wondered at then that, although in his books Corbin does not state explicitly where his position is when explaining Shī'ī theosophy, he should at the same time be endorsing it. This can be seen for example from his method, which is similar to that of the Shi'ī i.e., spiritual interpretation.

II

The central postulate of spiritual interpretation is the belief that to everything that is apparent, literal and external there corresponds something hidden, spiritual and esoteric.¹³ The terms in Arabic are *zāhir* and *bāṭin*, which correspond perfectly with the words exoteric and esoteric, exterior and interior, apparent and hidden, phenomenon and noumenon. Similarly, religion has two aspects: *zāhir and bāṭin*. The apparent aspect consists of the apparent meaning of the religion, while the latter comprises its hidden and inner meaning. The true and hidden meaning, Corbin claims, can only be reached by spiritual hermeneutics (*ta'wīl*), that is, by bringing the literal aspect of religion to the spiritual, to its archetype.

It is important to note that spiritual interpretation does not start with a symbol and then proceed to the enunciation of a general proposition. It rather starts with a reality whether in physics, in history, in ritual or in religious prescription, in order to disclose the vision of the archetype by elevating this reality to the level of symbol. The archetype is not the symbol but that which is symbolized, or in Corbin's terms: "Le *ta'wīl* ne consiste nullement à désymboliser la révélation littérale, mais au contraire é transmuier la lettre en symboles."¹⁴

To explain this phenomenon, Corbin quotes the statement of Nāsīr Khusraw, one of the great Ismā'īlī philosophers of the fifth/eleventh century:

Positive religion (*syarī'a*) is the exoteric aspect of the Idea (*ḥaqīqa*), and the Idea is the esoteric aspect of positive religion... Positive religion is the symbol (*mithāl*), the Idea is that which is symbolized (*mamthūl*).¹⁵

The spiritual interpretation, therefore, is not allegorical interpretation. Corbin took much pain to explain the differences between the two. Allegory, according to him, is a more or less artificial representation of generalities and abstractions which can be perfectly well grasped and expressed in other ways. Symbol, on the other hand, is the only possible expression of that which is symbolized.¹⁶ Allegorical interpretation interprets allegory and tries to

paraphrase or explain it in different ways, the symbolical interpretation, on the other hand, transforms the reality to its symbol, its idea.

This interpretation which carries the exoteric aspect of religion into the esoteric is also called by Corbin "phenomenology," whose meaning, however, is quite distinct from that widely used in the West. Corbin himself admits that the term does not have any connotation with any school of phenomenology in the West.¹⁷ Phenomenology in his view is "to cast aside the veil," which in Arabic is called *kashf al-mahjūb*.¹⁸ The phenomenologist in this sense is therefore the one who unveils the hidden and esoteric truth, or the one who participates in the process of *kashf al-mahjūb*. Corbin informs us that since his youth he has practiced this kind of phenomenology in his studies.¹⁹

III

In his discussion of the etymology of the word "phenomenology," Corbin points out that the original Greek (*sôzein ta phainomena*) means "to save or preserve the phenomena" (*sauver les phénomènes*),²⁰ by encountering them "where they *take place* and where they *take their place*."²¹ Religious events and consciousness, for example, happen in the souls of believers; therefore, the hermeneutical phenomenologist is said to unveil the hidden truth (in the souls) which is beneath their appearance. The soul is, in other words, the place where the religious events *take place* and *take their place*.

Phenomenology, in Corbin's understanding, therefore consists in preserving the phenomenon while disengaging or unveiling the hidden thing that reveals itself beneath that appearance. The *logos* of this phenomenology is the hidden and the invisible thing beneath the visible.

According to Corbin, with this phenomenology, we can save the phenomenon of the Sacred Book for its believers. The religious community that owns the Book is characterized in the Qur'an as *Ahl al-Kitāb* (People of the Book); they are the people whose religion is founded on a Book that 'came down from Heaven' and is revealed to a prophet.²² Properly speaking, according to Muslims, the People of the Book are the Jews, the Christians and the Muslims.

The basic problem faced by the People of the Book is: How do they understand their Holy Book? How do they understand its true meanings? In the Qur'an, for example, there are many narrations of past events, figures and actions. Do they still have meaning for the present? Does their meaning in the past differ from that in the present? To answer these questions, Corbin begins by citing the speech of Imām Muḥammad Bāqir (the fifth Imām of the Twelver Shī'a) who states that:

If the revelation of the Qur'ān only had meaning to person or group of people at the moment of such and such verse were revealed, then all the verses of the Qur'ān these days are dead. No, the Holy Book, the Qur'ān, is alive; it never dies; its verses will give benefit to future generations as they had given it to previous ones.

(Si la révélation du Qorān n'avait de sens que par rapport à l'homme ou groupe d'hommes à l'occasion desquels tel et tel verset furent révélés, alors tout le Qorān aujourd'hui serait mort. Non pas! Le Livre saint, le Qorān, est vivant, jamais ne meurt; ses versets s'accompliront chez les hommes de l'avenir, comme ils se sont accomplis chez ceux du passé).²³

The narrations in the Holy Book, Corbin believes, are not the dead historical past. It is by phenomenological hermeneutics that the phenomena of the Book can be safeguarded from the dead historical past. To save the revelation from this death, the Qur'ān must be made present in the experience of the believer. Only by making the literal Qur'ān of the past present to oneself in its inward meaning is one capable of transmitting it to generations to come.

Corbin further asserts that the verses of the Qur'ān are described as 'signs' (*āyāt*); and this is precisely the way to understand the verses of the Qur'ān; i.e., to understand them as they address you.²⁴ But here the modes of understanding (*modi intelligendi*) are conditioned by the modes of being (*modi essendi*) of him who understands; correspondingly, there are different levels of understanding as well as different levels of being.²⁵

Concerning the different modes of understanding, Corbin cites a prophetic tradition which says: "The Qur'ān has exoteric and esoteric meanings, the esoteric meaning, in turn, conceals another esoteric meaning till seven meanings."²⁶ This tradition reveals that meanings of the Qur'ān are not only two: literal and spiritual, but comprise seven levels of spiritual meaning, the understanding of which depends on the mode of being and its interior aspect. The purer the being, the more spiritual his understanding.

IV

The idea that the true meaning of the phenomenon of the Book can be grasped only from the subject who views them, I think, is in agreement with the "presuppositionful subject" of Bultmann.²⁷ The interpretation of any text, according to Bultmann, depends upon the "living relationship" or "existentielle relation" between the reader or interpreter with the subject matter. "*The presupposition for understanding*", Bultmann states, "*is the interpreter's relationship in his life to the subject which is directly or indirectly expressed in*

the text."²⁸ One only understands a mathematical text if he has a relationship to mathematics; or understands history if he is familiar with historical life. This preunderstanding is also shaped by the "interest" of the reader which will guide him in interpreting the text.

For Corbin, however, it is not only a simple relation, but rather a "spiritual relationship," because the true meaning of the text does not lie in its apparent aspect. It is the inner aspect which is the true one and it can only be gained through spiritual interpretation. Accordingly, only spiritual people or mystics ever reach these spiritual meanings.

This idea seems to originate from the hermeneutics of Heidegger who sees the mode of understanding as being conditioned by the mode of being.²⁹ But having learned the metaphysics of Mullā Ṣadrā and those of other Iranian theosophers, Corbin gives new attributes to the concept of being. While in the Heideggerian concept the end of humanity is characterized as "Being-towards-death" (L'êtré-pour-la-mort/Sein zum Tode),³⁰ "being, for Corbin, is for something beyond the death" (l'êtré-au-delè-de-lè-mort/Sein zum Jenseits des Todes).³¹ This eschatology, in other words, which Corbin found is missing from the philosophy of Heidegger, is however to be found in Iranian Islam.

V

At the outset of this paper we said that Corbin's method of interpretation is phenomenology, which he defined as "unveiling or exposing to view something that is hidden." By this phenomenological approach, Corbin wishes to refute historicism which reduces historical events to their historical time and explains them causally as the products of their circumstances.³² Historicism views past events as *dépassée* and *démonnée* in our time and believes that true historicity lies only in being in his time (*être de son temps*).

This does not mean, Corbin argues, that history has no meaning. "Should mankind give up knowing and studying its history," Corbin explains, "it would become amnesic (*humanité amnésique*), "like an individual who loses his memory."³³ What he is protesting against is the conception of historicism which limits the significance and range of historical events to the epoch when it makes its appearance, as though the epoch were its sole explanation.³⁴ This "horizontal" causality which assumes that the happenings in this world are perceptible only in an empirical and causal way, will lead to agnosticism which closes off all avenues that might lead to anything beyond this world.

In the metaphysics of Iranian philosophy, however, Corbin suggests, there is a concept of *life tradition* which will transmit the action into the future. It holds that the past and death do not occur in the physical being, but in the soul. In the end, it is up to the soul to awake itself from death.³⁵

Therefore, according to Corbin, it is not "man as being *in history*" (defined thus because he conceives of history as external, exoteric) which sinks under the burden of an historical causality; rather "the history is *in man*." Only with man does anything like history begin. Therefore, man essentially will bring with him something prior to history, something he will never cease to carry in himself that will save him from external history.³⁶

This internal history is called by Corbin *meta-history*, which occurred prior to our empirical history. This primordial fact is expressed in the divine question which human spirits were required to answer before they were placed in the terrestrial world: "Am I not your Lord?" (Qur'ān 7:172).³⁷

In Arabic, history is expressed by the term *hikāya*, which also has another meaning, i.e., imitation (in Greek *mimēsis*). Therefore, all historical events in this world, the external history (*histoire extérieure*), symbolize and *imitate* the internal history which is in the soul. This *hiérophistoire*, i.e., sacral history, cannot be perceived by the senses because their signification refers to another world. Only spiritual hermeneutics can preserve the true meaning of *hikāya* and the true meaning of the prophetic narrations in the Qur'ān.³⁸ This is because *ta'wīl* knows the spiritual meaning of these events in the time they occurred.

In this respect, I think, Corbin rejects the idea of "de-mythologization" held by Bultmann. Bultmann was conscious that there are past stories or - to express it in the terms that he used - "myths" in the New Testament.³⁹ To preserve the truth of the proclamations of the New Testament, he proposes, one must demythologize them.⁴⁰ This does not mean that the kerygma is to be eliminated as well. Only the mythologies are to be demythologized through existential interpretation. Bultmann, therefore, is of the opinion that existential interpretation is the only solution for demythologization and not cosmological or anthropological interpretation.⁴¹ According to this interpretation, the mythology is not in its imagery with its apparent objectivity but in the understanding of human existence of that time.

This kind of interpretation, in Corbin's view, also falls into the trap of historicism, even though Bultmann himself wished to refute it. The reason for this is that he tried to interpret the myth as the people of that time understood it. Or to use P. Ricoeur's words "to realize the intention of the text which speaks not of itself but *of the event*."⁴² Corbin would suggest that this myth be interpreted not as an "external event" but as an "internal event" which occurred in metahistory.

Corbin claims that his research originated in his analysis of Heidegger, which showed the ontological roots of historical science, emphasizing that there is historicity "deeper" and more "primitive" than the history of external events. Corbin, however, holds that if there is a meaning in history, that

meaning does not lie within the history of external events, but within the secret, occult, esoteric and ontological roots of history.

VI

In his studies, we see that Corbin put himself in the place of those whom he studied. He participated sympathetically with them and identified himself as one of them. This is a phenomenological approach. But his understanding of phenomenology is different. In his preface to *En Islam iranien*, as we have seen, he defined phenomenology as:

To save the phenomena, i.e. by encountering them where they *take place* and where they *take their places*. In religious sciences, this means encountering them in the souls of believers.⁴³

This phenomenology is not the one Western philosophers developed. It may be better to call his approach "phenomenology of the spirit,"⁴⁴ because it is the spiritual and internal aspect about which he was concerned.

Even though his concern was with the internal aspect, it is not true to claim that the religious fact exists only in the souls of the believers. It also exists on the historical level which conditions the religious consciousness and is conditioned by it too.⁴⁵ To ignore one of them is unjust, because the two complement each other. Furthermore, even if there is a spiritual meaning for every thing we still cannot claim that our understanding or our *ta'wīl* is the right one, for we are not a referee who can judge between these understandings.

Furthermore, phenomenological method in its classical terms, which approaches any subject matter "from within," besides offering positive sides, has also provided a negative side. One comes to suspend his critical judgment toward it. This is quite apparent in Corbin's studies; he hardly criticized the philosophical views of the Shī'ī theosophers, he even defended them.

This criticism is not to belittle Corbin achievements. The most important contribution of his is his fundamental question to the self-assurance of traditional Western positivism. He continually criticized the reductionistic approach of "scientism," "historicism," and sociologism.⁴⁶ This approach, in his view, reduces phenomena to the horizontal dimension only and refuses to recognise the "vertical dimension."

ENDNOTES

¹See, for example, Peter Heath who has analyzed three different Muslim hermeneuts: Qur'ānic exegete, philosopher and mystic, in his "Creative Hermeneutics: A Comparative Analysis of Three Islamic Approaches," in *Arabica* 36 (1989), pp. 173-210.

²See Jaroslav Stetkevych, "Arabic Hermeneutical Terminology: Paradox and the Production of Meaning," in *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 48 (1989), pp. 81-96.

³Edward William Lane, *Arabic English Lexicon* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 1984), vol. I, pp. 126-7.

⁴For an account on Ismā'īlism and its doctrine see, among others, W. Ivanow, "Ismā'īliya," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam. First Edition. Supplement*, ed. M.Th. Houtsma [et al.] (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1987), pp. 98-102; and Farhad Daftary, *The Ismā'īlis: Their History and Doctrine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵Henry Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, translated by Liadain Sherrard with assistance of Philip Sherrard (London: Kegan Paul International, 1993), p. 12.

⁶For his biography and the list of his works see Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Henry Corbin. 'L'exil occidental': une vie et une oeuvre en quête de l'Orient des Lumières," and "Liste des travaux et publications d'H. Corbin," in *Mélanges offerts Henry Corbin*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr (Teheran: Teheran Branch, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 1977), pp. 3-31 and iii-xxxii respectively. See also its English translation in *Sophia Perennis*, vol. 3 (1977), pp. 88-106.

⁷See, for example, his *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, translated by Willard R. Task (Texas: Spring Publications, Inc., 1980), p. 28 ff; idem, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 1 ff.

⁸According to Hamid Algar, Corbin's studies of Islam covers three areas: sufism, Islamic philosophy, and Twelver and Ismā'īlī, Shi'ism. See Algar, "The Study of Islam: The Work of Henry Corbin," in *Religious Studies Review* 6 (1980), pp. 85-91. Cf. Charles J. Adams, "The Hermeneutics of Henry Corbin," in *Approaches to Islamic Religious Studies*, ed. Richard Martin (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1985), pp. 129-50.

⁹*En Islam iranien: Aspects spirituels et philosophiques* (Gallimard: Éditions

Gallimard, 1971), especially the first volume on "Prologue, and "Le phénomène du Livre saint," pp. ix-xxiii and 135-185 respectively. Another article which I will often refer to is "De Heidegger à Suhrawardī," in *Henry Corbin*, ed. Christian Jambet (Paris: L'Herne, 1981), pp. 23-37. This was an interview between Philippe Nemo and Corbin concerning the latter's philosophical and spiritual life. Henceforth the book will be referred to as *L'Herne*.

¹⁰The book was re-published in *Qu'est-ce que la Métaphysique?* (Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1951) by including in it other excerpts from *Being and Time* and from a conference on Hölderlin. Besides Heidegger's works, he also translated the works of K. Jaspers, H. Conrad-Martius and A. Heschel.

¹¹See *L'Herne*, p. 24.

¹²See Corbin's "Introduction" to *Kitāb al-Mashā'ir (Le Livre des Pénétrations métaphysiques)* of Mullā Ṣadrā (Teheran/Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1964), p. 78. This will be discussed later.

¹³There is a verse in the Qur'ān 51:49 "wa min kulli shay'in khalaqnā zawjayni la'allakum tadhakkarūn." The Ismā'īlis translate this verse "and all things We created by pairs [*zāhir* and *bāṭin*] that you may reflect."

¹⁴Corbin, *Le Livre de Sources d'Abū Ya'qūb al-Sijistānī*, in *Trilogie Ismaélienne* (Teheran/Paris: Adrien-Maisonneuve, 1961), p. 27.

¹⁵Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 4.

¹⁶Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. 1, p. 152-3. Cf. Rudi Paret who translates *ta'wīl* as allegorical interpretation in "Ta'wīl," *Encyclopaedia of Islam. First Edition*, vol. IV:2, pp. 704-5.

¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. xix.

¹⁸See Corbin, "De Heidegger à Suhrawardī," p. 25. See also Daryush Shayegan, "Le Sens du Ta'wīl," in *L'Herne*, p. 85; idem, *Henry Corbin: La Topographie spirituelle de l'Islam iranien* (Paris: Édition de la Différence, 1990), 48; and Nasr, "Henry Corbin," in *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin*, p. 13.

¹⁹*Ibid.*

²⁰Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. I, p. xix. Cf. Heidegger's interpretation of this Greek term which he says comes from *legein ta phainomena*, meaning "to let what show itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself." See Martin Heidegger,

"Being and Time," in *Basic Writings from Being and Time (1927) to the Task of Thinking (1964)*, edited with general introduction and introduction to each selection by David Farrel Krell (New York: Harper San Fransisco, 1977), p. 82.

²¹Ibid. "Les rencontrer là où ils *ont lieu* et où ils ont *leur lieu*." (Italics in original)

²²Ibid. p. 136.

²³Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. I, p. 137.

²⁴ Cf. P. Ricoeur who says that the text as writing awaits and calls for a reading. See Ricoeur, "What is a Text? Explanation and Understanding," in *Paul Ricoeur: Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences*, ed. John B. Thompson (New York: Cambridge UP, 1981), p. 158.

²⁵Corbin, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 1. See also *L'Herne*, p. 26.

²⁶*Inna li 'l-Qur'an zahran wa batnan wa li-batnihi batnan ilā sab'at abtānin*. See Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. III, p. 217-8. For a discussion of this *ḥadīth*, see Corbin, "L'Intériorisation du Sens en Herméneutique Soufie Iranienne," in *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, vol. 26 (1957), pp. 57-187, especially p. 84 ff.

²⁷Bultmann, "Is Exegesis Without Presuppositions Possible?" In *Existence and Faith: Shorter Writings of Rudolf Bultmann*, ed. Schubert M. Ogden (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), pp. 289-96; and "The Problem of Hermeneutics," in *Essays Philosophical and Theological*, trans. by James C.G. Greig (London: SCM Press, 1955), pp. 234-69.

²⁸Bultmann, "The Problem of Hermeneutics," p. 241. (Italics is in original)

²⁹See Heidegger, *Being and Time*, translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper San Fransisco, 1962), p. 424.

³⁰Ibid., p. 279 ff.

³¹See Corbin, *L'Herne*, p. 3 1; idem, "introduction" in *Livre des Pénétrations*, p. 78. For a discussion of Being according to Mullā Ṣadrā and Heidegger, see Alparslan Açıkgeniç, *Being and Existence in Ṣadrā and Heidegger. A Comparative Ontology* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1993); Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "Mullā Ṣadrā: his Teachings," in *History of Islamic Philosophy*, ed. Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Oliver Leaman (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), Part I, pp. 646-8; and Toshihiko Izutsu, *Creation and the Timeless Order of Things. Essays in Islamic Mystical Philosophy* (Ashland: White Cloud Press,

1994), Chapter 7 on "Existentialism East and West."

³² Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. I, p. xvi. See also P. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of meaning* (Fort Worth, Texas: The Texas Christian UP, 1976), pp. 89-90. "Historicism is the epistemological presupposition that the content of literary works and in general of cultural documents receives its intelligibility from its connection to the social conditions of the community that produced it or to which it was destined."

³³ Corbin, *Philosophie Iranienne et Philosophie Comparée* (Téhéran: Académie Impériale Iranienne de Philosophie, 1977), p. 29.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Corbin, *En Islam iranien*, vol. I, p. xvii.

³⁶ Corbin, *Philosophie Iranienne*, p. 31.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 32; idem, *History of Islamic Philosophy*, p. 3.

³⁸ Corbin, *En Islam Iranienne*, vol. I, p. 163.

³⁹ See Bultmann, "New Testament and Mythology," in *Kerygma and Myth*, edited by Hans Werner Bartsch and translated by Reginald H. Fuller (London: S.P.C.K., 1964), vol. I, pp. 1-16.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p.10.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 12, 15.

⁴² P. Ricoeur, "Preface to Bultmann," in *Paul Ricoeur The Conflict of Interpretations: Essays in Hermeneutics*, ed. Don Ihde (Evanston: Northwestern UP, 1974), p. 389.

⁴³ Corbin, *En Islam iranienne*, vol. I, p. xix.

⁴⁴ See Adams, "The Hermeneutics of Henry Corbin," p. 142.

⁴⁵ See Algar, "The Study of Islam," p. 90.

⁴⁶ See Mircea Eliade, "Some Notes on *Theosophia perennis*: Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Henry Corbin," in *History of Religions*, vol. 19 (1979-1980), p. 173. See also Toshihiko Izutsu and Hermann Landolt, "Sufism, Mysticism, Structuralism: A Dialogue," in *Religious Traditions*, vol. 7-9 (1984-1986), p. 3.