**Spotlight 9**

# Islamic Mysticisms: The Green Canopy

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Studies Library: History, Societies & Cultures & Eurasia, Brill, 9789004306806]

Bibliography

## Wonder Beyond Belief: On Christianity by Navid Kermani and Tony Crawford [Polity, 9781509514847]

With a learned intimacy and cosmopolitan sensibility, Kermani sets out to lightly teach us a wayward appreciation of our Christian and Islamic heritage. It is on the whole better than visiting the places and centuries he describes.

What happens when one of Germany's most important writers, himself a Muslim, immerses himself in the world of Christian art? In this book, Navid Kermani is awestruck by a religion full of sacrifice and lamentation, love and wonder, the irrational and the unfathomable, the deeply human and the divine – a Christianity that today's Christians rarely speak of so earnestly, boldly and enthusiastically.

With the open-minded curiosity of a non-believer – or rather a believer in another faith – Kermani engages with Christian art in its great richness and diversity. The result is an enchanting reflection which reinvests in Christianity both its spectacular beauty and its terror. Kermani struggles with the cross, falls in love at the sight of Mary, experiences the Orthodox Mass and appreciates the greatness of St Francis. He teaches us to see the questions of our present-day lives in the pictures of old masters such as Botticelli, Caravaggio and Rembrandt – not with lectures on art history or theology, but with an intelligent eye for the essential details and the underlying relations to seemingly remote worlds, to literature and to mystical Islam.

Kermani's poetic school of seeing draws us in as we are carried along by his unique perspective on Christianity, rekindling our interest in great art at the same time. We are captivated by his unique and brilliant Islamic reading of the West.

Excerpt: Someone asked what salvation meant to me: when in my life I had been saved. My first thought was to mention the usual situations: accidents that had miraculously left me unharmed or been averted at the last second; recovery after a dangerous illness; a reconciliation of lovers; and

certainly, in my case, my travels, which had occasionally taken me into threatening situations. But in the end I spoke of my very earliest memory: the earache, no doubt medically harmless, but to me wholly unknown and therefore shocking, that makes me scream, and my mother — it must be night-time, or evening, because I can see the deep blue of the curtains — my mother takes me out of my cot and holds me in her arms, this feeling of all-embracing consolation, which doesn't banish the pain but makes it cease to seem like monstrosity itself, this feeling of not being alone with the pain — how long did I scream, I wonder, before my mother picked me up? — the security of being cradled in my mother's arms, of being concretely, physically close to her heart: someone is there for you; the sudden turn from bottomless loneliness and abandonment to safety and pure contentment, feeling the centre of attention and love — the more so as my father too came near and spoke comfortingly to me.

That, yes, that was salvation, that was salvation as every person has experienced it — ought to have experienced it — and treasured it in memory. The Quran teaches that the need for God is innate in human beings, who experience it as a shock, as pain, but also as a rescue, otherwise they would hardly be so quickly comforted in their mother's arms. And, strangely enough, although the Quran strictly rejects Jesus' Sonhood, it affirms Mary's God-given motherhood, and the virgin birth causes orthodox Muslims fewer headaches than it does enlightened Christians. And yet the Catholics so wisely associate Creation with both parents: because God created all mankind in His image, He must be man and woman in One. 'God is father and mother,' said the short-lived Pope John Paul I in his only Angelus address (and was accused of heresy for it). Ibn Arabi, the Greatest Master of Islamic mysticism, who had more female than male teachers, goes so far as to claim that the beatific vision, which is necessarily communicated to humans through concrete earthly experiences of nature, love, dream visions and, most strongly, sexuality reaches its highest perfection in women. For women incorporate both aspects of the divine, the passive and the creative, conception and childbirth, patiens and agens. Men, on the other hand, are born but do not give birth. That means that Ibn Arabi explicitly attributes the passive aspect to God as well and conceives His relation to humanity as a mutual one in which we depend on Him, but He

likewise depends on our love. `Do not blame me when I call God a bride', Ibn Arabi writes, conscious that his teaching must be provocative in the context of a patriarchal world and its theology.

Because the man was created first, Adam and Eve were not complete as the archetype of human love, says Ibn Arabi, but must be complemented by Mary and Jesus: in this typology, Eve and Jesus are like siblings whose parents are Adam and Mary. That is why the Prophet named women first among the blessings dearest to him and left out men entirely. The mystics have often speculated about the fact that the highest attribute of God, mentioned most often by far in the Quran, mercy, rahma, has the same root in Arabic as rahim, `womb' (and remembrance of God, dhikr, which is a human attribute, has the same root as dhakar, `penis'). When the Prophet says that Paradise lies at the feet of mothers, the mystics have not only understood it as an instruction to honour one's own mother (not one's father?) — no, they have always conceived the essence of God the All-merciful as feminine as well as masculine. `What is most deserving of love and attention?' a young man asked the Prophet. 'Your mother,' the Prophet replied. 'And second most?' — 'Your mother.' — 'And third most?' Again the Prophet, who was an orphan, answered, 'Your mother.'

In Christianity, Catholic popular devotion and the Eastern churches have had a more accurate instinct for the feminine principle as constitutive of the human incarnation of God than most theologians, who emphasize the cross and the Resurrection, and a better intuition than feminist theology, which has had surprisingly little to say about Mary and prefers to bend the language (to the breaking point). 'Thou rigorous Judge of all sinners, Who threatenest us terribly', German churchgoers sing (or sang?) fervently in Mass, and then find consolation in Mary's motherly love. `Mother of God' may be, strictly speaking, just an honorific, and yet in prayer — an experience that does not adhere to logic — it becomes a counterpart to God, although without entirely resolving the duality. The simultaneity of opposites is more distinctly audible in theotokos, the `God-bearer', in spite of all the Catholic Church's efforts to rationalize the title, to make it plausible to reason. Byzantine theology has more readily admitted that religious experience can only be verbalized in paradox. 'Mary is the cause of all those who were before her,' said Gregory Palamas, the famous

mystic of the Eastern Church, attribut¬ing a pre-temporal existence to the Mother of God. It was this Eastern, Oriental, and originally Gnostic Mariology that influenced the Sufis: `I am my father's mother,' says the Thunder found in Nag Hammadi; 'My mother gave birth to her father,' cried the enraptured Hallaj, who was crucified as a heretic; `truly, that is strange.'

Even we feel the outermost vibrations of a truth that Gregory Palamas and Hallaj experienced in inner contem-plation — just imagine leafing through your parents' photo album: are we not similarly amazed, or in my case shaken, every time we see how young our mother was when she bore us, much younger than we are when we first begin to think seriously about our mother — that is, only in the second half of our lifetime, as the painful awareness of her mortality grows from year to year and we can no longer ignore her infirmity? She is young, our mother, as young as the Madonna of the Rose Bower, no more than a girl, and, even to a fourth child like me, still a very attractive woman, and so she must be to know our fears and to be not only our guardian, our provider, our educator, but also to a small degree our sister, our friend and even our lover. For how much more vibrant, more powerful, more perilous and more all-embracing is maternal love than the father's love, which is why it is the mother's excessive sentiment, if anything about her, that literature regrets, and about the father, if anything, his remoteness. In his Meccan Revelations, Ibn Arabi recounts that, while he was writing about totality, he fell asleep and dreamt he saw his mother unveiling her pudenda and her breasts; he looked at her, and she smiled; after a while he realized that there was something forbidden about his mother's gesture — or about his gaze? — and he covered her with a white cloak: `In the same way, I use beautiful words to cover a certain view of nature that reason is not permitted to express.

The Madonna sitting in the rose bower before a damask curtain is young; her baby is just days or at most a few months old; but the peace that is in her face and her posture is not that of a girl or a young woman who is simply ignorant yet of her son's martyrdom. She wears the crown, which means she is resurrected; she has already lived through a mother's worst possible misfortune. The peace that is in her face and her posture is redemption or, in Kleist's terms, the innocence we can attain only after having eaten of the Tree of Knowledge.

Hence the garden, hence the golden background and hence the apple that Eve's brother is permitted; angels even offer him more apples.

In the centre, of course, exactly at the height of the observer's eyes, is the mother, who to Ibn Arabi is like the first human, and thus still more like God. Christ could never be represented in comparably precious symbols. You have to see the crown, for example, under a magnifying glass to comprehend the length to which Stefan Lochner went. Every pearl, every gem, every indentation in the precious metal, every space has its own form and a theological meaning: the gems form petals that correspond with the real, blood-red roses of the bower, and the sapphire at the crest reflects a window cross, referring to the sacrifice of Christ, 'the light of the world'. The extremely good condition of the painting, after more than half a millennium, is due not only to its perfect craftsmanship and careful conservation; the lasting luminosity also has to do, I read, with the extraordinary quality of the materials, the wood panel and the pigments. The ultramarine blue in which the dress is painted is made from lapis lazuli, a semi-precious stone that was mined only in Badakhshan: in Afghanistan! The only material that was more costly was gold leaf, which covers broad areas of the background. It not only represents the celestial light but glows itself as soon as a little light from the sun or a candle falls on the Madonna of the Rose Bower. The painstaking arrangement of the motifs similarly imitates the heavenly plan of salvation: in the centre of the picture, for example, the cone-shaped fold over Mary's navel, with the child's navel lying exactly in its extended line; or the nine blossoms in the crown that stand for the ninth hour, the hour of Christ's death, and at the same time the number of planetary spheres through which the soul ascends to Heaven. I also read that the height and width of the rose arbour are exactly three by three Cologne inches, so that they symbolize the Trinity and at the same time the Heavenly Jerusalem, whose architecture is described as regular. And so much more! Every point and every line, every area and every colour is `ordered in measure and number and weight', as the Book of Wisdom prescribes.

If the Greatest Master of Sufism claims that the contemplation of God is most perfect in women, the Christians' images confirm it. No one has ever succeeded in painting a halfway believable picture of the Father. In Stefan Lochner's painting, He is just a fairy-tale uncle looking down from some kind of window. Even Jesus is, at best, if a baby, as cute as a pudgy angel and, if an adult, just a man whose beauty takes on theological interest only in the form of the young shepherd. The Mother, on the other hand, although she is a mother, guardian, provider, educator, has an attraction as the Female in any portrayal, down to devotional postcards. In the most magnificent picture ever painted in Cologne, she reaches with her right hand for her son's wrist. Under the magnifying glass, you can see the gesture repeated in Mary's brooch: her right hand is on the raised right foreleg of the unicorn, which is equated with Christ. That, I read, was the official gesture of marriage and represented the Son and Mother as the Bride and Bridegroom of the Song of Solomon. To us too, she is supposed to be our sister and friend and to a small degree our lover. The Father only later came near and spoke comfortingly to me. <>

## Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism by Alexander Knysh [Princeton University Press, 9780691139098]

A pathbreaking history of Sufism, from the earliest centuries of Islam to the present.

After centuries as the most important ascetic-mystical strand of Islam, Sufism saw a sharp decline in the twentieth century, only to experience a stunning revival in recent decades. In this comprehensive new history of Sufism from the earliest centuries of Islam to today, Alexander Knysh, a leading expert on the subject, reveals the tradition in all its richness.

Knysh explores how Sufism has been viewed by both insiders and outsiders since its inception. He examines the key aspects of Sufism, from definitions and discourses to leadership, institutions, and practices. He devotes special attention to Sufi approaches to the Qur'an, drawing parallels with similar uses of scripture in Judaism and Christianity. He traces how Sufism grew from a set of simple moral-ethical precepts into a sophisticated tradition with professional Sufi masters (shaykhs) who became powerful players in Muslim public life but whose authority was challenged by those advocating the equality of all Muslims before God. Knysh also examines the roots of the ongoing conflict between the Sufis and their fundamentalist

critics, the Salafis—a major fact of Muslim life today.

Based on a wealth of primary and secondary sources, Sufism is an indispensable account of a vital aspect of Islam.

Excerpt: How else can any past, which by definition comprises events, processes, structures, and so forth, considered to be no longer perceivable, be represented in either consciousness or discourse except in an "imaginary" way? The Content of the Form: Narrative Discourse and Historical Representation by Hayden White [The Johns Hopkins University Press, 9780801829376]

Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism is about the ascetic-mystical stream in Islam that emerged at the very early stage of this religion's development and that subsequently took a wide variety of devotional, doctrinal, artistic, and institutional forms. Sufism's internal diversity has produced an equally wide variety of its assessments by both insiders and outsiders. They range from soberly detached and critical to empathetically enthusiastic and apologetic. Our study of the phenomenon of Sufism itself and its conceptualizations by various actors with vastly different intellectual and devotional agendas will reveal a great deal not just about Sufism but also about human beings' religious imagination more generally. What lies beyond this imagination does not concern us here. We leave it to believers, philosophers, and theologians to explore and appreciate.

Our task is to examine how Sufism has been imagined and, in the case of insiders, practiced based on this imagination, by various parties and actors since its inception up to the present. Our approach to the subject is inspired, in part, by Hayden White's (b. 1928) aforementioned statement about history as a product of imagining and emplotment of facts and figures. The continual imagining and emplotting of the historical vicissitudes of the ascetic-mystical movement in Islam by insiders and outsiders allow us to discover ever-new nuances and aspects pertaining to it. The process of imagining and emplotting is also revealing of the changing cultural, societal, and aesthetic assumptions current in the societies whose members seek to conceptualize and explain the phenomenon of Sufism and the actions and statements of its followers. Excluding or

delegitimizing one party to this collective act of imagining (for example, academic and nonacademic Orientalists, non-Muslim anthropologists of Muslim societies, or the Muslim fundamentalists/Salafis2) in favor of the other inevitably impoverishes our understanding of Sufism and Islam generally. Moreover, as will be shown, in describing the ascetic-mystical stream in Islam, different actors with different intellectual backgrounds and sometimes incompatible methodologies and goals feed off each other's discourses, thus creating epistemological bricolages that are as fanciful and illuminating as they are puzzling or occasionally incredible.

As some postmodernist critics of history writing have claimed, cogently, "history is always history for someone, and that someone cannot be the past itself, for the past does not have a self." Like all historians, historians of Sufism are not neutral observers: they always "take a stand within the world, [are] occupied with it, fascinated by it, overjoyed or horrified by it." Prompted by their all-too-human (and humane) "care"8 for the world, historians of Sufism "transform into ultimately imagined narratives a list of past events that would otherwise be only a collection of singular statements and/or a chronicle." In other words, like all historians, students of Sufism are on a mission of emplotting disparate events and statements related to the object of their concern in order to convey their personal understanding of it, on the one hand, and perhaps also to teach us a certain moral-ethical lesson, on the other. This being so, they are usually deeply, inextricably, and passionately invested into their own storytelling. The historians' act of arranging of events, statements, dates, and actors—usually depicted without any plot or logic in chronicles, literary works, or other historical documentation—has an obvious aim: to give these disparate pieces of historical evidence some "unity of significance." How exactly this raw historical evidence is emplotted into narratives remains uncertain. Hayden White has discussed its transformation into history writing mostly in literary terms, arguing that a "narrative account is always a figurative account, an allegory" aimed at the translating or "carrying over" of meanings from one discursive community to another. Whereas one does not have to agree with White on the predominantly literary nature of history writing, one can hardly deny that the success or failure of arranging raw

historical evidence into a story depends, in the end, on its resonance or lack thereof with cultural and intellectual preferences of the members of the society in which a given historical account has been produced. The same, of course, is true of any literary work.

It is probably in the spirit of such postmodernist conceptualizations of Western ("bourgeois") historiography as a work of fiction par excellence that in his seminal book on Sufism Carl Ernst has presented its modern understanding in the West as "an invention of late eighteenth-century European Orientalist scholarship." Bearing in mind its origins in the subaltern studies, which purposefully aim at dislodging Western intellectual paradigms, we should take Ernst's deconstructive statement cum grano salis, as the saying goes. Sufism, no matter how fancifully construed and emplotted, was and still is quite real for its followers, opponents, and students, both inside and outside the Sufi tradition. What Sufis of Islam's "classical age" (the ninth to twelfth centuries CE) said, implied, or wrote about Sufism in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, or the other "languages of Islam" was diligently translated by the oft-criticized Orientalists of western and eastern Europe as well as Russia into the languages of their native cultures. In the process, the Orientalists inevitably couched the original Sufi ideas and practices into the cultural codes intelligible to their own societies. The same applies to other phenomena within Islam, such as law, discursive theology, or the biography of the Prophet (sira).

The repackaging of Muslim discourses into one or the other European cultural idiom was, in our view, largely a natural process by which European intellectuals sought to comprehend and convey to others a complex, multifaceted foreign culture and religion. To be understood and appreciated by the European and Russian reading publics of a given age, Islam and its various trends, including Sufism, had to be defined, classified, and presented in the intellectual conventions that would make sense to the intended recipients. Presenting Sufism on its own terms, namely, as it was professed by countless Sufi teachers and their disciples, was simply not an option for European and Russian scholars of Islam. First, there was no one uniformly accepted, transregional metanarrative about Sufism and Sufis in the premodern and modern Muslim world. There

were, of course, numerous textbooks of Sufism or even dynastic histories composed from a Sufi perspective, but they were socially, linguistically, and culturally specific to the regions where they originated and, to boot, hardly representative of the internally diverse Sufi movement in Islam as a whole. Mentions by Sufi authors and teachers of their predecessors reveal a genealogy of their thought and practice, but do not provide a comprehensive picture of how, when, and why Sufism had arisen and developed in time and space. Second, as already mentioned, when translated literally into Western languages, Sufi teachings and biographies would have no doubt fallen flat on European audiences. It is in this sense that a general notion of Sufism had to be "invented," or, rather, imagined and emplotted, by European Orientalists for an average European intellectual to understand and relate to his or her own cultural and intellectual background and life experience.

In weaving a coherent and accessible narrative about Sufism for European audiences, leading experts on "Oriental studies" from the nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries first had to undertake the painstaking task of collecting, editing, and annotating Sufi texts. After this intellectual spadework had been accomplished, they would venture some general observations that have become grist to the mill of present-day critics of Orientalism. Finally, as we shall see throughout this book, medieval and modern Muslim writers both sympathetic and unsympathetic to Sufism tended to detach it from the rest of the Muslim tradition by presenting it being either its culmination or aberration. Therefore, to hold Westerners responsible for doing exactly the same, as Carl Ernst does, is seeing the situation with one eye only, to borrow an image used by the great Muslim mystic Ibn (al-)Arabi (d. 638/1240).

On balance, one can submit that the biases of Orientalist scholarship, although obvious to everyone with a modicum of knowledge of the subject, are no more or less severe than the biases of Sufis writing about their own doctrines and practices today as in the past. All writers, both insiders and outsiders, were, and still are, equally and deeply embedded in their own sets of power relations, cultural and social assumptions, and "oppressive [discursive] practices." Like Muslim

scholars advocating their fields of intellectual endeavor (for example, jurisprudence and theology), Sufi teachers were and still are eager to assemble a certain concept of Muslim ascetic-mystical piety and to present it as the only correct, orthodox one. Equally obvious and unavoidable are biases of Sufism's Muslim opponents whose views of Sufism will be discussed in detail later on in this book. One, then, wonders what "an unbiased and authentic" account of Sufism, which Ernst implies is possible, might look like. In the end, the question boils down to whose biases are more preferable (or less distorting)—those of insiders or those of outsiders to the Sufi tradition? Some tentative answers to this question will be proposed in the present study.

To reiterate, what the European and Russian Orientalists of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries did was to repackage for their respective reading publics, with various degrees of success and accuracy, the diverse Sufi and anti-Sufi discourses internal to the Muslim community at various stages of its evolution. In pursuing this educational goal (which was consonant with the spirit of the European Enlightenment), European students of Sufi texts carefully preserved and reproduced the hidden and not-so-hidden biases inherent in their sources. Simultaneously, they also injected into their renditions of original Muslim sources their own intellectual preferences and world-orientational convictions. As should be abundantly clear from the recent critical examinations of Orientalism, the Western scholars' biases were, in large part, shaped by the analytical categories that they used, because these categories were specific social-cultural constructs with particular genealogies of their own. Thus, the very notion of "religion" itself, which had grown out of the specific experiences of Christian Europe, was widely used as "the fundamental yardstick or paradigm-case for the study of `other religions?" The same applies to such categories as "mysticism" and "rational/irrational" that are of direct relevance to our study of Sufism. An unreflective, summary application of such distinctly (western) European categories to non-Abrahamic traditions of India and the Far East has been even more problematic due to the vast disparity in the cultural and social sensitivities of Eastern and Western societies.

Besides, as Edward Said and his numerous followers have shown, some practitioners of Orientalist scholarship in the nineteenth to early twentieth centuries did indeed pursue sometimes covert and sometimes obvious political and ideological agendas aimed at facilitating and justifying European colonization of the Muslim lands. For example, a number of politically and ideologically engaged Orientalists in the service of the European and Russian colonial governments tended to exaggerate the militant, antichristian "resistance potential" of Islam generally and Sufism in particular. In so doing, they followed, perhaps unwittingly, in the footsteps of medieval Christian detractors of Islam and Muslims.

This said, the views of various cohorts of European students of Islam (summarily described by Said as "Orientalists") differed significantly, determined as they were by their professional responsibilities and various audiences to whom they addressed their discourses. The situation in which nineteenth- and twentieth-century Orientalists found themselves is not dissimilar to that of today's Islamologists in Europe, the United States, and Russia, who, when called upon to comment on an "Islamic" event, wittingly or not, adjust their comments to the expectations and levels of understanding peculiar to their audiences. Thus, a Western scholar of Sufism today, when asked by state officials to explain why his or her study is important and how it is relevant to state policy toward various Muslim communities located inside and outside his or her native country, is likely to present a different image of Sufism from the one that he or she would in a lecture addressed to an audience of experts on the subject, in a college classroom, or while speaking to journalists. Any scholar who wants to be understood by a non-specialist auditorium is under pressure to avoid nuances and prolixity, going straight to the heart of the matter, as it were. This factor inevitably detracts from the complexity of the issues discussed, not to mention accuracy of his or her analysis. The image of Islam and Muslim societies is likely to be substantially different (usually more nuanced and self-reflective) in the scholar's academic works addressed to his or her intellectual peers. In short, one should keep in mind the diversity of consumers of Orientalist expertise, in addition to the sociopolitical positions and predilections of the experts. The experts have to weigh and adjust constantly and consciously their

public pronouncements about Islam and Muslims or risk stepping on many sensitive toes and facing public outrage.

Finally, scholars, who in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries served as colonial administrators, did indeed pursue definite professional goals (as do scholars today who are working for Western and Russian governments and think tanks). However, their discourses, in our opinion, should not be lumped together with those of academic Orientalists, who were under no immediate pressure to produce actionable or ideologically driven analyses. So, before launching into a diatribe against their predecessors, today's experts on Islam and Muslim societies, who have taken Said's critique of Orientalism to heart, should determine which group of the Orientalists they are targeting in order not to paint them all with one brush. They should also take a long and hard look at their own knowledge production and knowledge deployment practices that are always situational, determined as they are by concrete circumstances, audiences, and venues. In short, every critical deconstruction of Orientalism should begin at home.

As for the role of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Orientalists in reconstructing Sufism's evolution in time and space, without their painstaking efforts our knowledge of the ascetic-mystical tradition in Islam today would have been much poorer and less comprehensive than it is of Sufism that they shared with Sufis and Muslims generally, for no one, in our opinion, has the monopoly on exploring a subject that interests and excites them, even if, in hindsight, this exploration may appear to have been incomplete or biased. Richard King argues, and we agree, that a fruitful and illuminating study of religions by outsiders is possible, despite the cognitive gap between the subject and the object of study and with the proviso that academic scholars should not "claim ultimate jurisdiction in these matters."

We can agree or disagree with their descriptions of Sufism and/or Islam, but we should be grateful, not disdainful toward them, despite prejudices, errors, and blind spots that were as unavoidable in their time and age as they are in ours. In the present book, the legacy of European and Russian Orientalists is treated as the fruit of the collective intellectual discovery."

As for the "invented" character of Sufism in Orientalist discourses that Ernst and others have pointed out, it is no less or no more real or invented than such widely used concepts as "asceticism," "religion," "Neoplatonism," "Judeo-Christian tradition," or "Islam" itself. All these intellectual abstracts and constructs, whether external or internal to the phenomenon in question, are made real (realized) by the actors who take them to heart, discuss, debate, teach, or implement. Sociologists and anthropologists have shown that to exist and to have staying power, ideas and practices have to be constantly enacted or performed by various groups of actors. If a certain idea or practice is no longer enacted/performed by one group, it either vanishes or, as Bruno Latour has suggested, "the other actors have taken over the relay" to sustain it in a different type (or site) of performance. The actors are, in other words, the real agents, not the abstracts and practices themselves. However, abstracts, constructs, and practices do matter as motivations, frameworks, and sources of arguments insofar as they are being reimagined, emplotted, and debated by various categories of participants who thereby help to sustain them. In this respect, the notions of "Sufism" and "Islam" are not different from any other abstractions created by human beings to serve as explanatory tools.

Having just mentioned "Islam" alongside "Sufism," in the chapters that follow we treat the latter as "Islam in miniature." In other words, all the features of the encompassing larger tradition (Islam) are reflected in its ascetic-mystical stream (Sufism), albeit on a relatively smaller scale. We submit that, like Islam or any other religion for that matter, Sufism comprises the following major components:

1.  Teachings (discourses), both hegemonic and counterhegemonic, stabilizing and destabilizing, widely accepted and marginal;
2.  Practices, defined by the teachings (discourses) and instrumental in the production and maintenance of certain world outlooks, values, lifestyles, cosmologies, and social orders;
3.  Community of intellectual and, in the case of Sufism, also spiritual commitment that constitutes a source (and, occasionally, the

primary source) of identity/subjectivity for its followers;

4. Institutions that ensure the continuity of the Sufi stream of Islam by creating a propitious milieu for the cultivation, performance, and reproduction of its teachings/discourses and practices;

5. Leaders, who interpret the foundational teachings/discourses, supervise rituals, secure the functioning of institutions, and

6. determine the overall direction of the religious tradition and/or community that they guide and represent.


The aim of this book is to explore these dimensions of the ascetic-mystical stream of Islam, or Sufism, without sliding into either unbridled partisanship or adverse criticism of the subject and of its conceptualizations by both insiders and outsiders. As the hope of reaching "the heights of complete `objectivity'" is unreachable by definition, scholars, according to the British Buddhologist Richard King, should frankly acknowledge "their own `pre judgments," then attempt "to provide a balanced and fair portrayal of that in which they are claiming expertise," even if this attempt may entail expressing "alternate opinions" and challenging "perspectives offered by the religious traditions themselves." Our hope is that the relative impartiality of our approach to Sufism and Islam generally is assured by our lack of any personal stake in either. The American philosopher and psychologist William James (1842-1910), citing the great Muslim theologian al-Ghazali (d. 505/1111), has argued that "to understand the causes of drunkenness, as a physician understands them, is not to be drunk." Likewise, to understand Sufism, one does not have to "imbibe" and "digest" its principles with a view to implementing them in practice. On the contrary, to maintain a modicum of objectivity, one should remain immune to Sufism's potent allure. This detached, nonparticipatory kind of understanding, limited and limiting as it may appear, does have the right to exist. This is exactly our position: that of an outsider looking inside the "Abode of Islam/Sufism" without embroiling him or herself in debates about its true essence or what constitutes correct or incorrect Muslim or Sufi doctrine and practice.

This said, one can never hope to avoid having personal intellectual preferences, simply because they are humanly inescapable. Our approach to Sufism and Islam has been shaped by our lifelong academic study of Islam and Muslim societies. In the course of this study we have grown increasingly weary of the rampant ideological partisanship that has been the hallmark of the field of Islamic studies over that past few decades. While being cognizant of the fact that partisan approaches to Islam and the Muslims in the academic world and beyond are unavoidable under the current geopolitical and cultural conditions, we have endeavored, to the extent this is possible, to steer clear of ideologically and personally driven debates over Islam's and Sufism's true nature and orthodoxy (or a lack thereof). This does not mean that they are ignored. On the contrary, these debates are given serious consideration as long as they are germane to the issues raised in this book. For us, these debates are but evidence that should be treated objectively and impartially, not arbitrated, nor taken sides with or against. It is certainly true that any serious scholar of Sufism and/or Islam is not immune to a certain level of empathy for his or her subject. Nevertheless, our overall position is to try to keep our personal preferences to ourselves as much as possible.

On the methodological plane, we are not wedded to any particular theory for its own sake. Conversant with the latest methodologies offered by sociologists, anthropologists, literary critics, cultural historians, and adepts of so-called subaltern studies, we employ this or that method and theory only as long as it sheds new light on the aspects of the subject that would otherwise have remained invisible or underappreciated. At the same time, we are convinced that none of the methods or theories mentioned or applied in the narrative that follows is sufficient to explain such as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon as Sufism, not to mention Islam as a whole. New theories offered by social sciences and the humanities can indeed be of great help in that they allow the investigator to see one and the same event, personality, or concept from a variety of vantage points, which occasionally, but not always, can be quite illuminating. Furthermore, Islam and Islamic studies should not, in our opinion, be the limit in telling a comprehensive story of Sufism and its five components enumerated above. Methods used and

insights obtained in academic fields and contexts outside Islamic studies proper often prove to be extremely helpful in exploring the ascetic-mystical stream of Islam. Therefore, in this book we will be drawing parallels between Sufi Islam and other religious traditions as well as Sufism and secular ideological systems. This perspective should help us to avoid the common trend among scholars of Islam to focus on "things Islamic," while ignoring rich opportunities for comparative analysis offered by other religions and cultures. The lack of such a comparative perspective, as will be shown, is in part a result of the ideological self-censure performed by scholars out of a misguided (in our opinion at least) sense of political correctness or for apologetic considerations.

The main objective of this book is to give an accessible, while also nuanced, account of Sufism as a system of thought and action. The chronological scope is from Sufism's beginnings in the second/eighth century to the present day. Because our approach to Sufism is novel in many respects and departs from the traditional historicist and positivist perspective that we adopted in our earlier works, we have titled our study Sufism: A New History of Islamic Mysticism. Whether this title accurately reflects the content is for the reader to judge.

In order not to digress from the plot lines in the main body of this book, a definition of several key concepts that inform our analytic framework is in order. We treat Sufism as an ascetic-mystical movement, stream, or trend within Islam (both Sunni and Shi`i). Our choice of the hyphenated definition indicates our reluctance to separate strictly and unequivocally "ascetic" beliefs and practices from those commonly understood as "mystical." This separation takes its origins in Max Weber's concept of early Islam as "this-worldly asceticism of a warrior group" that was later somehow "adulterated by Sufism which catered for the emotional and orgiastic needs of the masses." Basing himself on this initial axiom, Weber defined Sufism as "other-worldly mysticism" that was derived "from Hindu and Persian sources" and that "in no case did constitute `asceticism' in the special sense of the term which we have employed." Although adopted by a number of present-day Islamologists, such a neat and occasionally useful dichotomy is, in our opinion, unsustainable. The

same applies to Weber's concurrent dichotomy of "ascetic virtuoso" versus "mystical virtuoso."

Renouncing this world often entails reorienting oneself to the world to come and, as a consequence, attempts to experience visionary glimpses or even somatic sensations of its glories and pleasures (for example, seeing God, partaking of paradisiacal fruits, drinks, and delicacies, embracing houris, and such) already in this life. The purpose of ascetic self-discipline and self-imposed strictures is, as numerous Sufi masters have argued for centuries, to purify the soul and to prepare it for a vision of or communion/communication with God here and now That this originally Platonic idea was adopted by some early Christian thinkers (for example, by Justin Martyr, 100-165 CE) is evidenced by their descriptions of "the soul's return to God through purification (askēsis) followed by contemplative vision (the Sria)." In other words, the desire to "starve out or punish the animal elements of the human condition" exhibited by early Christian monks (those "athletes of Christ") has always been supported by "a highly articulated [mystical] theology."

Therefore, distilling asceticism and mysticism into two "ideal types" may be helpful and elegant at first sight, but, at closer look, fails to account adequately for the messiness and originality of the thought and practice of real-life "spiritual athletes." After examining the statements of early Muslim heresiographers, the German Islamologist Bernd Radtke (b. 1944) has unequivocally linked the ascetic practices and self-imposed strictures of early Muslims to their mystical aspirations and goals. In fact, the two usually went hand in hand and were inseparable. The early Muslim heresiographers cited by Radtke considered both ascetic feats and mystical aspirations of the first Muslim pietists to be equally objectionable insofar as they had the potential to entice some gullible members of the Muslim community into thinking of themselves as God's beloveds, thereby causing them to neglect their religious duties. Much later, the renowned advocates of Sunni "orthodoxy" Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328) and al-Dhahabi (d. 748/1348) also conflated asceticism and mysticism by mentioning certain individuals who acted simultaneously "on the basis of the asceticism and Sufism of the philosophers." At the same time,

Muslim scholars such as Ibn Khaldun (d. 808/1406) believed that "philosophizing Sufis" had corrupted "the originally pious tradition of zuhd" with their mystical metaphysics. This view was reproduced by Western students of Islam, such as Louis Massignon (1883-1962) and Christopher Melchert, both of whom have argued that asceticism is not the same as mysticism and vice versa. According to Massignon, for example, by diluting the originally pure ascetic tradition of Islam with Neoplatonic metaphysics, later followers of Sufism sacrificed its suprarational, emotional impulse and directness. As a result, Sufism turned into a sterile scholastic theology.

As for the Sufis themselves, they have never tired of emphasizing an intimate link between the Sufi's "action(s) and elegant deeds of devotion," on the one hand, and the "divinely-inspired knowledge" bestowed on him by God, on the other. In any event, the very dynamic of merger and separation of asceticism and mysticism in insider and outsider accounts of Sufism is indicative of the two being, essentially, conterminous and complementary.

Similar conclusions about the relationship between ascetic and mystical belief and behavior have been reached by scholars of Christianity. Thus, the major expert on Western Christian mysticism Bernard McGinn (b. 1937) has argued that "rather than being something added on to mystical experience, mystical theory in most cases precedes and guides the mystic's whole way of life." This way of life, as McGinn's multivolume project demonstrates, invariably requires that Christian devotees engage in ascetic exercises and rigorous self-discipline (defined as "monasticism," "penance," and "absolute poverty") with a view to "attaining the `loving knowledge of God'" In other words, the ascetics' arduous feats of perseverance and self-disciplining strictures, according to McGinn, inevitably produce "visualizations," "contemplations," and ecstatic "trances:' Thus, both ascetic practice and mystical longing for God are equally necessary for the devotees to achieve their destination. A similar opinion was articulated by Vladimir Lossky (1903-1958) in his study of the mystical aspects of Eastern Orthodox Christianity. In his rather apologetic description of Russian Orthodoxy, he argued, among other things, that mystical theology constitutes the very core of its faith and practice. In sum, ascetic life and mystical theology are inseparable and feed off each other. The conclusions reached by McGinn and Lossky, as well as numerous other scholars of Christianity, apply neatly to the ascetic-mystical tradition in Islam. Like their Christian brothers-in-spirit, medieval Muslim devotees organically combined, albeit in varying degrees, ascetic practices (or "bodily regimes/praxis" as they are often dubbed in today's Western scholarship) with mystical speculations about God and his relations with his human creatures.

Should one still insist that there is an obvious heuristic validity to the asceticism-mysticism dichotomy, we can suggest that the former is more about disciplining the human appetitive soul or anima (by means of vows, vigils, fasting, and other self-imposed rigors and penances), whereas the latter is more about imagining and experiencing "symbolic" cosmologies as well as an often-ingenious linking of concrete ascetic actions to broader, and loftier, cosmic contexts and goals. Concisely put: asceticism is primarily about body, whereas mysticism is primarily about mind; however, the two are usually merged organically in one and the same personality and are thus inseparable, except for heuristic purposes. To go against one's natural instincts one has to have a really good cause. Therefore, in unison with McGinn, Lossky, and others, we submit that one cannot engage in ascetic "bodily regimes" without a mystical theology or metaphysics (that is, a "symbolic universe"), no matter how rudimentary, unstructured, or illogical. Whereas discoursing about mystical experience usually falls within the rubric of "mysticism" or "mystical theology," with asceticism being commonly conceived as practice par excellence, separating them may distract us from their organic coexistence and interdependence. As already mentioned, subduing one's appetitive nature demands a really good cause, in our case, either salvation or intimacy/union with God. However, we admit that occasionally such a separation may come in handy for educational purposes, for example, framing Sufism as a sequential progression from simpler to more sophisticated forms of belief and practice.

Nevertheless, one has to acknowledge that differences between "asceticism" or "renunciation of the world" (Arab. nusk; taqashshuf; zuhd [fi 'l-dunya]) and "mysticism" (`irfan; kashf; hikma) were

as real for medieval Muslim scholars as they are for modern-day Islamologists. Moreover, recent scholarship on the subject has suggested that one could pursue a rigorous type of ascetic piety without ever engaging in mystical speculations or attaching oneself to a Sufi community or spiritual lineage (sil-sila). Such assumptions notwithstanding, the two more often than not go hand in hand,98 which, in our view, warrants bringing them together in a hyphenated phrase. The usefulness and viability of numerous other terms and concepts pertinent to the ascetic-mystical movement in Islam are discussed in what follows. In particular, the ideologically driven contractions and expansions of the term "Sufism" itself constitute the subject matter of chapter 1 of this book.

This study has been inspired, in large part, by the author's editorial work for E. J. Brill's monumental Encyclopedia of Islam (EI). To its erudite, eloquent, and perceptive contributors he owes a profound debt of gratitude. In the process of editing submissions to the section "Sufism" of the Encyclopedia of Islam's third edition (EI3), he has had a unique chance to observe the overall evolution of the academic field of Sufi studies, a subfield of Islamic studies, or "Islamology/Islamologie," as it is sometimes dubbed in the European and Russian academe. One important advantage of his editorial duties was that they allowed the author to discover new scholarship on Sufism and Islam generally. This does not mean that the insights of the contributors to the EI3 have been simply integrated into this monograph. Most of the entries edited by the author were too narrow in their focus to serve as the foundation of a general analytic survey of Sufism such as the one intended here. The author's task was to synthesize disparate facts about Sufism in order to produce, hopefully, a cohesive and comprehensive whole.

The Gist

1. In exploring various manifestations of the phenomenon called "Sufism" (tasawwuf), one should bring together both "internal" and
(1) "external" perspectives on it that are often being intricately engaged in conversations with one another.
2. Sufism is "Islam in miniature" with the major features of Sufism present in Islam and

vice versa. This being the case, Sufism, like Islam, comprises all the major components of a religious tradition, namely, teachings/discourses, practices, communities, institutions, and leaders.
3. The author has strived to steer clear of both barefaced apologetics and theological criticism of Sufism, seeking impartiality and objectivity as far as humanly possible.
4. The author takes a holistic approach to Sufism by refusing to separate its ascetic and mystical elements, in particular Sufi teachings from Sufi practices. The two always go hand in hand and are reciprocal. Hence, the author's use of the hyphenated adjective "ascetic-mystical" in describing and analyzing various components and manifestations of Sufism.
5. The book summarizes the major insights that the author has acquired in working as an editor of the Encyclopedia of Islam's third edition (E. J. Brill, Leiden and Boston), the seminal reference for the field of Islamic studies today. <>

## Islamic Mysticism and Abu Talib Al-Makki: The Role of the Heart by Saeko Yazaki [Routledge Sufi Series, Routledge, 9781138118706]

Both in everyday language and religious metaphor, the heart often embodies the true self and is the seat of emotion in many cultures. Many Muslim thinkers have attempted to clarify the nature of Sufism using its metaphorical image, particularly in the tenth and eleventh centuries.

This book examines the work of Abū Tālib al-Makkī and his wider significance within the Sufi tradition, with a focus on the role of the heart. Analyzing his most significant work, Qūt al-qulūb ('The Nourishment of Hearts'), the author goes beyond an examination of the themes of the book to explore its influence not only in the writing of Sufis, but also of Hanbalī and Jewish scholars.

Providing a comprehensive overview of the world of al-Makkī and presenting extracts from his book on religious characteristics of the heart with selected passages in translation for the first time in English, this book will give readers a better understanding not only of the essential features of

Sufism, but also the nature of mysticism and its relation to monotheistic faiths.

Excerpt Despite the discourse on Islamophobia and topical issues around Islam and the West, Sufism appears to be accepted in Western society compared to other dimensions of Islam. Sufi thought is often described as `moderate' and `tolerant', in stark contrast, for example, to `extreme' Salafis who attack 'peace-loving' Sufis. In addition to this liberal image, the religious status of Sufism in Islam seems to be equivalent to Yoga in Hinduism and Zen in Buddhism, especially in popular culture; while Islamic (or Hindu or Buddhist) aspects are not entirely neglected, they are not central. The spiritual teachings of Sufism (and Yoga and Zen) are often regarded in the West as an alternative to conventional religious institutions and not incompatible with other belief systems. Many Sufism-related organizations in Europe and the United States have contributed to this image by focusing on humanity, peace, love and the universality of mysticism. (One of the prime examples would be the doctrine of Inayat Khan (d. 1927) — the Sufi and musician from India who tried to spread the idea of universal Sufism in the UK, Holland, France and the USA.)

Alongside this appreciation of Sufism that appeals to the popular spiritual movement, Islamic mysticism has also attracted significant scholarly attention in the West. The modem study of Sufism began in the colonial period when the image of Sufis was influenced partially by political interests and partially by European travellers' narratives of exotic dervishes in the Orient. From the early twentieth century, a number of scholarly works have been produced in Islamic studies in various European languages. The topics range from general surveys of the doctrine of Sufism and translation of Sufi writings, to more specific studies of a certain figure, order or period in the history of Islamic mysticism.

This book seeks to contribute to this growing body of literature, focusing on the tenth-century Muslim writer on piety, Abū Tālib al-Makkī (d. 386/996), whose major work Qūt al-qulūb (`The Nourishment of Hearts') appeared in different fields of study, including Sufism, asceticism, Hadīth, social sciences, Hanbalism and, beyond Islam, Jewish spirituality. The Qūt was written in a period which is generally

accepted as a time of systematisation of the Sufi tradition (the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries). These two centuries produced various treatises which became important mystical guidebooks for later Sufis, and al-Makki is often regarded as one of the earliest writers to have composed a 'Sufi manual'. In the Qūt, al-Makki discussed the role of the heart as the mediator between this world and the hereafter, governing human mind and body as king. He urged the reader to maximize the quality of the heart in order to be a pious believer carrying out God's will.

The Qūt has been read widely as a guide on ethics and exerted a great influence on later Muslim scholars. For instance, the famous Islamic thinker Abū Hamid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111) lists the Qūt first as a work on Sufism which he read for his study, and his heavy reliance on the Qūt in the writing of his magnum opus, Ihyā"ulūm al-din (`The Revivification of the Religious Sciences'), has been discussed by a number of scholars on Sufism. Among prominent medieval Sufi authors, al-Makki is highly esteemed, for instance, in the writings of al-Suhrawardi (d. 632/1234), Ibn al-`Arabi (d. 638/1240) and Rūmī (d. 672/1273), where al-Makki is praised as the author of a significant book on Islamic devotion, the Qūt. Compared to the straightforward respect al-Makki enjoys from Sufi thinkers, Hanbalì literature reveals a more complex estimation in the writings of, for instance, Ibn al-Jawzi (d. 597/1200) and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), which demonstrate a more ambivalent attitude towards al-Makki and his thought.

The teachings of the Qūt may even have crossed faith borders, as some scholars in Jewish studies have pointed out al-Makki's influence on the Andalusian Jewish thinker Ibn Bāqūdā (d. after 1080), who composed a moral guidebook, al-Hidāya ilā farā'id al-qulūb (`The Right Guidance to the Religious Duties of Hearts'), in Judaeo-Arabic. The name of al-Makki thus frequently appears in medieval literature in biographical dictionaries, Hadith, Sufi and Hanbalī writing, and his relevance to scholarship lies beyond the study of Sufism, and even Islamic studies. Despite this, few studies have carried out a critical analysis of al-Makki and his work, and no single monograph has yet been published on the subject. In 1992-5, Gramlich

published a complete translation of the Qūt in German, Die Nahrung der Herzen. (See below for translations of the Qūt.) There exist several PhD theses on al-Makkî: Shukri in 1976 investigates the life and works of al-Makkī and his spiritual doctrines in the Qūt; Amin in 1991 examines al-Makkī's contribution to Sufism and provides a translation of an extract from the Qūt to analyse its influence on a chapter of the Lhyā' by al-Ghazali; Bin Ramli in 2011 focuses on the development of scholarship in the history of early Sufism through analysis of knowledge and theology of the Qūt. Specific scholarship on al-Makki also includes an article on al-Makki in EI3, where Ohlander in 2010 greatly expands the previous articles on al-Makki in EI1 and EI2 by Massignon, shows an extensive use of Gramlich's introduction to the translation and Amin's article in 1999, which is an extract from his thesis. In 2011 Khalil published an article where he tries to situate al-Makkī in the history of early Sufism.

Based on this scholarship and my own PhD thesis on al-Makkī submitted in 2010, the present study attempts to provide a fresh examination of the world of al-Makkī and his work, Qūt al-qulūb. This book differs from the above-mentioned works in the following points. Firstly, the study is carried out through an exploration of the religious role of the heart, on which al-Makki's teachings are based. The heart is a unique organ — not only for its physical function as the sole organ pumping blood to the body but for its supposed spiritual capacity. Both in everyday language and in religious metaphor, the heart often embodies the true self and is considered to be the seat of emotion. In common with other cultures and religious traditions, Islam shares this central concern with the heart, as can be clearly seen in the title of al-Makki's major work, The Nourishment of Hearts — one of the prime extant examples of such early work. Focusing on the universal symbolism of the heart helps crystallise the nature of his thought in comparison with teachings of other Muslim thinkers, as well as Islamic spirituality in comparison with doctrines of other religions.

Secondly, I will examine the characteristics of the Qūt within and beyond the context of Sufism, where the Qūt is conventionally regarded as a paradigm of the early mystical guidebook in Islam,

together with two contemporary treatises: Kitāb lumafi'l-tasawwuf (`The Book of Sparkling Lights in Sufism') by al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), and Kitāb al-ta'arruf li-madhhab ahl al-tasawwuf (`The Book of Acquaintance with the Path of Sufis') by al-Kaiābādhī (d. ca. 385/995). Rather than dealing exclusively with mysticism as we can see in the latter two works, al-Maki fills his book with warnings and moral guidelines for believers based on an Islamic ethos. This view depends on the way in which we interpret al-Makki's understanding of tasawwuf, Sufism, which raises a further question of how we examine Islamic mysticism.

The definition of the term `Sufism' is beyond the scope of the present work; however, part of the title of Schimmel's famous work, Mystical Dimensions of Islam, would encapsulate the basic meaning of what I seek to convey by the terms `Sufism' or `Islamic mysticism' in this book. A mystical perspective is a way of interpretation of how the world works. Sufis may appear to pursue personal experience with the Divine through internalization of faith oblivious to the happenings in the external world. However, the personal is social. A Sufi way of living inevitably has an effect on every aspect of individual and communal life. As the study indicates, this understanding of mysticism accords with the teachings of al-Makki, which do not distinguish between the devotional manner of living of a Sufi and a Sufi lifestyle. An examination of the nature of the Qūt without pigeonholing it as a Sufi work, should problematise the way in which we study Sufism and mysticism in general.

Thirdly, through an exploration of the influence of al-Makkī, this book addresses the complexity of Sufi—Hanbalī and Muslim—Jewish relations, which has often been obscured especially by the current political discourses. The tradition of anti-Sufi Hanbalism receives some support from certain Hanbalī literature and its image has been further strengthened by puritanical Saudi-Wahhābī policy, whose principles are influenced by the prominent Hanbalī scholar Ibn Taymiyya. This, however, conflicts with the fact that the earliest extant Sufi order was founded by a famous Hanbalī mystic, `Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī (d. 561/1166).

The long and rich history of the Judaeo-Islamic tradition has often been regarded as one of

hostility, largely owing to the contemporary political conflict surrounding Israel and Palestine. This, again, clashes with the idea of the `Golden Age' in the Jewish history, which is applied to the time in al-Andalus during the Islamic period. The relationship between Sufism and Hanbalism on the one hand, and between Muslims and Jews on the other hand, thus shares a feature: their complexity and ambiguity are greatly affected by current political and ideological discourses. Through an examination of al-Makkī's influence on Hanbalī scholars and an Andalusian Jewish judge, this book seeks to shed a different light on these polarized views and give historical reference to them.

Considering these three issues, I have divided the focus of the present study into nine chapters. The first two chapters set the scene. Chapter 1 introduces al-Makki's life and works through an examination of a number of medieval biographical dictionaries and modern studies. Chapter 2 introduces the Qūt and situates it in its wider context through an exploration of the symbolism of the heart in various religious traditions, with special reference to Judaism, Christianity and the early history of Sufism. I then provide a detailed outline of the whole Qūt and discuss al-Makkī's manner of citation of the religious authorities.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine the role of the heart in the belief of al-Makkī through annotation and selective and paraphrastic translation of an extract from the Qūt. Section 30 of the book is the only part where al-Makki explains the different functions which he attaches to the heart. The selection of this part of the Qūt is not only because it can sum up his spiritual teachings, but also because the symbolism of the heart plays a pivotal role in the theory of Sufism as well as in other cultures and religious traditions. The copy of the Qūt used in this study is the 2001 edition by al-Radwānī. Although not well known to researchers on Sufism, this appears to be the only version to include descriptions of the manuscripts used in the editing process. (See a list of modern editions of the Qūt at the end of this section.) The summarised translation of the extract from the Qūt provided here will be the first English translation based on this edition. At the end of Chapter 4, I compare al-Makki's religious teaching on the heart with those of several other Muslim thinkers.

Based on a close examination of al-Makki's work and its intellectual context, Chapter 5 compares the Qūt with two tenth-century contemporary treatises, the Luma' by al-Sarrāj and al-Ta`arruf by al-Kalābādhī. Modern-day studies of Sufism often glue these three works as the earliest encyclopaedic Sufi treatises. This chapter, however, will highlight the differences between them. It will challenge the simplified estimation of the Qūt as a Sufi work only, through a discussion of the essential components of Islam as presented by al-Sarrāj and al-Kalābādhī.

The first part of this study lays emphasis on the nature of the Qūt as a moral guide of Islamic devotion, relying heavily on the Hadīth rather than Sufi sayings. However, the following two chapters examine the way in which he was known chiefly among his fellow believers in pre-modern times as a writer on Sufism. The diverse views on al-Makkī and his work will underline different interpretations of the Sufi way among medieval Islamic scholars. Chapter 6 first examines how al-Makki is treated in notable medieval works on Sufism by scholars, such as al-Suhrawardi, Ibn al-`Arabī, Rūmī, al-Rundi (d. 792/1390) and Jāmī (d. 898/1492). Despite their great debt to the Qūt, however, well-known medieval Sufi hagiographies make no reference to al-Makki. This chapter will then examine the way in which major biographical dictionaries and Hadīth literary works discuss al-Makki over the period of around six centuries.

Chapter 7 focuses on the influence of al-Makki on Hanbalī scholars, which will challenge the general picture of Hanbalism as hostile towards Sufism due to its heretical views of the Divine and its religious practices. I will analyse the evaluation of al-Makkī by four notable Hanbalī scholars from the eleventh to the fourteenth century who left literary works in the fields of Kalām, Sufism, historiography, law and polemics. The first is Ibn al-Farrā' (d. 458/1066), whose work on Kalām appears to be the earliest extant source which mentions al-Makki, and shows the author's heavy reliance on him. The second scholar is the well-known Hanbalī mystic `Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, whose influential Sufi work reveals his great debt to al-Makkī's teachings. The last two Hanbalī scholars show more complicated attitudes

towards al-Makki. Ibn al-Jawzi, the author of a famous Hanbalī polemic, demonstrates both criticism and acceptance of al-Makkī in his works. The same tendency can be seen in the renowned Hanbalī thinker Ibn Taymiyya, who influenced the anti-Sufi Wahhābī movement. Given the extensive focus on Islamic piety in al-Makki's writing, it is not surprising to see his name appearing in a wide range of fields. The examination of the treatment of al-Makkī by these four Hanbalī scholars reveals the complexity of the Sufi—Hanbalī relationship, raising questions of the fundamental meaning of Sufism in the history of Islam and the way in which we study it.

In order to situate al-Makkī's moral teachings in a wider context beyond Sufism, and indeed even Islam, the focus of the last part of the book shifts from Islam to Judaism. Throughout the vast area of the Islamic empire, Arabic served as the lingua franca. This encouraged continuous interaction beyond faith borders and in many places the Jewish adoption of Arabic as the vernacular and written language. In what Goitein famously called the 'Jewish—Arab symbiosis', there was a dynamic interaction between Jewish and Islamic and/or Arabic writings, particularly in al-Andalus. In this study, I compare the works of al-Makki and Ibn Bāqūdā, who wrote a Jewish moral guide which shows the great influence of Muslim literature, and I will address the issue of his possible debt to al-Makkī's Qût.

Chapter 8 first introduces Ibn Bāqūdā and his major work, al-Hidâya. This Judaeo-Arabic work became popular among Jews soon after its completion as the first systematic treatise on ethics. Due to its title, contents and terminology, several scholars in Jewish studies have mentioned al-Makkī's influence on this work; however, a systematic comparison has not yet been carried out. Chapter 9 therefore analyses the works of al-Makki and Ibn Bāqūdā through an evaluation of their aims, structures and approaches, and then their religious views of the heart, which underpin both authors' thought. In concluding, I examine more closely this possible link between al-Makkī and Ibn Bāqūdā through the linguistic differences between Arabic and Judaeo-Arabic, and the shared heritage between Judaism and Islam in the context of intellectual and religious enquiry.

Mysticism is generally considered to be universal; however, it expresses itself in a language within a specific cultural context. With different social locations and dimensions, Islamic mysticism has allowed its forms to be constantly changing. Regardless of the question of whether al-Makkī considered himself to be a Sufi, he employed certain terms often used by Sufis, and he argued within the framework of Islam. It is questionable whether the Qût should be classified simply as a mystical writing; however, it is clear that the intended readership of al-Makkī was his fellow Muslims. Despite this, his thought can be seen as transferable into intellectual and religious traditions beyond Islam. This might be partly because of the nature of mysticism and monotheistic traditions.

Throughout this book, an attempt is made to present al-Makkī in a multidimensional way, without pigeonholing him as a Sufi or a Hadith specialist, and to examine how he has been viewed later, despite — or because of— the way he projects himself in his writing. Through an exploration of the work and influence of al-Makkī, I hope this book will provide an opportunity to give further thought to the study of Sufism, the nature of mysticism and its relation to monotheistic faiths.

Qūt al-qulūb essentially concerns ethical issues. In this major writing, al-Makki almost attempts to codify the Qur'ān, Haab and sayings of worthy ancestors in order to show a pious way of life. Piety and ethics may not be identical. However, religion often defines codes of behaviour, and in the Qût, pious conduct and ethical action seem to be treated in the same way. Piety does not require logical comprehension of the mechanism of belief. In his work, al-Makkī encourages the reader to accept the unavoidable fact that there exists a sphere which human ability cannot reach. He clearly divides Divinity from humanity, as his belief appears to be based on the acknowledgement of the limit of man's faculties.

Al-Makkī, however, has complete faith in the enormous spiritual capacity of a particular human organ, the heart. If employed properly, the heart will be a judge and guide in this world and can be a bridge to the hereafter. One of the themes of the present study has been the universality of the religious image of the heart. As we have seen, many cultures have attached a metaphorical role to

the heart whose religious images bear a striking resemblance regardless of time and space. This has been further confirmed by a comparative analysis of the religious teachings of the heart of al-Makki and Ibn Bāqūdā. Crossing the border of faith and language, a unique aspect of the heart appears to lie in its symbolic ability of encompassing physical and spiritual worlds, Divine and human spheres.

This book has also explored the issue of the Sufi—Hanbalī relationship. Contrary to the prevailing view of Hanbalī hostility towards Sufism, an exploration of the intellectual reaction towards al-Makki of four Hanbalī scholars from different periods in different genres has demonstrated their diverse opinions of his work, from respect and total reliance to partial dependence and criticism. For example, the present study has unpacked the complexity of the treatment of al-Makki by Ibn Taymiyya, who has often been a reference point for the anti-Sufi Wahhābī movement. The line between the historical Ibn Taymiyya and the perception of him among later thinkers is never going to disappear. However, it is not necessary for me to reiterate the importance of a proper understanding of his thought by going back to his original texts, rather than quoting second- or third-generation citations out of context. The study of al-Makki is thus relevant to the modem context and a more in-depth examination should shed a different light on the current political image of Sufi—Hanbalī relations.

The present study has also evaluated a dynamic interaction between Judaism and Islam based on a comparative analysis between the Qūt and al-Hidāya, which has led to a further question of the way we study al-Makki and mysticism in general. If we are to assume that Ibn Bāqūdā went to great pains to substitute Muslim sources with Jewish ones, the significant issue is less about the extent to which he did so and more that he considered them of equal value. Ibn Bāqūdā seems to be able to find appropriate Jewish sources in many cases, and so does Judah b. Tibbon. If materials are already available, thought can be simultaneously developed, and influence can be mutual.

When Ibn Bāqūdā quotes a saying, which seems to indicate his use of Islamic texts, Fenton sees his anxiety (see Chapter 8). It may have been the

case. Ibn Bāqūdā may not have been too comfortable in using Muslim sources openly. However, I rather see his confidence here, as Moses Maimonides stated in a preface to one of his writings:

> Know that neither the teachings nor the explanations which I propound in the following chapters are altogether original to me. They are thoughts gathered by me from the works of sages in the Midrash and the Talmud and from other Jewish writings; furthermore, from the utterances of philosophers of antiquity and our own days, and from the works of various and diverse authors. I am willing to learn from anybody and everybody.

These two authors' scholarly honesty seems to come from their confidence that all their arguments can be explained and supported fully by their own Jewish tradition. Without denying Islamic traces in al-Hidāya, it should be emphasized that one of the inspiring aspects that Ibn Bāqūdā may have found in non-Jewish writings was the tools for constructing a convincing argument (methodology, argumentation, terminology), not necessarily only the contents.

Bettan in his review criticises Yahuda for his `grave error' in making 'such a bold assertion' of Ibn Bāqūdā's complete reliance upon Arabic literature. In terms of Yahuda's motivation, further investigation is necessary to assess whether the demonstration of the total dependence of al-Hidāya on Arabic writing was the sole aim in the publication of his edition. Regardless of his objective, however, the idea of `reliance' or `borrowing' needs to be revisited. The high level of acculturation and assimilation has been recognised in the medieval world of Judaism and Islam. This phenomenon is particularly remarkable in mysticism, as esoteric ideas seem to be somewhat easily transferred as philosophical and scientific knowledge. This receptivity may stem from the essence of these ideas which, although expressed in the vernacular, can go beyond localised tradition and beyond specific creeds, so that faith borders become secondary, while the contents become primary.

Ibn Bāqūdā's work reveals the development of the mystico-philosophical tradition in Judaism and the quick spread of Sufism into the Iberian Peninsula.

This also helps us understand the context and phenomenon of Judaeo-Arabic literature in al-Andalus, and the intertwined relationship between Judaism and Islam. In reading the Qūt and al-Hidāya, it should be noted that both authors were public figures — they were both preachers and Ibn Bāqūdā was a judge. Both deny an extreme form of asceticism, and their books pay attention to individual duties, as well as collective ones. At the end of his article, Ilan poses the question whether al-Hidāya should be read as an ethical work or as Sufi literature. My answer would be both. Ethics and mysticism overlap. As can be seen in the teachings of Confucius and Daoism, individual spiritual exercise and human social behavior are interconnected. The personal is social and political. This view is shared by both the Qūt and al-Hidāya. They are devotional works, passionately calling for the cultivation of a human relationship with the Divine, fellow humans, and everything surrounding them.

It is hoped that the present monograph has not only extended the study of al-Makki beyond Sufism, and beyond Islam, but that it will also lead to further exploration of a fuller range of opinions of the mystical way of life, piety and ethics — in both the past and the present. <>

## Essay

# The Importance of Sufism in the Study of the Concept of the Individual in Iranian Ways of Thinking

### The Importance of The Theological View in The Study of The Iranian Conception of Man

As we have said before, the objective of Part I of this work is to inquire into the idea of the dissolution of individuality in Persian Sufism as an important obstacle to the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking. In this regard, we are encountering two questions:

(1) why, when studying the concept of man in Iranian thought, do we stress the theological view;

(2) why do we focus on the theological view of the relations of man with God within

Islamic mysticism? In this essay, we will attempt to answer these questions.

As we have mentioned, in the Western world, with the separation of philosophy from theology and with the advent of the social sciences, an opportunity to study the notion of man from points of view different from the theological one was given. In the Islamic world, on the contrary, the study of the notion of man has always been accomplished in the theological realm. Henry Corbin, in his study of the history of Islamic philosophy, shows the different destinies of the philosophy — and, thus, the concept of man — in Christianity and in Islam (especially in its Irano-Islamic perspective). He maintains that in Christianity philosophy led the struggle against religious authority. Philosophy, indeed, took advantage of the weapons prepared by religion itself) However, in Islam the relation of philosophy to religion faced two divergent destinies, in the East and in the West (whose cultural `climate', was other than that of the East, especially of Iran). While in `Western Islam' — or Averroism — philosophy was dominant over religion, in Iran an all-embracing synthesis of philosophy and religion, particularly in the framework of mystical thought, occurred. This synthesis has, according to Corbin, been a response to the deep exigence of a culture where the history of philosophy remains inseparable from the history of religion. Here Corbin refers to Sohravardian Avicennism or Theosophical Sufism, which finds its climax in Sohravardi's Philosophy of Light (Ishraq).

It is noteworthy that Sohravardi (d. 1191) based a great deal of his philosophy on the ideas of Avicenna (Ibn Sina, d. 1037), who is regarded as one of the important figures in the presentation and interpretation of Aristotle's metaphysics in the Islamic world. The interesting point concerning the philosophy of Avicenna is that although his philosophy is regarded as the most important representation of Aristotelian philosophy and the philosophy of Reason in Islamic philosophy, it has a strong tendency towards monism (the theory which admits the equality of all beings) and mysticism. It is precisely this aspect of the doctrine of Avicenna that influenced Iranian mysticism. If in the West and even in a great part of the Islamic world the Aristotelian aspect of the philosophy of Avicenna was brought into focus, in Iran it was the `irrational'

and supernatural mystical dimension of Avicennism which drew the attention of thinkers.

In this way, as Corbin points out, the masters of Iranian Avicennism contributed to the foundation of a philosophy of the Spirit that was profoundly different from the philosophy that goes by the same name in the West, namely Latin Avicennism.

If Islam was solely a legalistic religion based on shari'a (Islamic law), philosophy should hardly have had such a significant place in its system of thought. However, since Islam is viewed — especially by Shi'ism — as the unveiling of a hidden esoteric reality, philosophy gained the possibility of playing an essential role in the further development of Islamic thought. In this connection Corbin, stressing the significant place of Sohravardi and his followers in Islamic philosophy, writes:

> While philosophical thought slumbered everywhere else in the Islamic world, these masters of Iranian Avicennism conducted Shi'ite Islam to its highest point of philosophical awareness.

In this way, if philosophers in the West for a long time had believed that with Averroism' Islamic philosophy had reached its final point, a further study of Sohravardi's essays made it clear that a new way had been opened for Islamic thinkers. Having this in mind, Corbin points out that at the same time in the East, and particularly in Iran, the work of al-Suhrawardi was opening up the road which so many thinkers and spiritual seekers were to follow down to our own days.

Sohravardian philosophy or the Philosophy of Light is a combination of Iranian, Hellenistic and ancient Oriental elements. Seyyed H. Nasr has summed up Sohravardi's main theories as follows:

> The essence of the First Absolute Light, God, gives constant illumination, whereby it is manifested and it brings all things into existence, giving life to them by its rays. Everything in the world is derived from the Light of His essence and all beauty and perfection are the gift of His bounty, and to attain fully to this illumination is salvation.

Accordingly, what is in the Sohravardian philosophy conceived metaphysically as existence (wujud) corresponds with nur, which is grasped in terms of the root experience as Light. Existence is then nothing but light.

What is crucial for our analysis is that with Sohravardi the old discussion of the dualism between philosophy and religion that had been going on among different Islamic schools for several centuries comes to its end. What, indeed, indicates the spiritual life of the centuries after Sohravardi, especially in Iran, is not — as for many years it was believed — Abu Hamid Ghazzali's critique of philosophy, but the renaissance or restoration of the religious and philosophical thought as a whole that was brought about by Sohravardi. After him, as Corbin mentions,

> [t]here would no longer be the dilemma of whether to be a philosopher or a Sufi. One cannot properly be the one without being the other. This produces a type of spiritual man of whom philosophy demands what it has perhaps never demanded anywhere else.

It is noteworthy that Sohravardian philosophy or the Philosophy of Light has had a great impact on Iranian philosophical and theological thought. In fact, this philosophy is a version of Iranian Sufism. Corbin defines the Philosophy of Light from the viewpoints of Sohravardi and his followers as a philosophy that premises inner vision and mystical experience, a knowledge that can be called an Oriental knowledge, because it originates in the Orient, of the pure Intelligences. It is because of this that the philosophy is called `The Philosophy of Ishraq'. Taking these points into consideration, A. Schimmel says that a very important element in Persian philosophical thought in the later Middle Ages was Sohravardi's philosophy, taken up mainly by Shi'i philosophers. The impact of this philosophy on Iranian thought is not, however, limited to this period. The Oriental tradition of Sohravardi has remained active in Iran until now.

Although Sohravardian philosophy brought about, as we have pointed out above, the renaissance or restoration of religious and philosophical thought as a whole, it was Mulla Sadra Shirazi (d. 1640), Sohravardi's successor, who synthesized Greek philosophy, ancient Iranian thought and Islamic mysticism and tried to put an end to two thousand years of philosophical discussions in Iran. With the great synthesis of Mulla Sadra, a complete combination of philosophy and religion was realized. Mulla Sadra's philosophy can be interpreted as a result of the special characteristics of Iranian culture, in which the history of philosophy

and the history of religion were hardly separable. The doctrine of Mulla Sadra, as the high point of Iranian metaphysical thought, made, indeed, the ceaseless synthesis of religion, philosophy and mysticism in Iran possible. Mulla Sadra's thought, as Corbin points out, `has left a personal stamp on all Iranian philosophy'. Therefore, from the sixteenth century onward in Iran, as William C. Chittick mentions, it is perhaps difficult to `classify a particular thinker as only a philosopher, or a theologian, or a Sufi'.

The doctrine of Mulla Sadra played an opposite role to that of Descartes concerning the development of the concept of the individual. D. Shayegan explains this as follows:

> Sadra was a contemporary of Descartes; while he was putting the finishing touches to a movement that was secular in many ways, and adding the last stone to the imposing edifice of Islamic metaphysics, Descartes was short-circuiting the past and hacking out new avenues which were going to make humanity into the founding authority of the universe.

Cartesian dualism by separating res cogitans (mind or consciousness) and res extensa (indivisible substance and matter) separates le "je pense" des choses pensées' and thus the realms of religion, of philosophy and of science from each other. In doing this, it paved the way for the development of the concept of the individual by promoting a view that considered man as a separate entity, an object among other external objects. In other words, by conceiving `I' as objectively separated from the 'other-than-I', the Cartesian doctrine emptied the concept of man of its religious meaning. The obstacle was removed. Man could from now on be considered an individual being, a citizen with his individual rights. The great synthesis of Mulla Sadra, on the other hand, means, among other things, the integration of the idea of the Unity of Existence into the whole structure of Shi'i thought. As a result, although Mulla Sadra like Spinoza, tried to assert the idea of the Unity of Existence philosophically, his doctrine did not bring about, as in the case of Spinoza and some Sufis, the idea of God as an impersonal being who does not have the freedom that is ascribed to the God of a theist. In other words, if Spinoza's God is not a free agent who can make a choice other than the one that he makes because everything is determined by the necessity of divine nature, Mulla Sadra's God has a freedom to change the destiny of man. In the doctrine of Mulla Sadra, God has then remained as a kind of authority, a creative agent. In this way not only could man, as an integrated part of the whole being, not effectuate his `I', but he was also, as a follower of religious laws, bound to some principles that deprived him of the possibility to affirm his individuality. An important consequence of Mulla Sadra's synthesis of religion, philosophy and mystical ideas was thus that the conception of man remained in the realms of spirituality and was hardly `secularized'. Mulla Sadra has such a significant place in the philosophy of Iran that he is regarded by Iranian Shi'i thinkers as the most important philosopher in the whole world. Regarding the importance of the doctrine of Mulla Sadra for Iranian thought Daryush Shayegan writes:

> All subsequent developments in Iranian thought have been, in a sense, commentaries on Sadra's oeuvre, whose metaphysical content will never be surpassed.

It is noteworthy that Mulla Sadra cannot, as Rumi (d. 1273), Shabistari (d. 1320) and some other Persian Sufis, be said to promote some kind of pantheism. He was, although an arif, indeed a reformer of Shi'i thought. This made him perhaps one of the most influential persons in Iranian religious thought.

However, this does not mean that Mulla Sadra's ideas were accepted without any resistance by all Irano-Islamic thinkers. Indeed, Mulla Sadra, as Arjomand maintains, `came under the fierce attack of some of the members of the Shi'i hierocracy.' Yet such attacks could not prevent the impact of his ideas upon the philosophical outlook of the Shi'i thinkers, especially ulama (the lawyer divines and theologians). In fact, after Mulla Sadra, his ideas were repeated over and over again by Iranian thinkers, one after the other.

Our intention has not been to discuss the doctrine of Mulla Sadra, something that is far outside the scope of this book. We have tried to show that endeavours to synthesize mystical thought and philosophy with religion in Iran have had an essential role, in that philosophy did not separate itself from theology, and that the concept of man did not lose its spiritual and religious meaning. Such

endeavours were not, however, the only reason for the non-separation of philosophy from religion in Iranian Islam. Another important cause was the absence of the phenomenon of the Church in Islam.

## The Non-Separation of Philosophy From Religion In Iranian Islam And The Absence Of The Phenomenon Of The Church

One of the reasons why philosophy in Iran remained within the framework of religious thought may be the absence of the phenomenon of the Church in Islam. Proceeding from the explanation of Corbin concerning this factor, it can be explained as follows.

In the West, we have witnessed how, from the second century on, the dogmatic magisterium of the Church replaced the freedom of a spiritual hermeneutics and how the spreading of the Christian consciousness indicated the growth of a historical consciousness. The idea of the divine Incarnation can be considered an example of the entry of God into history.

The result was, of course, the ever-increasing attention to historical meaning that was in accordance with the true meaning of the Old and New Testaments. Here, as Corbin asks, the question is:

> to what extent the phenomenon of the church, in its official forms at any rate, can ally itself with the prominence of the literal and historical meaning. Moreover hand in hand with the prominence goes a decadence which results in confusing symbol with allegory. As a consequence, the search for spiritual meaning was regarded as a matter of allegorization.

This could not, obviously, go hand in hand with the spiritual hermeneutics that has always been one of the bases of all kinds of mysticism.

Thus spiritual hermeneutics has been perpetuated and renewed by spiritual groups which have formed on the fringes of the church.

One of the reasons why, on the contrary, mysticism was finally integrated in the religious structure of Islam, especially in that of Shi'ism, was the absence of the phenomenon of the Church — in its Christian sense — in Islam. As Corbin mentions, in Islam there are no clergy possessing the `means of grace'.

Islam has neither a dogmatic magisterium, nor a council that has the task of defining dogma. Besides, the religious consciousness of Islam is not concentrated on a historical fact, but rather on a meta-historical, or better, trans-historical fact of the primordial covenant (mithaq) between man and God as understood from the Sura 7:172 in the Qur'an. God called future humanity out of the loins of Adam — who was not yet created — and asked the human Spirits: `Am I not your Lord?' and they answered: `Yes we witness it'. This covenant has played a very essential role in Muslims', especially mystics', religious consciousness and influenced their understanding of free will and predestination. Corbin explains this issue as follows:

> Because it has not had to confront the problems raised by what we call the `historical consciousness', philosophical thought in Islam moves in two counter yet complementary directions: issuing from the Origin (mabda') and returning (ma'ad) to the origin, issue and return both taking place in a vertical dimension. Forms are thought of as being in space rather than in time.

In this way, the direction of `historical development' is not conceived by Islamic thinkers as horizontal but as ascending. The essential point for our discussion is that this focusing on the meta-historical meaning instead of the historical had the effect that the fate of Islamic philosophy — and of mysticism — drastically differed from that of Christian philosophy.

When the world was not perceived as `evolving' in a horizontal and rectilinear direction but as ascending, the meanings of the divine Revelations corresponded to a spiritual hierarchy, to a level of the universe that issues from the threshold of meta-history. Accordingly, thought is not hindered by the prohibitions of a dogmatic authority and can move freely.

A detailed discussion on this issue will take us however too far afield. Yet it is noteworthy that when there is no place for a dogmatic authority, philosophy, in order to think `freely', is no longer obliged to detach itself from religious thought. Indeed, in the framework of hikmat ilahiyah (theosophy, in terms of etymology) philosophy finds the possibility to deal with its problems without indispensably feeling the need to go beyond the theological context. This being the case, it seems to

be reasonable to assume that the fate of philosophy, and accordingly the fate of the mystical dimension of Islam, has remained inseparable from the fate of theology. In Christianity, however, the predominance of the historical meaning brought about the secularization of the theological system and the separation of philosophy from theology. And then, when belief and knowledge were regarded as two different phenomena, historicism had no difficulty in taking the place of theological messianism.

Summing up, we can say that the history of thought in Iran can hardly be regarded as the history of the separation of philosophy from religion as is the case in the West. It is rather the history of an ever-increasing combination of religion, philosophy and mystical ideas in one realm. It is because of this combination that the development of the concept of man in Iranian thought did not take place outside the theological realm and that man as an object of study has rarely been an issue for social studies. Furthermore, where there is no line of demarcation between philosophy, religion and even science, the system of values is drawn from an extensive system of ideas in which, as Louis Dumont remarks, values are not separable from facts but rather closely combined with other non-normative representations. In such a system of values, man as value is not separated from man as a fact, that is, as an object of study. Having this point in mind we can maintain that the non-development of the social sciences in Iran is due partly to this synthesis between philosophy and religion. This in turn may be seen as one of the reasons that has prevented the study of man as an object in the social sciences — outside the theological realm — in Iranian society. Until now we have tried to answer our first question, that is, why, when studying the concept of man in Iranian thought, do we have to lay stress on the theological view? We hope to have succeeded in showing that the synthesis between philosophy and theology, which took place mainly in the twelfth century in Iran, meant an ever-increasing importance of the theological world-view for understanding philosophical issues — among others the concept of man. This is probably why every attempt to study the concept of man in Iranian thought has to take into consideration the very role of Islamic `philosophy' in the development of this concept. Therefore, the study will partly focus on an examination of the relation of man to God as an

important clue to the understanding of the Iranian conception of man.

Before answering the second question posed at the beginning of this essay, in order to go a step further into the core of the problem that we are dealing with in this part, it is necessary to clarify what we have in mind when we are addressing ourselves to the Iranian conception of the relation of man to God. Is it the same familiar picture of a relationship between God and man that portrays God as the Lord and man as his servant, based on a picture of a distant, absolute God who speaks to men through angels and prophets?

## The Study of The Concept Of Man In Iranian Thought And The Relationship Between Man And God

Among Muslims, there exist many different conceptions of God, falling in between two extremes. Thus, the answer to the question posed above can be both yes and no. One of these two extreme positions is based on the often-discussed dichotomy of Lord and servant that is familiar to the Western world. In the second one God is perceived as the Absolute Being where the principal point is the relationship between lover and Beloved. From the viewpoint of considering divine love as the cornerstone of religious perception, the latter conception seems to be close to that of Christian mystics, though there are certain differences between the ways Christian and Islamic mystics understand this relationship. We will come back to this point later, but here it should be mentioned that although God is defined in divergent ways in Islam, generally God is regarded as closer to man in Islam than in the main current of Christianity. For instance, Durand states that:

> Ce qu'il faut bien remarquer c'est que le christianism portait en germe — par son héritage juif et sa confirmation historique de l'Incarnation — la double menace de le loignement de Dieu (et de son corollaire la déréliction de l'homme), et de la recherche passionnée d'un rapprochement historique avec le Dieu lointain, rapprochement en la personne du `Fils de Dieu', puis dans la constitution d'un corp médiateur et

mystique du Christ, l'Église. Comme l'a bien montré E Schuon, c'est cette transcendance absolue de Dieu qui — contrairement à l'Islam où Dieu est plus proche — créé nécessité d'un échelle, d'un passage historique et temporel: Le Dieu des Juif et des Chrétiens est lointain, donc a besoin de l'humain, le Dieu de l'Islam est proche (El qarib) et n'a pas besoin de l'intermédiare humain.

[What must be remarked is that Christianity carried in germ - by its Jewish heritage and its historical confirmation of the Incarnation - the double threat of the loigning of God (and its corollary dereliction of man) and a passionate search for a historical rapprochement with the distant God, a rapprochement in the person of the 'Son of God', then in the constitution of a mediator and mystic body of Christ, the Church. As E Schuon has shown, it is this absolute transcendence of God that - contrary to Islam where God is closer - created the need for a scale, a historical and temporal passage: The God of the Jews and Christians are far away, so need the human, the God of Islam is near (El qarib) and does not need the human intermediary.]

As Durand points out some factors, such as the rivalry between man and gods in the ancient Greek religion, the absolute distinction of body from mind and the idea of Trinity and so on, show the existence of a tendency towards the dissociation of man from God in Western thought. The absence of such factors and others — whose discussion will take us too far afield — means that God in Islam is conceived of as very close to man. As it is stated in the Qur'an: `whithersoever ye turn there is the Face of God', (Sura 2:109), or `God is closer to man than his jugular vein' (Sura 50:16).45 Although one can find certain conceptions of God shared by some Muslims and some Christians, generally the Muslim conceptions of God, falling between God as Beloved and God as the Lord, are not identical to those of the Christians. Here it is worth mentioning that these different conceptions might have divergent psychological impacts on the adherents to these religions. In the preceding discussion on the impact of Greek thought on that of Westerners, we considered how the existence of a gap between man and God contributed to the growth of the feeling of loneliness among Christians which, in turn, paved the way for the domination of the idea of dualism between I and other. The conception of an intimate relationship between man and God in Islam — especially in Sufism, has played, as we shall see, the opposite role of reinforcing the idea of non-duality of one's self and other selves. In this study, however, we shall focus on that Islamic conception of God that is based on the Qur'anic promise of mutual love between God and man. In this conception, God is regarded as Reality and Absolute Being. Our point of departure for choosing this conception is not the fact that in this conception of God the idea of the non-duality of one's self and other selves is paramount, but that this conception has had an important place in the ways of thinking of both Sufism (Islamic mysticism) and Shi'ism — the two most important religious disciplines in Iran. Indeed, Sufism and Shi'ism are considered as two important movements which emerged as alternatives to the absolute legalistic orthodox doctrines that considered the relation between God and man as that between a Lord and his servant. Referring to Sufism and Shi'ism, J. Spencer Trimingham points out that, even though these Muslims accepted the exoteric Law, they could not confine themselves to it. Religion was for them both revelation and mystery. Because in Iran both Shi'ism and Sufism are adapted to the religious structure, we can understand to what extent the concept of God not only as the Lord but first and foremost as the Beloved and the Friend is prevalent in the ways of thinking of Iranians. The prevalence of this concept of God, which is interwoven with the idea of the Unity of Existence, has played a significant role in the development of the idea of the non-duality of self and other selves in the ways of thinking of Iranians. In the study of the relationship between God and man in Iranian thought we will deal, thus, with a picture of God in Islam which, as Henry Corbin maintains, for a long time has been absent from the general history of philosophy and therefore is not very well known to Westerners, except for some historians of religion or literature.

Now, after our discussion of the conception of God that will be focused upon in this study, it seems appropriate to take up the second question, namely, the reasons for focusing upon Islamic mysticism — Sufism — when studying the concept of man in Iranian thought.

## Integration of Sufi Ideas into Iranian Ways of Thinking

Sufism has had such a crucial impact on Islamic thought that, as S. H. Nasr states, "No study in depth of Islamic society is possible without taking into consideration the action of these `societies within society' [different orders of the Sufis]."

And, as Lewisohn points out: "Sufism is, in fact, the central facet of traditional Islam and as Victor Danner observes ... constitutes its very essence."

Victor Danner also draws attention to the fact that Sufism was "an all-pervasive reality that touched every one, even scoffer and critic of the path"; and the Sufis and their deeds "were well known and loved by the people and even by some of the doctors of the Law." Furthermore, as Binyon, Nasr and other scholars show, the influence of Sufism has been tremendous in the field of arts and sciences in Islamic societies, especially in Iran.

In short, it was because of the importance of Sufism in different realms of Iranian life that we have found it necessary to draw special attention to the profound impact that the Sufi concept of the relationship between man and God has had on the ways of thinking of Iranians. When explaining the important role played by Sufism in structuring the ways of thinking of Iranians, we have to show that the domain of influence of Sufism has not been limited to the cultural structure of some Sufi orders, but it is extended to society as a whole. In this respect, the task of explaining the widespread and hearty acceptance of Sufism by a large proportion of the people in Iran — and not just some sheikhs — becomes inevitable. In the following, we try to discuss some important factors that explain the integration of Sufi ideas into the ways of thinking of Iranians.

Proceeding from the study of Persian Sufism, Lewisohn comes to the conclusion56 that the paramount psychological cause behind the blooming of Sufism during the medieval period — the period between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries when the later form of Sufism flourished — might be the existence of an innate predisposition to mysticism in the Persian psyche — as Zarrinkub describes it — or "le genie iranien ...

la vocation imprescriptible de l'âme iranienne" as Corbin calls it.

According to Lewisohn this thesis is not merely a few orientalists' subjective and personal sentiment, but represents the opinion of a wide spectrum of Islamicists, literary historians, religionists and historians.

Whether this claim is true or not is not the issue. What is important here is the extent to which Sufism is considered an inseparable aspect of the ways of thinking of Iranians. A study of Sufism's legacy in Iranian culture and the extremely strong impact of Sufism on Iranian literature leaves no grounds for hesitation about the fact that Sufism is not an insignificant and temporary element in the Iranian belief system, but rather an integrated part of this people's culture, which has survived through the centuries. Few will dispute the fact that the development of Sufism owes much to Iranian mystics.

It is exactly because of the existence of such an intimate relation between Sufism and Iranian thought that we can affirm the deep impact of the Sufi conception of man on the ways of thinking of Iranians. In this respect, we are addressing the character of Sufism not merely as a religious tendency but as a cultural phenomenon that has played a crucial role in the construction and development of the concept of man as the Iranian people understands it. Therefore we must first inquire into those factors that caused the widespread and hearty acceptance of Sufism by the people in Iran. This has resulted, then, in the survival and even blossoming of Sufism, especially medieval Sufism with its `pantheistic' feature, in Irano-Islamic culture. In studying this, we will consider only those factors that have helped Sufism become accepted by and remain popular among the Iranian people.

## Iranian Familiarity with Mystical Ideas before the Introduction of Islam

One of the most important reasons for the integration of Sufi ideas into the ways of thinking of Iranians is this people's familiarity with some aspects of mysticism due to their ancient philosophies and religions.

The similarities between Rig-Veda and Avesta, and in general between Indian and Iranian mythology, both based on common gods, indicate that although Iranian thought did not exhaust its potential by reaching the same level of abstraction and imaginative conception of the world that characterizes Indian mysticism, it possessed the potential for integrating the mystical view. This potential provided the spiritual background for modifying the ancient Iranian view of the dualism between the good spirit of light — Ormizd — and the demon — Ahriman — by considering both Ormizd and Ahriman as emanating from an original principle of infinite time (Zurvan).

The mystical element in both Indian and ancient Iranian thought is so strong that Sufism, as Schimmel stresses, is considered by some researchers, for example E. H. Palmer, as the development of the primeval religion of the Aryan race. In this respect, although Nicholson rejects the theory that regards Sufism as the product of Indian or Persian thought or, more precisely, as a reaction of the Aryan mind against a conquering Semitic religion, he admits that statements of this kind are partially true. The similarity between some aspects of ancient Iranian philosophy and some of Sufism is undeniable. This similarity was crucial not only for the spread of Sufism among the Iranian people but also for its development from an ascetic to a contemplative tendency. Having this in mind, Annemarie Schimmel holds the view that Sufism has often been considered a typically Iranian development inside Islam. There is no doubt that certain important Iranian elements have survived through the ages beneath its surface as both Henri Corbin and Seyyed H. Nasr have recently emphalized.

What is of primary importance from the point of view of this study is that, even before Islam, some of the ideas characteristic of Sufism were already familiar to Iranians. There are similarities between Sufism and the archaic culture of ancient Mazdean Iran. One of these concerns the intimate relation of man to God. When examining the relationship between God and man in ancient Iranian religions, especially in the teachings of Zoroaster, it ought to be borne in mind that this relationship is not regarded as that between a lord and his servant, but as that between two friends. As Ashtiani maintains, Lommel, in his book Die Religion Zoroasters, regarded the dialogue between God and man in the message of Zoroaster precisely as a dialogue between two close friends. H.H. Schaeder shares this view. He says, as Ashtiani has cited him, that the view of the relationship between God and man in the message of Zoroaster is very close to the view that is prevalent in mysticism. Zoroaster, according to Schaeder, talks with God in such a way that no distance between God and man can be perceived.

Corbin accords with Schaeder's view that the Iranian conception of the relation between man and God differs from the Occidental. He proceeds from the story of Prometheus and tries to show why any suspicion about a competing relationship between man and God in Iranian thought is out of the question. As indicated above, the myth of Prometheus, which characterizes the stealing of fire as a symbol of man's audacity in front of the gods, apparently reveals the rivalry between man and gods in Greek mythology. The fundamental conceptions of Iranian cosmology, either those of ancient Zoroastrian Iran or those of Shi'ite Iran are, as Corbin maintains, quite the opposite of the myth of Prometheus:

> For the believer who experiences the Iranian concept of Light at the heart of his being, the myth of Prometheus cannot but seem a violent perversion of the reality of things, for Fire and Light are the sacred gift given to men by the Powers of Light.

It would be a perversion since for the Zoroastrian believer, who `is a knight fighting alongside the lord of Light', to betray his lord or to desert the struggle is out of the question. An Iranian believer considers himself as a comrade-in-arms with God defending the Fire and Light. This relationship, indeed, makes the perversion of the idea of the Heavenly Gift into that of Promethean theft impossible: such a perversion may turn man from a friend of God into His enemy. Yet, this has never been possible within the framework of Iranian thought with its characteristic strong tradition of friendly relations between man and God. What we observe here is nothing but a very intimate and friendly relationship between man and God in Iranian thought which, as Corbin says, is a carry-over from Zoroastrian Persia into Shi'ite Persia.

At any rate, it is undeniable that some features of the message of Zoroaster are very close to mystical ideas, among others those of Sufism. It is probably

because of such similarities that, as indicated above, Zoroaster became one of the three main personages whose ideas introduced Theosophical Sufism based on the Sohravardian philosophy, a school that has `the interpretation of the platonic archetypes in terms of Zoroastrian angelology' as one of its characteristics.

Another ancient Iranian religion in which we find an important place being given to mystical elements is the Manichaean religion. Mani (b. 16), the prophet of this religion, attempted to combine the teachings of Zoroaster and Jesus in order to create a new religion with a universal character. Doing this, he focused his endeavour on the gnostic interpretation of the Gospel of St John. Since the Manichaean religion was not so widespread among Iranians as Zoroastrianism, we are not going to deal with its philosophy here. Still, it is noteworthy that the teachings of Mani, which were strongly influenced by gnostic ideas and are viewed as a combination of Neoplatonism and Stoicism with some aspects of Chinese thought, are considered as one of those ancient Iranian doctrines that have affected some trends of Sufism in Iran.

However, as we hope to have made clear, there exists a deep mystical view in ancient Iranian religions, something that has contributed immensely to the acceptance of Sufi ideas by Iranians.

Another fact that shows the familiarity of Iranians with mystical views before the domination of Islam is the prevalence of Buddhism for more than a thousand years in the north-east of Iran (in Balkh and Bokhara), which is considered the most important center for Iranian Sufis. A considerable amount of the population of this area had converted to Buddhism before Islam became the official religion in Iran. It is therefore not so strange that Islamic mysticism found the best soil for its growth in this part of Iran. Indeed, Buddhism might be considered as one of the sources for the development of Sufism and as a factor behind the integration of mystical ideas into Iranian thought.

In the next essay, when dealing with the concept of man in Sufism, we shall investigate the similarities that exist between Sufism and Buddhism. Here, it is sufficient to mention that some of the methods of Sufism concerning the spiritual way (Tariqah) owe, perhaps, their origin to Buddhism. Besides, some essential ideas of Sufism, such as the conception of

the passing-away (fana) are very similar to that of Buddhism. At any rate, Iranians' acquaintance with Buddhism helped them to find the ideas of Sufism familiar and made it easy for them to adapt these ideas to their ways of life.

## Mystical Ideas and the Domination of Shi'ism in Iran

Another factor that explains why Sufism became widespread in Iran, especially from the thirteenth century onwards, is the expansion and domination of Shi'ism in the country. The relation of Sufism with Shi'ism is one of the most discussed issues in the history of Islamic philosophy. There is, however, no doubt that some ideas and theories of Shi'ism are not so different from those of Sufism. Although, as Schimmel maintains, the congruency between the theories of Shi'ism and Sufism has not yet been completely clarified, some doctrines

such as the theories of the primordial light of Mohammad, saintship in Sufism, and the ideas of `the imamate and gradual initiation of adepts into deeper realms of faith, into new levels of spiritual interpretation' in Shi'ism are very similar in their hierarchical structure.

Regarding these similarities, Corbin states that there is yet another form of metaphysics in Islam, without which it may be impossible to explain the beginnings and the development of Sufism. This other form is essentially the Shi'ite gnosis which goes back to the Imams themselves.

When discussing the question of the relation of Sufism with Shi'ism, we must be aware of the fact mentioned by Hossein Nasr in his book Sufi Essays that we are not dealing with the same dimension of Islam. According to Nasr, we can say, about the two dimensions of Islam, that is, the exoteric (zahir) and the esoteric (batin), that if the latter crystallized into the form of Sufism in the Sunni world, then in the Shi'i world Sufism poured into its whole structure (the esoteric as well as the exoteric dimensions) especially during its early period. Therefore, mystical ideas have been prevented from being integrated into the whole structure of Sunni thought while this was not the case with Shi'ism.

Here one may argue that, over the centuries, a great number of Sufis have lived in the Sunni world.

Yet, when we address ourselves to the non-integration of Sufism into Sunni thought, in no way do we maintain that Sufism as a sect or organization did not exist in the religious climate of Sunni countries. What we have in mind is the integration of Sufi ideas into the whole religico-intellectual discourse as is the case of Shi'ite Islam. Indeed, as Corbin mentions:

> the `phenomenon of Sufism' in some measure differs according to whether it is lived in Shi'ite Iran or whether it is lived in Sunni Islam, the Islam with which orientalists until now have been most familiar.

The domination of the doctrine of walayah (the esoteric aspect of prophecy) in Persian Sufism together with the synthesis of ancient Iranian thought (especially the Iranian conception of cosmology) with Sufi ideas are perhaps the most important characteristics that separate.

## Persian Sufism from `Sunni' Sufism.

In the Sunni world where the exoteric dimension of Islam is more important than the esoteric, there has been a strong tendency towards the institutionalization of the mystical paths leading to God. Consequently, Sufism has come to establish organizations which in many cases have altered it from a spiritual phenomenon to the formal ideology of a sect. Yet, although such organizations have always existed in Iran, there are many Sufi congregations that have neither external organizations nor denominations. These congregations, whose existence is purely spiritual, are led by a spiritual guide (whose name is mostly kept secret) who helps Sufis in their journey towards God. In such groups, hardly any concrete or rigid rules prevail. It is, mainly, personal initiation which is dominant. What is important here is that not being obliged to follow difficult and incomprehensible rules of discipline has made it easy for common people to be able to enter into such `organizations'. All this has prevented Sufism from becoming an unattainable `phenomenon' and increased its popularity among people in Iran.

It must be mentioned that when talking about the inner relation between Shi'ism and Sufism we do not take them in their historical manifestation in later periods. Such a relation becomes more evident only if, as Nasr points out, `we mean by Shi'ism Islamic esotericism as such'. Regarding the historical relationship between Sufism and Shi'ism

one can recognize two stages: the parallel establishment of Sufism with Shi'ism on the one hand, and the period during which Sufism influenced later Shi'ism on the other. A discussion of these stages will take us too far afield; therefore, let us only mention that if the connection between Shi'ism and early Sufism from the sixth to the ninth centuries was most intimate, after the eighth Imam, Ali al-Riza (d. 818), the Shi'ite Imams did not openly identify themselves with Sufis and there appeared a separation between Shi'ism and Sufism. While Shi'is began to actively participate in political life, many Sufis took refuge from the world, dissociating themselves particularly from politics.

In Iran, however, the relations between Sufism and Shi'ism became more obvious when a regular Sufi order in the north-west of the country developed into a group for indoctrinating Shi'i thought. That Shi'ism became the official religion in Iran in the sixteenth century, after the victory of Shah Ismail the Safavid, was mostly because of the endeavors of this group. Due to the victory of Shi'ism, Iranian mystics, after having endured numerous problems over the centuries, finally succeeded in spreading their ideas widely in Iran. This is true at least during certain periods of Safavid rule, for instance under the reign of Safi and Abbas I1.98 Even when Sufism encountered a great deal of difficulty under the reign of latter Safavids, it continued to spread among Iranians by changing its name to irfan. The reaction against the Sufi orders, as Nasr explains, is partly because, due to royal patronage of Sufism, many extraneous elements had joined it for worldly ends and also because some of the orders became lax in their practice of the shari'ah. [Accordingly], to this day one can openly study, teach and discuss irfan but never tasawwuf, which is too often associated with the indisciplined and lax dervishes oblivious to the injunctions of the shari'ah ...

In addition, one important reason for the suppression of Sufism in the later Safavid policy was the fact that the consolidation of Twelver Shi'ism in Iran, as the main endeavour of Safavid kings, required the elimination of some features of Sufism. Safavid rulers regarded some Sufi orders as enemies and tried to eliminate them both physically and intellectually. The integration of Sufi ideas into Shi'i thought was partly an attempt to

neutralize some radical ideas of Sufis. The elimination of some Sufi orders did not mean, thus, the elimination of Sufi ideas in Iranian intellectual thought. Because of the persecution of Sufis, Lewisohn calls some periods under Safavids in the fifth century `the darkest chapter in the entire history of Islamic Sufism'. He stresses:

> Of course, Sufism did not `vanish' under the Safavids.... One notable form in which Sufi teachings did continue to flourish in the Safavid Period was in the remarkable elaboration of the philosophical irfani tradition, which brought together Kalam, Peripatetic and illuminationist philosophy of Ibn Arabi. The outstanding figure in this endeavor was Mulla Sadra, who, following on the writings of the Pre-Safavid Haydar Amuli, effectively integrated Ibn Arabi into the new Shi'ite-Persian religious world.

Later we will discuss some ideas of Ibn Arabi and the importance of these ideas for Iranian thinkers' conceptions of man. Yet, the interesting point here is that the integration of mystical ideas into Shi'ism in Iran has been an essential factor for legitimizing such ideas. This does not mean that afterwards there was no conflict between Sufis and some exoteric scholars. Indeed, the struggle between Sufis and the dogmatic jurists of the letter of the law (the mullas) has been one of the most important conflicts in the history of Islamic thought. A thorough analysis of this issue would require a monograph and is thus far outside the scope of this analysis. What is essential for our study is that the synthesis of some Sufi ideas, especially those of Ibn Arabi, with Shi'i thought to a high degree helped Persian Sufism to be accepted as an integrated part of Shi'ism in Iran. In this connection, the role of Abu Hamid Muhammad Ghazzali (d. 1111), who linked the teachings of the ulama scholars to shari'a (Islamic law) with a respect for the independent wisdom of the Sufi mystics, should not be neglected. As Hodgson maintains, Abu Hamid Gazzali's teachings helped to make Sufism acceptable to the ulama themselves. By the twelfth century it was a recognized part of religious life and even of religious ilm knowledge.

The deep influence of and the great respect which Shi'ite thinkers have for both Mulla Sadra and Ibn Arabi despite their radical criticism of dogmatic clericalism show the extent to which the Sufi ideas were accepted by Irano-Islamic scholars. The

essential point for us here is that the integration of some Sufi ideas into the new Shi'ism in Iran not only let Sufi teachings continue to flourish in Safavid periods and afterwards, but also helped to increase the popularity of mystical ideas among Iranian people. Indeed, as Marshall Hodgson shows in his book The Venture of Islam, Sufism rises to a position of dominance in medieval Persian religious culture. This in turn contributed to the survival of Sufi ideas in the ways of thinking of Iranians, especially in the form of poetry, which, because of its extremely symbolic form, could ably hide the real meaning of the mystical ideas. While it is true that such ideas are usually expressed in symbolic forms, the use by Sufis of symbolic language to express their ideas can be explained by the fact that the real meaning of Sufi ideas could sharpen the antagonism between the clerical perspective and the Sufi outlook. This symbolic clothing of ideas may explain why the poems of some famous poets, such as Bayezid Bastami (d. 874), Khayyam (d. 1123), Rumi (d. 1273) and Hafiz (d. 1389), which call into question the orthodox conception of God and were in direct opposition to the exoteric scholar conception of divine law, could not only be accepted by Iranians, even by many ulamas, but became widespread among the people.

In sum, although certain radical ideas of some Sufis were not in line with those of Shi'ism, and although many orders were eliminated or degenerated under the Safavid period, it can hardly be denied that there existed an inner relationship between certain Sufi doctrines and Shi'ism. This relationship played a crucial role in the integration of Sufi ideas into Iranian ways of thinking. The domination of Shi'ism in Iran and the integration of certain mystical ideas into Shi'i thought thus helped Sufism to become widespread in Iran, especially from the thirteenth century onwards.

## The Political and Social Situation and the Acceptance of Sufism

One vital factor accounting for the popularity of Sufism among Iranians is its function as a consolation for the Iranian people, who were living under the horror of the Mongol conquerors. The consequences of Chingiz Khan's invasion of northern Iran — which has always been the `capital' of Sufism — in the thirteenth century were a continual

state of violence, including the extermination of many Iranians, devastation of property, insecurity and banditry, persisting for a whole century. In such a situation, Lewisohn notes, Sufism not only survived, but also blossomed. Indeed, Sufism, as one Iranian scholar remarks, became the sole force capable of saving the soul of the Iranian populace, casting a ray of hope and courage into the traumatized hearts of the inhabitants of medieval Persia. For the Sufi masters promised the populace — in the safety of Sufism — liberation from the aggravation of their corrupt contemporaries, offering as companions individuals of refined and sensitive feelings, instead of blackguards and tyrants

The poetry of this period and the following century (eighth Islamic/fourteenth Christian century) ... is little more than an attempt to offer condolences to the reader.

This consolatory function of Sufi ideas has been the subject of many discussions about Sufism especially among Iranian intellectuals. There are some who, without denying the contributions made by Sufism to Iranian culture, regard the political and social impact of Sufism on the history of Iran as a negative factor. According to this view, Sufism functioned as a means to escape the world in the sense of avoiding every contact with the social milieu. In this way, it hindered people from an active struggle for a better future — this was religion as `opium for the people'. Others stress, on the contrary, the positive political impact of Sufism on the struggle of Iranians to regain independence after the invasions of Arabs and Mongols. Whether Sufism has exerted a negative or positive influence upon Iranian social life does not, however, change the fact that it has played a central role in reducing the psychological impact of the terror. This contributed to the fact that Sufism became not only widespread among Iranians but also `the dominant cultural and intellectual current [from] the thirteenth to the fifteenth centuries'.

That the Sufis' special conception of Divine Justice differed from that of other religious currents in Iran is another paramount factor accounting for the popularity of Sufism among Iranians, who were suffering under the prevailing injustice, which intensified after invasions first by Arabs (seventh century) and then by Mongols (thirteenth century). Sufis developed their own notion of justice, achieved by a completely different method from

that of theologians. By rejecting both the substance and the form of theological justice, Sufis tried to realize Divine Justice through direct contact with God, that is, through meditation and spiritual exercises. By describing God's attributes in highly abstract and poetic symbols such as Light, Beauty, and Love, instead of using theological concepts such as Will or Wisdom, Sufis contributed to the development of the notion of Justice as an emanation from or a manifestation of Truth (Haqq). In the concept of 'Haqq', all the highest values are embodied. This concept of Justice, in which love is the only basis for moral perfection, is very far from shari'a and its complicated religious precepts for achieving Justice. The Sufi movement, Majid Khadduri holds, having certain objectives in common with utopian movements, may be regarded, at least in part, as a protest by men of piety and uprightness against the prevailing evil and injustice, and an attempt to set an example for other believers of how to overcome evil and injustice. It may also be regarded as a reaction to theological and other forms of intellectual discourse, which failed to resolve fundamental questions about the destiny of man and the realization of the jus divinum on the Earth.

With its special interpretation of the notion of Divine Justice and with a language better understood by ordinary people than theologians (especially when it concerns the question of Justice) Sufism could easily be accepted among common people, who were living under extreme political and psychological pressure and were tired of the scholastic discussions carried out by theologians.

## The Development of the Persian Language and the Popularity of Sufism

If the above-mentioned factors helped people to accept Sufism there is still one essential reason that made Sufism not only a cherished religious current, but also an important cultural orientation in Iran. This is the role of Sufism in the renewal and development of the Persian language. Since this point is crucial to a study of Sufism we shall have to discuss it more deeply.

Poetry has for more than one thousand years been the most important, most developed and popular form of art in Iran. According to Islamic law, non-religious music, dance, and so on were all

forbidden and therefore Islamic poetry became almost the only artistic form of expression for Iranians. Bearing in mind the fact that the language of poetry has always been one of the best forms of expression of mystical ideas, it is not difficult to understand that the Iranian strong tradition of poetry has contributed to the development of the mystical ideas of Sufism. Nobody familiar with Islamic mystical texts needs to be informed about the importance of Iranian mystical poetry for studying Sufism. Emphasizing this point, Annemarie Schimmel holds that it was mainly through the translation of Persian classical poetry that most of the information about Oriental spirituality could be obtained. In this respect, Nicholson states:

> In mystical poetry the Arabs yield the palm to the Persians. Any one who would read the secret of Sufism, no longer encumbered with theological articles nor obscured by metaphysical subtleties —let him turn to Attar, Jalaluddin Rumi, and Jami, whose works are partially accessible in English and other European languages.

And according to Francesco Gabrieli, an Italian Islamicist:

> The Persian genius alone gave to Muslim mysticism the glory of a luxuriant poetic bloom in which the innate aptitude of the Iranians for narration and the sentence combined with the energy of a highly stimulated emotionality and with the audacity of the most unbridled esoteric speculations ... All the great minds of the West, from Goethe to Hegel, who sought to approach this aspect of Muslim spirituality, took as their guides not the Arabic ascetics or doctors but the great Persian poets we have just named.

The legacy of Persian culture to Sufism is so evident that few will dispute it. However, the primary issue for our study is not the development of Sufism by its use of the Persian language, but the consequences of this act for the extension of Sufism from the theological field to the everyday life of common people and for making the ideas of Sufism the very essential dimension of Iranian thought and culture. Iranian people, who had always adored and loved poetry, became fascinated by the beautiful language of the Sufis. As a result, despite their complex ideas, the mystical poems of Persian Sufis became very favoured and common among people within a short time. The poems of Hafiz and

Jalaluddin Rumi, well known in the Western world for their mystical ideas, are so prevalent among Iranians that it is no exaggeration to claim that there are only a few Iranians who have not read or listened to a recital of at least one of these poems. One of the many reasons why mystical poetry survived among Iranians during so many centuries is the fact that Iranian children used to memorize these poems. Even today students read and memorize the poetry of Hafiz, Rumi and others. It is therefore not surprising that `to this day there is hardly anyone in Persia, even among the so-called illiterate people, who does not remember a number of verses of this poetry.' Besides, the fact that Nicholson has classified Mathnawi — a book of Persian mystical poems in rhyming couplets, mainly with didactic, romantic, and heroic themes written by Jalaluddin Rumi — `a work so famous and venerated that it has been styled "The Koran of Persia" ' indicates the extent to which the reading of mystical poetry has been a tradition among Iranians.

From the eleventh century until modern times, the influence of the mystical ideas of Sufism on Iranian poetry was so strong that most important poets in Iran were Sufis or had mystical ideas. About the popularity of Sufi poetry Ghani, one of the `prominent Iranian literary historians of this century', says:

> Because of the illustrative brilliance of their verse, Sufi poetry came to be widely diffused and popular, in turn giving great social impact to Sufism.... Sufism gave poetry a new and independent lease on life, broadening its conceptual scope and imaginative power, effectively transforming it into a public art-form.

It is because of this strong impact that H. Zarrinkub, `one of the most distinguished scholars of Persian Sufi literature', states that Persian poetry of classical times was so extensively influenced by Sufi philosophy that every lyric poet of that period was a Sufi, as nearly every great Sufi of the time was a poet.

Yet, if Sufism could so deeply influence Iranian culture, it was not only due to a strong tendency of Iranians towards poetry, but also due to the impact of Sufism on the conservation and development of the Persian language, something which was extremely important for the Iranian people. While

the language used by most Iranian scientists and philosophers after the domination by Arabs was Arabic, the language used by most Sufis was Persian. There were three paramount reasons for Sufis to employ the Persian language. Firstly, since the Sufis were not interested in scientific or scholastic discussions but only wanted to express their deepest feelings for `the Absolute', they could not use a language that was not their own mother tongue. If love, according to Sufis, cannot be learned, nor can the language expressing this love be a learned language like Arabic.

The second reason was that using Persian was indeed a kind of resistance against orthodox Muslims, especially fuqaha (Islamic jurisprudence), who were the Sufis' main opponents. Sufis rejected the orthodox idea that the only way of understanding the existence of God and achieving His mercy was acquiring religious knowledge ('ilm). According to Sufis, the path of love (ishq), not the path of knowledge ('ilm), is the right way to reach God and become one with Him. There were also Sufis (by some scholars called arifs) who, although they promoted the path of love, did not totally reject the path of knowledge as one of the ways of reaching God. By reciting poems, instead of acquiring religious knowledge, Sufis wanted to humiliate these men of knowledge, especially those who pretended to devote their whole life to the study of such religious knowledge. In doing this, Sufis were not obliged to use Arabic. Persian could very well serve the purpose.

The third reason for Sufis to employ the Persian language was the maintenance of contact with the people — something which for a long time was not so easy for Sufis due to the hostility of orthodox Muslims towards them. Persian was the only language that common people, who were the main audience of Sufi poems, could understand.

The Sufis' use of Persian as their main language had an important impact on the survival and development of this language. Thus, if New Persian finally became the main administrative and literary language of not only Iran but also Central Asia and Transoxiana and the lingua franca of an extensive area in West, South and Central Asia, stretching from Turkey over the Caucasus and Central Asia to the Indian Subcontinent and Chinese Turkestan in the East, it was partly due to the Sufis' attempt to use this language in their poetry. For this reason,

Iranians, for whom the survival of their language as an important way to keep their identity has always been an essential issue, have during the centuries cherished their mystical poets and tried to make their ideas survive.

Before summarizing the discussion concerning the factors that caused the integration of Sufism into Iranian thought and its acceptance and popularity among Iranians, it is necessary to note that, in addition to the factors discussed above, there are other important ones such as the existence of a `type of theological humanism', which revived certain humanitarian values such as `tolerance, antisectarianism, the emphasis on the direct experience in spiritual matters and love of beauty coupled with veneration for aesthetics' as virtues that `have endeared the Sufis to the hearts of Persians, both medieval and modern.' Some of these characteristics of Persian Sufism will be discussed later on.

Summarizing the preceding discussion, we may emphasize the following:

(1) the familiarity of Iranians with mystical ideas before the introduction of Sufism;
(2) the domination of Shi'ism in Iran from the sixteenth century;
(3) the special political situation of Iran after the invasion by the Mongols and the Sufis' especial conception of Divine Justice;
(4) the use of Persian by Sufis as their main language. These are some of the important factors that made Sufism not only an important religious ethos in Iran, but also an integral part of Iranian culture. It is mainly because of its place in the life of Iranians that we can talk about the impact of Sufism on the ways of thinking of Iranians, especially on their conception of man.

Until now we have tried to answer the question why we stress the study of Islamic mysticism — Sufism — in our inquiry into the concept of man in the ways of thinking of Iranians by providing the reasons why Sufism was made an integrated part of Iranian culture. Our attempt has been to show how widespread and important Sufism has been in the cultural life of the Iranian people.

If Sufism in Iran had been, like mysticism in Christian or in some other Islamic countries, a phenomenon belonging primarily to past times, we could hardly use its ideas about man as a point of departure for the study of the concept of the individual among Iranians who live in the twentieth century! As Nakamura points out:

> in the history of every people there is a distinction of periods, such as the ancient, the middle, and the contemporary, according to which the ways of thinking of peoples naturally differ.... But at the same time we also ought to recognize the fact that in every nation there are special thought-tendencies which have persisted throughout these historical stages.

Sufism as a thought-tendency is among those characteristic differences that, despite being conditioned by historical and social changes, have persisted through the ages. The interesting point about Sufism in Iran is, indeed, its long-lasting impact on Iranian thought even into modern times. Sufism is still present in the everyday life of Iranian people, in their poems, their songs and their expressions. In our study, this point is essential because we are dealing with Sufism not as a theological trend, but as an important factor in shaping and structuring the concept of man in general and the concept of `I' in particular in Iranian ways of thinking.

So far, we have concentrated on the reasons for taking up mysticism as an important element in Iranian thought. Now we will turn our attention to the dissolution of individuality in Sufism.

In the following essay, we will try to explain what Sufism is and to illustrate the development of Persian Sufism. Sufism is not in general an unknown phenomenon in the Western world and there are many studies of it in European languages. Yet, within the framework of the sociological tradition there is an inadequate knowledge about it. This deficiency is even greater when it comes to Persian Sufism. Therefore, we are obliged to devote a section of the following essay to introducing Sufism, especially Persian Sufism.

The remainder of the following essay is devoted entirely to a discussion of the relationship between man and God and the idea of dissolution of individuality in Sufism. In the light of this discussion, we will investigate the concept of man in Persian

Sufism (Irano-Islamic mysticism) and its impact on Iranian thought. We will inquire into how the individual constructs a concept of himself by adopting a certain concept of man and his relationship with God. In this respect, the idea of the Unity of Existence in Sufism will be discussed as an obstacle barring the development of the concept of the individual by preventing the emergence of a differentiation between one's own `self' and `other selves'. <>

## Essay

## The Dissolution of Individuality in Persian Sufism

### What is Sufism?

The word Sufi has its etymological origins, as many researchers note, in the Arabic suf, which means wool. Sufi refers, therefore, to those who wear garments of wool. However, this meaning of the word Sufi cannot cover the spiritual thought that characterizes Islamic Sufism. Sufism as the generally accepted name for Islamic mysticism is, like other kinds of mysticism, a spiritual experience that, according to Sufis, can be understood neither by sensual nor rational methods. It is, indeed, a manifold phenomenon, the analysis of which, if possible, requires several volumes. It is more difficult still to understand the way Sufis apprehend the world. Considering neither experience nor reason as adequate instruments for understanding the whole of existence, Sufis use different methods. To obtain knowledge about the world by means of myths, to employ rational modes for interpreting

the phenomenal world and to use intuition for understanding the cosmos are some of these methods. It goes without saying that these methods, especially the last one, do not have the same content, structure and social effect when employed by different peoples and in the framework of divergent cultures. In this respect, Sufism might be regarded as an intuitive way of comprehending the world, an epistemological method for interpreting it and a technique for spiritually mastering it based on the Islamic world-view. In a word, it can be considered as a special way of thinking and living.

Sufism may also, as long as it is considered as a kind of mysticism, be defined as the consciousness of the One Reality or, better, as the apprehension of divine realities. This is why Islamic mystics call themselves Anl al-Haqq' or `the followers of the Real'. The ultimate goal for the Sufi, as for all mystics, is the unio mystica. The nostalgia of the lover and the longing for union have marked the whole history of Sufism, especially its later form. There exist, however, varying definitions of Sufism, each one based upon one of its characteristics. For example, proceeding from the idea of the primordial light of Mohammad, Corbin defines Sufism as follows:

As evidence of mystical religion in Islam, Sufism is a spiritual phenomenon of tremendous importance. Essentially, it is the realization of the Prophet's spiritual message, the attempt to live the modalities of this message in a personal way through the internalization of the content of the Quranic Revelation.

Schimmel, instead, emphasizes the importance of the doctrine of tawhid (tauhid) — the Oneness of God — for Sufis:

> Sufism meant, in the formative period, mainly an internalization of Islam, a personal experience of the central mystery of Islam, that of tawhid, `to declare that God is One'.

One definition, which expresses explicitly the character of the dissolution of individuality in Sufism, can be traced to Junayd (d. 910), the great Sufi master. According to him, `Sufism is that God makes thee die to thyself and become resurrected in Him'. In accordance with the fact that there are many definitions of Sufism, there is no exact answer to the question of what Sufism really is. Acknowledging that Sufism is undefinable, Nicholson, whose studies on the subject are of great importance for many researchers of Sufism in the West, comes to the conclusion that Sufism is a word uniting many divergent meanings, and that in sketching its main features one is obliged to make a sort of composite portrait, which does not represent any particular type exclusively. The Sufis are not a sect, they have no dogmatic system, the tariqas or paths by which they seek God `are in number as the souls of men' and vary infinitely, though a family likeness may be traced in them all.

This being the case, it is obvious that in tracing back the origins of Sufism, researchers face several difficulties. Studies of these origins in the West began in the nineteenth century when the important Sufi texts became available in print in Europe. Since many of these texts are hardly reliable, there are divergent ideas about the origin of Sufism and its development. Here we will confine ourselves to introducing only some of these ideas. Furthermore, we will offer a few remarks on the historical development of Sufism.

## The Origin of Sufism

One of the important assumptions about the origins of Sufism concerns the Christian influence on the Muslim ascetics. Adalbert Merx, Arend Jan Wensinck, and Margaret Smith are some of the scholars who, by means of studying the relations of Muslims with Syrian monks, have tried to trace the origins of Sufism back to Christian mysticism. The presence of sayings of Jesus in some Sufi biographies is another factor that supports this assumption.

Another theory about the origins of Sufism is based on the influence of Neoplatonism on the development of Islamic philosophy. Since for a long time Greek philosophy had prevailed in Western Asia and also Egypt, the doctrines of emanation, illumination and ecstasy could very easily be assumed by the Sufis. Another fact that supports the possibility of an influence of Neoplatonic ideas on the development of Sufism is the translation of the so-called `Theology of Aristotle' into Arabic in the ninth century.

The degree of influence of Indian thought on the origins of early Sufism is debated. It is, however, undeniable that Indian thought, especially Buddhism, has had an important role in the development of the later form of Sufism.' The teachings of Buddha had, before the Muslims' conquest of India in the eleventh century, considerable influence in East Persia and Transoxania. In those Sufi methods that contain ascetic meditation and intellectual abstraction, one can find traces of Buddhism. One of the most important Sufi conceptions, namely the passing-away (fana) of the individual self, is, according to Nicholson and some others, of Indian origin. Since the doctrine of fana is very important in our study,

we will return to it later. Here, it is enough to mention that by quoting the sayings of Bayezid Bastami (d. 874) — the Persian mystic and the first great exponent of the doctrine of fana — and comparing fana with the definition of Nirvana, Nicholson tries to show how the Sufi theory of fana owes a good deal not only to Buddhism but also to Perso-Indian pantheism.

Another well-known theory about the origins of Sufism suggests that it was the reaction of the Aryan mind — especially that of the Indian and Persian — against a conquering Semitic religion. In his book Oriental Mysticism, E.H. Palmer considers Sufism as the development of the primeval religion of the Aryan race. Although such theories are not very well grounded and therefore not wholly reliable, it cannot be denied that Sufism has often been regarded as an Iranian contribution to the development of Islamic thought. We have in the preceding essay discussed the Iranian familiarity with mystical ideas and shown how one of the most important forms of Sufism, namely Theosophical Sufism, was mainly based on the ancient Iranian world-view promoted by Sohravardi.

Since it is true that Sufism, in the course of its development, has assimilated many philosophical elements from other religions, and since certain un-Islamic ideas such as ancient Iranian ideas concerning the concept of illumination and the idea that the diversity of phenomena arises from the admixture of light and darkness had an indisputable impact on the development of Sufism, the origins of Sufism obviously cannot be explained by a single cause. Stoddart, who denies the claim that the development of Sufism is a result of influences from sources such as Neoplatonism, Christianity, or the Indian religions, believes, as Massignon's well-known studies also show, Sufism has grown on the ground of Islam and `there is no Sufism without Islam.'

Nicholson shares the opinion of Massignon and Stoddart about the origins of Sufism. He says:

> Even if Islam had been miraculously shut off from contact with foreign religions and philosophies, some form of mysticism would have arisen within it, for the seeds were already there.

This claim may seem unacceptable if we concentrate merely on the simple monotheism of Islam and its idea of the transcendent personality of God, which is not in line with the idea of an immanent Reality as the soul of the universe that prevailed in Oriental pantheism. Yet, its history is the best evidence that Sufism traces its origin back to the Prophet of Islam and takes inspiration from the divine word as revealed through him in the Koran.

In fact, there are many verses in the Qur'an that indicate the close relationships of God to man. Without entering details, it may be useful to mention here that the notion of Allah as the one, eternal God, a God to fear rather than to love is only one aspect of the Qur'anic conception of God as interpreted by orthodox trends. The other aspect, namely the belief that `Allah is the light of the heavens and the earth, a Being who works in the world and in the soul of man', was largely elaborated by the Sufis. Using the numerous attributes that are given by the Qur'an to God (Allah), the Sufis developed a complicated system that helped them to reconcile the transcendental personality of God with the immanent Reality which is the soul of the universe. Although such a reconciliation may, in the first instance, seem impossible, due to factors like the Qur'anic manifold conception of God, the idea of a primordial covenant (mithaq) between God and man (Sura 7:171), the promise of mutual love between God and man (Sura 5:59), and the non-existence of an unbridgeable gap between God and man, the Sufis succeeded in making it possible.

From a sociological point of view, one of the conditions that made the survival of Sufism possible is the fact that in Islam, as explained above, institutions such as the Church and the Councils are absent.

Instead, there exists fidelity to the men of God, either prophets, imams or mystics who are regarded as men who perceive God directly and without any intermediator. Besides, the role of the Qur'an and the ritual practices taught by it is irrefutable in the origins and development of Islamic mystical theories; as Annemarie Schimmel says: `The words of the Koran have formed the cornerstone for all mystical doctrines.'

These factors are only some of those internal forces that have worked in the direction of reconciliation of mystical ideas with Islamic thought. There were also external forces functioning in this direction.

Yet there is no doubt that the integration of Sufi ideas into Islamic thought was not without problems. There existed forces that acted in the opposite direction, for instance the theologians of the Sunni kalam — Theological Dialectics — especially the rationalist movement called Mutazilites, and dogmatic clericalism. That is why, as we have pointed out above, Sufism underwent many restraints in its history, especially under the Safavid period. Since our task here is not to inquire in depth into the history of Sufism, a discussion about all the factors that have contributed to or worked against the synthesis of Sufism with Islam will take us too far. The important point for us here is that the result was, as Nicholson remarks, the acceptance of Sufism by Islam and the establishment of the Sufis in the Mohammedan church, instead of their excommunication.

So far we have discussed the origins of Sufism. However, before we proceed to explore the Sufi conception of self we should explain the term Persian Sufism.

## Persian Sufism

From the ninth century on, Sufism underwent considerable change. As Alfred von Kremer maintains,

> Moslem asceticism passed over into the pantheistic religious enthusiasm that forms the real essence of later Sufism.

Although Nicholson rejects the pantheistic character attributed by von Kremer to later Sufis, he accepts that it was a development from an ascetic to a mystic movement. In distinguishing between early and later Sufis we can say that the early Sufis were ascetics and quietists rather than mystics. The relationship between God and man was perceived by these Sufis mostly as that between creator and creature or as that between the Lord and His servant. The development of Sufi pantheism comes later, in the thirteenth century according to Nicholson, and it was due to Ibn Arabi. Regardless of whether the Sufism advocated by Ibn Arabi and the Persian Sufis was pantheistic or not, the mystic movement from the thirteenth century on showed a strong tendency towards embracing the principle of the Unity of Existence.

Many scholars, such as Hodgson, Arbery, Bausani, Gabrieli, Lewisohn and Henry Corbin, have tried to outline the legacy of Iranian culture on this variety of Sufism in particular. As their studies witness, it was partly because of the impact of Iranian culture and thought that Sufism developed from an ascetistic to a mystical movement.

One fact supporting this is that it was, as we have pointed out above, already at the end of the seventh century, that is, when Islam almost became dominant in Iran, that the new movement in Sufism arose. Also, the period between the thirteenth and the fifteenth century, that is, the epoch of the flourishing of this current in Sufism, was the period of great Sufi figures such as Sohravardi (d. 1191), Attar (d. 1220), Ibn Arabi (d. 1240) — the Great Master — Rumi (d. 1273), Shabistari (d. 1320) and Hafiz (d. 1389), all of whom, except Ibn Arabi, were of Persian origin. Regarding what has been noted above about Persian Sufism or Irano-Islamic mysticism, it is exactly this later form of mysticism with which we are concerned.

Weber took into consideration the Persian Sufis' strong tendency towards mysticism instead of asceticism. He says:

> The inner-worldly order of dervishes in Islam cultivated a planned procedure for achieving salvation, but this procedure, for all its variations, was oriented ultimately to the mystical quest for salvation of the Sufis. This search of the dervishes for salvation, deriving from Indian and Persian sources, might have orgiastic, spiritualistic, or contemplative characteristics in different instances, but in no case did it constitute `asceticism' in the special sense of that term which we have employed.

The key note of the new Sufism was not suffering in the ascetic sense but the ideas of Love and Light. Actually, one striking element that distinguishes early Sufism from its later form was that, for the former, the object of identification could be chosen from among the attributes of the Prophet of God, while for the latter God Himself was the Sufi's object of desire. In the eyes of Sufis, God as One Real Being is everywhere and in every phenomenon. His throne is not then in the haven of heaven, but in the human heart.

Such a view led, as we shall see later, to the appearance of a conception of God that has been `accused' of being pantheist by some scholars. According to this conception, the final goal of love

is to comprehend the reality of love which is identical to God's essence. Accordingly, God is necessary for me to exist and I am necessary for God to be manifested to Himself. As Ibn Arabi says: `I give Him also life, by knowing Him in my heart'. Seen in this light, the Sufi interprets himself and his relation to God in a way leading to the abnegation of his phenomenal and conventional self as `the product of social, historical, national and certainly personal impulses.' As we will show later, the idea of the abnegation of the conventional self has played the role of an obstacle to the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking.

Before inquiring into this issue, however, there is one point left that should be explicated. This point is the differences between Sufism and irfan or erfan (as it is pronounced in Persian). The necessity of clarifying this difference is due to some misunderstandings that might arise when discussing Irano-Islamic mysticism.

The word irfan is used generally to express the word `gnosis', and arif signifies a mystic-gnostic. Yet, as we have explained in the previous essay, the application of the term irfan in Iran became widespread when Sufis faced problems under the reign of the Safavids and therefore tried to spread their ideas among Iranians under the name of irfan. Using the word irfan instead of Sufi helped the `real' mystics both to distinguish themselves from the indisciplined and lax dervishes and to escape from the hostility of the exoteric jurisprudents. This gave rise to the utilization of the word irfan alongside Tasawwuf (Sufism) when referring to Islamic mysticism.

On the other hand, since there existed a form of synthesis between gnosis, philosophy and even traditional science in the Islamic tradition of thought, many of the leading figures in Iranian Islamic thought such as Ibn Sina (d. 1037), Nasir al-din 'Tusi (d. 1273), Qutb al-Din Shirazi (d. 1759/60) were Sufis, gnostics (arifs), traditional philosophers, theosophists and even scientists. It is therefore not easy to determine which one of the Islamic mystics was a Sufi and which one was an arif. In this respect, the criteria sometimes used to distinguish between arif and Sufi are obscure and general. For that reason, attempts to determine if Rumi was a Sufi or an arif have so far not come to a conclusion.

In this study we do not make a distinction between irfan and Sufism. On the one hand, mystics such as Rumi and Shabistari, who in this work are called Persian Sufis, were almost all not only Sufis, but gnostics (arifs) and philosophers as well. On the other hand, they are addressed as Sufis by the most important researchers of Sufism whose works are of significance for our study.

Having discussed Sufism and its origins, clarified what we mean by Persian Sufism, and explained our reasons for not distinguishing between Sufis and arifs, we can inquire into the concept of the self in Sufism, an understanding of which is essential if we are to comprehend the Iranian conception of the individual self. In doing this, our arguments will centre on the abnegation of the self and the Unity of Existence (or Unity of Being) as two important ideas in Persian Sufism. Our intention is, as mentioned above, to show how the abnegation of the conventional self in Sufism obstructed the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking.

## The Principle of The Abnegation of The Conventional Self in Sufism

Regarding the phenomenal and conventional self as one of the most essential obstacles to the development of the `real self', the Sufis developed a spiritual mechanism of eliminating any distance between man and God and, therefore, between man and the universe, and of transcending to the real self or the Universal Self. The principle of the abnegation of the conventional self is, indeed, one of the most important principles in the Sufi quest for selfhood. What is striking here is that this principle does not go hand in hand with the growth of concern for the individual self. This latter is based on the affirmation of what in Sufi doctrine is understood as the conventional self, which, according to Sufis, is of a regressive nature and alienates man from his true nature and which must therefore be overcome. But before we explore this principle, we must first consider what is meant by the conventional self and the real self.

In Sufi doctrine, the conventional self, expressed by the term *nafs ammarâ* (impulsive forces), is a product of culture and environment. A.R. Arasteh recognizes in his study of the meaning and significance of the self in Sufi philosophy a variety of different selves hiding in the conventional self.

They include parental selves, the generational self, the social self, the professional self, fatherhood or motherhood, the national self and historical self. Focusing on the regressive nature of these different selves for the achievement of man's real self, Sufis consider the conventional self as a phenomenon that alienates man from himself, from nature and from other men.

The aim of Sufism is in this connection to develop the art of the passing away of these different selves and transcending one's self to reach the state of Universal Self. According to Sufism, man realizes `his' `real' self when he becomes aware that his conventional self is only a short moment in the evolution of his `self'. The long path of growth from conventional self to Universal Self is described beautifully in the poetry of Rumi. Also, in his book Musibat Name the Sufi Master, Attar, explains in detail this process of inner evolution. However, before we proceed to explain this process as a procedure that makes the development of the concept of the individual completely impossible, let us first consider the Sufi conception of the real or Universal Self as the `final' point in the course of man's inner evolution.

According to Sufism, as Arasteh notes, the real self is a product of the universe in evolution. It is not, hence, only what environment and culture develop in us. Referring to the real self as a cosmic self, he says:

> Cosmic self can be thought of as the image of the universe which must be unveiled. It is wrapped in our unconsciousness, if it is not the unconsciousness itself, whereas the phenomenal self encompasses consciousness ... The cosmic self embraces all our being while the phenomenal self designates only a part of our existence.

In this regard, while the phenomenal self is a product of man in history and has a finite character, the real self is the product of an inner evolution and has an infinite character. In other words, while the phenomenal self is the product of the mental frame and its development, the real self is a result of intuitive power. The real self, Sufis believe, can be realized when one has emptied one's consciousness.

By bringing to light the unconscious, one can attain insight into one's whole existence, which is existence in the state of union with the whole cosmos. To

reach such a state one must, according to Sufism, take two steps. The first is the step out of one's self, the other is the step into God.46 In this sense, we can recognize two steps in Sufism: (i) the passing away of `I', and (ii) becoming wholly aware of `me'. To accomplish this process, Sufis progress through three stages which constitute the structure of the hierarchy of the Sufi personality. These stages — (1) Personification, (2) Deification, (3) Unification — can be related to three types of objects of desire: the sheikh or qutb (the spiritual guide), God, and love as the essence of creation. They are the stages through which man assumes the identity of a greater power and disclaims his own identity, that is, they are, in Rosenthal's words, the various stages of the process of 'other-identification'. Since it is through this process that man is released from the development of his individual self, it is important to inquire into these stages more precisely. Here it must be mentioned that, since it is hard to find a study about Sufism and its conception of self that has not taken into consideration the poems of Iranian mystic poets, especially those of Abu Yazid (Bayezid) Bastami (d. 874), Fariduddin Attar (d. 1220) and Rumi (d. 1273), and since the best way to understand the philosophical basis of the abnegation of self in the ways of thinking of Iranians is to study Iranian poetry, which contains the `real spirit' of Iranians, we sometimes have to let the mystics speak for themselves.

## Personification as a Step towards the Refutation of Individuality

Personification means identifying oneself with someone else, such as one's father, teacher, and so on. It is one of the stages of psychological development in the process of which every child becomes aware of her/his own self. Despite different psychological points of view on this issue, personification is generally accepted as one of the common `processes of growth' in every culture. In some cultures, however, personification has a decisive role in the process of internalization of the value-system of the culture in question. This is so in many Asian cultures in which the role of spiritual guidance in the individual's life is striking. As Arasteh points out:

> In Persian culture it [personification] was a strong mechanism of cultural preservation. Traditionally, in Persia, identification has

been a mechanism for assimilating the qualities that one respects, values that one idealizes.

Therefore, we are witnessing in Persian Sufism a strong tradition of the spiritual guidance system. A striking example is the identification of Rumi, the great Sufi, with his master Shams. In the lyrics that Rumi composes in this respect, we can clearly see how his self is completely dissolved in his master's self. Rumi's famous collection of poems, Diwan-i Shams-e Tabriz, contains some beautiful verses describing the relationship between master and disciple. These verses, which give evidence of the very existence of the phenomenon of personification in Persian literature, are so well known in Iran that they are often used by Persians to express their love to their beloved. The master in Sufism is, however, not only a spiritual guide. He is, as Nasr mentions, the representative of the esoteric function of the Prophet of Islam and by the same token he is the theophany of Divine Mercy which lends itself to those willing to return to it.

Only he has the power of delivering man from himself, from his carnal soul. It is, indeed, the power of the sheikh that makes it possible for the murid (disciple) to observe the Universe as it really is and to rejoin the sea of Universal Existence. Having such a perception of his master in mind, Rumi says:

> Without the power imperial of Shamsu'l-Haqq of Tabriz one could neither behold the moon nor become the sea.

In Iranian culture, personification is not, however, limited to the pure spiritual sphere, it extends to the social realm, too. An example in this respect is the charismatic view of leadership. Ayatollah Khomeini,

> for instance, owed his power to some degree to this feature of Iranian culture. An inquiry into this issue would demand a book to itself and is thus far from the scope of this study. Yet it must be mentioned that Ayatollah Khomeini was not merely regarded as a political but also as a spiritual leader, with whom many Iranians identified themselves.

## Deification as the Second Step towards the Refutation of Individuality

Personification is only the first step towards the complete abnegation of self. The next step is to deviate from the master's image in order to

apprehend God directly. It is in this stage that we are encountering the removal of the self, which in reality means the annihilation of those experiences which bar the revealing of the real self. Sufis call the experience of removal of `I' fana, which ends in a state of ecstasy, the feeling of union; it is the beginning of baqa, the state of conscious existence.

Concerning the abnegation of the self, it is necessary to be explicit about the Sufi conception of passing-away (fana); thus our account will next deal with this concept.

## The Concept of Fana

Nothing expresses the idea of the abnegation of the self in Sufism better than the concept of fana (annihilation', or disintegration of the negatives). Fana means the passing-away of the individual self in the Universal Being. The Sufi theory of fana is supposed to be of Indian origin. According to Nicholson, it `was influenced to some extent by Buddhism as well as by Perso-Indian pantheism.' Here it is the similarity between the concept of fana and Nirvana that is considered. Indeed, in both concepts, the passing-away of the individual is in focus.61 The concept of fana helps Sufism to come closer to Islamic monism — a theory that admits the equality of all beings and in which the principle of Oneness of God is of great importance.

The idea of unity is essential for Sufism. `To free man from the prison of multiplicity, to cure him from hypocrisy and to make him whole' is, Nasr states, `the whole program of Sufism. It is because this tendency towards the idea of unity in Islam and especially in Sufism that unity is considered as the basis of all faith, as Sheikh Mahmud Shabistari (d. 1320), one of the most famous Sufis in the Islamic World, maintains in his well-known book, Gulshan-i raz (Rose Garden of Mystery):

> See but One, Say but One, Know but One. In this are summed up the roots and branches of faith.

The Sufi conception of Oneness of God is not, however, identical with the clergy's and orthodox Muslims'. Since an analysis of this issue would far exceed the scope of the present work, we simply recall that the antagonism between the clerical perspective and the Sufi view of the concept of Oneness of God is indeed a reflection of the esoteric/ exoteric (batin/zahir) polarity. This

dimension represents `the "vertical" Structure of the revelation in Islam. One might formulate the essential difference between `orthodox' Muslims' and Sufis' conceptions of the Oneness of God by saying that for the former the statement that God is One means the uniqueness of God's essence, while for the latter it means the identity of God with the One Real Being which underlies all phenomena. Understanding the Oneness of God in this way, Sufism structures the process of deification based on ittihad (union), that is, the identification of the Sufi with the Divine Being. We find this characteristic of Sufism in Persian poetry. Attar's allegory of the Mantiq al-Tayr (The Conference of the Birds), the Mathnawi-i manawi of Rumi, and the lawaih of Jami are some examples in this respect.67 Believing in the Oneness of God did not, however, prevent Sufis from going over the boundaries of monism and interpreting the relationship between man and God in a way quite different from the interpretation of exoteric scholars.

Before the ninth century, Sufis, like mystics of other religions, strived for real detachment from all accidental appearances and sought to be free from every conceptual idea. However, they did admit that in mystical absorption in God there remained for ever their `I'. From the ninth century on, as we have explained above, we can see the emergence of a new tendency among Sufis describing the mystical experience as the reaching of the Subsistent Being Itself. However, as mentioned above, it is not until the thirteenth century on that we witness the flourishing of this tendency. While the early Sufis, as Arasteh mentions, chose their object of identification from among the attributes of the Prophet and God, in the new tendency, God Himself became the Sufi's object of desire.68 The Sufis interpreted the abnegation of self as a way of reaching God and being One with Him. In this way, they advocated the idea of the Unity of Existence. This can be considered as the most important point that distinguishes this tendency from other tendencies in Islamic mysticism, because in this new trend, the `I' of the Sufi was no longer considered an obstacle to unification with God.

The later Sufism, which ultimately came to dominate Muslim mysticism, became, as mentioned above, widespread among Iranian Sufis. As a result, we can in almost all texts written by Iranian Sufis find traces of the ideas of the abnegation of self and the Unity of Existence. It is exactly these two ideas that have played an important role in the non-development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking. The process of deification is, however, followed by unification as the last step in the process of the abnegation of the phenomenal and conventional self.

## Unification as the Last Step towards the Refutation of Individuality

As we have said above, the Sufi may, with the help of his master, travel the Sufi path and experience the Unity of Being. Admitting the possibility of complete unification with the Absolute, Sufism, therefore, does not consider the `I' of the seeker as an obstacle in his path towards Absolute Being. Here, the mystical experience is not a transformation of the human soul into God, rather it is the affirmation of the unity which has always existed and will always exist. As Arasteh mentions, `Unification with the life essence is recognition of deification in everything.' In this state, one exists devoid of time and place `within the realm of the beloved, and manifests oneself in terms of the mechanism of "love".'

A study of Iranian mystical poetry shows clearly this conception of a complete disappearance of `I' and the pure unity of God and man. The teaching of Abu Yazid (Bayezid) Bastami (d. 874), the first great exponent of the Sufi conception of the passing-away (fana), has so deeply influenced Sufism that, as Annemarie Schimmel says, few mystics have had such an impact on their contemporaries and successive generations. One of the most important points in his teachings is his conception of the experience of fana (annihilation). Bayezid's statements concerning the possibility of the complete union with God are so clear that there can be no discussion about its interpretation. About his relationship with God, Bayezid says:

> He got up once and put me before Himself and addressed me: `O Bayezid, my creatures desire to behold thee.' So I said: 'Adorn me with Thy Unity and dress me with Thy I-ness and raise me to Thy Oneness so that, when Thy creatures see me, they may say: We have seen Thee, and it is Thou and I am no longer there.'

It is exactly because of this idea of a Union with God that he claims that he has lost his `I', and replies to somebody who comes to visit him that: `I myself am in search of Bayezid.' And it is in such a state of Union that Bayezid says: `Subhani — Praise be to Me, how great is My Majesty!'

Bayezid's doctrine of Union with Reality, which differed radically from that of his predecessors, had a deep and vast influence on Iranian Sufis. As Schimmel mentions, Bayezid was `a strange figure of dark fire' who `stands lonely in Early Iranian Sufism'; `His name occurs, in poetry, more frequently than that of any other mystic, with the exception of "Mansur" Hallaj', with whom the idea of the absolute Union with God reaches its climax.

Although Bayezid had at many times claimed that he had achieved Union with God, it was not he but Husayn ibn Mansur, known as Hallaj (d. 922), who claimed `I am the Absolute Truth' (Ana `I-Haqq) or `I am God', a sentence that became the most famous of all Sufi claims.

The central theme of Hallaj's doctrine is that there exists no essential difference between God and His creatures. Let us study this doctrine from an ontological point of view. In a very interesting article, `The Structure of Selfhood in Zen Buddhism', Toshihiko Izutsu compares the Aristotelian form of question `What is man?' with the question of Zen Buddhism `Who am I?'. The essential difference between these two questions, according to Izutsu, is that the first question concentrates on the problem of the nature of man in general. The image of man here `forms itself in the mind of an objective observer who would approach the problem by first asking: "What is man?".'79 Consequently, man is regarded in this way as `but a "thing" in the sense that it is nothing but an objectified man, i.e. man as an object.' It is not, therefore, inaccurate to assume that the first question issues from a view that distinguishes between man as a subject and man as an object. For such a view, there will hardly be a question of Unity of Existence based on the principle of the non-dualism between subject and object.

Contrariwise, for those who ask the other question — `Who am I?' — the problem is not the nature of man as such, but rather man as a human subject. Here, `I' does not look at his own `self' from the outside as an object; in other words, `self' as a

subject and as an object is not dichotomized. `Self' is unified in one and the same phenomenon and is transformed into the Absolute Self. Seen in this light, the knower is identical with the known and the Creator is identical with His creatures. All this is nothing but the idea of the Unity of Existence which we can recognize also in the doctrines of most Sufis — such as Bayezid, Hallaj and Ibn Arabi — who belong to the later form of Sufism. For these Sufis, the main question is, as for a Zen Buddhist, `Who am I?' rather than `Who is man?' It is for this reason that Hallaj, to cite an instance, formulates his answer as `I am God' rather than `Man is God'. In fact, these Sufis do not believe in the nature of man as such and as separated from the nature of the `Absolute'. To them, the variety in the phenomenal world is nothing but the divergent forms which the Absolute takes when He manifests His Own `Self'.

Viewed in this light, the state of absolute unity is a state of not being subject or object. It is in such a state that, as Durand says,

> le 'Soi', qui était déja presenti dans l'image du Monde comme l'Un omniprésent, devient le principe d'unification et de hiérarchie du moi: l'unité, ou mieux l'unicité se révèle ... comme un Orde, un `cosmos' dont le principe spatio-temporel est une hiérarchie qualitative.

> [the 'Self', already present in the image of the World as the omnipresent One, becomes the principle of unification and hierarchy of the self: unity, or rather uniqueness, is revealed ... as an Orde , a 'cosmos' whose spatio-temporal principle is a qualitative hierarchy.]

For the Sufi this order is based on one principle: the principle of the Unity of Existence. From the point of view of Sufis, what makes the unification of man and God possible is Love. According to Hallaj, the relations between God and His creatures, especially man, are based on mutual love realized through suffering. In contrast to the former Sufis, to Hallaj suffering is not a destruction of the self, but a means for understanding the essence of God, which is indeed nothing but love. Thus suffering contains a positive value, which makes man God and leads him to lose himself.

Actually, love may be considered the supreme principle in Sufi ethics. For instance, one important result of Sufi love is universal charity. Since the Sufi sees God in all His creatures, he loves not only human beings, whatever cruelty they inflict upon him, but also animals. There are a lot of tales in the Sufi literature which show Sufis' strong feeling of pity for animals. It is noteworthy that the Sufi's love of God and His creatures and, accordingly, the universal charity of Sufism is a direct result of the Sufi's feeling of Union with Reality, something that is considered as a trace of pantheism in Sufism.

To a Sufi, love is the remedy of his pride and self-conceit. In practice, this kind of love goes together with self-sacrifice and the denial of individual personality. The doctrine and personality of Hallaj are, in fact, a symbol of such a love and self-sacrifice. It is not, therefore, very difficult to understand why, when Hallaj knocked at the door of his master and the master asked `Who is there?', the selfless Hallaj, asking himself `Who am I?', answered: `Ana `l-Haqq' (I am God).

Hallaj's doctrine and its impact on Sufism have been the subject of a lot of discussions among researchers in the West. It is, however, undeniable that not only his theory but also his personality and especially his death had a decisive role in constituting the strong tendency in Iranian thought towards complete self-renunciation, very similar to that of Indians. In Iran, Schimmel notes, the name of Hallaj `has become a commonplace in the verses of almost all poets', and even `the tragic figure of Mansur occurs in modern Persian drama'. It is noteworthy that to understand the strong Iranian tendency towards martyrdom we have to take into consideration the deep influence of the Sufi doctrine of denial of individual personality and self-sacrifice for the sake of a supreme love. A short study of the history of martyrdom in Iran will show us that to become a martyr, for the sake of love, truth, or a supreme idea, has not only been the wish of the religious people in Iran, but also of the non-religious intellectuals such as writers, poets, and even Marxist activists.

After Hallaj, the doctrine of self-inhibition became more and more common among Sufis and occupied a vast place in Persian poetry, something that has been quite important in laying the foundation of Iranians' conception of self. In this respect, it is enough to draw attention to the poems of the most favoured and famous mystical Persian poet Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi (Maulawi), who is also the most well-known mystic of Islam in the West. In his book Mathnawvi, which is regarded as the `the Koran of Persia'.85 we read the following, showing the idea of the necessity of not-being for being and becoming:

> I died as mineral and became a plant, I died as plant and rose to animal, I died as animal and I was man.
> Why should I fear?
> When was I less by dying?
> Yet once more I shall die as man, to soar With angels blest; but even from angelhood
> I must pass on: all except God doth perish.
> When I have sacrificed my angel soul,
> I shall become what no mind e'er conceived.
> Oh, let me not exist! for Non-existence Proclaims in organ tones
> `To Him we shall return!'

By these verses, as Nicholson observes, Rumi describes the evolution of man in this world and his further growth in the spiritual universe. This is nothing but self-annihilation in the ocean of the Godhead. As a drop of rain absorbed in the ocean ceases to exist individually, so the soul vanishes in the universal Deity.

Another famous poem that expresses the idea of abnegation of self and the possibility of complete union with the Universal Self is the following by the Persian poet Baba Kuhi of Shiraz (d. 1050). He recites:

> In the market, in the cloister — only God I saw,
> In the valley and mountain — only God I saw, ...
> I passed away into nothingness, I vanished, And lo, I was the All-living — only God I saw.

And the famous Persian poet Jami (d. 1492) exclaims:

> Neighbor and associate and companion — everything is He.
> In the beggar's coarse frock and in the king's silk — everything is He.
> In the crowd of separation and in the loneliness of collectedness
> By God! everything is He, and by God! everything is He.

We can see the strong tendency towards Unification. In the poems of many other Persian poets, such as Attar and Shabistari, this tendency is noticeable, too.

What the preceding study of the process of the abnegation of the conventional self in Sufism has made clear may be summarized by saying that this process is, indeed, a journey from `I' to `me'; a process during which the essential Sufi task, which is to break the idol of the phenomenal self as the mother-idol, is realized. Through this process, one proceeds from the state of `I-ness' to the state of 'He-ness' and from there to the state of 'one-ness'. The state of `I-ness' is regarded as the state of personification, the state of 'He-ness' as the state of deification and the state of 'one-ness' as the state of unification.

In the end of this process, the individual conventional self grows to be the Universal Self and [one] has and has not the feeling of existence ...In this state indescribable and characterized by silence, the individual is now everything or nothing: everything in the sense that he is united with all, nothing in the sense that nothingness is the beginning of `everythingness'...

He feels related to all mankind, experiences a concern for all beings and tries to utilize his earlier experiences for their benefit.

It is clear that, when in a way of thinking the growth of self is understood in this way, that is, as a development of the conventional self to the Universal Self, there is no question of the growth of concern for the individual self. In the following, we will, by studying the concept of the Unity of Existence from the philosophical point of view, try to show the existence of the idea of the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self in Persian Sufism, a doctrine which through Sufism permeates the ways of thinking of Iranians and has hindered the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian thought. Of course, it would be wrong to say that all Iranians hold such a view of the unity of all beings. Yet, this is the view maintained by a great number of Iranian `philosophers', from the thirteenth century up till modern times, and this view, we maintain, has had a great impact on the ways of thinking of Iranians because of the integration of Sufi ideas in Iranian thought.

## The Concept of the Absolute and the Unity of Existence

The roots of the idea of the Unity of Existence, which leads to self-annihilation, self-sacrifice and self-deification, can perhaps be traced back to Indian thought. Indeed, the Indian doctrine of the supremacy of Universal Self over individual self may have influenced the Sufis' view of self and 'other-than-self'.

The most important Sufi to have developed the doctrine of 'unification' is Ibn Arabi. Even if, as Schimmel remarks, according to a traditional Western view Ibn Arabi is `the representative of Islamic Pantheism' and `responsible for the decay of true Islamic religious life', his enormous impact on the development of Sufism, especially in Iran, is absolutely beyond doubt. In his study of thirteenth century Sufism, S.H. Nasr explores the crucial influence of the teachings of Ibn Arabi on Persian Sufism. As he and other researchers, for instance Schimmel, note, the profound connection between Ibn Arabi and the most influential and important Persian Sufi masters, for example, Rumi, Mahmud Shabistari, Shah Nimatullah Wali (d. 1430, the founder of the Nimatullahi order, the most widespread order in Iran), is indisputable. In this respect, Nasr points out that To understand the extent of Ibn Arabi's influence in Persia it is enough to realize that, according to what has been discovered by Othman Yahya, of the nearly 150 known commentaries upon the Fusus about 120 are by Persians and other peoples of this region.

As Nasr says, the tradition of teaching and commenting on Ibn Arabi's works has continued until the present day in Iran. Since the doctrine of Ibn Arabi has been very important for the development of the concept of man in Persian Sufism, we will below give a brief presentation of his ideas about the concept of the Absolute and the Unity of Existence.

## Ibn Arabi's Mysticism of Unity

The Absolute, which traditionally is indicated by the word Allah (God) in Islam, is called Haqq (Truth or Reality) by Sufis, because the truly Absolute is absolutely inconceivable. To call the Absolute Haqq is not only a matter of different taste in choosing

different names for God. It signifies, rather, the specific Sufi conception of Existence, a conception that is based on a certain understanding of the physical world and its reality. So-called `reality' is regarded by Sufis as a dream. In other words, being in its metaphysical reality is as imperceptible as phenomenal things in their phenomenal reality are to a man asleep. The so-called `reality' is therefore a symbolic representation of Reality or, more precisely, a particular form of Absolute Reality. Accordingly, if it is true that what is called living in this world is nothing but dreaming, then the only way for waking up and `living' in Reality is to die. Here, `death' is obviously not a biological but a spiritual event. This event is, as we have seen above, the mystical experience of `self-annihilation' or fana. Thus, fans is not to be understood in a completely negative sense as `I' in the state of purely `no-I-ness'. On the contrary, fana is a psychological state in which `I' finds its real `I-ness' on the ultimate level of Existence where there is no distinction between `man' and the rest of Universe, between ego and other. This is the state of the Unity of all Existence, the state of waking up from a phenomenal sleep, or the self-illuminating state of baqa (`remaining' in God after annihilation), or the state of eternal life. To reach such a state is not possible but through Unity with the Absolute, and it means nothing but the Unity of the Absolute with Himself.

According to Ibn Arabi, the ontological essence of everything is the Absolute. The variety in the phenomenal world is a result of the divergent forms which the Absolute takes in the process of self-manifestation. Since there exists nothing but the Absolute, Unity with Him is in this respect no more than the realization of the He-ness of the Absolute. To the mystic, Unity with the Absolute is to see all existing things as they appear in the mirror of the Absolute.

To a Sufi, the negation of individuality is therefore a complete affirmation of the Universal Self. The self-manifestation of the Absolute the world in order to see Himself. Thus the `other' is the mirror of God. In this respect, Man (Adam or the reality of Man) is conceived as the very polishing of that mirror. However, if we remember that for the Sufi `existence' is essentially the Absolute itself in its dynamic aspect, then the act of seeing Himself in the `other' means nothing but to see Himself in a

mirror which is His `Self'. It is remarkable that Ibn Arabi here presents the Sufi tendency to see One in Many and Many in One, or rather to see Many as One and One as Many. In this connection Jami, the famous Iranian mystic poet, says:

> can, according to the Sufi, be actualized only through determined forms. The self-manifestation is thus conceived as nothing other than a self-determination of the Absolute. As Ibn Arabi says, God created The unique Substance, viewed as absolute and void of all phenomena, all limitations and all multiplicity, is the Real (al-Haqq). On the other hand, viewed in His aspect of multiplicity and plurality, under which He displays Himself when clothed with phenomena, he is the whole created universe. Therefore the universe is the outward visible expression of the Real, and the Real is the inner unseen reality of the universe.

This being the case, it is not surprising that to the Sufi the Absolute and the world are identical. Indeed, according to this doctrine, while in their determined forms creatures are far from being the same as the Absolute, in their essence they are the Absolute. It is exactly from this idea that Jalaluddin Rumi's `pantheistic' interpretation of the doctrine of the Unity of Existence originates. In The Divan of Shamsi Tabriz, Rumi's famous lyrical poems, he says:

> I have put duality away, I have seen that the two worlds are one;
> One I seek, One I know, One I see, One I call.
> I am intoxicated with Love's cup,
> The two worlds have passed out of my ken;
> I have no business save carouse and revelry.

Believing that the essence of everything is God (the Absolute), one can discover Him in every form of the phenomenal world, from inorganic life to the human being. Then one can experience a unity in diversity of forms. Such a conception of the idea of the relationship of the individual self with the Universal Self influences, of course, the relationship of `I' with 'other-than-I'. Man conceives himself as an unseparated part of 'other-than-I'.

## The Relativity of Evil

Until now, we have tried to discuss the principle of the Unity of Existence. Now it is appropriate to turn from the general principle and briefly explain this principle in action. In this regard, we have chosen the way Sufis deal with the question of good and evil. One reason for choosing this issue is the fact that the categorization of different behaviours as good and evil can be considered as a mechanism for perceiving and valorizing these behaviours in accordance with our value-system. The way good and evil are understood and distinguished from each other is then crucial for our perception of the relationship of `I' with others and thus for organizing our social relations. Since this relationship, that is, the relationship between the individual self and other selves, is of great significance for our study, the way the Sufi treats the question of good and evil is interesting to observe. As Lewisohn, in his study of the `Unity of Religion' observes, the philosophical doctrine of the Relativity of Evil is an idea widely advocated by Sufi poets, such as Sana'i (d. 1131) and Rumi as well as Ibn Arabi. Lewisohn also notes that Shabistari, the famous Iranian Sufi, is of the opinion that certain Qur'anic passages witness that `in so far as "evil" in respect to its Divine origin is good, thus there is no absolute evil in Treation'. Good and evil, which according to Shabistari belong to the realm of morality, pertain merely to the realm of God's Qualities, not to the Divine Essence .... since what is evil and death to one person, is goodness and life to another, thus there can be no absolute evil.

Lahiji, one of the most important commentators on Shabistari's ideas, claims that, since to the Sufis Existence or Being is absolute Good, any `evil' which appears manifested therein arises from nonexistence ...

Hence considered from this `ontological' standpoint, `evil' and `bad' are but a retrogression to nonexistence, while existence remains, wherever it is, the summum bonum.

The psychological origin of evil shows the ultimate nonexistence of evil. It is indeed a product of human finitude. Indeed, by refusing to see evil as originating from the realm of the Divine Essence and by regarding it as a product of human finitude, the Sufis rejected the existence of any discrepancy between the imperfections of the world and the perfection of God. This being the case, it is clear that the problem of theodicy does not exist for Sufis. As we have said above, the problem of theodicy in Western culture contributed, to some degree, to the emergence of the concept of man as an individual, aimed at changing the world, at first in accordance with God's will and later according to his own will. As E. Underhill maintains:

> In the mystics of the West, the highest forms of Divine Union impel the self to some sort of active, rather than of passive life: and this is now recognized by the best authorities as the true distinction between Christian and non-Christian mysticism.

However, for Sufis, who believe `evil must exist if only in order to maintain harmony in creation' and maintain that "evil" relates purely to us, but vis-à-vis God that same "evil" is total Good and absolute wisdom', there can hardly exist any need to change the world in the manner understood by Christians. Refusing to see the world as imperfect, and thus refusing to see any need to change it, will to a certain extent question the role of man as an actor. Seeing himself as a god's `vessel', man feels no responsibility to act in this world to change it. In other words, his seeing himself as a united part of the whole of being undermines the necessary conditions for the emergence of the idea of man as an autonomous and independent actor and, thus, also the development of the concept of the individual. Here it must be mentioned that there have been many different conceptions of the problems of predestination and free will among Muslim thinkers, but the problem of theodicy as it appears in Christianity is neither so dominant nor important among Muslims as it is among Christians. The problem of theodicy, that is, the contradiction between the fact of human suffering and God's goodness, something that brings about the idea of the reconstruction of the world, Turner remarks, is one of the central theological controversies in Christianity. The main contradiction in Islam focuses, however, `on God's omnipotence and human free will'. In this connection, discussing the absence of a comprehensive confessional apparatus in Islam, Gilsenan affirms that

> Certainly, the sense of sin, of the fall from grace, of spiritual guilt and the whole theodicy of suffering are virtually absent

from Islam by comparison with most of the Christian churches.

The fact that Islam and Christianity have taken dissimilar attitudes towards the question of human suffering can be considered as one of the reasons for this difference between Christianity and Islam. A discussion about this requires a detailed inquiry into the anthropology of evil and the theological view of both Christianity and Islam. Our intention here, however, is not to study the problems of evil and theodicy from a theological point of view, but to study to what extent Sufi ideas influenced Iranian conceptions of the individual and his role as an actor in changing the `imperfect' world. We shall, therefore, just look into the problems of Satanology, which, as Annemarie Schimmel maintains, are `closely connected with those of good and evil and thus with predestination and free will'. Through this brief inquiry, we will return to the Christian conception of evil. It should be noted that the reason why we will confine ourself to a study of the Sufi attitude towards Satan is that it is an elucidating example, which not only shows to what extent the idea of the relativity of evil is strong among Sufis, but also clarifies to what degree the Sufi view of evil and good differs from that of Christians. There is in this respect, according to Tor Andrae, a `striking dissimilarity between the Christian ascetics' world of ideas and that of their Muslim counterparts'. Besides, the study of this issue may help us understand the attitude of Sufism towards other religions and its impact on the Iranian view of the adherents of other religions. This latter can, in turn, illuminate the Iranian conception of the relation between `I' and `the other-than-I'.

One Sufi whose ideas about Satan are famous is Hallaj. He is considered as the first person to try to formulate the idea of the rehabilitation of Satan. According to Hallaj, there have been only two real monotheists in the world: Mohammad and Satan. The latter, so Hallaj believes, is more monotheist than God himself. Satan, who must choose between God's will — which is that no one should be worshipped except Him — and God's order — which is to kneel in front of Adam — refuses to prostrate himself before a created being and disobeys God's order on behalf of His will. `My rebellion means to declare Thee Holy!', says Satan in Hallaj's words.

This view of Satan has had a great impact on some of the most famous Iranian poets and Sufis, such as Ahmad Ghazzali (d. 1126), who says bravely: `Who does not learn tauhid [affirmation of the unique] from Satan, is an infidel', or Sana'i (d. 871), who in his poems describes Satan as a fallen angel whose heart was the nest for the Simurgh of love.

Another important Iranian poet who sees Satan as a true monotheist is Fariduddin Attar (d. 1220). Satan, who, according to Attar, was cursed by God, accepted this curse as an honour because he believed that `to be cursed by Thee, is a thousand times dearer to me than to turn my head away from Thee to anything else.'

As can be seen, Satan is indeed considered a creation of God and never becomes `evil as such' in Sufi thought; he always remains a necessary instrument in God's hand. This view shows that in Islam, and especially in Sufism, there is no decisive dualism between good and evil or between God and Satan. There is no doubt that the idea that not only is there no God but the One God, but that there is naught but God has had a decisive role in this attitude towards Satan.

On the other hand, from the ontological point of view, even if we regard Satan as a symbol of evil, from the standpoint of the doctrine of the Relativity of Evil, he must belong to the realm of nonexistence and therefore he is a result of our mistaken perception of God's action from our own finite perspective. What is important from our point of view, however, is that the problem of Satanology in Sufism once more indicates the strong impact of the idea of the Unity of Existence on Sufis' ways of thinking. There is therefore in Persian literature no trace of stories about the absolute possession of man by the Devil or the struggle between God and Satan. In general, as Andrae points out, the devil has no significant place in Sufi thought. Stories about Lucifer, Mephistopheles or Satan, which are popular among Western readers, have no attraction for Iranians. Satan, either considered as one who is `more monotheist than God' or as a great sinner, is only a creature of God. His sin is not unforgivable, because God can bless every creature, even the Devil. The idea of Satan as a sinner in Islam is probably inherited from Judaism: in Jewish thought, Satan has not the significant place it has in Christian thought.

In the following, we wish to indicate the dissimilar views of Christians and Muslims on Satan. We must qualify what we are about to say with a forewarning about generalizations. This is especially valid of Christianity, since it embraces quite divergent traditions.

Studying the idea of evil in the Christian tradition, Taylor takes into consideration the fact that Christianity inherited the idea of Satan from Hebrew thought. However, according to Taylor, Satan did not have the same importance in Hebrew thought as in early Christianity.

Indeed, in later Jewish thought, although Satan is the one who disrupts the relation between man and God, he has no control over man. Man is believed to have the choice to act freely for or against evil. Yet, as Taylor explains, in the Christian evolution of the idea of Satan, matters take a different turn. Christianity took over the apocalyptic world view, which was basically dualistic. Thus Satan came to mean all that was opposed to God. He was Prince of this world, and all the kingdoms of the world were under his control.

In the later Christian tradition, the Devil's place was that of a rogue angel who wandered between angels and men, enticing men and women to sin and causing them to become witches and practice their craft power on his behalf upon the innocent.

The opposition between Satan and God, which later became the conflict between Satan and Christ, underwent different phases. However, it never vanished from the Christian tradition. As Taylor maintains, in the folk representation of Christianity the struggle between Satan and Christ developed a life of its own. The miracle plays are evidence of its continuity in the Middle Ages. With Milton's poem Paradise Lost it became immortalized. No doubt, different Christian traditions, especially Catholicism and Protestantism, have adopted different approaches to the question of the necessity of evil and the doctrine of original sin and, accordingly, to the idea of Satan. To inquire into these approaches is beyond the scope of this work, so we restrict ourselves to the general suggestion that the idea of conflict between Satan and Christ remains — despite many divergent interpretations of it — strongly alive among Christians.

This, connected to our previous discussion on the Sufi conception of Satan, may show to what extent the non-dualism of Islamic and especially mystic thought — a non-dualism that is an aspect of the idea of the Unity of all beings and the supremacy of the Absolute Self over the individual self — is in opposition to the dualistic view of Christian thought. No doubt, orthodox Islamic views of evil and Satan are not identical with those of Sufis. Yet, the fact that Sufis' controversial ideas concerning the relativity of evil and Satan could not only be developed — of course, not without problems — within the religious structure of Islamic thought, but also become widespread among Muslims — especially Iranians — shows that an absolute dualism between God and Satan does not exist in Islam. What we have in mind is that in contrast to Christianity, in which Satan has an enormous, towards monotheism and unity, the absence of the doctrine of original sin, and the non-absolute dualism between body and soul in Islam, especially in Sufism, on the other, sometimes absolute, power over man, in Islam Satan has never had such a power. This difference is understandable if we take into consideration the existence of a `gap' between man and God, the doctrine of original sin and the dualism between body and soul in the Christian tradition on the one hand, and the strong tendency.

Summing up, since in their social interactions individuals valorize one another's behaviors in accordance with their own value-system through a categorization of these behaviors into good and evil, the way the idea of evil is understood by a people can, to some degree, reveal the nature of the relationship of `I' with others among that people. When, in a way of thinking, certain ideas, such as the idea of the relativity of evil and the limited power of Satan, are prevalent, one may hardly categorize the behaviors of others as absolute evil. This can in turn hinder the growth of the feeling of being split between good and evil and strengthen the feeling of being united with a great One. Such conception of the unity of existence influences man's view of his `self' as an unseparated part of `other-than-self' as well as of Universe. What is then this view? Or rather, which concept of man originates from the idea of the Unity of Existence? In the following, we will consider this question.

## The Concept of Man in the Context of the Idea of the Unity of Existence

We can now proceed from the point that, in contrast to Occidental philosophy in which the whole system stands on the conviction of the independent existence of the ego substance as something opposed to external substantial objects, the Sufi ideas of seeing Many as One and One as Many, and of considering the creatures in their essence as the Absolute, lead to the idea of the dissolution of any dualism between the ego substance and `external' substantial objects.

Cartesian dualism divides reality into two incompatible kinds of substance, mind (res cogitans) and matter (res extensa). In such a division, all levels of nonmateriality are reduced to a single reality and the distinction between the spirit and the psyche disappears. In Islam, on the other hand, there is a clear distinction between spirit (ruh) and psyche (nafs). The recognition of such a distinction means that Islam, especially Sufism, will not see that sharp dualism between body and soul that we have come across in Western ways of thinking. As Nasr notes:

> Islam teaches that the rebellion against God takes place on the level of the psyche, not of the body. The flesh is only an instrument for the tendencies originating within the psyche. It is the psyche that must be trained and disciplined to become prepared for its wedding with the Spirit.

Consequently, the stages through which the conventional self becomes the Universal Self are indeed the process of becoming a totally conscious being by transcending the limited socio-intellectual consciousness. This process is not, then, the process of removal of the body as an obstacle to experiencing the state of 'one-ness' as is the case in Western ways of thinking. It is rather a process through which the individual self tries to reach the Universal Self, that is, to prepare the wedding of psyche with spirit. In this regard, to a Muslim the obstacle is not therefore, material existence — the flesh — but an unawareness that allows the impulsive forces to cause rebellion against God on the level of the psyche. Yet, we cannot talk about a dualism between spirit and psyche, because the spirit is not the antipole of the psyche, but `embraces the psyche and even the corporeal

aspects of man ...'. Having in mind the non-domination of the idea of the absolute separation of body from soul in Islam, we can understand why `the most intense contemplative life in Islam is carried out within the matrix of life within society'. In contrast to the Christian mystic, the Sufi, as Nasr mentions, while inwardly dead to the world, still outwardly participates in the life of society. When the world is considered by Sufis as the mirror in which God sees Himself — so that the Absolute and the world are identical — it is not surprising that worldly life is regarded as sacred and that man's participation in worldly affairs is not necessarily seen as opposed to his sacredness. This explains why the concept of man is always explained in the framework of sacredness in the ways of thinking of Iranians where Sufism has been an integral part. We have discussed this above, when presenting the view that Muslim philosophy never freed itself from the theological realm, entailing that man remained sacred.

The dissolution of any dualism between the ego substance and `external' substantial objects gives rise, among other things, to the idea of the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self. The result is nothing but the dissolution of the duality of one's `own' self and other selves. In his book *Sufism and Taoism*, Izutsu shows, by means of analyzing the philosophy of Ibn Arabi, to what extent the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self is strong in Sufism. A passage from this book clearly shows how the Sufi understanding of the concepts of the Absolute and the Unity of Existence brings about the idea of the individual self as an extension of the Universal Self:

> `The reality is one but assumes many forms' means that what is the one unique Essence multiplies itself into many essences through the multiplicity of self-determinations.

These self-determinations are of two kinds: One is `universal' by which the reality in the state of Unity becomes `man', for example, and the other is `individual' by which `man' becomes Abraham. Thus, in this case, [the one unique Essence] becomes `man' through the universal self-determination: and then, through an individual self-determination, it becomes Abraham, and through another (individual self-determination) becomes Ismael.

This quotation makes clear how the Sufi understanding of the concept of man as an individual is in direct relation to the conception of the Unity of the Absolute and His Self-manifestation. The individual self is not conceived beyond the plan of appearance of the numerable individual selves. The `self' stands separately only in the illusory plan of the external world. The real `self', hidden behind the competing individual soul, is the Absolute Self shared by every individual soul, and the Absolute Self is the substratum of the individual self. In other words, man as an individual is nothing but a form of the Self-manifestation of the Absolute. In this respect Nicholson points out that:

> The subsequent history of Sufism shows how deification was identification with unification. The antithesis — god, Man — melted away in the pantheistic theory which has been explained above. There is no real existence apart from God. Man is an emanation or a reflection or a mode of Absolute Being. What he thinks of as individuality is in truth not-being; it cannot be separated or united, for it does not exist.

What is at issue here is exactly what we have tried to show in this part, namely the existence of the idea of the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self, and the non-existence of an antithesis between God and man and, accordingly, the non-existence of individuality in Persian Sufism. When every distinction between Creator and creature vanishes, when man is regarded as nothing but `a mode of absolute Being', any idea about individuality is meaningless.

The view of the relationship between the individual self and the Universal Self brings out the very similarity of the views of the `self' held, respectively, by Sufism and other systems of thought of East Asia. The Sufi conception of the Self, based on the concept of the oneness of all beings in the universe, is indeed shared by almost all Eastern peoples' ways of thinking. From a comparative study of these views, this claim appears evident. The starting point for such a comparison between Sufism and East Asian philosophies is the fact that these world-views are based on a whole system of ontological thought centred on the concepts of the Absolute and the Unity of the Existence.

In *Sufism and Taoism*, to which reference has already been made, Toshihiko Izutsu tries to make a structural comparison between the world-view of Sufism as represented by Ibn Arabi and the world-view of Taoism as represented by Lao-tzu and Chuang-tzu. As Izutsu mentions, in both Taoism and Sufism the concept of the Unity of Existence is dominant. According to this concept, expressed in Sufism by wadat al-wujud (the oneness of existence or the Unity of Being) and in Taoism by t'ien ni (Heavenly Levelling) or by t'ien chun (Heavenly Equalization), different things are equalized to one another and reach a state of `unity' where there is no difference between them. In the state of `unity', things lose their ontological distinction. Thus the `unity' in question can be considered a `unity' of `multiplicity'. In both these systems, Izutsu says,

> the whole world of Being is represented as a kind of ontological tension between Unity and Multiplicity. Here is not the place to deal with this point in detail. Let us only recall that the concept of Existence as conceived by both Sufism and Taoism is understood very differently by Aristotelian philosophy, which has had a great impact on the Christian approach. In the systems of thought of both Sufism and Taoism the `ontological tension between Unity and Multiplicity' is not reducible to the dualism between Many and One which is the essential basis of Occidental philosophy, because as soon as the individual self as Many is put into the position of the Aristotelian `object', the Universal Self ceases to exist as One.

We suggest that the divergent Eastern and Western views of man as an individual can probably be traced back to the difference between the non-dualistic views of Taoism, Sufism and some other Eastern systems of thought, based on the idea of the Unity of Existence, and the dualistic view of Western thought, based on the ontological distinctness between subject and object, knower and known, God and man. That man, as Weber maintains, is not conceived by Eastern people as a tool — which is the case in Christianity — but is regarded as a vessel in relation to God, can be regarded as a confirmation of this claim. As Weber observes, to the Christian believer, whose concept of God has been based on distance, and not the ultimate unio mystica, salvation has always had the character of an ethical justification before

god, which ultimately could be accomplished and maintained only by some sort of active conduct within the world.

Yet, this activity cannot be legitimized unless this is done in the name of the enhancement of God's kingdom and glory and fulfilment of His will. Man must conceive himself as a tool of the divine to give a rational meaning to his activity in this world. On the other hand, since existence is regarded by the Christian as something imperfect in comparison with the perfection of God, he seeks all the time to refashion the world to remove this contradiction. In this way, to the ascetic the perception of the divine through emotion and intellect is of central importance, only in his feeling the divine is of a `motor' type, so to speak. This `feel' arises when he is conscious of the fact that he has succeeded in becoming a tool of his god, through rationalized ethical action completely oriented to god.

By contrast, for the mystic, for whom the whole world is not a `work which has been created' but a dream, there exists no reason to make the world perfect. If existence is essentially the Absolute itself in its dynamic aspect, there is no contradiction between the imperfect world and the perfection of God. In the same way, the enhancement of God's kingdom and glory and fulfilment of His will are meaningless.

Therefore, Weber remarks that the contemplative mystic neither desires to be, nor can be, God's `instrument'. His only desire is to become God's `vessel'. This being the case, for him the ascetic's ethical struggle is a ceaseless externalization of the divine in the direction of some unimportant function!'

The idea of the Unity of Existence has been one of the most essential obstacles to the emergence of the idea of man as a tool. As the preceding study of Sufism shows, the doctrine of the Unity of Existence leaves no room for the emergence of the idea of the existence of a gap between man and God, an idea considered to be an important factor for the emergence of the idea of man as a tool in relation to the Divine. As explained above, the idea of man as a tool has an important effect in the emergence of the concept of the individual. To consider, as Persian Sufism does, man not as a tool of the Divine but as God's vessel can, on the contrary, be considered a hindrance for the emergence of the in-worldly individual.

The non-existence of individuality does not, however, imply the negation of self-awareness in daily life. We have said before that in the Sufi tradition, man can outwardly participate in the life of society while he has died to the world inwardly. What guarantees his sacredness in the world is his `self-awareness'. Commenting on self-awareness from the point of view of traditional metaphysics, S.A. Nasr asserts that:

> Man is aware of his self or ego, but one also speaks of self-control, and therefore implies even in daily life the presence of another self which controls the lower self. From a sociological point of view, the immediate consequence of such a view is nothing but the rejection of the principle of the individual self as the highest principle regulating relations between individuals. This view, however, does not necessarily call into question the impact of man's inner life on social relationships. It may lead — if interpreted in the light of the doctrine of the `Unity of Existence' — to the emergence of the idea of benevolence. The Sufi teaches that man should not hate any one but should love all God's creatures. From an ethical point of view, the result is a great emphasis on the virtue of charity and the abandonment of hate of others. To render a service to others is therefore considered an important task. This trait of benevolence can be related to the alter-ego idea of friendship. The love of neighbor, friend and other selves can indeed be understood as the manifestations of the awareness of the Ultimate Self. The ideas of benevolence and charity and the alter-ego idea of friendship have affected Iranian culture. Besides, in a way of thinking where the conception of the Ultimate Self and the idea of attaining it are vital ideas, self-awareness will most likely lead to the prevalence of the principle of sacrificing one's self and becoming a source of compassion for the whole society. An example of such a principle can be found in the doctrine of shahadat (martyrdom).

On the other hand, a view that discredits the principle of the individual self as the supreme principle managing the relations between individuals, and that takes into consideration the presence of another self that controls the lower self, may as well give rise to other forms of social and

political relationships. It may contribute to the emergence of a system of social relationships in which each person is under the authority of an undefined force. This force might appear in different forms. We will try to show how the strong position of the metaphor of `mardom' (people) in Iranian culture signifies the strong presence of the idea of another self that controls the lower self in the daily life of the Iranian people. Mardom as an inhibiting force is, in fact, the manifestation of the domination of the Universal Self, in the form of a social force, over individual self.

The other form of embodiment of another self that controls the lower self is the relationship between ruler and ruled. Politics and legal systems are the areas within which the nature of this relationship is most evident. Kings have always been regarded as representatives of the deity. This idea was transmitted to the Shi'i political theory in which the imam, as the deputy of God on earth, was regarded as holy, infallible and in possession of supernatural powers and knowledge. In this respect, both the king and the imam or a combination of them might be conceived of as the `greater power', whose presence symbolizes the presence of another self that controls the lower self. In the following essays, we will discuss these forms of the embodiment of another self that controls the lower self.

What we have tried to show through the preceding discussion is that in Sufism, just as in some other East Asian philosophies (for example, Taoism and Buddhism), there is no state of duality between the individual self and the Universal Self, due to the dominating idea of the Unity of Existence. This being the case, the doctrine of the Unity of Existence promotes the idea of the Many as One and One as Many. This leads in turn to the negation of the dualism between the ego-substance and other, external, substantial objects. Accordingly, man conceives himself as an unseparated part of the 'other-than-self' and thus does not recognize any duality between his `own' self and others' selves. Each self is identical to others. All things are not, then, weighed based on separate individuals' own selves, and the distinction of individuals is hence regarded as merely a matter of phenomenal form.

The idea of non-existence of any gulf between the self and the 'other-than-self' brings about the belief that the other selves are one with the self and an extension of it. Indeed, the view that conceives man as nothing but a mode of Absolute being, and the individual self as a continuity of the Universal Self, does not merely influence the way of thinking of the Iranian Sufis and their concept of the individual, but also that of the Iranian people in general. Above we discussed the reason for the deep influence of Sufi ideas on Iranian culture; here we recall that one reason for this is that Sufis have not only expressed this view in their philosophical discussions, which can be very difficult for ordinary people to understand, but also in their literature and especially in their poems, which can be easily grasped by the people. Therefore, the ideas of Ibn Arabi have spread everywhere in the Muslim world and why his followers have increased rapidly in number, especially in Persian- and Turkish-speaking areas.

In Iranian poetry, especially in the poems of Hafiz (d. 1389), Jami (d. 1492), Rumi (d. 1273), Attar (d. 1220), Mahmud Shabistari (d. 1350), and so on, all considered among the greatest and most popular poets of Iran, and whose poems are widely read, we can explicitly follow the impact of this view of Man. For instance, besides Rumi's Mathnawi (the so-called Koran of Persian), Shabistari's famous Persian book Gulshan-i raz (Rose Garden of Mystery) — said to be `the handiest introduction to the thought of post-Ibn Arabi Sufism' — to a vast extent helped to spread Ibn Arabi's Mysticism of Unity.

Having in mind the importance of poetry in Iranian culture on the one hand and the domination of Sufism in Iranian literature on the other, we can understand to what extent the Sufi ideas of the Unity of Existence and the supremacy of the Universal Self over the individual self, have influenced the ways of thinking of Iranians. As we hope this essay has made clear, by impeding the rise of an idea of a discrepancy between one's `self' and other selves, these ideas are actually obstacles to the development of the concept of the individual in Iranian ways of thinking.

In the following our account will deal with the question of the socio-cultural effects of Sufism concerning the phenomenon of the dissolution of individuality in Iranian culture. Since it is not the purpose of this study to trace the influence of mystical ideas in all aspects of Iranian culture, we

will concentrate on some consequences of the mystical view that we see as important in a study of the behavior of Iranians in relation to others. In this respect, our study will focus on the doctrine of the Theophanic Unity of Religions and its impact on the Iranian attitude towards the adherents of other religions than Islam.

Furthermore, we will focus on the impact of Sufism on the attitude of Iranian artists towards conformity rather than individuality and, lastly, on the effects of the Sufi tradition of self-inhibition on Iranians' reluctance to speak of their personal life. We will concentrate our efforts in this respect on only some of those sociocultural effects of Sufism on Iranian social life that specifically touch upon the issue of the development of the concept of the individual. <>

Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis: A Practical Comparative-Contrastive Analysis by Hussein Abdul-Raof [Culture and Civilization in the Middle East, Routledge, 9781138110472]

Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis: A Practical Comparative-Contrastive Analysis provides a comprehensive and systematic analysis of the various schools of Qur'anic exegesis, from the earliest periods through to the present day.

Employing a comparative-contrastive methodology, the author examines traditional and rational schools of thought – such as the Mu'tazili, Shi'i, Ibadi, Sufi, metaphysical, modern, and scientific approaches to the interpretation of the Qur'an – to give a detailed analysis of the similarities and differences in their theological views. The study spans a broad period, covering exegetical techniques adopted in Qur'anic exegesis from its infancy during the 1st/7th century up to the beginning of the 15th/21st century. Furnished with copious micro- and macro-level examples which explicate the Qur'anic notions and the points of view relevant to each school and exegetical approach, the book provides a rounded empirical study of Islamic thought.

This thorough and holistic historical investigation is an important contribution to the study of Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic theology, and as such will be of enormous interest to scholars of religion, philosophy and Islamic studies.

Excerpt: Theological Approaches to Qur'anic Exegesis: A Practical Comparative-Contrastive Analysis is an in-depth empirical comparative-contrastive account of the various and theologically distinct schools of Qur'anic exegesis. It embarks upon a historical and methodological investigation of the development of Islamic hermeneutics and provides a holistic account of these various schools of exegesis. This work aims to provide a detailed explicated account of the exegetical techniques adopted by different exegetes of the formative, recording, and modern phases of the evolution of Qur'anic exegesis. This has been achieved through a comprehensive practical exegetical analysis of the major tafsir works by prominent exegetes' representative of different historical phases, different schools of thought, different methodologies, and genres. However, the book is not concerned with the discussion of the historicity of these tafsir works. Their historical investigation lies outside the purview of the present work. It is a trans-disciplinary comparative-contrastive methodology through which the divergent political and dogma-driven exegetical schools and techniques are explicated to the reader. Being an empirical-based approach, the book is furnished with copious examples explicating the Qur'anic notions and the points of view relevant to each school and exegetical approach. For our comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis, we have selected nine samples from the Qur'an which, we believe, are representative samples of the divergent exegetical and theological views of the mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. These Qur'anic passages are well selected in order to mirror the major objective of this work. Wild observes that 'the genesis of the Qur'anic text continues to absorb the interest of scholars'. However, there has been a definite and irrevocable shift of attention in the last few decades. The new interest is devoted to the Qur'ān as a textual corpus regardless of its scriptural pre-history. We believe that in order to provide a critical insight into the genesis and evolution of Qur'anic exegesis, a trans-disciplinary comparative and contrastive methodology is required. Therefore, major exegetical works constitute useful foci for our proposed critical comparative and contrastive investigation of the formative, post-formative, and modern Qur'anic exegetical works of both mainstream and non-mainstream schools of

exegesis that encompass and espouse multifarious theological and political points of view of Muslim theologians and exegetes. Thus, the focus of our methodological investigation will be on classical and modem Qur'anic exegetical works, their relevant exegetical genres and ad hoc techniques. These works are thoroughly investigated to illustrate and explicate the methodological similarities and cleavages as well as the distinct exegetical genres and techniques that are employed by different commentators from the first/seventh century to the end of the fourteenth/twentieth century.

The book aims to provide a practical analysis of Qur'anic discourse. The views of different exegetes are put into practice in the form of a comparative-contrastive analysis of āyahs and sūrahs. Qur'an exegetical commentaries have been marked by one of the following nine exegetical approaches that represent mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes. In their Qur'anic text analysis, classical and modem Muslim exegetes have adopted diverse exegetical approaches (uslūb) which designate the genre of a given tafsir work. The main distinctions between exegetical approaches are related to the amount of details provided by the exegete, the use of intertextuality, whether all or some āyahs are accounted for, and whether exegesis is provided at word, sentence, or text level. However, some exegetical works can be described as hybrids of more than one approach. These exegetical approaches are as follows:

(2) Analytical exegesis is referred to as al-tafsir al-tahlili and is the most common hermeneutical approach in which all the āyahs (musalsal) according to their arrangement in a given sūrah are analysed.

(3) Synoptic exegesis is referred to as al-tafsir al-ijmāli which is a gist āyah-by-āyah (musalsal) exegesis and is a modern approach in which the exegete provides a periphrastic exegetical outline of the āyahs according to their arrangement in a given sūrah.

(4) Legal exegesis features jurisprudential topics such as faith, daily ritual prayer, alms giving, fasting, holy war, pilgrimage, lesser pilgrimage, usury, theft, abrogation, the imposition of poll tax, and marriage.

(5) Allegorical exegesis is concerned with allegorical (majāzi), i.e. esoteric (bātin), interpretation (ta'wil) of Qur'anic passages. Allegorical hermeneutics is rational and is hinged upon the following: (a) personal opinion (dalil zanni), (b) discovery of meaning (istinbāt), (c) symbolism and allusion (ishāri), (d) probability (al-ihtimāl), and (e) connotative meaning (al-ma`nā al-bātin). Allegorical exegesis represents Sufi and Mu'tazili exegetical views.

(6) Comparative exegesis is referred to as al-tafsir al-muqārin and is a comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis in which the exegete compares and contrasts between different views of exegetes on an exegetical problem represented by a given āyah. The contrasted views may represent different schools of law.

(7) Thematic exegesis is referred to as al-tafsir al-mawdu'i (topic-based) and emerged during the early years of the formative phase, i.e. during the Prophet's phase, and has continued up to the modern phase. Thematic exegesis is not a musalsal tafsir, i.e. the approach of thematic hermeneutics does not follow the arrangement of the āyahs or sūrahs. Most importantly, this form of hermeneutics occurs at three different levels of analysis: (a) at word level, (b) at āyah level, and (c) at text level.

(8) Literary exegesis has been introduced in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by exegetes such as Saiyid Qutb, Muhammad al-Ghazāli, Muhammad Mutwalli al-Sh`rāwi, and Hasan al-Turābi. Among the Shi`i exegetes who have adopted the modern literary approach to Qur'anic exegesis is the Iranian exegete Ayatollah Mahmūd Taleqani (d. 1980) who also called for a political analysis of the Qur'ān. Taleqani was influenced by the Egyptian exegete Muhammad `Abdu (1849-1905).

(9) Scientific exegesis is a form of thematic exegesis approach that is primarily concerned with the scientific aspects of some āyahs that demonstrate God's

omnipotence, on the one hand, and that the two canonical sources of Islam are compatible with the scientific developments of our modern age.

(10) Stylistic exegesis is a linguistic/rhetorical approach which is both textual and lexicographical. Thus, it is concerned with semantic, syntactic, phonetic, and rhetorical features of an expression or an āyah. In this sense, it is a glossary form of tafsir which provides a brief definition of selected words from selected āyahs. Stylistic exegesis is concerned with:

a) gharib works which deal with the collection in sūrah order of Qur'anic expressions that are semantically ambiguous due to their rare use, such as foreign words, tribal dialect words, and lexical oddities;

b) wujūh, naza'ir, and ashbāh works which deal with the multiple senses of Qur'anic expressions;

c) mutashābihāt works which deal with the stylistically distinct but grammatically similar āyahs;

d) the variant modes of reading;

e) the syntactic analysis of ayahs and expressions that have more than one grammatical analysis which leads to different meanings;

f) Quasi-syntactic analysis of āyahs where the exegete provides a brief grammatical analysis of selected expressions of a given āyah with or without further exegetical details;

g) syntactic analysis of āyahs with particular attention to Arabic grammatical structures and grammatical rules;

h) consonance-based analysis which illustrates the thematic and conceptual relationship between consecutive āyahs and sūrahs;

i) stylistically based analysis of Qur'anic discourse which involves the discussion of the rhetorical and linguistic aspects of the āyah.

Mainstream exegetes are representative of traditional Sunni exegesis which is referred to as al-tafsir bil-ma'thūr, whose approach is based on:

(a) the three canons of exegesis, namely the Qur'ān, the hadith, and the views of the companions and early successors, and (b) the exoteric meaning of the āyah or a Qur'anic expression. However, the expression 'non-mainstream' is an umbrella under which a large number of schools of exegesis are sheltered. Non-mainstream exegetes include Sunni and non-Sunni Islam and share a number of exegetical techniques such as:

(i) They adopt a personal opinion, i.e. rational, approach to the Qur'anic text.

(ii) They deal with the esoteric meaning of the āyah or Qur'anic expression.

(iii) They have limited reference to Qur'anic intertextuality or the hadith.

(iv) They have limited reference to the exegetical views of the companions and the early successors. Non-mainstream exegesis represents the major dogmatic views of the Sufis, Mu°tazilis, Shi°is, and Ibādis.

Greek philosophy has impacted Qur'anic exegesis in two ways and has led to the evolution of non-mainstream exegesis: (a) Mu'tazili exegesis, and (b) metaphysical exegesis. However, modem scientific theories and discoveries have led to the emergence of another school of non-mainstream exegesis represented by the modem school of scientific exegesis, whose premise is inimitability oriented and is led by Sunni and non-Sunni Qur'an scientists and exegetes. The modern phase has also witnessed the evolution of the school of literary exegesis and the rebirth of the school of linguistic exegesis, whose premise is also inimitability oriented.

It is worthwhile to note that we can classify the schools of linguistic and scientific exegesis as non-mainstream due to the fact that the argument of their adherents is hinged upon rational, i.e. hypothetical, linguistic, and scientific views. Our claim does not exclude the linguistic approach of the Andalus mainstream school of Qur'anic exegesis. For this reason, the views of linguist and scientist Qur'an exegetes must be dubbed as `interpretation' (ta'wil) rather than exegesis (tafsir). However, for mainstream scholars and exegetes, linguistic interpretation (al-ta'wil al-lughawi) and scientific interpretation (al-ta'wil al-'ilmi) is

considered permissible or commendable hypothetical `rational' interpretation of the Qur'ān (ta'wil maqbūl, or ta'wil mahmūd). In other words, the views of linguist and scientist Qur'an scholars are not dubbed as heretical by mainstream scholars. This, however, should not be misinterpreted as an umbrella under which other schools of rational exegesis can be sheltered.

To clarify the theological position of mainstream exegetes on this controversial matter, we can argue that:

a)  Linguistic and scientific exegetical approaches, which may or may not be inimitability oriented, are non-heretical but are non-mainstream.
b)  Although linguistic and scientific views are hinged upon esoteric and rational meaning, they are permissible Qur'anic interpretation.
c)  The linguistic exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shi'i, and Ibādi schools of exegesis are not heretical if these linguistic views are not theologically or politically oriented.
d)  If the linguistic exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shi'i, and Ibādi schools of exegesis are theologically or politically motivated, i.e. counter to mainstream Qur'anic exegesis, such linguistic exegesis is considered heretical.
e)  The theological exegetical views of the Mu'tazili, Shi°i, and Ibādi schools of exegesis are heretical. This is attributed to the fact that their theological views are not intertextually based on the Qur'an and the sunnah.

Therefore, generally speaking, Qur'anic interpretation (ta'wil al-qur'ān) is no longer exclusive to theologically or politically oriented views. We can, therefore, classify Qur'anic interpretation into:

(i)  theologically oriented
(ii)  politically oriented
(iii)  scientifically oriented
(iv)  linguistically oriented.

## Methodology

The present methodology is trans-disciplinary comparative and contrastive analysis of selected Qur'anic texts. Throughout the marathon journey of Qur'anic exegesis since the first/seventh century, classical and modern Qur'an exegetical works have focused on a limited number of approaches. This can be attributed to:

(i) the multi-faceted textual nature of the Qur'an, (ii) the expertise of the exegete, and (iii) space limitation. In other words, no matter how encyclopedic a given exegete can be, he remains to be a human and suffers from limitation of knowledge and limitation of space when recording his exegesis. However, each historical phase of Qur'anic exegesis is different from the others in terms of approaches. Although the iconic companion exegetes of the formative phase during the first/seventh century had a bird's eye view of the Qur'anic text, they focused during their oral transmission of Qur'anic exegesis on a limited number of approaches and were generally periphrastic. The same applies to the early successor exegetes. Qur'ān exegetes of the recording classical and modern phases have been no exception to this. Thus, Qur'anic exegesis has remained generally constrained by a given exegetical approach or at times to more than one approach. Qur'anic exegesis has never been comprehensive in terms of the application of all the exegetical approaches. Therefore, had Qur'an exegetes included all the exegetical approaches, their commentaries would have been in dozens of volumes. Thus, this task has been impossible to undertake.

Our methodology in the present practical comparative-contrastive exegetical analysis is unique in the sense that it provides a holistic Qur'anic textual analysis where a wide range of mainstream and non-mainstream, classical and modern exegetical approaches will be applied in order to unravel the intriguing contrastive theological cleavages and the historical, linguistic, mystical, philosophical, scientific, and socio-political views. In order to achieve this task, our textual analysis is selective and is hinged upon a set of āyahs or a whole surah that is not too long, such as Q22 or Q69. Although our approach is not

concerned with word-for-word or āyah-by-āyah (musalsal) exegesis, it is informative through the methodically comprehensive analysis of the major distinctive exoteric and esoteric meanings and the comparative-contrastive discussion of theological and dogmatic differences among classical and modern Qur'ān exegetes. We can thus argue that no exegete, classical or modern, can undertake such an uphill task.

The school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis is an offshoot of the inimitability-oriented approach to Qur'anic exegesis. Our investigation has proven that there is an increasing interest among readers in the science-based āyahs. As a result, we have provided several science-based āyahs in our discussion of the school of scientific Qur'anic exegesis. There are, however, limitations with resources. There are not many available resources by Muslim scientists or exegetes who provide detailed scientific analysis of science-based āyahs.

Most importantly, due to space limitation and to avoid repetition of mentioning the sources consulted, we have not listed, at times, all or some of these sources since they are already listed in the bibliography.

Statistical information for Qur'anic exegesis This is an account of the semantic fields of major Qur'anic expressions. A semantic field involves all the expressions that are semantically related to a given word.

This includes:

1.  The Qur'ān as a book: the Qur'an has 30 parts (juz'), 60 sections (hizb), 240 quarters (rub`), 114 sūrahs, 6,236 āyahs, 77,437 words, 323,671 letters.
2.  Animals in the Qur'ān: cow, livestock, camel, she-camel, pig, dog, elephant, calf, lion (qaswarah), monkey, donkey, mule, wolf, goat, sheep, ewe, horse, wild beast, frog.
3.  Insects in the Qur'an: Spider, fly, mosquito, ant, lice, locust, moth, serpent, snake, bee, woodworm.
4.  Birds in the Qur'an: hoopoe, quail, crow, birds of prey.
5.  Trees and plants in the Qur'an: olive tree, lote tree, grapevine tree, tamarisk tree, date palm, gourd tree, zaqqūm tree, thorny plant, tree of eternity, grass, vegetation, field.
6.  Fruits and vegetables in the Qur'ān: olives, figs, green herbs, onion, garlic, cucumber, lentils, grapes, ginger, dates, seeds, grain, pomegranate, mustard, bitter fruit, tamarisk, lote, sweet basil.
7.  Sea animals in the Qur'ān: fish, whale, pearl, coral.
8.  Perfumes in the Qur'an: narcissus, musk.
9.  Planets in the Qur'ān: sun, moon, earth, shooting stars, stars, swimming orbits.
10. Categories of people in the Qur'ān: man, woman, male, female, elderly, those who evoked God's anger, those who have gone astray, deaf, dumb, blind, lame, just, unjust, pious, believer, unbeliever, immigrant, supporter, idolater, wrongdoer, wretched, criminal, poor, rich, orphan, needy, wayfarer, slave, prisoner of war, winner, successful, loser, humble, doer of good, wrongdoer, arrogant, those who stand in awe of their Lord, past nation, truthful, mad, liar, deceiver, disobedient, corrupt, oppressor, wise, foolish, those who commit excess in expenditure, those who hinder good, those who cause others to doubt, those who commit abuse, those who cause and spread corruption, those who shed blood, aggressive, patient, impatient, reformer, wavering, corrupter, slanderer, skeptical, denier, mocker, ridiculer, opponent, hypocrite, lazy, asleep, alive, dead, awake, asleep, ill, poet, soothsayer magician, soothsayer, illiterate, strayed, friend, gay, enemy, thief.
11. Natural phenomena in the Qur'an: day, morning, light, shadow, night, darkness, the passing of the night, fire, smoke, wind, whirlwind, clouds, cloud mass, hail, rain, water, spring, sea, river, bank, flood, waves, foam, torrent, land, sand, plain, valley, earthquake, heat, coolness, lightning, thunderbolt, mountains, mirage, heap of sand, shake, blast, elevation, dust, clay, stone, rock, fragments, horizons, sleep, lethargy, dreams, creation, the heavens and earth were a joined entity, falling fragments from the sky, setting of stars, the glow of sun set, sun rise, sun set, the sun is past its zenith.

12. Times in the Qur'an: dawn, morning, day time, night time, darkness, sun rise, sun set, summer, winter, beginning of day, end of day, before dawn prayer, evening, evening prayer, white thread of dawn, black thread of dawn, noon, the declining day, the crescent moons.
13. Week days in the Qur'an: Friday, Saturday.
14. Months in the Qur'an: Ramadan, the sacred month.
15. 15 Scriptures in the Qur'an: former scriptures, the book of Psalms, the Old Testament, the New Testament.
16. Prophets and messengers in the Qur'an: Adam, Noah, Idris, Shu`aib, Sālib, Ishmael, Isaac, Jonah, Aiyyūb, Mid, Abraham, Lot, Jacob, Aiyūb, Dhū al-Kifl, David, Solomon, Zachariah, Yahyā, Ilyās, al-Yasa'a, Moses, Aaron, Jesus, Muhammad.
17. Metals in the Qur'an: gold, silver, iron, copper, shackles.
18. Clothes in the Qur'an: clothes, shirt, garment, wool, feather.
19. Body in the Qur'an: body, head, face, cheek, eyes, tears, mouth, lips, tongue, nose, tooth, neck, aorta, chest, whispering, talking, throat, elbow, hand, arm, finger, nail, ear, leg, foot, ankle, heart, jugular vein, back, belly, intestines, sleeping, awakening, hearing, sight, thinking, knowing, womb, embryo, menstruation, flesh, bone, collar bone, backbone, rib, skin, burns, wound, pain, spirit, disease, puberty, private part of man, private part of woman, sperm.
20. Liquids in the Qur'an: water, milk, honey, wine that does not intoxicate, wine, oil, liquid pitch, liquid copper.
21. Numbers in the Qur'an: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 40, 60, 70, 80, 99, 100, 200, 309, 950, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 5,000, 50,000, 100,000, half, third, quarter, fifth, eighth.
22. Directions in the Qur'an: east, west, right, left.
23. Colors in the Qur'an: black, white, yellow, green, red.
24. Cultural items in the Qur'an: utensils, plate, food, egg, well, chest, gateway, cup, intoxicates, wine that does not intoxicate, burning lamp, ladder, depository, dirham, grave, white thread, black thread, cushion, couch, carpet, bed, linings, furniture, leather, wool, fur, hair, light, lamp, niche, glass, silk brocade, back door, toilet, chair, pillar, house, Makkah, chamber, mosque, church, monastery, synagogue, tent, palace, home, key, dwellings, pavilion.
25. Jewelry in the Qur'an: gold, silver, bracelets of silver, pearl, rubies, coral, adornments.
26. Seasons in the Qur'an: summer, winter.
27. Flowers in the Qur'an: rose, flower.
28. Finance in the Qur'an: account, capital, price, loss, debt, loan, deposit, interest, contract, covenant, scribe of contract, witness, trade, transaction, inheritance, will, excessiveness in expenditure, pay, postponement of payment, ransom, the writing off of debt.
29. Family in the Qur'an: family, husband, wife, child, son, daughter, relatives, offspring, father, mother, brother, sister, paternal uncle, paternal aunt, maternal uncle, maternal aunt, friend, neighbor.

## Structure of the work

This book comprises an introduction and five chapters:

Chapter 1, School of traditional exegesis (al-tafsir bil-ma'thūr), accounts for the traditional school of exegesis, how it developed, its major approaches, sources, and representative exegetes and their works. The present discussion provides an explicated account of the traditional school of Qur'anic exegesis and how it developed. The major sources of the school of traditional exegesis are also discussed and explicated. These sources include the Qur'ān, Muhammad's tradition (sunnah), the companions' views, and the early successors' views. This chapter also accounts for how the exegetical notion of Qur'anic intertextuality is related to the semantic notion of polysemy, the modes of reading, and the theological mutashābihāt. Details are also provided about the position held by mainstream exegetes towards non-mainstream exegesis.

The school of mainstream exegesis is the earliest form of traditional Qur'anic exegesis, which dates back to the lifetime of Muhammad (d. 11/632).

The major sources of this school of exegesis are: (i) the Qur'ān, (ii) the customary practice (sunnah) of Muhammad and his tradition (hadith), (iii) the views of the companions, and (iv) the views of the early successors. The evolution of mainstream Qur'anic exegesis (al-tafsir bil-ma'thūr or al-tafsir al-naqli) dates back to the classical formative phase' since the lifetime of Muhammad and is hinged on one of the above sources that are explained in the following sections.

Chapter 2, School of rational exegesis (al-tafsir bil-ra'i), investigates the hypothetical opinion school of exegesis, its evolution, its major approaches, sources, and representative exegesis works. It also highlights the major schools that constitute all the non-mainstream exegetes such as the Ibādi, the Mu'tazili, and the Sufi, as well as the Shi'i exegetes and Shi'i sub-sects such as the Ismā°ilis, the Zaidis, and the Hūthis. Therefore, various Muslim schools of thought will be analysed in terms of Qur'anic exegesis and approaches to Qur'anic discourse.

The present chapter investigates the rational, i.e. hypothetical or personal opinion, school of Qur'anic exegesis, its evolution, its major approaches and sources. The present account also highlights the major schools that constitute all the non-mainstream exegetes such as the Shi'i, the Ibādi, the Mu'tazili, and the Sufi. This chapter is furnished with numerous informative examples to demonstrate why al-tafsir bil-ra'i is allegorically based. Therefore, various Muslim schools of thought will be analysed in terms of Qur'anic exegesis and approaches to Qur'anic discourse. The present discussion explains why mainstream exegetes are sceptical about the school of rational Qur'anic exegesis, the criteria and charactersitics of rational exegesis, and why it is objectionable (madhmūm). This chapter also provides a detailed and explicated analysis of the theological and exegetical approaches of the various schools of rational exegesis. These schools include the Shi'i, the Shi'i sub-sects (the Ismā°ili, the Zaidi, and the Hūthi), the Ibādi, the Sufi, and the modem school of Qur'anic exegesis which is sub-divided into (i) reform-based and (ii) inimitability-oriented, where the former is divided into socio-educational and socio-political, while the latter is divided into linguistic, phonetic, stylistic, and scientific which is also sub-divided into science-based and number-based.

Rational exegesis is referred to in Arabic as (al-tafsir al-°aqli) which is claimed to be based on personal opinion and to be hypothetical. This is due to the fact that it is based on intellect (al-'aql) and personal knowledge or judgement (al-dirāyah). Rational exegetes consider intellect as a fundamental source of knowledge, promoting deduction (al-istinbāt), rejecting imitation, questioning the reliability of hadīth, and as an insufficient source to explain the Qur'an. However, mainstream exegetes have been sceptical about the school of rational exegesis and have criticized it as being subjective because it is primarily based on personal judgement which is classified as `hypothetical' (dalil zanni). The expression (al-dirāyah) is the antonym of (al-naql — the narration from Muhammad or his companions). Thus, the personal exegetical view lacks canonical support based on Qur'anic intertextuality, hadith intertextuality, and views of the companions or early successors.

For mainstream exegetes and theologians, rational theologians and exegetes are doctrinally suspect, and esoteric exegesis is heresy. Mainstream exegetes also view rational exegesis as fanciful, and a scholar who adopts this approach is nicknamed an `interpreter of the Qur'an' (mu'awwil) by hypothetical opinion, i.e. personal reasoning, and his tafsir is considered wrong and counter to the Qur'ān and the sunnah (the standard practice) of Muhammad. Mainstream scholars substantiate their objection to rational exegesis by reporting the hadith on the authority of Ibn 'Abbās in which Muhammad is believed to have said: 'The Prophet of God said: "man qāla fi al-qur'ān bira'yihi falyatabawwa' maq°adahū min al-nār — Those who explain the Qur'an by independent reasoning will have their place prepared for them in the fire of hell"', and also on the hadith narrated by Jundub b. °Abd Allāh: 'The messenger of God said: "man takallama fi al-qur'ān bira'yihi fa'asāb faqad akhta' — Those who interpret the Qur'ān by independent reasoning are wrong even if they arrive at the right meaning. The rational school of Qur'anic exegesis is an umberalla under which different non-mainstream schools, i.e. approaches, to Qur'anic exegesis have evolved.

Political and theological cleavages have emerged as a result of the above diverse approaches to the

exegesis of the Qur'ān. The growing polarity between traditional and rational schools of Qur'anic exegesis has significantly contributed to the genesis of sectarian exegesis. Thus, Qur'anic exegesis has acquired a politico-religious overtone favouring esoteric shades of meaning of Qur'anic expressions or passages and adopting hadiths which are dubbed `forged' or `weak' by mainstream exegetes. An exegetical work can mirror the politico-theological orientation of a given commentator and his school of exegesis.

Chapter 3, School of linguistic exegesis, deals with the linguistic school of Qur'anic exegesis and provides explicated details about the Middle East and the Andalus exegetes who adopt a linguistic/stylistic approach in their exegetical analysis. Representative exegesis works of this school will also be dealt with.

The school of linguistic Qur'anic exegesis has been the most robust exegetical technique that has evolved since the formative phase in the first/seventh century, spanning to the twenty-first century. This chapter provides a detailed and explicated discussion of the evolution of linguistic exegesis and how it was linked to the notion of inimitability of Qur'anic discourse. The inimitability-oriented analysis of Qur'anic genre is hinged upon linguistic and para-linguistic levels of analysis. Although the levels of numerical inimitability and scientific inimitability are para-linguistic, i.e. not purely linguistic, we believe they are relevant to our discussion at this stage while we are investigating the stylistic notion of inimitability. Through expounded discussion, the present chapter provides an insight in the syntactic, semantic, stylistic, and phonetic features of Qur'anic genre which are employed by linguist exegetes in their exegetical analysis. The present account also investigates the different approaches of the linguistic school of exegesis, what it has been primarily concerned with, the analysis by the linguist exegetes of grammatical, semantic, rhetorical, and phonetic problems involved in Qur'anic discourse and their impact on the meaning of the āyah, the evolution of modes of reading as a major exegetical technique in Qur'anic exegesis, the distinction between the phonetically oriented and semantically oriented modes of reading, the overlap between the seven dialectal differences and modes of reading, and the impact of modes of

reading on Qur'anic exegesis and theological cleavages. The use of the curly brackets applies only to the āyahs and expressions that are not compatible with the °Uthmanic master codex. The exegetes of the school of linguistic exegesis involve both mainstream and non-mainstream schools of thought. Most importantly, the linguistic approach to Qur'anic exegesis is based on linguistic facts which are applied to the Qur'anic text. However, exegetes have expressed wide-ranging rational linguistic analyses to various Qur'anic expressions and āyahs. For this reason, we classify the school of linguistic exegesis as non-mainstream due to the following reasons:

> (i) The grammatical analysis is, at times, hinged upon linguistic personal opinion where different grammarians appoint different grammatical functions to the same grammatical constituent. Thus, Arabic grammar has not regulated grammar-based Qur'anic exegesis. There is always room for grammatical maneuverability through which an exegete can prove a given theological point of view which may be contrary to the canons of exegesis.
> (ii) The stylistic analysis of the modem phase is based on hypothetical judgement (al-dirāyah) and textual artistic taste.
> (iii) The consonance-based analysis of the modem phase is purely hypothetical. Different linguist exegetes appoint distinct units and themes to the same sūrah.

Having stated the above three reasons, it is worthwhile to note that the school of linguistic exegesis falls within permissible Qur'anic interpretation (ta'wil mahmūd). However, when controversial theological issues are linguistically justified, linguistic exegesis is dubbed by mainstream scholars as innovative and heretical (bid°i) and is classified as objectionable interpretation (ta'wil madhmūm).

Chapter 4, Comparative-contrastive exegesis, is a holistic and methodical comparative-contrastive practical exegetical analysis of copious examples of āyahs and surahs that can vividly mirror the differences in opinion among the various schools of exegesis and their relevant theologians. This chapter will provide linguistic, stylistic, jurisprudence, and historical informative details with

regards to a given āyah or sūrah. The school of scientific exegesis will also be referred to whenever deemed necessary according to the āyah or sūrah under investigation.

The present chapter is a holistic and methodical comparative-contrastive practical exegetical analysis of copious examples of āyahs and sūrahs that can vividly mirror the differences in exegetical opinion among the various schools of Qur'anic exegesis and their relevant theologians. This chapter will provide linguistic, stylistic, jurisprudence, and historical informative details with regard to a given āyah or sūrah. The school of scientific exegesis will also be referred to whenever deemed necessary according to the āyah or sūrah under investigation. We shall also explain, within a historical context, the influence of the Judeo-Christian milieu, known as the Jewish anecdotes (al-isrā'iliyyāt) upon Qur'anic exegesis. The comparative-contrastive exegetical views represent a rich blend of the miscellaneous approaches of the schools of Qur'anic exegesis of the formative, the recording, and the modem phases. The following discussion is, thus, based on the exegetical works of classical and modem exegetes who are listed in the bibliography. The present exegetical account is based on major mainstream and non-mainstream exegetes.

Chapter 5, Contextual and co-textual relevance in Qur'anic exegesis, illustrates the impact of contextual and co-textual relevance in the exegetical process of Qur'anic discourse. This chapter provides an interesting critical assessment of the views of Western Qur'an scholars on the Qur'anic text and exegetical problems. It provides a valuable discussion of the notion of cohesiveness as a major textual feature of the Qur'anic text which can lead to misunderstanding if it is misinterpreted.

This is an account of the school of modem linguistic exegesis which is based on the text linguistic notions of cohesiveness and conceptual relatedness. A text, written or oral, is expected to be cohesive and thematically linked, i.e. its statements are intertextually related and hark back to each other. This is an intriguing textual criterion which needs to be incorporated into Qur'anic exegesis. The present discussion also provides a critical assessment of the

views of Western Qur'an scholars on the Qur'anic text and exegetical problems.

Our major premise in the present discussion is that the textual analysis of the Qur'ān should be hinged upon the following linguistic criteria:

> (i) Context and co-text are of vital textual relevance to Qur'anic exegesis.
> (ii) Context and co-text are prerequisites of the sound textual analysis of thematic relatedness, notional sequentiality, and conceptual cohesiveness.
> (iii) Context and co-text are of major relevance in the decision-making of the linguist with regards to whether a text is fragmented, thematically chaotic, or of a fragmentary character, and whose sentences are haphazardly arranged.
> (iv) Sentences of a given text hark back to each other to achieve textual cohesion and thematic sequentiality. <>

The Book of Ibn 'Arabi by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi, translated and introduced by Paul Smith [CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 9781508949367]

The Book of Ibn 'Arabi Translation & Introduction Paul Smith
In the West ibn 'Arabi is known as the Doctor Maximus and in the Islamic world as The Great Master. Born in Murcia in Spain in 1165 his family moved to Seville. At thirty-five he left for Mecca where he completed his most influential book of poems The Interpreter of Ardent Desires (Tarjuman al-Ashwaq) and began writing his masterpiece, the vast Meccan Revelations. In 1204 he began further travels. In 1223 he settled in Damascus where he lived the last seventeen years of his life, dying in 1240. His tomb there is still an important place of pilgrimage. A prolific writer, Ibn 'Arabi is generally known as the prime exponent of the idea later known as the 'Unity of Being'. His emphasis was on the true potential of the human being and the path to realizing that potential and becoming the Perfect or complete person. Hundreds of works are attributed to him including a large Divan of poems most of which have yet to be translated. Introduction… on his life and poetry, forms he composed in & Sufism in poetry, Selected Bibliography. Appendix: The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq of Ibn 'Arabi, Translation of Poems & Commentary

by Reynold A. Nicholson. The correct rhyme-structure has been kept as well as the beauty and meaning of this selection of his beautiful, mystical poems in the forms of qit'as, ghazals and a qasida. Large Format Paperback 7" x 10" 227 pages.

COMMENTS ON PAUL SMITH'S TRANSLATION OF HAFIZ'S 'DIVAN'. "It is not a joke... the English version of ALL the ghazals of Hafiz is a great feat and of paramount importance. I am astonished. If he comes to Iran I will kiss the fingertips that wrote such a masterpiece inspired by the Creator of all and I will lay down my head at his feet out of respect." Dr. Mir Mohammad Taghavi (Dr. of Literature) Tehran. "Superb translations. 99% Hafiz 1% Paul Smith." Ali Akbar Shapurzman, translator of works in English into Persian and knower of Hafiz's Divan off by heart. "Smith has probably put together the greatest collection of literary facts and history concerning Hafiz." Daniel Ladinsky (Penguin Books). Paul Smith is a poet, author and translator of over many books of Sufi poets of the Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Pashtu and other languages… including Hafiz, Sadi, Nizami, Rumi, 'Attar, Sana'i, Jahan Khatun, Obeyd Zakani, Mu'in, Amir Khusrau, Nesimi, Kabir, Anvari, Ansari, Jami, Omar Khayyam, Rudaki, Yunus Emre, Mahsati, Lalla Ded, Abu Nuwas, Ibn Farid, Majnun, Iqbal, Ghalib, Baba Farid, and many others, as well as his own poetry, fiction, plays, biographies, children's books and a dozen screenplays.
http://www.newhumanitybooksbookheaven.com/other-books

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Licit Magic: The Life and Letters of al-Sāhib b. ʾAbbād (d. 385/995) by Maurice A. Pomerantz [Islamic History and Civilization, Brill, 9789004345829]

In Licit Magic: The Life and Letters of al-Sahib b. 'Abbad (d. 385/995) Maurice A. Pomerantz explores the biography and literary output of a major tenth-century Muslim statesman, literary patron, and intellectual.

This study of Ibn `Abbād and his letters is divided into two main parts. The first section of the book (chapters 2–4) discusses Ibn `Abbād's career as a vizier, intellectual, and patron. The second section of the book (chapters 5–8) focuses on the collection of Ibn `Abbād's letters, their content, and the features of their style.

The two sections of the book may interest different readers and may be read independently of one another. Yet read together, I believe they offer a vision of the way political power, intellectual prowess, and literary style accompanied one another in Ibn `Abbād's life and expressed itself in his letters. For it was perhaps this very combination of a politically important individual who exemplified many sought after intellectual and aesthetic qualities that make Ibn `Abbād an enduring figure of his age and make his letters worthy of study.

I began this book with the image of Ibn `Abbād drafting a letter to an absent friend whom he missed seeing at court. Reading this letter, we can almost picture the delicately described scene in our mind's eye. And just as it was for its intended recipient, this letter presents an almost magical representation of the writer's view, surrounded by an aura of placid calm. Preserving a moment in time, the letter represents at once the token of a lost opportunity and a future invitation.

The letters of Ibn `Abbād serve as signs of lost opportunities and future invitations. While writing this book, I have been encouraged by the idea that understanding more about Ibn `Abbād might shed light on this remarkable intellect and his vibrant world. Like many modern readers, my interest in the vizier was sparked primarily by reading the works of Abū Hayyān al-Tawhīdī, whose writing about the court of Rayy is among the liveliest in the classical Arabic canon, and his portrayal of Ibn `Abbād is surely among the most memorable.

While reading the letters, I sought at first to reconcile the image of the vizier that I found there; it was quite different from that put forth by al-Tawhīdī in the Akhlāq al-wazīrayn. Occasionally, this yielded some tantalizing suggestions, many of which are found throughout the text and especially in the notes of this work. And in truth, there were many moments when it seemed that the letters might convey a very different sense of Ibn `Abbād, were I to read them with greater fluency and understanding and had more of them been preserved.

Yet, like readers and writers of the fourth/tenth century, I continually ran into obstacles of time and distance as I struggled to understand these epistolary texts and their meanings. For even as they often provide much insight into the political and social world of their creation, their opaque language, and their references to private events and topics, those known only between friends, hint that much remains under the surface, difficult, if not impossible for modern scholars to uncover.

Over the course of writing, my desire for more detailed knowledge of historical circumstances and political contexts was tempered not only by an appreciation of the temporal distances that separate us from the past, but also by the spaces between generic conventions of these texts and the worlds that they evoke. How to begin to distinguish the particularity of the vizier's voice from the conventionality of the letter? When do we see the persona of the writer emerging through the text? How do we discern the difference?

Questions about the conventionality of letters suggested an invitation to a more profitable line of inquiry that might be the subject of future investigations. It seems worthwhile to ask why conventional rhetoric was so often deployed in letters of the Buyid era. How did the stability, formality, and predictability of epistolary rhetoric offer the vizier and the elites who wrote these missives social spaces in which to negotiate the real distances of power and authority that stood between them? And was the conventionality of epistolary rhetoric a textualization of the courtly code of comportment, or did it provide modes of communication that worked in ways that differed from verbal addresses? How are they distinguished from other types of letters exchanged by other segments of the population? These are among the many research topics I raise here for future researchers to pursue.

Answers to these questions will come one day as scholars consider the many letter collections of the fourth and fifth/eleventh and twelfth centuries, as well as by the social role of epistolary discourse in the premodern Islamic world. Ibn `Abbād's masterful crafting of letters demonstrates the way that political and intellectual power were conjoined. And as their wide circulation attests, these letters witness and affirm a circle of courtiers and correspondents who admired these capacities,

a circle that was, perhaps, far larger than we first imagined.

Whether we consider—like some of his contemporaries—the vizier's writing exceptional because of its inherent beauty and grace, or attribute the widespread admiration of his writing to the courtly political system in which he lived, we cannot help but notice that the medium of letter writing was itself a powerful force in the Buyid age. Indeed, it should hardly seem a source of wonder that men occasionally referred to the idea of "licit magic" to explain the power of a literate man's words.

## Ibn `Abbād: A Letter of Longing for an Absent Friend

> I wrote these letters while I was at the edge of a pool that was as blue as the clarity of my love for you, and as delicate as my blame. If you had seen it, you would forget the waters of Ma'rib or the drinking spots of Umm Ghālib. Anemone flowers met me like weakened blood-spattered Abyssinian warriors, with only their last breath of life remaining. Trees soared above me, [they looked] as if houris had loaned them their clothes and dressed them in striped Yemeni brocades. Oranges were like spheres of coarse paper covered in gold, or the breasts of virgins. Those present grew bored with the length of this letter, so I turned away from the many things that I had desired to say.

This short letter expresses longing for a friend who did not attend a pleasurable gathering. The writer first gently blames the addressee for not meeting him at a delightful moment when he and his companions had gathered. His description of the setting of his writing includes a reflecting pool, flowers, trees, and fruits, and thus creates an image of a paradisiacal garden amidst which the writer sits. The descriptions of the pool's reflective surface, the lilting of anemone flowers, and the rough texture of orange skins conjure a sense of immediacy for the reader. In the closing lines of the letter, the writer apologizes for its brevity. The words that he writes are but a summary of what he wished to say, but could not, as his companions tired of his composing in their midst.

Readers knowledgeable of the poetic tradition of descriptive (wasf) poetry popular in the fourth/tenth century can find much in this letter that is familiar. As Andras Hamori notes, wasf is typified by a rich descriptive language. Wasf often transforms everyday objects to suggest diverse possibilities for perceiving the world. Wasf poetry "eliminates time, or causes the poet to surrender to time with his whole being."

Ibn `Abbād employs in each metaphor a similar set of poetic devices that heighten the perception of time's passing. He contrasts natural objects (water, flowers, trees, and oranges) with elements that possess a greater perdurance. For instance, the pool of water is contrasted with that of Maʹrib or Umm Ghālib—two legendary sources of water in the distant, indeed, legendary past. The lilting of the anemone flowers (shaqāʹiq al-nu`mān) evokes the image of Abyssinian warriors on the verge of death; this calls to mind the blood of the legendary Lakhmid king al-Nu`mān b. Mundhir who was trampled to death.

The trees, too, have borrowed their clothes from the angelic brocades of houris, and the oranges resemble rough-skinned spheres of eternal gold, or breasts of heavenly virgins. These descriptions transform Ibn `Abbād's experience of the world into a more lasting and nobler sphere of contemplation.

The description comes not in the form of an occasional poem as Hamori describes, but a letter composed at a particular moment in time by a specific writer intended for a distinct person. The basic epistolarity of this text is evident from its frame. The letter begins from the first line with a hāl clause which mentions the state of the composer while he composes: "I hung these letters while sitting by a pool of water." The momentariness of the similes, the clarity of the water, the dying anemones, the paradisiacal foliage, and the golden oranges all underscore the communicative investment of the writer who adorns the letter in this fashion. Indeed, the extent to which he pays attention to his absent friend in the course of drafting this letter leads his companions at the moment he composes it to grow bored with his literary attentions. The letter seems to have removed its writer from the social space that he inhabits.

If the description of the letter effaces time, much of its structure speaks to the time spent in constructing it. The first long phrase beginning with `alaqtu and ending with the rhyme lak and `itābak, reinforces the theme of this short missive, which is to gently express longing for his absent friend. Further rhymed couplets provide structure to the letter and emphasize each of the separate images in turn: the water of friendship (maʹrib/ghālib); the image of the battling Abyssinians (dimāʹuhā/dhamāʹuhā); the trees (athwābuhā/abrāduhā); and the oranges (dhuhibat/khuliqat). The letter ends with a cluster of three verbs in the first-person singular (waqaftu; kafaftu; sadaftu), each of which anticipates the final word of the passage (tashawwaqtu) indicating the writer's yearning for reunion. The writer's desire sets the final dominant theme of the letter.

The letter is predicated not simply on the moment of writing, but also on a second moment when he imagines the addressee receiving it, and that moment in which its meaning inevitably changes. And indeed, we can see that the letter in a sense acts in a proleptic fashion, anticipating the mode in which it will be received by its intended reader. Its descriptions conjure specific imagery meant to work on the mind of the receiver, and substitute shared intimacies on paper for the intimacies lost at the moment of writing. Amidst a lush garden of tropes, the writer's "I" is presented as a figure observing the minute details of the landscape.

The writer's desire to delight, entertain, and reach beyond the text into that which he has neither the space nor time to represent on the page touches a melancholy tone as it signals the impossible richness of what might have transpired between them. The letter becomes a token of their social relationship interrupted by absence. It seeks to transport the clear water of their friendship and slake these friends' thirst for communication and thereby make up for their lost intimacies.

In this sense the letter is a bittersweet complaint expressing regret for an opportunity squandered, a moment between friends—a meeting that never happened. From a distance of a thousand years, the reader confronts a different narrative of loss. We wonder whether the addressee received this letter, how was delivered to him? What was the context in which this letter was read? What effect

did it have on its reader? Did he respond? In all of these cases, we have no answer.

Contents

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## Foundations of Islamic Mysticism by Mukhtar Hussain Ali [Spiritual Alchemy Press, 9780983751755]

The metaphysics of Ibn ʿArabī can be articulated in a single concept, the "Oneness of Being," as expressed centuries earlier by Imam ʿAlī ibn Abī Ṭālib in his statement, "God is in everything but not by being contained within them, and separate from all things but not by being isolated from them." The primary goal of the gnostic is to attain God through understanding reality and secondarily, to articulate spiritual experience in precise philosophical language. Dāʾūd al-Qayṣarī, a prominent Sufi metaphysician in the school of Ibn ʿArabī, presents the doctrines of mysticism in the introduction to his commentary on Ibn ʿArabī's quintessential work, Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam. This parallel English-Arabic edition includes a complete translation of the original Arabic text of Qayṣarī's Prolegomena and aims to be a prerequisite text for the study of Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam. The original text serves as a point of departure for elucidating major themes in Ibn ʿArabī's thought as discussed by Qayṣarī as well as other exponents of his school, especially among the Shīʿī gnostics who have drawn extensively on Ibn ʿArabī's metaphysics. Qayṣarī discusses key ontological and epistemological issues such as Being and its degrees, the divine names, the Universal Worlds, the Supreme Spirit, spiritual unveiling and the Perfect Human. The common thread underlying these seemingly disparate topics is the concept of the Oneness of Being. This is expressed in the following ideas: Being is the sole reality manifesting in the various degrees of existence. Each degree of Being is the self-disclosure of its essential perfections, which are the divine names, and the entities are the loci of manifestation of those names. In addition to the translation of the original text, the commentary deals with each chapter in detail addressing several important themes in mysticism. Because of the profound and universal nature of Qayṣarī's text, the translation and commentary will serve as a contribution to any study of Islamic mysticism.

Excerpt: Increasing attention has been paid in recent years to Ibn ʾArabi, by common consent the greatest exponent of Sufism particularly in its theoretical dimensions, and to the Fuṣūs al-hikam, the challenging work which more than any other part of his vast opus has both demanded and received the closest of scrutiny. Commentaries on the Fuṣūs have come to form an important part of Ibn ʾArabi s legacy and, indeed, of Islamic scholarship as a whole in the varying regions and spheres where his influence has been felt, whether it be Turkey in both the Seljuq and Ottoman periods, the Arab lands, or Iran, transcending thereby the Sunni-Shi`i division.

The commentary of Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī has been one of the most authoritative and widely read works of this type, as attested by the numerous manuscripts preserved in the libraries of Turkey and Iran. Particularly influential has been the Muqaddima, the introduction that he wrote to his commentary, to the degree that it has sometimes been treated as a separate work and copied or printed as such; it became in its turn the subject of commentary and elucidation by scholars such as Jalāl ad-Din Āshtiyānī. The Muqaddima prepares the reader for his encounter with the Fusūs by discussing the key concepts—or, better to say, realities—that inform the entirety of the text.

Mukhtar Ali has now produced a complete translation of the Muqaddima; it is both fluent and faithful to the Arabic original, which is helpfully provided on the facing page. The work originated as a doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Berkeley, which the undersigned had the pleasure of supervising. Mukhtar has now supplemented the translation with his own commentary on each of its twelve chapters, drawing in part on the published work of Āshtiyānī as well as the recorded lectures of Ayatullah Jawādi Āmulī and instruction received from Shaykh al-Mājid in Qum; it represents therefore the continuation of a learned tradition. The result is a major addition to the sources available in English for the study of Ibn ʾArabi, and Mukhtar Ali is to be congratulated on it. It is to be hoped that, among other things, it will help to protect Ibn ʾArabi from the popularizing distortion to which Jalāl ad-Din Rūmī, that other pivotal figure of Islamic gnosis, has been increasingly subjected. — Hamid Algar, Berkeley

TRANSLATOR'S INTRODUCTION

Muhyī al-Din Ibn 'Arabi (d. 638/1240), one of the most influential figures of Islamic mysticism, is also recognized as the greatest spiritual master. His influence in the development of Sufism is largely due to the articulation of mystical concepts and insights and the elaboration of complex spiritual disciplines often only alluded to by the Qur'ān and hadith. Aside from his profound intellectual achievements, however, the honorific title, "the greatest master" (al-Shaykh al-Akbar) is on account of his unparalleled spiritual station, which has been ascertained through the accounts of various Sufi masters throughout history, having been confirmed on the basis of their own gnostic perception.

One of Ibn `Arabi s most influential works is Fusūs al-hikam, which he reports to have received by the Prophet Muhammad through a vision. For this reason, as well as the fact that it is considered the quintessence of his thought, it is the subject of over one hundred commentaries. He expounds in it various mystical doctrines as epitomized by a series of prophets beginning with Adam and ending with Muhammad.

Among the numerous commentaries on the Fusūs al-hikam, the most famous are eminent works by Mu'ayyid al-DīnJandī (d. 700/1300), 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 730/1330), 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmī (d. 898/1492) and Sadr al-Din al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274), whose commentary on the Fusūs is not exhaustive, although he is considered to be the greatest expositor of Ibn Arabi s works and the foremost of his students, and Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qaysarī (d. 751/1350).

In order to explore the teachings of Ibn 'Arabi, it is worthwhile to begin by examining the prolegomena to Matla` khusūs al-kilam fi ma`ānī Fusūs al-hikam, Dāwūd Qaysari s commentary on Fusūs al-hikam. Although his commentary on the Fusūs represents the third in a direct line going back to Ibn 'Arabi through Kāshānī, Jandī and Qūnawī, it has been considered one of the most popular due to its thoroughness and accessibility, frequently synthesizing the ideas of his predecessors.

It may also be noteworthy that often a reading of the Fusūs al-hikam with a qualified instructor in the traditional study circles is preceded by a complete and independent reading of Qaysari's Prolegomena, which, as mentioned addresses some of the most important themes of Sufism. Often this is accompanied by a close reading of Ibn Turka's Tamhīd al-Qawā`id. After the Fusūs, Qūnawi s Mí ftāh al-ghayb is studied and finally Ibn `Arabi's Futūhāt al-Makkiyya.

[Tamhīd al-Qawā`id, written by Sā'in al-Din ibn Turka has been studied in the theological seminaries of Tehran and Isfahan. Sayyid Jalāl al-Din Āshtiyānī writes that Agha Muhammad Reza Qomshai, one of the preeminent teachers of gnosticism, taught the text several times and himself studied it under Sayyid Rezā Larijānī.

2 Shaykh Hasanzāda Āmūlī recommends that this text should be studied before Qaysaris commentary on the Fusūs given that it has one of the most thorough discussions of the Being, which is the subject of Qaysari s first chapter in the Muqaddima. Although these four books comprise of the basic texts of theoretical gnosticism, Shaykh Hasanzāda includes Shark Ishārāt of Tūsī, a1-AsJar of Mu1lā Sadra and his own work Sirh al `uyūn fi shark al-`uyūn on spiritual psychology (ilm al-nafs). See " Hāmil al-Asrār" of Samadī Āmūlī, a short pamphlet discussing the curriculum for students of the rational and gnostic disciplines.]

The prolegomena, commonly known simply as the Muqaddima, although part of a larger work, which is the commentary on the Fusūs, stands on its own as an independent work and has been the subject of careful study. Moreover, since the Fusūs is a synopsis of Ibn `Arabi's doctrine, which he expands in Futūhāt al-Makkiyya, Qaysari s Muqaddima can be read as a summary of the Fusūs itself.

Qaysarī writes in a separate introduction to the Fusūs that without comprehending all of the essential topics of gnosticism, it is not possible to understand the original text of the Fusūs. It is in light of this approach that he wrote the Muqaddima, which contains what he considers to be the fundamental issues in gnosticism, such as Being,

the divine names, prophethood, unveiling, and the human being.

In recent times, Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Āshtiyānī has written a comprehensive commentary on the Muqaddima, treating it as an independent work and establishing it as a primary source for mystical doctrines. Āshtiyāni s commentary is a philosophical exposition of the school of Ibn 'Arabi, in which he often incorporates the views of the other major Islamic philosophical schools: Peripaticism, Illuminationism, and the Transcendent Wisdom of Mullā Sadra. In this way, Āshtiyāni s Sharh-i muqaddima-yi Qaysarī bar fusūs al-hikam, serves as an excellent sourcebook for mystical doctrines within the larger context of Islamic philosophy.

## DĀWŪD AL-QAYSARĪ

Sharaf al-Din Dāwūd al-Qaysarī was born in the central Anatolian town of Kayseri (Qayarīyya), around 660/1260 and died in 751/1350. He was a disciple of 'Abd al-Razzāq Kāshānī (d. 736/1335) in Kāshān, with whom he studied Fusūs al-hikam, and who was at the same time his spiritual preceptor on the path (tarīqa).' Although there is no entry on Qaysarī in 'Abd al-Rahmān Jāmi s hagiography Na fahāt al-uns, Zayn al-Din Muhammad 'Abd al-Ra'ūf al-Mūnawī (d.1031/1621) mentions him in his Irghām awliyā'al-shaytān bi dhikr manāqib awlíyā' al-Rahmān as follows:

> [Dāwūd al-Qaysarī was] the scholar given to religious devotion, the ascetic Sufi (al-`ālim al-`ābid) who used to partake in spiritual struggle (al-zāhid al-sū fi al-mujāhid).
> He studied the religious disciplines in his hometown and then went to Egypt and studied the three religious disciplines with the scholars versed in them. He studied intensely and became accomplished in the intellectual disciplines (wa bara`a f i l-funūn al-`aqlīyya). Then he occupied himself with Sufism, excelling in and mastering it and devoting himself to writing about it. He commented upon the Fusūs and attached an introduction to it in which he finely explains the principles of Sufism. Sultan Orkhān b. `Uthmān [Orhan

Gāzī] built a religious school for him in the town of Iznik, which was the first one built in the Ottoman Empire. He died in the eight century [AH]

Qaysari's Introduction to his commentary on the Fūsü. is of particular importance in the study of mysticism both because of his clear and lucid style as well as his mastery of the ideas of Ibn 'Arabi. Āshtiyānī writes in his introduction, "We have compared Qaysari's commentary with those of other commentators and found Qaysari's to be the best in many respects, even if Kāshāni s is more profound." Similarly, just as it can be said that Qūnawi s style of exposition of Ibn `Arabi s ideas was more organized and clear than that of the master himself, given the abstruse nature of Ibn `Arabi's voluminous writings, Qaysari s commentary is erudite, yet accessible. Furthermore, Āshtiyānī maintains that the Muqaddima is the best of Qaysari's writings. For this reason, Qaysari s commentary and introduction has become an instructional text studied in the classical learning centers as well as in private circles.

[Other works by Qaysarī include a commentary on Ibn Fārid's mystic poem, several treatises compiled by Jalā1 al-Din Āshtiyānī entitled Rasā'il-i Qaysarī, Tahqiq mā' al-hayāt, Kashf asrar al-zulām, Nihāyat al-bayān fi dirāyat al-zamān, Inshā' al-dawā'ir, Risālat fi `ilm al haqā'iq, Risālat fi īdah bad asrār Ta'wilāt al-Qur'ān li'l-Kāshānī, and his own commentary of the Fusiās called Matla` khusūs al-kiiam fi shark ma`āni fusūs al-hikam. See Shark al-Qaysarī 'ala tā'iyat ibn al-Fāridh, (Beirut, Dār al-Kutub al-Ilmīyya: 2004).]

Numerous scholars attest to Qaysari s mastery of Ibn `Arabi's doctrine and consider him to be a great scholar of this discipline. This is on account of both his ability to communicate philosophical and mystical doctrines as well as the fact that he was himself an accomplished gnostic, which may be considered one of the most important qualifications for the exposition of a mystical treatise. In the opening paragraph of the Muqaddima, Qaysarī acknowledges to be the recipient of gnostic visions. He also relates that he studied the Fusūs with Kāshānī with others among his students when he

became the object of divine assistance. He mentions,

> I was singled out amongst my companions to have received knowledge and perceive meanings without prior reflection and learning.

Since gnosticism is fundamentally a practical discipline, and the gnostic's foremost concern is spiritual wayfaring, it can be said that it appears as a theoretical discipline only as an elaboration of the visionary experience and as a mode of communication to others.

Though not to discount the important function of theoretical gnosticism in establishing the correct understanding of metaphysical principles, it can be argued that these principles are derived for the most part from gnostic perception, and not discursive reasoning, even if they appear in the form of philosophical arguments.

Qaysari s exposition simply brings to light the experience of the gnostics in the language of the philosophers. It is an attempt to reconcile their experiences in the terminology and world-view of the philosophers—given that philosophy is the closest discipline to mysticism—and is not an attempt to arrive at the truth solely by means of the intellect.

For this reason, it is necessary to establish Qaysarī, first and foremost as a gnostic, and secondarily as an original thinker or philosopher in order to lend credence to his exposition of the Fusūs. Were it not for his stature as an accomplished gnostic, it would not have been possible to present a credible commentary on a text whose very source is gnosis.

## OUTLINE OF THE MUQADDIMA

The Muqaddima is divided into twelve sections, each addressing an important topic in the field of Sufism. A brief outline of the original text is as follows:

The first chapter, as Qaysarī mentions, furnishes philosophical proofs for divine unity and other issues readily found in works of theology and philosophy. This is mainly to establish the philosophical foundations of divine unity according to the Sufis and to bring to light some differences from the other schools.

The second chapter comprises of a discussion of the divisions of the names and attributes including positive and privative, the names of Majesty and Beauty, the Keys of the Unseen and the difference between the names of the Essence, attributes and acts. Furthermore, concepts relating to the divine names, their engendering, the universal and particular, their dominion, governance, and their relationship with other names will be discussed.

The third chapter contains an exposition of the Immutable Archetypes and other divine realities such as contingent quiddities that are manifestations of the divine names. This chapter investigates the appearance of various levels of manifestation and the presence of the divine Essence in everything. In the commentary there is a discussion of God's knowledge and its relation to the created world.

The fourth chapter is a discussion of substance and accident according to the gnostics. Substance is defined as the Essence and accidents are defined as the divine names and attributes.

The five divine planes of existence or "presences" are discussed in the fifth chapter along with an introduction to the concept of the Perfect Human (al-insān al-kāmil), which is the fifth plane. The commentary will discuss the concept of the Perfect Human, as well as the concepts of the First Intellect and the descending degrees of creation.

The sixth chapter discusses the properties of the Imaginal World (al-`ālam al-mithāl). The levels of unveiling are introduced as well as the terms Throne, Footstool, seven heavens, earths and angels.

The seventh chapter discusses the various degrees of unveiling and the difference between unveiling and revelation.

The eighth chapter investigates the relationship between the microcosm and macrocosm, both of which are the form of man, the manifestation of the Supreme Name or the Muhammadan reality.

The ninth chapter explores the concept of the Muhammadan Reality and its relationship to the reality of the other prophets.

The tenth chapter discusses the Supreme Spirit, which is none other than the reality of man. Qaysarī also discusses the various levels of man's spiritual constitution.

The eleventh chapter discusses how the spirit returns on the Day of Resurrection through the governing effect of some divine names over others.

The twelfth chapter discusses the reality of prophethood and Spiritual Guardianship (wilāya). Qaysarī expounds on these two concepts from the point of view of the gnostics, which is an expression of the dominion of the divine names and their governance. The difference between prophet, messenger and saint is also addressed.

## THE COMMENTARY

In recent times, the Muqaddima of Qaysarī has been taught on a number of occasions in the theological learning center in Qum. One can find in the libraries of the seminary a complete course consisting of audio recordings on the Muqaddima by contemporary scholars such as Ayatullah Jawādī Āmulī, Ayatullah Hasanzāda Āmulī, both of whom are students of the late `Allāma Tabātabāī

In the tradition of Islamic scholarship, classical texts were transmitted from teacher to student who would then carefully transcribe his notes to preserve every word of his teacher. For this reason it was not uncommon for a student to present a complete commentary of a text with little or no textual references since his work was seen as a continuation of a lineage of transmission. In many ways, it was sufficient to have studied with an eminent teacher as the primary qualification for teaching or expositing a particular work.

It is noteworthy that mystical works were not in the traditional discourse of the religious institutions but have become, in recent times, increasingly popular and surprisingly accessible, given that only a generation ago they would have been studied only in private sessions for initiates on the mystical path.

During my time as a student in Qum, I had the good fortune of studying the Muqaddima with Shaykh Akram al-Māj id, the preeminent sage and gnostic. As a scholar he is erudite, articulate, astutely analytical, integrative in all of his teaching and extremely prolific as a writer and thinker. He is imbued with the highest ethical qualities, possessing gravity of bearing, graciousness and humility.

In addition, I have benefitted immensely from Professor Hamid Algar, to whom I am profoundly indebted for my academic training and moral edification over the years and for persistently guiding me throughout the translation and commentary.

In my commentary I have relied on my notes from the lectures of the Muqaddima delivered by Shaykh al-Mājid and AyatullahJawādī Āmulī, and from the text of Sayyid Jalāl al-Din Āshtiyānī, which exhaustively explores major themes in mystical thought, providing lucid explanation of difficult passages and a general framework for the organization of ideas. The rationale for choosing these three scholars as my primary sources is that they exemplify the contemporary exposition of a theoretical Sufi text in Islamic learning centers today. Each scholar from whom I have benefited possesses a unique expository style and a particular mode of transmission. I have attempted to coalesce each of their styles and incorporate some of their views in my commentary.

The study also turns to other exponents of this tradition, namely, Sayyid Haydar Āmulī, Najm al-Din al-Rāzi, Mullā Sadrā, and Hakim Tirmidhī, employing both Arabic and Persian sources as well as studies in English.

Āshtiyāni s commentary compares the views of the other schools of philosophy, using Qaysari s text as a point of departure to exposit many doctrinal issues in Shi ism. Jawādī Āmulī, an eminent philosopher and Qur'ānic exegete, approaches the text discursively, emphasizing the philosophical nuances of Ibn Arabi s metaphysics, as evidenced in the audio recordings of his lectures.

Shaykh al-Mājid, alongside his intellectual approach, emphasizes the practical dimension of gnosticism, or spiritual wayfaring. The simplest articulation of the spiritual way is self-knowledge through contemplation, remembrance, and purification of the soul. Once the heart is awakened, its inward faculties are then able to perceive spiritual meanings through reading the divine signs. Thereafter, those signs, which are essentially divine manifestations, intensify and one moves from reading the signs in existence and in the self, to embodying the divine names rooted in everything. When the spiritual nature overcomes corporeal nature, the intellect illuminated by the lamp-niche of prophecy, guides the human being,

stage after stage, in the degrees of the soul, so that the heart is adorned with virtuous attributes, reflects divine perfections and becomes aware of divine mysteries. In the final stage, the spirit becomes immersed in the ocean of divine unity, moved by the divine hand and in harmony with the divine will, returning to its Lord and having fulfilled its purpose in every realm.

The present work introduces the first English translation of this indispensable text in the study of mysticism, drawing attention to some of the most fundamental ontological and epistemological issues in Islamic thought. I hope to convey as faithfully as possible the erudition of past and present masters who have inherited and contributed to an enduring tradition.

The volume has a parallel English-Arabic edition of Qaysari s Muqaddima. The Arabic text corresponds with Hasanzāda Āmulī's edited manuscript of Qaysari s Sharh Fusūs al hikam, published in Qom, Iran, 1378 H. A detailed commentary of each chapter follows in the second section with selective coverage of important ideas that Qaysarī discusses. <>

## Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires: New Studies in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal Art and Culture edited by Kishwar Rizvi [Arts and Archaeology of the Islamic World, Brill, 9789004340473]

[Affect, Emotion and Subjectivity in Early Modern Muslim Empires](#) presents new approaches to Ottoman Safavid and Mughal art and culture. Taking artistic agency as a starting point, the authors consider the rise in status of architects, the self-fashioning of artists, the development of public spaces, as well as new literary genres that focus on the individual subject and his or her place in the world. They consider the issue of affect as performative and responsive to certain emotions and actions, thus allowing insights into the motivations behind the making and, in some cases, the destruction of works of art. The interconnected histories of Iran, Turkey and India thus highlight the urban and intellectual changes that defined the early modern period. Contributors are: Sussan

Babaie, Chanchal Dadlani, Jamal Elias, Emine Fetvaci, Christiane Gruber Sylvia Hougteling, Kishwar Rizvi, Sunil Sharma, Marianna Shreve Simpson.

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Excerpt:

## Affect, Emotion, and Subjectivity in the Early Modern Period by Kishwar Rizvi

Artists working in the imperial ateliers of the Safavids, Mughals, and Ottomans were keenly aware of their role within the art historical canon. Genealogies were constructed of great artists (calligraphers and painters) and albums were compiled of their works. The artist displayed his mastery over pen and brush, utilizing his tools to show his knowledge of older precedents while at the same time creating that which transformed them entirely. The past, present, and future were

mobilized through a mark on the page, through allusions and references, and through the materiality of the ink, paint, brush, and paper, themselves. By looking closely at the traces left by the artists, be they painters, poets, or architects, the art historian may gain insight into the cultural production of these great empires of the early modern period.

Over the past thirty years scholars of Islamic art and architecture, in keeping with trends in art history more generally, focused on the social and historical contexts of the works they studied. Issues of patronage and politics were foremost among the concerns of art historians. This was a shift away from the formalist roots of a discipline that had earlier focused on questions of attribution and connoisseurship. Thus, we now may understand the motivations behind great works of art and architecture, the ways in which they were funded, and the roles they played within their broader political and religious contexts. Less work has been done on how those objects and buildings were received and, in some case, how they functioned. For example, despite the use of the term "Islamic" as a descriptor, there remains much to be known about devotional practices in the early modern period or the manner in which ritual spaces and objects were used. Questions about reception and intentionality, as well as about audiences and their responses, remain to be fully addressed through closer study of personal diaries, portraits and chancellery documents. The goal of this anthology is to further this discourse and contribute new research that expands our understanding of art and culture in the Persianate Islamic world.

In the early modern period, the arts of writing and depiction were intertwined with the social practice of connoisseurship. Modes of evaluation, by kings and courtiers, were tabulated in the prefaces of poetic and literary texts, as well as the emerging genre of art historical collecting in the form of albums, or muraqqas. The album preface became an important site for setting forth rationalizations for creating certain works and establishing standards for appreciating the arts of writing and depiction. Calligraphic exercises were juxtaposed next to sketches by master draftsmen and artists. The traces of the artists' hands were indexed through physical gestures and the impression made

by a brush loaded with ink or a reed sharpened to perfection.

The massive folios collectively known as the Timurid Workshop Album provide opportunities for examining the criteria for judgement and evaluation in the fifteenth-century. The pages are massive (680 × 500 mm) requiring at least two hands to turn a single page. They comprise mostly of calligraphy exercises, as well as hand-drawn sketches and preparatory drawings. Together they lend credence to the idea of "the albums' unique potential as sources for the study of how art history and aesthetics were theorized in premodern Iran." The album also requires us to think of the embodied experience of art and what that meant not only to the makers of the artworks within it, but also those that encountered the object through visual and tactile means. In its gigantism, the album overpowers the senses of the beholder, especially if considered in the context of illustrated manuscripts, which were often designed to be intimate objects, primarily (though not exclusively) for individual reading and viewing. Monumental calligraphy, of which there are also examples in the album, would have been less unexpected, given that elite calligraphers were often commissioned to design architectural epigraphy. Yet what spaces – physical and intellectual – would the large sketches of animals, lovers, and warriors, have occupied? What was it about the Timurid period that inspired such a breathtaking object, in which works referencing other artistic traditions (European and Chinese, for example) were collected alongside other examples of Persian drawing and calligraphy? What was being represented through these enigmatic sketches, preparatory drawings, poems, and to whom were they directed? And importantly, what did the production of the album mean in terms of the changing status of the artist? Questions such as these occupy the authors in this volume, who address the personal and the political, the affective and emotional, and what these inquiries imply for an expanded history of art that breaks away from its traditional disciplinary parameters.

## Art as Affect

There is a story in the Dalā'il al-imāmah ("Signs of the Imamate") of Abu Jafar Muhammad al-Tabari

(d. 923) that centers on the fourth Shi`i imam, `Ali bin Husayn, "Zayn al-Abdin." After the death of Imam Husayn in Karbala, his young son returned to Madina, where his divine authority was challenged by his uncle, Muhammad Ibn al-Hanafiyya. In order to find a fair judgment, the two sides agreed to consult the Hajjar al-aswad, the black stone embedded on the side of the Ka`ba which was believed to "present itself on the Day of Judgment, with eyes and lips, to bear witness." They repaired to Mecca and upon arriving at the Ka`ba, the uncle addressed the stone first. There was silence. Next Zayn al-Abdin asked of the stone, "Oh Hajjar al-aswad ..., if you know that I am the Proof of God (hujat-i khudā) speak to us so that my uncle renounces his claim." The stone spoke, "Oh Muhamad ibn `Ali, listen and submit (samī' wa matī') to Zayn al-Abdin, for he is the Proof of God." The uncle listened and submitted, and the black stone fell silent, having testified to Zayn al-Abdin's imamate.

The encounter of Zayn al-Abdin with the black stone is the subject of a painting from the History of the Immaculate Imams (Tārīkh-i `aimayi māsūmīn) of Veramini of 1526, which illustrate stories from the lives of the imams. The scene is centered on the Ka`ba; on one side the Imam is shown gesturing towards the stone, his hand raised in a manner indicating conversation or communication. On the other side of the stone stands a bearded man, his uncle. The black stone is shown as a gaping void in the Ka`ba, like an open mouth or an oracle. As if in response to the miraculous event of the stone's oral response, a group of men standing and kneeling on the opposite side of the page raise their hands and eyes in prayer.

An image such as this does something more than simply illustrate a story or provide visual exegesis on an important episode from Shi`i history. By calling attention to the authority of the black stone, the image also draws attention to its own materiality. It invites the viewer to consider what the affective as well as instructive role of the work of art may be. It should be noted that the image is part of a series of such visual narrations throughout the manuscript. The paintings were meant to act as corollaries to the text but also to evoke in the reader a pious response. Focusing on miraculous events, the images reveal the goal of visual exegesis.

In early sixteen-century Iran the cult of Shi`i imams was patronized by the ruling Safavid elite and, as with the popular hagiographies of Sufi shaykhs, were centered on the spiritual and miraculous power of the chosen. Buildings, books, and objects were all called upon to bear witness to the charismatic power of the imams and, by extension, their Safavid descendants. These works of art were believed to be affective testimonials of the religious and imperial power embodied by the Shah. Thus, seemingly inanimate objects came to life, imbued with Divine vision and the capacity to impart knowledge.

The affective response, in a case such as this, would be one that represents feelings of piety, fear, and hope – among others – and illustrates how "discourses of personal and public experience shape and structure cultural meaning." In doing so they require imaginings that move away from the faculty of sight alone, and employ embodiment both as a practice and process of representation. That is to say, one may consider affect to be a physical or mental response to artistic and cultural productions that are themselves manifestations of personal, social, and communal experiences. The essays in this volume consider the issue of affect as performative as well as responsive to certain emotions and actions, thus allowing us insights into the motivations behind the making and, in some cases, the destruction of works of art. They also consider the impact that these actions may have on individuals and their communities.

## Self-representation

Identities in the early modern period were fluid and expansive. A figure such as the Safavid courtier, Mirza Shah Husayn, is described in contemporary chronicles as an architect-builder (mimār). He began his career in Isfahan (c 1503–4) and was soon appointed clerk of the imperial divan. The darughā (governor) of the city was Durmish Khan Shamlu, a Qizilbash amir, who chose to stay at court with Shah Isma`il and thereby nominated Husayn to be his vazīr and na'ib (deputy) in Isfahan, a post Husayn held until 1519. A European visitor to Isfahan at the time, Gil Samoes, described Husayn as a young man who was versed in many languages, a skill that no

doubt served him well in the multi-confessional and multi-ethnic milieu of early modern Iran.

It was during his tenure as Durmish Khan's deputy that Husayn built the Harun-i Velayet shrine in Isfahan (completed in 1513), a monument marking the Shi`i proclivities of the newly established empire. The patron and builder are named in a cartouche below the foundation inscriptions of the shrine, which reads, "With the attention of Khan Durmish, the powerful, this memorable edifice (bina) was made possible by Husayn." The historian Qazi Ahmad Qummi includes this couplet in Husayn's death notice in his Khulāsat al-Tawārīkh, thus identifying "Husayn" as Mirza Shah Husayn, Durmish Khan's deputy at the time. The recognition on the façade of this important edifice is in keeping with Husayn's modest beginnings and his peripheral status in Ismail's court — a position that would change drastically over the next decade.

The construction of the Harun-i Velayet brought the young courtier to Shah Isma`il's attention. By building an important shrine in the heart of the city, Mirza Shah Husayn was displaying his identity as a loyal servitor of the court and an implementer who had access to the most desirable site in the city, off the Maydan of the Great Mosque of Isfahan. The shrine project would prove to be Husayn's introduction into Shah Isma`il's inner circle. At the height of his power he was the possessor of great wealth and authority, with property in Isfahan and Kashan. According to the historian Khwandamir, his "threshold became a resort of the great and powerful and his magnificence increased as the Shah's favor shone on him." As a sign of his closeness to the imperial household, in 1528 Husayn was made the guardian (lālā) of the future Shah Tahmasb. It was at about this time that he undertook another important architectural project, the renovation of the Masjid-i `Ali, also in his hometown, Isfahan.

The small Masjid-i `Ali is located a few steps opposite the Harun-i Velayet shrine. The portal of the mosque is covered in intricate glazed brick and tile mosaics, and the inscriptions extol the greatness of Shah Isma`il. In brown mosaic are select Qur'anic verses referring to the leadership of Isma`il, thereby conflating the prophet and the Shah. Overlaid in white is the foundation inscription, dedicated to Isma`il. In a significant divergence

ffom the epigraphic program of the inscriptions on the shrine, those on the Masjid-i `Ali focus on the builder. Certainly, Shah Isma`il is praised as the holder of the keys of fortune and he is equated with the Divinely chosen imams; nonetheless, it is Mirza Shah Husayn who is equated with the revered Shi`i imam, Husayn, and portrayed as a pious believer and builder of sacred mosques. He is named fully, as the splendor (kamāl) of the empire, "Mirza Shah Husayn, long last his protection of justice over the east and the west." The anonymity of the builder (merely Husayn) witnessed at the Harun-i Velayet is now complemented by the characterization of a grand courtier, who is proud to display his skill as an architect (the builder of great mosques) and as a bureaucrat loyally serving his king.

Mirza Shah Husayn was assassinated in 1523 by a jealous rival, yet he is included in the anthologies of poets and artists and in every important court chronicle written in the sixteenth century, attesting to the breadth of his influence and the complexity of his persona. Interestingly, in his eulogistic death notices Husayn is described first as a notable architect and second as an important courtier. It becomes clear that for men like him, the designation was an important status symbol, one that also provided an avenue toward social and political mobility. The myriad ways in which he is described also provide insights into the ways in which identity was constructed in the early modern period, through institutions as well as personal ambition.

Mirza Shah Husayn's is an example of how an individual in sixteenth-century Iran could fashion his public persona. The examples in this volume demonstrate that the construction of identity and its multiple representations were not uniquely European or derived from the humanist traditions associated with the Italian Renaissance. Recent scholars have shown the shortcomings of ascribing singularity either to the definition of selfhood or that of the early modern period. It is interesting, thus, to consider parallel developments in the fields of art and architecture and the history of ideas within a broader, more global, context. As Peter Burke notes in his essay, "Representations of Selfhood from Petrarch to Descartes," one would be remiss is assuming either the uniqueness of the "Western self" or even of ascribing strict

distinctions between temporalities, such as the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Instead, he points us to what may be understood as common concerns in the Muslims empires as well, namely, questions of self-knowledge; the uniqueness of the individual; and an inquiry into the mechanics of self-consciousness.

For the literati of the early modern Muslim empires, an increasingly popular genre to explore was the autobiography. Life stories had certainly been penned before, under the rubric of saintly hagiographies, imperial chronicles, or anthologies of famous poets or theologians, but in the sixteenth century, the personal memoir began to take shape. Among the most well-known of these is that of the founder of the Mughal dynasty, Zahir al-din Babur (d.1530), who wrote the Bāburnāma, a remarkable account of his own life and times. The book is organized chronologically, giving it the impression of being a court history. However, the voice of the author dominates the narrative, from his astute impressions of people to his likes and dislikes of certain types of food. Early in the book, Babur gives the account of his first marriage, when he was a shy and quiet young man of seventeen, insecure about being intimate with his wife. In contrast, he writes of his love for a boy from the camp, who Babur couldn't bear to look in the eye, filled as he was with bashful desire. He writes that "in the throes of love, in the foment of youth and madness, I wandered bareheaded and barefoot around the lanes and streets and through the gardens and orchards, paying no attention to acquaintances or strangers, oblivious to self and others."

Two aspects of Babur's biography are of particular relevance. The first is the externalization of the author's feelings in a way that makes them familiar and universal. The second is the unprecedented representation of the author, which allows entrance into a world (whether true or contrived) that Babur alone had access to. Interestingly, the Bāburnāma was among the most popular and heavily illustrated texts of its time, appreciated not only as a document marking the foundation of the Mughal Empire, but as a self-representation, a portrait of the founder and a worldview. Similar autobiographies would be penned by Babur's neighboring ruler, Shah Tahmasb (d. 1577) of Iran, who wrote of his dreams and inspirations in his Tazkira.19 Babur's grandson, Prince Salim, would

also leave us with one of the most insightful biographies, the Jāhangīrnāma, a chronicle no doubt inspired by the Bāburnāma. In all these examples, the self-representation is presented as intimate and reflective, the first-person voice allowing the reader a view into what appear to be the lived experiences and innermost thoughts of the writer.

## The Portrait
Jahangir left behind not only one of the most interesting works of literary biography, but a fascinating corpus of visual material. Priding his own connoisseurial abilities, he supported an inventive cadre of artists, who merged allegory and story-telling with new visual tropes gleaned from other visual cultures, such as Christian devotional art. Thus for example, the sequence of so-called "dream-pictures" that were illustrated by the court artist and khānazād (a term used for those brought up in the court) Abul Hasan reveal the complex interplay of allegory and illustration. Based on dreams described by the emperor, Abul Hasan's paintings have a strange intimacy to them, as though the artist has gained access into the subliminal hopes and fears of the king. In "Jahangir embracing Shah `Abbas," the two early modern rulers are seen clasping each other closely, Jahangir looming over his Iranian counterpart. They stand on the backs of a lamb (Shah `Abbas) and lion (Jahangir), calmly resting on a globe showing Europe, Africa, and Asia. Recent scholars have interpreted this image through the lens of race and gender dynamics, as well as the cartographic obsessions of early modern artists and rulers. Allegory, as a particular attribute of early seventeenth-century imperial iconography, has also been explored most recently by Ebba Koch, who writes that Mughal rulers relied on Christian symbols (such as the imagery of the lion and the lamb) "in search of suitable ideas and symbols to broaden their image as universal rulers with yet another deifying element." These issues are prominent in the image, but they can also overshadow the unique vision and ability of the artist, Abul Hasan. According to the king, Abul Hasan was born as khānazād, the son of an artist-courtier, whose talents were nurtured from an early age. Jahangir gave him the sobriquet, "Nadir al-Zaman" the "Wonder of the Age" and wrote of him that he had no rival or equal.

What would a title such as "Wonder of the Age" mean in the context of seventeenth-century India? Was it simply a form of praise or did it come with professional recognition at the imperial court? Did the issue of time, central to the title, place Abul Hasan within a lineage of great masters, whose innovations and particular style of painting bestowed on them a singular position in the history at art itself? Jahangir was well aware of such concerns, as would have been his artists, who actively sought to insert themselves into the rhetoric of image-making. This was done either through the manipulation of earlier models (that is in emulating the works of past masters) or through literally including themselves in the image. Authorship in the early modern period was a complex issue, in which artists and compilers of albums viewed the history of art as a chain of transmission, of skills as well as concepts. The act of making was a performative response to history, and the artist was one who replicated and perfected earlier models.

Portraits served to narrate the social and political status of the person depicted, often the ruler, through similitude or suggestion. Commoners and courtiers were also subjects for documentation, as the eye of the artist moved towards the quotidian, sketching dervishes as well as elite governors. One such image is that of the renowned Mughal courtier, Abdur Rahim (1556–1627), who was brought up in the court of Akbar. He was a polyglot, "proficient in Turkish, Persian, and Hindavi, and he is said to have known Arabic, Sanskrit, and Portuguese." He was also a renowned statesman and poet, credited with expressing himself in both Persian and Hindavi and patronizing poets who wrote in both languages. According to a biography he commissioned towards the end of his life, Rahim established important ateliers in cities that he was sent to govern, such as Thatta, in Sindh, and Burhanput, in the Deccan. Here, poets as well as painters were gathered, to write on a range of topics, from Perso-Islamic literature to retellings of Hindu classics, such as the Ramāyāna. Textual records provide important insights into Rahim's patronage, his ambitions, his interests and abilities. However, visual sources were also called upon to represent the man. In a single-sheet painting from a dispersed album (now at the Yale University Art Gallery), Rahim is shown in profile, wearing a modest tunic of white cloth specked with gold; the

waist is cinched with a patkā fabric belt, while mauve pāi-jāmā trousers hug tightly at his calves. A cap woven with white and gold thread sits on his head as Rahim gazes intently into the distance. Jahangir was fond of having his courtiers and close associates painted by his favorite artists, and those images would be collected in his albums of painting and calligraphy. His involvement is apparent in the inscription on the painting, running sideways on the left-hand side, which reads, "Likeness (sūrat) of Abdur Rahim Khan-i Khanan 1017 H (1608)." The inscription appears to have been penned by Jahangir himself, in a hand that is identifiable to ones on other single- sheet paintings collected in the Shah Jahan Album, such as the portrait of Maharaja Bhim Kanwar, by the artist Nanha, now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Jahangiri's handwritten inscriptions run along the side of the painting, lending an intimacy to the image. He took great pride in his ability to recognize and nurture artistic talent, and it is clear from his biography and the works themselves that he was closely involved in their production. But what of Abdur Rahim; how do we "find" him in this image? Does the painting reduce and mask his achievements, restricting him to the role of "Jahangir's courtier?" Certainly, his representation is less opulently adorned in the accoutrements of power; there are no jewels, no sword hilt or grand headgear. Rather, Rahim stands in obeisance, his hands folded at his waist. Nonetheless, his acumen and vision is seen in the intensity of his gaze, which is at once serene and perceptive. A poet and a warrior, Rahim personified early modern Mughal India, surrounding himself with figures of different religions and linguistic and cultural backgrounds. His ideas and likenesses circulated widely, influencing the courtly milieu of which he was an intrinsic part. That an individual such as Rahim could deploy or be a part of such diverse representations, points to the multiplicity of media available to early modern audiences and the complex manners in which they were brought together.

## Mobility and Temporality
The aspirations of chroniclers, poets, architects, and artists that that were part of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal courtly milieu were evinced in the

composition of autobiographies as well as in the emphasis on verisimilitude and portraiture. New technologies affected architectural production, and a broadening social sphere changed the way in which urban spaces were described and experienced. Capital cities, such as Isfahan and Istanbul, were not only conceptualized as seats of religious and imperial power but were thriving metropolises that were home to diverse populations and a range of public institutions.

The art, architecture and urbanism witnessed in this period was part of global trends, and we would be remiss to think of Iran, Turkey, and India in geographic or temporal isolation. Recent scholarship has indeed questioned the universality of definitions such as "Renaissance" and "early modern" as well as their physical location. Thus one may look to the intertwined histories of people, culture, and works of art to understand how some of the most important social and political changes occurred in the world. Thriving cosmopolitan cities, from Isfahan to Venice, supported the movement of people and trade, bringing silks and ceramics to European households and illustrated print culture to the Middle East and South Asia. Such exchanges are visible in a range of media, from the dress of courtiers and merchants to the ornament on imperial mausolea, such as the Taj Mahal. Thus, a painting of Sir Robert Shirley shows the British envoy from Shah `Abbas to the courts of Europe dressed in Safavid silks embroidered with opulent figural and floral designs. The coat and cape are draped in a way to give full view to the textiles, representing well the skill that went into their making. It was an appropriate costume for a man negotiating economic and political ties between England and Iran. Similar "cross-dressing" took place in other media, such as Safavid ceramics embellished with Ming designs (and exported to Europe as Chinese ware) or Mughal architecture revetted in precious stones using the Italian pietra dura (hard stone) inlay technique, known in Persian as parchīn kārī. Whether driven by aesthetic choice or technological inspiration, among the particularities of the early modern period is the cross-pollination seen in these examples. Together they demonstrate how works of art and architecture were intrinsically linked to cultures of contact and appropriation. They also reveal that social meanings at this time were mutable and contingent on location and the particular

perspective of the observer, the consumer, and the maker.

Shah `Abbas' Isfahan competed with other great capitals of the time as an important center for trade and commerce in the early modern period. The Ottomans were at the height of their glory following Sultan Sulyeman's victories, which increased Istanbul's status as the religious, bureaucratic and artist center of the empire. Similarly, Akbar's capitals in Lahore and Agra attracted missionaries and merchants from all over the world, their legendary wealth represented in deluxe objects and recorded in the diaries of travelers. The early modern city was the site of novelty and adventure, where chance encounters and secret trysts provided opportunities for love and romance. The titles of such poetry — shahr asūb, city destroyer — signaled the role of the individual (often a beautiful young man) who traversed the city, turning it upside-down along with the hearts and minds of those who encountered him. Such encounters happened often at dusk, after the setting of the sun. Isfahan, like Agra and Istanbul, was imagined as a nocturnal city, where the culture of coffeehouses took over once the call to prayers died down.

Urban spaces, like artistic ateliers, were heterotopic and polyglot, where men (and sometimes women) came together in complex and interdependent ways. Seen through such a lens, early modernity describes a way of imagining the world in its totality. It was evident in the obsession during this time with mapmaking and the competition to gain supremacy over land and sea. With the rise of cartography, Europeans as well as those in the great empires of Asia, especially the Ottomans, performed their imperial and economic ambitions in competition and dialog with each other. Yet it would be incomplete to characterize the period as simply a response to scientific and geographic discoveries. As Ayesha Ramachandan has written, "Because of its explicit interest in recreating the world — visually, philosophically, and politically — world-making forced early modern thinkers to confront complex theological and metaphysical dilemmas, as their own act of intellectual creation and ordering seemed to parallel and rival God's original creation of the world. To imagine and create the world in early modernity was thus to express something more

profound than a desire for imperial and commercial dominion: worldmaking was nothing less than establishing an ideal world order, understood in metaphysical, scientific, theological, and eventually, in political terms."

From the perspectives of the Ottomans, Mughals, and Safavids that are the subjects of this volume, imagining the world was concerned with finding their place within it. For the rulers, it meant to validate and explain their own dynastic ambitions. In Iran, for example the question was how to merge Shi`ism with the language of messianism and spiritual authority in order to establish a new rhetoric of statehood. How would tribal norms give way to new cadres of loyalty to the ruling family; how would earthly governance cohere with changing dogma; and relevant to the art historian, how would works of art and architecture be mobilized in propagating this new vision? Yet alongside imperial desires were the passions of individuals, whether they were the rulers or the ruled. Such concerns were shared across the great Muslim Empires. Thus while Tahmasb's biography reveals the desire of a man trying to define himself in succession to his charismatic father, the portrait of Jahangir's close companion and courtier, Inayat Khan, by the artist Balchand poignantly highlights the futility of a man succumbing to excess. Jahangir ordered his artists to sketch the drug-addicted Inayat Khan as he lay dying, an image that was at once documentary and poetic, expressing the pathos of life itself. The introspection and curiosity to understand the inner self merged with the scientific need for precision and tabulation. Similarly, expressions of self-hood overlapped with knowledge of an ever-expanding sense of the world; contact and exchange heightened these experiences that would be recorded in books and on buildings, inscribed on paper and etched on walls, transforming the world and its very conceptualization.

## Structure of the Book

The focus of this anthology is on the three Muslim empires, but Europe and China, the Americas and Africa, whisper in the shadows. Trade and commerce were as essential as religion and culture in defining political ideology. Equally potent changes were taking place in social, theological, and cultural practices, and in literature and the arts. The essays gathered here are linked by a deeply historical approach to understanding the early modern period, yet each author approaches questions of time, tradition, and identity very differently. Whether through the lens of affect or visuality, or through considering poetic texts or portraiture, the authors contribute unique ways of studying issues of intentionality and subjectivity in Islamic art and culture.

Among the most visible signs of authorship are the traces of one's hand, one's name, and one's portrait. The first three essays address these issues in detail, highlighting the social and political implications of artistic authority. In Chapter 1, Sussan Babaie considers the ways in which architects in the early modern period – their titles fluid and mutable – negotiated identity within their courtly milieu and how that identity could be brought to bear on their social and economic status. In the case of Mirza Shah Husayn, for example, that identity was made manifest through his architectural "signatures," something that modern-day readers may associate with a brand or design. Yet for men such as Husayn, the title "architect" was itself the marker of social and artistic hierarchy. Their status was made manifest on the façades of the buildings they designed and in the chronicles documenting their achievements.

Marianna Shreve Simpson enumerates how some markers of identity were distilled into the medium as seen in the ways in which painters and calligraphers embedded their names within the image or text itself. Annotations and signatures were sometimes concealed and barely legible, hidden in the corners of a page, the folds of a dress, or written on the cornice of architectural composition; sometimes they were confidently declarative, emblazoned as foundation inscriptions, adding a forceful coda to the name of the patron and builder. A name, the primary indicator of personhood, began to appear thus in spaces of sociability and encounter. It was simultaneously personal and public, the signature reflecting a moment in a person's life and his need for achieving posterity. Using the manuscript was also conceptualized as dialogic, the painter/calligrapher hiding clues for the viewer/reader to find. The revelation enhanced the experience of encountering the manuscript, the moment of discovery as ephemeral and delightful

as a knowing wink exchanged between friends or co-conspirators.

The issue of artistic identity and agency is brought to the fore in the third chapter, in which Emine Fetvacı focusses on author portraits in Ottoman manuscripts. As in the case of Mughal India a little later, writers and illustrators were identified on the opening pages of the historical and poetic anthologies they composed, thus asserting their role in the production process. That is to say, they were no longer simply executors of a patron's will, but active participants in the codex's making. The representation of the authors and artists, illuminators and illustrators, were idealized and nonspecific in terms of physiognomy; instead they were identified by the "tools" of their respective trades, pens and brushes, for example. The constructedness of identity was a marker of this period, in which selfhood was encoded through typologies of merit which merged the personal with the official.

Owners of books and albums sometimes annotated them, leaving marginal notes or drawings that provided commentary on the text/image. In her chapter on effacement and mutation of images, Christiane Gruber raises important questions about the ways in which people interacted with images after they were made. The affective use and misuse of images must be understood as complementary and related phenomena. Iconophilia as well as iconophobia, she argues, both provided impetuses for the intentional and unintentional defacement of paintings. Images were manipulated, sometimes centuries after their making, through complex acts of devotion as well as destruction. For example, whereas some might kiss an image until it was damaged, others might purposefully obliterate or mutilate it.

Sylvia Houghteling's study of Safavid figural textiles in Chapter 5 brings to the fore issues of subjective experience within the framework of Islamic material culture. In addition to discussing the production and dissemination of silk, the author studies the trade networks and cultures of exchange within which textiles circulated in the early modern period. She studies the objects themselves, but also their representations in visual and textual sources of the time, thereby revealing what she calls a "period sensorium." The connoisseurship and collecting of textiles was

practiced in the Mughal court where many of the Safavid silks were bought by imperial men and women, who evaluated the materials for their aesthetic impact and the craftsmanship used to achieve it. The poetry and paintings studied by Houghteling add another dimension to understanding the use and appreciation of textiles, which were called upon to bring comfort and pleasure, all the while bestowing prestige upon their owners.

The early modern period is exemplified not only by the global exchange of commodities, but also the mobility of people. Chapter 6 returns to the subject of architecture through a consideration of the Mughal city, Delhi, as it was transformed over the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Chanchal Dadlani argues that the cityscape, predicated on the influx of migrants as well as foreign travelers, changed the way people encountered urban spaces. Interestingly, places that were once at the center of urban life, such as the imperial fort and palace, were replaced by Sufi shrines and gardens. Needless to say, these were sites with greater accessibility for a wider swath of society, crossing gender, socio-economic, and religious boundaries. The multiple sites also allowed for heterodox urban experiences, as seen in the famed Muraqqa`-yi Dilhi, a poetic text that described and extolled the grand city and its inhabitants. The texts and spaces together point to a new urban awareness at this time, one which led in turn to new ways of locating oneself, metaphorically and physically, within the city.

The spectacular merged with the sensuous, as seen in the following chapter, in which Sunil Sharma discusses the experience of urban subjectivity, understood through the lens of late Mughal poetry. His focus is on the eighteenth-century figure, Fa'iz Dihlavi, whose Urdu poetry is novel in the manner in which it merges traditional Persianate tropes with Indic forms. The poet describes the multitudes promenading in the city, and the different religions and social classes; yet his focus is on the women he encounters and the desires they evoke in him. Love is here uncoupled from the metaphysical adoration of God, to focus on more sensual, earthly desires. Women's bodies are displayed and described, ethnography is overlaid with erotica, to reveal a voice filled with longing, yet in control of his subject — the poem. Individual experience, subjective and

independent, takes precedence over imperial representation, a marker of the changing social and ideological norms of the times.

Chapter 8 is an exploration of the methods employed by historians, whether of religion or art history, when they attempt to tackle the issue of emotion and subjectivity. Jamal Elias suggests that emotion be viewed not as a universal, but as a cultural artifact, constructed through the specificities of time and place. Utilizing representations of Mevlevi Sufis in textual sources as well their visual counterparts, Elias provides case studies that demonstrate the complexity in trying to work productively through historical material. He suggests that gestures and postures provide semiotic clues to decoding the meaning rooted in certain representations. The final essay is a useful coda to the anthology, as it provides a broadened context, temporal and theoretical, for considering issues of emotion and affect in the early modern period.

The papers in this volume take as a starting point the mandate to move beyond traditional formalist or social art historical methods to study the early modern Muslim empires of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals. Thus, they raise questions of authorship and reception; affect and sentiment; mobility and encounter; transregional connections and the circulation of objects and ideas. Historically rooted, these studies have nonetheless pushed the boundaries of traditional Islamic art history. Focusing still on questions of materiality and production, they ask us to think of what those mean in a world transformed through the solidifying of imperial boundaries, technological innovation, and travel. They give us insights into the ambitions of architects, artists, and poets, who make use of their skills to represent themselves and their world through the mediums of art, literature and architecture. <>

The Arts of Ornamental Geometry: A Persian Compendium on Similar and Complementary Interlocking Figures [Fī tadākhul al-ashkāl al-mutashābiha aw al-mutawāfiqa (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Persan 169, fols. 180r–199r)] A Volume Commemorating Alpay Özdural **edited by Gülru Necipoğlu With Contributions by Jan P. Hogendijk, Elaheh Kheirandish, Gülru Necipoğlu, Alpay Özdural, and Wheeler M. Thackston [Studies and Sources in Islamic Art and Architecture; Supplements to Muqarnas, Brill, 9789004301962]**

This collective study focuses on a unique undated anonymous primary source on ornamental geometry featuring geometrical constructions and textual instructions in Persian. The chapters interpreting this fascinating medieval source are followed by a facsimile, transcription, English translation, and supplementary drawings.

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Thackston, with contributions by the other authors; accompanied by Wheeler M. Thackston's transcription of the Persian text and Alpay Özdural's drawings, with commentaries by Gülru Necipoğlu (based on "Analyses," the second chapter in Alpay Özdural's unpublished book)
FACSIMILE
A reduced-scale reproduction of Fī tadākhul al-ashkāl al-mutashābiha aw al-mutawāfiqa (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Ms. Persan 169, fols. 180r–199r)

The subject of this study is a Persian work on ornamental geometry. Discovered in the 1970s, the only extant manuscript copy known so far comprises folios 180r– 199r of Ms. Persan 169, a volume of collected works in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris. This volume, referred to henceforth as the Paris Codex, consists of twenty-five treatises on the mathematical sciences, covering a variety of topics ranging from the astrolabe to finger counting and a period from the late tenth to the mid-fifteenth century. Altogether they give the impression of having been collected and bound for somebody who was interested in the practical applications of mathematics in various fields.

The document to be considered here is listed as the twenty-fourth treatise in the Paris Codex. This work (i.e., the Anonymous Compendium) was mentioned only briefly in the catalogues of Edgar Blochet and Francis Richard, who described it as containing "solutions for different geometric problems accompanied by figures." After its discovery by historians of Islamic art and architecture, however, its significance for both fields began to be appreciated. It is a unique document in which both verbal and pictorial descriptions of geometric constructions for scores of ornamental patterns are provided. It thus combines the information that can be supplied by mathematical sources and gathered from architectural drawings preserved in the form of scrolls. This dual character sheds new light on the creative process of the architectural arts.

The main hypothesis underlying this study is that mathematicians played an active role in Islamic art and architecture. This unique document provides us with ample evidence in support of this argument. Even at first glance, it appears to embody the informal link between theory and praxis in the Islamic world. To demonstrate the collaboration of mathematicians and artisans that it represents, in Chapter 2, titled "Analyses," each construction will be analyzed with respect to the history of mathematics on the one hand, and the history of art and architecture on the other. Then, in Chapter 3, "Synthesis," the treatise as a whole will be assessed in terms of topics around which the constructions are loosely classified, in order to illustrate its role as the documentation of a series of meetings between theoreticians and practitioners of geometry.

## GÜLRU NECIPOĞLU: IN MEMORY OF ALPAY ÖZDURAL AND HIS UNREALIZED BOOK PROJECT

This volume came into being in response to the unfortunate circumstances surrounding the submission, in 2003, of a book manuscript for the Supplements to Muqar nas series by Alpay Özdural, who died suddenly just a few weeks later. During the last decade of his life, Professor Özdural published a series of articles that formed the foundation stones of his monumental book manuscript, titled "Interlocks of Similar or Complementary Figures: Collaboration of Mathematicians and Artisans in the Islamic World," a project he had discussed over the years with Margaret Ševčenko, the managing editor for Muqarnas at that time. His detailed study focuses on a celebrated anonymous Persian primary source in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, namely, fols. 180r–199r of Ms. Persan 169. This work, hereafter referred to as the Anonymous Compendium, first caught the attention of two historians of Islamic art and architecture in the early 1970s. The pioneering studies of Mitkhat Sagadatdinovich Bulatov and Wasma'a Chorbachi on this unique document inspired a series of publications that only briefly analyzed its contents. A Russian translation was published in 1978 (reprinted in 1988), and a modern Persian edition appeared in Iran in 1990– 91, but an English translation accompanied by a facsimile and transcription of the original medieval Persian text had not been attempted. Özdural's endeavor in this direction was therefore especially valuable.

However, efforts to publish his book manuscript posthumously were impeded because revisions

suggested by anonymous reviewers specializing in the history of mathematics could not be realized due to the author's untimely death. Moreover, Özdural's references and citations were in many cases either incomplete or improperly cited, which proved to be an insurmountable obstacle. As editor of Studies and Sources in Islamic Art and Architecture: Supplements to Muqarnas, I searched in vain for a historian of mathematical sciences who might be willing to edit and revise the manuscript, even as a co-author. The present collaborative volume is therefore a compromise. While bringing to light selected sections from Özdural's manuscript, it is complemented by three related chapters dedicated to his memory by an interdisciplinary and international research team comprising two distinguished historians of science and myself. Each of these chapters contains individual interpretations of the Persian Anonymous Compendium that constitutes the focal point of our collective study. I would like to thank Jan P. Hogendijk and Elaheh Kheirandish for agreeing to contribute not only essays but also invaluable suggestions on other aspects of this timely publication. The English translation of the primary source published in the present volume is based on the one originally prepared by Özdural, who collaborated with the translator Zaka Siddiqi in interpreting the Persian text, but includes modifications made by the authors of the three chapters.7 I am particularly grateful to Wheeler M. Thackston, who graciously edited and revised the final English translation, checking it against the original Persian text. Thackston also prepared the transcribed edition of the Persian text, which Özdural did not include in his book manuscript. We would also like to express our gratitude to the staff of the Reproductions Department at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, for granting us permission to publish the facsimile of Ms. Persan 169, folios 180r–199r, and to Ms. Sara Yontan, Conservator of the Turkish Collections of the Bibliothèque nationale de France, for the assistance and advice she so kindly provided over the years it took to complete this volume.

## CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE PRESENT VOLUME

The undated Anonymous Compendium is illustrated with geometrical constructions that are accompanied by texts in Persian explaining how to draw those com-plex figures. The heading in red ink on the first page has reasonably been assumed to be its title and this is in¬deed the way the work has traditionally been referred to in the secondary literature. Consisting of two vertical lines in Arabic written from bottom to top in the right margin, the heading reads: Fī tadākhul al-ashkāl al-mutashābiha aw al-mutawāfiqa (see the reduced-scale facsimile, fol. 180r [1]). Özdural proposed translating this as "On Interlocks of Similar or Complementary Figures," a modified version of which we have adopted here: "On Similar and Complementary Interlocking Figures." Although in describing this primary source the late author observed that "we cannot even call it a treatise since it lacks a predetermined structure, an argument, or at least a logical sequence," he nonetheless referred to it in his manuscript as the "anonymous treatise." Precisely because of its character as a loosely grouped collection of geometrical constructions, we have chosen to refer to it in this publication as the "Anonymous Compendium."

Each of the chapters written for the present volume by members of the aforementioned research team— Elaheh Kheirandish, Jan P. Hogendijk, and myself— sheds light on certain aspects of the Anonymous Compendium, without aiming to analyze it comprehensively. These essays serve as a segue to selected parts of Özdural's book manuscript. My own chapter, titled "Ornamental Geometries: A Persian Compendium at the Intersection of the Visual Arts and Mathematical Sciences," expands upon preliminary observations made on this primary source in my 1995 book The Topkapı Scroll: Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture. Taking into consideration questions debated in subsequent studies, I reassess the historical contexts of the Anonymous Compendium and examine its contents in light of new information. After analyzing its relationship to relevant works on surveying and practical geometry that are bound together with it in the same codex, this chapter turns to its wider implications for convergences between the applied mathematical sciences and artisanal-architectural practice in the realm of geometric ornament. It argues that intersections and mediations between the practice-oriented constructive geometry of practitioners and the

theoretical geometry of geometer-astronomers cannot simply be reduced to a one-way transmission of knowledge.

The next chapter, by Elaheh Kheirandish, titled "An Early Tradition in Practical Geometry: The Telling Lines of Unique Arabic and Persian Sources," evaluates the early Islamic tradition of practical geometry by focusing on old and new primary sources, with a particular emphasis on the legacy of the renowned Iranian mathematician-astronomer Abu'l-Wafa ' al-Buzjani (ca. 940–98). She considers the "contexts" and previously overlooked "revelations" of these sources, critically assessing the assumptions made in modern interpretations of the relationship between mathematicians, artisans, and surveyors. Kheirandish argues for the close relationship of practical geometry and surveying, while also re-examining issues of dating and provenance on the basis of recently discovered manuscripts and new arguments.

The final chapter, by Jan P. Hogendijk, focuses on the mathematical aspects of the Anonymous Compendium. Titled "A Mathematical Classification of the Contents of an Anonymous Persian Compendium on Decorative Patterns," his essay classifies the material compiled in this unparalleled document, so as to familiarize the readership of the present volume with its problems. Hogendijk analyzes only selected examples of geometrical constructions from each category of his classification, cross-referencing earlier studies on these particular exemplars and leaving the mathematical analysis of the rest to future research projects. His focused study aims to reach an understanding of the relationship between the unusual contents of the Anonymous Compendium and those of standard scholarly mathematical treatises in the medieval Islamic tradition.

## A PRÉCIS OF ALPAY ÖZDURAL'S UNPUBLISHED BOOK MANUSCRIPT

Özdural's monographic study comprises three chapters: the first, titled "Preliminaries" (pages 1–31), provides a general introduction; the second, "Analyses" (pages 32–256), consists of a lengthy mathematical analysis of all the geometrical constructions contained in the Anonymous Compendium; and "Synthesis," the third chapter (pages 257–73), summarizes the author's main

arguments concerning what he calls the collaboration between mathematicians and artisans in the medieval Islamic world. Özdural's three chapters are accompanied by his acknowledgements and bibliography, as well as an extensive appendix focusing directly on the Anonymous Compendium itself. In the present volume, the reader will find the introductory chapter, "Preliminaries," which offers a succinct overview of earlier publications on the subject and Özdural's own arguments, along with his bibliography and the contents of his entire appendix, comprising his drawings, the Persian facsimile, and the English translation made by the translator zaka Siddiqi under Özdural's supervision (which was edited and revised by Wheeler M. Thackston). We have omitted the interdependent chapters titled "Analyses" and "Synthesis," since the readers' reports recommended revisions that could not be implemented without the author's personal intervention. However, for those who wish to obtain a copy of the full, unedited original book manuscript of Özdural, where he discusses the mathematical properties of all geometrical constructions in the Anonymous Compendium as well as the step-by-step method for drawing each one, we have made his work available online at https://doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.5255416.

In the section of the present volume titled "Translation, Transcription, and Drawings," the English translation and Persian transcription of the Anonymous Compendium have been combined with Özdural's redrawings of the sixty-one figures in this primary source, so that readers would not have to turn back and forth to compare the interrelated texts and images. In some instances, Özdural extrapolated larger ornamental panels based on the redrawings; he also occasionally included drawings of comparative materials. These supplementary drawings follow each of the sixty-one redrawn figures and the associated translated and transcribed texts. This means that the English translation cannot be read as a continuous document, unless one skips the intervening drawings. Our decision to juxtapose the translation and transcription with the drawings may be justified by the fragmented character of the Anonymous Compendium itself, where the explanatory texts that accompany individual geometrical constructions lack a linear narrative.

Since Özdural's drawings lacked captions and were seamlessly integrated into the chapter titled "Analyses," in this volume they have been furnished with descriptive labels and brief commentaries, summarized from his much longer unpublished work. His redrawings of the geometrical constructions are particularly valuable because they incorporate the uninked incised lines that generated the constructions drawn in black and/or red ink on folios 180r–199r of Ms. Persan 169. The incised lines, which provide precious information on the construction process, are invisible in the photographed facsimile since they were marked on the paper surface with the sharp points of a divider-compass or stylus. Özdural scrupulously recorded those uninked incised marks as dotted lines in his redrawings. The present volume concludes with a reduced-scale facsimile reproduction of the Anonymous Compendium, presented in its original format, in which the pages are turned from left to right. The reader will thus find the first page of the facsimile [folio 180r] on page 374.

Özdural began to examine the Anonymous Compendium in some earlier articles, in which he discussed selected geometrical constructions by providing his own redrawings and developing them into larger ornamental patterns, supplemented with comparative visual materials and translations of the Persian texts. This is precisely the approach he followed in the "Analyses" chapter of his book manuscript for all sixty-one geometrical drawings of the Anonymous Compendium. Indeed, he announced the plans for his future book project in his 1996 Muqarnas article, titled "On Interlocking Similar or Corresponding Figures and Ornamental Patterns of Cubic Equations":

> In a forthcoming publication I plan to translate the complete document and study its contents using information gathered from other works on mathematics, particularly Geometric Constructions [by Abu'l-Wafa ' al-Buzjani] and other drawn material on ornamental geometry, particularly design scrolls, for comparative purposes. This article is a preliminary assessment of the mathematical content of Interlocking Figures, highlighting certain points of interest, particularly the use of cubic equations in the ornamen¬tal arts.

In his book manuscript, Özdural dated this primary source (now referred to as Interlocks of Similar or Complementary Figures, abbreviated as Interlocks of Figures) to circa 1300 and hypothetically ascribed it to Ilkhanid Iran, probably Tabriz, on the basis of circumstantial evidence to which I shall return. The unpublished sections of his book manuscript are somewhat speculative when he makes debatable inferences about the "collaboration between mathematicians and artisans" in a series of meetings that, in his view, must have led to the compilation of this document. The "Synthesis" chapter encapsulates his principal thesis concerning the Anonymous Compendium, which lacks the kind of systematic ordering more typical of a formal treatise:

> The main argument of the present study is that this work is in fact the documentation of a series of meetings between mathematicians and artisans and thus evidences the intimate link between theory and praxis in the architectural arts. At the beginning of the study this hypothesis is assumed to be true, and the constructions are analyzed accordingly. Now I reverse the order and demonstrate the truth of the hypothesis while assessing the Interlocks of Figures.

All 61 constructions are not of the same character. More to the point, they can be grouped under two distinguishable categories. Some of them concern basic principles or skills of geometry, whereas others are related directly to ornamental patterns and the tools used for executing them. The first group of constructions gives the impression of being offered by mathematicians who were giving instructions on general issues in relation to specific topics. The topics, however, seem to be selected without any plan or organization. This haphazardness suggests that those constructions were merely ad-hoc answers to the varied needs of a group of persons in a gathering. We may describe such gatherings as "teaching sessions." We also observe that constructions regarding the ornamental patterns are grouped somewhat loosely around certain topics, which seem to have been chosen again not according to a preconceived plan but depending on the composition of the gatherings and the arbitrary inclinations of the participating persons. These sorts of gatherings, at which the ornamental patterns

and pertinent tools were discussed, can be classified then as "working sessions."

In other words, Özdural differentiates "teaching sessions," whose main objective was to prove a theorem or show a technique, from "working sessions," which were primarily dedicated to creating geometrical constructions intended for ornamental patterns. He notices a shift from the "teaching mode to the working mode" on fol. 185r, but admits the absence of a clear-cut organizing principle in this work, which sometimes combines the two modes. His brief "Synthesis" ends with a conclusion reiterating the character of this primary source as an anonymous work without a single author:

> All the specific observations and interpretations discussed above suggest that Interlocks of Figures was the fruit of the collaboration of mathematicians and artisans at a series of meetings. It was apparently the task of a professional scribe to record the discussions that took place during those informal meetings. He was not usually involved in these discussions. The composition of those gatherings might have changed from session to session. Sometimes the participants were brilliant mathematicians and accomplished artisans; and in some cases, they were combined ideally in the same person. These meetings served as the venue for artisans to seek advice from mathematicians concerning fresh ornamental patterns or when they encountered a problem related to the application of geometry. Mathematicians, on the other hand, regarded the ornamental arts as a rewarding and enjoyable field in which to apply their expertise.

This conclusion is largely based on hypotheses presented in Özdural's "Preliminaries" (published as chapter 4 in the present volume), which further develops assertions he makes in his articles. It is necessary to state at the outset that, in actuality, the non-uniform character of the Anonymous Compendium makes it difficult to determine with certainty the specific purpose(s) and author(s) of each geometrical construction, despite Özdural's understandable effort to do so in his "Analyses," where he attempts to construct a narrative sequence of "sessions." It is not even certain that this

work can be interpreted as a record of meetings showing the "collaboration" between mathematicians and artisans, which were written down in successive sessions by a scribe, an arguable conclusion that the chapters of this volume will reconsider from different angles.

Less speculative are Özdural's mathematical analyses of each geometrical construction compiled in the Anonymous Compendium, which he groups under the following categories, although other classifications are also possible:

- "Transforming polygons and star polygons by the cutand-paste method"
- "Constructing the regular pentagon"
- "Finding the center of a circle"
- "Defining polygons by way of angular modules"
- "Twin isosceles quadrangles facing opposite directions"
- "Four rotating isosceles quadrangles in a square"
- "Integration of different types of star polygons"
- "Miscellaneous patterns"
- "Muqarnas plans"

In "Preliminaries," Özdural distinguishes the Anonymous Compendium from the work immediately preceding it in the Paris Codex (Ms. Persan 169), namely, a Persian translation of Abu'l-Wafa ' al-Buzjani's well-organized and systematic treatise on the practical applications of geometry, titled tarjuma-i kitāb-i A`māl-i handasiyya (Translation of the Book on Geometrical Constructions [henceforth the Geometrical Constructions]). Proposing that Abu'l-Wafa"s treatise was familiar to those responsible for the geometrical constructions compiled about three centuries later in the Anonymous Compendium, Özdural believed that it may have inspired Ilkhanid mathematicians and skilled artisans to work together in designing ornamental patterns: "This collaboration probably led to the creation of our document."19 He argues that the Anonymous Compendium, seemingly recorded by an anonymous professional scribe in the Ilkhanid period, was recopied in mid-fifteenth-century Timurid Iran. This implies that he differentiates the

time of its composition, at the turn of the fourteenth century (i.e., ca. 1300), from its subsequent transcription and compilation in the Paris Codex (Ms. Persan 169).

Özdural agreed with Edgar Blochet's suggestion that the entire codex may have been copied in the hand of Abu Ishaq ibn `Abdallah Kubanani yazdi (fl. 1442–43 to post-1483), who added a postface to the Persian translation of Abu'l-Wafa "s practical geometry treatise included in the same codex. He accepts the identification in previous publications of Kuba nani yazdi with the Timurid-era mathematician-astronomer known as Shaykhzada Hadim Burhani, who was active in 1442–43 at Sari, and in 1459 at Kirman and Hormuz. However, Özdural makes a new proposal: that this individual was one of three contemporaneous Timurid scholars involved in that particular Persian translation of Abu'l-Wafa "s Geometrical Constructions. The other two figures were the master geometer (muhandis) Ustad Shams al-Din Abu Bakr Shah ibn Hajji Taj-al-Din and his late father, the great master (ustād) and scholar Shaykh Najm al-Din Mahmud Shah. It was the son who commissioned Kubanani yazdi to complete his father's translation, parts of which had been lost.

In his "Acknowledgements," Özdural thanked Eva Maria Subtelny, "who was of great help in translating" this difficult postface "concerning the Persian translation of Abu'l-Wafa "s work." Subtelny's judicious rereading of this complicated passage, which had been misinterpreted in previous studies, prompted Özdural to propose a Timurid date for the completed Persian text of Abu'l-Wafa "s practical geometry treatise: "We can infer...that he [Abu Ishaq Kubanani yazdi], Shams al-Din Abu Bakr, and Najm al-Din Mahmud (the three mathematicians involved with that particular Persian translation of [Abu'l-Wafa "s] Geometrical Constructions) lived in the mid-fifteenth century." Misinterpreting the same passage, Bulatov dated both the translation of Abu'l-Wafa "s treatise, and the Anonymous Compendium, long assumed to be an appendix to the transla¬tion, to the eleventh century. Another questionable assumption, repeated in several publications including Blochet's catalogue entry, has been the presumed rela¬tionship of Kubanani yazdi to the late Najm al-Din Mahmud, thought by many to be his sibling rather than his dear colleague, due to

the way the author of the postface deferentially referred to him as "dearest brother (barādar)." However, if he and Najm al-Din Mahmud were indeed siblings, then it seems rather odd that the postface does not refer to the presumed brother and nephew of Kubanani yazdi in more intimate terms.

Özdural proposed that this Timurid-era mathematician-astronomer not only completed the lost sections of the Persian translation of Abu'l-Wafa ʾ's treatise but also copied that work and the Anonymous Compendium that followed it. As mentioned above, he furthermore conjectures that Kubanani yazdi probably copied all the works assembled in the Paris Codex (as formerly proposed by Blochet), which is written in a single hand. While this conjecture may not be unreasonable, it has yet to be verified by comparing the handwriting of the Paris Codex with other known manuscripts attributed to Kubanani yazdi. Özdural admits that although the former cataloguers of the codex, Edgar Blochet and Francis Richard, agreed on attributing the nasta`līq script of its treatises to the same hand, they differed in dating the volume to the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively. Özdural prefers Priscilla Soucek's expert re-dating of the calligraphy of the Paris Codex, on stylistic grounds, to the mid-fifteenth century.

Whether or not the codex was recopied again later in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, which seems rather unlikely, I find it worth pointing out that datable items assembled in it do not go beyond the fifteenth century. The plausibly Timurid codex came to the Bibliothèque nationale de France from the collection of the French traveler Jean de Thévenot (d. 1667), who acquired it in Istanbul. The ex libris on fol. 2r bears the name of its otherwise unknown former Ottoman owner, "Sinān Çāvūṣ, sāhib al-fakr." As noted in Turkish on folio 1r, the volume contains 201 folios (`aded-i varāk iki yüz bir tamām). A table of contents (fihrist) on folio 1v, which lists only epistles at the beginning of the codex, is presumed to have been written in his hand.

Özdural acknowledged the possibility that a few textless geometrical constructions appearing at the end of the Anonymous Compendium might have been added in the Timurid period, as previously

suggested by Lisa Golombek and Donald Wilber, who nevertheless accepted Bulatov's eleventh-century dating for this work. He believed that the Anonymous Compendium actually ends on fol. 196v, at the bottom of which are written the twenty-eight letters of the Arabic alphabet with their accompanying numerical values (the abjad system of numbering, commonly used for labeling points on geometrical constructions). Özdural suggested that the following constructions on fol. 197r were probably added in the mid-fifteenth century by Kubanani yazdi and that he may also have been their author. Özdural attributed the textless final construction on fol. 199r, which differs in drafting technique and, unlike the others, covers a whole page, to a later phase: according to him, it possibly came into the possession of Kubanani yazdi, who inserted it at the time the volume was being bound.

Finally, a key contribution made in Özdural's book manuscript is the hypothetical identification that he proposes for Abu Bakr al-Khalil al-Tajir, whose name appears twice in the Anonymous Compendium (on fols. 187r and 189r), as well as in two other treatises of the Paris Codex, as I had noted in my 1995 book. He suggests that this otherwise unidentified individual may have been the father of `Ali ibn al-Khalil al-Tajir, who was the copyist of an Arabic manuscript on surveying dated 728 (1327–28), now kept at the Astan-i Quds-i Razavi Library in Mashhad. If so, Özdural infers, Abu Bakr al-Khalil al-Tajir probably flourished sometime "in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries," thereby suggesting a date circa 1300 for the Anonymous Compendium. This tempting yet conjectural identification, too, requires reexamination. It is assessed in the chapters of the present volume, along with Özdural's proposed redating and reattribution of this primary source and his deliberations concerning the "collaboration" between mathematicians and artisans.

In conclusion, all three chapters of this volume, much like the subsequent selections from Özdural's unpublished book manuscript, scrutinize the modalities of the engagement of medieval mathematicians and artisans with practical geometry, in light of the Anonymous Compendium. After more than a decade of deferment in the realization of this long-anticipated interdisciplinary publication project, it is a pleasure to bring the present volume to completion. I hope that this study may inspire further research on the Anonymous Compendium and on the unresolved implications concerning the intersection, or lack thereof, between mathematical knowledge and artisanal expertise. Our study is also timely because the exponentially growing interest in geometric patterning in contemporary architectural practice has recently led many architects and designers to study Islamic forms of surface decoration as an inspiration for tessellation and parametrically derived forms. Far from being intended as an exhaustive study of this fascinating document at the interface between diverse fields, our collaborative volume aims to make it more accessible, thereby highlighting its multifaceted relevance to historians of art and science, as well as to contemporary mathematicians, physicists, artists, and architects. Gülru Necipoğlu, Editor <>

## [Formation of a Religious Landscape: Shi`i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran](#) by Maryam Moazzen [Islamic History and Civilization, Brill, 9789004355293]

In [Formation of a Religious Landscape: Shi'i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran](#), Maryam Moazzen offers the first systematic examination of Shi'i educational institution and practices by exploring the ways in which religious knowledge was produced, authenticated, and transmitted in the second half of Safavid rule (1588-1722). By analyzing the deeds of endowment of the Madrasa-yi Suln and other mosque-madrasas built by the Safavid elite, this study sheds light on the organizing mechanisms and structures utilized by such educational foundations. Based on the large number of ijazs and other primary sources including waqfiyyas, biographical dictionaries and autobiographies, this study also reconstructs the Safavid madrasas' curriculum and describes the pedagogical methods used to transmit religious knowledge as well as issues that faced Shi'i higher learning in early modern times.

Excerpt: The Safavid dynasty's period of rule (1501–1722) is one of the most important epochs in Iran's religio-political history as well as in the history of Shi`i higher learning. It was during the Safavid period that Twelver Shi`ism gradually transitioned from being a minority sect to constituting Iran's official religion. This

transformation was facilitated by the evolution of Shi`i educational and scholarly undertakings. Not only did Twelver Shi`i religious scholars have the opportunity to spread their knowledge on a wider public scale, but during Safavid rule Shi`i literature also grew remarkably. Thousands of treatises were written both in Arabic and in Persian on legal, philosophical, and theological subjects, and many compendia on various scholarly subjects were produced. This literary corpus helped establish and sustain systems of religious authority that persist in Iran to this day.

The Safavid dynastic era has attracted great interest among scholars, especially in the past four decades during which a large number of studies have been published. This extensive body of literature examines Safavid society, history, culture, and the socio-political roles played by Safavid `ulamā' (religious scholars). Scholars interested in Shi`i intellectual history in general and Safavid intellectual history in particular tend to concentrate on the socio-political functions of religious scholars and their doctrinal positions. This may be due to the role that the Shi`i `ulamā' played and continue to play in socio-political events such as the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran that had an enormous impact on the politics of neighboring countries such as Lebanon, Bahrain and Iraq.

Although we have a good understanding of the socio-political and religious functions of the Safavid `ulamā', we lack a coherent picture of what they taught and how they contributed to the advancement of Shi`i scholarship.

Furthermore, little attention has been paid to the impact of the advent of the Safavids on Shi`i higher learning. At best, our current state of knowledge provides a general description of Safavid educational undertakings, but this is of little use when it comes to understanding the richness and complexity of everyday life in Safavid madrasas. This study seeks to fill these lacunae by exploring the ways in which religious knowledge was produced, authenticated, and transmitted in the second half of Safavid rule – from the reign of Shāh `Abbās (1588–1629) to the end of Shāh Sultān Husayn's era (1694–1722). It also examines the manner in which Safavid madrasas facilitated intellectual discourse while serving as sites in which socio-religious groups, and political elites' religious

policies came together, allowing the madrasa to function as a powerful locus of Shi`i culture.

## Shi'i Higher Learning in Safavid Iran

In my historical and textual analyses of the various aspects of Shi`i higher learning, including the religious and political relations and structures in Safavid Isfahan's madrasas, as well as in my analyses of Safavid pedagogical practices, I draw on a broad range of primary sources including biographical dictionaries, autobiographies, ijāzas, deeds of endowment (waqfiyyas), chronicles and historical resources, European travelers' accounts, anthologies and polemics written by Safavid `ulamā', administrative annuals and chancery literature, and works by the Safavid `ulamā'. Although biographical dictionaries often provide little information about the lives and vocations of scholars, the madrasa or madrasas where he acquired his training, and the length of their educational training, and their information is at times repetitive, contradictory, and even inaccurate, they are one of the key sources for the study of educational practices. As recent scholarship has shown, the authors of these biographical dictionaries were mainly concerned with showing the continuity of scholarship in certain branches of knowledge.

The autobiographies of some leading Safavid scholars, such as Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī, Sayyid Ni`matullāh al-Jazā'irī, and Bahā' al-Dīn Isfahānī, known as Fādil Hindī (d. 1724), are also important sources for the study of educational practices in early modern Iran. They usually refer to textbooks and different branches of knowledge the authors studied in their formative years. Ijāzas to transmit are, however, the most essential tools for studying the intellectual history and curricula of religious higher learning. Even though Ijāzas tend to be formulaic, they contain valuable information about who studied with whom and when. More importantly, they reveal the range of subjects and disciplines – both religious and rational – and particularly the various texts, which the licensee (mujāz) was permitted to transmit. Ijāzas also contain important biographical and bibliographical data about scholars and thus are essential to reconstruct entire scholarly traditions and networks.

The deeds of madrasas endowment also contain invaluable information about the curriculum and the textbooks taught. The passages on the academic and moral obligations of the teachers, students, and other personnel of such endowed pious institutions are a welcome antidote to the cursory reports on academic life in Safavid historical and biographical literature.

Although the authors of Safavid historical chronicles are mainly concerned with reporting the lives and times of the Safavid shahs, military commanders, wars, natural disasters, epidemics, and other notable affairs, they also contain materials pertaining to the religious concerns and policies of the Safavid shahs and particularly their relationship with and patronage of the `ulamā'. European travelers' accounts provide useful information about the Safavid socio-political, economic, and religious institutions, but the authors' biases need to be examined more closely. Although administrative manuals are generally concerned with the administrative organization of the state, they do supply information about official posts, some of which were held by religious scholars, their job descriptions as well as and the fees they received.

In addition to above-mentioned primary sources, I have consulted the many important works on Shi`i intellectual history and the period of the Safavid rule published during the last four decades. For the study of Shi`ism and its intellectual history, I have profited in particular from the excellent studies by Wilferd Madelung, Heinz Halm, Etan Kohlberg, Hossein Modarressi, and Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, while for the role of the Safavid scholars and the socio-political careers of the prominent and influential religious scholars of `Āmilī background, the works of Saïd Amir Arjomand, Devin J. Stewart, Rula Jurdi Abisaab, and Andrew J. Newman constitute the foundation for my own research. In the area of Safavid cultural history, I have consulted the works of Jean Calmard and Kathryn Babayan. Although Babayan does not discuss the role of the madrasa as a very important institution for reconstructing Shi`i cultural memory, her narrative about the "cultural landscape of early modern Iran," as well as the way she shifts the emphasis from so-called orthodox narratives to heterodox experiences in understanding Safavid society, provide an important fresh perspective. I have also profited from the works of Andrew

Newman, Todd Lawson, and Robert Gleave, who offer detailed discussions about Safavid intellectual debates in general and on the Akhbārī (traditionalist) and Usūlī (rationalist) schools of thought in particular. For economic history and the institution of waqf, I relied on the studies of Ann K.S. Lambton, Robert D. McChesney, and Rudi Matthee, while for Safavid art, architecture, and urban culture I have made use of the works of M. Haneda, Robert Hillenbrand, and Stephen P. Blake, among others.

As discussed earlier, despite the rich secondary literature on Safavid era, there is a dearth of scholarship on Shi`i higher learning and Safavid madrasas, where Shi`i doctrinal training was developed. Each chapter of this study explores a particular aspect of the Safavid madrasas, but collectively it illustrates the academic life of Safavid Iran. Although this study focuses primarily on educational practices, it also includes an examination of the socio-political motivations of Safavid elite in establishing madrasas and of their roles in shaping intellectual discourse. More precisely, I examine the Safavid shahs' religious policies and their patronage of Shi`i higher learning and those religious scholars who were put in charge of developing a Shi`i legal system and cultural norms.

Because wāqifs (donors), who were mainly members of the political elite and military and affluent Safavid subjects, to a great extent defined and shaped the direction of intellectual discourse and designed the orientation of the madrasa curriculum, it makes sense to discuss their attitudes towards pedagogy before delving into the curriculum and the methods of instruction. Therefore, after outlining the historical foundations of the rise of Shi`ism to the state religion, the first two chapters consider how madrasas were used as an effective agency to consolidate Shi`ism in Iran by examining the tradition of madrasa building by Safavid shahs and powerful and wealthy individuals, particularly Shāh Sultān Husayn. The content of the next four chapters is based on the information and analysis presented in the first two.

In the first chapter "Mosque and Madrasas of Safavid Isfahan," I survey and interpret the outward manifestations of imperial Twelver Shi`ism by studying madrasas and mosques of Safavid

Isfahan. The very fact of their constructions and extensive pious endowments — of which I propose an interpretation — allow us to understand one of the crucial agencies used to facilitate the process of Iranian conversion to Shi`i Islam, and have been also significant to the dissemination of religious knowledge, the understanding of Shi`i values, and the promotion of personal piety. Additionally, from the inception of Twelver Shi`ism as the state religion, religious sites and rituals served as the mnemonics that not only had a profound impact on many areas of life at every level of Safavid society, but also were significant to the dissemination of religious knowledge, the understanding of spiritual and ethical values, and the promotion of personal piety. Although I would not claim that the madrasa was the most important reason for the final triumph of Shi`ism over Sunnism in Iran, I argue that it certainly was one of the primary instruments for the firm establishment of Shi`ism in Iran and one that has been largely overlooked. Indeed, as part of their religious policies, the Safavid monarchs, particularly from the time of `Abbās the Great (r. 1587–1628), established educational institutions to advance religious higher learning and promote a Shi`i ethos among their subjects.

The second chapter "The Madrasa-yi Sultānī: Waqfs, Administrative Structure, and Academic Life," examines the tradition of a madrasa building by Shāh Sultān Husayn, the last effective Safavid ruler, and by powerful and wealthy individuals living during his reign. By analyzing the waqfiyyas of madrasas and mosques, in particular, the Madrasa-yi Sultānī, I shed light on the mechanisms and structures for organizing Shi`i educational and charitable foundations, the motivations expressed and implied in their establishment, the branches of knowledge transmitted, the kinds of religious activities supported, and the beneficiaries selected — all of which indicate the founders' attitudes toward learning, religion, and the role of the religious elite. The Madrasa-yi Sultānī articulates the relation among politics, cultural practices, and the transmission and production of religious knowledge. Its various functions also reveal the complicated relationship that existed between political elite and religious authorities. I argue that because members of the political establishment were typically founders of new madrasas, political

ends were inevitably fused with religious values in the resulting endowed foundations.

This chapter therefore aims to explain the complex motivations that Shāh Sultān Husayn and other Safavid elite experienced in founding madrasas and other religious and cultural establishments. Certain developments during the reigns of his predecessors will also be noted, because the religious policies and initiatives of previous Safavid rulers continued to have major bearing on religious trends during the last decade of the seventeenth century and early years of the eighteenth century. I also examine the administrative structure of the Madrasa-yi Sultānī and describe the duties of its personnel, as well as the living conditions of the students residing in it. To achieve this objective, I rely mainly on the Madrasa-yi Sultānī's waqfiyyas.

Chapter three, "Reshaping Shi`a Cultural Memory: Commemorative Rituals and Constructing Identity," looks at the broader cultural contexts of madrasas. Building on the arguments presented in Chapters One and Two, I discuss how this era of religious consciousness was characterized by the appropriation of new cultural styles, ideas, and forms of material culture that served as important generational markers of difference. I explain how Safavid madrasas were more than centers of disseminating religious knowledge and preserving the Shi`i intellectual heritage. Madrasas functioned as a multifaceted institution that served much wider goals. Madrasa not only acted as an agent in the social construction of collective memory but also played an important role in retrieving, reconstructing, re-articulating, and contextualizing or contemporizing the past to suit Safavid needs. I argue that during Safavid rule, Shi`i cultural memory was constantly being reconstructed and re-read in the light of current circumstances, perceptions, and cultural memory. For instance, through public memorializing, the deaths of the Imams came to serve as a symbolic and moral resource for organizing and interpreting the Shi`i community's new experiences and for mobilizing it to face new crises. These commemorative experiences, along with active memorializing, helped Safavid society to mediate between events of the past and the present and to find direction for future actions.

After discussing the concept of `ilm (knowledge) as defined by Muhammad Amīn Astarābādī (d. 1626) and Sadr al-Dīn Muhammad Shīrāzī, known as Mullā Sadrā (d. 1640), chapter four examines the curriculum of the Safavid madrasas. Based on biographical dictionaries, autobiographies and the large number of extant ijāzas issued by Safavid scholars over a period of two centuries, I argue that, in the sixteenth century, the Usūlī mujtahids (jurisconsults) dominated higher learning and played an active role in directing cultural and religious institutions. The revival of Akhbarism (traditionalism), which had a substantial influence on cultural and intellectual affairs, curtailed the mujtahids' dominance.

Chapter five sets out to describe the pedagogical methods that Safavid scholars employed to transmit religious knowledge. Despite the fact that various Shi`i intellectual schools of thought had differing description of knowledge, and regardless of what Safavid mujtahids, Akhbārī muhaddiths (traditionalists), and philosophically-minded scholars considered as sources of knowledge and the varied ways they interpreted them, they used a number of technical terms in the ijāzas (licenses to transmit) they issued to their students, which indicate the manner in which an act of learning and transmission occurred. Generally a student read to his teacher such authoritative texts as the four great hadith collections (al-kutub al-arba`a), namely: Kāfī by Abū Ya`qūb al-Kulaynī (d. 941); Man lā yandurahu al-faqīh by Muhammad b. `Alī b. Mūsā b. Bābūya or Bābawayh, known as Shaykh al-Sadūq (d. 991); and Tahdhīb and al-Istibsār, by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Ṭūsī, known as al-Shaykh al-Ṭā'ifa (d. 1067),89 or a number of legal and exegetical texts written by the most eminent jurists and Quran commentators as well as widely recognized sharhs (commentaries) written about any of these genres. The decorum pertinent to teaching and learning as well as lengths to which Safavid scholars went to cultivate networks of intellectual contacts with their counterparts are also discussed in this chapter.

In chapter six, the major problems that faced the Shi`i higher learning are discussed. More precisely, this chapter examines the critiques by such scholars as Mullā Sadrā, (d. 1640), the famed Safavid philosopher, Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī (d. 1679), a renowned traditionalist, Muhammad Bāqir Khurāsānī, known as Muhaqqiq Sabzawārī (d. 1679), the shaykh al-Islam of Isfahan and a prominent mujtahid, and Muhammad Zamān Tabrīzī (fl. early eighteenth century), an eminent Safavid pedagogue. Although these scholars had different intellectual perspectives, there is a great deal of commonality in their critiques. All of them depict the intellectual attitudes of early modern Iran and criticize what they referred to as the literalist (zāhirī) religious authorities. All of them thought that the formal religious sciences taught in madrasas, as well as theological and philosophical speculation, fell short of what education should be. Mullā Sadrā and Muhsin Fayd in particular strove to determine the approaches that they deemed would lead to what they referred to as "epistemic certitude" (yaqīn).

A historical and analytical examination of religious higher learning in the late Safavid period in its socio-political, economic, and cultural contexts leads to a number of conclusions. First, higher learning was supported mostly in response to the internal demands of Safavid society. Establishing mosques and madrasas played a part in each Safavid ruler's cultural programs. Shahs with special interests in intellectual concerns generously offered patronage to learning in anticipation of a certain level of loyalty from the religious authorities. They fully expected that Shi`i jurists trained in madrasas would help them create social and spiritual cohesion among their subjects.

Contents

## Mosque-Madrasas of Safavid Isfahan

From the preceding preliminary observations, we may argue that imperializing Twelver Shi`ism was responsible for the single farthest-reaching transformation in the Shi`i higher learning. The interactions of this religious development with other historical forces and institutions resulted in one of the most distinctive legacies of the Safavids that shaped the subsequent history of Iran. This transformation continued to develop from the beginning to the end of the empire; however, its

historically effective and traditionally authoritative apparatuses and attitudes emerged in the latter half of the life of that empire. Indeed, in the process of creating their empire, Safavid monarchs who initially expropriated previously existing religious and cultural institutions created some of the richest pious endowments and the most magnificent mosque-madrasas complexes and shrines in the course of Shi`i history by assigning a great portion of their wealth in waqf. The pious endowments made by the Safavid shahs and their building undertakings during the first century of their rule was but a prelude to the full-scale rise of waqf-making during the second century of the Safavid rule. Perhaps one of the reasons that may account for the sizeable increase of madrasa building in the later period of the Safavid rule was due to the fact that Safavid rulers reached the limits of their expansion in the early seventeenth century and entered a phase that Max Weber calls "routinization of charisma." Therefore, they had to find new ways to legitimize their rule. They did so by building sumptuous palaces, madrasa-mosque complexes, and other architectural monuments.

The Safavid architectural undertakings could also be identified as a cultural process and construct by which and in which the religious identity of the Persians were formed. In particular, Safavid elite had to confront the problems of incorporating peripheral domains and assimilating diverse peoples into one religious community and establishing a degree of religious homogeneity – or at least a semblance of common religious perspective. A direct connection between this new religious geography and identity can be discerned. Indeed the numerous Safavid mosque-madrasas become a rich cultural tapestry of life in which intellectual Shi`i heritage, traditions and representations were put on permanent display and their occupants and visitors were given a sense of participation through the presentation of appropriate interpretative materials. In other words, through constructing a religious identity, the Safavid ruling elite and Shi`i authorities attempted to integrate a people separated by ethnicity, language, religion, and class that made them believe they have a shared past. As such, in addition to providing the continual realignment and recombination of intellectual discourses, political interests, and structures of power, Safavid mosque-

madrasas functioned as centers to create a shared narrative of Shi`i history, a framework of meaning that would become a source of common identity, a willingness to sacrifice for a larger cause, and a sense of commonality with one's fellow Shi`i brothers.

Safavid rulers also used a variety of other means to legitimize and consolidate power, including exempting Shi`i Muslims from paying taxes and treating different ethnic and religious groups in ways that utilized their economic contributions while limiting their ability to challenge the authority of the political power. They were also keen on recruitment and use of bureaucratic elite, as well as the development of military professionals. Safavid shahs also established new trading networks with Christian Europeans, which proved profitable for the rulers and merchants involved in these trade networks. Finally, they used arts and literature to display political power, legitimize their rule, and appeal to their subjects as well as neighboring empires. Military, sociopolitical, institutional, and cultural mechanisms, including identification with certain religious values and ethos through a variety of mediums such as high art and literature, architecture, rituals, and myths, were all dedicated to the mission of establishing a monolithic religious identity and integrating peripheral loyalties.

## The Madrasa-yi Sulṭānī

Historically, the distribution of material resources in the form of pious endowments had been a common way of establishing connections between ruling elite and masses. Mosques and madrasas supported by the elite created employment opportunities for a variety of people, from teachers, Friday and daily prayer leaders, muezzins, preachers, and Quran reciters, to people who did the administrative jobs and menial laborers. The group who benefitted the most from the waqf was obviously the religious class. The `ulamā' were linked to the waqf both as beneficiaries and as administrators. Increasingly, members of the religious class were appointed mainly as mutawallīs and professors enjoyed the assured income that pious endowments provided not only for themselves, but also for their descendants. Ann Lambton argues that the entry of members of the religious class into the ranks of

great landlords was the most notable change in the composition of the land-owning class in Safavid times. There were, however, religious elites who ostentatiously rejected governmental employment or refused outright to accept any official positions. The poor also benefitted from distributions of food and money. All these people, in addition to people who studied and lived in those establishments, were asked to pray for the longevity of the patrons' lives and their salvation in the hereafter.

Although genuine piety may have motivated Safavid elite to endow, the wish to insure the loyalty and respect of the leading members of the religious class, as well as to hold sway over Islam's most important religo-cultural and educational loci, ought to be considered part of the dynamic process of establishing their authority as well as demonstrating their wealth and might. Creating pious endowments gave Safavid ruling elite access to the scholarly talent of those who attended those madrasas. Pious endowments also led to substantial urbanization and economic development. A number of studies have examined the roles that awqāf played in fostering economic development in early modern Iran. Amin Banani argues that establishing ostentatious public buildings, in the context of certain struggles for power and privilege, and tensions endemic to the history of Persia are proofs of the effective internal controls and external manifestations of the wealth and supremacy of the Safavid rulers vis-à-vis the Ottomans and the Uzbek. Wealthy people followed suit, perhaps mainly to avoid paying taxes as well as to maintain a measure of immunity from confiscation. By preserving the right of the tawliya for themselves and their families, they continued to enjoy a rather major part of the revenues from their endowed properties while making some contributions to charities, hoping to secure a lofty place in the hereafter as well.

## Reshaping Shi'a Cultural Memory

In their attempts to construct a Shi`i "orthodoxy" through the articulation of "true" narrative and public morality, Safavid political elites, along with mainstream religious authorities, were active in appropriating the domain of culture by making effective use of all religious infrastructures and rhetorical tools available to them. As a result,

madrasas acted not only as an institution in the transmission of religious knowledge and the social construction of collective memory, but also played an important role in retrieving and reconstructing the Shi`a's own past, and hence their distinct identity within the flux of Muslim religo-cultural identity.

During Safavid rule, the cultural memory of the Shi`a was constantly reconstructed in the context of current circumstances and perceptions. The rise of the shari`a-minded Shi`i scholars in Safavid society was a notable force thanks to their articulation of a set of discourses that challenged the role and position of extremist supporters of the Safavids. These discourses simultaneously claimed authority over the interpretation of the realm of meanings associated with what was considered "true" Shi`ism, as well as the role of past heroes and practices among unconventional socio-religious, spiritual and intellectual groups. In the ongoing struggle over the power to define and control the assumed right belief, the dominant discourse sought to claim authority by using the categories of religiously permitted and forbidden to refer to religio-cultural practices. Thus they imposed their religious outlook within the public sphere.

The Safavid court's positioning in the cultural battle converged with that of the mainstream while maneuvering to manage the challenge of the extremist Shi`a. The Safavid court's image was increasingly invested in the religiocultural arena as a strategy for neutralizing the extremists. The Safavid elite pursued this aim on the grounds of morality and religiosity, using religiouscultural institutions and praxis, e.g. commemorative rituals and the madrasas, as weapons for discrediting revolutionary Shi`ism and non-conformist schools of thought. As learning centers madrasas were, however, first and foremost places for transmitting the curriculum and textbooks considered "orthodox" by the elite who sponsored intellectual and cultural activities, a topic argued in the next chapter.

## The Safavid Curriculum

Higher education under the Safavids was not confronted by a rapidly changing society. Therefore no major societal changes demanded a shift in the curriculum from the classical tradition to a more practical and vocational approach that was changing the contour of learning in Europe for instance. Given the fact that the focus of religious

learning was to maintain the authenticity of the act of transmission, educational undertakings hardly led to any major change. Moreover, Safavid educators showed no major desire s to ask the question of "how" the world was created; rather, they were mainly concerned with "who" initiated the process. Hence, madrasa learning continued to foster a God-centered education. The main goal of learning was, therefore, to bring a student to an understanding of Islamic laws, values and virtures, providing knowledge of the Creator as well as the Lord's creation. If one is to be educated, dictated the thinking of the time, this cannot be accomplished without explaining life in terms of the One from whom he came and the One to whom he would return. Hence, it is in scriptures that a person discovers who he is and what he is intended to be.

However, as the Shi`i faith gained more momentum in Iran, interpretations, opinions and dialogues became increasingly dynamic and complex. At the same time, the mastery of theological and academic "essentials," including legal studies alone, were no longer enough. Safavid mystical philosophers, for instance, came to believe that their ideas and works would prepare students to meet the evolving challenges of a new, emerging Shi`i identity with innovative, dynamic, and ecumenical dialogue, which would empower seekers of knowledge with a more profound and culturally relevant compass to craft the present and future. Therefore, Safavid curriculum was not totally static. It was indeed an ongoing developmental process that had a fluid nature. Although a teacher might have refrained from teaching philosophical texts in compliance with the stipulation of a waqfiyya, he could still teach these texts in his home. Hence, although Safavid madrasas helped establish the domination or exclusion of certain ideas and practices in addition to constructing religious laws and – in so doing – defined and spread a particular brand of orthodoxy, they could not terminate the study of subjects that fell outside the purview of the madrasa curriculum.

## Engagement with Religious Knowledge
As demonstrated by primary sources discussed above, a lifelong pursuit of learning is an ideal of Islamic piety and underlies the concept of Islamic

education. While the primary focus of learning was the nurturing of religious

belief in the individuals, its scope broadened to incorporate various disciplines to train persons solidly grounded in the virtues of Islam. In so doing, Safavid `ulamā' transmitted knowledge that originated in the Quran, Prophetic and Imamī traditions, legal treatises, and textbooks in different ways including recitation and debate; students fortified their learning by means of discussion, memorization, contemplation as well as writing commentaries and glosses. The next chapter will shed more light on the conditions of teaching and learning by discussing the criticism of the education conducted in Safavid madrasas, by a number of prominent scholars of the late Safavid period.

## Safavid Pedagogical Approaches
Isfahan's relative political tranquility and stability during the period from the first decades of the seventeenth century until the early decades of the eighteenth century did create favorable conditions for a dynamic intellectual atmosphere. Philosophers and traditionalists with mystical leanings, such as Mullā Sadrā and Muhsin Fayd, who mastered both rational and traditional sciences and had their own particular epistemological convictions, contested the Shari`a-minded scholars and literalist scholars who preferred knowledge obtained by human effort over that bestowed by divine grace; as a result they criticized conventional religious learning conducted by úlamā-yi rasmī. The traditional dichotomies between the literalists and the philosophers with mystical leanings were contested once again. An array of influential figures engaged in heated debates and wrote a number of anti-Sufi and anti-philo-sophical polemics. Mainstream scholars, for example, claimed that they alone had the best and most correct understanding of the Quran and Prophetic and Imāmī traditions, whereas the opposing scholars insisted on more fragmented and subjective knowledge.

The critics whose ideas I presented and discussed were concerned with the decline of learning. In differing ways and with varying degrees of effectiveness, they promoted an ideal of what

education should be. Mullā Sadrā reinvigorated a type of epistemology in which traditional philosophy was mediated by mysticism. He harmonized scripture, mystical insights, and philosophical truth, while reinterpreting and reformulating Islamic principles in a new light. The doctrine expounded by Mullā Sadrā is not to be found in the study of for-mal sciences or in what is normally understood as Sufism, nor is it to be found in the disciplines of theology or conventional philosophy. He proposed a type of transcendent mystical philosophy different from other intellectual currents.

For Mullā Sadrā and Muhsin Fayd, respectively, knowledge of soul and hikmat and the revelation and Prophetic and Imāmī traditions were indispensable, even inescapable means, for gaining epistemic certitude. In particular, their mystical inclinations prodded them to earnestly reflect on the reformulation of learning. Muhsin Fayd gave hikmat, which he identified with the traditions of the Prophet and the Imams, a lofty status. What Muhsin Fayd found persuasive about traditionalism was the kind of certitude (yaqīn) it led to. On the one hand some mujtahids viewed the prophetic and Imāmī tradition as a collection of contradictory and at times unauthentic reports with an unclear relevance to exigencies of the early modern times. On the other hand, Akhbārīs such as Muhsin Fayd regarded diversity of approaches to scriptural interpretation as a threat to unity among the Shi'a.

All four thinkers discussed in this chapter lamented that higher learning had been reduced to dry formalism and that many ignorant persons had been representing themselves as scholars in order to obtain status and wealth. They warned against what they saw as an ever-widening gap between true learning and the shallow and half-baked training that students received in madrasas. They believed that zāhirī (literalist) scholars were destroying the very essence of Shi`ism by reducing it to a mere corpus of legal minutiae and hadīth collections. They claimed that zāhirī scholars learned some Arabic and studied a few books mainly to deceive the masses into seeing them as scholars and leaders. The masses might follow their words and trust them to perform their religious ceremonies and duties, but for scholars such as Mullā Sadrā, legal studies was the indispensable

beginning; when completely internalized, the law also became an end toward which the spiritual quest was directed.

As Sabzawārī maintained, jurisprudence regulated external behavior alone, yet he believed a true adherent had to also remain pure of heart. By contrast, mujtahids believed their professionalism and specialization served the changing needs of their society and that legal studies should therefore be the focus of higher learning. Mujtahids accused mystic philosophers and traditionalists of not understanding the pressing mundane needs of the masses. Moreover, mujtahids portrayed the Akhbārīs' method of scholarship as reductionist and simplistic vis-à-vis the more systematized and dynamic approach of ijtihād. Akhbārīs tried to solve this problem by practicing a hermeneutics that enabled them to recast the religious ideas expressed in the sayings of the Imams into concepts of a fundamentally different culture, notably that of the religious community to which they themselves, as scholars, belonged.

The earliest and most vocal critics and opponents of mystic philosophers were jurists and traditionalists such as `Alī b. Muhammad `Āmilī and Muhammad Tāhir Qumī. They viewed Sufis and philosophers as rivals whose growing influence posed a serious danger to the principles of religion as they knew it. For their part, mystic philosophers and Akhbārī scholars reproached literalist scholars for placing worldly ambition above wisdom, under the guise of defending the faith. They blamed the decline of learning on the zāhirī scholars' motives of vanity and desire for wealth and power. Seeking to advance their careers, literalists were thought to no longer care to learn or teach the subjects that would best serve the needs and interests of the faith. Mystic philosophers and Akhbārīs also criticized the mujtahids' useless disputations as a jumble of ludicrous objections and irrelevant analogies, calling such wordy arguments deceptions that did not assist students in their search for truth.

However, these scholarly figures do not account for all Safavid pedagogical activities; the four scholars whose ideas and criticisms are discussed here were collectively disappointed in pedagogical activities. Therefore, they challenged the prevailing thought regarding the appropriate educational setting and curriculum by analyzing the literalism of zāhirī

scholars and the mundane ambitions of jurists. Yet, despite the expressed unhappiness of the educational undertakings during the Safavid era by the aforesaid thinkers, Sayyid `Abdallāh al-Mūsawī al-Jazā'irī al-Tustarī (d. 1759) envies the favorable condition of the Shi`i scholars of the earlier decades. He reports that the majority of his contemporaries do not pass the stage of mere imitation (taqlīd) and even those to whom this does not apply did not go far compared to the scholars of the former generations. He argues that this is not due to their inability to reach a higher level but rather results from the circumstances in times of political turmoil, civil war, and poverty, as well as a general disregard for knowledge, its transmission, and the scholars who produce it.

Although there were Shi`i madrasas in pre-Safavid times, the rise of the Safavids to power undoubtedly led to a far-reaching advancement of Shi`i higher learning and authority. It was during the rule of the Safavids that the Shi`i `ulamā' for the first time developed a long-standing relationship with the political elite. This evolution helped Shi`i `ulamā' to define and consolidate Shi`i "orthodoxy." As Talal Asad argues, orthodoxy is "not a mere body of opinions but a distinctive relationship – a relationship of power ... to regulate, uphold, require or adjust correct practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine, or replace incorrect ones."

The relations between the Safavid ruling elite and religious authorities were mutual and symbiotic – their power and influence characterized and constituted the socio-religious and cultural apparatus of early modern Iran. Safavid rulers were aware of the fact that they could not sustain their rule and legitimacy through military and political coercion alone. They also knew that, in the long run, they needed a certain amount of support from their subjects in order to maintain stability as well as to implement their socio-political ideals and religious programs. Thus, patronizing Shi`i scholars and building magnificent mosque-madrasa complexes were part of the socio-cultural and religious policies of every Safavid shah.

As an important socio-religious group from the advent of the Safavid rule, Shi`i `ulamā' supported Safavid rule either by accepting official positions – including teaching posts, the offices of ṣadr, and

the head position of shaykh al-Islam – or just by giving political and religious advice to the reigning monarchs. As mujtahids, members of the Safavid `ulamā' developed religious rulings; as judges and shaykh al-Islams, they dispensed justice; and as administrators of awqāf, they often had substantial influence on cultural and intellectual affairs. For example, Mīr Muhammad Bāqir Khātūnābādī was entrusted with many responsibilities. As the teacher of the Madrasa-yi Sultānī he was in charge of training students and was responsible for their well-being. He was also expected to supervise the observance of religious rituals performed in the madrasa. As the mullā-bāshī, he had the final say in religious matters.

In the madrasas of Safavid Isfahan, Shi`i `ulamā' continued to transmit knowledge originated in the Quran, Prophetic and Imāmī traditions, and works of prominent Shi`i scholars, through recitation, disputation, memorization and other teaching methods. Acquiring such knowledge, pedagogical skills and legal expertise required years of training under the supervision of scholars whose authority had been verified through the ijāza system. As demonstrated in the preceding chapters, Safavid political elites were actively committed to the promotion of Twelver Shi`ism throughout their realm. The patronizing of madrasas and their residents, both professors and students, was a means of promoting this agenda. Although they did not standardize training, and transmission of knowledge was based on the personal authority of the teacher and certified by the ijāza, Safavid madrasas became prime venues where Shi`i scholars spread their knowledge on a much larger scale for the first time in Islamic history. By providing professors with sizeable income and prestige and giving students a place to live and learn without financial burden, the madrasa system transformed higher learning and the Shi`i scholarly class.

As mentioned in the introduction, scholars continue to debate whether the advent and swift spread of madrasas across the Muslim world affected Islamic higher learning, or alternatively wielded minimal impact on the process of transmission of knowledge. Primary sources used in this study illustrate the many layers of organization that characterized Shi`i higher learning and madrasas during the

Safavid era. Although the deeds of endowment consulted in this research do not include stipulations requiring examinations to determine students' advancement, they do reveal that muddaris were expected to monitor students' academic progress and conduct. In all the deeds of endowment examined for the purposes of this research, the donors emphasize that – should the professor find that certain students have not made satisfactory progress in their studies – they should be expelled from their madrasas and replaced with students who could benefit in their stead.

Autobiographies of prominent scholars such as Ni`matullāh al-Jazā'irī and Fayd Kāshānī as well as the Safavid biographical dictionaries and ijāzas discussed in chapters four and five, furnish us with much of the information necessary to reconstruct the core curriculum that students followed in Safavid madrasas. These sophisticated means of ensuring the integrity of a chain of authority clearly demonstrate that there existed set curricula of study during this period that reflect a degree of regularity in the transmission of knowledge.

The didactic literature produced by the Shi`i also illustrates the process and the stages students should follow on their academic path. As discussed in chapter five, Shahīd al-Thānī makes it clear that students of law in particular were required to advance through specific training and acquire certain knowledge and skills to be eligible to issue fatwas. Al-Jazā'irī, Muhammad Zamān Tabrīzi and Shahīd al-Thānī's approach to education reflects many of the traditional approaches that defined an earlier period of Islamic education. They offer specific directions for rules of conduct in madrasas and any teaching circles. Shahīd al-Thānī's detailed accounts on the rule of debate, disputation and other teaching and learning methods, in particular reveal that students had to reach certain benchmarks in order to advance in their studies. All these accounts reveal a structured process that encouraged students to study, to memorize, and to debate fundamental texts in order to gain expert knowledge on various legal issues as well as religious notions and principles. At the end of this process they received credentials to issue fatwas, or to teach religious sciences, or to transmit ḥadīth. His discussion of the responsibilities of the muʿīd

refers to the hierarchy that existed among madrasa students.

As demonstrated in chapter four, curricula of Safavid madrasas demonstrate complex intersections as well as a dynamic process of intellectual exchange between several competing and overlapping groups including jurists from Jabal al-`Āmilī, native Iranians, and hybrid religious scholars in their varied Usūlī, Akhbarī, and mystical philosophy groupings. The curriculum of Safavid madrasas also reflects alterations in the Safavids' sources of legitimacy. The last three chapters delineate some of these changes and explain some of the dominant discourses. In the sixteenth century, the Usūlī mujtahids dominated higher learning and played an active role in directing mosques and madrasas as well as the institutionalization of Shi`ism in Iran. By considering revelation to be the main engine in the production of religious knowledge, and by making traditions and personal reasoning its interpretative basis, mujtahids claimed that they were better equipped to develop religious laws.

Mid-seventeenth century Iran, however, witnessed the brewing of a dispute between the Akhbārīs and Usūlīs, who emphasized or overemphasized reason, and the traditionalists, who stressed the adequacy and efficiency of the Quran and khabar literature. The standards by which the transmission's authenticity was measured reveal the different views of mujtahids, mystical philosophers, and Akhbārīs. Compared with traditionalists and their doctrine of the primacy of the Imāmī traditions, mujtahids believed they had developed more diffuse forms of authority and validated the use of a wider variety of intellectual innovation. But, as meticulously and convincingly argued by Robert Gleave, the Akhbārīs nonetheless demonstrated a scholarly sophistication in their legal methodology as well as other fields of religious sciences. Akhbārī scholars also acted as jurists and judges and were engaged in legal interpretation based on the akhbār of the Imams.

Indeed, the revival of Akhbarism in the final decades of Safavid rule had a substantial influence on educational and intellectual pursuits. It undoubtedly enabled the expansion of scholarly debates among the traditionalists, jurists, and

mystical philosophers of the second half of the seventeenth century and beyond. Legal studies remained one of the main subjects in the curriculum despite the rise of traditionalism. The Safavid court always needed a group of `ulamā' to actively develop a method or program for organizing the judicial and cultural affairs of the realm. It was inevitable that `ulamā – even the traditionalists – had to utilize interpretive tools, including reason as well as other sources, to develop religious law.

Mystical philosophers, on the other hand, promoted a lofty ideal of what education should be. According to them, learning was a process in which scripture, gnosis, and philosophy are harmonized. Although much of philosophical enquiry was concerned with theological issues, conventional Shi`i scholars were wary of the study of ancient sciences. There were, however, some scholars who appreciated the rational and logical analysis that philosophy offered. Hence, they constructed their own theological judgments and ontology by harmonizing those apparent contradictions found in the Islamic holy texts through reasoned and logical analysis, and in the process came to rely on the ancient Greek and other civilizations' intellectual heritage.

Both mystical philosophers and traditionalists came to contrast their own method of discussing and writing about legal and religious matters against those of the mujtahids and to argue that their ideas were more authentic than those of the jurists. In truth, the thought of the mujtahids possessed considerable variety and depth. These scholars often engaged in debating complex legal issues and religious matters in ways that were far from dry and which dealt with realistic considerations. However, regardless of what method of scholarship and instruction these various schools of thought considered the best way of instilling knowledge, their main concerns were organizing educational undertakings as such to guarantee the reliability of transmitted knowledge and people who convey them. Studies lasted many years. Between one student and another, the length of time required before receiving a license to teach, especially jurisprudence, could vary considerably.

The gulf that separated these schools of thought in interpreting Islamic teaching was less profound than one may imagine. Despite the fact that the mid-

17th century saw a decline in royal patronage for the rationalist mujtahids in favor of traditionalist scholars, as noted by Rula Abisaab, nevertheless a creative dialogue between adherents of these distinct juridical approaches continued throughout the era. Abisaab argues that ijtihād (the principle of independent reasoning) – not ijmā`, as claimed by other scholars – "was central to the Usūlī-Akhbārī controversy." As noted in Chapter six, Astarābādī and Hurr al-`Āmilī, however, deny the validity of both ijtihād and ijmā` (consensus of `ulamā'), considering them to be Sunni innovations (bid`a). Fayd al-Kāshānī, a prominent Akhbārī, also makes a strong point against rationalist mujtahids for their adaptation of Sunni legal methodology, i.e. personal opinions and use of qiyās (analogy).

As mujtahids were not a monolithic group, Akhbārīs "were themselves a mix," as stated by Abisaab. In his description of Akhbarsim, Robert Gleave adds that there was a wide diversity of currents and views within the school and notes that there was no agreement on whether it constituted just one legitimate school within the Shi`a or the only sound interpretation of the teaching of the Imāms. For example, among the Akhbārīs we come across figures such as Fayd al-Kāshānī and Muhammad Taqī Majlisī, who were more disposed towards Sufism and even philosophy, compared to Muhammad Hurr al-`Amilī, who was a traditionalist through and through.

Isfahan's relative political stability during the period from the first decades of the seventeenth century until the early decades of the eighteenth century afforded the development of a dynamic intellectual atmosphere, which produced a number of original, highly accomplished and creative figures in the various fields of Islamic civilization, as noted in preceding pages. The sources make it clear that learning has always been regarded as a form of worship, with specific value in and of itself. Indeed, some attended the teaching circles with no lofty ambition, seeking only edification from a time spent in receiving higher learning. There were, however, some pseudo-seekers of knowledge who – according to Mullā Sadrā, Muhsin Fayd, and Muhammad Zamān Tabrīzī – had reduced religious higher learning to some kind of superficial and cursory learning and represented themselves as

scholars in order to obtain worldly status and wealth.

Thanks to the Safavids' generous patronage of Shi`i higher learning, and the growth and proliferation of Shi`i madrasas, Shi`i scholars who had limited means of supporting themselves before the rise of the Safavids now came to enjoy and rely on the financial benefits that madrasas and other religious institutions offered. As a result, the lifestyle of the professors and students attached to these institutions transformed. Criticisms of Safavid scholars discussed in chapter six reveal the complex world of Islamic higher learning and also illustrate the ideals and realities that shaped the behavior of Shi`i scholars. While many Safavid scholars competed against each other to win the Safavids' favor and to take a position at the court, maintaining that – in order to guide Muslims in worship and give order to personal, business and governmental affairs – they must collaborate with the ruling elite. There were, however, a number of `ulamā' who considered themselves independent of the ruling elite and were regarded as such by the population at large. These religiously conscious and cautious scholars considered collaborating with the Safavid court to be a corrupting endeavor; thus they usually refrained from joining the Safavid court. But even the most secluded ones sometimes had to accept the monarchs' invitations to join the court, if even for a short period of time (e.g., Fayd Kāshānī).

In principle Safavid madrasas had no substantial impact on the way knowledge was authenticated; yet the increase in the number of madrasas during the Safavid period led to a new form of scholarly orthodoxy as had already been achieved in Sunni societies. Madrasas were carefully and generously supported by the Safavid elite for a variety of reasons, one of which could have been the fact that the students trained in madrasas provided a pool of eligible talent to assume positions of authority in socio-cultural and religious affairs of the Safavid society. In light of the salience of education in Islamic culture, Safavid elite also used their newly appropriated authority to establish an infrastructure to ensure that education would serve to promote a uniform identity, which would integrate their empire into the cultural and religious spheres.

Safavid madrasas and other religious establishments thus became places where an entire set of values, beliefs, intellectual preferences, and attitudes was developed and relayed to society as a whole. The successful process of Persia's conversion to Shi`ism depended on the ability of the Safavid ruling elite and Shi`i religious authorities to produce a substantial cohort of experts specializing in the conceptual and legal elaboration of Shi`i dogma and culture. Despite the fact that a pattern of patronage and appointment could be discerned, Safavid madrasas cannot be identified as "well-defined corporate bodies" or "state agencies" because there was no systematic governmental regulation and control. The offices of ṣadr and shaykh al-Islam only supervised the activities and did not control them strictly. Meaning, these officials did not regulate the madrasas' curriculum or set out a series of calibrated examinations and a grading system, and so forth.

As multifaceted educational and cultural centers that attested to the Safavid shahs' power, piety, wealth, stability of their rule, economic might and idealism, madrasa-mosques of Safavid Isfahan became a new sacred geography for the Shi`a, incorporating what Pierre Nora has called "sites of memory." Made of durable materials intended to last long, and built in grand architectural forms upon which Shi`i ethos and beliefs were inscribed for posterity, Safavid madrasa-mosques became sites where religious ceremonies and rituals have been held since the time of their completion. In these ritual contexts, Shi`i imams – who personify the pedigree of Shi`ism – are commonly invoked by a diverse group of people, especially through the ta`ziya and rawḍa-khvānī. All commemorative rituals celebrated in the Safavid madrasas were designed to touch an individual's psyche in order to revivify the most essential elements of Shi`i collective consciousness and memory. They introduced something from the distant past to be remembered at regular intervals.

These commemorative rituals reconstructed the abstract knowledge of the past as lived experience, thereby creating collective memory and a new religious identity. The commemorative narrative backed by the Safavid elites, both political and religious, accentuated the perception of a divide between Shi`i and Sunni Muslims. The Shi`a were specifically associated with heroic

struggles, and contrasted with a highly negative image of Sunnis seen as excessively passive in the face of the persecution and massacre of Husayn and his followers. Sunnis were also blamed for a deliberate suppression of `Alī's right to Muhammad's succession. These two allegations made possible the active condemnation of Sunnis. As much as the Safavid elite commemorated certain rituals, others were prevented from remembrance. Attempts to fix "official" versions of history clashed with popular forms of storytelling done by the naqqālān. What Safavid subaltern and dominant groups share in their efforts to utilize the past resembles the universal activity of anchoring divergent memories in place by means of oral histories, myths, events, and sites.

Every era has something in particular to be remembered by; in addition to classics of history, literature, and philosophy that display layers and dimensions of Safavid thought, the salient feature of the Safavid period is the magnificent sacred landscape created specially in Isfahan. In the case of early modern Iran, the advent of the Safavid era led to a major religious transformation. This very rupture with the past led to a self-conscious quest for memory. Safavid elite employed monumental architecture as a means of advancing their sociopolitical power and religious vision. More than just spaces, Safavid religious structures simultaneously functioned as physical testimonies to Shi`i presence in Iran. They became sites where history and geography entwined. This fusion played an integral role in the development, maintenance, and transformation of religious ethos among the Persians during this transformative period.

As conspicuous agents in the social construction of collective memory, they have also played an important role in retrieving and reconstructing the Shi`a's own past, and hence their distinct identity within the flux of Muslim cultural identity. During the final decades of Safavid rule, the traditions of the Imams were increasingly seen as the most reliable sources of knowledge. Their deaths came to serve as a symbolic and moral resource for organizing and interpreting the community's new experiences and for mobilizing the community to face fresh crises. Learning and transmitting the traditions of the Imams, along with the active memorializing of pivotal events from the Shi`i religious calendar,

helped Safavid society to mediate between events of the past and the present, and to chart a course for the future. <>

Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics by Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī (d. 1420 AH /1999) translated by John Cooper, edited and Introduced by Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad [The Modern Shīʿah Library, Brill, 9789004343023] paperback [789004343344]

The Universal Science ('Ilm-i kulli) by Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī is a concise and authoritative introduction to the fundamental discussions in Islamic metaphysics. This short work offers an accessible, lucid, and deeply learned, guide through the ⬚living tradition⬚ of Shi'i philosophy.

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Excerpt: It is a great privilege to present the second volume in The Modern Shī`ah Li¬brary, 'Universal Science: An Introduction to Islamic Metaphysics' (ʿIlm-i kullī), the first singly authored work by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī (d. 1420 ah/1999), translated here into English by John Cooper (d. 1997). This is the first of Yazdī's several influential works on philosophy, jurisprudence, and political theory, to have been translated from Persian into English—and only the second to have been published in the West. Its author, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī was born into a scholarly family, son of the founder of the Islamic Seminary at Qum—one of the main loci of Shī`ī intellectual activity—Shaykh `Abd al-Karīm Ḥā'irī Yazdī. He studied jurisprudence, philosophy, the 'rational sciences', and astronomy with many of the leading intellectual authorities of his day—including Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Aḥmad Khwānsārī (d. 1406 ah/1985) and Āyatullāh Rūḥ Allāh Khumaynī (d. 1409 ah/1989)—before going on to teach at the University of Tehran. The work before you was written in the 1950s amidst a period of great political turbulence in Tehran, which coincided with a crossroads in the life of its author; who soon after chose to leave Iran for the United States, where, having already developed a thorough grounding in Islamic philosophy, he then spent many years studying the Western philosophical canon and contemporary analytic philosophy at the Universities of Michigan and Toronto, respectively. He later went on to teach at Oxford, Yale, and McGill Universities; making Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī almost unique in his ability to navigate both the worlds of Islamic and Western philosophy.

The Universal Science itself is an introduction to 'metaphysics proper'; originally conceived as the first part of a trilogy that would go on to elaborate on both 'theology proper' and psychology. As an introduction it is remarkable both for its sheer philosophical breadth and for its clarity of exposition, and as such it serves as a fitting riposte to the still-prevalent Orientalist supposition that 'Islamic Philosophy' reached its peak in the mediæval period and has hitherto been in decline. This edition of John Cooper's translation therefore provides Western academia with a rare, but exemplary, insight into the 'living tradition' of Islamic philosophy as it continues to be practiced today in the Shī`ī seminaries of Najaf and Qum; a metaphysical–theological and epistemological discipline that has been transmitted continuously for the best part of a thousand years, which is concerned with examining matters of causality, existence, knowledge, and quiddity as these pertain to an understanding of the Divine. Although the permit of the Universal Science is often recondite in nature, the accessibility of its prose and the abundance of examples with which its author seeks to illuminate and invigorate the arguments of previous philosophical schools and authorities (Sadrian, Illuminationist, Peripatetic, and Avicennan), are qualities that have seen it utilised as a philosophical textbook for many years at the University of Tehran. Thus this translation will provide a guide through Islamic metaphysics for undergraduate students and scholars alike.

A note of thanks is here due to the friends of the Shī`ah Institute, for their support, to Brill, for their commitment to this series, and to my dear colleagues, here at the Shī`ah Institute, namely, Aun, George, Mohammed, Nizam, and Sajjad, without whose indelible efforts and collective endeavour this work would still have remained a neglected draft of handwritten notes, queries, and untranslated passages amongst John Cooper's papers.

It is our hope that the Universal Science will be of special interest to academics in Islamic Studies and to philosophers seeking to understand and explore the shared philosophical heritage of the Western and Islamic worlds.

## Islamic Metaphysical Science
Philosophy is the foundation of all sciences. It is the universal science (`ilm-i kullī). Without philosophy no other science can be established (banā kard)...Philosophy is the ontology of any reality (ḥaqīqat). For example, the reality (ḥaqīqat) of man. If you put philosophy to one side, you have put man aside. Because man is a rational and perceiving animal... the perceiver of 'reality'. Āyatullāh Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī (d. 1420 AH /1999)

These observations on the centrality of philosophy in the human experience, by the author of `Ilm-i kullī, are redolent with the wisdom of the living Islamic philosophical tradition, a tradition which

survives in all its fullness into our own times only among the Shī`ah. Āyatullāh Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī was not only an authority on all aspects of the Shī`ah intellectual tradition, but he was also among the few such authorities in its history to have acquired the highest philosophical credentials from a Western university and written works of great insight in the light of his twin intellectual attainments. (In this regard Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī is somewhat akin to Nishitani Keiji (d. 1990) who was among the first Japanese Zen Buddhist scholars and philosophers to pursue higher studies in the West after a thorough grounding in his own tradition in Japan. He studied with Martin Heidegger (d. 1976) and Edmund Husserl (d. 1938) in Germany and, in Japan, was a disciple of Nishida Kitarō (d. 1945)—the founder of what is known as the 'Kyoto School'. Another modern Asian intellectual figure to whom Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī may be compared is the Chinese Taoist scholar and philosopher Youlan Feng [in older works 'Yu-lan Fung'] (d. 1990). Feng was a student of John Dewey at Columbia University; where he received his PhD in 1924. He also met Ludwig Wittgenstein (d. 1951) in Cambridge. See the volume Japanese Philosophy: A Sourcebook, (eds.) James W. Heisig, Thomas P. Kasulis, and John C. Maraldo, Honolulu, 2011, pp. 639–69 (Overview of the Kyoto School, Nishida Kitarō), pp. 713–732 (Nishitani Keiji). On Youlan Feng see: Moeller, Hans-Georg, Daosim Explained [orig. pub. in German by Insel Verlag in 2001 as In der Mitte des Kreises: Daoistisches Denken] Chicago, 2004, pp. 21–3, 27–8, 162n. Representative Works: Nishitani Keiji, Religion and Nothingness, Berkeley, 1983; Nishida Kitarō, An Inquiry into the Good, New Haven, 1992; Yu-lan Fung, A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 1: The Period of the Philosophers & A History of Chinese Philosophy, Vol. 2: The Period of Classical Learning, Princeton, 1952–53; and, Feng Youlan, The Hall of Three Pines: An Account of My Life, Honolulu, 2000, p. 279 where he describes his meeting with Wittgenstein.)

Glimpses from the extraordinary story of Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's life journey are offered herein by way of introduction to the English translation of his Universal Science (`Ilm-i kullī). In this work his own journey intersected with that of another seeker of knowledge, John Yaḥyā Cooper (24 August 1947 -

9 January 1998), who commenced its translation from the original Persian in consultation with the author. Cooper was E. G. Browne Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge until his death in 1998. The incomplete manuscript of his translation languished in obscurity among his private papers and has remained unpublished until now. It was due to the efforts of Professor Sajjad H. Rizvi, one of Cooper's doctoral students at the University of Cambridge in the late 1990s, that the translation was spared almost certain loss by his salvaging of these papers. Thanks are due to the continuing and tireless support of Dr Sayyid Amjad H. Shah Naqavi, Dean of the Shī`ah Institute, whose direction, perseverance, and vision has led to its publication and the opportunity for the `Ilm-i kullī to reach a wider audience for the first time.

The intersecting lives of John Cooper and Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī are an integral part of the context of `Ilm-i kullī. Accordingly, the work will be approached here in the light of their respective biographies and intellectual contributions; followed by a word on the translation and an account of the historical context as well as the content of `Ilm-i kullī.

### Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī: A Philosophical Life

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was born in 1341 ah/ 1923 in the holy city of Qum into one of the most prestigious scholarly families of recent times. His father, Āyatullāh `Uẓmā `Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad Ja`far Yazdī Mihrjirdī al-Ḥā'irī, was born in Mihrjird —which at the time was a village outside of the present-day Iranian city of Yazd—in the month of Rajab 1276 AH /1859. He travelled in search of knowledge to the cities of Samarra, Najaf, and Karbala, returning to Iran in 1332 AH /1913 and, after settling for a time in the city of Arāk, moved to Qum in 1340 AH /1921. To him belongs the singular distinction of having not only transformed the city—which had hitherto been a significant centre of Imāmī Shī`ī muḥaddithūn in the 3–4th /9–10th centuries—into a locus of Shī`ī learning and the traditional ḥawzah, but of having made it into a serious rival to the great seminary of Najaf in neighbouring Iraq. He died in Qum in 1355 AH / 1937.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī followed, along with his elder brother Murtaḍā, in the footsteps of his illustrious father to become a jurist. The elder members of the family were known for their piety and spirituality and this was also inculcated in the Ḥā'irī brothers. One may gain some idea of the spiritual atmosphere in which they were formed by an anecdote told of the older of the pair, Murtaḍā Ḥā'irī Yazdī, by our teacher Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusaynī al-Ḥusaynī al-Jalālī (b. 1362 AH/1943), whom he visited many times in his home and whose lessons he attended in 1393 AH /1973 and from whom he received an ijāzah in the same year. He tells us that Āyatullāh Murtaḍā:

> [...] had authored numerous works but had forbidden [many of] them from being published out of disdain for self-aggrandisement telling me jokingly that "What has been published already is sufficient to satisfy the base craving for publication and the ego (inna fīmā ṭubiʿa kifāyatan li irḍā'i shahwat al-ta'līf wa irḍā' al-nafs)".

We are fortunate, however, that despite Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's pious upbringing such a severe askesis regarding matters of publication was not carried by him to the same lengths as that of his elder brother, and that he was ultimately to leave behind a published oeuvre of about a dozen works.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī received his earliest training at the hands of his father and then commenced his formal training with the scholars of Qum. His teachers in jurisprudence included Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā al-Sayyid Ḥusayn b. al-Sayyid ʿAlī al-Ṭabāṭabā'ī al-Burūjirdī (d. 1380 AH/1961), who would assume leadership of the ḥawzah after his father's death, and Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥujjat b. al-Sayyid ʿAlī Kūhkamarihī Tabrīzī (d. 1372 AH /1953), with whom he pursued the so-called 'external studies' in Islamic Law (sharīʿah), known as dars-i khārij. After fifteen years in the ḥawzah, and at the still tender age of twenty-eight, he was granted the prerogative to engage in 'juristic reasoning' (ijtihād) by Āyatullāh al-ʿUẓmā Burūjirdī. Such permission indicates that a seminarian has arrived at an expert level of competence in directly deriving rulings of the Law

from its scriptural and other sources and is thus no longer allowed to merely comply with the conclusions of the skilled practitioner of juristic reasoning. Instead they must determine the legal ordinances of religion for themselves—through their own juristic reasoning.

Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's interests were not confined only to jurisprudence, however, and he also zealously pursued the 'rational sciences' (ʿulūm ʿaqliyyah) through studying also with such masters as Āyatullāh al-Sayyid Aḥmad Khwānsārī (d. 1406 AH/1985) of Tehran with whom he read: Mullā Ṣadrā's (d. 1045 AH/1636) commentary on the Peripatetic compendium of Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī (d. 663 AH/1265 CE), known as Sharḥ al-hidayat al-athīriyyah; Shaykh Khwājah Naṣīr al-Dīn Ṭūsī's (d. 672 AH/1274 CE) commentary on Ibn Sīnā's (d. 428 AH/1037 CE) al-Ishārāt wa al-tanbīhāt; as well as texts of tradi¬tional mathematics such as Euclid (fl. between 347 BCE and 287 BCE). With Mīrzā Mahdī b. Jaʿfar b. Aḥmad al-Ṭahrānī al-Āshtiyānī (d. 1372 AH/1953) he studied Ibn Sīnā's Kitāb al-Shifā', Mullā Ṣadrā's Kitāb al-Asfār, and he also read Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī's Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id with Āyatullāh Rūḥ Allāh al-Mūsawī al-Khumaynī [hereafter, Khomeini] (d. 1409 AH/1989), the founder of the modern day Islamic Republic of Iran to whom he was related through the marriage of his niece to Khomeini's eldest son. Finally, he even journeyed to Mashhad to study traditional astronomy with Sayfullāh Īsī and also acquired an expertise in traditional astrology.

Following this prolonged period of intense study, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī decided to move from Qum to Tehran and begin teaching in the capital. It was at this point that he began his life-long association with the University of Tehran, where—despite long periods abroad—he would remain a professor until his death in 1420 ah/ 1999. Thus in 1370 AH/ 1951, upon arriving in Tehran, he first taught at what is now known as the Shahīd Muṭahharī School (formerly Madrasah-yi Sipāhsālār), which was built by Nāṣir al-Dīn Shāh Qajar for the philosopher ʿAlī Mudarris Zunūzī (d. 1307 AH/1889), one of the four hakīms of the 'School of Tehran' and a leading commentator on Mullā Ṣadrā. Ḥā'irī initially assumed responsibility for teaching the rational

and transmitted Islamic sciences in keeping with his training in Qum. But following the death of the school's principle—the prominent philosopher and mystic, Mīrzā Mahdī Āshtiyānī, with whom Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī himself had studied the Kitāb al-Shifāʾ of Ibn Sīnā—in 1372 AH/1332 AH/1953, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was bestowed custodianship of the school as a whole. At the same time, from 1374 AH /1955 onwards he also taught at the University of Tehran, and because of his background and experience was quickly elevated to Associate Professor (dānishyārī) when the university recognised his capacity for iǰtihād as bestowed by Burūǰirdī and other ʿulamāʾ as being equivalent to a doctorate. Within five years he had been promoted to full professor, a post he would hold until his retirement in 1408 AH/1987.

In the nineteen fifties he witnessed first-hand the immense pressure to which the government of Dr Muḥammad Muṣaddiq [Mosaddegh] (d. 1386 AH/1345 CE/1987) was subjected following the nationalisation of the Anglo– Iranian Oil Company, and the aftermath of the coup d'état, which ousted the nationalist prime minister from power. It was during this turbulent time that Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī taught Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus, al-Ḥikmah al-mutaʿāliyah fī al-asfār al-ʿaqliyyah al-arbaʿah (henceforth Asfār), as well as uṣūl al-fiqh, at Sipāhsālār and doctoral students at Tehran University's Faculty of Theology. It is also in this period that the current work, ʿIlm-i kullī, was written.

Soon after writing this work, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī would begin a new phase of his intellectual life; one which, to this day, distinguishes him from many other scholars in terms of both intellectual depth and geographical breadth. Following the coup d'état which restored Muḥammad Riḍā Shāh Pahlavī (d. 1400 AH/1359 SH/1980) to power, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī decided to leave Iran, and it is this departure, which coincided with his full-blown academic engagement with Western philosophy. The exact motives for this pursuit are not entirely clear. Apart from the undesirable political situation prevailing inside Iran, this move also seems to have been spurred by his innate intellectual curiosity; hastened by the influx of foreign ideas and ideologies emanating from the Western

philosophical canon, which had begun to make their presence felt, and increasingly found themselves taken up by the burgeoning Iranian intelligentsia. Some eminent traditionalist ʿulamāʾ simply repudiated such ideas outright, while others, like ʿAllāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī (d. 1402 AH/ 1981) in works such as Uṣūl-i falsafah wa rawish-i riʾālism, or Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr (executed 1400 AH/ 1980) in his Falsafatunā, writing in Persian and Arabic, respectively, fashioned responses which were rooted in Islamic philosophy and centred on indigenous adversaries inspired by the Marxist theory of dialectical materialism. Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī, by contrast, took the unusual decision to leave Iran for the United States, at first for a mission at the behest of Āyatullāh Burūǰirdī —for whom he acted as a representative in Washington—but soon thereafter beginning the study of Western philosophy anew, casting himself in the role of a tabula rasa. He had become convinced of the necessity of developing a thoroughly philosophical response to materialism and secularism from within the Islamic tradition itself. As Ḥāʾirī recalls in his memoir:

> When I came to the [United States] I felt that an individual who really wants to properly research the Islamic sciences, must not only be satisfied with the Islamic sciences and the traditional framework proposed by Islamic methods. This is because that method, however good it may be; in the end, our youth, the Islamic youth as a whole, not only from Iran, but other countries as well, they come to America and Europe and in the end their mind collides with a series of other issues, and a series of questions replace previous learning, and these must ultimately be analysed ... In this regard I thought it was simply not enough for one to merely start to learn the language here or in his own country, to become familiar with English or French. Suppose that we become familiar with English or French, but when we turn to the structure of their thought—meaning, their thought and intellectual system, and we are not familiar [with it], it is of no use.

He continues,

> I said to myself that if we want to begin from the substructure (zīrbanā) and

become acquainted with the foundational system of Western thought, we must entirely abandon our own methodology, albeit temporarily, [and begin] a new day.

One should therefore bear in mind that not only is ʿIlm-i kullī Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's first singly authored work, but that it also pre-dates his move to the United States, and full immersion in Western philosophy. In any event, it was in this spirit that Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī enrolled as an undergraduate in Western philosophy at Georgetown University, after which he went to the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor for graduate studies. Then, following the completion of his Masters in Michigan, he left for Canada to undertake a PhD in Analytic philosophy at the University of Toronto.

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's doctoral thesis was later published with a foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr and under his editorship by the State University of New York Press with the title of The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence in 1992; a work which showed him to be uniquely at home not only with the epistemological ruminations of Ibn Sīnā, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawārdī (d. 587 AH/1191 CE), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606 AH/1209 CE), Ibn ʿArabī (d. 638 AH/1240 CE), Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, and Mullā Ṣadrā, but also those of Immanuel Kant (d. 1804), William James (d. 1910), Bertrand Russell (d. 1970), and Ludwig Wittgenstein. In this challenging volume he deals in the first place with epistemological problems, most notably what is known as 'knowledge by presence' (ʿilm-i huḍūrī). The latter has the nature of an immediate cognition unmediated by rational demonstration, as in one's direct perceptions of inner states such as pain. Moreover, mystical experience is identified as a species of knowledge by presence in contradistinction to discourse about mystical experience. It is interesting to note that this volume seems to have been more or less ignored by the Western philosophical establishment. Moreover, even prior to the completion of his doctorate Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī authored a notable work on theoretical rationality and Islamic metaphysics entitled, Kāvushhā-yi ʿaql-i naẓarī (1347 SH/1968). Graduating in 1979 with a PhD in hand, he returned to Georgetown to take up a position as a Senior Fellow at the Kennedy Institute of Ethics

where he remained until 1980, when he was invited to become a Visiting Professor at Yale University in New Haven.

Thousands of miles away from the revolution unfolding in his homeland, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī had for the most part lived the life of the itinerant scholar, pursuing his research, as was his wont. When still in the United States—and following the abandonment and removal of the Shah's diplomats and staff from Iran's embassy in Washington—Karīm Sanjābī (d. 1416 AH/1995), the Foreign Minister at the time, and a leading member of the National Front, suggested Ḥāʾirī as someone who could supervise activities at the embassy until a formal appointment could be made. Thus in the course of the heady concatenation of events unfurling inside Iran, and on Sanjābī's initial prompting, Ayatollah Khomeini proceeded to directly appoint Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī as guardian of the embassy and representative of the Foreign Minister in Washington, given his former student's many years in the United States and his standing as the son of Khomeini's teacher. It was hoped by Sanjābī that Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī might bring some calm and order to the embassy amidst an otherwise chaotic and unpredictable time in the two countries' bilateral relations. But after a brief stint of two weeks, and ultimately unable to bring the situation to heel or control the younger revolutionaries in his midst who continually sought to undermine his authority, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī submitted his resignation to Sanjābī and returned to focus on his responsibilities at Georgetown.

On a routine visit to Iran to see his wife and child in the summer of 1980, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī was not permitted to leave the country and, in his own words, was effectively placed under 'house arrest' in Tehran. The exact reasons for his detainment seem to have even eluded Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī himself, insofar as he does not elaborate at any length on this episode in his memoir, except to detail one instance where he contacted Ayatollah Khomeini, proposing to speak with Edward 'Ted' Kennedy (d. 1430 AH/2009) in order to mediate a peaceful resolution to the hostage crisis—an offer which was firmly rebutted by his former teacher. It is of course worth mentioning that Ḥāʾirī's intellectual disagreements with the ideological bases of the newly founded state would hardly

have been a secret to those who were acquainted with him and his philosophical orientation. These years were not spent in idle expectation of returning to the United States, however. Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī published several of his most important works during this period, which often originated in lectures he delivered at research institutes such as Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah in Tehran. The more distinguished works conceived during this time were, Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-yi hastī shināsī-yi taṭbīqī (1360 SH/1981), in which he attempted to elaborate upon the bases of comparative ontology in the Western and Islamic traditions, and a work on meta– and applied ethics, Kāvushhā-yi `aql-i `amalī: falsafah-yi akhlāq (1361 SH/1982). The provenance of both works lay in lectures Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī had delivered at the Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah during the early nineteen eighties.

By 1983 Ḥāʾirī was again free to travel and accordingly left for the United Kingdom; going briefly to Oxford and then on to London. In his memoir he speaks of students from the University of Oxford visiting him regularly in order to study with and ask him questions.36 While he does not mention John Cooper by name, it is highly probable that the list of students with which he maintained contact included the Englishman and former ṭalabah. It was in London that Ḥāʾirī would publish a work on political theory, Ḥikmat wa ḥukūmat (1995). In this endeavour he drew not merely on traditions in Islamic metaphysics, jurisprudence, mysticism, and political thought, but also on social contract theory—upon which he centred much of his own theoretical edifice in defence of the inalienability of humankind's natural rights. In the course of this decisive theoretical intervention into the foundations of political legitimacy and representative government, he notes his disagreements with Hugo Grotius (d. 1645) and Thomas Hobbes (d. 1679), offers strident criticisms of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (d. 1778) and the latter's conception of the 'general will', while also dutifully acknowledging the abiding importance of John Locke (d. 1704) and his Two Treatises on Government. He achieves this by consistently and consciously demonstrating areas of agreement and disagreement with the propositions

of the Qur'ān and ḥadīth, Shī`ī legal theory, and Imam `Alī's (40 AH /661 CE) Nahj al-balāghah.

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī continued to go back-and-forth from Europe and the United States to Iran, and outlived his elder brother, Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Ḥāʾirī Yazdī who passed away in 1406 ah/1986, and whose daughter had married Ayatollah Khomeini's elder son, Sayyid Muṣṭafā Khumaynī (d. 1397 AH/1977) who pre-deceased the revolution. In the final years of his life Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī contracted Parkinson's disease and passed away on 24 Rabī` al-Awwal 1420 AH/ 17 Tīr 1378 SH/ 8 July 1999, and was buried like his brother and father before him in the city of his birth at the Shrine of Fāṭimah Ma`ṣūmah (fl. 2nd century AH/7-8th century CE), sister of Imām Riḍā (d. 203 AH/818 CE), in Qum.

Selected Bibliography of Works by Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī (in order of year of publication)

1. `Ilm-i kullī (Universal Science), introduction by Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, Tehran: 1384 SH/2005. Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's first monograph published in 1956.
2. Kāvushhā-yi `aql-i naẓarī (Investigations in Theoretical Reason), Tehran, 1384 sH/2005. Authored in 1347 sH/1968.
3. Āgāhī wa gawāhī: tarjumah wa sharḥ-i intiqādī-yi risālah-yi taṣawwur wa taṣdīq-i ṣadr al-muta'allihīn shīrāzī (Concept and Judgement: Translation and Critical Commentary on Mullā Ṣadrā's Treatise on Concept and Judgement (Risālah fī al-taṣawwur wa al-taṣdīq)), Tehran, 1360 SH/1981.
4. Haram-i hastī: taḥlīlī az mabādī-yi hastī Shināsī-yi taṭbīqī (The Pyramid of Existence: An Analysis of the Sources of Comparative Ontology), Mu'assasah-yi pazhūhishī-yi ḥikmat wa falsafah-yi īrān, 1385 sH /2006. Based on lectures delivered by Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī in 1359 SH/1980 at the Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah in Tehran, and published in 1360 SH/1981.
5. Kāvushhā-yi `aql-i `amalī: falsafah-yi akhlāq (Investigations in Practical Reason: The Philosophy of Ethics), Tehran, 1384

SH/2005. Originally published in 1361 sH/1982. Based on Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's lectures delivered in 1360 SH/1981 on the philosophy of ethics at the Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah in Tehran.

6. The Principles of Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy: Knowledge by Presence, foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Albany, NY, 1992. Based on Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's doctorate and first published in Iran in 1362 SH/1983 by the Anjuman-i ḥikmat wa falsafah.

7. Ḥikmat wa ḥukūmat (Philosophy and Government), London, 1995. This is the final work which Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī authored.

8. al-Ta`līqāt (Glosses on Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm), Tehran, 1377 SH/1998. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's commentary on the Tuḥfat al-ḥakīm by Shaykh Muḥammad Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Gharavī al-Kumpānī al-Iṣfahānī (d. 1361 AH/1942).

9. With Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī, al-Ḥujjah fī al-fiqh (Proof in Jurisprudence), Qum, 1378 SH/1999. Lectures of Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥusayn Ṭabāṭabā'ī Burūjirdī and Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Ḥujjat Kūhkamarihī Tabrīzī as transcribed by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī when he was seventeen years old. The first volume of four was published in 1999, the year of his death. At the time of writing, the other three volumes do not seem to have been published.

10. Khāṭirāt-i Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī: faqīh wa ustād-i falsafah-yi islāmī (The Memoir of Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī: Jurist and Professor of Islamic Philosophy), ed. Ḥabīb Lājavardī, Bethesda, MD: Center for Middle Eastern Studies of Harvard University, 2001. Transcribed from Ḍīyā' Ṣidqī's interview with Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī for the Harvard University Oral History Project, supervised and edited by Ḥabīb Lājarvardī.

11. Justārhā-yi falsafī: majmū`ah-yi maqālāt, (Philosophical Inquiries: Collected Articles), ed. `Abdallāh Nāṣrī, Tehran, 1384 Sh/2005. This volume contains articles and interviews predominantly from the last two decades of Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's life, though some of the material in this posthumous volume was published in an earlier collection in 1360 SH/1981 entitled, Mitāfīzīk, also edited by `Abdallāh Nāṣrī.

12. Falsafah-yi taḥlīlī wa naẓariyyah-yi shinākht dar falsafah-yi islāmī (Analytical Philosophy and Epistemology in Islamic Philosophy), ed. `Abdallāh Nāṣrī, Chāvūshgarān-i naqsh, 1385 SH/2006. Published posthumously in 1379 sh/2000. The text is based on classes given by Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī in 1360 sh/1981 and 1364 SH/1985.

13. Sharḥ uṣūl-i kāfī: kitāb al-`aql wa al-jahl; kitāb al-tawḥīd (A commentary on Uṣūl al-Kāfi: Book on the Intellect and Ignorance, and The Book of Unity), ed. Parvīz Pūyān, Tehran, 1391 SH/2013.

## Translator John Cooper: Oxford, Qum, and Cambridge

As John Gurney remarked in his obituary of John Cooper, 'his background and earlier education gave little indication of the strange trajectory that his subsequent life would take'. Cooper was born in Brighton in 1947, the only child of a bank manager and Scottish mother. He grew up in North London and attended Highgate School where he studied Maths and Physics for his A-levels, going on to St. John's College, University of Oxford, where he undertook a degree in Philosophy, Physiology, and Psychology. After graduating from Oxford, Cooper spent five years in North Africa from 1970–1975 as director of English Studies at a language institute in Casablanca. At this point in his life, he was still yet to take a serious interest in Islam or the Arabic language. Instead he improved his French and picked up 'a smattering of Berber'.

After leaving Casablanca in 1975, it was Cooper's next destination and his experience in the run up to the Iranian Revolution of 1399–1400 AH/1978–1979 that had a decisive impact on his life's trajectory. Upon arriving in late 'Pahlavī' era Iran, Cooper spent a year teaching English at an army technical school in Masjid-i Sulaymān, the city

where George Reynolds and his team first struck commercial quantities of oil in 1326 AH/1908. The following year Cooper went on to teach physiology at the Medical Faculty of Jundī Shāpūr Ahwāz. Not yet thirty, he slowly started becoming drawn to Islam and Islamic philosophy and began his study of Arabic and Persian. The factors motivating Cooper to eventually embrace Shī`ah Islam remain unclear, but what seems to be the case is that his study of the Islamic sciences, both rational (ma`qūl) and transmitted (manqūl), only acquired further impetus and momentum with his conversion, as he enrolled to study philosophy at the Qum ḥawzah in 1397 ah/1977. Cooper was free to choose those areas in which he desired to specialise and develop his knowledge, ultimately deciding to focus on fiqh and Islamic philosophy. Covering both preliminary and more advanced texts with Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Ja`farī and Sayyid Muṣṭafā Muḥaqqiq Dāmād, who was at the time a young seminarian, Cooper's conversance in these areas quickly blossomed.

This period of bookish quietude would not, however, last for long. Throughout 1398 AH/1978 the cycle of protests that would reach their denouement in Muḥarram 1399 AH/December 1978, and eventually spell the end of the Pahlavī regime, continued apace and the British talabah would have witnessed first-hand these fateful events as they unfolded at the time. It was at this crucial and historic juncture that Cooper found himself thrust into the limelight as he began to act as a voluntary translator for Āyatullāh al-`Uẓmā Sayyid Muḥammad Kāẓim Sharī`atmadārī (d. 1406 AH/1986), as he had been studying and living at the latter's institute, the Dār al-tablīgh. It was also during this time that Cooper became acquainted with the author of `Ilm-i kullī, Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, who had only recently returned from North America. Cooper attended his postgraduate classes in Islamic philosophy, which he delivered in his capacity as professor of philosophy at the University of Tehran. It was during this time that Cooper began to translate ʿIlm-i kullī with Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī, which had since become an established textbook at the university due to its succinct exposition of the central questions of metaphysics. In these clamorous years, Cooper—with his fluency in Arabic and Persian and

knowledge of philosophy and jurisprudence—was a much sought-after translator. He embarked upon numerous translations of the writings of Āyatullāh Murtaḍā Muṭahharī (d. 1399 AH/1979), one of the leading thinkers and ideologues of the newly established Islamic Republic of Iran, and some translation projects for the Muhammadi Trust of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Additionally, with his teacher Shaykh Muḥammad Riḍā Ja`farī, he began work on Shaykh Abū Ja`far Muḥammad b. Ya`qūb al-Kulaynī's (d. 329 AH/941 CE) al-Uṣūl min al-kāfī, one of the sacred 'four books' collating the riwāyāt of the Twelve Imāms.

By 1981, Iran was in the throes of a brutal and bloody war with neighbouring Iraq and the profound turmoil brought about by this conflict would still be very much underway for another seven years. Under these circumstances it was no longer possible for the Englishman to isolate himself from the surrounding maelstrom and carry on his scholarly pursuits without attracting attention. The new managing committee at the Fayḍiyyah School did not renew his paperwork for a residency permit, and requested Cooper to leave immediately. Thus, as Gurney tells the story: 'he packed up within a week... and returned to England after an interval of nearly six years'.

Thus after a long respite, Cooper eventually came full-circle, returning to Oxford and British academic life, albeit having left physiology firmly behind. He first continued his studies in Arabic metaphysics with Fritz Zimmermann, and after a year enrolled as a DPhil student under the supervision of Wilferd Madelung. In Cooper's DPhil dissertation, provisionally entitled 'Intellect and Language: A Study of the Philosophical Foundation of Shī`ī legal methodology (uṣūl al-fiqh)', he pioneered studies which had been non-existent in English-language scholarship prior to him. Cooper had set himself the mammoth task of attempting to delineate the main phases of the development of Shī`ī uṣūl al-fiqh from Shaykh al-Ṭūsī through to the twentieth century and the decisive contributions of Ākhūnd Mullā Muḥammad Kāẓim Khurāsānī (d. 1329 AH/1911). Through his historical research into the primary legal texts he hoped to address the deeper epistemological questions surrounding uṣūl al-fiqh's complex mediation of reason and

revelation and its theoretical engagements with language and semantics. For obvious reasons this required a fundamental engagement and appraisal of the key texts of the Shīʿī legal tradition, and in this regard, he was greatly helped by Sayyid Ḥusayn Mudarrisī Ṭabāṭabāʾī—Hossein Modarressi, now of Princeton University—with whom he read Khurāsānī's Kifāyat al-uṣūl at Oxford in the academic year 1983–1984; who fondly remembers Cooper as an 'excellent student and a great human being'.

As his three-year grant came to an end, financial pressures compelled Cooper to undertake several side–ventures which ultimately distracted him from the completion of his thesis. These included a collaborative project, which entailed an abridged translation of al-Ṭabarī's (d. 310 AH/923 CE) Jāmiʿ al-bayān ʿan taʾwīl āy al-Qurʾān and the establishment of an academic and journal production company. It was only after his appointment as E.G. Browne Lecturer in Persian at the University of Cambridge that Cooper was able to return full-time to his academic preoccupations with renewed vigour and energy. At Cambridge he taught elementary Persian, classical texts, introductions to Islam and the religious sciences, and mediaeval Islamic thought, among other subjects. Apart from his translations and sporadic articles, it is arguablCooper's legacy as a teacher that has most endured and that will continue to live on in the years to come. His mastery of the original languages, and his breadth of knowledge—covering everything from Islamic mysticism to theoretical innovations in semiotics—not to mention his personal experience of both Western and traditional Islamic teaching methods and pedagogy, made him truly unique amongst his peers.

His death from a heart attack as he returned home from holidaying in Austria and Geneva on 9 January 1998 (corresponding to 9 or 10 Ramaḍān 1418 AH) came as a huge shock and loss to his friends and loved ones, and the many students upon whom he had left an indelible mark. The burgeoning field of Shīʿah Studies was also deprived of one of its potential champions, with the many projects he regrettably left unfinished, including his DPhil. thesis, a study of the first book of Mullā Ṣadrā's al-Asfār al-arbaʿah, and the work

herein, to name but a few; amounting, altogether, to a plethora of entwined threads left for posterity to take up and follow through to their own conclusions.

## The Translation of Universal Science
Every effort has been made to remain as faithful as possible to the translation undertaken by John Cooper. He based this on the second printing of 1380 AH/1960 of the original edition of 1376 AH/1956 published by Tehran University Press for the Faculty of Rational and Revealed Sciences (Dānishkadah-yi Maʿqūl wa Manqūl). However, whilst his original work was an impressive achievement, it was not a final draft and thus required editing in a number of respects. There were some brief portions left untranslated and, naturally, these had to be translated by the editor, who did his utmost to remain true to Cooper's style. In certain other instances, minor stylistic refinements were also made. Apart from going through the translation carefully against the original Persian text, the editor has compared Cooper's rendering of Ḥāʾirī's book paragraph by paragraph with the updated edition of ʿIlm-i kullī, which contained Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's own minor corrections and some brief additions to the original text published in 1376 AH/1956. However, these brief additions did not add much to the book and thus were not added to Cooper's translation which we have preserved as he left it with the minor corrections already mentioned above. It should also be noted that, we have been unable to trace all of the quotations the author employed as, in many instances, he relied either on older editions which were not available to us or on translations of Western works into Persian which we have been unable to locate. Care has also been taken to indicate in the footnotes whether the author was Yazdī, the translator, or the editor.

It should also be acknowledged that English-language scholarship and secondary literature upon the history of Islamic philosophy, particularly the philosophy of Mullā Ṣadrā, was relatively scant when Cooper in all likelihood began his translation of ʿIlm-i kullī in the early nineteen eighties. At this time there was little by way of consensus on the translation of such vexing concepts as tashkīk al-wujūd [variously rendered as 'modulation of being', 'analogicity of being', and 'amphiboly' among

others], central to Ṣadrian ontology. The editor has therefore tried to reflect, in as lightly a manner as possible, some of these scholarly deliberations over terminology and their conclusions, so that the translation of pertinent philosophical diction can be recognisable to readers familiar with previous scholarship in the field.

## ʿIlm-i kullī: Historical Context and Content: Historical Context

ʿIlm-i kullī is a concise overview—as indicated by its subtitle—of metaphysics. It was to be followed by two other volumes also written as overviews of 'theology in the most specific sense', which was seen as metaphysica specialis (al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-akhaṣṣ), and of psychology (ʿilm al-nafs) neither of which, unfortunately, ever materialised.

In order to better understand ʿIlm-i kullī we must understand the tradi-tion of which it forms a part. In Islamic philosophy, metaphysics proper was regarded both as 'first philosophy' (al-falsafat al-ūlā) as well as meta-physica generalis 'theology in the most general sense' (al-ilāhiyāt bi al-maʿnā al-aʿamm) in which the chief concern was with ontology, the science of being (ʿilm al-wujūd) as well as with certain dimensions of logic (manṭiq). A number of elaborations of this metaphysica generalis emerged in Islamic history, of which the most famous is the Peripatetic (mashshāʾī) school of Ibn Sīnā, who was heavily indebted to al-Fārābī (d. 339 AH/950 CE). The next in order of importance is the Illuminationst (Ishrāqī) school founded by Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyā b. Habash b. Amīrak al-Suhrawardī al-Maqtūl al-Shahīd (d. 587 AH/1191 CE). ʿIlm-i kullī, however, is a concise modern summa of the metaphysical doctrines of a school founded after these, namely the 'School of Transcendent Wisdom' (al-ḥikmah al-mutʿāliyah) of Ṣadr al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī, known to posterity as Mullā Ṣadrā; which continues to be regarded as definitive today by a fair amount of Shīʿī scholars.

The great genius of Mullā Ṣadrā was not only in the intrinsic originality of his ideas, but also in the breadth of his synthesising vision; which incorporated nearly every significant philosophical trend that preceded him. His system is a totalising synthesis of the philosophical tradition of Ibn Sīnā, the illuminative wisdom of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī, the Shīʿī rational theology (kalām) of Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, the unitive mysticism of Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn ʿArabī, and the pristine vision of direct insight into the nature of the Real in the teachings of the Shīʿī Imāms preserved in the ḥadīth. Nothing like it had existed before. Yet, Mullā Ṣadrā's synthesis was not based purely on conceptual elaborations and mere discursive procedures, but was also the expression of a direct witnessing (mushāhadah) and unveiling (kashf) of reality attained through a comprehensive askesis (tajrīd). In truth the life-blood of philosophy resides not so much in its answers as in its questions, and no question can be more fundamental than that of 'being', or 'existence'.

What does it mean to say that something is or that it exists? Is it possible to define existence? Is the notion of existence simply a mental construct, or does it refer to something real in the external world? Is being truly the 'ultimate reality', as some philosophers and mystics claim, or is 'ultimate reality' instead to be identified with non-being as claimed by still other philosophers and mystics? If so, how can non-existence be the ultimate ground of all that exists? These are epochal questions of an exceedingly ancient pedigree and it is in these fundamental areas that Mullā Ṣadrā interrogated the meaningfulness and validity of the metaphysical systems that preceded him and inaugurated a new beginning. It was Aristotle (d. 384–322 BCE) who, in trying to construct a science of being qua being (al-wujūd min ḥaythu huwa al-wujūd), introduced the distinction between quiddity and existence; instead of a science of being/existence (wujūd), however, he created a philosophy of existing things (mawjūdāt), or what he called 'substance' or 'essence' (Gk., οὐσία ousia, lit: 'thinghood'). It was left to the philosophers of Islam to work out the implications of the distinction between quiddity and existence. This distinction is, of course, a purely mental one and in the external world we are merely confronted by an object. The question subsequently arose as to which of the two was more fundamental, or primary, in the external world. That is to say: was it quiddity that was fundamentally real (aṣīl), with existence being a

mere mental abstraction (amr iʿtibārī; amr intizāʿī), or was it rather the reverse, namely that being was fundamentally real in the external world with quiddity having only a mentally posited reality? Prior to Mullā Ṣadrā the dominant view was that of the fundamental reality of quiddity (aṣālat al-māhiyah) in the external world. Indeed, Mullā Ṣadrā too originally adhered to this position, however he went on to completely reject it and took the fundamental reality of existence in the external world (aṣālat al-wujūd) as the starting point of his new system. Yet, Mullā Ṣadrā did not arrive at this conclusion by mere discursive thought alone. We are fortunate to have a brief account in his own words of how he was led to this view:

> In the earlier days I used to be a passionate defender of the thesis that the quiddities are aṣīl and that existence is iʿtibārī, until my lord gave me guidance and let me see His demonstration. All of a sudden my spiritual eyes were opened and I saw with utmost clarity that the truth was just the contrary of what the philosophers in general had held. Praise be to God who, by the light of intuition, led me out of the darkness of the groundless idea and firmly established me upon the thesis which would never change in the present world and the Hereafter. As a result (I now hold that) the existences (wujūdāt) are primary realities, while the quiddities are the permanent archetypes (aʿyān thābitah) that have never smelled the fragrance of existence. The existences are nothing but beams of light radiated by the true Light, which is the absolutely self-subsistent Existence, except that each of them is characterised by a number of essential properties and intelligible qualities. These latter are the things that are known as quiddities.

Mullā Ṣadrā sought a balance between Islamic gnosis and discursive thought. Philosophy without spirituality is not true philosophy. The true philosopher is not just a 'thinker' who speculates about the Ultimate Truth, but one who practices some method of noetic and psychic askesis, which enables him to concentrate upon this Ultimate Truth. In short, he must follow a regimen of spiritual exercise. Of course, for Mullā Ṣadrā, these are none other than the well-known Islamic practices of

supererogatory (nawāfil) prayer (ṣalāh), fasting (ṣiyām/ṣawm), supplication (duʿāʾ), invocation (dhikr), and periods of seclusion (khalwa). It is a well-known fact that spiritual exercises were, also, central in the Platonic tradition, although this was rarely given much attention until recently.

Thus, for Mullā Ṣadrā, true philosophy is lived wisdom with its roots in a spiritual way of life. In terms of his ontology, this is seen in his observation that the human being qua human being has an innate understanding of the deep meaning of being/existence (wujūd), insofar as we all understand what the meaning of 'is', is. Yet, here we are confronted with a profound paradox. Despite this universal intuition—basic to our humanity of what is meant by existence—no definition of being is possible since it is the basis of all con¬ceptual elaboration. Thus, all attempts to define it or describe it must fail. Moreover, despite this basic, pre-conceptual—even pre-linguistic— intuition of what being is, such an intuition can never constitute a pristine cognition of its true nature. Mullā Ṣadrā writes:

> The ipseity of being is the clearest of things in its immediacy and un-hidden-ness, [whereas] its true reality is the most hidden of things conceptually and in terms of getting to its very core, [while] its notion is the least of things in need of definition due to its apparent-ness and obvious-ness in addition to its being the most general of things due to its comprehensiveness. [However] its 'that-ness' is the most specific of specificities in entification and individuation, for it is by [none other than] it that every individuated thing is individuated, and every com¬pleted thing is completed, and every entified and particularised thing is entified; and it is individuating in itself and entifying in itself as you shall come to know.

Mullā Hādī Sabzawārī, a much later representative of the school of Mullā Ṣadrā, eloquently encapsulates this insight in a few short verses from his metaphysical poem embedded in his Sharḥ ghurār al-farāʾid (Glittering Gems), which is an epitome of the doctrines of the founder.

> All defining terms of "being" are but explanations of the name; they can neither be a definition nor a description (muʿarrif

al-wujūdi sharḥ al-ismi laysa bi al-ḥaddi wa lā bi al-rasm).

Its notion is among the most well-known of things, yet its true reality lies in the extremity of hiddenness (mafhūmuhu min a`rafi al-ashyā' wa kunhu-hu fī ghāyat al-khafā').

Mullā Ṣadrā's magnum opus is his Kitāb al-asfār (The Book of the Four Journeys) in which he sets out his system in great detail. Both modern editions of this work run to nine volumes. Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's `Ilm-i kullī is loosely modelled on Sabzawārī's Sharḥ ghurār al-farā'id and, like this work, is ultimately rooted in the doctrines elaborated in detail in Kitāb al-Asfār. Mullā Ṣadrā appropriated the notion of spiritual wayfaring (sulūk) or journeying (safar) as a symbolic framework in which to cast his system. These four journeys are identified with different areas of philosophy (falsafah): which Mullā Ṣadrā uses interchangeably with the Qur'ānic term for wisdom (ḥikmah). Although Mahdī Ḥā'irī Yazdī's `Ilm-i kullī touches only on elements of the first journey the work is rooted in the overall system of the Asfār and thus it behooves us to examine these journeys in detail.

The notion of a journey (safar) is an apt symbol for the spiritual path and has a long and venerable history in the spiritual heritage of the world. To undertake even a profane journey is to be changed, for one never returns as the same person who left. To journey is to undergo a transformation. Indeed, even in pre-Islamic jāhilī culture we see the transformative power of the journey undertaken by the poet in the raḥīl sections of the Seven Odes (al-mu`allaqāt al-sab`). Islam's fifth pillar is also a spiritual journey, namely the pilgrimage to Makkah. So it is not at all surprising that Mullā Ṣadrā should employ the journey as the symbolic principle of organisation of his Asfār. He is certainly not the first person in Islamic history to take recourse to such symbolism. It would be difficult, and beyond our abilities, to determine whom first employed such an image, however we will very briefly mention the main figures of `irfān (gnosis) prior to Mullā Ṣadrā who did so.

Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ghazālī (d. 520 AH/1126 CE) authored a work known as Risālat al-Ṭayr which was later elaborated upon in poetic

Persian by Farīd al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-`Aṭṭār (d. 586 AH/1190 CE) in his own Manṭiq al-Ṭayr: in which a group of birds set out on a journey in search of the mythical bird known as the sīmurgh which symbolises the spiritual guide. All but thirty of them perish on their quest in which they do not undergo four journeys, but must instead cross seven valleys (haft wadī) after which each realises that he is the Sīmurgh.

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī also authored a Risālat al-Ṭayr, however, the more significant work for our discussion is his Qiṣṣat al-ghurbah al-gharbiyyah. This tale of the occidental exile introduces a geographical symbolism wherein 'the occident'—the place where the Sun sets—is associated with exile and alienation from the Origin, which is symbolically associated with 'the orient'—the place where the Sun rises. Thus, we are all in exile in the occident and must undertake a journey of return to the orient of lights. Ibn Sīnā (d. 428 AH/1037 CE) espoused similar ideas in his Persian 'visionary recitals', as they were termed by Henry Corbin. However, to my knowledge, neither of them spoke of four journeys, as such.

Implicit in any notion of a journey, and particularly a spiritual one, is the idea of stages; which is to say, a progressive set of phases of spiritual transformation. Whilst none of the figures mentioned above introduced a symbolism of four journeys, the notion of the spiritual journey being one of gradual transformation does seem to be implicit in their works. A very early Ṣūfī figure, Khwājah `Abd Allāh Anṣārī (d. 481 AH/ 1089 CE) authored an influential work on the spiritual path entitled Manāzil al-sā'irīn, which, although it sets out numerous stages of the spiritual path, also does not speak of four journeys. Nevertheless, Mullā Ṣadrā quotes from the section on the Divine Unity (tawḥīd) in the Asfār.

Perhaps the first Ṣūfī to speak of Four Journeys—or three—was Muḥyī al-Dīn ibn `Arabī (d. 638 AH/1240 CE), but these do not seem to correspond with those of Mullā Ṣadrā. In fact, he speaks of all existence other than Allah as being in a condition of perpetual journeying (safar). This seems similar to Mullā Ṣadrā's idea of a continuous spiritual transformation known as al-ḥarakat al-

jawhariyyah and generally referred to in English as 'transubstantial motion' or 'motion-in-substance' (al-ḥarakah fī al-jawhar) rather than his Four Journeys.

Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 736 AH/1335 CE) and al-Sayyid al-Sharīf `Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī (d. 816 AH/1413 CE) speak of four journeys in an almost identical fashion and, indeed, it seems that the latter was paraphrasing and further expounding upon the views of the former. Kāshānī describes the notion of journey itself as 'the turning of the heart towards the Truth' (tawajjuh al-qalb ilā al-ḥaqq) and maintains that the [spiritual] journeys are fourfold. The first is described as journeying to Allah (al-sayr ilā allāh) from the way–stations of the soul (manāzil al-nafs) until arrival at the 'clear horizon' (al-ufuq al-mubīn) which is the end of the station of the heart and the beginning of the self–revelations of the Names (nihāyat maqām al-qalb wa mabdaʾ al-tajalliyāt al-asmāʾiyyah). The second is the journey in Allah (al-sayr fī allāh), which is to say it consists of acquiring His attributes (ṣifāt) and becoming established in His names until arrival at 'the highest horizon' (al-ufuq al-aʿlā) which is the end of the station of the Presence of Oneness (ḥaḍrat al-wāḥidiyyah). The third is rising to 'the source of gatheredness' (ʿayn al-jamʿ), which is a state of non-duality and is the Presence of Singularity (ḥaḍrat al-aḥadiyyah) which is the Station of Two Bows' Lengths (qāb qawsayn). If one rises further to the level of 'or less' (aw adnā) [less than two bows' lengths] then this is the end of sanctity (nihāyat al-wilāyah). The fourth is the journey by Allah together with Allah for completion (bi allāh `inda allāh li al-takmīl), which is the station of subsistence after annihilation (al-baqāʾ baʿd al-fanāʾ) and discernment after unification (al-farq baʿd al-jamʿ). Both Kāshānī and Jurjānī speak the language of the Ṣūfīs; presumably based on their lived spiritual experience.

The Indian scholar Muḥammad `Alī b. `Alī Thānvī (d. 1158 ah/1745) speaks of only two journeys: 'to Allah' (ilā allāh) and 'in Allah' (fī allāh). Another Indian scholar, `Abd al-Nabī b. `Abd al-Rasūl al-Aḥmadnagarī (d. after 1173 ah/1745) only

briefly alludes to the four journeys, but does not say what they are: 'The journeys according to them are four in number as is set out in detail in the [well-known] works of spiritual wayfaring (sulūk)'.

Although there are certain points of convergence, none of the examples we have considered matches exactly with Mullā Ṣadrā's notion, which is very specific. He writes:

> Know that the wayfarers (sullāk) among the sages (`urafāʾ) and sanctified ones (awliyaʾ) undergo four journeys:
> The first of these is the journey from the creatures to the Truth (min al-khalq ilā al-ḥaqq).
> The second of these is the journey by the Truth in the Truth (bi al-ḥaqq fī al-ḥaqq).
> The third journey parallels the first for it is from the Truth [back] to the creatures by the Truth (min al-ḥaqq ilā al-khalq bi al-ḥaqq).
> The fourth in a way parallels the second for it is by the Truth in the creatures (bi al-ḥaqq fī al-khalq).
> Thus, I have arranged this book of mine in the form of four journeys to conform to their movements among the lights and shadows, naming it The Transcendent Wisdom regarding the Questions of Lordship (or The Transcendent Wisdom regarding the Journeys of the Intellect).

Based on this passage we can see that Mullā Ṣadrā is in agreement with his predecessors on the first journey insofar as Allah may be seen as a 'destination', namely that the Absolute Truth is seen as distant and thus must be journeyed toward by journeying away from creation. Having thus 'arrived' to Him, one can obviously journey back. However, one can also 'stay there' for some time before going back. Having come back to creation, however, one is changed and continues to journey 'within' creation. Mullā Ṣadrā does not offer any further explanation of what he means by the four journeys other than to state that the book is heuristically organised into its four major parts according to this principle. How the topics correspond to the journeys is presumably to be discerned from the overall organisation of the book to be seen in the titles of its divisions. However, according to Āyatullāh Ḥasanzāda Āmulī in his edition, previous printings of the work have

garbled some of these headings, thereby dividing the work in a rather confusing fashion.

At any rate, we must make the best of the situation and try to discern what is involved in these journeys by analysing the published editions available to us. Such an analysis leads us to examine certain correspondences. The First Journey is concerned—mostly—with Metaphysics/First Philosophy/Theology in its most general sense/Metaphysica generalis (al-il-āhiyāt bi al-ma`nā al-a`amm); the Second Journey is concerned with Physics; the Third Journey is concerned with Theology or Metaphysica Specialis (al-il-āhiyāt bi al-ma`nā al-akhaṣṣ); and the Fourth and final Journey is concerned with Psychology. According to this schema, then, Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's `Ilm-i kullī is concerned exclusively with the first journey, and its projected second volume would have been concerned with the third journey, whereas its projected third volume would have been concerned with the fourth journey.

Mullā Ṣadrā's characterisation of the Four Journeys differs from those of his predecessors; Kāshānī and Jurjānī speak only in purely Ṣūfī terms. Mullā Ṣadrā radically differs from these two as well as from nearly all philosophers and Ṣūfīs who preceded him, in his harmonious blending of what we may call the 'discursive pursuit of wisdom' (al-ḥikmah al-baḥthiyyah) and the 'illumi¬native pursuit of wisdom' (al-ḥikmah al-kashfiyyah al-dhawqiyyah al-ishrāqi-yyah). The system set out at such length in his book is a harmonisation of the ways of purely discursive reason and illumination. One does not find in his thought the exclusive reliance on mere conceptual elaboration and apodictic proof (burhān) as a means of attaining to the Ultimate Truth, that can be seen elsewhere, for instance, in some adherents of the school of Ibn Sīnā, or amongst pure Aristotelians like Ibn Rushd (d. 595 AH/ 1198 CE).

One also does not find the sort of anti-intellectualism which asserts that reason and spiritual realisation are incompatible and which was the hallmark of much of Ṣūfī thought prior to Mullā Ṣadrā as well as in his own time and even now wherein all reason is sacrificed to notions of kashf, dreams, visions, so-called 'ecstatic utterances' (shaṭaḥāt), etc. Mullā Ṣadrā retains the notion of

Four Journeys because it conveniently encapsulates the four logically possible modes of spiritual wayfaring; which cover, in a general way, all spiritual stations. Moreover, he identifies each of these Four Journeys with specific areas of inquiry in traditional Islamic philosophy, namely metaphysics, physics, theology, and psychology. To recapitulate, any journey presup¬poses a point of origin and a destination—a departure and an arrival: the spiritual path is none other than the quest for the Truth (al-ḥaqq), but here Allah is both origin and destination. Having completed the journey from the creatures to the Truth, the soul must further complete its movement from potentiality to actuality, and thus journey by the Truth in the Truth. Having accomplished the latter; the third journey is a kind of return inasmuch as it proceeds from the Truth back to the creatures by the Truth. The fourth and final journey represents the last stage of the soul's movement from potentiality to actuality and is by the Truth in the creatures.

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's ʿIlm-i kullī, while it does not explicitly mention the four journeys, is intimately connected to this tradition of unifying the discursive and the illuminative in the pursuit of wisdom. As noted above, it is concerned with the topics of the first journey alone, namely metaphysica generalis. Although it broadly follows the plan of Sabzawārī's Sharḥ ghurar al-farāʾid it differs from this work in a number of significant ways; the most obvious of which being that it is written in Persian, and is thus more readily understandable to someone for whom this is their mother—tongue even if they are well grounded in Arabic. The second mark of distinction is that it seeks to make the presentation of ideas as accessible as possible. This attempt at clear presentation may be seen as foreshadowing similar developments pursued later by Āyatullāh Sayyid Muḥammad Bāqir al-Ṣadr to simplify the teaching of Islamic jurisprudence (uṣūl al-fiqh) in his Durūs fī `ilm al-uṣūl (Lessons in Islamic jurisprudence). This effort in philosophy came to fruition in the 1390s AH/1970s with `Allāmah Sayyid Muḥammad Husayn Ṭabāṭabāʾī's (d. 1402 AH/1981) works Bidāyat al-ḥikmah (The Beginning of Philosophy) and Nihāyat al-ḥikmah (The End of Philosophy). Mahdī Hāʾirī Yazdī's `Ilm-i kullī predates all of these works by decades.

## Content

While the `Ilm-i kullī tries to simplify its subject, by presenting it in the clearest terms possible, Mahdī Hā'irī Yazdī nonetheless assumes a certain measure of philosophical preparation on the part of his readership and it is in respect to this that the modern reader approaching the `Ilm-i kullī can be placed at a disadvantage. The preparation in question is a thorough grounding in logic. There was a time in the West when schooling was built on a solid foundation of instruction in logic, (Latin) grammar, and (Latin) rhetoric; altogether known as the trivium. This ceased to be the case quite a long time ago with results whose full examination lies beyond this introduction. Suffice it to say that many people today have scarcely any idea what the laws of logic are and how pivotal they are for orienting any serious discussion.

Logic is best considered as an instrumental science, which concerns itself with establishing the laws by which one is prevented from making errors in thought. Sabzawārī's Sharḥ ghurar al-farā'id in its lithograph edition of 1298 AH/1880, which is the one that most Shī`ī seminarians used until very recently, is bound along with another book in the same volume; al-La'ālī al-muntaẓamah, a textbook on logic which forms a pre-requisite for understanding the metaphysical text which follows it. The kind of logic taught in al-Laʾālī al-muntaẓamah, whose knowledge is assumed by `Ilm-i kullī, is the traditional logic founded by Aristotle and further developed by those who came after him well into modern times. However, this has all now been completely discarded except by the Muslims, mainly the Shī`ah and less so the Sunnīs, and the Catholic philosophers known as Thomists or Neo-Thomists. This 'old logic' has largely been superseded by a modern, symbolic, logic, which was developed mainly by mathematicians—there are other newer forms of logic such as modal logic, fuzzy logic, etc. but they are not central to our argument. A reader grounded in the confusions of modern symbolic logic, is perhaps likely to miss the significance of much of the argument in `Ilm-i kullī. In order to address this situation the key issues will be dealt with by way of conclusion to this introduction.

The bedrock of traditional logic is the fact that man is a rational animal (al-insān ḥayawān nāṭiq), that human beings think and, moreover, that thought has structure. This structure is exhibited in the three fundamental acts of the mind:

> Simple apprehension
> Judging
> Reasoning

To these three fundamental kinds of thinking correspond the mental products:

> Concepts
> Judgements
> Arguments

Which are expressed in logic as:

> Terms
> Propositions
> Syllogisms

And which are, in turn, given expression in language as:

> Words
> Declarative sentences
> Paragraphs

For example:

> 'Man'
> 'Avicenna is a man'
> 'All men are mortal, and Avicenna is a man, therefore Avicenna is mortal'

A term stands alone; it is a word and has no parts, whereas a proposition consists of a subject term (mawḍū`) and a predicate term (maḥmūl), and an argument is composed of at least one premise (mutaqaddim) and a conclusion (tālin). Terms answer the question of what is, and thus are either clear or ambiguous; propositions answer the question of whether something is or is not, and thus are either true or false; and finally arguments answer the question of why something is or is not the case, and thus are either valid or invalid. Metaphysically, terms reveal quiddities (māhiyāt; what a thing is), propositions reveal existence (wujūd; whether a thing is), and arguments reveal causes (`ilal; why a thing is). Now, the effect of modern symbolic logic has been far more drastic than simply introducing a mathematical shorthand for expressing our arguments, for it has eliminated the study of terms; it has, in so doing, repudiated the study of the first act of the mind. Modern symbolic logic is not interested in the study of quiddities or essences. The reason for its (anti-)metaphysical roots lies in the repudiation of

both epistemological realism and metaphysical realism. Epistemological realism affirms that the object of the intellect (`aql), when working naturally and rightly, is objective reality (ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ) as it really is (kamā hiya). In other words, not only can we know objective reality, we can sometimes even know it with certainty. Modern logic, however, is not comfortable with such seemingly obvious truths and deems them to be naive. Metaphysical realism affirms the intelligibility of reality. This two-fold rejection is the legacy of David Hume (d. 1776) and Immanuel Kant (d. 1804).

Hume, like John Locke (d. 1704) before him, argued that the immediate objects of human knowledge were not those of objective reality, but rather the products of our mentation—and that we could not know if these mental images truly corresponded to 'real' objects. He makes this point early on in his An Inquiry concerning Human Understanding. Accordingly, Hume speaks of two kinds of propositions corresponding to these ideas or images, which he terms 'matters of fact' and 'relations of ideas'.

All the objects of human reason or inquiry may naturally be divided into two kinds, to wit, 'Relations of Ideas', and 'Matters of Fact'. Of the first kind are the sciences of Geometry, Algebra, and Arithmetic, and in short every affirmation which is either intuitively or demonstrably certain. That the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the square of the two sides is a proposition which expresses a relation between these figures. That three times five is equal to half of thirty expresses a relation between these numbers. Propositions of this kind are discoverable by the mere operation of thought, without dependence on what is anywhere existent in the universe. Though there never were a circle or triangle in nature, the truths demonstrated by Euclid would forever retain their certainty and evidence.

Matters of fact, which are the second objects of human reason, are not ascertained in the same manner, nor is our evidence of the truth, however great, of a like nature with the foregoing. The contrary of every matter of fact is still possible, because it can never imply a contradiction and is conceived by the mind with the same facility and distinctness as if ever so conformable to reality. That the sun will not rise tomorrow is no less intelligible a proposition than the affirmation that it

will rise. We should in vain, therefore, attempt to demonstrate its falsehood. Were it demonstrably false, it would imply a contradiction and could never be distinctly conceived by the mind.

In the thought of Kant, Hume's 'relations of ideas' correspond to his 'analytic propositions' and 'matters of fact' correspond to his 'synthetic propositions'.

In all judgements in which the relation of a subject to the predicate is thought (I take into consideration affirmative judgements only, the subsequent application to negative judgements being easily made), this relation is possible in two different ways. Either the predicate B belongs to the subject A, as something which is (covertly) contained in this concept A; or B lies outside the concept A, although it does indeed stand in connection with it. In the one case I entitle the judgement analytic, in the other synthetic. Analytic judgements (affirmative) are therefore those in which the connection of the predicate with the subject is thought through identity; those in which this connection is thought without identity should be entitled synthetic. The former, as adding nothing through the predicate to the concept of the subject, but merely breaking it up into those constituent concepts that have all along been thought in it, although confusedly, can also be entitled explicative. The latter, on the other hand, add to the concept of the subject a predicate which has not been in any wise thought in it, and which no analysis could possibly extract from it; and they may therefore be entitled ampliative. If I say, for instance, 'All bodies are extended', this is an analytic judgement. For I do not require to go beyond the concept which I connect with 'body' in order to find extension as bound up with it. To meet with this predicate, I have merely to analyse the concept, that is, to become conscious to myself of the manifold which I always think in that concept. The judgement is therefore analytic. But when I say, 'All bodies are heavy', the predicate is something quite different from anything that I think in the mere concept of body in general; and the addition of such a predicate therefore yields a synthetic judgement.

Thus, we see that Humean 'relations of ideas' and Kantian 'analytic propositions' correspond to 'tautologies' in today's logic, namely propositions that are true by definition since the predicate in question only repeats all or part of the subject; e.g.

'Milk is milk', or 'The gryphon is not a non-gryphon', or 'Bachelors are unmarried men'. As for Hume's 'matters of fact' and Kant's 'synthetic propositions', these are propositions whose predicates do add some new informa¬tion to their subjects, e.g. 'No giraffe is blue', or 'Some planets exhibit retrograde motion'. For Hume such propositions are matters of fact since they can only be known by sense observation and thus are always particular— 'These two men have moustaches'—, rather than universal—'All men are mortal'—since we cannot experience universals through the five senses, only particulars. Hume argued that we cannot truly be certain of universal truths such as 'All men are mortal'—despite the fact that the mortality rate for all of human history has never fallen below one hundred percent! For him, particular facts deduced from general principles are only probable and can never be known or predicted with certainty and, thus, there can be no certain knowledge of objective reality ('matters of fact'), only of our own mentation ('relations of ideas'). This extends for Hume even into the domain of scientific knowledge, which he also reduces to a matter of mere probabilities since we cannot assume any necessary connection between cause and effect—only a 'constant conjunction' of particular causal instances. It is interesting to note that the same sort of repudiation of causality was vigorously defended by the Sunnī mutakallim al-Ghazālī (d. 505 AH/1111 CE) in his Tahāfut al-falāsifah (Incoherence of the Philosophers).

Even though he accepted much of this analysis, Kant did not go as far as the radical scepticism of Hume. His novel solution—of, which he was sufficiently enamoured to term it his 'Copernican revolution in philosophy'—was to argue that it was not for human knowledge to conform to objective reality, but to construct it as a painter paints a picture; thus, human knowledge does not consist of learning but of making. Therefore, the world of experience is formed by our knowing, rather than our knowledge being formed by the world.

Whether one upholds Humean scepticism or Kantian idealism, as his view is known, logic is in any case reduced to the mere manipulation of symbols by agreed upon conventions and does not offer us systematic principles for structured knowledge of an ordered universe. Thus, on such a view, 'relation', 'cause', 'quality', 'time', etc. are mere mental constructs that have no objective referent. Moreover, the five universals (al-kulliyāt al-khams) of Aristotle: 'genus' (jins), 'differentia' (faṣl), 'species' (nawʿ), 'proprium' (khāṣṣah), and 'common accident' (ʿaraḍ ʿāmm) are reduced to mere names for classes and sub-classes that we mentally construct.

Such then are the metaphysical roots of modern symbolic logic. Due to its initial development having been at the hands of the mathematician-philosophers Gottlob Frege (d. 1925),91 Alfred North Whitehead (d. 1947), and Bertrand Russell (d. 1970), modern symbolic logic is greatly concerned with notions of mathematical consistency. This concern thereby leads to a host of other problems, namely the so-called 'paradoxes' of what is termed 'material implication' which are in fact nothing more than fallacies. In what follows we shall discuss this and two other fallacies rooted in modern symbolic logic and Set Theory, which we have dubbed 'the fallacy of incompleteness' and 'the transfinite number fallacy'. It is important that the contemporary reader understand what is at stake in these fallacies since the arguments in `Ilm-i kullī are based on traditional logic and the notion that philosophical reasoning based on apodictic proof does yield necessary truths. A number of arguments in traditional philosophy are also based on the impossibility of an infinite regress. However, certain developments in mathematics during the nineteenth century have led some people to hold that an infinite regress is indeed possible. These ideas are developed at length in what follows.

Material Implication: Paradox or Fallacy?

Modern symbolic logic seeks to give mathematical expression to human reasoning. Its distinguishing feature is that it seeks to render all parts of an argument as symbols expressly designed for analysis. However, rather than the simple use of symbols employed in the old logic, such as in 'all As are Bs, all Bs are Cs, therefore all As are Cs', in modern symbolic logic no words from the language in question remain and all is reduced to symbols. This approach has its roots in the investigations of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (d. 1716), and was further developed around the same time by George Boole (d. 1864) and Augustus De Morgan (d. 1871), finally culminating with the 'concept script' (Begriffsschrift) of Gottlob Frege.

Logic is very much concerned with inference, in fact one may even go far as to call it the science of necessary inference. The latter involves a process of thinking by which we draw a conclusion from evidence; moving from one proposition to another until we reach a conclusion, using propositions, known as premises, to infer the conclusion. The simplest example of such reasoning in action, is the syllogistic movement from true premises to a true conclusion. An argument is logically valid when the conclusion necessarily follows from its premises. Therefore, in a logically valid argument, if the premises are true, it necessarily follows that the conclusion must be true: 'All men are mortal, Avicenna is a man, therefore Avicenna is mortal' is a valid argument. However, in an invalid argument this is not the case: 'Men have two legs, Avicenna has two legs, therefore Avicenna is a man' is not a valid argument. Although, Avicenna is indeed a man, it does not follow from the premise used in the argument, and therefore the conclusion that 'Avicenna is a man' cannot be established by this argument. In traditional logic a true conclusion can only be established on the basis of some, not all, premises. Thus, the second example was seen to be invalid by traditional logic and, indeed, this agrees with our innate logical 'common sense' as well. However, in modern symbolic logic the second example would be considered a valid inference. Modern symbolic logic establishes a relationship between premise and conclusion known as 'implication', often also called 'material implication' that is known as a 'truth functional connective'. That is to say the truth of a statement is simply a function of its parts akin to a mathematical equation. Thus, the simple negation or denial of a proposition p, that is to say -p, is calculated, as it were, by recourse to the truth table given below.

Negation

| P | -P |
| --- | --- |
| T | F |
| F | T |

Similarly, conjunction and (inclusive) disjunction are calculated from the following truth tables:

Conjunction

| P | 4 | P & 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| T | T | T |
| F | T | F |
| T | F | F |
| F | F | F |

Disjunction

| P | 4 | P v 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| T | T | T |
| F | T | T |
| T | F | T |
| F | F | F |

The ultimate motivation behind all of this mania for symbols, since Leibniz, has been to render the determination of an arguments' validity a purely clerical task which could be performed without recourse to the words of the argument. Paradoxically, the idea was to accomplish the task of thinking without any thought at all but merely by recourse to the inspection of the bare symbols and whether they appear in the order specified by the rules governing them: thus, reasoning is reduced to a purely formal, clerical exercise. The earliest computing machine merely represents the natural step from the clerical to the mechanical, and then to the electronic. This process of mathematizing thought reaches a bizarre culmination in the notion of material implication. For, in modern symbolic logic, the truth-value of material implication is not at all dependent on the content of any of the propositions of the material implication, but only on whether the premises ('antecedents') are true or false and whether the conclusion ('consequent') is true or false. Material implication is calculated according to the truth table below:

Material Implication

| P | q | P -> 4 |
| --- | --- | --- |
| T | T | T |
| T | F | F |
| F | T | T |
| F | F | T |

By way of clarification and example, the first row tells us that if the premise is true and the conclusion is true, then the implication is true. Let p be 'lapis lazuli is blue' and let q be 'gold is a precious metal'. Thus, the material implication will be 'if lapis lazuli is blue, then gold is a precious metal'. Now, obviously p and q each considered on its own is true, however q certainly does not follow from p. In the second case, illustrated in the second row, if the premise (antecedent) is true and the conclusion (consequent) is false, then the implication is false. So, 'if lapis lazuli is blue, then gold is a fruit'. Note that p is certainly true and q is certainly false, but again q does not follow from p. In the third case, if the premise (antecedent) is false and the conclusion (consequent) is true, then the implication is true. So, 'if lapis lazuli is green, then gold is a precious metal'. Here p is certainly false and q is certainly true, and yet again q does not follow from p. Finally, if each of the premises (antecedents) and the conclusion (consequent) are both false, then the implication is true. Thus, 'if lapis lazuli is green, then gold is a fruit'.

According to the rules of material implication, if any statement q is true, then it is implied by any statement p whatever. Thus, 'the square root of two is an irrational number' is implied by 'the moon is made of green cheese'. In modern logic, even self-contradictory statements such as 'cats are not cats' validly imply any true conclusion. Also, if a proposition is false, material implication permits it to imply any statement whatever. 'The earth is flat' implies that 'Eve is female' and also that 'Eve is male' and that 'three squared is nine', as well as 'three squared is not nine'.

These strongly counter-intuitive results are commonly known as the 'paradoxes of material implication'. Logicians such as P.H. Grice attempted to explain away their paradoxical appearance, through positing a notion of 'conversational implicature'. However there remains a strong case to be made that the absurd consequences engendered by the 'truth-functionality' of material implication—in its abandonment of that we ordinarily mean by 'valid implication'—go so far as to greatly undermine the reasonability of symbolic logic.

## The Fallacy of Incompleteness

In 1930 Kurt Gödel (d. 1978) proved his famous Incompleteness theorem which states that in any system sufficient to axiomatise arithmetic there will always exist some proposition p, such that it will not be possible to decide whether p is true or not on the basis of that system. Thus, the complete disjunction: 'p or not p', in symbols: (p ∨ ¬p) will be formally undecidable on the basis of the system, hence the title of his seminal paper On Formally Undecidable Propositions of Principia Mathematica and Related Systems published that year in the Monantshefte für Mathematike und Physik. Due to works published in the twentieth century which popularised these aspects of mathematics, especially Douglass Hofstadter's Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid and Rudy Rucker's Infinity and the Mind an impression has been fostered amongst a not inconsiderable number of people that this result establishes that logic is incapable of arriving at necessary truths through apodictic proof. It is this that we have in mind when speaking of the 'fallacy of incompleteness'. In reality, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem (1931) is specifically concerned with the limitations inherently present in the axiomatisation of arithmetic, by Russell and Whitehead in their Principia Mathematica. He later extended this theorem to include any systematisation of mathematics sufficiently sophisticated enough to define basic arithmetic. Those who interpreted his result to mean that we can never really be sure of our logical structures in their entirety—and thus took it to be the destruction of rationality itself—are guilty of a gross misunderstanding and misrepresentation of his position. Quite to the contrary, Gödel saw his result as evidence of an eternal objective truth independent of the human mind, which could only be imperfectly apprehended. It is beyond the scope of this introduction, as well as lying outside of its immediate aims, to delve any further into Gödel's position on matters of metaphysics and mathematical philosophy, but suffice to say he adhered to a Platonist conception of mathematics and was also a believer in God after the fashion of Leibniz. It is this misuse of Gödel's otherwise perfectly sound theorem that we have characterised as being fallacious rather than the Incompleteness Theorem itself.

## The Transfinite Number Fallacy

The final discussion of ʿIlm-i kullī concerns the use of the concepts of the vicious circle and the infinite regress in philosophical argumentation. An infinite regress is impossible and is often employed in cosmological arguments for the existence of God; the impossibility of an infinite regress, whether of temporal events such as, causes and effects, contingencies, etc., is that such would constitute an actual infinite and that an actual infinite cannot exist. At the close of the nineteenth century, Georg Cantor (d. 1918) developed a rigorous mathematical theory of a new class of numbers 'greater' than infinity, which he called transfinite numbers. His insight was that, whilst what are known as the natural numbers with which we count, 1, 2, 3, ..., etc., constitute our basic notion of infinity; when taken as a totality in their abstract numeracy, so to speak, this is seen to be only one 'kind' of infinity. Thus, if one conceives of the odd numbers in their totality, and the even numbers in their totality each of these sets taken as a totality will also constitute an infinity. Moreover, this infinity is of the same kind as the infinity we associate with the natural numbers since the odd numbers 1, 3, 5, ... as well as the even numbers 2, 4, 6, ..., etc., can, in our imagination, all be put into a one-to-one correspondence with 1, 2, 3, ..., etc. On the basis of such insights, Cantor proceeded to define transfinite ordinal numbers denoted by the Greek letter ω (omega) as well as transfinite cardinal numbers denoted by the Hebrew letter א (aleph). Employing subscripts attached to these symbols he worked out the rules for an arithmetic of transfinite numbers. However, there is another kind of infinity, different from that associated with the natural numbers, namely that of the 'number', so to speak, of points on a line. In this case, it is not possible to imagine putting all the points on the line into a one-to-one correspondence with 1, 2, 3, ..., etc., because between any two points there will always be another point. Therefore, this set exhibits another sort of infinity greater than the infinity of the set of numbers 1, 2, 3, ..., etc.

It is on the basis of these realisations that Cantor developed a full-blown theory of transfinite numbers. It is sometimes alleged that the concept of an infinite regress and the arguments based on it have now been invalidated by Cantor's discoveries as well as subsequent developments in Set Theory.

However, as in the case of the fallacy of incompleteness, so too with what we have here termed the 'transfinite number fallacy'; such an interpretation can only constitute a gross misunderstanding or misrepresentation. The notions of the infinite employed in Cantor's transfinite numbers as well as in modern Set Theory belong to the mathematical abstractions which exist, to be sure, in the mind, but not in the external world. The actual infinite does not leave the world of the mind to become actualised in the external world. Philosophical arguments employing the impossibility of an infinite regress deny only the existence of the actual infinite in the external world.

## Nominalism and the Repudiation of Universals

Of the fallacies that we have so far examined above, the one that impinges most directly on logic itself is, of course, that of so-called 'material implication'. This notion, together with the repudiation of both epistemological realism and metaphysical realism are what distinguish modern symbolic logic from its traditional ancestor. Thus, in this new logic not only does the object of the intelligence not conform to the real, but also in knowing we construct an order on a random and chaotic 'reality', which is ultimately unknowable. Thus, in modern logic, categories such as 'man', 'rational', 'thing', and 'attribute' are to be considered names rather than universals; a repudiation (of universals) which is known as 'nominalism' and has roots far older than Hume. Nominalism is associated with the philosopher William of Ockham (d. 1347 CE) and, although his position was eventually condemned by the Catholic church, which adopted the theological formulation of Thomas Aquinas as definitive, his real influence—despite his deep and genuine faith in God—was to culminate in the scepticism and nihilism of the modern age. The author of Nihilism before Nietzsche makes the following observations on the effects Ockham's nominalism had on logic:

> For scholasticism, ontological realism had gone hand in hand with syllogistic logic. If the basic premise of realism, the extra-mental existence of universals, is accepted and, if these universals are identified with God's thoughts in the Neoplatonic manner of Porphyry, Boethius, and the Arabs, then

logic becomes a universal science that explicates the necessary and essential relations of all created things. No real knowledge of scripture is necessary to grasp the truth of nature. The rejection of realism thus undermines syllogistic logic. If all things are radically individual, then universals are merely names (nomina), verbal tools created by finite human beings for the purpose of dealing with the vast array of radically individual things. Universals in this sense have only a logical meaning. Logic thus becomes a logic of names or signs rather than a logic that expresses the real relations among things.

Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī's ʿIlm-i kullī is the fruit of a tradition that never accepted such sophistry. Indeed, after making an allusion to an anti-philosophical bias among a minority of Shīʿī scholars he rejects such anti-intellectual and sceptical tendencies at the outset of his work where he paraphrases Plato's Phaedo, thus:

> In one of his discourses, Socrates said to his pupil Phaedo: "The worst affliction is that someone should turn his back on reasoning, just as some people turn away from the human species. By which we mean that it sometimes happens that someone, without consideration and involun¬tarily, takes someone else as the repository of his confidences; he takes him for a truthful, sincere, and honest person. After some time he finds him to be a wicked man and a liar. When this event has occurred several times, and the unfortunate person has been frequently deceived by those whom he takes to be his best and most sincere friends, he becomes tired and fed up with all men, and believes that no right and sincere man can be found. O Phaedo! have you not seen how some people in this way gradually turn their backs on their fellow humans?"
> Phaedo: "Yes, indeed, how well you have analysed the matter, O Socrates, my dear and beloved teacher".
> Socrates: "Now let us examine the abandoning of the intellect. In this case it happens that someone has no knowledge of reasoning or intellection, and in that state he accepts some proof. Then, in fact or by mistake, it transpires that his reasoning was in error, and he chooses the opposite opinion. Then he becomes involved in a conflict and gets used to

accepting differing opinions, and finally he is led into confusion concerning the faculty of intellection and reasoning. He believes that neither is there any reality in the world, nor is reason and the intellect a good criterion or a firm base".
> "So, Phaedo, is it not a great affliction that someone should turn his back on intellection and reasoning because he applies the incorrect and fallacious reasoning that every fact is sometimes true and sometimes false, and arrives at the conclusion that, instead of recognising himself to be defective and in error from his own lack of discernment, it is intellection and reasoning that are completely false, and that he should imagine that he can derive no benefit from knowledge and the investigation of reality?"

Shīʿah Islam also wholeheartedly rejected the anti-intellectualism of groups such as the literal-minded 'Hadith-folk' (Ahl al-Hadith) whose most prominent figure was Aḥmad ibn Hanbal (d. 241 AH/855 CE), and Ashʿarism, which was founded by Abū al-Hasan al-Ashʿarī (d. 324 AH/936 CE) who came under the influence of Ibn Hanbal and who had much in common with William of Ockham. Ashʿarism was further championed by al-Ghazālī who repudiated philosophy and in the end bequeathed a soporific, anti-intellectual, and irrational Ṣūfī thought to Islamic posterity. This is strikingly similar to developments in Mediaeval Christian theology, which laid the foundations for the emergence of modern scepticism and a new logic at odds with everything that had come before. This thesis has been argued at length by Michael Allen Gillespie who writes:

> The epochal question that gave birth to the modern age arose out of a metaphysical/theological crisis within Christianity about the nature of God and thus the nature of being. This crisis was most evident as the nominalist revolution against scholasticism. This revolution in thought, however, was itself a reflection of a deeper transformation in the experience of existence as such. Scholastics in the High Middle ages were ontologically realist, that is to say they believed in the real existence of universals, or to put the matter another way, they experienced the world as the instantiation of the categories of divine reason, They experienced, believed

in, and asserted the ultimate reality not of particular things but of universals, and they articulated this experience in a syllogistic logic that was perceived to correspond to or reflect divine reason. Creation itself was the embodiment of this reason, and man, as the rational animal and imago dei, stood at the pinnacle of this creation, guided by a natural telos and a divinely revealed supernatural goal. Nominalism turned this world on its head. For the nominalist, all real being was individual or particular and universals were thus mere fictions. Words did not point to real universal entities but were merely signs useful for human understanding. Creation was radically particular and thus not teleological. As a result, God could not be understood by human reason but only by biblical revelation or mystical experience. Sunnī Islam has followed a very similar path. The Shī`ī Imāms, however, taught that Man has been endowed with intellect (ʿaql) and it is by virtue of this very intellect that man is bound to God:

> Ibn Idrīs (d. 306 AH/ 908 CE), on the authority of Muḥammad b. `Abd al-Jabbār,109 on the authority of one of our narrators who gave his chain of narrators back to (`an ba`ḍ aṣḥābinā rafa`ahu ilā) Abū Abdullāh (the Sixth Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq, (d. 148 AH/765 CE)), who said:
> I asked him: "What is intellect?"
> He [the Sixth Imām Ja`far al-Ṣādiq] replied: "That by which the Infinitely Compassionate is worshipped and by which the Garden is attained".
> "Then what did Mu`āwiyah (d. 60 AH/680 CE) have?"
> He replied: "That was merely wickedness; diabolical cunning which seems to resemble intellect, but is not intellect".
> Abū `Abdullāh al-Ash`arī, on the authority of one of our narrators who gave his chain of narrators back to (`an ba`ḍ aṣḥābinā rafa`ahu `an), Hishām b. al-Ḥakam (d. ca. 179 AH/795 CE):
> 'Abū al-Ḥasan Mūsā b. Ja`far (al-Kāẓīm, the seventh Imām, d. 183 AH/799 CE) told me: "...O Hishām! Truly Allah has two proofs against mankind an outwardly manifest proof and an inwardly hidden proof. As for the outwardly manifest, it is the Messengers, Prophets, and Imāms and

as for the inwardly hidden it is the intellect (al-`uqūl)...".

At the very outset of this introduction it was observed that the philosophical enterprise in Islam came to be almost uniquely identified with the Shī`ah. This was no mere profession of sectarian chauvinism. Just as William of Ockham argued vigorously for nominalism so too did the Sunnī mutakallim Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash`arī. In the case of al-Ash`arī, however, the tendency he fostered rose to ascendency especially through the efforts of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī, and resulted in a Sunnī theology that belittles the use of the human intellect, places an extreme emphasis on the utter transcendence of the Creator, absolutises the Divine Will at the expense of other Divine Attributes, denies (secondary) causality, effectively renders epistemology impossible, denies an objective basis for ethics and morality, and repudiates free-will. By contrast, for Mahdī Ḥāʾirī Yazdī metaphysics is to be considered a 'universal' science because it deals with the most general of things; existence (wujūd); and, moreover, philosophy—as outlined above—is thereby integral to the human experience. The ʿIlm-i kullī makes this abundantly clear through its intricate examinations of the eternal verities of primordial and unchanging wisdom as well as those of revelation, which are, in the end, seen to be one and the same. Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad <>

## Opposition to Philosophy in Safavid Iran: Mulla Muhammad-Tāhir Qummī's Hikmat al-Ârifīn Introduction and Critical Edition by Ata Anzali, S. M. Hadi Gerami [Islamicate Intellectual History, Brill, 9789004345645]

In Opposition to Philosophy in Safavid Iran Ata Anzali and S.M. Hadi Gerami offer a critical edition of what is arguably the most erudite and extensive critique of philosophy from the Safavid period. The editors' extensive introduction offers an in-depth analysis that places the work within the broader framework of Safavid intellectual and social history.

Contents

Excerpt: The seventeenth century has been characterized by scholars of Ottoman and Savafid history alike as a period when religious fanaticism rose and eventually triumphed over the rational sciences and/or Sufism. It has been suggested, for example, that the study of rational sciences in Ottoman madrasas diminished significantly in the face of a puritanical movement spearheaded by a preacher named Mehmed Kāzīzāde (d. 1044/1635) and propagated by his followers in the first half of the century.1 Similarly, it is said that in the second half of the century, a successful campaign was waged against Sufism and philosophy in the Safavid realm by scholar/preachers like Muhammad-Ṭāhir Qummī (d. 1100/1689), Muhammad-Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699), and Mīr Muhammad Lawhī (d. after 1081/1671). Their campaign, which was supported by the last Safavid king, Shāh Sultān Husayn (r. 1105/1694-1135/1722), resulted in the near total eradication of Sufism and a precipitous and significant decline in the study of Islamic philosophy.

As the intellectual history of the early modern era receives more attention, however, it has become increasingly clear that the picture is more complicated than these narratives suggest. In a recent monograph devoted to scholarly currents in the Ottoman Empire and the Maghreb in the seventeenth century, Khaled El-Rouayheb challenges the existing scholarly paradigm, arguing that the evidence for the purported decline in the study of rational sciences in the seventeenth century Ottoman madrasa system does not withstand critical scrutiny. The proponents of Kāzīzādelī movement, he says, were a minority group within the Ottoman religious establishment, and their role in the decline of practices of which they did not approve should not be exaggerated. Moreover, El-

Rouayheb provides detailed evidence that the position of important Kāzīzādelī figures, including Mehmed Birgevī (d. 981/1573), who has been considered the intellectual forefather of the movement, was more nuanced than previously allowed and did not entail wholesale abandonment of the rational sciences. Based on the existing bio-bibliographic evidence, El-Rouayheb concludes that, "the study of philosophy and the rational sciences continued unabated in Ottoman scholarly circles throughout the seventeenth century."

Similarly, recent studies have revealed that while the organized networks of major Sufi orders were indeed significantly weakened by the end of Safavid rule, the extent to which this was caused by active persecution of Sufis has been exaggerated.s I have argued somewhere else, for example, that the decline of organized Sufi networks is better attributed to an epistemic shift that took place in the hearts and minds of the Safavid populous as it went through the protracted socio-political process of conversion to Twelver Shi`ism. This process did not result in a wholesale rejection of Sufism as an undesirable vestige of Iran's Sunni past. Instead, important aspects of the social functions and intellectual components of Sufism were adopted by Twelver religious scholars.' Popular scholars like Shaykh Bahā'ī (d. 1030/1621) and the Majlisīs, both father and son, were often treated by the public much as Sufi pīrs were treated by their followers. Other mystically-minded religious scholars, including Mulla Sadrā (1045/1635) and Fayż Kāshānī (1090/1680), incorporated fundamental elements of the Sufi worldview into Savafid Shi`i thought. This synthesis was so successful that even the most controversial of Sufi doctrines, the unity of existence (wandat al-wujūd), was discussed and debated in Qajar madrasas through the teaching of, and commentary on, Mullā Sadrā and Ibn `Arabī. Therefore, although it is fair to say that the traditional social structure of Sufism was marginalized over the course of the seventeenth century, this period was one of success for the Sufi worldview, which had significant impact on—and was incorporated into— Safavid Shi`i piety.

The decline narrative has also been popular when it comes to Islamic philosophy in the Safavid period. The standard conception is that the study

and practice of philosophy experienced a renaissance in the early part of the seventeenth century with the emergence of the so-called School of Isfahan, which was led by towering figures like Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631-2), Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1050/1640), and Mulla Sadrā. This renaissance did not last long, however, and the study of philosophy plummeted in the face of mounting criticism from puritanical and fanatic mullas, led by hard-liners like Majlisī Jr. and Qummī, who had unrivaled access to and influence in the Safavid court during the last half century of the dynasty's rule. In the coming pages I will argue that the bio-bibliographical and other primary sources do not support the latter part of this narrative and that the study of philosophy and other rational sciences continued to flourish in the final decades of Safavid rule, experiencing only a slight decline despite growing opposition.

## Philosophy and Philosophers: Hapless Victims or Elite Contenders?

When Qummī took it upon himself to write Hikmat al-`ārifīn sometime during Shah `Abbās II's reign (r. 1052/1642-1077/1666), the anti-Sufi campaign of the second half of the seventeenth century was gaining momentum. Popular preachers like Mīr Lawhī had already begun to denounce Sufis from the pulpit as "Sunni heretics," and Qummī had involved himself in a heated debate about the vices of Sufism with Majlisī Sr. (d. 1070/1659), one of the most prominent religious scholars of the time. Sufis still had the upper hand, however, thanks to their rooted social networks, public support, and the sympathy of the Safavid king. As a result, both Qummī and Mīr Lawhī had to be cautious in their criticism, at times publishing under pseudonyms or keeping silent for fear of their lives.10 Hikmat al-`ārifīn was the first full monograph of the Safavid era dedicated to a critique of philosophy, but Qummī had long had his eye on this "heretical" discipline. This is evidenced by his earlier work, namely a short treatise titled Bahjat al-dārayn, which he completed in 1055/1645, just a few years after he moved to Qom. Based on the chronology of his works, it appears that he started to publicize his views against philosophy much later than his critiques of Sufism. Only during the reign of

Shah Sulaymān (r. 1666/10771105/1694), who appointed Qummī as the judge and Friday prayer leader of Qom, did Qummī feel secure enough to openly write anti-philosophy works in Persian to reach a broader audience. His efforts in writing works like al-Favā'id al-dīniyyah and the concluding section of Tuhfat al-akhyār were successful in that they led to an increase in volume and number of anti-philosophy voices in the final decades of Safavid rule. A superficial understanding of this dynamic, however, has led some contemporary scholars to espouse an uninformed and romantic view regarding the persecution of philosophers during the Safavid period—one that casts philosophers as noble guardians of rationalism and reason who, alongside peace-loving and tolerant Sufis, were threatened by bigoted literalists and exotericists. A detailed and passionate articulation this perspective is found in a chapter by Hamid Dabashi on philosophy in Safavid Iran in Seyyed Hossein Nasr's edited volume, A History of Islamic Philosophy. In a tone that betrays his disdain for the opposing camp, Dabashi writes: "Those who engaged in philosophical matters did so at some peril to their personal safety and social standing," and thus, "the fate of philosophy was left in the hands of whimsical monarchs who for a number of practical and symbolic self-interests, such as their need for a court physician and court astronomer, would inadvertently provide for the possibilities of philosophical pursuit" which "has never had any institutional foundations except at the clandestine peripheries of the madrasa system, in the libraries of wealthy individuals, and ultimately in the whimsical vicissitudes of the court." Dabashi dramatizes the situation by suggesting that the pursuit of philosophy had "always" been a "precarious act," not only during the Safavid period, but "during the course of Islamic intellec-tual history." He immediately re-focuses on the Safavid period, however, stating that "financial support for students of philosophy was virtually non-existent," and that "the madrasa system and its total reliance on religious endowments prohibited any financial support for students who were attracted primarily to philosophy."

Dabashi offers scant historical evidence to support such sweeping claims of philosophers falling victim to bigotry and narrow-mindedness. He cites the

example of Mulla Sadrā's retreat from Shiraz to Kahak, a village near Qom, and he mentions Shāh Sultān Husayn's expulsion of another philosopher, Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī (d. 1134/1721), in the final decade of Safavid rule. In addition, Dabashi references reports that "on the front doors of some schools in Isfahan the patrons had specifically prohibited the teaching of philosophy." But if the late Safavid environment was so hostile to the pursuit of philosophy, how did it nurture one of the most innovative periods of philosophical thinking in Muslim lands, a period that Seyyed Hossein Nasr calls "one of the apogees of Muslim history?"

Dabashi gives the Safavids no credit for this intellectual renaissance, saying, "If we witness the rise of a particular philosophical disposition, recently identified as the 'School of Isfahan' during the Safavid period, this phenomenon must be attributed more to the diligent and relentless philosophical engagements of a limited number of individuals rather than considered the product of favorable and conducive social circumstances." It is difficult to know what to make of this statement given that one page earlier he emphasizes that "The flourishing of Mīr Dāmād and the establishment of the 'School of Isfahan' would hardly have been possible without these necessary political and social developments" (that is, the advent of the Safavids and the establishment of Isfahan as their capital and the new center of the Twelver Shī`ī world).

Dabashi's fervent enthusiasm for the victimized philosophers betrays his status as advocate-turned-historian, but he is not alone in his mischaracterization of this period. Some version of this romantic narrative of philosophy as victim, or philosophy as dangerous business, exists in many scholarly works that deal with the intellectual and cultural life of the Safavid period. For example, in his influential and otherwise phenomenal study, Arjomand writes, "the gnostic Shi`ism of the philosophers of the school of Isfahan, severely debilitated by Majlisī, was forced after his death to subsist outside the Shi`ite hierocracy, and was thus perhaps doomed to virtual extinction." Similarly, Meisami, in her study of the life of Mulla Sadrā, claims that "[T]he extreme hostility towards both rationalism and mysticism in the late Safavid period created an intellectually suppressed

atmosphere for philosophy in general and mystical philosophy in particular. The attempts of a few remaining followers of Mulla Sadra to keep transcendental philosophy alive were at the cost of serious accusations and tragic consequences. Giving full power to Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d. 1110/1698), known for his religious and sectarian intolerance, Shah Sultan Husayn made any intellectual activity of 'unorthodox' nature impossible." It appears to me that the aura of credibility that this view enjoys, despite the dearth of historical evidence, is mainly due to paradigm-defining narratives developed earlier in the twentieth century by prominent scholars like Zarrīnkūb and Nasr as well as to the general tendency of the modern liberal reader to succumb to a romantic view in which "conservative" religious scholars are generally seen in a negative light as "fanatics" vis-à-vis the "open-minded" advocates of "rationalist" and "mystical" readings of religion.

A critical examination of the few pieces of evidence put forward to substantiate this view reveals its precarious foundation. The reason for Mulla Sadrā's retreat to Kahak remains highly debatable, as Rizvi points out, and it is not at all obvious that the so-called "nomocentric" jurists were behind it. Dabashi also fails to mention that sometime later, Imām-Qulī Khān, who became governor of Shiraz in 1021/1612, built the magnificent Madrasa Khān (completed 1024/1615) and invited Mulla Sadrā to return and teach philosophy there. The latter accepted the invitation and began to teach there around 1040/1630, more than a decade after he had left that city for Kahak. The madrasa became so famous that the European traveler Herbert Thomas wrote, "indeed, Shiraz has a college wherein is read philosophy; astrology, physic, chemistry, and the mathematics; so as it's the more famoused through Persia." As for the oft-cited expulsion of the philosopher Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī and a number of his students, including Hazīn, from Isfahan, Ja`fariyān has pointed out that the story only appears in one late source (early thirteenth/nineteenth century) and is not corroborated by the earlier sources available to us. In fact, contemporary sources paint a different picture. Hazīn's autobiography, for example, does not mention him facing any difficulties in his

extensive and enthusiastic pursuit of philosophy in Isfahan and Shiraz.

The fact is that philosophers remained highly influential in the court well into the early decades of the eighteenth century, preserving their high social status despite the increasingly hostile rhetoric against philosophy. This is not surprising, because mainstream philosophical discourse was deeply embedded in both the Shī`ī and Sunni intellectual traditions. Textbooks of rational theology, or kalam, regularly included extensive chapters on metaphysics with arguments and counter-arguments that were almost indistinguishable from the ones offered in the tradition of Islamic philosophy. This was the case in works like al-Mawāqif by `Adud al-Dīn Ījī (d. 756/1356), Maqāsid al-tālibīn by Sa`d al-Dīn Taftāzānī (d. 792/1390), and Nasīr al-Dīn Tūsī's Tajrīd al-i`itiqād, with its numerous commentaries and glosses by theologians like `Alī Qūshjī (d. 879/1479) and philosophers like Jalāl al-Dīn Davānī (d. 908/1502). These writings, along with works of Aristotelian logic covered over with glosses and commentaries, were used extensively and without interruption in both the madrasas of Safavid Persia and those of the rival Ottoman realm. In fact, the vocabulary of Aristotelian logic had penetrated kalam and (much later) usūl al-fiqh to such an extent that it was practically impossible for students to acquire a sound understanding of these Islamic disciplines without having a solid grounding in logic. Therefore, and unlike the organized Sufism centered in the khanaqāh, philosophy was an integral part of the madrasa curriculum, at least to the extent that it was required to understand theology. This being the case, prominent teachers of traditional Peripatetic philosophy were among the most respected figures in the madrasa, and they had a congenial relationship with the higher echelons of the political order. These teachers constructed and sustained a powerful philosophical orthodoxy, controlling the relevant discourse and the prestigious philosophy chairs in the madrasas. Prominent members of this establishment, for obvious socio-economic and intellectual reasons, did not welcome innovations of the sort that Mulla Sadrā was eager to introduce into philosophical thinking.

Some concrete examples of the status and influence of philosophers in the Safavid court might be of help here. We know, for example, that Mulla Muhammad-Bāqir Sabzavārī (d. 1090/1679), Isfahan's shaykh al-islām at the time, played a prominent role in Shah Sulaymān's accession to the throne. The philosophically-oriented Āqā Husayn Khānsārī (d. 1099/1688)—a student of Mīr Dāmād, Majlisī Sr., and Sabzavārī—was also among the trusted members of the court `ulama, and the shah erected a mausoleum for him upon his death. But perhaps nothing illustrates the strength of philosophical studies towards the end of the Safavid period more vividly than the testimony of an Augustinian friar named Antonio, a native of Portugal who converted to Islam in Isfahan in 1108/1696 and wrote several treatises against Christianity and Judaism under his new name, `Alī-Qulī Jadīd al-Islām (d. after 1134/1722). His testimony deserves to be quoted at length:

> Too often I found myself in the company of a group of [religious students] who, having spent years in the madrasas in pursuit of knowledge, believed they knew something and numbered themselves amongst the knowledgeable. Even as a recent convert at the time with no thorough knowledge of the hadiths, when I asked them about a tradition that dealt with the most fundamental matters of religion, they knew nothing about it, and I was the one who taught them on the matter. They said, "We study philosophy; we have busied ourselves for years with books like Sharḥ al-hidāya, al-Shifā, and al-Ishārāt, and thus we found no spare time to study hadith," an excuse worse than the offense itself! You see, all these considerable funds are tirelessly collected and spent on madrasas by pious endowments with the intention of creating `ulama and educating the followers of the first Imam in matters of religion... [and then] these students end up reading such material... Once I had a conversation with one of these philosophy-reading mullas and told him that Plato and Aristotle's philosophy has nothing to do with religion and religiosity. In response he told me, "Nowadays the amount of one's stipend depends on one's knowledge of Plato and Aristotle's philosophy. I and people like me who come here to study want to make a living as students, because we are poor. We see that the system of stipends and promotions in Isfahan

revolves around philosophy, and so we spend our time studying Plato and Aristotle's philosophy and do not bother with jurisprudence or hadith."

Another interesting piece of evidence comes from Qazvīnī's Tatmīm amal al-āmil. In it, the author tells a story about the most prominent and politically well-connected jurist of the final decades of Safavid rule, Muhammad-Bāqir Khātunābādī (d. 1127/1715). Khātunābādī was the first cleric to occupy the position of mullābāshī, a post created by the last Safavid king, Shah Sultān Husayn, and the highest religious office in the land. The anecdote goes as follows:

> I heard my master... Amīr Muhammad Sālih Husaynī [Khātunābādī] say, "We were studying Sharḥ al-ishārāt and its gloss with our great teachers. We were told to study Sharḥ al-ishārāt with Amīr Muhammad-Bāqir [Khātunābādī], for it would allow us to get closer to the sultan [because the teacher was close to him]. So we sat in his class while he boasted of knowledge he did not possess, and he would narrate something from `Allāma Khānsārī's gloss and oppose him with absurd criticism. Then, when we rejected his criticism of Khānsārī, he would turn to us and say, "I wanted to say that very thing!"

Khātunābādī is categorized in Tatmīm as a jurist. The fact that he took it upon himself to teach philosophy, even though—as the quote indicates—he was not an authority on the rational sciences, reveals much about the curriculum of the madrasas and the position of philosophy therein. The author also relates the story of another Khātunābādī, Hāj Ismā`īl, who taught the music section of Ibn Sīnā's classic philosophical work, al-Shifā, in one of the most important madrasas of Isfahan, Jāmi` Sultānī.

Moreover, a survey of the biographical contents of Tatmīm reveals no meaningful decline in the number of `ulama with expertise in rational sciences in the early decades of the eighteenth century compared to the latter half of the seventeenth century. Tatmīm is a perfect bibliographical source for such a survey, because it was written at 1191/1777 as a supplement to Shaykh Hurr al-`Āmilī's (d. 1104/1693) Amal al-āmil, extending the latter's coverage of prominent `ulama to the

twelfth/eighteenth century and adding important figures from the past that had escaped al-`Āmilī's attention. The author lists one hundred and thirty-seven names, mostly from the twelfth/eighteenth century, and provides a short biography for each. Among them, seventy-two figures were active mainly in the last three decades of the Safavid rule and beyond. These can be divided into two groups: first, the twenty-two who died prior to 1150/1738 (which means a major part of their career as teachers of the Islamic sciences overlapped with the last three decades of Safavid rule) and, second, the fifty who died after 1150/1738, and who were probably teaching in their profession after the fall of Isfahan.

Nearly sixty percent of the `ulama featured in Tatmīm who died before 1150 are described either as philosophers (hukamā) or as proficient in both the rational and transmitted sciences (jāmi` al-ma`qūl wa-l-manqūl). This is the case for forty-four percent of those who died later. Thus we see that the number of students occupying themselves with philosophy declined at the end of the Safavid era, but nonetheless, over the span of this century, nearly half of the students of religion studied philosophy.

The polemical works of Qummī and others, then, had a certain degree of success. This is partly reflected in a number of monographs written in Persian during the reign of Shah Sultān Husayn that opposed the rational-philosophical method and questioned its legitimacy as a tool for understanding questions of faith like the principle of tawhīd. We know of a number of fascinating, yet understudied, manuscripts on the topic written by authors otherwise unknown to us from extant bio-bibliographical compendiums. The fact that the authors are not among the well-known religious scholars of the time could be interpreted as a sign of the relative success of Qummī and his allies in expanding their message beyond a limited number of elitist `ulama.

The partial success of the anti-philosophy discourse in shifting public opinion against philosophy in the last three decades of Safavid rule can be further assessed by comparing vaqf-nāmahs (certificates of pious endowment) from the time of `Abbas ü with those written during the reign of Shah Sultān

Husayn, the last Safavid king. No such documents dating to the former period explicitly exclude philosophy or Sufism from the curriculum of the madrasa being endowed, but a number of documents belonging to the latter period explicitly condemn the so-called illusory sciences.

The vaqf-nāmah of two of the most important madrasas built during the reign of `Abbas II, namely Jaddah-yi Kūchak and Jaddah-yi Buzurg, do not put any conditions on the type of studies resident students were permitted to pursue. The documents also include the list of books donated to the library, among which no major work of philosophy or Sufism can be found. Nor do they include a considerable number of hadith collections. Instead, the overwhelming majority of the books are related to fiqh, kalām, and manṭiq (logic). This stands in striking contrast to the vaqf-nāmah of the Sultānī madrasa, which was built between 1118/1706 and 1126/1714 and was one of the most splendid projects of the Safavid era. This document explicitly prohibits resident students from discussing books of Sufism and pure philosophy (ḥikmat-i ṣirf). It also outlines a requirement that students take at least one class on a Shī`ī book of hadith, a clear indication that the process of endowment was heavily influenced by the strong hadith-centered movement of the latter part of the Safavid period that was most notably manifested in the emergence of Akhbārīsm. In another case, the vaqf-nāmah of the Maryam Bīgum madrasa, built in 1115/1703, explicitly prohibits students from teaching or learning from "books of illusory sciences," i.e., the sciences of shubha (doubt), as ḥikma and the rational sciences were known. Such books included al-Shifā, al-Ishārāt, Ḥikmat al-ʿayn, Sharḥ al-hidāya, and the like.39Additionally, the vaqf-nāmah of a madrasa in Hamadan built in 1100/1689 by Shaykh `Alī Khān Zanganah I`timād al-Dawlah, similarly asserts that "if the teacher and students occupy themselves with teaching and learning of philosophical sciences (ʿulūm-i ḥikmiyyah) that are contrary to the Shari`a without refuting it, their stipend should be withheld, and they must be expelled from the madrasa."

In addition to these explicit exclusions, we should also take into consideration the curious fact that at least two of the vaqf-nāmahs of madrasas established during the reign of Shah `Abbas II and Sultān Husayn contain an erasure exactly where the document clarifies what sciences may be pursued in that madrasa. One example is the vaqf-nāmah of the Shafī`iyyah madrasa built in 1067/1657. According to the document, eligibility to receive stipends was contingent upon the condition "that the students pursue [erased text] religious sciences."41 A similar phenomenon is observable in the vaqf-nāmah of the Imāmiyyah madrasa in Isfahan, built in 1129/1717, six years before the fall of the Safavid capital.42 Although we do not know what words are missing, these erasures indicate the extreme sensitivity surrounding what was considered a legitimate pursuit of knowledge and speak to the battle over who got to define these boundaries. Tampering with a vaqf-nāmah is considered a grievous sin, but apparently the stakes were high enough in these cases to overrule such concerns.

The evidence in the vaqf-nāmahs should be taken with a grain of salt. The documents cannot be taken as representative of widespread or universal practice, though they may point to an intellectual trajectory. Other vaqf-nāmahs available to us from the same period are silent about philosophy and Sufism. One such example is the vaqf-nāmah of the Sultān Husayniyyah madrasa built by Āqā Kamāl (d. after 1133/1720), director (sāhib jam') of the Central Treasury (khazānah-yi `āmirah), on which construction began in 1107/1695 and continued until 1133/1720, with an attendant extension of its endowments. This doc-ument contains no negative mention of philosophy or Sufism. On the contrary, the brief list of endowed books at the end of this document includes classics in the study of philosophy like Ibn Sīnā's al-Shifā.

Furthermore, if we move from Isfahan to other major urban centers like Shiraz, there is no substantial indication that philosophy or Sufism was targeted. Instead, when we assemble the pieces of the historical puzzle, an image emerges of an intellectual environment quite welcoming to philosophers and Sufis. The vaqf-nāmah of the Muqīmiyyah madrasa, built in 1059/1649, states that students should occupy themselves with learning religious sciences (úlūm-i dīniyyah) like fiqh, hadith, tafsīr, usūl, and other preliminary

sciences like Arabic grammar and literature. The document further states that students are allowed to extend their area of study to other sciences with the aim of "sharpening their minds;" an explicit reference to mathematics and philosophy. Another vaqf-nāmah from the year 1094/1683 belonging to the Imāmiyyah madrasa of Shiraz requires that the superintendent (mutavāllī) find and appoint a primary teacher for the madrasa competent in both transmitted (naqlī) and rational (`aqlī) sciences. Herbert Thomas' abovementioned observations on the Khān Madrasa bear repeating. He writes, "philosophy, astrology, physic, chemistry, and the mathematics [are read]; so as it's the more famoused through Persia." The situation does not seem to have changed in Shiraz in later decades as is evidenced by Hazīn Lāhījī's memoirs about his time in Shiraz, in which he fondly recalls the many teachers of philosophy and Sufism he met there. These include figures like the mystically-minded Shah Muhammad Dārābī Shīrāzī (d. circa 1130/1718), as well as philosophers like Ākhūnd Masīḥā Fasavī (d. 1127/1715), a student of Āqā Husayn Khānsārī, the previously mentioned shaykh al-islām of Isfahan. Hazīn's remarks about Isfahan's intellectual environment in the final decades of Safavid rule are colorful, and they also remind us to view the success of the anti-philosophy, anti-Sufi campaign in relative terms. He speaks of his wonderful years in Isfahan and his erudite teachers, including Mīr Sayyid Hasan Tāliqānī who, according to Hazīn, synthesized the vision of philosophy (hikmah) with that of Sufism and taught not only Ibn `Arabī's Fusūs al-hikam but also Suhrawardī's Hayākil al-nūr. In Isfahan, Hazīn also studied with the famous, mystically-minded philosopher of the time, Mulla Sādiq Ardistānī. As mentioned, his comments about Isfahan's intellectual environment are not followed by complaints about the opponents of Sufism and philosophy. Nor does he mention his alleged expulsion from Isfahan, along with Ardistānī, at the order of the Shah. Rather, what can be gleaned from his memoirs is (1) that the study of hadith had become a normal occupation not only for students of hadith but also for those in philosophically- and mystically minded circles of learning, and (2) despite growing opposition, philosophy continued to be pursued by students without significant difficulty. This conclusion stands in marked contrast to the above statements that present the study of philosophy in the late Safavid period as a dangerous enterprise undertaken at risk to one's life.

Only after the fall of Isfahan did many of society's elite figures, including Hazīn himself, flee the city they adored. It was this dispersion of human resources, along with an attendant lack of financial resources, which most gravely damaged the enterprise of teaching and learning philosophy and mysticism. With this as our backdrop, we turn to Hikmat al-`ārifīn and its author, offering an analysis of their significance in the intellectual history of the Safavid period.

## Muḥammad-Ṭāhir Qummī

Muhammad-Ṭāhir b. Muhammad-Husayn Shīrazī Najafī Qummī was born in the late sixteenth century to an ordinary family in the province of Fars. His birthplace was most likely the small town of Bavānat, located halfway between Shiraz and Yazd. He may have spent early years in Shiraz, but for unknown reasons his father moved the family to the shrine city of Najaf in modern-day Iraq, where he grew to adulthood. Information about Qummī's life in Najaf is hard to come by, but we know that he attended the seminaries of that city. We know only two of his teachers by name. Both hailed from Jabal `Āmil in modern day Lebanon, and we do not know whether he met them in Najaf or elsewhere.

The first of these two known teachers is Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn `Alī al-`Āmilī (d. 1068/1658), a well-known member of the prominent lineage of Twelver scholars from Jabal `Āmil. Sayyid Nūr al-Dīn is said to have taught in the Levant before moving to Mecca, where he lived for more than two decades until the time of his death. If that is the case, Qummī must have travelled in the pursuit of religious knowledge.58 Nūr al-Dīn is known as an anti-Akhbārī jurist (mujtahid), and he is the author of al-Shawāhid al-makkiyya, a critical commentary on Mulla Muhammad-Amīn Astarābādī's (d. 1033/1623-24 or 1036/1626-27) famed al-Fawā'id al-madaniyya. As we will see, in contrast to his teacher, Qummī was an avowed Akhbārī scholar. The second of Qummī's known teachers was

Muhammad b. Jābir b. `Abbās al-`Āmilī al-Najafī (d. after 1035/1627), another prominent `Āmilī scholar who resided in Najaf.

We know little about Qummī's time in Najaf, but we know that it came to an abrupt and undesired end after the fall of Mosul in 1048/1638, when he fled to Iran in fear of further Ottoman advance. Qummī was a well-educated young scholar when he arrived in Qom, but it took time for him to establish connections in Safavid Iran. In Newman's words "al-Qummī had appeared on the scene somewhat suddenly ... with little apparent connection to Iran-based clerics of the preceding generation." Based on existing manuscripts and other surviving evidence we can deduce that Qummī's literary activities began in Qom, and his first treatise is dated 1053/1643. He went on to become a prolific author, and more than fifty titles are ascribed to him. Many of these are short treatises written in Farsi and intended to guide the educated public on matters of creed and orthodoxy, but a number of substantial books are attributed to him as well. None of these writings can be dated to the Najaf period.

Muhammad-Tāhir may have been a young man of little reputation or fame when he settled in Qom, but half a century later, by the final decade of his life, he had become one of the most well-known religious scholars and public figures of his era. He actively sought the favor of Shah `Abbās II and Shah Sulaymān, dedicating a number of his works to them. His rather quick rise to prominence is a testament to his talents for navigating the socio-political landscape of Safavid Persia, which he did without having the advantage of being connected to prominent `ulama families of the time.

Most of Qummī's treatises — including many of his criticisms of Sufism and philosophy - were written during the reign of Shah `Abbās II. This was in spite of the latter's Sufi proclivities, and in fact it was Shah `Abbās II who appointed Qummī as a judge and as the Friday prayer leader of Qom. By the time Shah Sulaymān ascended to power, Qummī had accumulated sufficient credentials and established a good enough relationship with the court to be appointed to the position of shaykh al-islām, the highest religious office to be had in a major shrine-city. Qummī appears to have held that

position in Qom until his death on a Thursday night on the 23rd of the month of Dhu al-Qa`da of the year 1100 hijrī, which corresponds to September 9th, 1689. He was buried in the Shaykhān cemetery close to the Shrine of Fātima al-Ma`sūma, where his grave stone can still be located today.

Given that he was perhaps the most powerful figure in Qom for several decades, and given his confrontational style of criticizing his opponents, it is not terribly surprising to see charges of corruption and abuse of power leveled against Qummī in some sources. A detailed and colorful picture of the rumors circulating about Qummī is preserved in two polemical works written in response to his critique of Sufism by Muhammad-Mu'min Tabīb Tunikābunī (d. after 1090/1680), a court physician during Shah Sulaymān's reign. In both Tabsirat al-mu'minīn and Futūfz al-mujāhidīn, Tunikābunī provides a detailed account of Qummī's supposed abuses. It is impossible to determine whether these allegations are true, but given their scope, it is clear that Qummī was considered a person of tremendous influence, at least in Qom.

This powerful position clearly reflects Qummī's favor in the eyes of Shah Sulaymān, but his relationship with the monarch was not uniformly positive. Once, we are told, Qummī's blunt criticism of wine-drinking in the court — Shah Sulaymān was known for excessive drinking - got him into trouble with the king, nearly costing him his life. Nonetheless, Qummī not only managed to retain his position, but also made a name for himself as an outspoken critic of Sufism, and later, philosophy. His increasing power and influence and his strong stance against Sufism, which was still a formidable social and intellectual force, made him many enemies along the way. Animosity toward him extended beyond proponents of Sufism and philosophy, due in no small part to the brutality of his criticism and his liberal use of takfīr as a weapon not only against Sufis and philosophers but also against members of the `ulama whose intellectual outlooks diverged only marginally from his own. For example, Qummī attacked Mulla Khalīl Qazvīnī (d. 1089/1679), an ally in the anti-Sufi campaign, due to latter's belief that Friday prayers were not obligatory. According to Khānsārī, he even called Qazvīnī an infidel because

of this position. The following anecdote, transmitted by Khānsārī, provides a sense of how strong a reaction Qummī provoked even among like-minded colleagues:

> [D]uring one of Mawlānā Khalīl's gatherings, the hadith regarding the naming of the holy town of Qom was mentioned. [The hadith says] that during his night journey, the Messenger of God (PBUH) saw groups of people amassed at that location. Among them was a man at the pulpit who wore a red hood and sought to deceive them. [The Prophet] asked Gabriel the meaning of what he saw. He said, "This is a place settled by your followers (shī'a) and those who love your descendants. The man standing among them is a cursed devil who wishes to lead them astray from the path." As a result, the expression on the face of the Messenger of God changed, and he said to [that devil], "Depart (qum), you cursed one!" This is why that holy place is called Qom. When the conversation reached this point, Mawlā Khalīl said "That devil whom the Messenger of God (PBUH) saw is presently in the pulpit of that holy place, blocking people's way on the path. In saying this, he was alluding to Mawla Muhammad-Tāhir [Qummī]. Some of the people who were present asked him, "If, as you say, this man is misguided and leading people astray, why don't you do something to oust him from this high position and to deter people from following him?" In response he said, "How could he be dissuaded by what I say when he was not dissuaded by what the Messenger of God (PBUH) said and did not come down from the pulpit at his command?!"

This anecdote appears to have been in circulation from much earlier times. It can even be traced back to Qummī and Qazvīnī's lifetime, strengthening the likelihood that it contains a kernel of truth. Furthermore, we know that Qummī wrote a refutation of Qazvīnī's treatise on Friday prayers. Titled Jā'a al-haqq and written in 1076/1665, the treatise begins with Qummī's claim that he was prompted to write this refutation due to accusations of kufr leveled by Qazvīnī against people who deemed Friday prayers permissible.

Khānsārī also transmits an elaborate anecdote about the highly strained relationship between Qummī and Fayż Kāshānī (d. 1090/1680). The story relates that Shah Sulaymān had decided to kill Qummī for his public criticism of wine-drinking at the court. After a successful intervention by some of Qummī's allies in the capital, the shah changed his mind and ordered that Qummī be summoned to Isfahan to be personally reprimanded by the Shah. On his way to Isfahan, we are told, Qummī stopped briefly in Kāshān, where he was greeted by prominent religious scholars of the town, among them `Alam al-Hudā. When Qummī recognizes Fayż's son,

> [H]e asked someone in his presence, "Hasn't this Zoroastrian (majūsī) Shaykh died?" By that he meant the abovementioned's [`Alam al-hudā's] father. This was due to what he [Qummī] believed about the corruption of his [Fayż's] belief in God's unification (tawhīd). When Fayż heard of this, he came to pay him a visit, but he [Qummī] did not let him in, so he said, "Oh, our master, I will present to you my beliefs from behind the door. If what I say corresponds to what you have heard [then I will leave]; otherwise let me in." After he presented his beliefs to him and he [Qummī] realized their soundness and that he had been misled about his [Fayż's] position, he allowed him to enter, the two greeted, and he [Qummī] apologized. Whatever reservations were in their hearts [against each other] were removed.

This late hagiographical account should be taken with a grain of salt, especially because Rawdāt and other late hagiographies of the `ulama written in Qajar period betray a clear effort to present the `ulama as an undivided front dedicated to the defense and explication of the faith. By the time such hagiographies were written, both Fayż and Qummī had been canonized as representatives of true Shi`ism and prominent members of the `ulama, and any indication of substantial and irreconcilable differences appears to have been problematic for hagiographers. Such sources deny, for example, that Fayż had any association with organized Sufism and/or explain away his mystical proclivities and beliefs influenced by the school of Ibn `Arabī through his mentor, Mulla Sadrā.

While we can be reasonably sure that the happy ending to the above story is a pious fiction, earlier sources confirm how strongly Qummī felt about Fayż's "unorthodox" positions on matters of belief. Again, Tabīb Tunikābunī informs us in his Futūh al-mujāhidīn that Qummī was of the opinion that all the pages of Fayż's al-Wāfī should be washed clean – a not so subtle way of implying that it was among books deemed to be heretical (kutub-i żāllah). This anecdote comes from a source biased against Qummī, but it is likely true. Qummī's position as an Akhbārī scholar of hadith means that Fayż's compendium of hadith would have been of special interest to him. This is evident in the text of Hikmat al-`ārifīn, in which Qummī quotes Fayż's work, presents strong objections, and almost always refers to the latter as sāhib al-Wāfī.

Qummī was recognized in his lifetime as a prominent scholar of hadith, and two of the major religious scholars of his time, Muhammad-Bāqir Majlisī (d. 1110/1699) and Hurr al-`Āmilī (d. 1104/1693), list him as an authority in their ijāzahs.80 Additionally, it appears that their pronounced opposition to Sufism and their focus on the hadith literature were influenced by Qummī. Yet the most important aspect of Qummī's influence and legacy was not related to his training of a large number of students, but to his contributions as a polemicist to the formation of important aspects of "orthodox" Shi`i piety. In this he resembled Majlisī Jr. The latter was of a more scholarly bent, but both men dedicated their lives to promoting and defending what they considered to be the true creed received from the infallible imams. For his part, Qummī seems to have thrived on attacking heresies and innovations that, from his perspective, threatened Twelver orthodoxy, while Majlisī was more inclined toward describing that orthodoxy, outlining its contours in a series of accessible trea-tises. Both figures avoided elitism and made a conscious effort to write many of their works in Persian with the aim of educating the public on matters of creed. Qummī's obsession with issues of orthodoxy is clearly reflected in his writings, which span more than half a century. His major goal was to defend the integrity of Shi`ism – especially the doctrine of the imamate – against Sunnis arguments and to purify Shī`ī thought and practice from the

influence of what he considered to be foreign elements, which included philosophy and Sufism. His understanding of what constituted true Shi`ism was informed by his Akhbārī leanings, which led him to believe that hadith literature, especially the Four Canonical Books, was the only legitimate source of religious knowledge.

A significant portion of Qummī's writings falls under the genre known as refutation, or radd. These include works that he wrote in refutation of Sufism and philosophy. The earliest of his writings in this genre is Bahjat al-dārayn, a treatise completed in 1055/1645 on the subject of determinism and destiny (al-qadā wa-l-qadar) and his rejection of various schools of thought, including mainstream Peripatetic philosophy. A considerable portion of this text is spent explaining and refuting philosophers' arguments on issues like the nature of divine attributes, cosmogony, and cosmology in so far as they pertain to the question of free will. Notably, Qummī expresses his astonishment and dismay that a prominent contemporary Shī`ī philosopher like Mīr Dāmād (d. 1040/1631) would follow the "unorthodox" beliefs of earlier figures like Ibn Sīnā on the issue of free will. He refrains, however, from attacking Mīr Dāmād directly.

However, it was the controversial treatise known to us as Radd-i sūf~yān, probably written before 1060/1650, that brought him into the spotlight and earned him fame (or infamy, depending on your position in the debate over Sufism). This work was written when Qummī was still a largely unknown relgious scholar, and it was brought to the attention of Majlisī Sr. (d. 1070/1659) against Qummī's intentions. The former decided to write a refutation of its content in the form of a gloss, thus putting Qummī, the younger scholar, in the position of having to confront one of the most famous and well respected religious scholars of his time. Majlisī Sr.'s prominence, however, does not appear to have given the young Qummī pause. He wrote a stinging response to Majlisī in the form of a super gloss, accusing his opponent of being an ignorant populist and friend of Satan, among other niceties. He dispatched the super gloss to the capital, and this tête-à-tête became one of the best-known and most frequently cited debates in subsequent decades, when a virulent anti-Sufi campaign swept

the Safavid realm.86 In the immediate context, however, as Newman astutely observes, both Shah `Abbās II and the general cultural environment were favorable to Sufism, making Qummī "aware that too extreme a polemic might endanger both his personal safety and his career prospects, and he continued to modify both the tone and substance thereof as compared with those in his earlier Radd." For example, in Radd, Qummī does not seem to care that the Safavid dynasty was rooted in the Sufi order established by Safī al-Dīn Ardabīlī, but in Tuḥfat al-akhyār, the final version of which was completed around 1075, he is careful to pay lip service to the Safavid claims to legitimacy by affirming Safī al-Dīn, while claiming that the legendary figure was neither a Sufi nor a Sunni. Rather, says Qummī, Safī al-Dīn was a true Shi`i gnostic (`ārif) who was opposed to the path of Hallāj and Bāyazīd, but who practiced dissimulation (taqiyyah) due to the Sunni milieu in which he lived. Qummī then immediately expresses gratitude to Shah `Abbās II and his forefathers for establishing and promoting Twelver Shi`ism in Iran. Although Tuḥfat al-akhyār was the last of Qummī's monographs to be wholly dedicated to the repudiation of Sufism, its contents were reproduced with minor changes by other likeminded writers and published under different names. The anti-Sufi campaign gained more social traction during the reign of Shah `Abbas II's successor, Shah Sulaymān, who did not share his father's Sufi proclivities. With the help of popular preachers like Mīr Lawhī and other like-minded religious scholars, Qummī spearheaded this campaign, which raged in major cities like Qom, Mashhad, and Isfahan, where other anti-philosophy works continued to be written.

In later years, Qummī focused his attention on attacking philosophers. A final chapter of his widely-read anti-Sufi work Tuḥfat al-akhyār is devoted to criticism of philosophers, which was, most likely, the last of his many revisions to the book. Hikmat al-`ārifīn, the subject of the present volume, is his most extensive critique of philosophy written in Arabic. During Shah Sulaymān's reign, Qummī also wrote al-Favā'id al-dīnīyyah, a Persian treatise against philosophy in a question and answer format obviously intended for a broader audience.

Qummī's refutations were not confined to philosophy and Sufism. As an influential Akhbārī jurist, he contributed to the hotly-debated question of Friday prayers, writing rebuttals in response to two of his colleagues who did not believe attending Friday prayers was obligatory during the twelfth Imam's occultation. One of these treatises was written against the teachings of Mulla Hasan-`Alī Shūshtarī (d. 1075/1664) in 1068/1658, and the other, as mentioned above, was written against those of Mulla Khalīl Qazvīnī completed in 1076/1665.

As a Twelver theologian, Qummī considered explaining and defending the basics of Shi`i creeds and rituals, including the important doctrine of the imamate, to be among his most urgent tasks. His Jāmī' safavī, for example, is a short catechism-style treatise written in an accessible language explaining Shi`i basics like the imamate (Qummī enumerates ten reasons for the necessity of the existence of infallible imams). His most detailed and technical defense of the doctrine of the imamate appears in al-Arbain, an Arabic work in which Qummī offers, in his words, "irrefutable arguments for [the twelve imams'] imamate, beginning with texts included in the books of the opposing party [Sunni sources] on the issue of the imamate of our master and the master of all the people, the commander of the believers. [This is followed by] clear responses to the misinterpretations (ta'vīlāt) and doubts (shubuhāt) of our enemies, ending with an explanation of Sunni beliefs related to both the principles (usūl) and branches (furū' of religion." Atiyyah-yi rabbānī va hadiyyah-yi sulaymānī is another monograph in an accessible style in which Qummī deals with the subject of the imamate, providing basic information on the imams' lives, their virtues, the enmities and injustices they faced, and their miracles.

What makes his portfolio of writings much more fascinating, however, is a body of Persian treatises that could be classified as works of zuhd, one of the earliest genres to emerge in Islamic literature. These writings are illuminating because they stand in direct contrast to the abrasive, takfīrī style of many of his other works. They reveal their author to be a sensitive, introspective soul committed to the development of a moral and spiritual life aimed at

subduing the carnal soul and drawing near to the imams and to God. In refuting Sufi piety, Qummī had more to offer in its place than a dry, rigid, literal understanding of sacred texts. In these works, he appears to have been genuinely and deeply interested in a framework for spiritual life based wholly on the Qur'an and the teachings of the imams. The ideals and practices of the introspective mode of piety he espoused resemble those of the renunciants (zuhhād) who lived in the early centuries after the rise of Islam. Theirs was a piety that emphasized the value of utmost sincerity (ikhlāṣ) in all ritual devotional practices (`ibādāt), whether obligatory or supererogatory. Like the zuhhād, Qummī was deeply suspicious of the carnal soul, believing it must be kept in check through examining one's intentions (muhāsabāt al-nafs/murāqabāt al-nafs), meditating on the transient nature of this world and worldly possessions, and reminding oneself of impending death and the prospect of eternal damnation in the fires of hell. In Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn, for example, after making it clear that, from his perspective, ḥikma can only be attained through the knowledge of the teachings of the infallible imams, he emphasizes the centrality of the practice of zuhd, or asceticism, for attaining this ḥikma. He is quick to mention that zuhd does not involve wearing rough cloths or eating rough food like the followers of Hallāj and Abū Yazīd. Rather, he says, it requires "cutting worldly desires short (qaṣr al-amal) and avoiding what God has prohibited (al-waraʿ ʿammā ḥarrama Allāh)." The key for success in such practices is constantly reminding oneself of the reality, and inevitability, of death and what follows it. Although the fear of death and a pious awaremess of God (taqwā) are emphasized throughout, Qummī's writings in this genre are also sprinkled with lines of his own poetry in which the subject of love, or maḥabbat, is mentioned, though not elaborated. Examples of this poetry give the reader a better sense of this aspect of his personality:

> O Lord, capture me with your love (maḥabbat).
> Consume my body in the fires of purification.
> Pluck all neglect of God from my wings and feathers,

> That I might fly to the pinnacle of your love (maḥabbat).

> O Lord, capture me with your love (maḥabbat).
> Turn me away from anything but your love.
> Sprinkle my face with the water of your mercy,
> To awaken me, in the blink of an eye, from my sleep.

> O Lord, free me from the bonds of my body,
> Rescue me from attachment to this world.
> Pour a sip of the nectar of your desire into my mouth,
> Setting me free in an instant of the need for bread and water.
> Sincerity is the motto of the gnostic (sāhib-i `irfān),
> In whose heart lies the light of faith.
> One who obeys God out of greed [for paradise]
> Is among the merchants and mercenaries.

> Obedience is accepted by the Lord,
> When it comes from love and desire.
> Sincerity is the accomplishment of the skilled man,
> Whose heart contains the light of insight.
> The Four Books are the soul of religion;
> They are four pillars of faith.
> In the struggle against the carnal soul,
> They are four mirrors for the man of gnosis (`irfān).

The above lines reflect the kind of spiritual and religious teachings that Qummī advocated as an alternative to the prevalent discourse of his time, which was heavily influenced by Sufism and philosophy. Throughout his work, Qummī explains aspects of this alternative paradigm, which some have called `irfān-i hubbī in contrast to the traditional tasavvuf-i `ishqī.105 Qummī's semantic choices are highly significant. For example, Qummī rejects the concept of `ishq because it is not attested in the canonical sources of faith and replaces it with the concept of mahabba, a concept that is attested in hadith literature and the Qur'an. Similarly, the concept of ma`rifa is central to him, but it has a radically different meaning than the Sufi conception of ma`rifa. Therefore, at the very

outset of Hikmat al-`ārifīn, the foundational qudsī hadith so often referenced in Sufi literature ("he who knows himself, knows his Lord") is replaced with an exclusively Shī`ī hadith on the imamate: "One who dies not knowing his imam has died a jāhilī death [that is, as a non-Muslim]." Similarly, Qummī has an understanding of hikma that diverges sharply from the way the word is used in the context of the discursive practice of Islamic philosophy. Indeed, Qummī offers his own definition of the term in his introduction to Hikmat, once again placing knowledge of the imams at the center:

> Hikma is knowledge (ma`rifa) of the imam, and the hakīm is one who knows the true imam and learns religious knowledge from him. There is no question that the purified imams from the family [of the Prophet] are leaders of truth and repositories of hikma, having learned it from the Prophet himself, PBUH ... He said, "I am the house of hikma, and `Alī is its door. Whoever desires hikma must approach the door." Therefore, hikma is what is understood from the sayings of the pure imams, who are the companions of infallibility and the interpreters of God's Book... [Hikma does not lie in] the problems of philosophy, which are in contradiction to the Book and the tradition (sunna).

Elsewhere, he espouses the same sentiment in the form of a quatrain:

> The ignorant man busies himself with Greek philosophy (hikmat),
> While neglecting God and following Satan.
> We have no need for Ibn Sīnā's Shīfā,
> For the Qur'an is the healer (shīfā) of the believers.

In short, the immediate object of gnosis or `irfān is the infallible imam and not, as Sufis would have it, the divine nature. Similarly, the only epistemologically legitimate sources of religious knowledge are the Qur'an and the four books.

The importance of these semantic shifts cannot be overemphasized. They lie at the heart of a broader epistemic shift in seventeenth century Safavid Persia, one that forced proponents of long-established traditions of knowledge like philosophy, usūlī jurisprudence, and Sufism to formulate new ways, and find new sources, to

legitimize their discourse. As Twelver Shī`īsm increasingly acquired an independent identity as a world religion rather than a sect during the seventeenth- and early eighteenth century, religious scholars of all stripes engaged themselves more seriously with the Shī`ī hadith traditions in an effort establish the legitimacy of their discourse in accordance to the ethos of the newly-established Shī`ī sacred nomos. The dramatic increase in scholarly activity focused on the canonical collections of Twelver hadith is perhaps nowhere more obvious than in the number of commentaries written on Usūl al-kāfī. Out of the twenty commentaries/glosses that can be identified using Āqā Buzurg's bibliographical compendium, sixteen were written between 1001/1592 and 1150/1737. Like Mulla Sadrā and his teacher Mīr Dāmād are also on the list, as are theologian-philosophers like Mīrzā Rafī`ā. This diversity illustrates the centrality of Shī`ī hadith literature in the consolidation of orthodoxy and the competition for authority involved in that process.

Perhaps the most distinctive and radical expression of the central place the infallible imams and their sayings found in the newly-established Safavid sacred nomos during the seventeenth century was the Akhbārī movement. The success and rapid popularity of Akhbārīsm should be understood as part of a broader intellectual, social, and political shift during the Safavid period that required a re-evaluation of the old regime of truth and its bases of legitimacy. The categorical rejection of Sunni hadith sources and methodologies developed primarily by Sunni scholars was in line with Safavid propaganda, which made every effort to draw a sharp distinction between the Sunni Turks (Ottomans) and the followers of the family of the Prophet (the Shi`a under Safavid rule). The jurists adhering to the Akhbārī legal school, in a return to what they dubbed as tarīqat al-qudamā (the way of the predecessors [among hadith scholars]) freed themselves of the necessity of using the extensive technical Usūlī vocabulary which was, in turn, thoroughly indebted to Peripatetic philosophy and logic. This gave them the added freedom to attack philosophy as a foreign element that needed to be purged from the madrasas. Therefore, the gradual rise to prominence of Akhbārīsm in the madrasa as an alternative framework of legal thought

facilitated the turn against philosophy in important ways.

Although debates over the epistemic legitimacy of philosophy were nothing new in the history of Islamicate world, during Qummī's time these issues were being debated on new terms: those of a politically dominant and symbolically self-contained Twelver Shī`ī worldview that required the authentication of long-established social and intellectual formations on new grounds. Although Qummī and the philosophers to whose teachings he objected had very different views of the nature of the imams and the essence of their teachings, they all directed their efforts toward the Shī`ī hadith compendiums, writing commentaries and using many hadith reports from those compendiums in their works. In other words, although philosophers like Sadrā and Fayż fundamentally disagreed with scholars like Qummī or Qazvīnī, they were united on a larger point: all believed it was imperative to demonstrate that traditions like philosophy were based on the teachings of imams.

Qummī himself was an avowed Akhārī scholar, as mentioned, and the clearest articulation of this intellectual commitment appears in a lengthy introduction to his commentary on Tūsī's Tahdhīb al-ahkām, entitled Hujjat al-islām. This still unpublished work is around 200 pages in length and is among the last that Qummī authored. It is a testament to his erudition and in keeping with his status as a prominent member of the `ulama. It is also where Qummī tackles the issues of hottest debate between the Akhbārīs and Usūlīs, namely, which sources of religious knowledge are valuable, and what constitutes proper methodology. Not surprisingly, after long and winding arguments, Qummī maintains that only two sources are legitimate: the Qur'an and the Sunna. He vehemently attacks the notion that ijtihād is a valid method of approaching these sources, offering arguments based on both Sunni and Shī`ī sources. Additionally, he rejects the usefulness of the concept of ijmā` and then uses the remainder of the introduction to critically examine specific topics in the discipline of uṣūl al-fiqh one by one, from semantics (mabāhith al-alfāẓ), to the issue of probative power (ḥujjiya), to procedural principles (al-uṣūl al-`amaliyya).

In short, Qummī's writings and the information we have about him from other sources reveal that he was a religious scholar of some prominence with relatively strong ties to the political center. He seems to have been more concerned with issues of orthodoxy and piety among the masses rather than the hair-splitting his elite colleagues. He may not have had considerable influence on later generation of Shi`i religious scholars, but his polemical writings were a significant contribution to the formation of Shi`i piety in his time. His puritanical insistence that the Qur'an and the hadith canon were the only legitimate sources of religious knowledge may not have become a majority opinion in Iran in the centuries after him, but it remained a serious epistemological challenge to the epistemologically pluralist strains Shi`i thought. As Gleave, Ansari, and others have noted, the contemporary proponents of maktab-i tafkīk can be seen as intellectual inheritors of the trend of thought in Shi`i history for which Qummī was a prominent advocate as an Akhbārī.

## Ḥikmat al-ʿĀrifīn

Ḥikmat al-ʿĀrifīn is a substantial monograph written at the height of Qummī's literary campaign against philosophy and philosophical mysticism. If the number of surviving manuscripts is any indication, it was also his most widely read technical work.[118] Internal evidence suggests it was written between 1068/1657 and 1075/1664.[119] This is based on two features of the text. First, Qummī mentions Fayż Kāshānī's al-Wāfī multiple times.[120] We know that al-Wāfī was finished no earlier than 1067/1657,[121] and it is unlikely, given the strained relationship between Fayż and Qummī, that the latter had access to incomplete drafts from the author. Qummī also mentions Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn in his other work, Tuḥfat al-akhyār, which, as discussed, was finished no later than 1076/1664.

Two important aspects of Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn have significant bearing on the intellectual history of the Safavid period. First, it is the first monograph of the Safavid period dedicated to criticizing mainstream philosophy and Ibn `Arabī's school of philosophical mysticism from a Shī`ī-Akhbārī perspective. Second, it is the earliest work of its

kind to single out Mulla Sadrā and his philosophy as a primary target. Despite these noteworthy features, Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn has attracted little scholarly attention. S. M. Hadi Gerami was the first to offer a brief discussion in Persian of the significance of this work, especially its attention to Sadrā's philosophy.124 Some years later, I discussed the book in the context of the broader intellectual and social transformations of the late Safavid period. Most recently, Sajjad Rizvi has provided a partical and brief report of the content of Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn as part of a larger analysis of the takfīr of philosophers during the Safavid period. The following synopsis of the work is intended to provide a bird's eye view of the content of the work. Readers, of course, must refer to the detailed arguments of each section for a thorough understanding.

As mentioned earlier, Qummī begins Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn with an epistemological critique of the category of ḥikmat, emphasizing that the only legitimate source of ḥikma is maʿrifa, or knowledge of the infallible imams and their teachings – not the philosophical speculations of Greek philosophers that are contrary to divine injunctions as encapsulated in the Qur'an and hadith literature. Without a proper knowledge of the teachings of the imams, says Qummī, "the rational faculty cannot be perfected, nor can it be purified of illnesses, and attaining ḥikma would be impossible." Like any Akhbārī scholar worth his salt, Qummī spends most of the rest of introduction justifying this position by deploying dozens of hadith reports, both from Shi`i and Sunni sources, to the effect that it is obligatory to learn religious knowledge only through the infalli-ble imams, and that the two sources of Qur'an and hadith cannot be separated from each other. Qummī closes the introduction with extensive quotes from al-Ghazālī's al-Munqidh and Tahāfat al-hukamā (sic), all with the single theme of how all philosophers are infidels.

The first major subject of Hikmat is a discussion of the mainstream philo-sophical methods of proving God's existence. For this purpose, Qummī focuses on the question of why a contingent being (mumkin) needs a cause (`illa) for its existence – a question that happens to be the cornerstone of many

philosophical arguments about God's existence. From his perspective, two major schools of thought exist on the issue, one espoused by philosophers and the other by theologians (mutakallimun). Philosophers believe that imkān, or contingency itself, is the reason that a contingent being needs a cause, whereas theologians stipulate hudūth, or "coming to be," as the criterion. Not surprisingly, Qummī takes the side of the latter group, claiming that their position is supported by the Qur'an and the sunna.

In his criticism of the philosophers' school of thought, he engages in a detailed discussion of the issue of al-awlawiyya al-dhātiyya, or "essential precedence," quoting extensively from Lāhījī, Dashtakī, Qūshjī, and Davānī and rejecting their arguments that a contingent entity, as contingent, is equivocal vis-à-vis existence (wujūd) and non-existence (`adam). Then, he turns to what he views as the correct way of proving God's existence. Quoting verses of the Qur'an to support his claim, he concludes that the only valid way to argue for God's existence is by pondering on His creation. Qummī then goes on to say that since the philosophical arguments fail to prove God's existence, they naturally fall short of proving His unity. As for his own arguments, he contends that the issue is among the necessities (al-darūriyyāt) of faith and, as such, it does not need to be supported by rational arguments. Rather, the ample evidence for God's unity in the Qur'an and hadith literature is sufficient for the faithful. Qummī adds that "tawhīd is not among the [theological] issues necessary for proving [the necessity of] prophecy, therefore, it is possible to make arguments for it [tawhīd] based on transmitted reports (al-naql) without [committing the fallacy of] circular argument."

The second major issue Qummī takes up in his criticism of philosophy is that of God's knowledge. Not surprisingly, the bulk of discussion is dedicated to the question of how God knows, i.e., the extent and quality of His knowledge of the created world. This issue, of course, is hotly contested in philosophy and has long been used by opponents of philosophy to demonstrate how philosophical speculation falls short of the requirements of faith. Qummī spends a number of pages criticizing Ibn

Sīnā's conception of divine knowledge and then turns to some of his contemporaries (ba`d al-muta'akhkhirīn) who, according to Qummī, believe that God's knowledge of the contingent world is presential (hudūrī) as is His knowledge of Himself. Although he names no one in this section, it is quite clear that his ire is focused on Mulla Sadrā and his school of thought. After rejecting both husūlī and hudūrī notions of divine knowledge and accusing Lāhījī of infidelity because of his views on the issue in his Shawāriq, Qummī goes on to explain his own position in a very brief statement that has striking similarities with the Hanbalī position on divine attributes:

If someone asked "if you deem all these positions and schools of thought [madhāhib] false, what is your school of thought on the issue of [divine] knowledge?" [In response] we say "our belief is based on what we have acquired from rational arguments. We have taken this belief from the niche of prophecy, and that is that his knowledge, exalted is he, is without quality (lā kayfa lahu), just like his essence. His knowledge is not like the knowledge of creatures. Rather, his knowledge is [identical to] his essence in the sense that his perfect essence is the source of illumination with no quality, no need for the acquisition of the images of the known things, and no [necessity] of the presence of their essences; his knowledge comprehends all things, universal and particular."

The next issue Qummī addresses is that of divine attributes and their identity with the divine essence, followed by a brief discussion of divine volition (al-mashiyya/irāda). Next he discusses the issue of determinism and destiny (al-qaḍā wa al-qadar) and the related, and controversial, idea of al-badā. It is here that, for the first time in Ḥikmat, he takes on Fayż Kāshānī, to whom he refers throughout the books as a ṣāḥib al-Wāfī. Qummī begins his criticism of Fayż by saying, "know that since ṣāḥib al-Wāfī founded his exegesis of Qur'anic verses and hadiths on the basis of the principles of Sufis and philosophers, he interpreted [the doctrine of] al-badā in a very strange manner that would surprise anyone with common sense and a straightforward outlook." His major criticism of Fayż is based on the latter's interpretation of al-badā as a change in the knowledge of spherical souls (nufūs falakiyya), whereas , he claims, the relevant Qur'anic verses and hadith reports explicitly attribute the change in knowledge implicit in the concept of al-badā to God himself.

The next major theological issue in Ḥikmat is the nature of divine and human actions. Qummī claims that within the framework of Peripatetic philosophy, all actions, whether human or divine, are inevitable and necessitated (mūjab). This leaves no space for free will because an action, as a contingent entity, is equivocal vis-à-vis existence and non-existence and does not "come to be" unless it is necessitated by a prior cause. In contrast, Qummī says, most of the Mu`tazila believe that an action "comes to be" only after it has found some priority (awlawiyya) without reaching the threshold of necessity. Qummī takes the latter position, rejecting the necessity of the cause-effect relationship in the case of a volitional actor and arguing that, with such actors, the caused action can actually deviate from (takhalluf) what the complete cause (al-ʿilla al-tāmma) demands.

Qummī then goes on to tackle the well-known and controversial theological problem of the creation of human actions (khalq al-afʿāl). After listing six different schools of thought on the issue that, from his perspective, are incorrect, he introduces what he sees as the correct theological position as derived from the Shi`i hadith canon. This position is presented as a middle ground between the two extremes (al-amr bayn al-amrayn) of complete divine determination of human actions (al-jabr) on one hand, and the complete autonomy of human agent (al-tafwiḍ) on the other.

The next major topic in Ḥikmat al-ʿārifīn is the issue of al-ḥusn wa-l-qubḥ al-ʿaqliyyayn or "the [rational] intelligibility of good and vile." Here, Qummī denies the validity of both the Ash`arī and Mu`tazilī positions and claims that the correct theological stand is, again, that of a middle ground between two extreme positions (al-amr bayn al-amrayn). Qummī remarks that one can agree with the Mu`tazilites that the notions of ḥusn and qubḥ are independently recognized by human intellect. This recognition by itself, however, does not make the human agent a subject of divine reward (thawāb) and punishment (ʿiqāb). In other words, for divine punishment and reward to be justified,

the human agent must also be able to recognize the notions of 'obligation' (wujūb) and 'prohibition' (ḥurma). That is possible, he says, only through divine guidance and injunctions.

After this general discussion, Qummī treats several important theological issues as sub-sections (al-furūʿ) of the above topic. Among these is a discussion of qāʿidat al-luṭf, or "the argument from [divine] benevolence." Qummī rejects the validity of this argument and offers an alternative argument based on the principle of the necessity of obedience (wujūb al-tamkīn) to the effect that it is incumbent upon the believers to attain certitude (al-ʿilm al-yaqīnī) regarding God's injunctions. From Qummī's perspective, the hadith reports are definitive that mere opinion (ẓann) does not relieve believers of their religious duty. Certainty regarding God's injections is impossible without an infallible guide who has comprehensive knowledge of God's law. In order for the believer to properly obey divine injunction, God must appoint such guides.

Another significant theological issue treated as a sub-section is the issue of al-iḥbāṭ (frustration of good deeds due to the effect of later sins) and al-takfīr (concealment of sins due to the effect of later good deeds – not to be confused with takfīr in the sense of declaring someone infidel). Here Qummī indulges us with an extensive discussion of the nature of major sins (dhunūb kabīra), criticizing both Shaykh Tūsī and Shaykh Bahā'ī's interpretations of the concept. This is followed by a discussion of the concept of al-ʿadāla (justice) and what it means to be a just person (ʿādil) in light of the previous discussion of what constitutes a major sin.

Next, Qummī's attention turns once again to his disagreements with philosophers, this time on the question of the existence of al-mujarradāt or "abstract beings." Qummī lays out his own position that rational arguments for and against the existence of abstract beings other than God are incomplete. Furthermore, he notes that based on the Qur'an and the sunna, one cannot stipulate any abstract beings beside God. The issue at stake is the principle of tanzīh, or the utter incomparability of God. From Qummī's perspective, accepting the

existence of other beings that are beyond time and devoid of special dimension amounts to tashbīh and a clear rejection of the Qur'anic statement that laysa ka mithli-hī shay'un ("there is nothing in His likeness"). Qummī expresses astonishment that some of his "knowledgeable contemporaries" (baʿd al-fudalā al-muta 'akhkhirīn) – most likely one of Mīr Dāmād's students in this case— has followed the philosophers in accepting the existence of such abstract beings. For Qummī, this misguided position reveals nothing but this man's ignorance of the hadith literature and the unfortunate influence of Ibn ʿArabī's nonsense in al-Futūḥāt and Fusūs.

Next, Qummī takes on a principle that has been the cornerstone of the cosmogonic scheme advocated by most philosophers since the time of Ibn Sīnā or earlier: al-wāhid la yasdur ʿan-hu illā al-wāhid, which literally means that "from one, no more than one can issue forth." According to this principle, it is impossible for God, as a unified and simple entity, to be the immediate cause of multiple entities, because this would be a violation of the purity of His oneness. Therefore, there is only one entity, the First Intellect (al-ʿaql al-awwal) of Muslim philosophy, which is the immediate creature of God. Qummī ridicules this argument, saying that it blatantly contradicts the Qur'anic dictum that God is omnipotent. He rejects the notion of the First Intellect entirely. Anticipating the skepticism of those who would point to the famous hadith in Usūl al-kāfī that states that the first creation of God was the Intellect (al-ʿaql), Qummī remarks that the term ʿaql in that hadith has nothing to do with what philosophers called ʿaql. To clarify his point further, he examines Fayż Kāshānī's commentary on the abovementioned hadith in al-Wāfī, rejecting the latter's philosophically inspired interpretation. Qummī's argument against Fayż is based on the principle of perspicuity and goes something like this: God

speaks with humans using their common language. Therefore, his words need to be understood in such terms unless a specific religious (sharʿi) meaning is clearly designated in addition to the customary meaning (as in the case of rituals like salāt or adhān). In this case, Qummī says, no hadith reports lead us to a technical/philosophical conception of ʿaql, and therefore we are obliged to understand

and interpret the term as it is customarily understood, which is to say as the human faculty that allows for differentiation between good and bad, true and false. In this sense, the term is the opposite of madness (junūn) and ignorance (jahl). After offering this argument, Qummī adds his analysis of what led Fayż to commit such a mistake, saying, "it is no secret that the author of al-Wāfī based his exegesis on philosophy and Sufism and a synthesis of the two, despite the fact that the Sufis reject philosophers in the strongest words, as is clear from the works of Ghazālī, Rumi, and others." No matter what our opinion of Qummī or Fayż, this is an accurate observation. Qummī is correct that the merger between philosophy and Sufism, attested here in the writings of Fayż, is a relatively new development, and for Qummī a highly concerning one. In the remainder of this section, Qummī offers his own interpretation of the abovementioned hadith and follows with multiple proofs that, from his perspective, demonstrate that spirits are not abstract beings.

Next Qummī treats the issue of whether the universe is eternal (qadīm) or non-eternal (hādith). Little is new in this portion of the book beyond the fact that Qummī adds Mīr Dāmād's argument on al-hudūth al-dahrī, or "perpetual incipience," to a long list of arguments that philosophers have put forward in contradistinction to what Qummī sees as the position necessitated by Qur'anic verses and hadith reports, which is that the universe has come to be in a strictly temporal sense (al-hudūth al-zamānī). This raises the question of how the universe could have come into being temporally when the very existence of time is dependent on the universe existing in motion. Qummī replies that the rational faculty can imagine time extending before and after the creation of the universe, and that our ability to imagine such a thing warrants talking about the universe as "coming to be" (hādith) in time.

Qummī continues his foray into fundamental debates in philosophy and theology by discussing the notion of existence (wujūd) and whether it is the semantic form (ishtirāk lafzī) or the semantic content (ishtirāk ma`nawī) that is common when using the term to refer to God and the created world. He weighs in on the side of the latter option and then turns to the contentious issue of the relationship between existence (wujūd) and quiddity (māhiyya). In a rare and inexplicable moment of agreement with the philosophical tradition that he has castigated throughout the entire work, he invokes Ibn Sīnā and the author of al-Mawāqif to assert that wujūd is among the second-order constructed concepts (al-ma`qūlāt al-thāniya), which does not correspond to anything real outside the mind. "[W]hat is outside," Qummī says, "is human, blackness, and other realities; these are the quiddities (al-māhiyyāt) that actually exist in reality. [Concepts like] existence and thingness have no primacy, or ta'assul, in reality. Rather, they are among the second-order concepts that are derived from first-order concepts - as concepts - and nothing outside corresponds to them."

It does not take long for the reader to realize that Qummī's decision to align himself with the mainstream Peripatetic philosophical position of asālat al-māhiyya, or "the primacy of quiddity over existence," is a strategic choice. The concluding section of Hikmat al-`ārifīn makes this particularly clear. That section is dedicated to an extensive refutation of what Qummī considers the most dangerous and heretical aberrations of all: the idea of wandat al-wujūd, or "unity of existence." The significance of this issue in Qummī's mind is clear from the fact that the khātima makes up one fourth of the length of the entire work.

Rather than proceeding with Ibn `Arabī, whom he calls "the chief of the antichrists" (úmdat al-dajjālīn) and "the killer of religion" (mumit al-dīn), Qummī focuses initially on his contemporaries, Mulla Sadrā in particular. In a clear reference to the latter, he begins the section by expressing surprise that "some among his contemporaries" have "merged philosophy and Sufism." His criticism of Sadrā's position focuses mainly on the two pillars on which the entirety of the philosopher's system is built. These are his argument in favor of the primacy of existence over quiddity, or asālat al-wujūd, and the notion that wujūd is a reality that is subject to "gradations," or tashkīk. These two pillars, according to Qummī, lead Sadrā to the untenable and heretical position of wandat al-wujūd. Qummī quotes extensively from al-Asfār al-arba`a and al-

Shawāhid al-rubūbiyya, demonstrating a firsthand, extensive knowledge of the writings of his opponent on the issue. Abrasive personal attacks may have been his style, but it is clear that he was committed to an accurate representation of the positions with which he disagrees.

Qummī's criticism of Mulla Sadrā is in accordance with the mainstream philosophical and theological paradigm of the time, and it revolves around the former's view that the concept of wujūd corresponds to nothing outside the mind. If wujūd exists only as a universal concept (mafhūm kullī) in the human mind, says Qummī, talking in terms of gradations or primacy, let alone conceptualizing it as a principle that permeates all, is absurdity.

Yet, Qummī is well aware that it is foolish to blame Sadrā for this heretical idea. It is true that the latter is responsible for the "unholy" marriage between Sufism and philosophy during the Safavid period, but the real culprit is Ibn `Arabī. "It is clear," says Qummī, "that the notion of wandat al-wujūd did not exist and was not well-known before Muhyi al-Dīn al-`Arabī al-Andulusī al-Hanbalī and his followers, and his statements make clear that he was possessed of the lowest and most nonsensical intellects. As for the earlier generation of Sufis like Abī Yazīd [al-Bistāmī] and al-Hallāj and the likes of them, their statements make clear that some of them believed in ittihād (unity of man and God in essence) and others in hulūl (divine incarnation) ... therefore, you must be aware that it was Muhyi al-Dīn, who in reality is Mumīt al-Dīn (the killer of religion), who made the idea of wadat al-wujūd famous among the [intellectually] weakest Muslims using treachery and deception..." Qummī then treats the reader to a long list of quotes from Ibn `Arabī's Fusūs as well as quotes from famous commentaries by his followers, including al-Qaysarī (d. 751/1350), al-Qāshānī (d.735/133), and al-Jandī (d. circa 700/1300), to expose their heretical beliefs.

When Qummī penned his critique of Sadrā's metaphysics, the latter's philosophy was known only to a small circle of elitist philosophers. Nearly a century would pass before his system replaced the Peripatetic tradition as the dominant philosophical paradigm. So why, one might ask, did Qummī choose to focus on Sadrā? If Qummī's colleagues dismissed Sadrā, why help bring the latter's philosophical thought from the margins to the center of scholarly discussion?

As we have seen, Qummī was alarmed by Sadrā's merger of philosophy and Sufism. But can we go farther, as Rizvi has recently argued, and say that this synthesis was the very reason that philosophy came into the radar of opponents of Sufism at the end of the Safavid era? In other words, had it not been for the innovative synthesis of Sadrā and his students, would philosophy have escaped the attention of Qummī, Mīr Lawhī, and others?

The answer, I would argue, is negative. It is true that an important concern of Qummī in his attacks against philosophy was the fact that some of the hukamā advocated a monistic perspective on questions of existence, but his problems with philosophy were much broader and more fundamental, as it is evident from the first three quarters of Hikmat al-`ārifīn. Qummī's other writings that criticize philosophy confirm this perspective. In works like Tuhfat al-akhyār and al-Favā'id al-dīniyyah, Qummī eschews his critique of Mulla Sadrā's philosophical monism in favor of a broader critique of philosophy as a discipline. The bottom line for Qummī, as mentioned above, was that philosophy was an invalid and illegitimate discipline of knowledge because of its foreign roots and because on several important and fundamental issues, it contradicts what he perceived as the normative stance of Shi`i hadith literature.

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## The Act of Being: the Philosophy of Revelation in Mullâ Sadrâ by Christian Jambet ; translated by Jeff Fort [Zone Books, 9781890951696]

The Sufi Islamic-Greek influences upon the metaphysical ontology Muhammad ibn Ibrahim Sadr al-Din Shirazi, Muhammad ibn Ibrahim, (d. 1641) aka Mullâ Sadrâ are explored in this original study of the Persian Philosopher's contemporary revelence,

Exploring the thought of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, an Iranian Shi'ite of the seventeenth century: a universe

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of politics, morality, liberty, and order that is indispensable to our understanding of Islamic thought and spirituality.

This lluminating study by Christian Jambet explores the essential elements of the philosophical system of Mulla Sadra Shirazi, an Iranian Shi'ite of the seventeenth century. The writings of Mulla Sadra Shirazi (d. 1640) bear witness to the divine revelation in every act of being, from the humblest to the most celebrated. More generally, Islamic philosophy employs an ontology of the real that is important to the destiny of metaphysics, an ontology that belongs to our own universe of thought. The Act of Being, nourished by the Sufism of Ibn al-'Arabi, the philosophy of classical Islam, the thought inherited from the Greeks, and the esoteric and mystical dimension of Shi'ism, seeks to make sense of this intuition of the real. Mulla Sadra saw the world as moving ceaselessly in an uninterrupted revolution of its substances, in which infinite existence breaks through the successive boundaries of the sensible and the intelligible, the mineral and the angelic. In a flourish of epiphanies, in the multiplied mirror of bodies and souls, Mulla Sadra perceived absolute divine liberty. Revealing freedom in the metamorphosis of the believer and the sage, existence teaches the imitation of the divine that can be seen "in its most beautiful form." Reading Mulla Sadra reveals the nexus of politics, morality, liberty, and order in his universe of thought--a universe, as Christian Jambet shows, that is indispensable to our understanding of Islamic thought and spirituality.

Excerpt: When a philosophical work written by a Westerner attempts to articulate the essential elements of a philosophical system constructed by an Iranian Shī`ite of the seventeenth century, the potential reader has the right to ask: For what reasons has the author of this book spent so many years reading the works of this man who will always remain a foreigner, whose very face he will never know, and whose beliefs belong to the intellectual universe that came to an end, in the West, with the mathematization of physical space, with the end of political theology, and with the great revolutions that radically modified the image of reason?

Rarely does such a question fail to become an objection. After reading The Act of Being, an erudite and attentive friend, who had long before included my first work on Islamic philosophy in the series he was then editing,' wrote to me in all honesty that for us today there is not much to learn from my dear Mullā Sadrā. Working before the age of modern science, deeply rooted in the soil of metaphysics, subject to the demands of religious revelation, Sadrā, like all the thinkers of Islam, is merely an object of learned study and of the history of philosophy, a kind of scholarly curiosity or even an antiquated exhibit fit for a museum.

This objection is not entirely without merit. I would even like to add a few arguments to it, in order to see whether it is possible to refute it in a serious manner.

The first argument against such an undertaking is of a historical nature. The interest that Western culture has shown for Islam, for its thinkers, poets, and mystics, has its own history. Roughly speaking, this history has had three major phases since the eighteenth century: first there was the "Oriental Renaissance," as Raymond Schwab has called it. Then, in response to the positivism of Ernest Renan, there was the discovery of the great spiritual figures of Islam, as part of a quest aimed at starting a dialogue between the mystics of the three religions of the Book — Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Finally, today, the intent is no longer to gain self-knowledge in proximity with Islam, but rather to come to know Islam in its foreignness, or even its fundamental hostility toward ourselves. A concern no longer for the same, for similitude, but for the other, for difference, for the absence of any common space. This more recent perspective, which is eager to take up the vocabulary of war ("clash of civilizations," and so on) is the unreflective response to the political emergence of Islam at the present moment of world history.

The first phase can be associated with the names of Goethe and Hegel, the second with those of Louis Massignon, Henry Corbin, Richard Walzer, and Seyyed Nasr. The third phase, our own, is seen as the time of the sociologists and the political scientists. The history of this research would thus show that the period when Orientalism was closely linked with the colonial era, and with that of the emancipation of colonized peoples, has ended. The present is seen as a time involving the reciprocal criminalization of the West and the Islamic East, the hegemony of "revolutionary" doctrines in Islam, and

the ruin of all "dialogue" between the peoples of the Book. The major conflicts centered in the Middle East are said to overwhelm a more spiritual Islam, drowning it in blood — a spiritual Islam whose death knell was rung during the Islamic revolution in Iran.

The second argument is closely related to the first. Islam, it is said, is above all a political religion and gives rise essentially to political theologies, such that the only reason to study its ideologues would be to illuminate this politics, identified entirely with the "struggle on the path of faith." The philosophers, mystics, and poets should be placed on the shelf of curiosities because they lack any concrete effectivity and reflect a scholarly culture cut off from the popular masses who make history. This observation is not false. The works of a thinker such as Sadrā, like those of Avicenna, al-Fārābī, and Ibn Hanbal, remain unknown to the people and are of interest only to scholars. The separation between philosophy, spirituality or Qur'ānic studies, and popular culture obviously promotes a religion for simple, ordinary people characterized by a naive adherence to the letter of the Qur'ān, to traditional customs, and to the teachings of local preachers, who may be more or less well informed. The simplicity of Wahhabism no doubt partially explains its success, and it promotes the expansion of the Islamist political ideologues. These considerations certainly do little to weaken such an argument.

Let us remark, however, that the culture of religious scholars is more consequential than is often acknowledged. In Iran, and more broadly in the Shiite world, the actors on the political stage use the discourse of classical philosophers or theologians, citing it and adapting it for their own purposes. It suffices to recall the example of the Ayatollah Khomeini, or one of his successors. If Khomeini turned his back, in a way, on Mullā Sadrā's thought, he nevertheless knew it very well, and his political gesture cannot be explained without taking into account his internal dialogue and his critical relation with the great Iranian mystic and philosopher. You turn your back only on someone who rules over you — and who for that reason influences you in the very gesture of separation. In the Sunni world, the rupture between mystical religion and political religion is in itself a major historical fact that only the study of the

spiritual philosophy of Islam allows us to illuminate in a satisfactory way.

It therefore seems to me that the doubts and confusions can be dispelled if we examine their presuppositions.

The first objection to there being any present interest in studying the philosophies of Islam emphasizes the irreducible fracture that separates the Western system of thought based on the contestable in our eyes, without illuminating them through the exegesis practiced by Muslim authors on the religious revelation of these practices and, consequently, without paying precise attention to the ontology of Islam that is unveiled by the philosophers and theologians, or even by the mystics? It is not in the surface discourse perpetually rehashed by the Muslim jurists that the truth of the political order is best revealed in Islam, but in the works of the philosophers, whether they turn away from politics or attempt to found it. Most often, philosophical and theological syntheses are conscious testimonies to the profound tension that animates Islam, a tension between a temporal vocation and a spiritual vocation that are simultaneously united and opposed.

The choice of an author like Mullā Sadrā thus becomes very clear. In order to understand this choice, we must not forget the importance of messianism for the ontology of Islam. Related to the "Servant" whose coming was announced by the prophets of Israel, to the "Suffering Servant" in the Old Testament, and to Jesus, and not without influence from the figure of Mani, who invented the notion of the "seal of prophecy," Muslim spirituality is an intense meditation on the essence, the prerogatives, and the demands of the complete Servant in proximity to his Lord. He is the Perfect Man, and the thinkers of Islam, inspired by the work of Ibn al-Arabi, focused their thought on the definition of this Perfect Man, on his future coming, and on his silent and active presence in this world and in the other metaphysical worlds. Already, Shī`ite thought, particularly Ismā`īlism, had thus proposed a scheme of sacred history, unfolding from its origin in the creation of Adam until the coming of the awaited Resurrector.

The study of such an ontology of history, one of the richest versions of which we are presenting here, is extremely important if we want to move forward in

the comparative study of the three messianisms — Jewish, Christian, and Muslim. Such a study reveals a conception of human becoming that includes the exigency of man's divinization, or rather of his fulfilled resemblance to God, who made man in his own image and established him as "caliph of God on earth." The concept of the essential motion of all existents toward that point where the Perfect Man becomes the mirror of the divine names, a concept that we find in Mullā Sadrā, remarkably illuminates the dynamic orientation of Islam. Part of what is at stake in such a study is a philosophy of history that renounces the assertion of a supposed "disenchantment of the world," and that renounces any abdication before a supposed "secularization" of historical time, seeing the everyday as only a surface phenomenon, beneath which the conflict internal to biblical and Qur'ānic messianism carries on its work. Toward what end? Toward what reconciliation? Toward what irreducible alterity? These are the very questions we face today.

The epistemological argument that maintains that these systems of thought are rendered obsolete by modern science or by the ascendancy of modern political thought disregards something that is nonetheless glaringly obvious. It is pointless to say to an entire culture that it is "behind," or that it has not completed the necessary journey to the age of scientific truth. It would be more useful to ask: Why, today, has such a culture, combined in a very complex way with multiple contributions from the West — in technology, economy, and ideology — begun to move, on the historical stage, so decidedly against the grain, and in such a flagrant way? Why is the present historical moment characterized by such a historical initiative?

To answer this by attempting to justify the "modernity" of Islamic science is pointless. To answer by deploring the "perverse" effects of a dead thought or a culture blocked in its development is to proffer a contradiction in terms. How, indeed, could a dead thought have any living effect (contestable or not, that is not the question here) if it is truly dead? What it would be necessary to understand, rather, is the following.

On the one hand, we would need to understand how the philosophy of Islam has a certain living power, from the very fact that it is not foreign to world history, because it is connected to and even interlinked with our own metaphysical destiny, both Greek and biblical. In the past, it already gave life to some of the most enduring categories of our vision of the world. A central example is provided here, when I examine the question of the existence of essence, in an attempt to give what I call the Avicennian moment its full importance.

On the other hand, we would have to ask how, against the background of a common metaphysics, Islam has maintained convictions foreign to those that made possible the development of modern philosophy in the West, as well as the worldviews that derive from these convictions. That is, we would have to ask how it is not a thing of the past but rather lives according to its own rhythm, in a mode of historical life with its own logic, its own time, and its own autonomous finalities.

Such work goes far beyond the ambition of the present study. But it is at least within this perspective that I have written it. I would like to specify my method. My goal here was not primarily that of a historian of Islamic philosophy, although I do believe that I have been faithful to history and its demands. It is as a philosopher that I have attempted to read the philosophers, whether Western or Eastern, who are interrogated here. My only ambition has been to receive as faithfully as possible what Sadrā and those associated with him were trying to say, and to render manifest, in the language of a Western philosopher living today, the mode of appearance of being evident for these spirits in their immediate and direct vision. My method strives to be the phenomenology of a becoming, of a metamorphosis of thought, from its Hellenic bases to the Islamic figure of an absolute that is different from the absolute unveiled in Western Christian thought. That is my obvious debt to Hegel, whose teaching still seems indispensable to me, whatever the contestations with which practically all contemporary discourses have assailed it.

Finally, I would like to express my gratitude and admiration for the scrupulous and rigorous work done by Jeff Fort in translating this work into English — for he has done more than translate it; he has given it another life in a fitting and adequate philosophical language (and that is his specific contribution to this text), in all faithfulness to the original French. His work provided the occasion for a number of corrections and

specifications, and in that sense, too, it cannot be seen as the passive reconstruction of a book in another language. Any errors or omissions in this book fall to me; the improvements and elucidations, however, owe a great deal to him. And for this I offer him my warmest thanks.

## Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought by Sadr al-Din Shīrāzi, Critical Edition, Introduction, Glossary of Technical Terms and Index by Hossein Ziai [Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions Series, No. 13, Mazda Publishers, 9781568592824]

This volume is Part One of one of the most significant and truly philosophical texts of the post classical period in Arabic and Persian philosophy, published here for the first time in a critical edition. The text is titled Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought (al-Taʻlīqāt ʻalā Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Awwal ft Dawābit al-Fikr), and is an exemplum work in the revivalist scholastic tradition in Iran known as the "School of Isfahan."' This text represents the apogee of philosophical analysis of post classical Arabic and Persian philosophy, and in many ways it is the most innovative composition by the renowned Persian philosopher Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Shīrāzī best known as "Mullā Sadrā"—we shall henceforth refer to him as "Sadrā."

The text here published is in the illuminationist tradition and is distinct from the text-book genre where philosophy is limited by predetermined doctrine and is reduced to "handmaiden of theology." This text was, however, the least known of Sadrā's philosophical work during his life outside of specialist circles. This is because it was not meant for the broader scholastic audiences and was one of the author's "private" compositions. The author is the most important figures of post classical philosophy in Islam taken as a whole, and a highly creative Persian thinker.

The present volume is one of the major results of my research in the past two decades on post Avicennan philosophical traditions, the creative side of which is defined by illuminationist philosophy. This text, Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought, is distinguished from textbooks on philosophy, in that Sadrā's approach is such that it does not limit the construction of philosophical arguments by pre-determined, or by given, dogmatic doctrine.

One of the aims of my research on post Avicennan philosophy has been to systematically identify principle texts in Arabic and Persian that form Sohravardī's illuminationist philosophy and inform us of the ways this innovative system continues in Iran from the end of the 12th c to the present. I have placed singular emphasis on identifying and publishing critical editions—including initial analysis—of philosophical texts first by Sohravardi himself, and subsequently by adherents of the new school, the Philosophy of Illumination (Hikmat al-Ishrāq), whose different types of compositions, commentaries and original work, continue Sohravardī's creative thinking after his brutal execution in Aleppo in 1191.

The Philosophy of Illumination is recognized as an independent school, and in order to study and write about its place in the history of the genesis and developments of philosophy in the Islamic civilization we must have access to critical editions of at least a core group of texts that represent its construction first by Sohravardī and then its development after him. I have been devoted to

accomplishing this task, which has a two-fold significance. Firstly, the publication of exemplar texts in critical editions is the necessary preliminary step in the study of philosophy in Islam. Secondly, the more I have probed illuminationist texts and have analyzed specific problems and arguments such as especially theories of knowledge and the construction of a unified epistemological structure named "knowledge by presence," the more I have come to conclude that Sohravardi's legacy, his Philosophy of Illumination, has greatly impacted intellectual Persian poetry and in ways more than one has defined the poetic principle I have named "Persian poetic wisdom." My work has also been instrumental in showing the inaccuracy of describing philosophy as it develops in Iran after Avicenna in subjective mystical terms. The use of the label, "theosophy" to describe the thought of Persian thinkers such as Sohravardi, Sadrā, Sabzevārī, and many others is inaccurate and also leads to misrepresentation of philosophy as some kind of subjective mysticism.

The publication of the present volume takes us closer to making available a representative group of texts that inform us of the development of philosophy in Iran during periods after Avicenna, and not determined by mysticism nor by theology. I have always felt that to firmly establish my claim that philosophy did not die out in the East after Avicenna, nor did it deteriorate into an ill-defined mystical "theosophy," we need first to have critical editions of a meaningful number of the important philosophical texts. Part Two of the present text, namely Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part Two: On the Light of Lights and the Principles the Ranks of Being (al-Ta`līqāt alā Sharh Hikmat al-Islirāq: al-Qism al-Thānī fi Nūr al-Anwār wa Rabadī al-Wujūd wa Tartībihā) was not published in 2011 because of the editors death, which will add to the plan of presenting representative texts that determine the origins and developments of illuminationist philosophy in Iran, from the time of Sohravardi in the 12th century to the present. The critical edition of Parts One and Two of Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination will add to the list of major critical editions of illuminationsit texts that I have published so far: Anvāriyya: Persian Commentary on Hikmat al-Isrāq; Shahrazūrī's Commentry on Hikmat al-Ishrāq; and

Ibn Kammūna's al-Tanqīhāt .ft Sharh al-Talwīhāt. Refinement and Commentary on Sohravardī's Intimations: A Thirteenth Century Text on Natural Philosophy and Psychology.

The author of this text, Sadr al-Din al-Shīrāzī, is one of the most revered of all philosophers in Islam. His full name is Muhammad ibn Ibrāhīm Qavāmī Shīrāzī, and he is commonly known as "Mullā Sadrā." His honorific title is "Sadr al-Din" and his epithet is "Sadr al-Muta'allihin." He was born in Shīrāz in 979/ 1572 to a wealthy family. We know that his father was a "minister" in the Safavid court, but was also a scholar. Sadrā died in 1050/1572 while on his seventh pilgrimage journey to Mekka in Basra where he is buried, and where his grave was known until recent times. Unlike authors of earlier periods we have substantial information on his life, several autographs of his works, many letters, and a good number of glosses on earlier textual traditions have survived.

After completing his preliminary studies in his native Shiraz, the young thinker travels first to Qazvin and later to Isfahān, the seat of Safavid rule, perhaps the most important center of Islamic learning and scholarship in the 16th and 17th centuries. In Isfahān he first enrolls in courses on traditional Islamic scholarship, commonly named the "Transmitted Sciences" (al- `ulūm al-naqliyya), where the great jurist Bahā' al-Dīn Muhammad al-`Āmilī (d. 1031/1622) was laying the foundations of a new Shī`ite jurisprudence. Sadrā's early studies of the emerging Shī`ite jurisprudence, Hadīth, and Koranic commentary under the famous Shī`ite thinker distinguishes him from many of the earlier philosophers of Medieval Islam, whose knowledge religious subjects were not at the level of ranking clergy. This side of Sadrā's intellectual formation marked his thinking and represents one of the two main trends in his writings. He is known both as a jurist (faqih), considered to be at the rank of one who has achieved "independent reason" (i.e. has become a "mujtahidn'), as well as a philosopher.

The exact nature and expression of accepted philosophy in Shī`ism needs to be studied more, but it is safe to state that Sadrā's philosophical work, especially his popular texts such as al-Asfār al-

Arba `a (The Four Journeys), and a few others that define his holistic reconstruction named, "Metaphysical Philosophy" (al-Hikma al-Muta`āliya), present philosophy in a framework that was not deemed hostile by the clergy, which marks an important point in the history of philosophy in Islam. While philosophy was never accepted by mainstream Islam, and in fact was shunned by the fundamentalists initiated by the anti-rationalist writings of Ibn Taymiyya in the 14th c, and later labelled "heretical" by Salafi figures from the 17th and 18th centuries on, a select group of Shī `ite scholastic figures accepted philosophy, especially the tradition refined and expressed in a limited form by Persian scholars in Iranian scholastic centers such as Shīrāz, Tabriz, Qazvīn, and Isfahān. The role played by Sadrā and the substantial number of leading scholars he trained is of monumental significance. That philosophy is not just tolerated but actively pursued by some of the highest ranking Shī `ite Ulamā at present in Shī `ite circles, is a direct result of achievements in philosophical composition by Sadrā and his students in Iran. These scholars produced substantial numbers of work in various domains of philosophical analysis and discourse, but very few are available in critical editions and fewer still have been rigorously studied by historians of philosophy. Also, there are a few texts, such as the one here published, that were apart from the main group of philosophical writings, and belong to a more "private" set of work that were not meant for the larger scholastic readership of the Madrasas, but for private discussion among select numbers of students under the supervision of the teacher. This possible dual character of Sadrā's work needs to be fully studied. I plan to present such an analysis when Part Two of the present work is also published and when we have access to a more comprehensive range of Sadrā's sophisticated analytical work.

Sadrā's philosophical training commenced during the same period he was studying the traditional religious syllabus. We know that once Sadra entered Isfahān and while studying with Bahā' al-Din Muhammad al-`Amilī, he commenced his study of the "Intellectual Sciences" (al- `ulūm al- `aqliyya) in earnest with one of the greatest original Islamic thinkers of all time, Muhammad Bāqir Astarābādī,

well-known as "Mir Dāmād" (d.1040/1631). This famous, erudite philosopher, also known as the "Seal of Scientists" (Khātam al-Hukamā') and the "Third Teacher"—after Aristotle and Fārābī—taught Sadrā a comprehensive range of Arabic and Persian texts that form the core of of philosophical teachings in Islam. Mir Dāmād himself was a remarkably creative thinker and innovative philosopher. His concept Hudūth Dahrī (Eternal Generation) anticipated Bergson's "Creative Evolution," and had it not been for his pupil he would have been remembered more than he currently is. In many ways Mir Dāmād's endeavors, funded by Safavid court's enlightened endowments of the arts and sciences, lead to the establishment of superior libraries where the older manuscript traditions were collected, copied and published. Evidence for this profuse activity are the tremendous numbers of Arabic and Persian manuscripts presently housed in major collections all over the world, all produced in Isfahān in this period. Mir Dāmād's texts on philosophical subjects, especially his Qabasāt and his Jadhawāt, are among the first that lead to the "revival" of philosophy known as the "School of Isfahān," as indicated.

Sadrā's studies with this Mir Dāmād lead him to the compilation of his most famous work, which is the next synthesis and reconstruction of metaphysics in Islamic philosophy after Sohravardi. This philosophical work is identified as an independent school in Islamic philosophy, and is perhaps the most dominant at present, and bears the name "Metaphysical Philosophy" (al-Hikma al-Muta`āliyya) chosen specifically by Sadrā himself.

Sadrā's fame as master of the then accepted both branches of Shī`ite learning: the Transmitted and the Intellectual, soon spread over the Safavid capitol, but he did not accept any official position in courtly Safavid circles in Isfahān. He did, however, accept to teach in the Madrasa built and endowed by the Safavid nobleman Allāh-verdī Khān in his native Shiraz.

Sadrā trained a number of students who become famous pillars of philosophy in Iran, and their texts are studied in scholastic circles. His two most significant pupils are: Muhammad ibn Murtada,

well-known as "Muhsin Fayd Kāshānī," whose work, especially his al-Kalamūt al-Maknūna, emphasize the more religious component of philosophical expression; and 'Abd a1-Razzāq ibn Husayn Lāhījī, whose Persian summaries of the Peripatetic side of Sadrā's philosophical works have been especially popular in Iran. His Shawāriq al-Ilhām deserves special mention here for its inclusion of an older Avicennan view of Ethics. Both pupils were also married to two of Sadrā's daughter's, which is indicative of an increasingly "intimate" relation between master and teacher in Shī`ite learned circles, prevalent to this day.

Later in life Sadrā retreated from society and from city life altogether, and stayed in the small village of Kahak, near Qomm. This period marks Sadrā's increased preoccupation with the contemplative life, and is also the period when he composed most of his major work. Judging by the voluminous extent of his textual compositions—a recent edition of his magnum opus philosophical work, al-Asfar al-Arba'a, alone is in ten volumes----this period of Sadrā's life represents the most fruitful time of his life.

Monumental though the impact of Sadrā's works and thinking have been on Islamic intellectual history, very few comprehensive, systematic studies of his philosophy are available in western languages. The earliest extensive study was done by Max Hörten, whose Das Philosophische System von Schirazi (1913), while problematic in places and difficult to use because of the author's use of pre-modern philosophical terminology and older Orientalist views, is still a good source for the study of Sadrā's philosophical thought. In more recent decades Henry Corbin's text-editions and studies opened a new chapter in western scholarship on Islamic-Iranian philosophy. Corbin's emphasis on the presumed esoteric dimension of Sadrā's thought has, however, hindered a properly philosophical analysis of his metaphysical philosophy.

More than fifty works are attributed to Sadrā. They can be grouped into two parts indicative of the two main trends of his thought mentioned above. His compositions that are predominantly on subjects that relate to the "Transmitted Sciences," i.e. that cover the traditional subjects of Islamic jurisprudence, Koranic commentary, Hadith

scholarship, and theology, are best exemplified by: (1) Sharh al-Usūl al-Kāfi. This is a commentary on Kulayni's famous work, the first Shī `ite Hadith compilation on specifically juridical issues; (2) Mafātīh al-Ghayb, an incomplete Koranic commentary (tafsīr); (3) A number of short treatises each devoted to the Koranic commentary of a specific Sūra; (4) A short treatise called "Imāmat" on SW' he theology; (5) A number of glosses on standard Kalām texts, such as Baydāwī's Tafsir, and Qūshchī's Sharh al-Tajrid.

Sadrā's more significant texts, widely thought by Muslims to represent the apogee of Islamic philosophy, are those that indicate the second major trend of his thought, named the "Intellectual Sciences." His major texts in this group include: (1) Al-Asfār al-Arba'a al-Aqliyya (the Four Intellectual Journeys). This is Sadrā's magnum opus philosophical work, and includes detailed discussions on all philosophical subjects, minus logic; (2) Al-Shawāhid al-Rubūbiyya (Dvine Testimonies), which is generally accepted to be an epitome of the Asfār; (3) Glossess on Avicenna's Shifā and (4) Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination, Part One of which is here published in Arabic text.

Finally we should present the reader with a selected list of the most famous philosophical problems commonly associated with Sadrā. These are: (1) The ontological position called "primacy of existence" (asālat al-wujūd) which was chosen by Sadrā after a critical evaluation of the various ontological principles including the "primacy of essence," held by the illuminationists. His position is not simply that of the Peripatetics as explained by Avicenna, but Sadrā adds to this the illuminationist view of equivocal being, and considers that while being is primary it is also given to degrees of less and more in a continuous sense, as the illuminationists had applied this principle to essence. (2) Sadrā's other ontological position, commonly referred to as "unity of being" (wadat al- wujūd) is distinguished from the Peripatetic position which regards being to be a "common term" which for him is a "common concept." (3) The problem of the "unity of subject and object" (ittihād al-'āqil wa al-niā'qūl), which is a principle illuminationist epistemological position in the proof of the primacy

## The Text and the Edition

The Arabic text here published is named Addenda on The Commentary on The Philosophy of Illumination: Part One on The Rules of Thought (al-Ta `līqāt 'alā Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Awwal fi Dawābit al-Fikr). The term "addenda" (ta `līqāt, sg. to `līq) refers to one of several types of philosophical commentary. These are: (1) Shark (commentary), which may be in one of two styles, interlinear comments on the main text, or commentary added in blocks; (2) Tanqīhāt (refinements); (3) Ta līqāt (addenda); (4) Hāshiya (gloss), which is often taken to be the same way comments are made and added to a text as in a Ta'līq; (5) Talkhīs (epitome), which was more prevalent in periods before the 12th c. and is also a type of philosophical work in the Peripatetic tradition, where an epitome (short or long) of a major text is produced by later scholars. For example, there are several epitomes of Aristotelian texts composed by Averroes, which were one of the main methods employed in publishing works on Aristotelian philosophy in Islam.

In the text, Addenda, Sadrā presents his arguments, discussions, rebuttals, and refinements concerning specific philosophical topics, problems and propositions in relation to two texts: (1) The main text, which is Sohravardi's Hikmat al-Ishrāq, and (2) The secondary text, which is Shark Hikmat al-Ishrāq by the 13th century Persian Illuminationist philosopher, Qutb al-Din Shīrāzī. The text is in a refined, technical philosophical Arabic. Sadrā introduces the topic he wishes to analyze by quoting either directly from Sohravardi's text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq or by quoting Qutb al-Din's text, but he then goes directly to what he considers to be the core illuminationist position on a given topic. Sadra does not quote the full text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq nor that of Shark Hikmat al-Ishrāq, usually quoting only a few phrases ended with "the rest"— the abbreviation is placed at the end of the short quote, introduced by "his [Sohravardi's] statement" (qawluhū) or by "the commentator [Shīrāzī] said" (gala al-shārih), and the reader is expected to have access to the full text. I have therefore added the full text in footnotes so that the reader will easily be able to access the complete text of the argument to thus better follow Sadrā's additional comments. The additions by Sadrā are usually his own highly refilled analysis of the argument at hand plus the conclusions he makes ill favor of, or against, the original argument as presented by Sohravardi and clarified by Shīrāzī. However, in the majority of cases the arguments are directed against Sohravardi's text alone. It is difficult to follow Sadrā's arguments, and the reader must be familiar with Sohravardi's teachings in general and of course with his specific arguments and constructs concerning a specific problem. On the whole Sadrā takes an illuminationist position on the majority of the philosophical problems and topics he examines, and his aim is not to refute Sohravardī, but neither to simply comment on his illuminationist doctrine. His aim is to add to and to refine illuminationist arguments thus to present illuminationist philosophy as a more systematic and more self-consistent system. In this way Sadrā uses the method of augmenting (`allaqa 'ala) the argument by presenting ultimately his own often innovative refinements and constructions of philosophical propositions.

In sum, this critical edition of Sadrā's, al-Ta `līqāt 'ala Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq: al-Qism al-Thānī fi Dawabit al-Fikr, is based on the above manuscripts and editions. In the annotations to the text, I have provided the full text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq based on my own edition of Shahrazūrī's, Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq, to facilitate the reader's access to the main arguments as presented by Sadrā. The critical edition therefore includes not just Sadrā's Addenda but Sohravardī's text, and in parts whenever necessary Shīrāzī's commentary as well.

The preparation and production of this critical edition of the Arabic text of Sadrā's, al-Ta `līqāt 'aid Sharh Hikmat al-Ishrāq, has been complex and time consuming. The result, it is hoped, will add to the body of critical editions of texts that collectively make up the tradition of post Avicennan philosophy as it originated and developed in Iran through the analytical work of innovative Persian thinkers. The publication of this text will help in our analysis of what is philosophy after Avicenna, and will help dismiss the previous errors of historians that philosophy died in East after Avicenna, and will

also help refine the earlier misrepresentation that philosophy deteriorated into an ill-defined, subjective mystical theosophy. Reading and analyzing the details of Sadrā's sophisticated philosophical arguments and constructions in areas that include semantics, formal logic, material logic, foundations of physics—including the critique of Aristotelian matter and form—epistemology and the analysis of propositions that cover the topic "sameness of knowing and being" and how the first principles are obtained, will indicate clearly that this is a philosophical text of a refined nature, one that exemplifies a high standard in philosophical analysis and expression. And, philosophy did not die in Iran.

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## Inner Light [Nūr al-Fu âd ]: A 19th Century Persian Text in Illuminationist Philosophy by Shihāb al-Din Muhmmad ibn Mūsā Buzshallū'ī Kumījānī, edited, with Introduction and Notes by Hossein Ziai, Persian Introduction by Mohammad Karimi Zanjani Asl [Bibliotheca Iranica: Intellectual Traditions, Mazda Publishers, 9781568592664]

### Islamic Philosophy after Avicenna

Islamic philosophy after Avicenna developed in ways even more innovative than in the past, transforming the previously dominant Greek element into new, reconstructed holistic systems with their own distinguishing characteristics. As demonstrated by H. Corbin, S. H. Nasr, S. J. Ashtiyani, M. Ha'iri Yazdi, Gh. H. Dinani-Ibrahimi, S. J. Sajjadi, J. Walbridge, M. Aminrazavi, and other scholars, Suhrawardī's Philosophy of Illumination served as the main conduit for these developments.

The new, holistic reconstructed system is distinguished from the earlier Avicennan Peripatetic philosophy by virtue of the epistemology of "knowledge by presence" (al- ílm al-hudūrī) a unified epistemological theory with a principle position that is capable of describing types of knowing, including the obtaining of primary principles. The Illuminationist (ishrāqī) theory of light and vision, and the principle ontological position of the "sameness of knowing and being," likewise rank among the technical refinements specific to the Illuminationist system.

Suhrawardī's innovative philosophical oeuvre was hailed as a major achievement soon after his execution in Aleppo in 1191; he was recognized as the founder of the new system and the "Master of Illumination" (Shaykh al-Ishrāq). Foremost among philosophers who wrote commentaries on Illuminationist texts during the 13th century was Shams al-Dīn Shahrazūrī, author of Sharh Hikmatal-ishrāq. In the course of time the Illuminationist tradition became widely recognized as the second school of Islamic philosophy (after Avicenna's Peripatetic school) and following Shahrazūrī, thinkers such as Qutb al-Din Shīrāzī and Said b. Mansūr Ibn Kammūna (13th century); Qīyās al-Din Mansūr Dashtakī and Jalāl al-Din Davvānī (15th & 16th century); Nizām al-Din Harawī (16th century); and Sadr al-Din Shīrāzī (17th century) wrote extensive commentaries on Illuminationist texts. The last great Illuminationist work is Sadr al-Din Shīrāzī's al-Ta`līqāt âlā Sharh hikmat al-Ishrāq. Considerable more research is required, however, to ascertain the nature and the extent of Illuminationist writings after the 17th century. The discovery of the manuscript of Mir al-Fu 'ad, introduced here for the first time, is a clear indication that Illuminationist texts were studied and independent works were authored in this tradition during the 19th century. It is hoped that this publication will turn attention to philosophical writings in Persian from a period in Islamic philosophy that while of great interest, remains neglected in western scholarship.

### Nur al-Fu'ād and its Author, Shihāb al-Din Kumijanī

In the course of my research into the Arabic and Persian manuscripts in UCLA's Special Collections at

the University Research Library, I discovered a Unicom autograph Persian manuscript titled Mir al-Fu'ād Mr. Mohammad Karimi Zanjani Asl, co-author of this edition, subsequently discovered three other copies of Nūr al-Fu'ād, two of which—one in Berlin and one in Qum—predate the UCLA manuscript. The four texts form the basis of the present publication.

Nūr al-Fu'ād is authored by Shihāb al-Din Kumījānī (d. 1895) a strict follower of the Illuminationist school' in the 19th century who is extolled as "The Second Master of Illumination." Most likely a Kurd from Western Iran, Kumījānī, studied with Hādī Sabzivārī for nearly two decades in Sabzivār, a city in northeastern Iran. His full name as it appears in the manuscript and in Manuchehr Saduqi's pioneering study of post Sadr al-Muta'allihīn philosophers in Iran, Tār-ikh-i hukamā' va 'urafā' muta akhkhir bar Sadr al-Muta allihīn, is Shihāb al-Din Muhmmad b. Mūsā al-Buzshallū'ī al Kumījānī, Badī` al-Zamān Furūzānfar further identifies Kumījānī as "The [Second] Master of Illumination."

Kumījānī describes his work as the quintessence of Illuminationist Metaphysica Generalfis and Specialis but adds that he has attempted, wherever possible, to refine the arguments previously presented by Suhrawardī, the "Master of Illumination," in the latter's Philosophy of illumination.

The discovery of such an original and engaging, often innovative, well-written and on occasion creative treatise from this period is a welcome development and is important for several reasons, some philosophical per se, and some of general relevance to the study of the intellectual history of Iran.

The style and content of Nūr al-Fu âd and its author's honorific underscore the significance of Illuminationist philosophy in 19th century Iran. Its substance challenges the Orientalist view that philosophical inquiry ceased after Avicenna—some would say after Ghazzāli—in eastern Islam. Relatedly, given its systematic analysis of philosophical problems, Nūr al-Fu âd demonstrates that the scientific discourse did not in fact deteriorte to a form of pseudo-philosophical "sagesse orientale" Indeed, as part of a corpus of

philosophical writings—including several unpublished Persian manuscripts from the Qajar period that remain to be text-edited and examined—the work illustrates a course of revisionist and innovative trends in Islamic philosophy that found renewed energy in 19th century Iran. Although relatively few in number and marginal socio-political and historical impact, the writings point to a continuous line of creative thinkers that kept the science of philosophy alive.

The renewal of interest in philosophy in the early decades of the 19th century may be demonstrated by three examples specifically connected with the tradition of Hikmatal-Ishrāq. We know of Mull ā 'Ali Nuri, a well-known thinker in the 19th century who taught philosophy in Isfahan. His teaching is centered on Sadr al-Muta'allihin's glosses on commentaries on the main text of Hikmat al-Ishrāq. One of Mulla Sadra's most engaging, analytical works in philosophy whose text-edition I have recently completed and should be published soon is titled: Al-Ta'liqāt `alā Shari) Hikmat al-Ishraq One of the extant manuscripts of this work, which may in fact be Sadra's last composition, is found in Mullā 'Ali Nūrī's own handwritten copy—with a few marginal additions.

There is evidence that Ibn Kammüna's, al-Tanqıhāt fi Shalh al-Talwīhāt (a commentary on one of the four main texts on Illuminationist philosophy was taught in Tehran. There may even have been a late 19th century lithograph edition of this work, which suggests that it was included in the syllabus on Hikmat al-Ishrāq.

Most significantly, Hādī Sabzivārī repeatedly states in several treatises that his "novel" reconstructive system—al Hikma al-Muta âlīya—aims to incorporate and harmonize Hikmat al-Ishrāq with Avicenna's Peripatetic philosophy and Sadr al-Din's al-Hikma al Muta âlīya. Indeed, the new system incorporates principle views taken from Hikmat al-Ishraq: in epistemology, "knowledge by presence;" and in ontology, "the sameness of knowing and being," deemed the resolution of the problematic of zīyādat al-māhīyya/zīyādat al-wujūd in the critique of predication. Kumījānī was Sabzivārī's student, a status that he acknowledges with great reverence for the master; but he also claims to be making refinements to certain Illuminationist

principles, not as components of al-Hikma al-Muta âlīya but as logical extensions of Hikmat al-Ishrāq.

## The Text: A Synopsis

The text is written in an elegant philosophical Persian that abounds with standard Illuminationist terminology but also introduces a number of new technical terms, an example of which will be discussed below. The text itself is divided into chapters with the heading, "Ishrāq" the first Ishrāq, the second Ishrāq, and so on. Each chapter constitutes divisions called " Tajallī, " with a few added "lemmas" and corollaries. Naming and dividing chapters in this fashion was widely practiced in 17th century philosophical texts and has continued to some extent since:

Prolegomena, discussion of method, mention of the priority of knowledge by presence: the science of lights— 'ilm al-an wār Light—the primary thing in being—cannot be known by definition but only by "sight"—the correspondence of mushāhic/a and ibsār. The sameness (`aynīyyat) of the essence light with every and all ranks and orders of beings/existent entities (sameness of knowing and being since light is the most self-knowing entity)

Examines the term "Allah" as foundational and discusses the stated purpose of the work, namely, analysis of the proposition sameness (`aynīyyat) of the essence light with each and every existent entity in reality. Correspondence between demonstrated science (i.e., deductive metaphysics and physics [the cosmology of generation and corruption plus elements of De Caelo]) with the purely empirical; the sense-data prior to demonstration. This is a most significant methodological principle informing of basic views on science and technology: a light entity when seen is known itself. I will discuss one such principle further below and analyze Kumījānī's claim to refining and augmenting Suhrawardī's views.

To conclude this brief exposé, it is clear that 19th century Iran witnessed a revival of philosophy not as a mere continuation of a scholastic "text-book" tradition but in the context of an active and genuinely analytical discourse.

## On Platonic Forms: The distinction between form, image, and paradigm

The epistemology of unified vision requires the proper functioning of the subject as instrument (say, eyes); visibility of object (say, a lit entity) and the medium (say, light), or the relational principle A number of basic Illuminationist principles that clearly distinguish this system from the Peripatetic are presented, discussed and, in a few cases, philosophically refined in Nūr al-Fu'ād. Perhaps the most technically significant argument is where Kumījānī elaborates on the idea of "sameness" between subject and predicate, and/or substance and attribute said of specific constructed and formulated propositions that relate to primary principles, and on the distinctly Illuminationist perspective, between light as sub¬ject, and "evidence" (Evidenz in Husserl)/presence, as attribute, or object.

## Analysis of the Relation Sameness

The proposition "sameness of knowing and being" is fundamental to philosophical inquiry; some thinkers have argued that the positing, plus the analysis in responding to this proposition together define: (1) what-is philosophical investigation (at the first, undifferentiated level and sub-sequent ontological, epistemological and cosmological distinctions); and (2) the necessary first step in philosophical construction, that is of holistic systems. Stated from a general philosophical perspective this proposition encompasses a singular problem that is distinguished by sets of naming characteristic of historical periods as well as by the domain of inquiry: The mind body problem (Kant, Neo Kantian and German Idealism); Cartesian cogito--je pense donc je suis--; self-knowledge; self-consciousness; and the transcendent ego (Phenomenological philosophy: Husserl, etc.); conjunction/ union with the Active Intellect (Aristotelian intellectual knowledge; most of Latin medieval philosophy; and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy); Plotinian and its developments of unity of the one and the first hypotheses; mystical monism; and the like.

The very nexus of Islamic Peripatetic philosophy's theory of knowledge rests on the strict epistemic formulation of this proposition as "Union with the Active Intellect"--al-Ittihād bi'l Aal al-Fu'ād. That is al-Ittihād mā bayna al-Aql al-Mustafād--sometimes al Aal al-Qudsī--wa al-Aal al-Fa al. This

formulation may be traced to Aristotle (Past Analytics I, 79b ff; De Anima III; and Metaphysics XII) but is to be fully explained in view of the arguments on the intellect and intellectual knowledge by the later . Hellenic Peripatetic commentators, mainly Alexander of Aphrodisia and Porphyry (the latter is perhaps the one who first used the term nous poetikus, (Arabic al-'Aal al-Fa`āl). Scientific theory, and the requirement that the principles of science themselves may not be defined as a horos or horimos (al-hadd al-tāmm,) but must be known prior to demonstration by "immediate knowledge." This is a stipulation by Aristotle, who, however, never fully explains the structure of a theory of knowledge that would explain how "immediate" knowledge leads to certitude; but in Arabic texts this type of knowledge is defined to be the result of a conjunction with the Active Intellect where it acts as "Dato rFormarum"(wāhib al-suwar; wāhib al-`lm, etc.;) thus, the requirement for obtaining the primary principles, the necessary first step in demonstration, is met.

Aristotle, and after him Alkindī, Alfārābī, Avicenna, and Averroes, talk of two aspects or modes of the intellect (nous): the active and the passive. Perhaps the theoretical motivation for this twofold distinction is the polarity of form and matter, but also the notion that intellectual knowledge presupposes dyadic differentiation (a notion that as we shall see a later, is rejected in other philosophical traditions in Arabic and Persian). As mentioned before, the name nous poetikus is not found in Aristotle who refers to nous theoretikus, or nous apathes--as noted by Avicenna in his al-Mabda' wa al-Ma ad where the term is attributed to Porphyry. To my knowledge, unlike many other Avicennan texts, this one was not translated into Latin. In De Anima III 5, 430a Aristotle (and then in the Arabic Peripatetic version of "On the Soul" as well--in Physics, fi al-Tabi ī) we read: "We must distinguish between two intellects: one able to become all things, and another able to give all things a form; the first represents the matter of thinking, the second the cause and form." And this is a central distinguishing constituent of the proposition: knower/known; knowing/being; or more strictly in its Peripatetic formulation: intellect/object of intellect; intellect as subject/intellect as object.

The standard Islamic Peripatetic view of the knowing/being question is this: Any science starts from principles best known through `aql/nous therefore the theoretical intellect is the locus of intelligibles, it is in the act, the intelligibles themselves--the thinking which thinks itself noesis noeseus noesis (al-Aql/al-aql al-awwal, idhā agala, âgala shayān wa huwa aglān sāra ma`qūlan). Here is Aristotle's account of the identity of nous and the intelligibles (Met, XII, 7, 1072b): "Thus thinking thinks itself by participating in the intelligibles, because it becomes the intelligible itself, coming into touch with its own object of thinking about it, so that the intellect and the intelligibles fuse, becoming identical. This is so because the receptacle of the intelligibles and of essence is thinking, which manifesting its presence by the act, possesses the intelligibles." The noetic absorbs the ontological in a supreme fusion: the ontological background of reality is the intelligible, that is, intelligence in act. The nous is thus the locus of intelligible forms (De Anima, III, 4, 429).

Now consider a much later Arabic text of the 17th century, seldom if ever mentioned in the Orientalist tradition. Also the proposition in its Plotinian expression, which is in fact the Arabic expression of one of the Fragments of Parmenides, is: al-âql wa al-ma`qul huwa huwa. There has, however, been confusion as to the identity of this and the other type:

> Form one: al-ittihād bi'l `aql al-fa `âl
> Form two: al-ittihād al-`āgil wa al-ma`qūl

But the relation huwa huwa is first used in the Uthulūjīyā and later presented as we also see in Kumījānī's text, as âynīyya. Here the proposition is more aptly closest to the "sameness of knowing and being." In most texts the impact of the Plotinian doctrine of: 1) One beyond being; 2) the three hypotheses: intellect, soul, and matter; 3) continuum being, in that becoming and multiplicity does not entail differentiation with and from the one.

It is of historical significance that the problems as stated in these texts are traceable to Parmenides' famous statements on being and knowing, controversial as these may be in that the Greek has been translated drastically distinctly in European languages. The Greek statements appear in fragments III and VIII.

Thinking is identical (note the distinction between connection/conjunction, etc.) with the object of thinking; so the origins of the logical notion of the law of identity between thinking and existence are here traced to Parmenides, who states: "To think and to be is the same thing;" this may also mean: "Only what exists can be thought." In its philosophical form the statement is said to inform of the "identity/ sameness of knowing and being" [cp. logicians on identity relations--the distinction between the senses of predication and the meaning of nouns in predicative propositions, e.g., Frege].

What is significant for my purposes here is that one of the two ways that the statement made by Parmenides in his Moira was transmitted into Arabic was via the Uthulījīyā, i.e., in its Plotinian form. The other was in Aristotle's De Caelo, which had a different impact altogether: The proposition is: al-'aqil wa al-ma'qul huwa huwa.

There are a number of non-Peripatetic Arabic and a host of Persian texts that make use of this proposition when discussing the foundations of knowledge. To name a few: Jāmi ` al-Híkmatayn, Gushāyesh va Rahāyísh by Nāsir Khosrwo; Kashf al-Mahjtrb by Abū Ya`qūb al-Sijistānī; similar texts of the early 4th-5th A.H. in Persian, specifically Ismā`īlī textual traditions; and most important of all, Suhrawardī's Arabic texts, the four (named: T; MUA; MM, HI); and his Persian Partow Nāmeh. Distinguished from Arabic Peripatetic texts, the discussion of knowing rests on examining "I"/ I-ness; `man" in Persian and ana/anā'īyya in Arabic in relation to the soul (nafs/ravān) or the body (tan/jasad,) the mind-body problem being more evident here. Most sections in such books probe the idea of the "togetherness" of knower and known; the idea togetherness is also Plotinian as the "coupling" (couplement in Cartesian thought) of mind/body; knower and known, Be-ham būdan/ma'íyya and in later texts as âynīyya. Sameness of knowing and being is thus generalized.

In general, a number of distinctly philosophical problems that are associated with Híkmat al-Ishrāq are also found in Nur al-Fu 'a-d. Some are illuminationist by common associa¬tion, such as the multiplicity of Intellects (kathrat-e `uqūl; §54-§61); the attribution "rich" and "poor" to equivocal being.

Other problems are more complex and require closer exami¬nation below.

In the domain of epistemology, the unified theory of apprehension (Arabic, idrāk; Persian, daryāftan,) is known in Islamic philosophy as "knowledge by presence" (`ilm-e hudūrī), This theory rests on an inquiry into the relation between being and knowing, which is first rendered into Persian in The Book of Radiance; Kumījānī's Persian follows the same style. Here self-consciousness plays a fundamental role. "I-ness"; (mani, in Persian) is expanded to include "thou-ness" (tu ī) and "he/she/it-ness" (u'i); i.e., ipseity (huwīyya) is generalized and encompasses the second and third persons as well (§27, §44). The subject, or the "one who apprehends/knows" (Arabic, mudrik; Persian, daryābandeh) apprehends the object (mudrak; daryāfteh) when an atemporal relation is actualized between them. Self-consciousness/self-apprehension does not derive from the dyadic differentiation of being but is prior to any differentiation. Thus, "I think" and "I am" are "sameness," which is a non-predicative identity relation.

Togetherness/sameness — aynīyyat in Kumījānī's text-is an identity preserving a one-to-one correspondence between each and every member of the set of all knowing subjects and knowable objects. Suhrawardi here extends a logical principle of identity on to a metaphysical principle of relational corres-pondence. Each side of the relation is defined as a continuous domain consisting of multiple things, and the sum total of all things constitutes the whole. Every member of each of the two domains is said to be self-conscious, which is further attributed as "living"; therefore, the whole is also said to be self-conscious and thus "alive" (hayy; §41-46).

Illuminationist philosophy contests the Aristotelian position that the laws of science formulated as A-propositions (the universal affirmative, al-mūjiba al-kullīya; are both necessary and always true, or universal. Through an elaborate process of arguments starting with the sections on logic in his major Arabic texts, Illuminationist philosophy establishes future contingency (al-imkān al-mustaabal) as a scientific principle. Using this and other principles he argues that contrary to the

Aristotelian position, the laws of science cannot be universal. For us, this would mean that the current laws of science, such as formulated as, or equated with and are inherently refutable, and may in fact turn out to be wrong, because at time thus invalidating the universality of identity.

The first place to examine is the Law of Identity in logic, then the physics of continuity (ittisāl) and discontinuity (infisāl) against the notions of "equality" (tasāvī); "union" (ittihād); and "connection" (ittisāl) between the apprehend¬ing subject (al-maw(lū` al-mudrik) and the apprehensible object (al-mawdū` al-mudrak).5 The theory is formulated in full for the first time in the section on Metaphysics in Paths and Havens: Book Three. Kumījānī takes from the Illuminationist text and discusses what I call "Aristotelian predicative knowledge," thought to be inapplicable to the process of obtaining the Primary Principles,' and further elaborates on the unified theory of "knowledge by presence." In logical terms, this means that forms of equality such as "x is y" and "x = y" are replaced with a unified law of relational correspondence between each and every (kull wāhid wāhid) individual member (āhād) of aggregate wholes (al- jtimā , a novel illuminationist term): the "realm of knowing," and the "realm of being." This relation between subject and object is named al-idāfa al-ishrāgiyya'; meaning "illuminationist relation."

The idea of a relational correspondence between thinking and being, subject and object, thinker and the thing thought, is one of illuminationist philosophy's great achievements. The theory clearly defines the multi-level relation between the thinking subject and the knowable object as a relation function between each member of the two realms: thinking and being. Thus, non-predicative knowledge by presence is given priority over predicative knowledge, and finally, X = Y is replaced by  a fundamental of pre-relational identity as (xy), which is called a unified law of metaphysics.

The theory of relational correspondence is then used to overcome such problems as the unity of essence and the attributes of the Necessary Being, and positing the non-priority of being/quiddity. So, the answer to "ma huwa al-wājib" if stated as `al-

wājib huwa, mathalan, al-rahmān" would lead to a logical problem of the addition of māhīyya over Wujūd, or vice-versa, but employing the idea of "sameness" (`aynīyya) then `al-wājib ayn al-sifat, mathalan," or as we have it in Kumījānī's treatise al-nūr `ayn al-zuhūr, " then the essence, sameness as relational correspondence/ what-is, as a non-predicative proposition within first order logic, solves the problem.

Suhrawardī's novel criticism of Aristotelian logic is paralleled in William of Ockham's Summa Logicœ: Pars Prima: 13, 14. Other parallels include: Illuminationist critique of Aristotelian horos and horismos, in the Philosophy of illumination, Part One, I.7, §13 through §16, with summa Logicœ, Pars Prima: 26: "On Definition;" and Summa Ligicœ, Pars Prima: 12: "Second intentions," with i `tibar t 'aglij ya, in the Philosophy of illumination, Part One, 111.3.1, §56 ff.

5 Consider: Selbsgefiihl, as "the central and original idea that underlines all of subsequent writings [of Fichte]" states the translator Daniel Breazeale (See Fichte, Early Philosophical Writings. Translated and Edited by Daniel Breazeale. In addition, Breazeale reports . Fichte's discussions with Henrik Steffens (a former student who noted the conversation in vol. IV of his Was ich erlebte. In one passage we read: "For some time he [Fichte] had dimly realized that truth consists in the unity of thought and object. He ... thought that the act by which self-consciousness seizes and holds onto itself is clearly a type of knowing. The I recognizes itself as something produced through its own activity; thinker and thought, knowing and its object, are here one and the same. All knowledge proceeds from this point.... he tried to establish the I as the principle of philosophy" (Was ich erlebte). Now consider Suhraward ī's statement as explained by his commentator Shahrazūrī: "All things self-apprehending are 'pure lights' and all pure lights are evident (Evidenz in German philosophical texts) to their I-ness (al-anā īyya, which is extended in Persian to include manī, tar, and u'i). .. . so, here the self-conscious subject (al-mudrik,) the knowable object (al-mudrak,) and awareness itself (al-idrāk (Vernehmen in German,) are one" <>

**Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities edited**

## by Marlene Laruelle [Eurasian Studies Library: History, Societies & Cultures & Eurasia, Brill, 9789004306806]

[Being Muslim in Central Asia: Practices, Politics, and Identities](#) results from the Central Eurasia—Religion in International Affairs (CERIA) Initiative, hosted at The George Washington University's Central Asia Program. The CERIA Initiative aims to promote state-of-the-art research on religion in contemporary Central Asia, understanding religion as a "societal shaper" – a roadmap for navigating quickly changing social and cultural values. Religion is not a given but a construct that appears alongside other aspects of life. It can thus take on multiple colors and identities, from a purely transcendental faith in God to a cauldron of ideological ferment for political ideology, via diverse culture-, community-, and history-based phenomena that help people situate themselves in the world and define what makes sense for them.

Since the end of the 1990s, with the Taliban's seizure of power in Afghanistan, and even more so since the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the subsequent "war on terror," the policy narrative on the role of Islam in Central Asia has been shaped by a sense of danger, with analysis of religion often seen as an offshoot of security studies. Paradoxically, the Western policy community and the Central Asian regimes share similar misperceptions of Islam. They tend, though to differing extents, to conflate Islamic practices, political Islam, and paths to violence, providing security-oriented explanations of local political and social changes. The new, post-Soviet expressions of religiosity are over-interpreted as signaling "risks of radicalization." With every emergence of a new Islamist movement, from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan in the 1990s to al-Qaeda in the 2000s and the Islamic State in the 2010s, the global policy community has expressed concerns about the "radicalization" of Islam in Central Asia. These skewed interpretations have damaged the image of Islam in general and its appropriate place in the societies of Central Asia. There is, for instance, a striking contrast between the positive image of Buddhism in the revival of political activism in Tibet, thanks in large part to the media visibility of the Dalai Lama, and similar trends among Uyghurs in Xinjiang, which tend to be viewed negatively because Uyghur claims are associated with an Islamic identity.

However, the so-called "re-Islamization" of Central Asian societies since the collapse of the USSR has very little to do with anything political. It is, above all, an apolitical re-traditionalization marked by calls for more conservative mores and stricter gender segregation; and demands for observance of (some) Islamic rites by younger generations. This re-traditionalization aims to reconsolidate the social fabric at a time of massive upheaval and to construct new individual identities in harmony with the times but respectful of what is understood as national belonging. The local traditions of submission to the authorities, of respect for long-standing hierarchies, of assimilating religion into the community, whether national or local, are now competing with imported models in which Islam is lived as a more universal religion, less subordinated to the national or local, more confrontational and more individualist. Other, albeit smaller, trends are also visible: in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, some of the younger generations call for a kind of Islamo-nationalist ideology; globalized networks of believers work with foreign proselytizing groups such as the Tablighi Jama'at to reach out to a new community of believers; merchant groups and small entrepreneurs instrumentalize Islam to legitimize their economic success and to develop informal networks of solidarity through Islamic charities. Growing segments of the Kyrgyz and Tajik populations invoke Islam, sometimes Shari'a, to demand more social justice, less corruption, and "compensation" from states failing to deliver basic public services and security.

The field of studying Islam—the study of other religions, i.e. Christianity, focuses almost exclusively on conversion and proselytizing—has evolved dramatically since the collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, Western Sovietologists working on religion, heirs of Alexandre Bennigsen (1913–1988), found themselves challenged by scholars from Middle Eastern studies, who claimed that their knowledge of Islamic societies provided a better calibrated tool to approach the new Central Asia. Nonetheless, this new school faced difficulties in integrating the Soviet legacy and longer historical continuities in its analytical toolbox and indirectly reinforced the misreading that Central Asia was on

the path to becoming a second Afghanistan or Pakistan. In the 2000s, a new generation of scholars emerged, with a more intimate knowledge of the region—often specializing in only one country—and of local languages. This new generation combined its area expertise with ongoing theoretical discussions in the social sciences and humanities with greater comparative skills than before. Academic disciplines such as cultural anthropology have deepened our knowledge of Islam to the micro-level of community, family, and gender relations, offering a more complex picture in which religion is one among many elements of everyday life impacted by macro-level political and socioeconomic changes.

Thanks to this new generation of scholars, our understanding of Islam and what it means in contemporary Central Asia has dramatically evolved and increased in complexity. The question of the "revival" of Islam has been transformed by a better understanding of the intricacies of Muslim practices during Soviet times and the revelation of Islamic plural debates and theological conflicts inside the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM). It also evolved by ending the simplistic division between "foreign influences" coming from abroad and domestic situations on the ground: Central Asian Islam is today a largely globalized phenomenon, with multilayered interactions that blur the boundaries between "home" and "abroad" and create transnational identities in tune with the rest of the Islamic Ummah. In terms of external influences, Turkey's preeminence in the early 1990s has been eclipsed by the Gulf countries, particularly the Emirates and Dubai, which are seen as the embodiment of a successful Muslim modernity, and by proselytizing groups such as Tablighi Jama'at coming from the South Asian subcontinent. Like any community, Central Asian Muslims are shaped by the multiple, contradictory definitions of what is "their own," national and traditional, and what is "other," foreign and new, especially in relation to everything that can be labelled as Arab.

One driver for new research has been to conceptualize that the central issue is not how external observers typologize the way Central Asians express their "Muslimness," but the fact that the fight to define the "right Islam" is a struggle going on inside the Muslim communities themselves.

Some call for a Soviet-style Islam that would keep the public space secular and confine Islam to being merely one part of national traditions and identities; others call for Islam to be an individual practice carried out by each citizen according to their own conscience. Still others hope for a more normative Islam that prescribes individual manners and collective practices. Competing narratives, references and practices have therefore become the new normal for Central Asian societies. Some defend the Hanafi school against "intrusions" of Hanbali rituals; others debate the content of Salafism, Wahhabism, Deobandism, so-called radical Islam or unaffiliated Internet preachers; others discuss the Islamic legitimacy of pilgrims to local shrines and traditional medicine. The spectrum of Islamic practice is broad, stretching from Muslim "born-agains" to private entrepreneurs who capitalize on their "Muslimness" to justify their economic success in the name of an Islamic theology of prosperity. Across the region as a whole, several elements signal the structuring of Islam as a central reference for individual and collective identities: calls for teaching religion in the school system, rapid increases in the number of people fasting during Ramadan, and a rise in the number of people participating in zakat – giving alms to the poor and needy. References to Shari'a as religious orthodoxy, largely absent from Central Asian traditions, have become visible in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Central Asian Islamic communities are now deeply plural.

In post-Soviet Central Asia, the relationship between Islam and the state has often had a schizophrenic character: Islam has been glorified as a religion of the nation, local pilgrimage sites have been valorized, and the great national figures linked to Sufism have been celebrated, but at the same time religious practices have been monitored, sermons in the mosques are increasingly controlled, religious education is highly restricted, and interactions with the rest of the Ummah are looked upon with suspicion. However, the interaction between state and society emerges as much more complex than the black-and-white narrative of advocacy groups criticizing the lack of religious freedom in the region and the repressive practices of the state structures toward religion.

First, a large segment of Central Asian societies supports the securitization approach to Islam that is

advanced by the state, a trend reinforced by the scary story of young people "lost" to jihad in Syria. Second, the Spiritual Boards and Council for Religious Affairs play an ambiguous role in "normalizing" what to accept and what to reject in Islamic practices and discourses. Third, some political elites, especially economic elites, are attracted by a new Islamic identity inspired by Dubai, and security service officers are often very respectful of religious leaders and of their authority. All these trends confirm, if such confirmation is needed, that the state secularism inherited from the Soviet regime is progressively eroding in the face of multiple ways to display "Muslimness." As everywhere in the world, social tensions within Muslim communities and in their interaction with non-Muslims give a large room to debates about how women dress, because the topic embodies issues of purity, morality, self-respect, and the call for a more control over a rapidly evolving society.

In the first part of the volume, we discuss what it means to be a Muslim in today's Central Asia by looking at both historical and sociological features. In Chapter 1, Galina Yemelianova argues that, throughout history, Central Asians developed a particular form of Islam that presented a productive and fluid synergy between Islam per se, their tribal legal and customary norms, and Tengrian and Zoroastrian beliefs and practices. It is characterized by a high level of doctrinal and functional adaptability to shifting political and cultural environments, the prevalence of Sufism (mystical Islam), and oral, rather than book-based, Islamic tradition. A common Eurasian space and lengthy shared political history of Central Asians and other peoples of Muslim Eurasia account for considerable similarities in their Islamic trajectories.

In Chapter 2, Barbara Junisbai, Azamat Junisbai, and Baurzhan Zhussupov investigate the rising religiosity and orthodoxy among Central Asian Muslims, drawing on two waves of public opinion surveys conducted in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in 2007 and 2012. They confirm that a religious revival is underway; however, cross-national variations remain important: religious practice, as measured by daily prayer and weekly mosque attendance, is up in Kyrgyzstan, but has fallen in Kazakhstan. They attribute these differences to political context, both in terms of cross-national

political variation and regional differences within each country. In Chapter 3, Yaacov Ro'i and Alon Wainer focus on Uzbekistan and Uzbek identity and its relationship to Islam by looking at some 200 interviews with Uzbek students. While almost everyone considers himself or herself a Muslim, the vast majority perceive themselves, above all, as citizens of Uzbekistan. Moreover, their Islam is not reflected primarily in Islamic practice but rather in a somewhat nebulous Islamic traditionalism. In the international arena, young Uzbeks tend to prefer Muslim over non-Muslim peoples and communities, but not necessarily as destinations for labor migration.

The second part of the volume is devoted to Islam, politics and the state. Tim Epkenhans begins by analyzing the evolution of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IKPT), the only Islamic party recognized in Central Asia (until it was banned in 2015, when the Tajik authorities abandoned the principles of the 1997 General Peace Accord, which had ended the country's civil war). Since then, the IKPT has distinguished itself as a credible oppositional political party committed to democratic principles and with an almost imperceptible religious agenda. By shifting the IRPT's attention to issues of democratization and socioeconomic development, its chairman, Muhiddin Kabirī, opened the IKPT to a younger electorate, although continuous defamation campaigns and government persecution have worn down the IRPT's activists and its electorate.

Chapter 5, by Aurélie Biard, delves into the political uses of Islam in the Kyrgyzstani Fergana Valley, through case studies of the main Kyrgyzstani Uzbek theologians based in the city of Karu-Suu, who appear to be core actors in re-Islamization and propagators of Saudi-style Salafi Islam. She argues that religious debates and postures concerning the relationship to secular power are inscribed in patronage and personal clientelist networks, as well as local power struggles. She states that we are now witnessing the reactivation of a religious utopia that challenges the existing political and financial order through local rhetoric about establishing an idealized caliphate, conveying a message not only of social justice but also of economic transparency and free trade.

In Chapter 6, Alexander Wolters examines another way in which the Central Asian states have instrumentalized Islam—namely, Islamic finance. Rather a recent phenomenon in the region, it was only with the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2007 that the cooperation between the states and the Islamic Development Bank resulted in domestic initiatives to establish forms of Islamic banking. Wolters sees a correlation between the subsequent development of such initiatives and the unfolding political crises. Specifically, the Central Asian states were eager to connect to available streams of Islamic investment capital in the early stages of the international financial crisis, but their commitment to further adapt declined when they entered periods of political crisis that forced them to reorder their reform priorities.

The third part of the volume explores the changing role of Islam in terms of societal and cultural values. Wendell Schwab looks at Asyl Arna, the most popular Islamic television channel and dominant Islamic media company in Kazakhstan. He examines how images on the social media pages of Asyl Arna create a way of understanding and engaging in contemporary Islamic life. The visual culture of Asyl Arna's social media promotes Islam as an achievable part of a middle-class lifestyle that can provide simple rules for a pious, economically successful life and a connection to the holy life through the Qur'an. Manja Stephan-Emmrich follows this search by investigating Muslim self-fashioning, migration, and (be-)longing in the Tajik–Dubai business. She analyzes how young, well-educated, and multilingual Tajiks involved in Dubai's various business fields create, shape, and draw on a sense of cosmopolitanism to convert their uncertain status as "Tajik migrants" into that of economically autonomous "Muslim businessmen." Pointing to the mutual conditionality of longing and belonging in migrant cosmopolitanism, she offers a nuanced picture of everyday life in Dubai that goes beyond the "spectacularity" of the city, challenging the prevailing representation of Tajik Muslims' engagement in transnational Islam as a security matter only. And in Chapter 9, Rano Turaeva explores the space of informal economies, focusing on transnational entrepreneurs between Central Asia and Russia. These male and female entrepreneurs live mobile economic lives in which Islam plays a central role in regulating informal economies. Islamic belonging has progressively become a stronger marker of identity than ethnicity among Central Asian migrants in Russia, and mosque communities have grown in influence as places to socialize.

The last section of the volume investigates female attire as a public debate. Emil Nasritdinov and Nurgul Esenamanova explore how the growing community of practicing Muslims asserts the right to be in the city, live according to its religious ideals, and create Islamic urban spaces. Such claims do not remain uncontested and, because religious identity has a strong visual manifestation, religious claims—especially female attire—become the subject of strong public debate. This contestation overlaps with socially constructed gender hierarchies—religious/secular claims over the urban space turn into men's claims over women, with both sides (religious and secular) claiming to know what women should wear.

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