

## Abstract

The aim of this thesis is to interpretate the stories *The Living, son of the Vigilant*, *The Bird* and *Salaman and Absal*, written by one of the greatest scholars of medieval Islamic East, Ibn Sina (980-1037). Unlike his philosophical and medical writings these stories have a different character and create a coherent narrative cycle. Based on their themes, narrative methods and symbolism they should be in my opinion called initiation stories. The main aim of this dissertation is thus to verify this hypothesis by means of the hermeneutic interpretation. These stories, read as a coherent cycle, show typical features of initiation genre: the hero can't find his way, his existential condition makes him desperate, he is consumed by strong desire for reaching a higher ontological degree, meets an initiator, goes through initiation rites of passage, crosses the border between the uninitiated and initiated space, reaches the final initiation through symbolic death. The interpretation of each of Ibn Sina's three writings reveals an inner coherence of the stories: *The Living, son of the Vigilant* focuses on the motive of an initiator-guide and the description of the stages on the initiation way leading upwards, *The Bird* tells in an emotional way about the state preceding the initiation and then concentrates on the penetration into the initiated state and finally *Salaman and Absal* is an apparent tragedy heading towards the desired initiation in the form of symbolic death. The analysis of symbols focuses on symbolism of light and solar hierophany, symbolism of water and also on vegetative hierophany and symbolism of stones. Subsequently it deals with the archetypal themes such as phenomenon of the guide, the ascension and the bird. Special attention is paid to the motive of love which in the Avicennan universe represents a desire for reaching the ontological fullness and the dynamic principle of the very initiation. Although it has proved that all the motives are autochthonous in Arabic Islamic culture and that Ibn Sina's works belong to Islamic context, it is obvious that the author referred by the symbols to a much older perception of symbolism rooted in the archaic images of human imagination. The initiation hypothesis is thus confirmed and it disproves the traditional orientalist view on Ibn Sina which sees him as a secret mystic who embodied a true esoteric doctrine in his stories and at the same time is challenges the opposing view which considers the stories a mere allegorical expression of classic Aristotelian conceptions. This thesis presents the texts as deeply symbolic stories touching the archetypal contents of human imagination and telling about the way of intellect towards the God.

Key words: Ibn Sina, Islamic philosophy (falsafa), Islamic literature, initiation, initiation story, love in Islam