



بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
In the Name of Allah, the Compassionate the Merciful

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**Philosophical Instructions: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy
An Abridged Edition**

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Publisher's Forward

To begin and execute a research is like walking in the path of development and evolvement. When the seeds of the “questions” are planted, in the soil of the mind of the researcher, this phase initiates, and its end is culminated when the result and the outcome of knowledge and wisdom is gained.

Evidently, this end is a new chapter in itself, for growth, and announces beforehand this good news to humans. For the result of all those mental efforts will not only bring the blooming and flowering of talent and all kinds of Blessings to humans, but it also makes the mind of the researcher to ponder and shape new, more questions.

This will produce a great collection of growing plants and flowers for the seeking mind... Those “questions” are in fact, the seeds, which according to the necessities of Time and the strength of the researchers will grow and bloom by themselves. They will make Culture and Civilization to move forward.

In like manner, the increasing rate of transferring oneself from one place to another place and the decrease of the distances will make those seeds travel miles and miles, to faraway places, in order to install them inside the curious mind of other seekers. This will bring an amazing diversity and a novelty for another civilization...

It is true then, that the presence of knowledge and a good, capable management will help this project to develop itself and one has to admit indeed, that it has always played an important role...

Al-Mustafa International Publication and Translation Center, because of its global mission, and its special position among the Religious Schools and the colorful human diversity that it has developed inside itself, sees it as a moral duty to procure all the appropriate conditions for any research works, and takes its role in this matter, most seriously. To procure all kinds of necessary grounds, with an excellent management of all the existing possibilities and talents, and to care and protect all its researchers in religious fields; these are the most crucial responsibilities of the Department of Research in this International center.

We dearly hope that by being attentive to all these autonomous scientific movements, and by fortifying all the existing motives, we shall be able to witness the blooming of the Religious Culture in every part of this wide world!

**Al-Mustafa International
Publication and Translation Center**

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Transliteration

Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
ء	'	آ	a
ب	b	ت	t
ث	th	ج	j
ح	ḥ	خ	kh
د	d	ذ	dh
ر	r	ز	z
س	s	ش	sh
ص	ṣ	ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ	ظ	ẓ
ع	'	غ	gh
ف	f	ق	q
ک	k	ل	l
م	m	ن	n
ه	h	و	w
ی	y	ة	ah
Long Vowels		Short Vowels	
آ	a	ـَ	a
ای	ī	ـِ	i
او	ū	ـُ	u
Persian Letters			
Symbol	Transliteration	Symbol	Transliteration
پ	p	چ	ch
ز	zh	گ	g

At the end of Farsi words, 'eh', '-e', and '-ye' have been used.

Foreword

Considering necessity of preparing appropriate Islamic texts in English for the modern world and aiming at satisfying that need, Al Mustafa International Research Institute (M.I.R.I.) decided to establish “Islam and West Research Centre” in 2009. This centre has accomplished that duty in the best way by producing, translating, and reprinting tens of such appropriate texts.

The book entitled *Philosophical Instructions: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy*, whose original text in Farsi had been formed on the basis of lectures delivered by the outstanding philosopher and great scholar Ayatullah Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi, has already been presented to the English-speaking world by Institute of Global Cultural Studies (IGCS).

However, for the sake of offering an easier access to all such detailed discussions, the Abridged Edition was decided to be published. The Abridged Edition presents the whole content of the book in a summary fashion in the four parts of “preliminaries,” “epistemology,” “ontology,” and “theology.”

This book is a response to the widespread need for references and textbooks reflecting the Islamic philosophy, in both the various disciplines of the humanities in universities and the specialist faculties of scientific and research centres. It is a committed answer to this need that can be used by these institutions to approach their common goals and, in addition to improve both the quality and quantity of educational references, avoid repeated work.

We hope that this book should form a link showing the way for those who seek advancement.

Al-Mustafa International Research Institute (M.I.R.I.)

Preface

This is an abridged edition of *Philosophical Instructions: An Introduction to Contemporary Islamic Philosophy* (Henceforth: *Philosophical Instructions*), Translated by Muḥammad Legenhausen and ‘Azim Sarvdalir. It is a textbook compiled for the purpose of introducing the students of the Islamic seminaries in Qom to the rudiments of Islamic philosophy. The reason for the shortening is obvious: to provide a concise as well as a comprehensive textbook that is more appropriate for both instructor and student.

Philosophical Instructions was based on the lectures given by the author Āyatullāh Miṣbāḥ Yazdī who is one of the most highly respected clerics in the Shi‘i world, and a revered professor of philosophy. The lectures were originally presented by the author to students and taped at the *Dar Rāh-e Haqq Institute* in Qom in 1981 and 1982, the transcriptions of the tapes were revised and edited by Prof. Miṣbāḥ and published in two volumes by the Islamic Propagation Organization in Qom. The Persian edition, titled *Āmūzesh-e Falsafeh*, first printed in 1985-86.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of this book is that it shows why and how the human reason is important in our way to provide a foundation for a philosophy capable of supporting theistic beliefs.

The lessons of this book are organized in four main parts. The first part (*Preliminaries*) begins with a brief glance at the history of philosophy and its various schools of thought, so that students may become aware to some extent of the situation of philosophy in the world from its first appearance to the present, and in addition, that they may

PREFACE

become interested in the study of the history of philosophy. Likewise, the main features of philosophy and the relation between philosophy and other disciplines and sciences is investigated and their need for philosophy is established, in brief. The necessity for learning philosophy is explained, and the doubts surrounding it are removed. Before mentioning the problems of *Ontology* (part three), *Epistemology* (part two) is discussed, which is logically prior to it, and which is the topic of much discussion in the present day world. The final part of this book is devoted to *Theology* which covers issues of the existence of Almighty God and His attributes. This part also includes some brief discussions of the purpose of creation, Divine decree and the problem of evil.

In the end I hope that this abridged edition of *Philosophical Instructions* will provide a balanced and pedagogically useful textbook in the field of Islamic philosophy.

Farshad F. Saniee